LIEUTENANT GENERAL
ROBERT C. RICHARDSON JR.

Central Pacific Theater
Army Commander for
Admiral Chester W. Nimitz
1943–45

James D. Scudieri
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Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson Jr: Central Pacific Theater Army Commander for Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, 1943–45

James D. Scudieri

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Foreword

The United States and China in great-power competition heightens concerns from Japan and South Korea to the Philippines and Taiwan. US Army Pacific is at the forefront of US Army efforts in the Indo-Pacific area of responsibility. US Army Pacific postures during competition as it prepares for potential crisis and conflict.

Dr. James D. Scudieri’s research into Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson Jr.’s commands of US Army Forces in Central Pacific Area and US Army Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas from August 1943 to June 1945 concludes that the commands were a de facto theater Army to Admiral Chester W. Nimitz. Moreover, Richardson conducted the full range of what are now the Army warfighting and Joint functions. The study begins with the evolution of prewar plans, the state of Joint operating procedures, and the realities of early wartime defeats from December 1941 through May 1942. Richardson’s operations then occurred when American might had built up and was ready for virtually continuous offensive operations.

The monograph helps Joint warfighters and senior leaders think about the context, scale, scope, and implications of large-scale combat operations at the theater level in the Pacific’s extended lines of communication. It also discusses actions through competition and crisis, not just conflict. The analysis fills a major gap in understanding the US Army’s little-heralded accomplishments in the Pacific War, in general, and the central Pacific, in particular. It showcases the critical role of Landpower in this area of responsibility. Moreover, the monograph offers theater-strategic rather than tactical analysis, enriched by research in previously untapped primary sources.

These assessments are relevant to US Army Pacific today. Its four current roles of theater Joint Force land component command, combined Joint task force, combined Joint force land component command, and Army Service component command lend themselves to such comparative analysis.

Dr. C. Anthony Pfaff
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Executive Summary

As of 2024, the United States and China continue great-power competition in the Pacific, struggling to achieve the greatest preeminence and influence. Recent general election results in Taiwan heighten tensions with China and underline the fragility of attempted détente. US Army Pacific is at the forefront of US Army efforts in the Indo-Pacific area of responsibility. This theater Army postures during competition as it prepares for potential crisis and conflict, and continues the tradition of Army presence in the region. This monograph analyzes the Army’s experience in the Pacific in World War II and today, filling a major gap in understanding the US Army’s little-heralded accomplishments in the Pacific War and the central Pacific and showcasing Landpower’s role in the Pacific from a theater-strategic perspective.

Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson Jr. functioned as de facto theater Army commander to Admiral Chester W. Nimitz from August 1943 to June 1945. Richardson’s command of US Army Forces in Central Pacific Area and US Army Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas in World War II is a case study of a senior Army command serving under a US Navy theater commander. Moreover, Richardson conducted the full range of what are now the Army warfighting and Joint functions, and his commands illustrate US Army Pacific’s current roles.

This monograph uses untapped primary sources to explain Richardson’s accomplishments, including five reports Richardson submitted on US Army Forces’ participation in offensives under Admiral Nimitz. All reports consist of formal parts or sections and detailed annexes, but with limited commonality. The reports do not share identical structure, though there is heavy thematic crossover given the major topics. Some subjects are unique to a single operation. All five have a tailored summary and conclusions, as well as “Assistance Rendered to the Navy and Marines.” A sixth report from Richardson’s later US Army Forces, Middle Pacific provides addenda on the island bases. The six reports number close to 2,000 pages.

Research also examined the only known copies of draft text which was the basis of an unpublished autobiography. This work is an elusive source. Two complete copies are at the US Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, Pennsylvania. An incomplete set resides at the US Army Pacific History Office. These notes comment substantively on the rest of the story of Richardson’s Pacific War. Otherwise, Richardson has a voluminous collection of personal papers at the Hoover Institution. Published official
histories and other specialized accounts complement these primary source collections. They lay out prewar plans, along with complex but comprehensive orders of battle, task organizations, and command relationships.

The study first contextualizes Richardson’s operating environment, analyzing prewar US plans for the Pacific with focus on the 1938 Orange Plan, the transition to the Rainbow plans, and the unforeseen disasters of the early war years from December 1941 through the surrender of the Philippines in May 1942. The next section examines the 1935 edition of the Joint Action of the Army and the Navy, which was the embryonic, albeit unofficial, policy and doctrinal basis for conducting joint operations in World War II, followed by the wartime reality of deep-seated and widespread interservice rivalries.

Richardson’s operations occurred when American might had built up and was ready for virtually continuous offensive operations. The detailed evaluation of Richardson’s accomplishments as de facto theater Army commander distills and packages his reports for the reader. The context is the current Army warfighting and Joint functions: command and control, movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment, protection, and information. The final section on base operations explains Richardson’s key role as a major landowner in the Pacific.

Prewar plans and early-war defeats showcase the precarious nature of planning assumptions in a dynamic environment. Significantly, the transition from competition to crisis to conflict was brief. The crisis period lasted barely four-and-a-half months from July 26, 1941, until the attack on Pearl Harbor on December 7. The implications are stark. The situation today is more uncertain and riskier than 1941–42. One can anticipate greater challenges in the unpredictable change and likely rapid transition from competition to crisis to conflict.

The preeminent, initial challenge for US Army Pacific is the buildup of Landpower during competition and before crisis and conflict. Limitations in forward-deployed units, pre-positioned stocks, and problematic timelines to cross the physical tyranny of distance imperil the Army’s effectiveness to setting the theater for large-scale combat operations. Richardson’s predecessors learned the risks of the Army’s limitations with the fall of Guam on December 10, 1941, and the Philippines in May 1942.

The shift to a largely continental United States–based Army following the end of the Cold War and through the Global War on Terror is ill-suited for the current environment of a contested commons in multiple
domains and threats from factory to foxhole. This latest geopolitical reality requires strategic reframing to more forward-deployed units and pre-positioned stocks, also strategically dispersed. Failure to adapt risks preventing the Army from posturing effectively during competition with ramifications during crisis and conflict, especially for protracted war.

Richardson’s commands in 1943–45 themselves highlight multiple additional insights for today. They are especially illustrative for US Army Pacific’s four current roles of theater Joint Force Land Component Command, Combined Joint Task Force, Combined Joint Force Land Component Command, and Army Service Component Command.

Setting the theater in the Pacific, during World War II and today, underlines the importance of the theater Army’s role across all Army war-fighting and Joint functions. The theater Army is the preeminent Joint provider for large-scale combat operations in protracted war. Notions of the Pacific as a Navy theater fail to consider a holistic approach. Nor is the Marine Corps another land army, as it lacks such capability and capacity by design and intent. Likewise, the Army’s corps and divisions cannot fulfill these continuous, theater-strategic responsibilities.

US Army Pacific today is well ahead of the Army’s Pacific posture from 1938–42, and it could posture yet more effectively during competition. United States Indo-Pacific Command and US Army Pacific should consider issuing additional establishing directives across the Joint functions. Refined task organization and forward positioning of enabling units and commodities under US Army Pacific during competition would help prepare for crisis or conflict, address allied partners’ concerns, and demonstrate commitment across the combatant commander’s area of responsibility.

Today’s strategic realities may also require US Army Pacific to function as a war-fighting headquarters for longer than planned. The current doctrinal guidance in the 2021 editions of *Armies, Corps, and Division Operations*, Field Manual 3-94, and also noted in *Theater Army Operations*, Army Techniques Publication 3-93, may prove illusory.

This study will help Army and Joint Staff planners, other warfighters, and senior leaders consider the context, scale, and implications of large-scale combat operations at the theater level in the Pacific’s extended lines of communication. It discusses actions through competition and crisis, not just conflict. The analysis fills a major gap in understanding the US Army’s little-heralded accomplishments in the Pacific War in general and the central Pacific in particular. It showcases the critical role of Landpower
Executive Summary

in the Pacific. It is a theater-strategic, not tactical, analysis enriched by its research in previously untapped primary sources.
Introduction

The Pacific is the forgotten US Army theater, especially compared to the campaign in northwest Europe in 1944–45. Yet, besides six US Marine Corps divisions, 22 US Army divisions served in the Pacific. Numerous enabling units projected and sustained combat power across the theater.

Lieutenant General Robert C. Richardson Jr. is an understudied and unappreciated senior Army leader of the Pacific War. Commissioned in 1904, his experience included commands at the brigade, division, and corps levels. Richardson led the VII Corps at the time of the Pearl Harbor attack, served three years in the rank of lieutenant general from 1943–46, and was posthumously promoted to full general in 1954.

This monograph examines Richardson's service as the de facto theater Army (TA) commander for Admiral Chester W. Nimitz in the central Pacific from August 1943 to June 1945. Multiple insights provide threads of continuity for US Army Pacific (USARPAC) today as the TA for the United States Indo-Pacific Command. Richardson's critical role then and USARPAC’s critical role now transcend the superficial notion this Pacific area of responsibility, dominated by water, has minimal Landpower missions.

