

D-Day 20 Oct. 1944
H-Hour 0500



The Leyte landings were preceded by covering maneuvers as invasion combat teams seized positions on the northern tip of Dingat Island and the southern portion of Homonhom Island to command the entrance to Leyte Gulf for the passage of the main forces.

MESSAGES FROM THE PRESIDENT

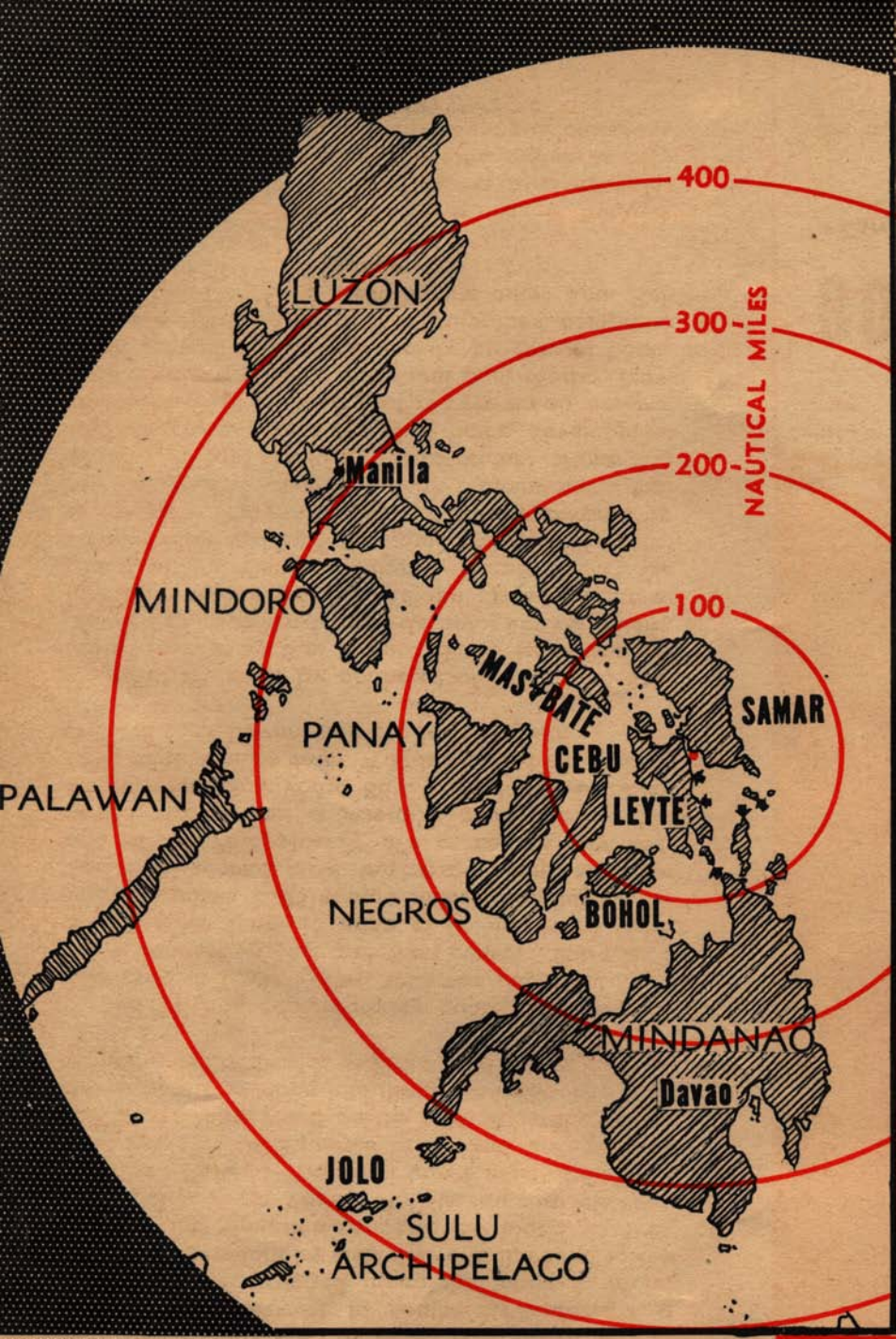
From Washington, President Roosevelt sent congratulations to General MacArthur expressing the gratitude of the entire nation and offering a prayer for success, "as you and your men fight your way back to Bataan." The President said "the whole American nation to-day exults at the news."

At the same time, the President sent messages to Admirals Nimitz and Halsey, and to President Sergio Osmena of the Philippine Commonwealth. In his message to the Philippine people, President Roosevelt declared "we promised to return and we have returned," then went on to renew the pledge that the Philippines would be a free and independent republic once the Japanese have been driven from the Islands.

