
Documents 1625A

The Nassau Fleet, according to various English collections of voyages

Sources (See bibliography for general reference on the collections of voyages): 1) Anon. A True Relation of the Fleete which went under the Admirall Jaquis Le Hermite through the Straights of Magelane towards the Coasts of Peru, and the Towne of Lima in the West-Indies [sic], London, Mercurius Brittanicus, 1625 (33 pages only); I have found this book in the rare book division of the Lenox Library, NYPL, under #KC1625; 2) Kerr's Collection, Vol. X, Part II, Book IV, Chap. VII, which is based on the next two; 3) Harris' Collection, Vol. I, pp. 66 et seq.; 4) Callander's Collection, Vol. II, pp. 286 et seq., itself based mostly on De Brosse's Collection; 5) Captain Burney, vol. 3, chap. 1, pp. 33-35.

A1. The first printed news of the Nassau Fleet

A True Relation of the successe of the Fleet which went under the Admirall Jaquis Le Hermite...¹

[Unfortunately, since this book was printed in 1625, the fleet had only reached Peru by that time. So, nothing is said about Micronesia. The book mentions that the original fleet consisted of 11 ships, 7 of which were newly-built. As for Admiral L'Hermite, by the time he reached Lima, he had "his leggs very thicke being swolne". He soon died and the vice-admiral "John Hugen", i.e. Schapenham, took over as admiral.² Also, in Lima, the Spanish captured at least 4 Dutchmen and some Frenchmen from the Dutch ships and tortured them to get information before releasing them.]

1 Ed. note: The title inside the book is slightly different from the one on the cover.

2 The new vice-admiral was the former rear-admiral, Verschoor.

A2. Extract from Kerr's edition

Voyage of the Nassau Fleet round the world, in 1623-1626, under the command of Jaques Le Hermite.

Introduction. The government of the United Netherlands, considering it proper to distress their arch enemy the king of Spain by every means in their power, determined upon sending a powerful squadron into the South Sea, to capture the ships of his subjects, to plunder the coasts of his dominions, and to demolish his fortifications. Accordingly, in autumn 1622, a final resolution for this purpose was entered into the States General, with the concurrence of their stadtholder, Prince Maurice of Orange, who even advanced a considerable sum of money towards it from his own funds; and a fleet of no less than eleven ships of war, besides smaller vessels, were ordered to be fitted out for the expedition, by the several admiralties of the Union and the East India Company. This fleet was in condition for putting to sea in spring 1623, when the command was intrusted to Jaques Le Hermite, an able and accomplished seaman of great experience, who had been long in the service of the East India Company, and was now appointed admiral of the fleet; Hugo Schapenham being vice-admiral. The ships fitted out on this occasion by the admiralty of Amsterdam were:

1. The **Amsterdam** of 800 tons, admiral, carrying 20 brass cannon and 22 iron, with 237 men, commanded by Leenders Jacobson Stolk, as captain, Peter Wely being supercargo, Engelbert Schutte commander of the soldiers on board, Frederick van Reneygom fiscal or judge-advocate, John van Walbeck, engineer, and Justin van Vogelair, engineer extraordinary.¹

2. The **Delft** of 800 tons, vice-admiral, having 20 brass and 20 iron cannon, with 242 men, commanded by captain Cornelius de Witte.²

3. The **Eagle** of 400 tons, captain Meydert Egbertson, of 12 brass and 16 iron cannon, with 144 men.³

4. A yacht called the **Greyhound** [actually Winthont] of 60 tons, captain Solomon Willelmson, carrying 4 brass cannon and 20 men.⁴

1 Ed. note: More or less the same order as aboard Spanish ships, except that the supercargo would have been called factor or steward, the commander of soldiers would have been called constable (or simply by his army rank), the fiscal called inspector, and the engineer (including the supernumerary) called master gunner. Of course, the admiral ship (i.e. the flagship) was called the captain ship (*capitana*) by the Spanish, and the vice-admiral ship was called the admiral ship or *almiranta*, the admiral being called general, and the vice-admiral simply admiral.

