

INVASION OF THE MARSHALLS.

Following the occupation of the Gilbert group and the two landings on New Britain, the Americans invade the Marshall Islands; one of their boldest and best executed operations of this war. Ships converge from Alaska, Hawaii, California, the Ellice Islands, New Hebrides, New Zealand and Australia.

Lying in mid-Pacific, almost halfway between Pearl Harbour and Tokio, the Marshalls have been fortified by the Japanese for twenty-five years. The main American attack was directed against the islands in the **KWAK KWAJALEIN ATOLL**, reputed to embrace the largest lagoon in the world. A great expanse of water ringed by innumerable coral islets of which **ROI** (with its air base), **Namur** and **Kwajalein** are the principle. The 66 mile lagoon could harbour and entire Japanese fleet.

Weeks of savage air and Naval bombardment preceded the great amphibious attack.

The stroke at the heart of the Marshalls. Paralysed by the terrific concentration of shelling and bombing, ~~though~~ the defences could do little to stem the assault which was carried out with exceptional speed. Many lessons at Tarawa had been taken to heart; Casualties were consequently extremely low; It was surprising that the Japanese fleet made no appearance.

No more beautiful place on earth than the Coral Islands of **KWAJALEIN**. Colour has run riot in this one-time paradise now riven by the mechanics of war. Marines and veterans of the **ATTU** battle storm the beaches.

Marine marksmen fire on Japs attempting to escape by swimming from one coral outcrop to another.

The airfield at **ROI**, with its Hangars and planes torn to pieces by 16 inch shells and 2000 lb block-busters.

Jap beer, and a couple of thirsty marines who could just do with a pint.

Giant enemy pillboxes of steel and concrete were split open and demolished by high explosive. Japs who still lived crawled back among the dead and had to be exterminated one by one.

A naked metal framework is all that remains of the Hangars. Japan's efforts over many years to make the ATTOL an impregnable base have gone with the wind. For the first time, Japanese territory has been invaded and conquered...and Japan must realise that this is only a beginning.