Sources

This study heavily relies upon untapped primary sources. Richardson submitted five reports on US Army Forces’ participation in the unremitting offensives under the overall joint command of Admiral Nimitz. All five reports consist of formal parts or sections and detailed annexes but have limited commonality. The reports do not share an identical structure, though the reports do share heavy thematic crossover given the main topics. Some subjects are unique to a single operation. All five reports have summaries, conclusions, and interestingly, sections titled “Assistance Rendered to the Navy and Marines.” A sixth report from US Army Forces, Middle Pacific, provides addenda on the island bases. The six reports number close to 2,000 pages.

Richardson also left a voluminous collection of personal papers. The bulk of his collection resides at the Hoover Institution. A series of notes, which were the basis of an autobiography, are in Richardson’s personal papers. Richardson’s unpublished work is an elusive source. The US Army Heritage and Education Center has a small collection of Richardson
papers. These papers contain an unpublished draft, in 25 tabs mixed with diary documents, in two locations. The USARPAC History Office has eight files titled chapters. All eight chapters at US Army Pacific have identical titles to the eight tabs at the US Army Heritage and Education Center, but the two collections contain different chapter and tab numbers. These are the only known copies. Richardson’s notes comment substantively on the rest of the story of Richardson’s Pacific War.

Published official sources and other specialized histories complement the primary source collections. The official sources lay out prewar plans, along with comprehensive orders of battle and task organizations.

Methodology

Richardson’s central Pacific operations were the by-products of prewar plans, early-war defeats, and wartime adaptations to conducting simultaneous global war in Europe and the Pacific. Some context on the period before Richardson’s service as a de facto theater Army (TA) commander is important.

This study examines the World War II Pacific experience more widely. Analysis first reviews prewar US plans for the Pacific throughout the interwar period. This initial analysis emphasizes the 1938 Plan Orange, the transition to the Rainbow plans, and the unforeseen disasters of the early-war years.

The next section examines the embryonic policy and doctrinal basis for conducting joint operations, followed by the wartime reality of deep-seated and widespread interservice rivalries. The section considers Richardson’s accomplishments as de facto TA commander compared to US Army Pacific’s four current roles of theater Joint Force Land Component Command (TJFLCC), Combined Joint Task Force, Combined Joint Force Land Component Command, and Army Service Component Command. The higher-level emphasis is on the exercise of Army Landpower to conduct large-scale combat operations (LSCO), with a special focus on issues of command and control (C2).

The study then evaluates Richardson’s missions and accomplishments, summarizing the microdetails in the five operational reports. The analysis packages the assessment through the lens of the current Army war-fighting functions (WfF) and Joint functions. The final subject is Richardson as primary landowner, including a tabulated summary derived from the
island bases’ addenda. These products illustrate the breadth and depth of Richardson’s task as a de facto TA.

The final section closes with insights for US Army Pacific in the context of LSCO, juxtaposing Richardson’s responsibilities and accomplishments then with USARPAC responsibilities today. The section’s focus remains on the strategic and theater-strategic levels throughout.
As early as 1919, the Joint Planning Committee, Army, and Navy articulated a Pacific strategy in case of war with Japan, Great Britain, or both. Continuous refinements of these strategic plans produced the colored plans. Each potential adversary had a color code, Japan being orange. The Orange Plans had a designated 1923 estimate, followed by formal plans in 1924, 1928, and 1938.

A series of lower-echelon, operational-level Army grand joint exercises and Navy fleet problems tested the plans’ practicality and the vulnerability of Hawaii itself—especially Pearl Harbor—between 1923 and 1940. One ostensible purpose of the tests was to promote cooperation in joint operations, as historical experience demonstrated failures due to lack of training. Exercises also tested joint operations to recapture Hawaii, but the success of the exercises in promoting jointness is debatable. The Army blue American Expeditionary Force commander for the 1932 exercise led 42,000 troops, a reduced Army infantry division, a Marine Corps division equivalent, and corps-level troops. The Army had overall command, but the Marines were not attached forces. The number of corps, division, and brigade staff was skeletal and too small to replicate complete roles.

Army efforts included US Army War College contributions to a holistic, rigorous, systematized planning process with formal war-planning courses. In 1934–35, one course summary noted a simultaneous and concurrent planning process. Integration involved subordinates’ plans, frontier plans, and those of the Navy and General Headquarters Air Forces. Details about procedures were classified, but the latest staff recommendation as of 1934–35 was to make no changes at present but to war game the plans at the US Army War College. Planners took account of political sabotage in Korea and Manchuria as well as economic pressures requiring coordination among seven federal entities.
More specifically, the 1938 Plan Orange consisted of a joint Army and Navy basic war plan with nested Army and Navy service-level drafts. The staff identified interagency issues across what are now the diplomatic, informational, military, and economic elements of national power, such as “Supporting Legislative Programs” and “Cooperation with Other Departments of the Government.” Strategic assessments prioritized the continental United States first at Category C; Alaska, the Panama Canal Zone, and Oahu at Category D; and the Philippines at Category E.  

The most serious conundrum of a Pacific strategy was the Philippines: the 1938 Plan Orange focused Philippine defense on Manila Bay. The Army was also responsible for delaying the enemy at Subic Bay and elsewhere, but “without jeopardizing the timely withdrawal of mobile ground
forces to the Bataan Peninsula.” The Philippines was not a priority, tasked with defending itself with locally available forces.\textsuperscript{18} The Army recognized the strategic triangle of Alaska, Oahu, and Panama.\textsuperscript{19} Boldness and optimism rested upon successfully holding the Philippines with highly capable American and Philippine forces, a position promoted by Douglas MacArthur.\textsuperscript{20}

Others forecasted three and four years respectively for Army and Navy operations to defeat Japan. A 100-page US Army War College study on May 18, 1939, presciently forecasted early Japanese success followed by a strategic defense and a slow American return. Debate was contentious.\textsuperscript{21}

Then, two factors drastically altered the strategic calculus.

First, the change from single-enemy colored plans to Rainbow plans in 1939 responded to the potential for global conflict with the Axis powers.\textsuperscript{22} Planners also had to account for a range of contingencies in the Western Hemisphere.\textsuperscript{23}

Second, the rapid fall of France in June 1940 shook American leaders. The fall, which took place within six weeks, prompted serious rearmament.\textsuperscript{24} The vaunted French army was a pillar of capability the free world took for granted.\textsuperscript{25} Italy as an Axis power and no French ally radically changed the British naval balance of power.\textsuperscript{26} The November 1940 Plan Dog memo by Chief of Naval Operations Admiral Harold Stark suggested giving strategic priority to Europe.\textsuperscript{27} The United States now had major impetus to begin formal American and British staff coordination in January 1941: the American-British Conversations series.\textsuperscript{28}

Entering the war in December 1941, the United States faced a skilled Japanese onslaught.\textsuperscript{29} The Philippines’ prospects dimmed with each Axis success. The deteriorating possibility of succoring the Philippines’ defenders in early 1942 was at odds with senior leaders President Franklin D. Roosevelt, Secretary of War Henry L. Stimson, and Army Chief of Staff George Catlett Marshall’s desire to aid MacArthur. Army planners reported on January 3, 1942, that neither reinforcement nor MacArthur’s idea for an offensive were possible. A serious dose of reality came when the president’s fireside chat on February 23, 1942, focused on a global war.\textsuperscript{30} The Philippines had become the quintessential dichotomy between ends and means in a rapidly evolving, global, strategic situation.
Overview of the Pacific War, 1942–45

The short-lived American, British, Dutch, Australian Command (ABDACOM), established in January 1942, attempted an Allied unity of command. The command floundered due to its hasty conception amid rapid, highly successful Japanese offensives. The ABDACOM did not survive long. On February 18, 1942, President Roosevelt suggested to United Kingdom Prime Minister Winston Churchill the United States should focus on Australia while the United Kingdom emphasized India; respectively, the right and left flanks of the ABDACOM. President Roosevelt further suggested worldwide responsibilities be divided into an American Pacific Ocean area, a British Indian Ocean and Middle East area, and a combined European-Atlantic area. As early as March 1942, senior American leaders conceived an Army command in the southwest Pacific and a Navy command in the central Pacific. On April 3, 1942, the Joint Chiefs of Staff established the commander in chief, Pacific Ocean Area (CINCPOA) and commander in chief, Southwest Pacific Area (CINCSWPA). The original directive to CINCPOA Nimitz included the North, Central, and South Pacific Areas, with agreement from Australia, New Zealand, and the United Kingdom. Lieutenant General Millard F. Harmon, Army Air Force, subordinate to Richardson, commanded all Army forces in the south Pacific. From June 1944, Harmon commanded Army Air Force, Pacific Ocean Area. Figure 2 illustrates the new boundaries.