2 Ed. note: Delft is the name of a Dutch city, famous for its porcelain goods.

3 Ed. note: Eagle is the English translation of its Dutch name, which was possibly Adler.

4 Ed. note: This yacht was purposely burned off Acapulco and therefore was not present at Guam.

The admiralty of Zealand fitted out only one ship for this expedition:

5. The **Orange** of 700 tons, captain Laurence John Quirynen, and carrying likewise the rear-admiral, John William Verschoor. Her complement of men was 216.¹

The admiralty of the Maes furnished the following ships:

6. The **Holland** of 600 tons and 182 men, carrying 10 pieces of brass and 20 of iron ordnance. In this ship was Cornelius Jacobson, who was counsellor to admiral Le Hermite, but the ship was immediately commanded by captain Adrian Troll.

7. The **Maurice** [actually Mauritius] of 360 tons and 169 men, having 12 brass and 20 iron cannon, commanded by captain James Adrianson.

8. The **Hope** [actually Hoop] of 260 tons and 80 men, with 14 iron cannon, captain Peter Hermanson Slobbe.

The admiralty of North Holland also provided the following ships:

9. The **Concord** [actually Eendracht] of 600 tons and 170 men, with 18 brass and 14 iron cannon, captain John Ysbrandtz.

10. The **King David** of 360 tons and 79 men, with 16 pieces of brass cannon, captain John Thomason.

11. The **Griffin** of 320 tons, and 78 men, with 14 iron cannon, captain Peter Cornelison Hurdloop.

The whole of this fleet of eleven sail, carrying 294 pieces of cannon, had 1,687 men, of whom 600 were regular soldiers, divided into five companies of 120 men in each. The East India Company contributed largely to the expense, but does not appear to have equipped any ships on this occasion.²

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[Guam episode]

On the 23d [January 1625] the scurvy had made much progress, that there were hardly men enough to work the ships.

In the evening of the 25th, there were off the coast of **Guam**, one of the Ladrões or Mariane islands, the inhabitants coming two leagues out to sea to meet them, with all sorts of refreshments, which they exchanged for old iron, and next morning 150 canoes came off with fruits and garden stuffs.

On the 27th a good watering-place was found, where fifty soldiers were landed to protect the seamen.

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- 1 Her number of guns is not mentioned, but she could hardly have less than 36 from her size.
 - 2 Ed. note: The story of the navigation from Holland to California will be summarized later. Suffice to say for now that, before getting to Guam, the fleet sighted an island labelled *Galperico* on their chart; it was Gaspar Rico, or **Taongi** Island. There were other small vessels in the fleet, for instance, the yacht *Violence* which was also burned near Acapulco. Another yacht, the *Jager* [Hunter] did cross the Pacific.

In the beginning of February, the natives brought them considerable quantities of rice, giving 70 or 80 pounds weight in exchange for an old hatchet.

On the 5th, by a general muster, 1260 men were found to remain in the fleet, including 32 Spanish and Negro prisoners, so that they had lost 409 since leaving Holland.

The island of Guam, Guaham, or Guaci [sic], one of the group named by the Spaniards *Islas de las Velas*, *Ladrones*, or *Mariane* Islands, is in lat. 13°40' N.¹ The soil is tolerably fertile, producing vast quantities of cocoas, and the natives grow rice in several places. The Dutch procured here about 2,000 fowls,² but the natives would not part with their cattle for any price.³ The people of this island are larger than other Indians, strong and well-proportioned, and are mostly painted red,⁴ the men going entirely naked, and the women having a leaf to cover their nakedness. Their arms are *assagaies*,⁵ or javelins, and slings, both of which they use with great dexterity. Their canoes are very convenient, and go before the wind at a great rate; neither are these islanders afraid of putting to sea even in a storm; as, in case of their vessels being overset, they turn them up again immediately, and bale out the water. They were also very expert in cheating; for when the Dutch came to examine the bags of rice they had bought so cheap, they found the insides full of stones and dirt; besides which, they stole every thing they could lay hold of. Such persons also as land on this island out to be very cautious, as the Dutch had several of their people slain here, through their own folly.

1 Ed. note: Since the fleet was stationed before Cetti Bay, at lat. 13°19' N., the author's position (while anchored) was estimated 21 minutes too high, unless he gives a position for the northern end of the island.

