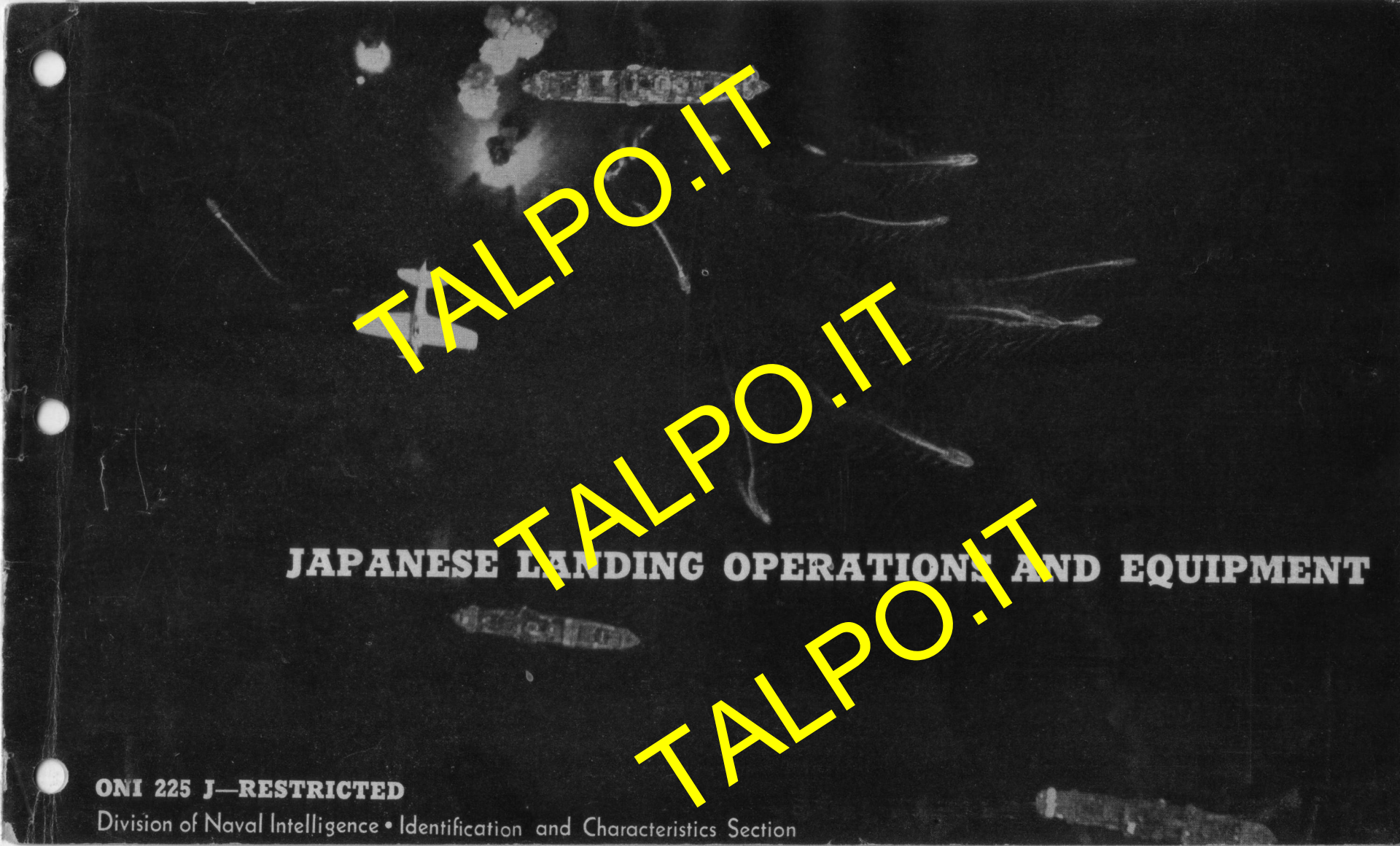

JAPANESE LANDING OPERATIONS AND EQUIPMENT

ONI 225 J—RESTRICTED
Division of Naval Intelligence • Identification and Characteristics Section

CONTENTS

NAVY DEPARTMENT
Office of the Chief of Naval Operations
Washington
May 21, 1943

1. ONI 225–J is a compilation of data on Japanese landing craft, equipment and landing operation techniques. It became apparent, while collecting materiel data, that some discussion of methods employed by the enemy in the use of his equipment would render this publication of greater value to operating personnel. Tactical information on this subject has consequently been interpolated, along with drawings, photographs and diagrams.

2. The early phases of the Pacific War were highlighted by an almost unbroken series of successful Japanese landing assaults. Since that time counter measures by the United Nations have halted enemy conquests throughout the Pacific theater. Air power at Buna and in the Solomons has rolled back many a contemplated landing. Surface forces in the fourth Solomons battle repelled a major assault, destroying or scattering the Japanese naval forces, while Japanese transports succumbed to American bombers.

3. Although the tide of enemy conquest may have receded, a familiarity with the enemy's tactics and the ability to recognize his equipment will be of value to combat personnel in anticipating the enemy's future aero-amphibious operations.

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Rear Admiral, U. S. Navy,
Director of Naval Intelligence.

RESTRICTED Op–16–P2 A8–2/EF37 Serial No. 2047816

FOREWORD

No universal pattern can be developed from a study of Japanese landing operations. Conditions of warfare change so rapidly that reports which form the basis for these notes were "cold turkey" before they ever reached the Navy Department. The recent methods employed by Japanese landing forces can only be evaluated by the men who have set them back on their heels at Guadalcanal and in New Guinea. No statement that appears here should be taken as an estimate of what the Jap is going to do next but only as a statement of what he did in a number of instances of what equipment he used and how he used it. No effort has been made to draw conclusions from these data, and the following notes and diagrams simply represent a compilation of facts from which operating personnel may conceivably draw a few useful bits of information.

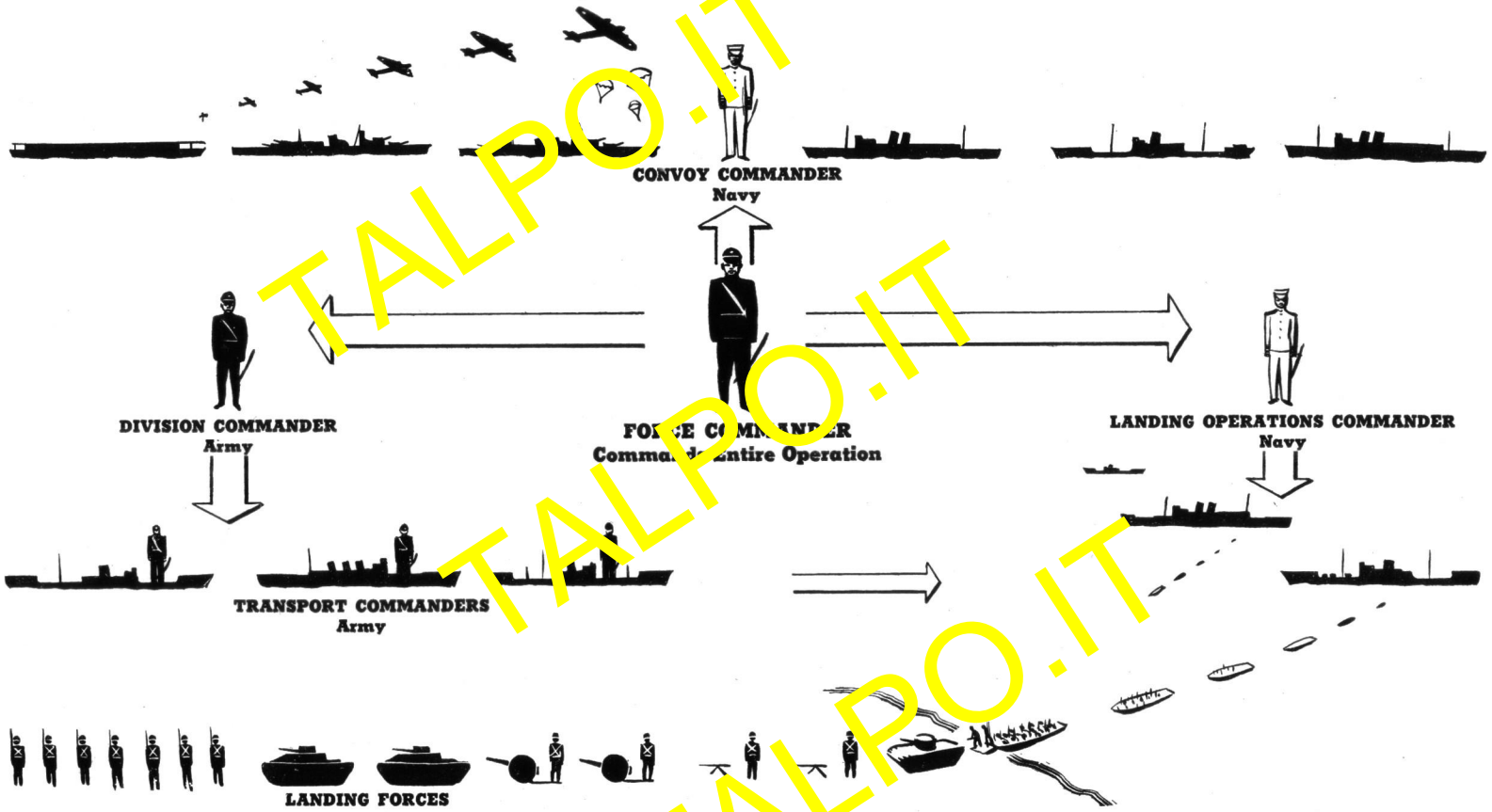
In July 1937 along the beaches and in the river mouths of the Chinese coast, fleets of modified sampans, "ramp" fishing boats and other familiar small Japanese craft appeared under the protection of aircraft and naval vessels. These hitherto innocuous little ships were loaded with specially trained troops who proceeded to occupy their objectives with method and despatch. This was our introduction to the type of modern large-scale amphibious warfare that has formed the pattern for Japanese conquest.

