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GEOGRAPHIC LOCATION OF US APOs 31 AND 323 IN NETHERLANDS NEW GUINEA

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Some confusion exists regarding the location of US APOs 31 and 323. Shaffer (1979) lists both as occurring briefly at "Toem, Ceram, Moluccas". APO 31 opened there July 11, 1944 and closed sometime in early September, reopening on Morotai on September 23, 1944. APO 323 opened at Toem September 24, 1944. APO 323 opened at Toem September 24, 1944 and closed in early February 1945. Rabarts (1977) listed "Toem or Tum" as being one of several locations in Netherlands New Guinea where American forces had established Army Post Offices. He was unable to identify where in Netherlands New Guinea Toem was located, but noted that a town by the name of Tum was located on Ceram in the Moluccas. He also pointed out that no American forces occupied Ceram until after Japan's surrender in September, 1945 and felt that Ceram was therefore not the location of the APOs in question. He further theorized that the location might be at "Tiom", a small settlement in the Baliem Valley of the central mountain area, but pointed out that there would have been no reason why American forces would have been stationed in so remote an area.

As noted by Shaffer, and as shown below, APO 31 was used by the US 31st Infantry Division. Smith (1953) records that the 31st Division began arriving in force at Toem on July 14, 1944, and that it left in early September for Morotai, where it participated in the September 15 invasion. After the 31st Division left Toem, control of the area passed to other units, until the last Americans left the area for good on February 6, 1945. These dates match the dates given by Shaffer for the usage periods of APOs 31 and 323 at Toem, with APO 323 replacing APO 31 after the 31st Division left. Smith further documents that Toem was located on the northeast coast of Netherlands New Guinea on the mainland directly opposite Wakde Island (see Figure 2), about 8 miles east of Maffin bay (a major staging area for the Morotai invasion), 6 miles east of the mouth of the Tor River, and about 2 miles east of Arare (landing area for the Wakde invasion). Toem's geographical co-ordinates are approximately 1°59'S, 138°59'E, but whether the name has changed since 1945 is not known.

LITERATURE CITED

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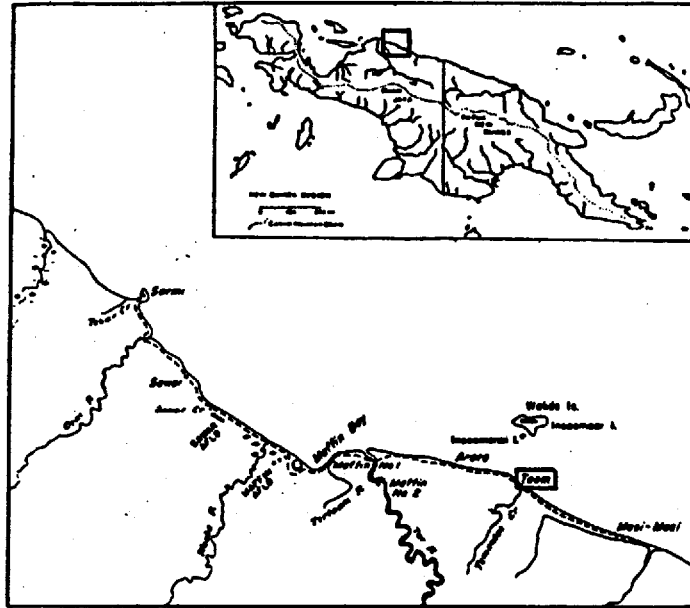
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10-5120-1		

Cover from APO 31, August 22 1944, mailed at Toem,
Netherlands New Guinea

NOTE

Cover illustrated below from Alan Jennings (U.K.) shows APO 323 on 28 February 1945 which by that time had moved location to Hollandia. Further contributions from members on this welcomed. Ed.



Location of Toem on northeast coast of
Netherlands New Guinea

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