The year 1942 marked defensive operations, the lopsided victory at the Battle of Midway in June, and the commencement of American counterattacks with the US Marine Corps’ debut on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands and MacArthur in New Guinea. The successful Australian defense of Port Moresby and the start of the Papua Campaign were equally on display.
Figure 2. The Far East and the Pacific, 1941: Status of forces and theater boundaries, July 2, 1942
(Map courtesy of the Department of History, United States Military Academy, New York)
American Pacific operations proceeded along two axes: Nimitz in the central Pacific and MacArthur in the southwest Pacific. The broad-outline map in figure 3 depicts the various American offensives up to February 1, 1945, with a Roman numeral. 34

Richardson's command of US Army Forces in Central Pacific Area (USAFICPA) and US Army Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas (USAFPOA) from August 1943 to June 1945 evolved from the prewar plans, early wartime defeats, and adaptation with considerable buildup. Richardson's operations benefited from the dramatic change in American fortunes after the Battle of Midway in June 1942. He was a key player in the sweeping American Pacific offensives.

Richardson's execution as TA in 1943–45 primarily supported Nimitz, and supported MacArthur secondarily. The accompanying table shows the 1942 defensive operations, and Nimitz's and MacArthur's major Pacific offensives, chronologically to the end of the war. 35

Further context will complement the maps and table; limited crossover dates are deceiving. The dates do not constitute simply consecutive operations. First, the Pacific competed with the European theater, which held a higher priority and faced its own challenges. Thus, in March 1943, the Joint Strategic Survey Committee concluded events since the Casablanca Conference, held in January 1943, demonstrated the overall Allied strategic situation had deteriorated. Explanations for the deterioration ranged from differing American and British interpretations of decisions made at the Casablanca Conference, shortages such as shipping, and stubborn Axis resistance. The Trident Conference in May 1943 finally directed future central Pacific operations, which, in turn, focused strategic planning for the Joint Chiefs of Staff. 36 Then 1944 marked the massive, extended efforts to conduct the long-awaited Normandy Invasion on June 6 and then to conduct continuous operations to war’s end in northwest Europe in May 1945 (for example, the Normandy Campaign from June to July; Operation Cobra’s breakout in August; Operation Market Garden in September; the unexpected Battle of the Bulge in December; the Rhine River crossing in March 1945; and the final, fierce actions in Germany itself).
Figure 3. The Far East and the Pacific, 1941: Summary of Allied Pacific campaigns and status of Japanese forces, February 1, 1945
(Map courtesy of the Department of History, United States Military Academy, New York)
Table 1. Summary of the Pacific War, 1941–45

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Dates</th>
<th>Nimitz</th>
<th>MacArthur</th>
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<tr>
<td>1942</td>
<td>I. Defense of Strategic Triangle</td>
<td>II. Protect Australia and bases</td>
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<tr>
<td>March–September 1942</td>
<td></td>
<td>III. Port Moresby (New Guinea)</td>
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<td>June 1942</td>
<td>IV. Battle of Midway</td>
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<tr>
<td>August 1942–January 1943</td>
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<td>V. Papuan Campaign (New Guinea)</td>
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<tr>
<td>January 1943–December 1944</td>
<td></td>
<td>New Guinea north coast, New Britain</td>
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<tr>
<td>November 1943</td>
<td>VI. Gilberts (Tarawa and Betio)</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>January–February 1944</td>
<td>VI. Marshalls (Kwajalein and Eniwetok)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>February 1944</td>
<td>Truk (Carolines) (aerial attacks and bypassed)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April–October 1944</td>
<td>VIII. Approach to the Philippines</td>
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<tr>
<td>May–November 1944</td>
<td>VII. Marianas (Saipan, Guam, and Tinian)</td>
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<tr>
<td>September–October 1944</td>
<td>Angaur and Ulithi (Western Carolines)</td>
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<tr>
<td>October–December 1944</td>
<td>IX. Leyte Campaign / Leyte Gulf</td>
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<tr>
<td>January–August 1945</td>
<td>X. Invasion of Luzon</td>
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<tr>
<td>February–March 1945</td>
<td>Iwo Jima (Bonins)</td>
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<tr>
<td>April–June 1945</td>
<td>Okinawa (Ryukus)</td>
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Second, theater-wide Pacific and central Pacific planning did not proceed in a singular, lockstep continuum; for example, what was next in January 1944 was an open question. The debate over the practicality of invading Formosa in 1944–45 was another example. Formosa competed with both the central Pacific under Nimitz and with MacArthur’s aim for Luzon.37

Third, CINCPAC and CINCSWPA did, at times, seek the same resources, theater-planning timelines, and associated organizational and training requirements. Friction also extended the commitment and required dates, straining available troops, equipment, and other materiel.38 Richardson dealt with the consequences. In Operation Galvanic on Tarawa
in November 1943, soldiers lacked sufficient preparation for tasks and lacked at least one complete and realistic rehearsal.\textsuperscript{39} Even in 1944, Richardson’s report cited the need to begin creating general plans at least seven months prior to the target date, and stated service-unit training required greater emphasis on field conditions.\textsuperscript{40} Richardson noted, as late as the Battle of Iwo Jima in February–March 1945, garrison units must be complete and formed at least three months prior to deployment with their commanding general (CG) in place.\textsuperscript{41}

**Joint Command and Control and Jointness**

The US Department of War did not have formal joint commands in the Pacific upon the outbreak of war. The Department of War had four service commands: two Army, and two Navy. The two Army service commands were MacArthur’s US Army Forces, Far East, which had absorbed the previous Philippine Department, and a separate Hawaiian Department; the two Navy service commands were the Asiatic Fleet in the Philippines and the Pacific Fleet.\textsuperscript{42} Nonetheless, joint operations did not begin with the National Security Act of 1947, which established a Department of Defense and the famed Goldwater-Nichols Department of Defense Reorganization Act of 1986.\textsuperscript{43} The basis for joint operations in World War II was the Joint Action of the Army and the Navy (JAAN).

The 1935 JAAN replaced the 1927 edition and listed all policies, agreements, and instructions, delineating service responsibilities and procedures for joint Army and Navy operations. Chapter VI, “Joint Overseas Expeditions,” articulated 20 common definitions and the development of nested service and joint plans. Separate sections described embarkation, overseas movement, landing, withdrawal and re-embarkation, and communications. Chapter VII covered joint exercises.\textsuperscript{44}

The JAAN acknowledged specified joint agencies for Army and Navy coordination had no legislative or executive basis for existing. Nonetheless, Chapter VIII listed the extant Joint Board, and established the Aeronautical Board, Army and Navy Munitions Board, Joint Merchant Vessel Board, local joint planning committees, and the Joint Economy Board. Chapter IX dealt strictly with communications and coordination policies, doctrine, and guides. The volume ended with detailed schematics.\textsuperscript{45}
The JAAN notwithstanding, prewar disagreements over implementing joint Pacific C2 mechanisms carried through the war’s end. Richardson was embroiled in the friction, which was exacerbated by active operations and an Army Air Force that was already behaving like a separate service.

Richardson’s issues with Nimitz’s headquarters were, in part, because Nimitz served as both the joint/combined force commander and his own naval component commander. In March 1942, the British and American Combined Chiefs of Staff had designated the Pacific theater a US strategic responsibility, and the Joint Chiefs of Staff then appointed Nimitz CINCPOA. Nimitz appointed subordinates over the North and South Pacific Areas but retained direct command of the central Pacific and the Pacific Fleet. Such dual hatting violated JAAN guidance. But note MacArthur also engaged in dual hatting. Although MacArthur was CINCSWPA, MacArthur as US Army Forces, Far East commander retained C2 of
US Army Forces, ground, air, and service, in the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) as senior Army forces equivalent. But Australian General Thomas A. Blamey was the commander of the Allied land forces, a combined force land component commander equivalent.  

Richardson rejected the notion Nimitz had a bona fide joint headquarters based on a few assigned Army officers from the continental United States, individuals disconnected from Richardson’s command. Richardson bitterly noted Navy and Marine Corps efforts to remain in the forefront, perpetuate higher-level Marine Corps commands over Army divisions, and garner publicity. Nimitz also disapproved the request to use Richardson as a forward Army group headquarters. Richardson’s persistence led to the use of the XXIV Corps for the western Caroline Islands and, later, Okinawa under the newly established Tenth Army.  