Japan, as an isolated group of islands from which access to an objective can only be obtained over water, was the first power to develop fully the technique of ship-to-shore attack. Through carefully rehearsed operations she has been able to spread her tentacles throughout the western Pacific islands and down through Malaya. Since we are confronted with the problem of winning back these territories, the methods and equipment used in this maritime blitzkrieg may well be a subject for our study.

We may anticipate changes and developments in equipment and methods, but thus far the techniques of Japanese "aero-amphibious" warfare have remained fairly constant. In the following pages typical operations are discussed and shown diagrammatically, and the organization of task forces outlined. Information on the appearance of landing craft, ordnance and other equipment is also given, with a view to acquainting combat officers operating in the Pacific area with the matériél as well as the methods employed by the Japanese in the earlier phases of the Pacific war. These drawings and notes may suggest some of our opponent's weaknesses as well as the careful planning and bold execution that have characterized his operations.

Compared to our own landing equipment that of the Japanese task forces may appear flimsy and inadequate. It has, however, produced astonishing results. Always ready to take their losses in gaining an objective, the Japs have not permitted the vulnerability of their landing craft to limit their employment, and these little ships, although simple adaptations of non-military types, have proven highly effective. The pages that follow will serve to give the reader some idea of how they did it, and it is hoped that they may contribute to some degree in keeping them from doing it again!

ORGANIZATION OF JAPANESE LANDING FORCES

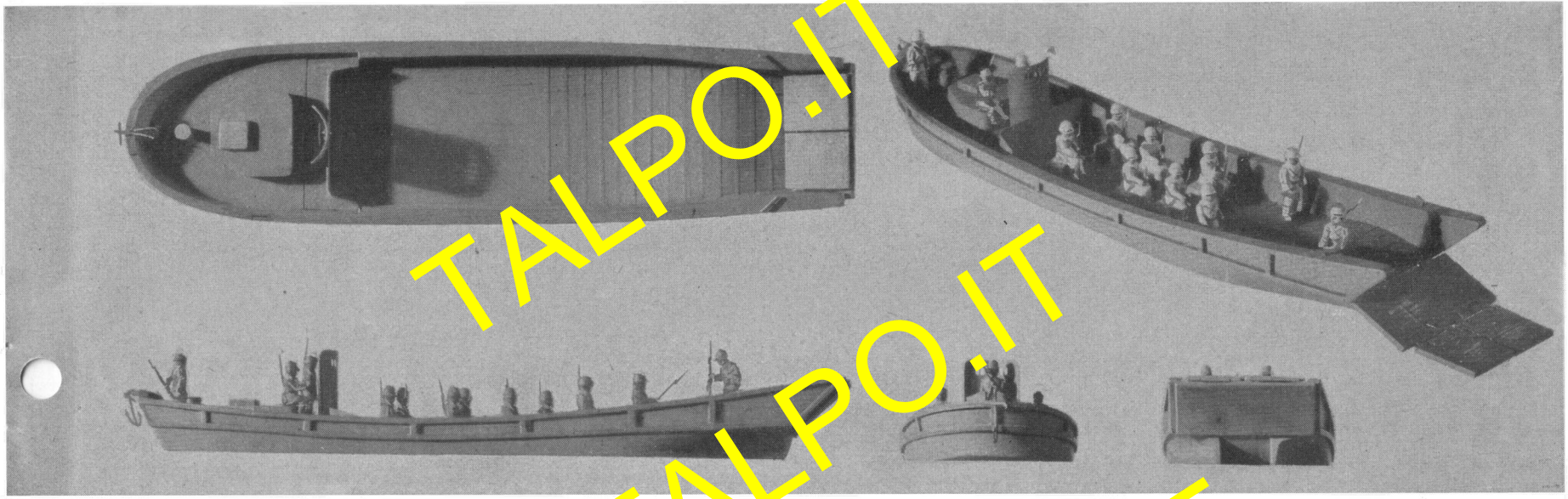


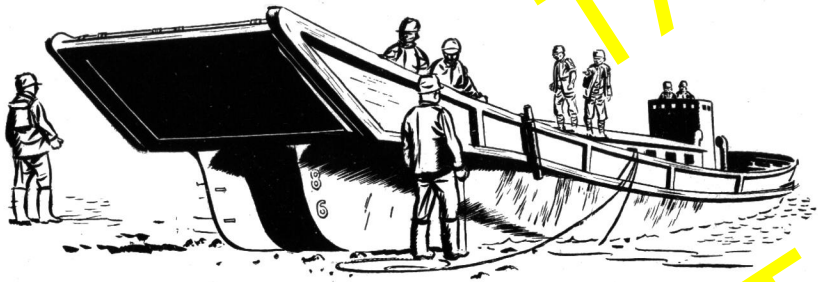
Japanese "aero-amphibious" operations reflect close cooperation among naval, air, and land forces. All services are organized into basic task forces. A usual organization for larger task forces appears on the preceding page. On later pages will be found statements of divisional and brigade organization and of the forces used in various individual operations.

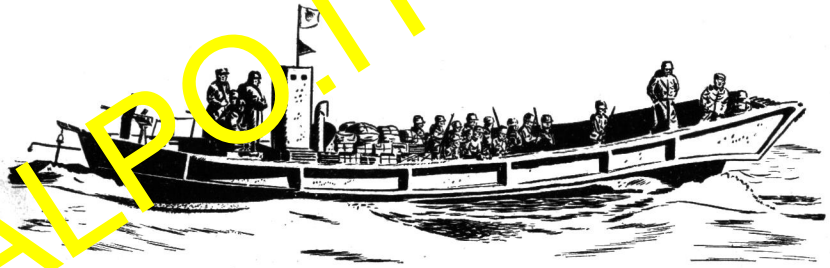
Since the element of surprise is essential to any landing operation, approach to an objective is characterized by caution. Convoys are sometimes divided at sea and draw near their destinations from unexpected quarters. The Force Commander of a convoy may elect to return to his base if he suspects that his convoy has been observed at sea. Escorting naval vessels will often precede their convoy when the goal is near, as at the fourth Solomons Battle. Air blanketing is increased as the moment of landing approaches. In the several Java landings fleet units cruised up and down the coast to scatter and confuse the defenders.

