

S-E-C-R-E-T

UNIT HISTORY

214TH ANTI-AIRCRAFT ARTILLERY GROUP

24 SEPTEMBER 1942 to 15 AUGUST 1945

INDEX

SECTION

- I. GENERAL
- II. MOVEMENT OF UNIT
- III. COMBAT ACTIVITIES
- IV. IMPORTANT PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS
- V. COMMENDATIONS

OAGP-214-01

CLASSIFICATION
CANCELLED
 BY AUTHORITY OF THE ADJUTANT GENERAL
W. G. ...
 21 Aug 46

APR 26 1948

53252

Master

S-E-C-R-E-T

I. GENERAL

1. Organization.

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 214th Antiaircraft Artillery Group, was organized on 10 November 1943, at Guadalcanal, Solomon Islands, from Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 214th Coast Artillery (Antiaircraft) Regiment pursuant to authority contained in General Order No. 339, Headquarters USAFLSPA, APO #502.

2. Commanding Officers.

<u>NAME</u>	<u>RANK</u>	<u>ASN</u>	<u>PERIOD</u>
STODDARD, JOHN E.	Colonel	0-275151	1 October 1939 to 10 May 1944
MERKLE, ERNEST A.	Colonel	0-15597	10 May 1944 to 26 July 1944
CHANDLER, HORTON L.	Colonel	0-130618	26 July 1944 to 22 April 1945
WEDDELL, WILLIAM A.	Colonel	0-16340	22 April 1945 to date.

II. MOVEMENTS OF UNIT

Date of departure and arrival of the Group at all stations or combat positions during all subsequent movements in chronological order:

<u>DATE OF DEPARTURE</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>	<u>DATE OF ARRIVAL</u>	<u>LOCATION</u>
24 September 1942	San Francisco, California.	7 October 1942	Pukakohe, New Zealand
2 November 1942	Auckland, New Zealand.	6 November 1942	Neumes, New Caledonia
25 January 1943	Tontouta Air Base, New Caledonia	30 January 1943	Henderson Field, Guadalcanal
26 December 1943	Guadalcanal	31 December 1943	Takapuna, New Zealand
10 June 1944	Auckland New Zealand	22 June 1944	Finschhafen, New Guinea
10 August 1944	Finschhafen New Guinea	14 August 1944	Toem, Dutch New Guinea
11 September 1944	Toem, Dutch New Guinea	15 September 1944	Morotai, Netherlands East Indies

III. COMBAT ACTIVITIES

1. Guadalcanal Campaign.

a. The Antiaircraft Artillery Defense of Henderson Field, Guadalcanal was the responsibility of the 214th AAA Group (then the 214th CA(AA) Regiment) from 30 January 1943 to 26 December 1943. The Regiment was composed of the following units:

Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, First Battalion, 214th CA(AA) Regiment with Batteries A, B, C, D and First and Second Provisional Batteries, making a total of six Gun Batteries.
 Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Second Battalion, 214th CA(AA) Regiment with Batteries E, F, G and H.
 Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Third Battalion, 214th CA(AA) Regiment with Batteries I and K.

b. The primary area for AAA defense initially was Henderson Field. As Fighter Strip #1, east of Henderson and Fighter Strip #2, west of Henderson was completed, the primary defense mission shifted to the area of approximately 6,000 by 15,000 feet in which the three strips and the dispersal and repair areas were concentrated. (See exhibits A and B)

c. There were 29 raids recorded, all of which came within range of AAA weapons and were engaged. (See exhibit C) Two hundred and eighteen planes were involved in these raids, of which one hundred and twenty participated in the big daylight raid of 16 June 1943. For the purpose of these statistics an attack is defined as a flight which came into range of AAA weapons on a heading which could readily be developed into a hostile attack on the area.

	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APR</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Number of Raids	5	5	4	3	2	3	2	5	29
Planes Involved	21	16	16	9	121	11	12	12	218
Attacks Made	13	11	15	5	3	9	10	11	77

d. Of the 29 raids in which attacks developed, 2 were without advance warning and 2 attacks were made when AAA fire was restricted by Fighter Controller.