Richardson was a premier critic following the July 1944 handling of the 27th Infantry Division on Saipan and Marine Corps Lieutenant General Holland Smith’s relief of the division commander, Major General Ralph Smith, as commander of the V Amphibious Corps. Richardson stated he did not question the relief. Ralph Smith’s position demanded an Army inquiry, with results reported to Army Chief of Staff General Marshall. Richardson did question Holland Smith’s tactical competence. Richardson also noted the differences between Army and Marine Corps tactical procedures—especially regarding the use of field artillery. An amphibious corps lacked a force structure with the organic units necessary to support an Army division. The Marine Corps had only recently garnered experience in division and corps operations. Army officers had experience at the division, corps, and army levels; particularly, at the corps level. The relief of Ralph Smith was arguably a violation of JAAN guidance as well.  

One qualifier is worth noting. Despite contentious interservice rivalries, Richardson told his staff definitively their purpose was to win the war and thus adhere to one rule. The staff would support Nimitz “without cavil or stint.”  

Richardson was not alone among Army senior leaders in questioning Nimitz’s command arrangements and joint staff shortcomings. Ernest Joseph King entered the fray; King replaced Stark as chief of naval operations in March 1942. Marshall himself proposed Nimitz become a theater commander and be relieved of the Pacific Fleet command.
Interservice rivalry notwithstanding, the Army and Navy strove to achieve more effective joint logistic cooperation. Modifications of service-specific structures, processes, and procedures were necessary. Army Service Forces, that is, the Services of Supply (SOS), relied on centralized planning, designed for European major combat operations. The SWPA was similar. The Navy used decentralized processes. Nimitz achieved commendable jointness in logistics. His initial joint logistics plan dated from July 1942. Marshall and King became involved as service chiefs. In March 1943, the chiefs issued a “Basic Logistical Plan for Command Areas Involving Joint Army and Navy Operations.” Nimitz issued his own document with the same title in April 1943 under a joint logistics board. Nimitz abolished the joint logistics board in favor of a genuine joint staff with greater Army integration in September 1943. His senior joint logistics officer J-4 was an Army officer.

Another historiographical theme addresses the failure to appoint a single joint commander for US forces in the Pacific. Criticisms of the failure to appoint a single joint commander, based on personalities, have ample justification but are incomplete analyses. Other factors affected appointment decisions. First, American Pacific chains of command and who led them were primarily an alliance issue, especially for the United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand. The United Kingdom had higher strategic concerns. Australia and New Zealand, in early 1942, depended on the United States for their defense existentially. Australia and New Zealand’s veteran fighting formations were already deployed in the Middle and Near East. Australian cities suffered under Japanese attacks.

Second, Nimitz’s and MacArthur’s responsibilities as CINCPOA and CINCSWPA, respectively, differed in fundamental ways that accounted for Allied concerns. Was a single Pacific commander a realistic option given the experience levels of American flag officers during massive expansion, restructuring, and rapid changes in the characteristics of warfare?

Interestingly, a twenty-first-century comparison exists with the disestablishment of US Joint Forces Command as a unified command in January 2011. The US Joint Forces Command’s disbandment pushed certain decisions higher, to the civilian secretary levels, with the advice of the service chiefs or chairman.
Exercise of Army Landpower in the Pacific

The current interest in LSCO graphically underlines the criticality of understanding Richardson’s theater-level structures and missions in context. The evolution of Richardson’s structures and missions highlights his status as the de facto commander of a TA.

Richardson commanded the VII Corps in the continental United States upon the United States’ declaration of war. Richardson provided on-site unit evaluations for MacArthur in 1942. That experience is beyond the scope of this study.

He then held a wide range of responsibilities. These were CG, Hawaiian Department & Military Governor of Hawaii; CG, USAFICPA; CG, USAFPOA; and CG, Middle Pacific, a merger of the previous Central and South Pacific Areas.

The Hawaiian Department was 30 years old in 1941. The department’s primary responsibility was defense, especially the defense of Oahu. Richardson’s transition from the Hawaiian Department to USAFICPA on August 14, 1943, involved administrative and training responsibilities for all Army ground and air soldiers in the central Pacific to project offensive operations, well outside the purview of the Hawaiian Department. For example, subordinate commands included the XXIV Corps and the Army Port and Service Command.

Richardson’s subsequent redesignation as CG, USAFPOA on August 1, 1944, reflected restructuring and consolidation following territorial gains. The changes after territorial gains further expanded the scope of operations across Army WfF and Joint functions. For example, Richardson assumed C2 of the Tenth Army. The Department Reserve became a Combat Training Command, and a Replacement Training Command was created.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff made Richardson’s Army ground and air units available to both Nimitz and MacArthur, subject to Nimitz’s approval. No unit transferred C2 from Richardson for employment until he deemed the unit ready; a task from the Department of War itself. Richardson commanded 12 Infantry divisions: six transferred to MacArthur’s US Army Forces, Southwest Pacific Area, and six remained in the central Pacific. Five participated in central Pacific combat operations, and one stayed in Hawaii for home defense.
Expanded responsibilities added numerous bases. Both the Army and the Navy operated an increasing number of advanced bases. Unlike the SWPA with major land masses from which to project operations, central Pacific forces had to seize required advanced bases west of Pearl Harbor to consolidate gains and posture for subsequent missions. The Navy land presence was far smaller, due to the Navy’s evolutionary adaptation from prewar large bases to a fully mobile logistic-support organization. The other reason for the increasing number of bases was Richardson’s status as de facto TA commander.

Richardson was the major landowner in the central Pacific, and USAFPOA service troops retained under Richardson’s operational control were critical resources for base development and base operations to support growing combat forces. King asked Marshall in June 1943 that the Army relieve 9,000 Marines from garrison duties. Marshall sought an overall requirements determination from Nimitz’s staff. Three base commands ran the central Pacific, western Pacific, and south Pacific, with two active in July–August 1944. Missions included combat operations with assigned separate infantry regiments.

Richardson’s command peaked at close to 500,000 soldiers. Congress recognized Richardson’s achievements, that is, Richardson “commanded Army forces, which included a field army and supporting units,” with Richardson’s posthumous promotion to full general on July 19, 1954.

Ultimately, the Department of War subordinated Richardson’s USAFPOA to MacArthur’s new, senior US Army Forces, Pacific on April 6, 1945, for administrative reporting and operational control on July 1, 1945. Richardson’s command, no longer a TA beginning on July 1, 1945, was redesignated US Army Forces, Middle Pacific. Subordinate units required individual transfer dates based on Nimitz’s operational requirements. The exact dates by unit are unknown. The Department of War’s changes were part of the large-scale planning for the invasion of the Japanese home islands under a single Army commander. Richardson remained the military governor of Hawaii with martial law authority derived directly from the secretary of the Department of War.
US Army Forces in the Central Pacific

US Army Forces in Central Pacific Area and USAFPOA submitted five reports on US Army forces’ participation in the central Pacific offensives under Nimitz’s overall joint command. All five reports consist of formal parts or sections and detailed annexes but have limited commonality. The reports share similar, but not identical, structures, and a heavy thematic crossover is present given the key themes. Some subjects are unique to a single operation. All five reports have tailored summaries and conclusions, and interestingly, sections titled “Assistance Rendered to the Navy and Marines.” A sixth report from US Army Forces, Middle Pacific provides addenda on the island bases. The six reports number close to 2,000 pages.  

Richardson’s command was a warfighting headquarters with both operational and administrative responsibilities. Richardson released operational control of selected units to Nimitz for tactical employment, though the definitions were not exact. Richardson’s responsibilities in supporting MacArthur, particularly to provide trained troops, were subject to Nimitz’s approval.  

Richardson conducted all of today’s Army Wff and Joint functions: C2, movement and maneuver, intelligence, fires, sustainment, and protection. The seventh Joint function is information. This analysis uses the lens of current Army Wff and Joint functions, rather than the differing formats of the reports themselves. The discussion of each function is deliberately disparate and stream of consciousness. The intent is to showcase the complexity and simultaneity of Richardson’s missions.
Command and Control

The US Army Forces in Central Pacific Area and USAFPOA dealt with subordinate deficiencies in personnel manning, unit structures, and deployment timelines, which impacted C2 capability. Garrison units must be complete and formed at least three months prior to deployment, with the unit’s CG in place. Engineer advisors for base commanders must thoroughly understand the base-development plan and the status of equipment and supplies. The senior base engineer must exercise C2 over local engineer units.\(^7^9\) Planners should form a garrison force headquarters promptly after target designation to provide sufficient time to plan multiple simultaneous tasks, including base defense, construction, and garrisoning.\(^8^0\) Units destined to land on Okinawa as part of the Tenth Army were delayed
in the Pacific theater until the units were alerted for movement due to the nonavailability of units from Department of War sources.\footnote{81} Unsurprisingly, joint operations demanded early and adequate liaising.\footnote{82}

**Movement and Maneuver**

The rarity of Japanese surrender is well-known. Isolated Japanese troops behind ostensibly secure American lines remained a threat. Although often unrecognized, Richardson’s commands conducted combat operations with separate infantry regiments. Seven units were assigned from November–December 1943 through June 1945.\footnote{83}