AIR PREPARATION

Air power constitutes the most effective defense against landing operations where sea defense is lacking, and the Japanese have in these circumstances devoted their first efforts to neutralizing any air installations within range of their objective at the outset. Initial reconnaissance will, therefore, usually be followed by bombing attack on a defender's airfields. Through this method the landing at Aparri, in the Phillipines, was effected without opposition.







TYPE "A" LANDING CRAFT (NAVY)

Length: 49′ 4″ o. a., 41′ w. l.

Beam: 11′ 5″.

Propulsion: 2 cyl. gasoline or 6 cyl. Diesel.

Speed: 10 knots.

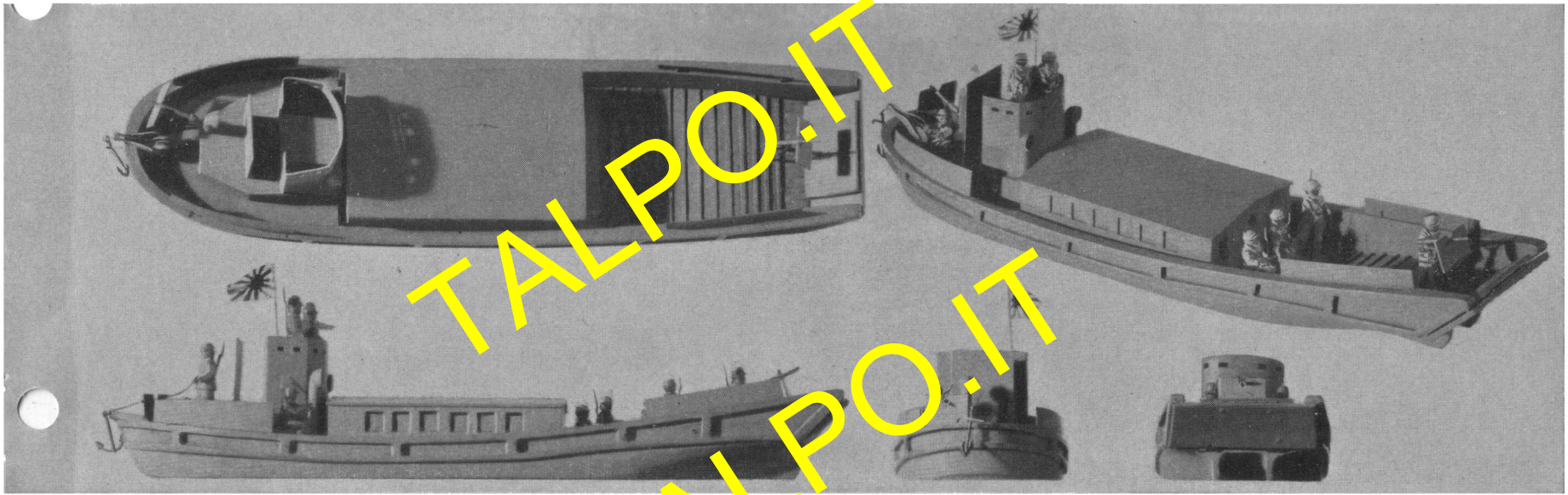
Capacity: Approx. 80 men.

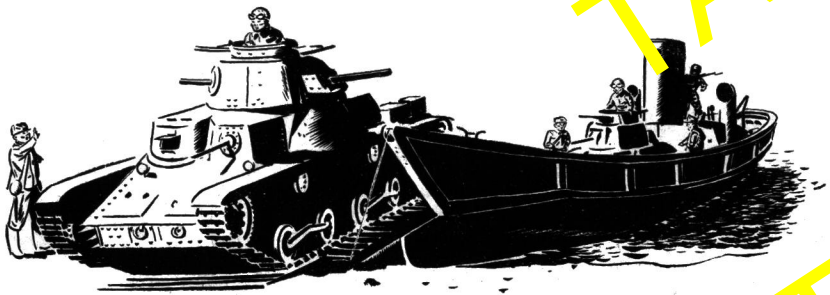
Anchor: Large stern anchor weighed by hand.

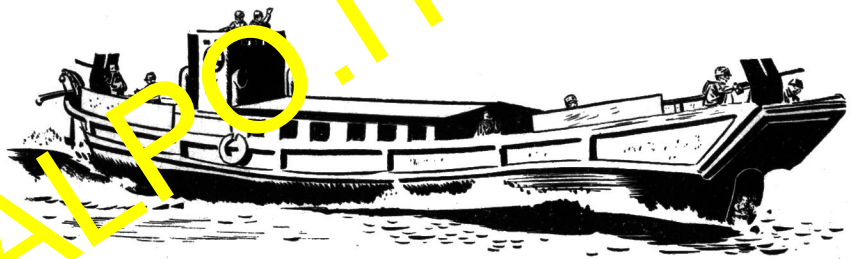
Armament: Two OERLIKON type machine guns; one forward, one aft.

Armor: Metal shield (⅜″?) protects afterworks from light fire.

Notes: This boat is similar in construction to type "A" Army. A deck house has been added in the Navy type. Other refinements are bulwarks forward and added shield protection for control personnel.



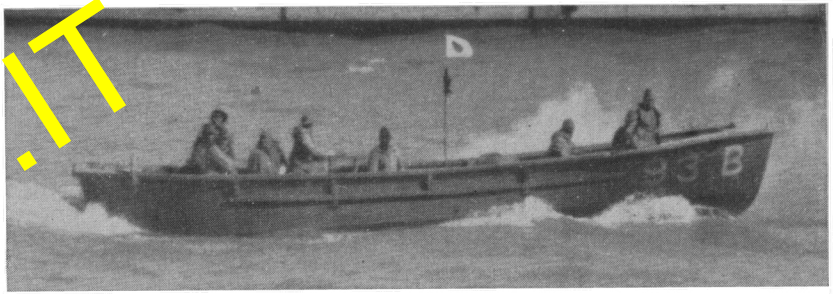


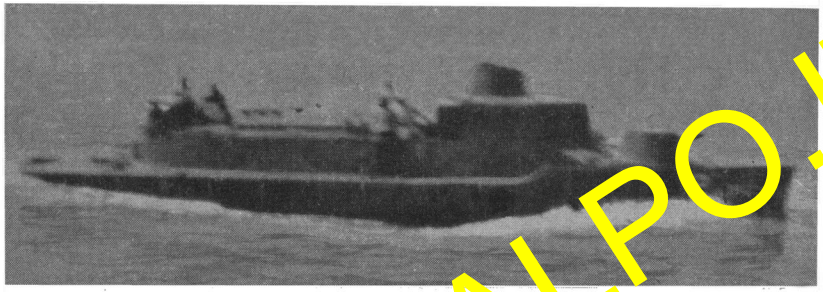


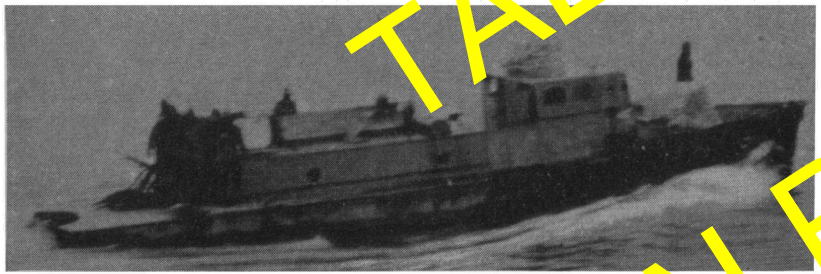
TYPE "B" LANDING CRAFT

Length:	30′4″ o. a.
Beam:	7′6″.
Propulsion:	Gasoline engine.
Speed:	8–10 Knots.
Capacity:	Approximately 40 men.
Anchor:	Large stern anchor weighed by hand.

Armament: Machine gun in bow.
Armor: Some [illegible] bullet-proof shields in bow. Capable of stopping .50 calibre bullets.
Notes: Employed by initial covering [illegible]. Similar to merchant like boats in appearance. Successfully strafed by low flying fighters when fire was concentrated on power-plant in stern.