2 Ed. note: Misprint for 200 (see the other accounts).

3 Ed. note: Apparently, the Dutch did not find the cause; there were no quadrupeds on the island.

4 Ed. note: Slight misrepresentation by Kerr. The natives were tawny in color, not painted or tattooed.

5 Ed. note: This is not a Chamorro word, but a variation of an Old French word *sagaie*, itself derived from Arabic *az-zaghaya*.

[Ulithi sighted]

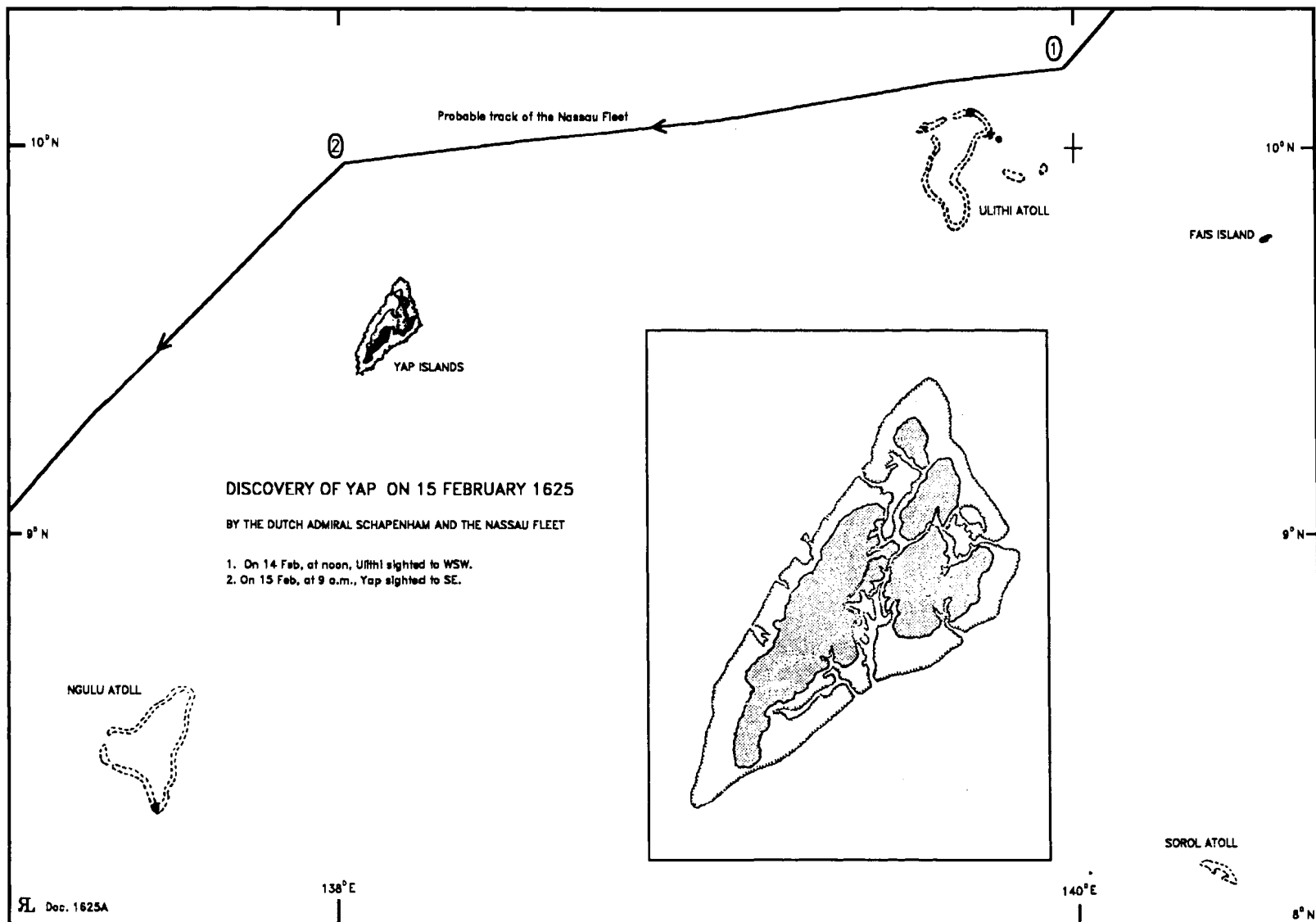
Proceeding on their voyage, they saw an island on the 14th of February, in the latitude of 10°30' N which they took to be the island of *Saavedra*.¹