	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APR</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Raids w/o warning	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Attacks w/o warning	1	0	0	0	0	0	1	0	2
AAA Fire Restricted	0	0	0	1	1	0	0	0	2

S-E-C-R-E-T

e. The effectiveness of fire is reflected in that almost all attacks were delivered from 20,000 feet altitude or above.

<u>ALTITUDE OF ATTACK</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APR</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>%</u>
Below 1,000	1	0	0	0	1	0	2	0	4	5.2
1,000 to 5,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
5,000 to 10,000	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
10,000 to 20,000	0	1	1	0	1	0	0	1	4	5.2
Over 20,000	10	10	13	5	1	9	7	10	65	84.4
Unknown	<u>2</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>5.2</u>
Totals	13	11	15	5	3	9	10	11	77	100.0

Of the 84.4% above 20,000, 81.5% of these were above 24,000 feet.

f. Of the 77 attacks that were suitable AAA targets, 73 were suitable for 90mm guns only and only 4 were suitable for automatic weapons fire.

g. Antiaircraft Artillery action resulted in the destruction of fourteen planes, in the probable destruction of eight and in damage to six others. Automatic weapons were credited with three destroyed, no probables and none damaged. The low percentage of automatic weapons targets was probably due to the expensive lessons the 3rd Marine Defense Battalion had given the Japs during the early months of the campaign. The number accredited to 90mm fire alone, eleven destroyed, eight probable and six damaged, while not large, was undoubtedly kept down by the high altitudes flown. The number of hostile aircraft turned back by 90mm indicated that considerable damage was inflicted by 90mm fire. The result of which could not be accurately assessed. Bearing evidence to the effectiveness of the antiaircraft artillery is the record of only 6 strings of bombs, many of them only small anti-personnel type, and one additional strafing attack, falling on the defended area. Two of these occasions were sneak raids, one when friendly planes were landing and the enemy circled the illuminated field with his running lights on and has fine opportunity to engage his target. The other one was a early morning, low altitude, strafing attack. The total damage caused by the six raids that bombs fell in target area was the destruction of one B-24, one B-17, one A-29 and minor damage to about twelve others due to bomb fragments.

h. In May 1943, the antiaircraft artillery commander proposed a plan for using day fighters overhead at night to attack illuminated enemy planes after bomb release. Due to the small defended area and the close in perimeter the normal fighter-searchlight team set-up was impracticable. In mid-May, the above plan was put into operation using a P-38. The cooperation and the fine work of searchlights and pilots resulted in the destruction of 5 Betties (2 EB) in only a very few attacks. The searchlights were credited with a total of 56 illuminations out of 90 suitable targets.

<u>SEARCHLIGHTS</u>	<u>FEB</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>APR</u>	<u>MAY</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>JUL</u>	<u>AUG</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Proper Targets	16	16	16	9	1	11	10	11	90
Illuminations	6	9	13	7	0	7	9	5	56

1. There were only two daylight attacks which developed during this period. This small number can probably be accredited to the excellent fighter defense provided by the pilots of the Army, Navy, Marines and the New Zealand Air Forces. In the one big attack on 16 June 1943, when 120 Jap Divebombers and Fighters attacked shipping lying offshore between Point Cruz and Koli Point over 75 of the attackers were shot down by friendly fighters. On another occasion six F-4U's, returning from a mission, intercepted about 80 Jap planes 100 miles north of Guadalcanal, shot six down and turned the rest of the flight without the loss of a single plane.

2. Morotai Campaign.

a. The antiaircraft artillery defense of the occupied area of Morotai, Netherlands East Indies has been the responsibility of the 214th AAA Group from 15 September 1944 (D Day) to date. Initially, the Group was composed of the following organizations:

- Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 214th AAA Group
- 528th AAA Gun Battalion
- 744th AAA Gun Battalion
- 383rd AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion
- 389th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion
- 785th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion
- 229th AAA Searchlight Battalion (Less Battery B)
- Headquarters Detachment and 2d and 4th Platoons, 58th CA Surface Warning Battery
- Signal Radar, AAA Ordnance, and Searchlight Maintenance Teams attached