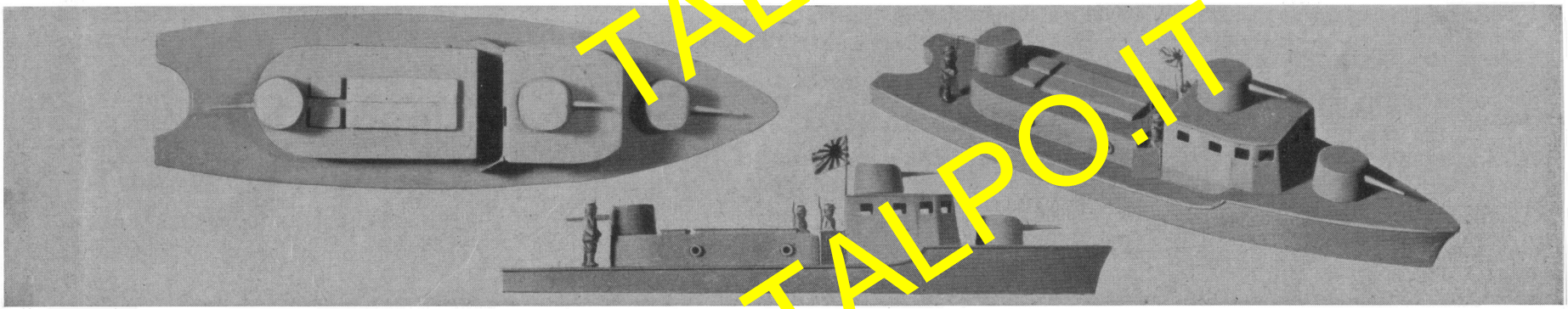


Length: 49′.
Beam: 13′.
Propulsion: Diesel.

Speed: 25 Knots.
Capacity: Approximately 50 men.
Anchor: Large stern anchor weighed by hand.

Armament: 1-.303 Machine Gun on forward turret, 360°–60° elevation—1 Machine Gun forward 1 Machine Gun aft.
Armor: Steel plate construction.

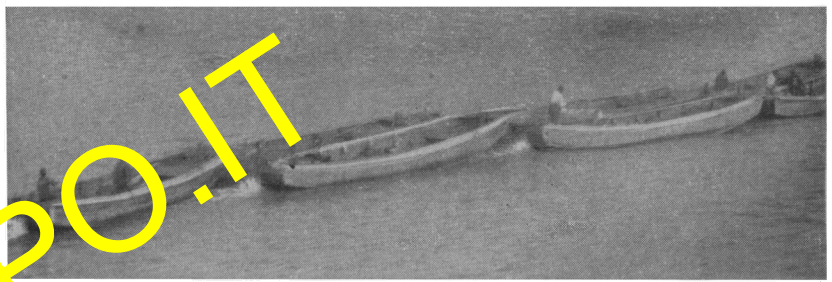
Notes: May be used to support landings with fire from its three guns, or may land personnel. Also used in reconnaissance and patrol duties.

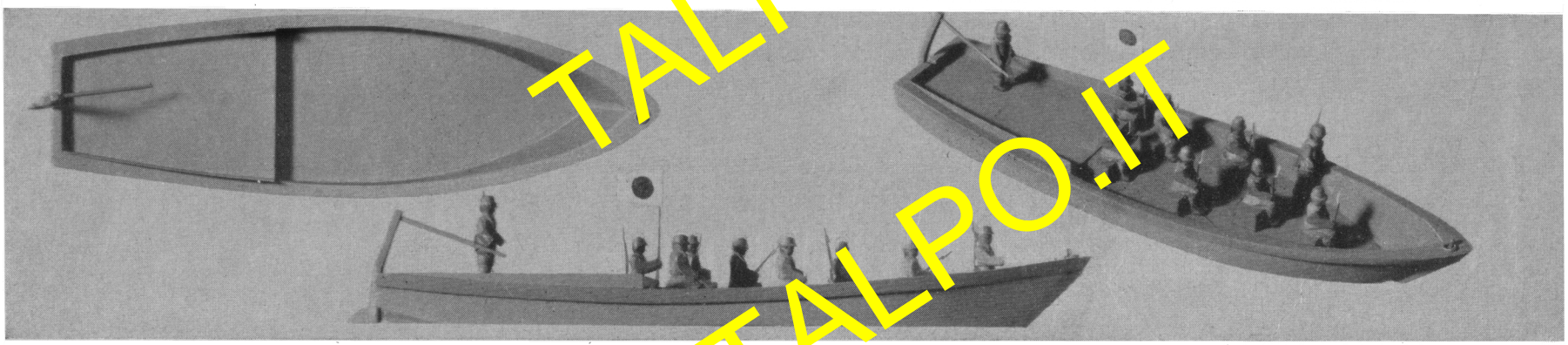


TYPE "D" LANDING CRAFT

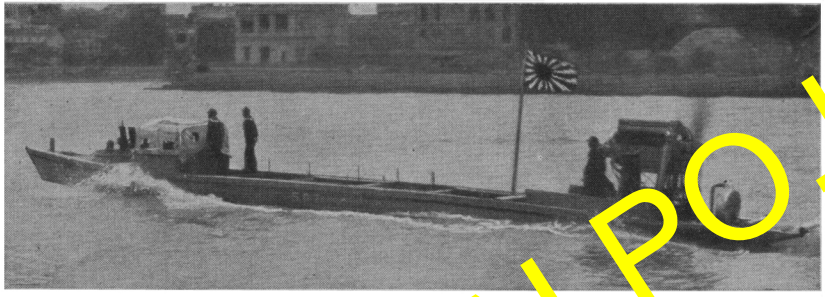
Length: 38′6″.
Beam: 11′.
Propulsion: Some have gas engines; others not powered.
Capacity: Approximately 60 men.

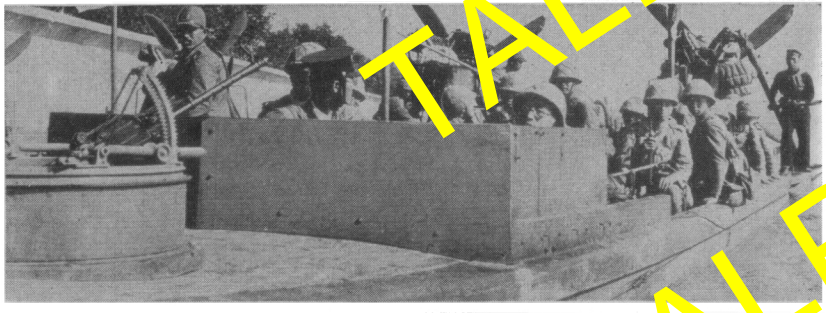
Armament: None.
Armor: None.
Notes: Some have clipper bow, others sampan type. Stern is decked over. Resembles U. S. M. C. Artillery Lighter. Functions of this type parallel those of Type "A".



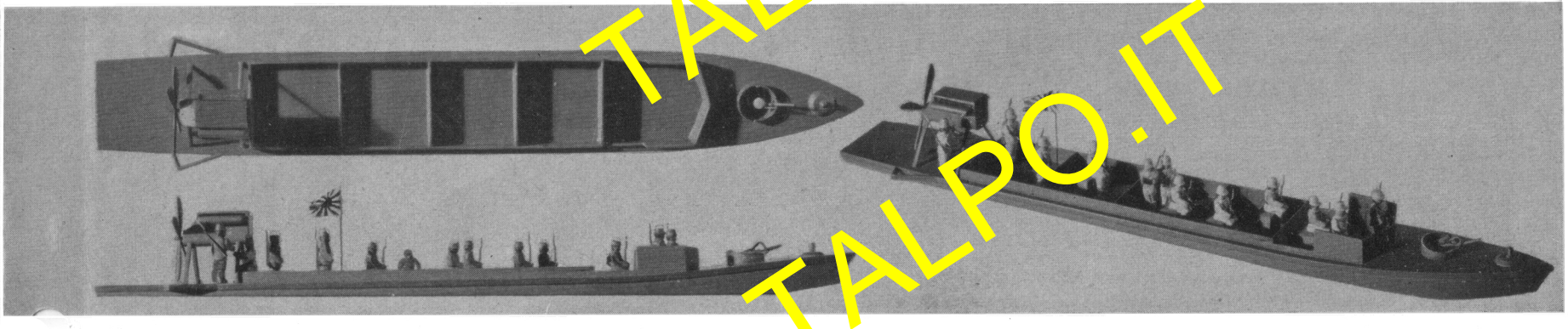


TYPE "E" LANDING CRAFT





Length: 63'2" o. a., 55'6" w. l.
Beam: 8'9".
Propulsion: Air screw propellor.
Speed: 10 Knots.
Capacity: Approximately 60 men.
Armament: 1 or 2 machine guns.
Armor: Shield protects machine gun in bow.
Notes: Air screw propulsion affords advantages in navigation of shallow waters. Flat bottom construction enables Type "E" to penetrate waters inaccessible to ordinary craft.