Training and timing frequently affected units’ skills in conducting movement and maneuver, necessitating Richardson’s large-scale intervention. Operation Galvanic, directed against Tarawa in November 1943, was the first major amphibious assault since the Guadalcanal landings in August 1942. Soldiers, and sometimes Marines, were not sufficiently trained for their tasks in Operation Galvanic, and the operation lacked at least one complete and realistic rehearsal. Army engineers later constructed and handed over a division training camp to the 2nd Marine Division upon its redeployment from Tarawa.\footnote{84} The Marshall Islands operation needed at least 90 days to prepare for task-force operations, especially for units that had never worked together before.\footnote{85} Even in 1944, Richardson’s report cited the need to begin creating general plans at least seven months prior to the target date, and stated service-unit training required greater emphasis on field conditions.\footnote{86} In this context, service units refer to SOS troops, not Army Ground Forces. Four of the reports showcased inadequate tank-infantry training; the last report specifically addressed flamethrower tanks.\footnote{87} An estimated 25 percent of tank allocations should follow assault echelons and the tank-replacement rate should be 20 percent per month of expected combat.\footnote{88}

Amphibious operations presented challenges, including false economy in streamlining units to save manpower and shipping space, leading to disconnected troops and equipment; too few service (logistics) troops, especially port personnel, among early deployers; issues with ship loading; and clogged beaches. Combat troops must receive training on mopping up following the leading waves.\footnote{89} Amphibious training, however, was assessed to be sound for the western Caroline Islands and central Philippines.\footnote{90}
The Army viewed amphibious operations as special training and formally established an Amphibious Training Center on May 20, 1942. Operations began in the continental United States on June 15, 1942, at Camp Edwards, Massachusetts. The principal site became Camp Gordon Johnston at Carrabelle, Florida. Training evolved from small-unit and individual training. Several changes in mission generated much turmoil. In fact, the center lasted only until December 1943.91

In-theater joint training filled the void. Navy and Marine Corps units used the Army’s Unit Jungle Training Center, Waianae Amphibious Training Center, Maui Amphibious Training Center, and the Bishop Museum between July and December 1944.92 The Bishop Museum in Honolulu began in 1889 to house the collection of Hawaiian objects and royal family heirlooms of Princess Bernice Pauahi Bishop, the last descendant of the royal Kamehameha family, and wife of Charles R. Bishop.93 Navy and Marine Corps personnel also used the Pacific Combat Training Center and the Waianae Amphibious Training School for jungle survival training.94 The Navy and the Marine Corps returned to the Pacific Combat Training Center and Waianae Amphibious Training School for retraining prior to the Battle of Okinawa.95

Unexpected shortcomings created new missions. A virtually unknown fact is Richardson’s command trained 157,000 personnel how to swim. The activity came under the direction of an American Red Cross official, an unheralded example of nongovernmental organization integration.96

Another USAFPOA assessment commented on unit noneffectives. Combat units needed a strength overage of five percent during preparation.97

**Intelligence**

US Army Forces in Central Pacific Area and USAFPOA were very active in intelligence collection and dissemination. Personnel received inadequate training on Tarawa to handle captured enemy supplies, materiel, and documents. Additionally, the TA provided timely and detailed intelligence for joint operations. First, the TA prioritized feeds to the joint intelligence center.98 Joint intelligence sharing included distributing 140 copies of the 7th Air Force summary prior to the western Caroline Islands and central Philippines landings.99 Richardson’s G-2 intelligence staff provided the Navy and the Marine Corps several sources for the Battle of Iwo Jima: their headquarters intelligence bulletins, periodic reports, an “Objective Study of Iwo Jima,” and a captured hydrographic chart found on Saipan.
Direct recipients varied by document, but included the 5th Fleet, the Fleet Marine Force, the V Amphibious Corps, and the 3rd, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions.\textsuperscript{100} Following the Battle of Okinawa, Richardson recommended delaying the distribution of higher headquarters’ classified documents not vital to assaults until after the Army Ground Forces’ advance echelon began to function.\textsuperscript{101}

**Fires**

An array of fires assessments underlined the criticality of fires. Tarawa revealed the efficacy of artillery canister as antipersonnel rounds.\textsuperscript{102} The Marshall Islands highlighted several shortfalls. Heavy artillery units needed one D8 tractor per battery and divisional artillery, D4 tractors, or R4 tractors, to preclude the diversion of engineer assets to moving artillery. The 155-millimeter gun batteries required a mobile fire-control radar. Final rehearsals should incorporate artillery preparations to enhance realism. The Marshall Islands operations vindicated the use of medium and heavy bombers in close air support in the absence of enemy antiaircraft fire. Airpower necessitated maximum concentration to preclude dissipation and ensure the saturation of enemy air defenses.\textsuperscript{103} Eight Army liaison aircraft supported the Marine V Amphibious Corps Artillery down to the battalion level. Several Army officers were attached to the headquarters.\textsuperscript{104} By the Battle of Okinawa, Army forces acknowledged antiaircraft artillery in ground-support missions needed a smoke round. Richardson’s command also requested divisional 105-millimeter artillery battalions in theater change their prime movers, from trucks to tracked vehicles.\textsuperscript{105}

**Sustainment**

Selected snapshots across the spectrum of sustainment areas showcase the demands of major combat operations, now LSCO. Notes on equipment, supplies, and logistics covered a litany of maintenance issues, shortages in supply classes, and related soldier requirements. Vast quantities of equipment, supplies, and other needs across a wide range underline the sheer scope and pace of operations. Marines fought to seize Peleliu from September 15 through November 1944. The Army was still feeding some 25,000 Marines on December 31, 1944.\textsuperscript{106}
The joint demands for clothing items were prodigious. The Army issued 500,162 waterproof clothing bags, 400,144 heavy leather gloves, and 200,482 spectacle-type sunglasses with cases—all for the Battle of Iwo Jima.\(^\text{107}\)

For the 4th Marine Division and the 2nd Marine Logistics Group and 2nd Supply Battalion alone, for the Battle of Iwo Jima, the Army provided 19,158 rounds for 105-millimeter howitzers in six types.\(^\text{108}\) The Battle of Okinawa saw greater support. The Fleet Marine Force, Pacific requested Army resupply of selected ammunition not in its supply channels. One type of ammunition was 4,441 high-explosive shells for 8-inch howitzers. The Tenth Army issued III Amphibious Corps 67,200 smoke grenades and 4,500 incendiary grenades before the Okinawa landings. The Battle of Okinawa then revealed the inaccuracy of unit fire tables as a basis for resupplying daily ammunition expenditures. Stocks of small-arms ammunition and grenades were adequate, but an acute shortage of mortar ammunition and a critical shortage of artillery ammunition existed. Richardson’s staff developed a table based on daily expenditure data from all previous operations.\(^\text{109}\) The Battle of Okinawa still witnessed artillery ammunition shortages. Demand exceeded supply in snapshots of time as resupply operations were degraded by weather, road conditions, beach unloading and transportation issues, and enemy action.\(^\text{110}\)

Certain broader assessments were equally important. Wartime conditions do not eliminate the need to imbue soldiers with “a personal interest in property responsibility.” Packing must protect supplies from saltwater and air exposure. Subsequent inspections must test functionality; for example, communications equipment checks.\(^\text{111}\) Extra maintenance and supply personnel are necessary from D+60 through D+90, as well as the early availability of adequate numbers of grave-registration soldiers, now categorized as mortuary-affairs.\(^\text{112}\) During the western Caroline Islands and central Philippines operations, shipments of supplies and equipment from the continental United States took four months. Notably, though, “Emergency transfer of supplies between the services was a constant occurrence,” mostly expendables.\(^\text{113}\)

Tactical shortages encompassed low-density and specialized equipment, transportation, and an imbalance between forward stockages and sustainment resupply; in particular, on-hand stocks for the first month. Examples ranged from clothing and tents to generators and refrigeration.\(^\text{114}\) Conversely, some automatic supply shipments generated large piles of excess supplies.\(^\text{115}\)
Field services faced daunting challenges. Tarawa showcased the need to have a disposal plan for large numbers of enemy dead. In the Marshall Islands, combat units used sodium arsenite spray on the dead for fly control. The Army provided research analysis and arsenite to the Navy and the Marine Corps to avoid repeating the experiences on Tarawa and Makin. The report noted sufficient grave-registration personnel must be present and burial details must work early given the health issues presented by a tropical environment.