[Discovery of Yap]

Next day, about 9 in the morning, they saw another island, not laid down in the charts, in lat. 9°45'N² the natives of which came out to them in canoes with fruits and other refreshments, but as the ships were sailing at a great rate, they were not able to get on board. The people seemed much like those of Guam, and the island seemed very populous and highly cultivated.³

It was now resolved to continue their course to the island of Gilolo, and thence to Ternate. The 2d March, they had sight of the high mountain of Gammanacor[a], on the coast of Moco [rather Moro], at the [north-]west end of the great island of Haremanera [Halmahera] or Gilolo, on the west side of which the Molucca islands are situated. They arrived at Malaya [rather Malayo], the principal place in Ternate, on the 4th in the evening. The 5th, or, according to the computation of the inhabitants, the 6th,⁴ Jacob Le Fevre, [Dutch] governor of the Moluccas, came to visit the admiral, from Taluco, where he then resided. The fleet proceeded on the 4th of April to Amboina, and on the 28th sailed for Batavia, where they arrived on the 29th of August. here the fleet was separated, part being sent on an expedition against [Portuguese] Malacca, and others to other places, so that here the voyage of the Nassau fleet may be said to end, without having completed the circumnavigation, at least in an unbroken series.⁵

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- 1 Ed. note: In Kerr's time (1814), an island with this name still appeared on the charts in a position he gives as 10°50' N and long. 133°50' E of Greenwich. The latitude given in the text is 25 minutes too high, but that may have been the latitude of the ship itself. As for the longitude on Kerr's English chart, it was understated by at least 1° for Guam, and we now find that Saavedra was laid down 6° west of the true position of Ulithi.
 - 2 Ed. note: We can expect the pilot to have been more careful in estimating the latitude of this newly-found island, which he must have derived from his noon sighting three hours later. Still we find that he was quite accurate, being only 5 minutes north of the actual latitude of the northern tip of Yap. The island does in fact lie between 9°45' and 9°40' N.
 - 3 Ed. note: De Broses (vol. 3, p. 450) adds that the natives has long black hair and some curious ornaments around their bodies, no doubt a reference to the traditional Yapese loin-cloths.
 - 4 Ed. note: Remember that the International Date Line did not yet exist, but the Moluccas followed the Portuguese, i.e. European, dates.
 - 5 Ed. note: De Broses adds that Schapenham decided to return to Europe with the rest of his fleet but died four days out of Batavia, before the ships had come out of the Sunda Strait. His ships nevertheless reached the Texel on 9 July 1626. As for Adolph Decker, the author followed by De Bry in the Latin edition of the Voyage, he stayed behind in Batavia for two more years.



A3. Extract from Callander's edition

[Departure from Acapulco]

On November 1st [1624], the ships sailed out of port, and the fortress discharged several pieces of cannon, but without doing them any hurt. In the evening, a great detachment was sent, under the command of the Vice-admiral, to anchor twenty leagues to the west of Acapulco, in order to look out for the [Manila] galleon, to give her chase; and if they could not come up with her, to force her into the fleet.

On the 2d, the Admiral, and the **Orange**, remaining still before the port, the rest of the ships spread along the coast, that they might be sure of meeting with the vessel they expected.

On the 3d and 4th, the shallops belonging to the Admiral, and to the Orange, went to take in water at Puerto del Marques, which is a league and a half from Acapulco.¹

On the 7th, Captain de Witte being at the watering-place with his shallop, the enemy attacked his men from an ambuscade; the Dutch immediately fled to their vessel, and reimbarqued; a soldier reached the shore just as the boat had put off; but Captain de Witte ordered them to row back, going himself on shore to save the poor man, which cost him a wound in the side, of which, however, he happily recovered.

On September [rather November] 21st, the Vice-admiral's squadron appeared in sight; and, on the 22d, they sent a yacht to acquaint the Admiral, that six of their soldiers having deserted, they had seen six hundred Spaniards the next day, advancing towards the shore, who, they conceived, had a design to surprize their men at the watering-place; but, by good luck they were all imbarked.