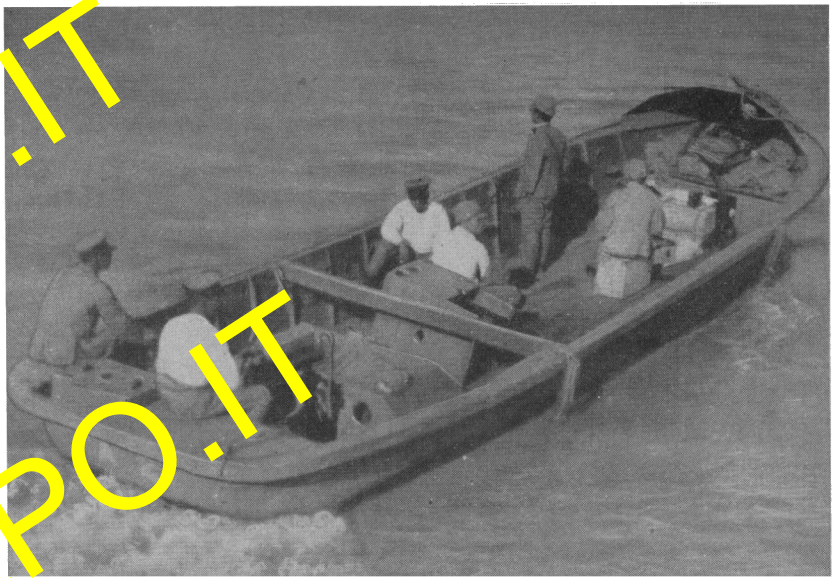


TYPE "F" LANDING CRAFT

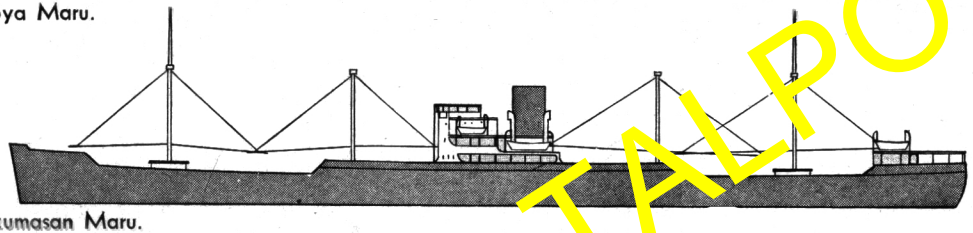
Length: 21′ o. a.
Beam: 7′.
Propulsion:
Speed: 8–10 Knots.
Capacity: Approximately 20 men.
Armament: None.
Armor: Steel plate construction.

Notes: Movable crosspiece provides convenient means of shifting inboard compartment arrangement.

A two-section collapsible composition board boat with rubber pontoons has been noted at Guadalcanal. Approximately 15 feet long, 4 feet wide and fitted with oars and outboard motor, this boat is believed capable of carrying 20 men.

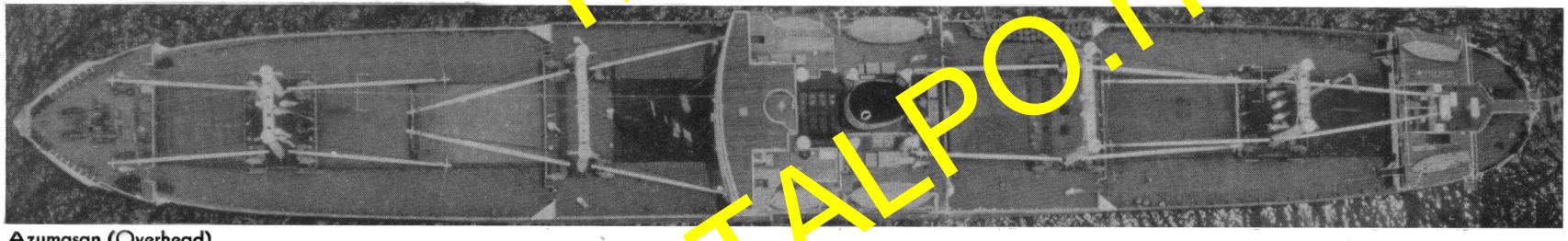


Goya Maru.



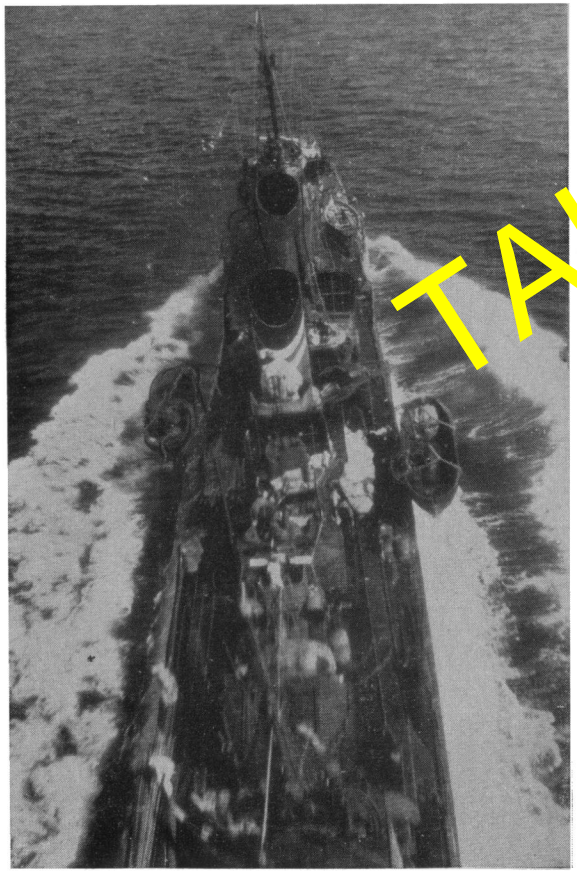
Azumasan Maru.

These are typical of merchantmen employed in amphibious convoys. Vessels with ample deck stowage space lend themselves to ready disembarkation. Cargo booms forward and aft in this type of transport provide rapid launching of a deck load of landing craft.



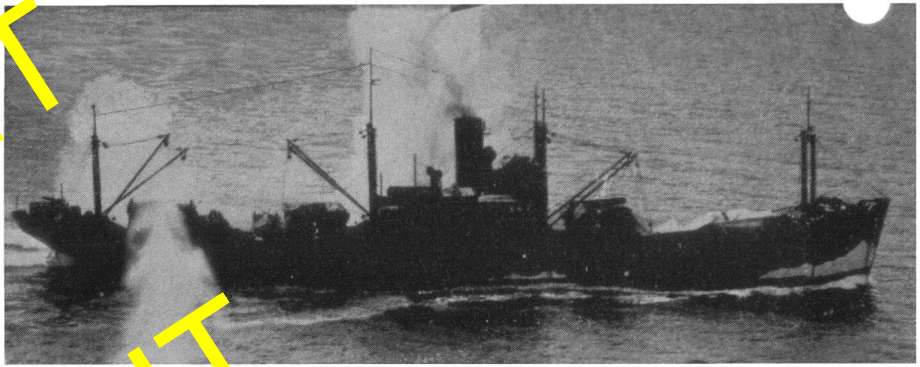
Azumasan (Overhead).