Personnel issues concerned the ability to integrate new soldiers of all ranks rapidly. Backfills and replacements arrived from the continental United States, but constrained numbers necessitated close management when assigning certain skilled specialties. Officer fills from the continental United States must complete orientations on task organization and field conditions prior to assignment. Replacements require weapons to be issued prior to assignment. Divisional commanders on Okinawa were dissatisfied with the rate of arrival and integration of replacements. Soldiers for the Okinawa garrison force were assigned by military occupational specialty without regard to experience, with a commensurate reduction in effectiveness. Field-grade officer replacements came directly from administrative assignments in the continental United States slated for command; commanders were reluctant to place these replacements amid combat.

Part 9 Replacement Training Command of the Okinawa report evaluated the personnel-planning factor of 9,000 replacements positioned in the Mariana Islands for the first 60 days. Another 10,000 replacements would be on Oahu and New Caledonia. A replacement facility on Saipan would receive 12,000 replacements. Richardson’s staff projected the overall theater-replacement level of 17,100 was inadequate and advised the Department of War on December 23, 1944, that by February 1, 1945, the theater would require 40,500 trained replacements, 60 days prior to the landings on April 1. The report’s planning factors were for the Tenth Army’s six divisions—three Army (XXIV Corps) and three Marine Corps (III Amphibious Corps)—with two more Army divisions on alert, and did not include a shortage of 3,300 troops to bring the XXIV Corps to full strength. Note the time frame of Richardson’s staff’s notice to the Department of War was in the midst of the Battle of the Bulge in Europe.

The Army faced financial issues as well. Army finance officers provided support on demand to the Navy and the Marine Corps during the western Caroline Islands and central Philippines operations. An Army
facility on Peleliu issued bills and coins to the Navy to operate ships’ stores. The Army also recognized it should collect US dollars and issue receipts while troops are aboard ship. Exchange of dollar receipts for invasion currency should take place after disembarkation. Disbursing officers could then carry invasion currency in bulk.

Current health-service support topics included the surgeon reports. The Battle of Iwo Jima demonstrated the criticality of a nonmedical security force for hospitals during the assault phase. The Battle of Okinawa yielded the future planning factor for a convalescent hospital with a 3,000-bed capacity in the combat zone to handle lightly wounded and mild cases of all types: one per every nine divisions. The use of psychiatric hospitals during the assault was invaluable.

The Army provided vast medical support to other services. For the Marshall Islands, the 36th Field Hospital deployed from Oahu to Eniwetok pending the arrival of a Navy hospital. Delayed equipment hampered the hospital’s effectiveness, but the hospital eventually left most of its gear and supplies for the Navy replacement unit. The 17th Field Hospital and the 41st Portable Surgical Hospital detached from the 81st Infantry Division and attached to Peleliu Island Command pending the establishment of naval hospitals. The 17th Field Hospital served as a holding station for air-evacuated casualties from Leyte Island through Palau. Navy and Marine Corps patients used 250 beds daily at a station hospital in Makawao, Maui. Approximately 99 percent of casualties handled by Army evacuation and hospitalization agencies during the Battle of Iwo Jima were Navy and Marine Corps patients. For the Battle of Okinawa, Army hospitals treated 487 Navy and 8,678 Marine Corps casualties on Okinawa and another 1,274 Navy and 2,707 Marine Corps patients on Saipan.

Protection

The reliance on the 4.2-inch mortar for smoke was ubiquitous, concluding a requirement for allocation of one battalion per division. The Army’s 4.2-inch mortars mounted on Landing Craft, Infantry were also effective. The Battle of Iwo Jima vindicated the intensive training of chemical-warfare operating crews.

Joint training was frequent. Prior to Tarawa, the Army Chemical Warfare Service provided 1,600 Navy and Marine Corps personnel with training
in defense against chemical attacks and smoke employment in three schools and in one chemical field maneuver. Another 5,627 personnel received training before landing in the Marshall Islands. Prior to the western Caroline Islands and central Philippines landings, 200 Navy personnel attended a three-day school on chemical defense, individual and collective protection, decontamination methods, and first aid for chemical casualties. Richardson’s chemical officer approved, requested, and filled requisitions for 4.2-inch mortar ammunition for Navy boats, as well as all Navy smoke-producing agents, chemical-warfare equipment, and supplies. Anti-aircraft units on Okinawa did not have adequate stocks of sandbags to construct field fortifications.

Information

US Army Forces in Central Pacific Area and USAFPOA handled aspects of information operations. Tarawa highlighted the need for complete and detailed censorship, covering every contingency, for operational security. The Army, the Navy, and the Marine Corps soon developed joint censorship authorities, including authority for the Army to handle Navy and Marine Corps mail. The services developed joint censorship authorities again prior to the Battle of Iwo Jima, but independent censorship units did not attach to supporting units prior to execution. The Battle of Okinawa resulted in USAFPOA recommending that the Department of War establish a public relations office at corps and division headquarters. Press reports had linked units with geographical areas, which also compromised garrison locations. Mimeographed news bulletins could not handle the scale of operations; mobile printing units would provide faster and wider circulation. The Marine Corps had no orientation training program comparable to the Department of War’s direction, so the Army provided all assault-echelon Marines the same materials as Army troops.

Base Operations

Richardson’s increasing responsibilities as central Pacific landowner necessitated the establishment of three Base Commands. The Central Pacific and South Pacific Base Commands were activated in July and August 1944, respectively. The Western Pacific Base Command formed in April 1945. These Base Commands had subordinate island bases.
An August 1945 snapshot of 10 subordinate island bases focuses on sustainment missions. The Army ran nine of the 10 bases. Only Fiji lacked joint populations; the Navy had no personnel on Fiji. Of note, Army bases deployed 53 hospitals of various types; 28 were on Okinawa alone. Ie Shima Island had one hospital and additional hospitals were in Japan or under US Army Forces, Pacific C2.\textsuperscript{141}

Figure 6. Report on Canton, New Caledonia, Kwajalein, Saipan, Tarawa, Tinian, Fiji, Guam, Guadalcanal, Okinawa
Insights and Recommendations

Strategic Planning Assumptions, 1938–41 and Today

By 1938, the Philippines could not compete with the Army’s strategic triangle of Alaska, Oahu, and Panama. Prewar planning shifted from Plan Orange, dealing solely with Japan, to global Rainbow plans, which reduced Pacific prioritization. Rapid Axis victories in 1939–41 shredded American planning assumptions. Japan’s decision to go to war in 1941 was strategically calculated, carefully timed, and well planned against under-resourced American, British, and Dutch Allied forces. Of note was the German auxiliary cruiser *Atlantis*, which captured the British freighter *Automedon* en route to Singapore with classified British documents. In a rare example of Axis strategic intelligence sharing, Germany provided the contents of the documents to Japan. The documents specified no British reinforcements should Japan attack. Conversely, American and British Pacific plans were independent of one another during the interwar period, until 1940 and the estimate of imminent hostilities in December 1941. The US Navy attempted to cooperate with the Royal Navy as the US Navy strove to reinforce the Philippines. The outbreak of war exposed scanty and scattered Allied naval forces deployed in the region with no established, combined C2 structure. The Pacific Fleet was out of sector at Pearl Harbor. The Asiatic Fleet in the Philippines had three cruisers, 13 destroyers, and 29 submarines. The Royal Navy fielded a single battleship and a battle cruiser with four destroyers. The Netherlands East Indies Fleet consisted of three cruisers, seven destroyers, and 13 submarines. The Australians’ and New Zealanders’ few vessels were committed to the European and Mediterranean theaters. The Allied powers were ill postured and woefully unprepared to challenge the sheer numbers of ships and ship types in the Imperial Japanese Navy’s Combined Fleet, which was well prepared for night operations.

The timing of early Axis victories is of note today. One can view competition as spanning the prewar period through June 1941, with deteriorating Allied fortunes and mounting Axis triumphs. The onset of crisis in the Pacific occurred with the diplomatic furor resulting from Japan’s unilateral occupation of French Indochina in July 1941 and the ensuing American sanctions, which froze Japanese assets on July 26, then embargoed all oil imports on August 1. Hence, the crisis period
lasted barely four and a half months until the Pearl Harbor attack on December 7, 1941.

The ever-deteriorating strategic situation for the Allied powers should not obscure the concerted joint effort to provide reinforcements to the Philippines, though the projected completion date was February–March 1942. Three convoys reached the Philippines between September and November 1941. The so-called Pensacola convoy, No. 4002, was at sea when war broke out and had to divert to Australia. Eight other ships sailing independently also diverted elsewhere.\textsuperscript{148}

A deeper analysis is revealing. The Army and the Navy intended to provide large-scale support for General Douglas MacArthur’s US Army Forces, Far East, the Army theater headquarters, which had absorbed the now-subordinate Philippine Department. The plan was to ship 25 units in December 1941. Of note, seven were corps- and army-level units and one unit was for the Philippine Department. Eleven ships attempted surface blockade runs in 1942: three succeeded, three were sunk, four were recalled, and one was canceled.\textsuperscript{149}

The situation today is more uncertain and riskier than in 1941–42. Today’s adversaries in great-power competition, especially China, strain American and Western concepts of distinct war and peace and the boundaries between formalized competition, crisis, and conflict. One can anticipate greater challenges in the unpredictable and likely rapid transition from competition to crisis to conflict.\textsuperscript{150}

The preeminent, initial challenge for USARPAC is the buildup of Landpower during competition and before crisis and conflict.\textsuperscript{151} Limited forward-deployed units, scanty prepositioned stocks, and problematic timelines to cross the physical tyranny of distance imperil the Army’s effectiveness in setting the theater for LSCO. Richardson’s predecessors learned the risks of the Army’s limitations with the fall of Guam on December 10, 1941, and the fall of the Philippines in May 1942.