On 1 April 1945, after the situation had become somewhat static, the 383rd AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion was relieved from attachment to 214th AAA Group and attached to the 31st Division for the Mindanao Operation. On 28 June 1945, movement orders on the 389th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion, 528th AAA Gun Battalion and 744th AAA Gun Battalion were received. These units departed this station on the following dates and were attached to 6th Army upon arrival at destination:

389th AAA Automatic Weapons Battalion.....	13 July 1945
528th AAA Gun Battalion.....	30 July 1945
744th AAA Gun Battalion.....	16 August 1945

S-E-C-R-E-T

b. The primary area for AAA defense initially was the beachheads and the air strips under development. As the strips became usable the primary defense mission shifted to an area of approximately 6,000 by 10,000 feet in which the three strips and the dispersal and repair areas are concentrated. (See exhibits D, E, and F) For about thirty days the enemy seemed to be chiefly attacking targets of opportunity within the occupied area. After the arrival of the 13th Air Force, in October, enemy effort appeared to be solely directed at the area containing the air strips which contained choice and easily located targets. His bombing, however, has appeared to be aimed at that area as a whole rather than any precise part of it.

c. There were 84 raids recorded by Fighter Sector and the Antiaircraft artillery. (See exhibit G) Of these, six represent enemy activity well outside the gunfire ring and were recorded by AA only to keep coincidence of raid numbers with Fighter Sector. In two raids the enemy plane reversed its course upon the firing of alert guns and did not develop its attack, leaving a total of 76 raids in which the enemy came within range of AAA weapons. One hundred and eighty seven planes were involved in these raids and they made 190 attacks on the area. For the purpose of these statistics an attack is defined as a flight which came into range of AAA weapons on a heading which could readily be developed into a hostile attack on the defended area.

	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Number of raids	16	12	30	20	4	1	1	84
Turned back by alert gun	0	0	2	0	0	0	0	2
Raids involving attacks	14	12	26	18	4	1	1	76
Planes involved	34	19	77	40	13	3	1	187
Attacks made	31	20	86	38	11	3	1	190

There were no raids during the months of February, April or May.

d. Of the 76 raids in which attacks developed 23 were without advance warning, and 15 attacks were made when AAA fire was restricted by the Fighter Controller.

	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Raids without warning	8	2	5	7	1	0	0	23
Attacks without warning	7	2	5	7	1	0	0	22
AAA Fire restricted	2	6	5	1	0	0	1	15

e. Of the 190 attacks made subtracting the 15 attacks on which AA fire was restricted leaves a total of 175 attacks at which AA elements were free for action. Of these 175 attacks 22 were delivered without advanced warning, mostly at tree top altitude and during periods of very poor visibility.

	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Attacks made	31	20	86	38	11	3	1	190
When fire restricted	2	6	5	1	0	0	1	15
Attack targets for AAA	29	14	81	37	11	3	0	175

f. The 175 targets for AAA action attacked at all altitudes from tree-top height to over 25,000 feet. The AAA defense developed in strength and area covered as the island was cleared of its very high and heavy growth which permitted better distribution of armament and more suitable fields of fire. The increase in effectiveness of fire is reflected in the decrease in attacks at low altitudes and an ensuing shift to high altitude attacks which were consistently above 18,000 feet. It was noted in December that even when there was a cloud cover over the area that the attackers still tended to stay about the 20,000 feet level.

<u>ALTITUDE OF ATTACK</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>	<u>%</u>
Below 1,000 feet	3	4	11	5	0	0	0	23	13.2
1,000 to 5,000 "	15	1	4	1	0	0	0	21	12.1
5,000 to 10,000 "	7	6	6	0	0	0	0	19	10.9
10,000 to 15,000 "	4	3	7	2	0	0	0	16	9.2
15,000 to 20,000 "	0	0	27	14	3	1	0	45	25.9
Over 20,000 "	0	0	25	15	8	2	0	50	28.1
Unknown	0	0	1	0	0	0	0	1	.6
Totals	29	14	81	37	11	3	0	175	100.0

g. Of the 175 attacks that were AAA targets 130 were suitable for 90mm fire only, 39 were suitable for only automatic weapons fire, and six were suitable for both types of fire.