LANDING CRAFT STOWAGE



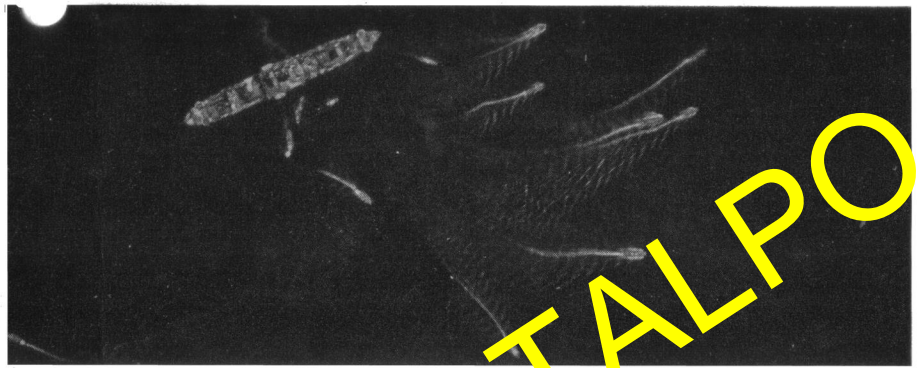
Destroyer With Landing Craft In Davits.

These photographs illustrate adaptation of Japanese merchant ships to landing operations. Transportation of landing craft seems to be undertaken with a minimum amount of conversion. The boats, lined up on deck, are nested in tiers two or three high.

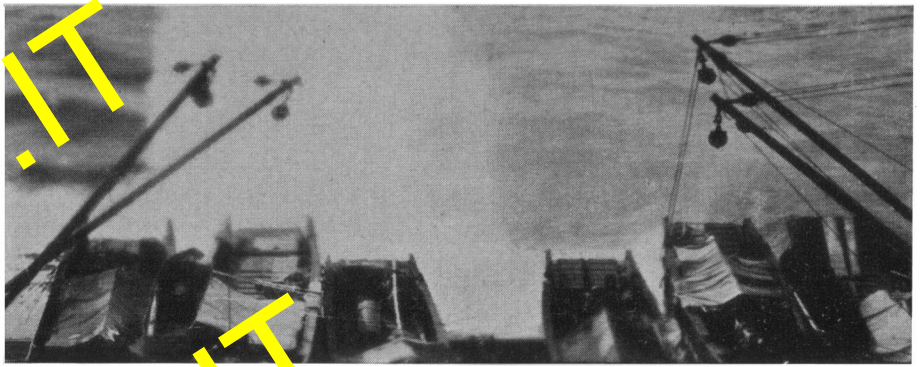


Strafing a Deck Load of LC's.

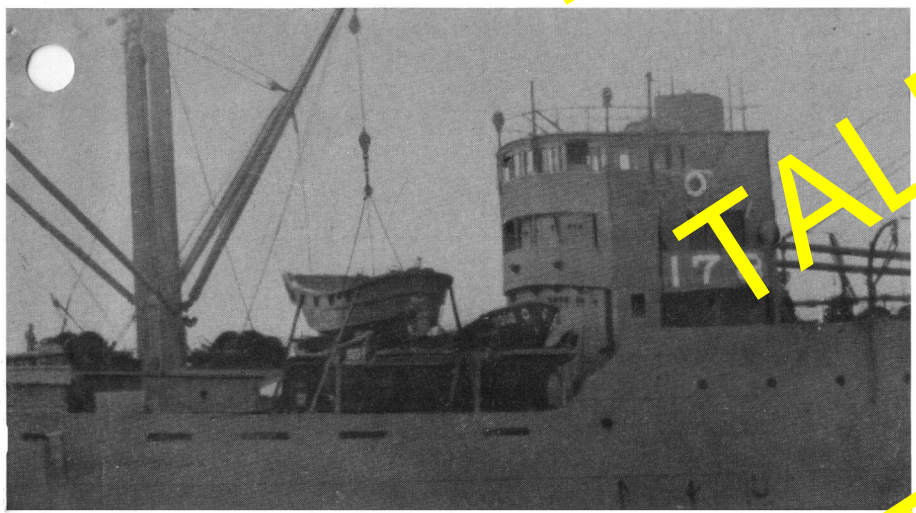
Interrupted By Our Planes.



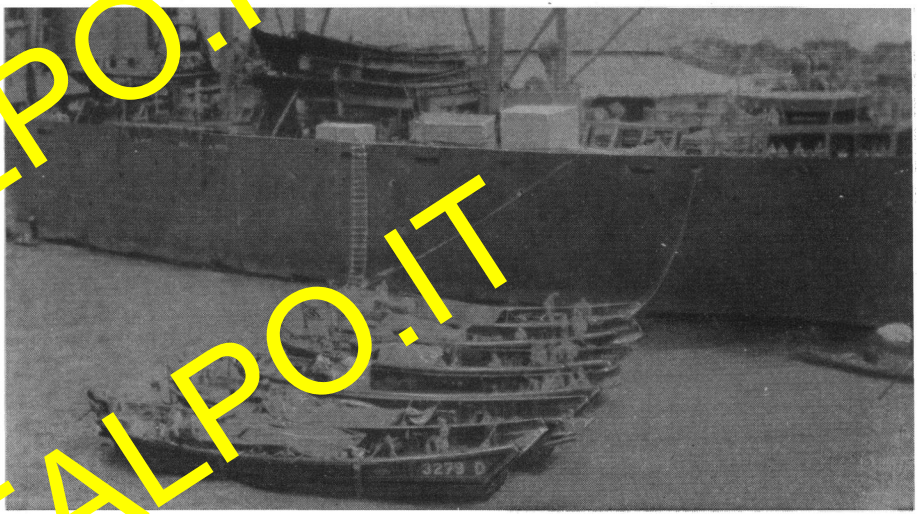
Landing Craft Scattering from Carrier Under Attack.



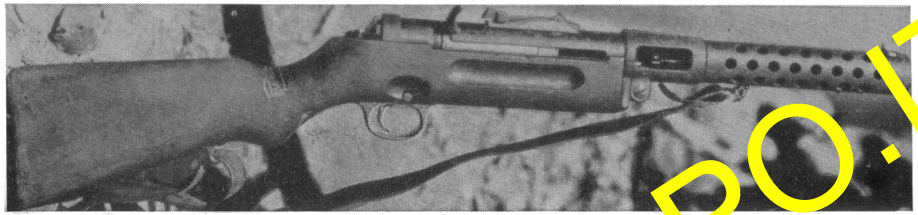
A Mast High View of Stowed Landing Craft.



A Nest of Type A's

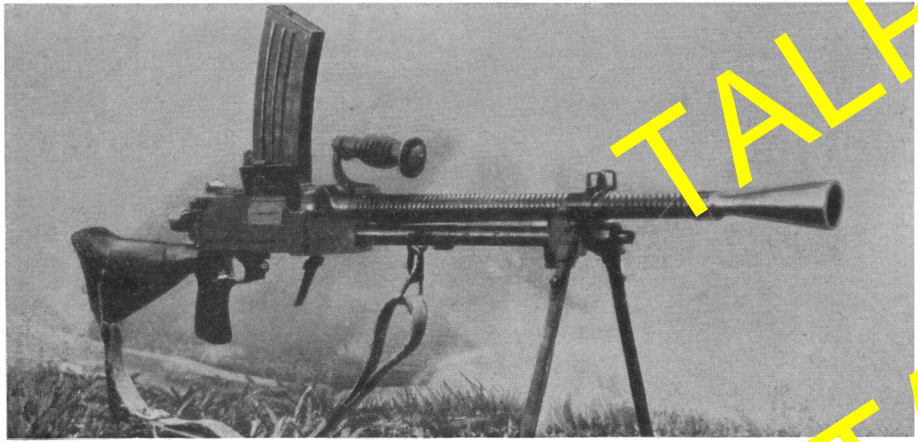


Landing Craft Alongside Their Carrier.



Bergmann-Type Submachine Gun, Submachine Gun, Cal. 9 mm.

Solothurn-Type Submachine Gun, Cal. 7.63 mm.