The modification to a largely continental United States-based Army following the end of the Cold War and through the Global War on Terror is ill-suited for the current environment of a contested commons in multiple domains and threats from factory to foxhole. This latest geopolitical reality requires a strategic shift toward more forward-deployed units, prepositioned stocks, and strategic dispersal. Failure to adapt risks preventing the Army from posturing effectively during competition, with ramifications during crisis and conflict, especially for protracted war.
Theater-Strategic Considerations

Of greatest note is, even today, the Pacific remains in many minds a Navy theater with the Army as a secondary player. The interservice rivalry resonates over the decades. The Army has engaged in the Pacific on behalf of the United States for over a century. Planning today's integrated campaigning reflects both Army and Navy interwar experience in promoting American interests. One view argues the Army's and the Navy's efforts show a “firm foundation of continuity of presence and a deep operational legacy.” The counterargument emphasizes the problematic, stormy joint relationships behind the services' presence. Richardson's experience reinforces the services' problematic relationships, and Richardson is but one portion of the record.

Regardless of World War II and long-term historical assessments, reframing for LSCO requires the intellectual imagination to leverage jointness with greater agility. Arguably, two decades of counterinsurgency in Afghanistan and Iraq have tarnished joint experience in LSCO. The Joint Force should posture mindsets in both operational art and operational design so any service component can be the supported commander when required. Such agility could disrupt an adversary's theater-strategic balance.

Richardson's command showcases the need for clearly documented and well-understood command and support relationships, both joint and service specific. Implementing current C2 doctrine is neither easy nor straightforward for TA units, which are frequently in short supply with critical enabling missions. Operations, tactics, and base operations require clear boundaries and require an answer to the question of “who can do what where?”

The current environment, with its changes in the characteristics of warfare, requires a reevaluation of air, land, and sea boundaries, for example, the traditional shoreline between ground and naval forces. Specifically for base operations, base commands or island commands as Richardson employed them could help USARPAC's current situation in competition, crisis, and conflict. Perhaps the best current example is Guam.

Richardson's operations also underscored how the Marine Corps was not another land army. Even the Marine Corps' World War II expansion to six divisions, all in the Pacific, did not preclude the deployment of 22 Army divisions to the Pacific. Moreover, none of the 28 divisions
in the entire Pacific contributed to setting, operating, and maintaining a theater. Richardson’s commands contributed to setting, operating, and maintaining a theater in the central Pacific with some actions for US Army Forces, SWPA. MacArthur’s SOS logistical organization included air defense, engineers, numerous subordinate elements, early-war predecessors, and successor organizations, but does not equate to Richardson under Nimitz.  

The Marine Corps is not a separate land army now, nor is the Marine Corps trying to be one. The Marine Corps’ purpose is “for service with the fleet in the seizure or defense of advanced naval bases and for the conduct of such land operations as may be essential to the prosecution of a naval campaign.” The Marine Corps focuses on comprehensive modernization to be lighter, more naval, more versatile, and more lethal.  

Also to consider, the Army today is responsible for conducting amphibious operations, besides airborne, air-assault, and riverine operations. Moreover, the shortcomings Richardson’s headquarters corrected in training and procedures often apply to deployment, whether for amphibious operations or not. The shortcomings included false economy in streamlining units to save manpower and shipping space, leading to disconnected troops and equipment; too few service of supply (SOS) troops, especially port personnel, in early deployers; issues with ship loading; and clogged beaches. Combat troops must receive training on mopping up following the leading waves.  

Another key insight from Richardson’s accomplishments is the physical predominance of water does not minimize the role of Army Landpower. Rather, it is as critical as before. The vast amount of water in the Indo-Pacific region greatly complicates the physical tyranny of distance. The area renders the exercise of Landpower more challenging, not less relevant.  

Only the Army can provide the requisite capability and capacity across all Army WfF and Joint functions for the ultimate centrality of land operations. Do not fixate on the totality of World War II. Juxtapose the selected case studies with the projected increase in the demands of LSCO compared to two decades of counterinsurgency. For example, Richardson’s support to the V Amphibious Corps in the Battle of Iwo Jima involved three Marine Corps divisions and a separate Army infantry regiment. Support for the Tenth Army on Okinawa involved two corps (III [Marine] Amphibious Corps and XXIV [Army] Corps) with eight divisions,
counting the two on alert or in reserve. The assault force for the Battle of Okinawa totaled 238,099 troops with a projected garrison of 160,680 troops.\textsuperscript{164} The Battle of Iwo Jima and the Battle of Okinawa are well within the scope of LSCO. Fathom the range of tasks within USARPAC’s four roles of TJFLCC, Combined Joint Task Force, Combined Joint Force Land Component Command, and Army Service Component Command across all Army WfF and Joint functions.\textsuperscript{165}

Limited historiography has rediscovered the Army’s considerable role in the Pacific War, though MacArthur’s SWPA has garnered notoriety for some time.\textsuperscript{166} The histories still detail tactical combat operations with little or no attention paid to the criticality of theater-level enablers in general, and logistics and sustainment in particular.\textsuperscript{167}

Granted, the current Indo-Pacific environment is far different from the environment in World War II. Unlike Richardson’s support of island-hopping campaigns in conflict, today’s island-hopping is taking place during competition, with the US Department of State leading Diplomacy, Development, and Defense activities among a host of island nations.\textsuperscript{168} The USARPAC campaign approach, especially Operation Pathways, demonstrates the Army’s execution of the combatant commander’s campaign plan as part of the overall Diplomacy, Development, and Defense effort.\textsuperscript{169}

Unlike during the pre-World War II years, USARPAC is better postured during competition. First, it has been established as TJFLCC, combined joint task force, combined joint force land component command, and Army Service component command.\textsuperscript{170} The TA’s initiatives across TA warfighting, campaigning, and wargaming are tackling the strategic environment of the Indo-Pacific overall and China as a pacing challenge.\textsuperscript{171} The Joint Pacific Multinational Readiness Center hearkens back to Richardson’s amphibious, jungle, and other specialty training centers and schools, which benefited all the services.\textsuperscript{172}

America’s disastrous defeats between December 1941 and May 1942 are sobering reminders of unpreparedness and lack of readiness. Hence, USARPAC’s impressive accomplishments to date merit further efforts during competition. Executive agent mandates constitute only some of the myriad requirements of competition.\textsuperscript{173} US Army Pacific as TA and TJFLCC will execute many more tasks, as did Richardson, across the Army WfF and Joint functions. Richardson’s experience provides the insights. For example, USAFICPA and USAFPOA
numerous tasks as will USARPAC to ensure inbound units completed all 
the combatant commander’s predeployment requirements and standards.\textsuperscript{174} 

US Army Pacific as TJFLCC is currently well suited for facilitating 
even better posture. United States Indo-Pacific Command and USARPAC 
planning during competition can formalize additional relationships and 
responsibilities before crisis and conflict, with the potential to rehearse 
during competition. Further analysis across the Army WfF and Joint functions 
could result in United States Indo-Pacific Command issuing additional 
establishing directives for US Army Pacific.\textsuperscript{175} One option is for the commander 
of United States Indo-Pacific Command to exercise directive authority 
for logistics, especially common user logistics.\textsuperscript{176} Refined task organization 
and forward positioning of enabling units and commodities under 
USARPAC as TJFLCC during competition is necessary to prepare for 
crisis or conflict. Refined task organization and forward positioning would 
also address several allied partners’ concerns beyond China—for example, 
concerns about destructive weather—and would demonstrate further 
commitment across the combatant commander’s area of responsibility. 
The poor record of the ABDACOM in January–February 1942 
highlights the liabilities involved in inaugurating allied and combined 
C2 structures early in conflict. 

The preeminent challenge for USARPAC is the lack of forward-deployed 
units and materiel during competition.\textsuperscript{177} First, USARPAC’s current situation 
is reminiscent of the Pacific’s theater-strategic posture in 1941–42. 
Richardson’s successful force projection for offensive operations followed 
a large-scale buildup. 