The Leyte landings place our troops 340 miles south of Manila, 600 miles north of Morotai, and 2500 miles from Milne Bay where the fight back to the Philippines started nearly sixteen months ago.

• Published by Information & Education Section USAFFE

NEWSMAP
EXTRA
21 OCTOBER, 1944





THIS IS THE TERRAIN

PRESS your hand in damp sand, fingers pointed north. The impression left by the heart of your hand is, roughly speaking, **LEYTE ISLAND**. The ridge from northwest to southeast represents a heavily-forested, rugged mountain, tough to travel by foot, impossible by vehicle. The flat land to the north of the mountain range is the broad, agriculturally rich Leyte Valley and its southern offshoot, Tacloban Valley. That land grows most of the food for Leyte's 972,000 people. Around the southern half of the island and on the west coast the plains are narrow and slope into the mountains. The land is honeycombed with streams and rivers.

LEYTE has comparatively good roads, especially good in Leyte Valley, with two important highways connecting east and west coasts. The island is 115 miles long, 15 wide at its narrowest point and comprises 2,785 square miles. Capital city is Tacloban, second most important hemp shipping port of the Philippines. It's a modern city with paved streets, has a sizeably good harbor that empties into San Pedro Bay. Tacloban is about 1,390 statute miles from Wakde, 1,510 from Hollandia, 275 from Davao, and 340 from Manila.

SAMAR, north by northeast of Leyte, and separated from it by San Juanico Strait, looks (the impression of your hand won't do here) like an oblong kicked in at the sides. It's the northeasternmost island of the Visayan group. Samar hasn't the broad valley and high mountain contours like most of the other Visayan islands. Samar is covered by heavily-forested medium high mountains that dwindle off into shallow coastal plains. Damaging northeast monsoons have held down development of Samar. The island had a very small pre-war population, no ports of entry and poor roads. Travelling around Samar was mostly by coastal boats. Samar is third largest of the Philippines, comprises 5,050 square miles, is 1,490 statute miles from Hollandia and 370 from Manila.

DINAGAT, south of Leyte, is a rugged, sparsely settled island covering an area 46 miles long and 11½ miles wide. The road system is very bad. Boats are about the only means of communication for the fishing population.



SAMAR

LEYTE

DINAGAT

BOHOL

MINDANAO

Statute Miles



GENERAL MacARTHUR'S HEADQUARTERS, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, FRIDAY, 20 OCTOBER

In a major amphibious operation U.S. Forces have seized the major part of Leyte Island in the central Philippines, General Douglas MacArthur announced in a special HQ. communique. Tacloban, capital of Leyte, has been secured, and ground troops are extending their positions. Supplies and heavy equipment were being brought ashore in great volume.

SHATTERING PRE-INVASION BOMBARDMENT

On D-DAY the Seventh Fleet, elements of the Third Fleet and the Australian Squadron stood off Leyte's coastal plains along which the Japanese Fourteenth Army Group of an estimated 225,000 were garrisoned. In a steady bombardment, the Allied naval units pounded the coastline. From the heavens, too, hell rained down on the Japs as FEAF, RAAF, and carrier-based planes came over in steady waves.

As H-Hour approached the transports of the greatest amphibious force ever assembled in the Pacific split into three groups and steamed towards their rendezvous. In brilliant execution of invasion tactics, elements of the Sixth Army, attached units from the Central Pacific and other supporting units moved shoreward with split-second timing. First landings were on a thirteen mile beachfront. One force landed three miles south of Tacloban, near Palo. A second force hit the beach in the Dulag area. Farther south combat units struck at two points on Panoan.

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ENEMY AGAIN OUT-FOXED

Again the Jap was foxed. And for being deceived into expecting the major blow to be struck at Mindanao, the enemy paid a high price. In the special communique issued from the Philippines, where General MacArthur is in personal command of operations, it was stated that the landing at Leyte "at one stroke splits in two the Japanese forces in the Philippines." Now cut off from Japan forever are more than 500,000 enemy garrison troops in Borneo, the Indies, and other islands overrun in 1942 by the oppressors.



This small surf-ringed atoll to the northwest of Ponape was passed by Vice Admiral Mitscher's force on the way to the

attack. Low-lying specks of land like this have provided most Pacific bombardment targets to date. As the American fleets

move westward toward hilly islands like Ponape, battleships and cruisers will have much more difficult gunnery problems.



NEW GUINEA NATIVES HELP PREPARE A MEADOW FOR SERVICE AS AIR STRIP