	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
90mm targets only	8	9	68	31	11	3	0	130
Auto weapons targets only	18	4	11	6	0	0	0	39
Targets for both	3	1	2	0	0	0	0	6

h. Antiaircraft artillery action resulted in the destruction of seventeen planes, in the probable destruction of seven planes and in damage to twelve others. Automatic weapons are credited with eight destroyed, six probables and seven damaged, or 53.8% of the automatic weapons targets, probably accounted for the low percentage of low altitude attacks during the last few months of enemy action. The number accredited to 90mm fire alone, seven destroyed, one probable and five damaged, while not large, has undoubtedly been kept down by the high altitudes flown. The number turned back by 90mm fire, 67, indicates that much more damage was inflicted by 90mm fire than we could accurately assess.

	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
<u>Planes Destroyed</u>								
90mm fire	2	0	4	1	0	0	0	7
Auto weapons fire	3	3	2	0	0	0	0	8
Jointly	1	1	0	0	0	0	0	2
<u>Probably Destroyed</u>								
90mm fire	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Auto weapons fire	1	1	4	0	0	0	0	6
<u>Damaged</u>								
90mm fire	0	0	5	0	0	0	0	5
Auto weapons fire	2	1	4	0	0	0	0	7
<u>Attacks turned away</u>								
90mm fire	2	5	26	29	4	1	0	67
Auto weapons fire	3	0	1	0	0	0	0	4
Searchlights	0	0	2	0	1	0	1	4

S-E-C-R-E-T

Attacks are considered as turned away when the plane changes course away from the defended area in the face of AAA action, whether or not he has jettisoned his bombs. We have not counted as a turnaway instances where bombs were dropped far outside the defended area but the plane continued across the area in evasive action the AAA fire appeared the cause of the early bomb dropping. Neither have we included any credit for a turnaway in numerous instances where the plane was destroyed in the turnaway although the turnaway was an accomplishment of the AAA mission.

i. in terms of percentages of targets presented, and considering that the turning away of an attacker is a completion of the AAA mission almost as satisfactory as his destruction, the figure of 58.4% accomplishment seems noteworthy. Bearing evidence to the effectiveness of the antiaircraft artillery action is the record of only 19 strings of bombs, many of them only small anti-personnel type, and two additional straffings, falling on the strip area. Several of these occasions were sneak raids when friendly planes were landing.

Percent of attackers turned back, destroyed, or probabled, by:	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
90mm fire	17.2	35.7	37.0	81.1	44.4	33.3	0.	43.8
Auto weapons fire	24.1	35.7	8.6	0.	0.	0.	0.	11.1
Jointly	3.4	7.1	0.	0.	0.	0.	0.	1.2
Searchlights	<u>0.</u>	<u>0.</u>	<u>2.4</u>	<u>0.</u>	<u>11.1</u>	<u>0.</u>	<u>100.</u>	<u>2.3</u>
Totals	44.7	78.5	48.0	81.1	55.5	33.3	100.	58.4

j. In September the antiaircraft artillery commander proposed to the Fighter Commander a plan for a fighter-searchlight team. In mid-November the fighter-searchlight team set-up, that was used very successful at Guadalcanal, was put into operation. Initially a P-38 with nightfighter pilot and later Spitfires of the 80th Wing, RAAF were employed. This cooperation and the fine work of searchlights and pilots resulted in credit to the 418th Nightfighter Squadron for three destructions and two probables in eight attacks, and the RAAF for one destroyed in one attack. The searchlights are also credited with assisting by illumination in four destructions and two probables by AAA fire. The searchlights illuminated 61 out of 122 proper targets.