Another caveat remains out of USARPAC’s control. Today’s 
strategic realities may require USARPAC to function as a warfighting 
headquarters for longer and more deeply than planned, despite doctrinal 
guidance.\textsuperscript{178} Richardson’s frustration over Nimitz’s disapproval of the request 
to become an Army group headquarters was based heavily on interservice 
rivalry. However, there are similar aspects regarding war-fighting 
responsibilities, in terms of potential duration and the scope of multiple 
roles and missions. At United States Indo-Pacific Command’s 
direction, USARPAC must be prepared to serve as either a war-fighting 
four-star combined Joint task force or as a combined Joint force land 
component command while simultaneously executing Army Service 
component command tasks.
Conclusion

This monograph reviewed prewar US strategic plans for the Pacific and early-war defeats in 1941–42 as precursors to Richardson’s victorious operations in 1943–45. Richardson operated in an ever-changing, dynamic environment, despite remarkable growth in capabilities and capacity. Only embryonic joint relationships and the intent to win tempered interservice rivalries at the senior levels. Analyzing Richardson’s missions across all Army WfF and Joint functions showcases the sheer breadth and depth of major combat operations in a vast theater with extended sea lines of communication. The accomplishments of USAFICPA and USAFPOA demonstrated the staff’s meticulous attention to detail in each function. The Army’s capability, capacity, and expertise grew, allowing the Army to conduct operations of increasing complexity, while continually learning.

Richardson commanded all Army troops—Army Ground Forces, SOS, and Army Air Force troops—as befitted a de facto TA commander. US Army Forces in Central Pacific Area and USAFPOA dealt directly with the Department of War over the two years of war in 1943–45, much as USARPAC currently coordinates with the Department of the Army. Though comparative analysis reveals both similarities and differences, these still showcase striking insights from Richardson’s responsibilities then and USARAPC’s responsibilities today, especially in the context of conducting LSCO at the theater-strategic level.

US Army Pacific responsibilities across the entire range of Army WfF and Joint functions are more challenging now than in World War II. An Army presence with required capability and capacity and on requisite timelines is essential for Joint plans to succeed in the maritime Pacific as much as in other combatant commanders’ areas of responsibility.
Endnotes


61. Richardson Papers, box 1A, folder 2, tab 9, “Corps Commander,” and tab 10, “Mission to Australia.”

62. Richardson, Register of Graduates and Former Cadets, “Biographies,” entry 4236, 4–82; and Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, Order of Battle, 122–23.


64. Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, Order of Battle, 107–8, 113, chart 10, 124, 140–42; Richardson, “A Soldier’s Life,” chap. 10, “I Go to the Pacific,” 1, 5; and Richardson Papers, box 1A, folder 2, tab 12, “I Go to the Pacific,” 1, 5.


69. Hayes, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 480.


74. Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, Order of Battle, 101–2, 120.


78. Headquarters, Department of the Army (HQDA), *Operations*, Field Manual 3-0 (Washington, DC: Headquarters, Department of the Army, 2022), 2-1; and Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), *Joint Campaigns and Operations*, JP 3-0 (Washington, DC: JCS, 2022), III-1.
79. Richardson, “Galvanic Operation,” 152; Richardson, “[Marshalls],” 258; and Richardson, “Iwo Jima Operation,” 331.
82. Richardson, “Iwo Jima Operation,” 331.
83. Stanton, *Order of Battle*, 204, 215, 217, 225, 239, 240, 254, cite the seven units.
84. Richardson, “Galvanic Operation,” 147, 151.
85. Richardson, “[Marshalls],” 257.
87. Richardson, “Galvanic Operation,” 161; Richardson, “[Marshalls],” 261; Richardson, “Western Carolines and Central Philippines Operations,” 341; and Richardson, “Iwo Jima Operation,” 331.
100. Richardson, “Iwo Jima Operation,” 315–16.
103. Richardson, “[Marshalls],” 258–59, 262.


112. Richardson, “[Marshall],” 256.


119. Richardson, “[Marshall],” 258.


133. Richardson, “Galvanic Operation,” 147.

134. Richardson, “[Marshall],” 249.


141. Richardson, “Report on Canton, New Caledonia, Kwajalein, Saipan, Tarawa, Tinian, Fiji, Guam, Guadalcanal, Okinawa,” 15, 22, 30, 35, 41, 49, 58, 68, 76, 87 for personnel; and Richardson, “Report on Canton,” 19, 27, 32, 38, 45, 55, 64, 73, 84, 93 for hospitals. Page numbers are electronic from a scanned copy of the report and the base reports are individually paginated. Personnel is on page 1; hospitals, vary.


148. Hayes, Joint Chiefs of Staff, 16–17, 31–36, 741n42; and Williford, Racing the Sunrise, map 3, tables 1–3, 5–6, 39, 52–53, 77, 153, 156, 177–78, list the convoys by ship, contents, units, and cargo, and track the proposed and actual routes of Convoy 4002.

149. Williford, Racing the Sunrise, tables 7 and 9, 190–91, 234–35, list the individual units and ships, respectively.

150. JCS, Joint Campaigns and Operations, JP 3–0, I–2–I–5 is a concise overview of the strategic environment and associated challenges.


153. See Jon T. Hoffman, “The Army's Historical Think Tank,” Army History, no. 123 (Spring 2022): 55, for an overview of this experience and recent efforts at study.


157. JCS, Joint Planning, JP 5–0 (Washington, DC: JCS, 2020), IV–1–IV–3 provides overviews of operational art and operational design, as well as the latter’s methodology.

158. For example, see John A. Bonin, Concept Paper for an Area Command, version 2.5 (Carlisle, PA: Center for Strategic Leadership, US Army War College, July 17, 2023).

159. Department of the Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, Order of Battle, 45–100.


170. USARPAC, America’s Theater Army, 7.

171. USARPAC, America’s Theater Army, 3–6.


173. Access to breakdown by service and agency requires a common access card. See HQDA, Operations, 4-12–4-15 for theater Army roles during competition.


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US Army War College Curricular Archives. War Plans Course. US Army Heritage and Education Center, Carlisle, PA.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronyms</th>
<th>Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>AFPAC</td>
<td>Army Forces Pacific (MacArthur from April 1945)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ASCC</td>
<td>Army Service Component Command</td>
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<tr>
<td>C2</td>
<td>Command and control</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFLCC</td>
<td>Combined Force Land Component Commander</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJFLCC</td>
<td>Combined Joint Force Land Component Commander</td>
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<tr>
<td>CG</td>
<td>Commanding General</td>
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<tr>
<td>CINCPOA</td>
<td>Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Area (Nimitz)</td>
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<tr>
<td>CINCSWPA</td>
<td>Commander in Chief, Southwest Pacific Area (MacArthur)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CJTF</td>
<td>Combined Joint Task Force</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>COIN</td>
<td>Counterinsurgency</td>
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<tr>
<td>CONUS</td>
<td>Continental United States</td>
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<td>GWOT</td>
<td>Global War on Terror</td>
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<td>INDOPACOM</td>
<td>Indo-Pacific Command</td>
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<td>JAAN</td>
<td>Joint Action of the Army and the Navy (1935)</td>
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<tr>
<td>JCS</td>
<td>Joint Chiefs of Staff</td>
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<tr>
<td>LSCO</td>
<td>Large-scale combat operations</td>
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<td>SOS</td>
<td>Services of Supply (World War II non-combat arms)</td>
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<td>SWPA</td>
<td>Southwest Pacific Area</td>
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<td>TA</td>
<td>Theater Army</td>
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<tr>
<td>TJFLCC</td>
<td>Theater Joint Force Land Component Command (USARPAC today)</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAFFE</td>
<td>US Army Forces Far East (MacArthur, July 1941 to March 1942 and February 1943 to June 1945)</td>
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<tr>
<td>USAFICPA</td>
<td>US Army Forces [in] Central Pacific Area (Richardson, August 1943 to July 1944)</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
<td>USAFMIDPAC</td>
<td>US Army Forces Middle Pacific (Richardson from July 1945)</td>
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<td>USAFPOA</td>
<td>US Army Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas (Richardson, August 1944 to June 1945)</td>
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<td>USAHEC</td>
<td>US Army Heritage and Education Center</td>
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<td>USARPAC</td>
<td>US Army Pacific (current)</td>
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<tr>
<td>WfF</td>
<td>war-fighting functions (current Army)</td>
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About the Author

Dr. James D. Scudieri is the senior research historian at the Strategic Studies Institute, US Army War College. During 30 years of active-duty military service, he held a variety of field and academic positions, including logistics plans, with assignments in the United States, South Korea, Germany, Afghanistan, and Iraq, before retiring in August 2013. Scudieri has a master of arts degree from Hunter College of the City University of New York, a master of military art and science degree from the School of Advanced Military Studies, and a doctorate in military history from the Graduate School and University Center of the City University of New York. He is a 2004 graduate of the US Army War College and the Advanced Strategic Art Program.
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