

# OPERATION FLINTLOCK

THIS COMBINED NAVY, MARINE, AND ARMY INVASION WOULD SERVE AS THE BLUEPRINT FOR THE ISLAND-HOPPING WAR TO JAPAN

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PHOTOGRAPHY COURTESY NAVAL HISTORY AND HERITAGE COMMAND

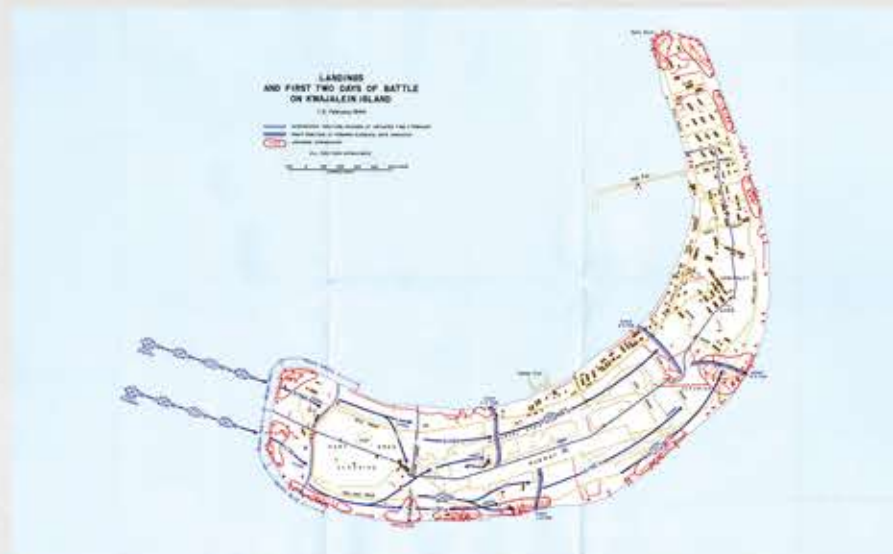
This past February marked the 80th Anniversary of Operation *Flintlock* — the American invasion of the Marshall Islands. This operation, the largest amphibious assault of the war to date, was also the first major central Pacific operation of the Pacific War. The successful landings in the Marshalls, both at Roi-Namur and Kwajalein, demonstrated the soundness of American amphibious operation

doctrine, and revealed that the issues of poor planning and execution seen at Guadalcanal, the Aleutians, and the Gilberts were resolved. The complex operation was swiftly and efficiently executed, and the vast swath of islands in the central Pacific were consolidated for subsequent operations against the Japanese.

The operation was only possible owing to the vast expansion in the



Namur Island, Kwajalein Atoll, photographed from a Navy recon aircraft on 30 January 1944 before it was destroyed by Operation *Flintlock* gun fire and bombings. Note the many buildings and the pier with a large hammerhead crane. Roi Island is in the far upper left. Virtually everything in the photograph was destroyed over the next few days.



Map illustrating Operation *Flintlock* landings on Kwajalein.



After his Helldiver was severely buffeted, a Navy combat photographer in the rear seat took this dramatic photo of the torpedo/bomb storage facility exploding. The whole island was rocked by the blast, whose rising cloud resembles the A-Bomb that was to come.



Fitted with a depth charge on its centerline position, a Douglas Dauntless of VB-16 patrols over USS *Washington* and *Lexington* during Operation *Flintlock*.