<u>SEARCHLIGHT</u>	<u>SEPT</u>	<u>OCT</u>	<u>NOV</u>	<u>DEC</u>	<u>JAN</u>	<u>MAR</u>	<u>JUN</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Proper targets	19	8	70	18	5	1	1	122
Illuminations	10	2	39	7	1	1	1	61
Assists to AAA	1	1	7	2	0	0	0	11
Assists to fighters	0	0	5	1	0	0	0	6

k. There have been no full daylight attacks on the area, tho in the early days of the operation low altitude raids were made as the sun was rising above or setting on the horizon. The narrowness of the occupied area definitely limited the shape of the defense, but by cutting clearings in rain forest and altering the shape of coral hills a defense was established which covered all angles of approach. The weakness in warning against low altitude attacks from

the northern side which is due to radar ineffectiveness against hilly terrain was to a large extent overcome by extra alertness of gun crews and curtailment of friendly aircraft flying at night north of the defended area.

1. In addition to the alerts called to repel actual raids all AAA units have stood daily dawn and dusk alerts, each of one hour or more duration, and 281 other red and yellow alerts of varying length. The automatic weapons and searchlight units also stood special half crew alerts throughout all the moonlight hours of the moonlight periods until February 45. At the same time the AAA installations and bivouacs have been developed to the point where all are a source of pride and the personnel have undergone supervised training except during the periods of greatest enemy activity.

Alerts called by	SEPT	OCT	NOV	DEC	JAN	FEB	MAR	APR	MAY	JUN	JUL	TOTAL
Fighter Sector												
Daylight	26	19	0	3	0	0	0	0	0	0	1	49
Dusk to 2200 hrs	16	23	27	19	4	4	2	3	0	0	2	100
2200 to 0200 hrs	13	17	28	22	8	3	4	1	3	1	3	103
0200 to dawn	<u>12</u>	<u>25</u>	<u>34</u>	<u>27</u>	<u>4</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>0</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>1</u>	<u>105</u>
Totals	67	84	89	71	16	8	6	4	3	2	7	357

m. As a secondary mission the antiaircraft artillery was charged with responsibility for the offshore defense, supported therein by the Field Artillery. A separate Offshore Defense Center was operated by the AAA at its Headquarters for that purpose during the period 1 December 1944 to 5 April 1945. Subsequent to 5 April 1945 the 93rd Infantry Division assumed the responsibility for the offshore defense and were supplemented by AA elements of this group.

n. The Antiaircraft Artillery has very effectively supported the Field Artillery by 90mm fire on a number of occasions, its weapons reaching many thousand yards farther than the field artillery weapons. An effective plan was developed for the use of 584 radars and the artillery liaison plane to accurately locate targets for fire action by either 90mm or field artillery weapons. The same plan has been used to survey the enemy areas in order to correct maps and also to locate on the ground points selected from maps which the plane and patrols have not been able to spot.

IV. IMPORTANT PROBLEMS AND SOLUTIONS

1. Attached hereto, and marked exhibits, are the following documents, the contents of each being noteworthy in view of the excellent results obtained therefrom:

- | | |
|--|-----------|
| a. SOP Searchlight - Fighter Cooperation | Exhibit H |
| b. SOP for Off-Shore Defense Center | Exhibit I |
| c. SOP for Antiaircraft Artillery Operations Center | Exhibit J |
| d. Narrative Report of Experiments AA Radar with Field Artillery Plane | Exhibit K |
| e. Special Scale of 40mm Gun | Exhibit L |
| f. Mobile Antiaircraft Operations Room | Exhibit M |

