



parted for the South Pacific with a large troop convoy. The Marines carried aboard the troop transports were the now famous First Marine Division and the First Marine Raider and Parachute Battalions. The long trip to Tonga Island in the Friendly Island group was marred by the loss of two men swept overboard by a freak wave which struck next to the port torpedo tubes. The assembled Task Forces conducted a dress rehearsal on the Fiji Islands and headed for Tulagi in the Solomons.

Raids by carrier-based aircraft and bombardment by cruisers had been initiated earlier in the war when Admiral William F. Halsey, U.S.N., led a force of two carriers, six cruisers and 10 destroyers against the Marshall and Gilbert Islands. Fast carriers continued strikes against widely separated island bases through February, March and April, highlighted by the take-off of General Doolittle's small force of B-25's from the HORNET on April

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