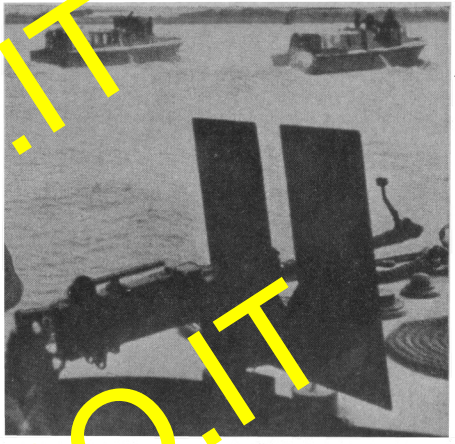


Czech Praga—Z. B.—Type Light Machine Gun, M2596, Cal. 6.5 mm.

Japanese Automatic Arms as employed in initial stages of landing operations have consisted wholly of these derivations of foreign designs. The infantry squad light machine guns (M2596 and Nambu) and the heavy Taisho 3 (or 1914 version of the Juki) fire 6.5-mm. ammunition. Deficient in stopping power this .256 cartridge is advantageous only in lightness of ammunition in mass, and in lack of recoil, permitting the M2596 to be fired from the hip as a makeshift submachine gun. As fired from the Arisaka long rifle, the 6.5 mm. is noteworthy in that almost complete combustion takes place, resulting in no flash at night. Newer 7.7 (cal. .303) rounds as employed in the Juki but not in the belts of the Vickers aircraft guns sometimes mounted on landing barges, are rimless, and are not to be confused with rimmed British .303 cartridges. The "tommy" guns are of European make.

Hotchkiss Nambu Light Machine Gun, Taisho 11, 6.5 mm.

Japanese Weapons represent a mixture of the modern with the obsolete, the copy of foreign design—even the use of foreign made arms—with the originality of native products. Japanese adaptability and capacity to improvise are further indicated by their utilization of arms captured from United Nations forces. British and Netherlands automatic weapons have been found in Japanese hands on Guadalcanal and in New Guinea, along with some German antitank guns taken from the Chinese. The automatic weapons include British Lewis guns of .303 caliber (possibly favored because they fire the same cartridge as Japanese 7.7-mm. aircraft machine guns), Dutch 6.5-mm. Madsen short-barreled light machine guns, and Colt automatic rifles. Belgian made, these Colts are a version of the Browning auto-rifle.



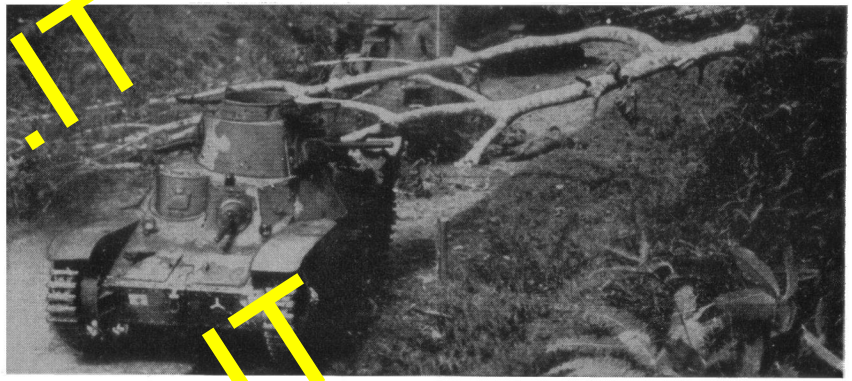
Vickers Aircraft Machine Gun, 7.7 mm.

Combination Periscope-Telescopic Sight.

Solothurn-Type Antitank Rifle, Cal. 20 mm.

Hotchkiss-Type Juki Heavy Machine Gun, M2592, 7.7 mm.

Two-Man 3-Ton Tankette M2592.

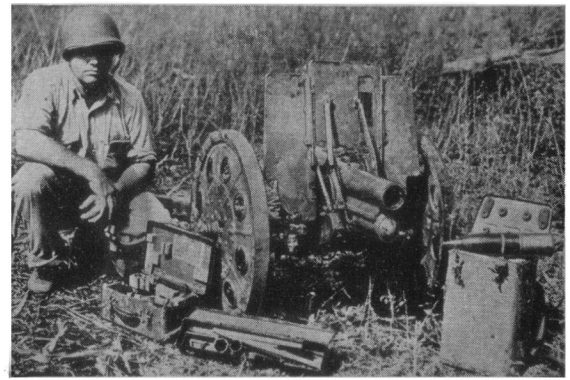


Light 7-Ton M2595 Tank With 37-mm. Guns.

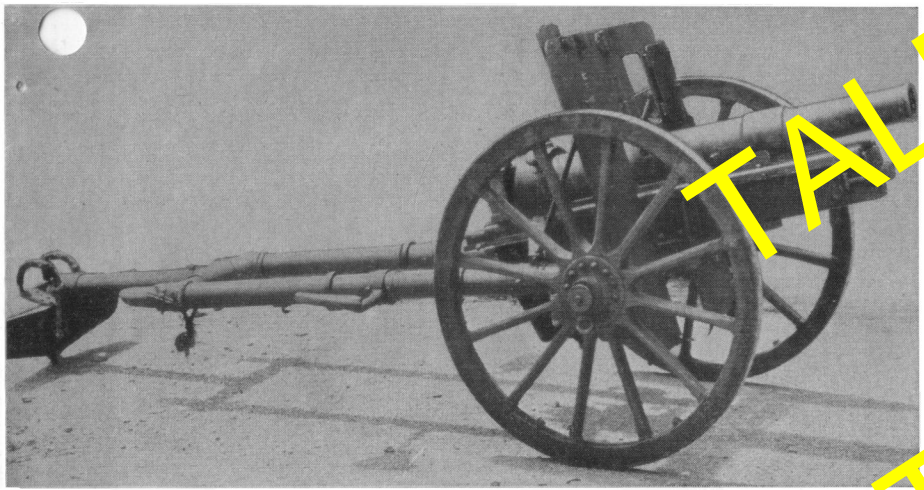
Top View of M2595 Light. Armor Is .45-in.

Infantry Gun Squad With M2592 70-mm. Howitzer

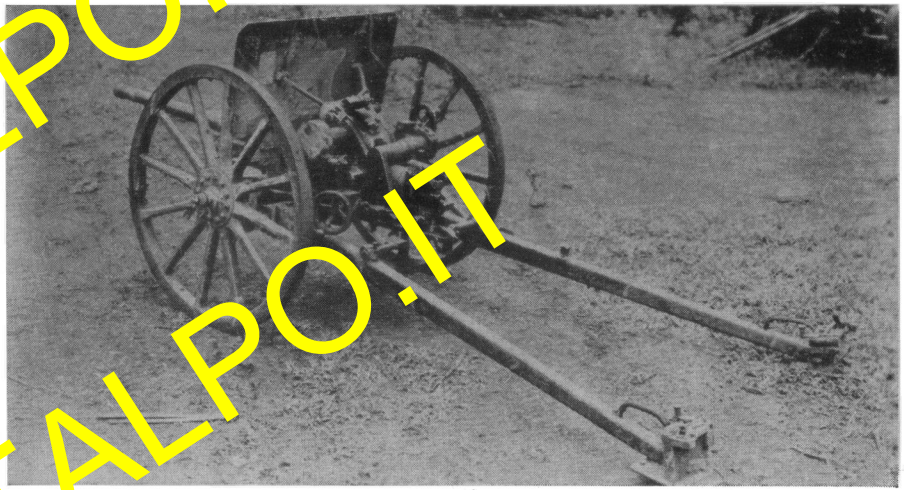
Close-support Artillery is a feature of Japanese organization closely copied from modern German doctrine. The specially designed 70-mm. howitzer is a battalion weapon; the old 1908 75-mm. gun is a regimental piece, was formerly a mountain gun.



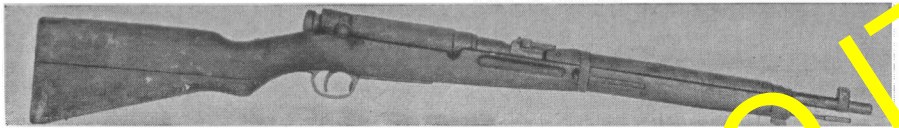
M2592 70 mm. Howitzer With Shell.