V. COMMENDATIONS

1. Attached hereto, and marked exhibits, are the following commendations received by this group.

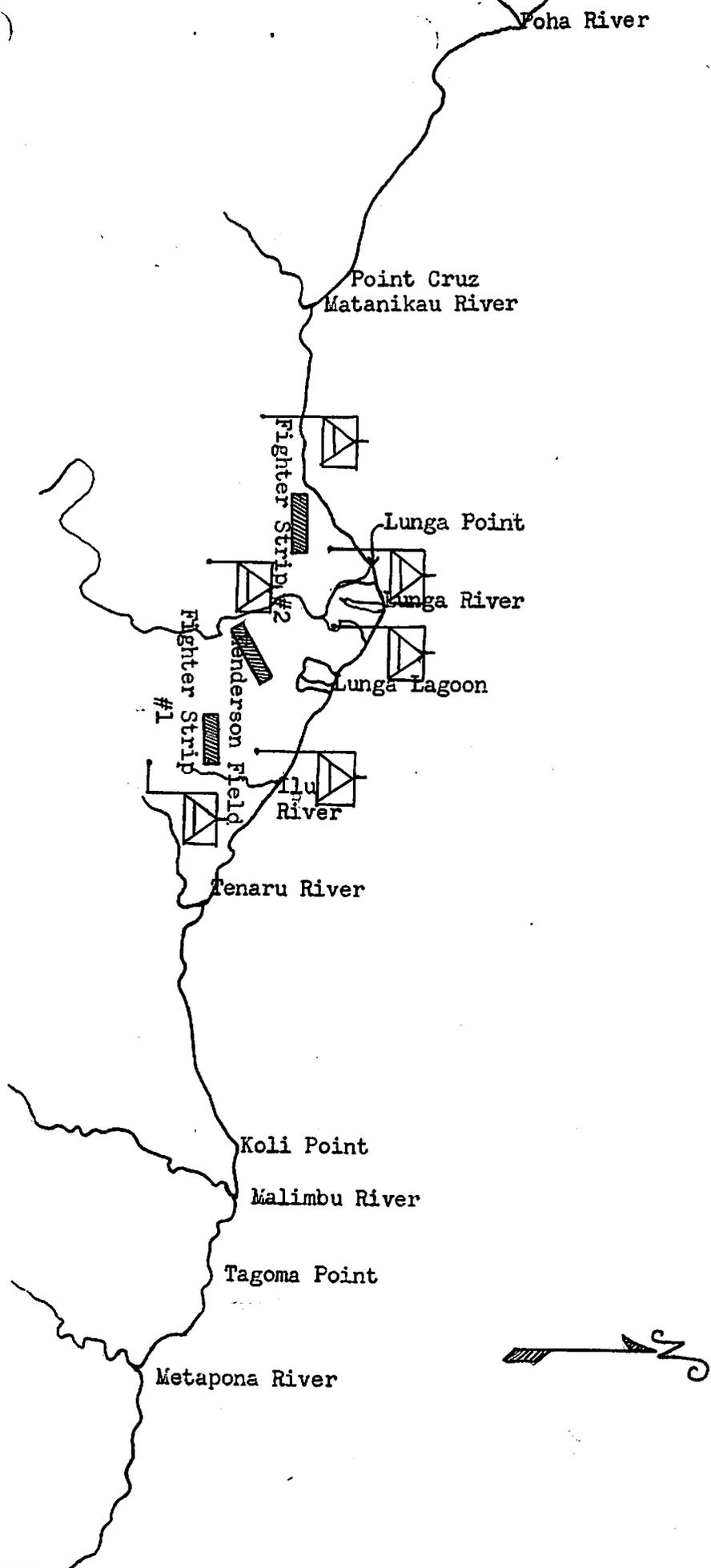
- | | |
|--|-----------|
| a. Commendation, Commanding General, XIV Corps | Exhibit N |
| b. Commendation, Commanding General, U. S. Army Forces, USAFISPA | Exhibit O |
| c. Commendation, Commanding General, XI Corps | Exhibit P |
| d. Commendation, Commanding General, 40th AAA Brigade | Exhibit Q |

FOR THE GROUP COMMANDER:

OFFICIAL:

WILLIAM E. NORRIS
Capt, 214th AAA Group
Ass't S-3


ARTHUR R. KOSANKE
Capt, 214th AAA Group
Adjutant



ANTI-AIRCRAFT GUN DISPOSITION
 HENDERSON FIELD, LUNGA AREA, GUADALCANAL
 AS OF APRIL 1 1943

EXHIBIT "A"

ANTI-AIRCRAFT WEAPONS DISPOSITION
 HENDERSON FIELD-LUNGA AREA-GUADALCANAL

AS OF 1 APRIL 1943

LEGEND

- ↑ 50 CAL MG
- 20 MM GUN PED
- 20 MM GUN DUAL
- ⊖ 37 MM GUN
- ⊠ BATTERY CP