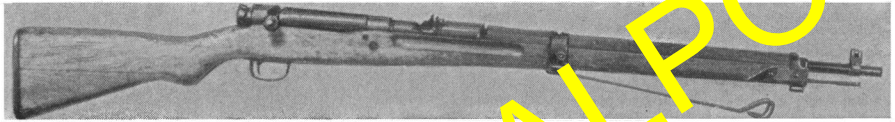
Heavy 75-mm. Infantry Gun, Meiji 41.



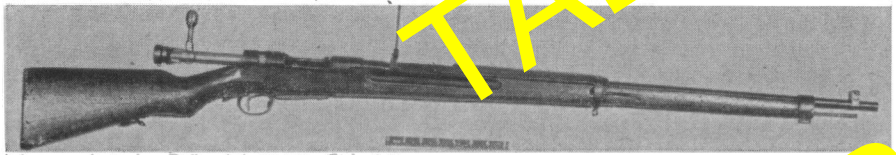
Antitank Gun M2597, Damaged by Machine Guns.



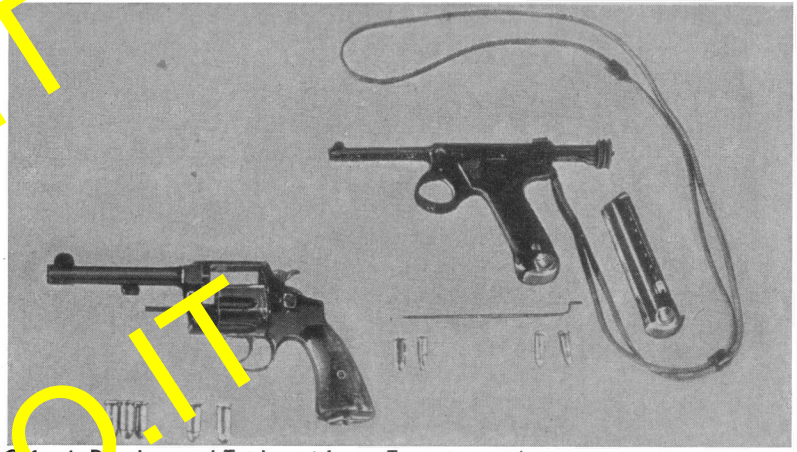
Mauser-Arisaka Carbine, Meiji 38, Cal. 6.5 mm.



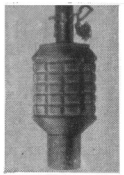
New Mauser Type Rifle M2599, Cal. 7.7 mm.



Mauser-Arisaka Rifle, Meiji 38, Cal. 6.5 mm.

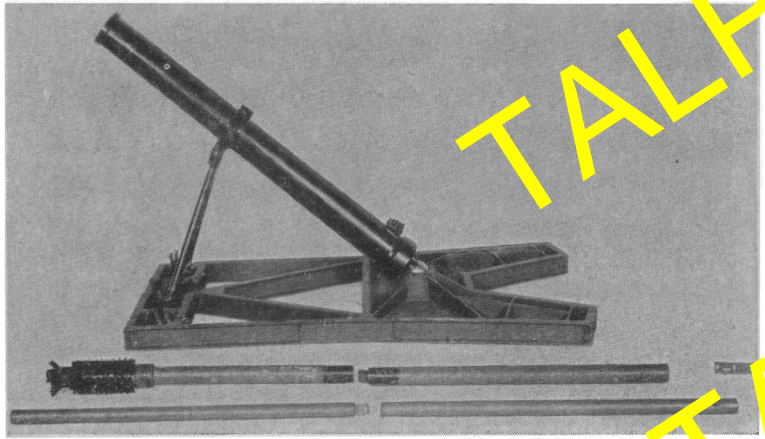


Officer's Revolver and Taisho 14 Luger-Type 8-mm. Automatic.

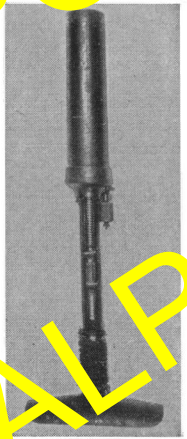


Taisho 10 Grenade.

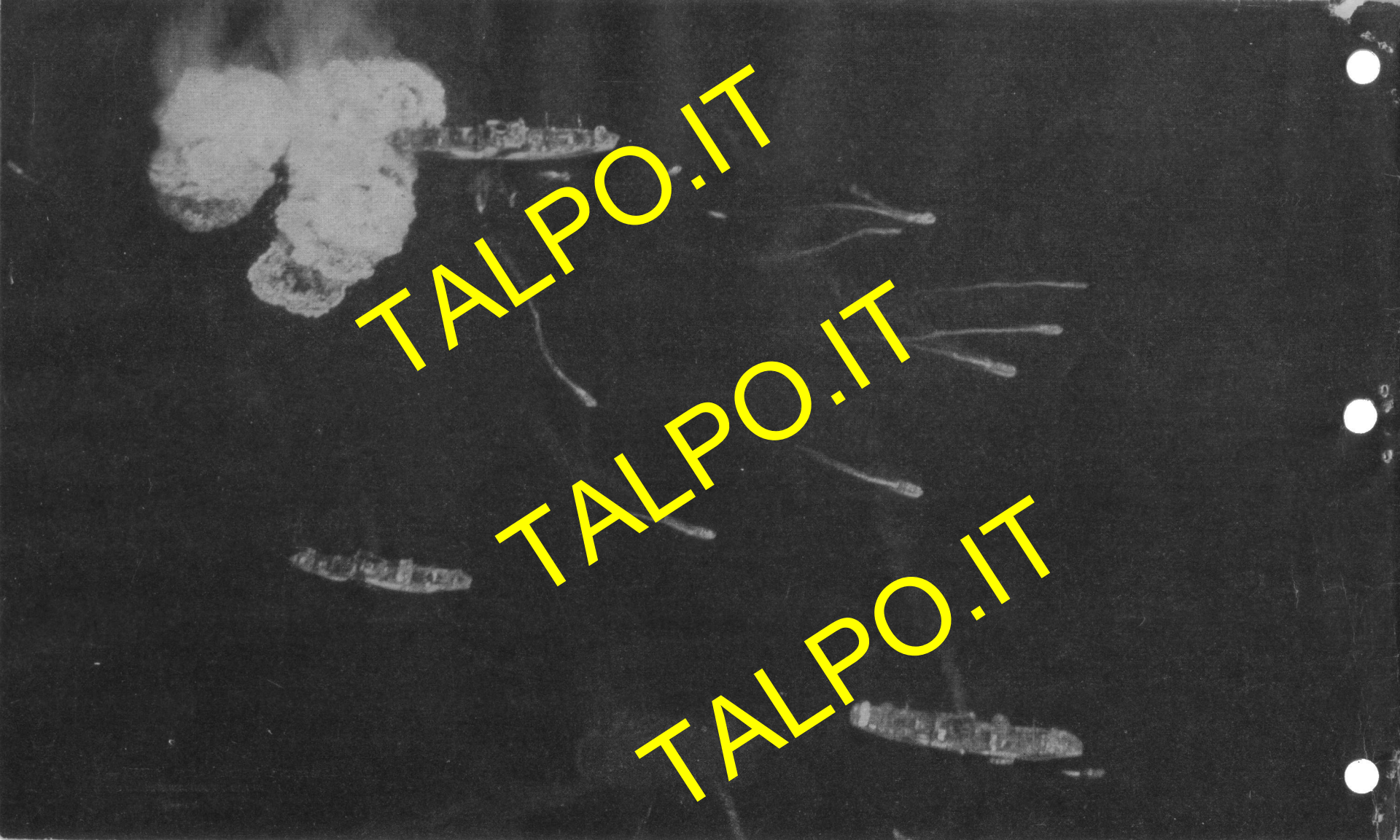
M2589 50-mm. Grenade.



Light 50-mm. Trench Mortar on Base Plate.



M2589 "Knee Mortar" 50-mm. Grenade Dischargers: Taisho 10s Similar.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