From the 24th to the 28th, the fleet continued cruising to the westward, in hopes of finding the Islands called Ladrilleros,² which, in a Spanish Journal,³ were said to lie forty leagues to the west of Acapulco; and that they might there meet with water, fish, and potatoes, in abundance. The Dutch, however, sailed twice that space without being able to find them, which, whether it was owing to any mistake in the Spanish charts, or to the ignorance of the Dutch pilots, is uncertain.

On the 29th, they burned their two yachts, the **Greyhound** and the **Violence**, because they could hardly swim any longer; and so resolved to proceed with all the diligence imaginable to the East Indies.

On January 15th, 1625, they saw some very low land towards the west, over which the sea broke with great fury, which they took to be the coast of the Island of Galperico [Taongi].

On the 23d, the scurvy had prevailed to such a degree, that they had scarce men enough in health to work the ships.

1 Ed. note: Actually it is on the eastern lip of Acapulco Bay (See modern map in Doc. 1615A).

2 Ed. note: Literally, the Brick-makers, probably a site with clay deposits where bricks were being made.

3 Ed. note: There were Spanish pilots on board some of the ships, some volunteers, others prisoners.

[Guam episode]

In the evening of the 25th, they were on the coast of the Island of **Guan**, one of the *Ladrones*, the inhabitants of which came two leagues to meet them, with all sorts of refreshments the Island afforded, which they exchanged for old iron. The next morning there came off 150 canoes, with fruits and garden-stuff. On the 27th, the Vice-admiral, with half the soldiers, attempted to land on a small island, about three leagues to the south of the road, but found it impracticable.¹ In the mean time, the Rear-admiral had coasted the bay, and found a very good watering-place. On the 28th, they landed fifty soldiers to protect the seamen, while they were filling water; and the next day it was found necessary to strengthen that detachment, which had been insulted by the natives. In the beginning of the month of February, they brought considerable quantities of rice on board, and sold seventy or eighty pounds weight for an old hatchet. On the 5th, the Admiral directed a general review, when, including Spanish and Negro prisoners, of which there were thirty-two, they found 1,260 on board, by which it appeared they had lost 409 since they left Holland.

The Island of Guan, which is one of those styled by the Spaniards, *Islas de las Velas*, or *Ladrones*, lies in 13 degrees, 40 minutes, north latitude. The soil is tolerably fertile; they sow rice in several places, and have prodigious quantities of cocoas. The inhabitants sold the Dutch 200 fowls, but they would not let them have any cattle, though they offered them any satisfaction. The people are of a larger size than other Indians, and very strong and well proportioned; they are, generally speaking, painted [sic] red. The men go stark naked, but the women have the leaf of a tree to cover their privities. The arms they use are assagies [sic], or wooden javelins, and slings, which they use with great dexterity. Their canoes are very convenient, and go at a great rate before the wind. Neither are they afraid to put to sea in stormy weather, but, in case they are overset, turn up their vessels again, and empty the water in an instant. The Dutch experienced their dexterity in another profession, viz, that of cheating; for, when they came to examine those balls of rice, which they thought they had bought so cheap, they found inside of them stones and dirt. Besides, they stole every thing that they could lay their hands on. Such as land in this island, ought to be extremely cautious how they ramble; for the Dutch, while they remained here, lost several of their people, through their own folly in this respect.

[Ulithi sighted]

On February 14th, they saw an Island, in 10 degrees, 30 minutes, which they took to be that of Saavedra, which if it was, then it is wrong laid down in the charts.

[Discovery of Yap]

On the 15th, about nine in the morning, they saw another island not laid down in the charts, the people of which endeavored to come out to them in canoes with fruits

1 Ed. note: Cocos Island, south of the open roads centered on Umatac.

and refreshments. They were much of the same size with the inhabitants of the Ladrões, but, the ship[s] sailing at a great rate, they were not able to get on board. This island appeared to be very populous, and extremely well cultivated, lying in the latitude of nine degrees, forty-five minutes.

The 23d, it was resolved in council, that they should continue their course south south-west to the height of three degrees, in order to arrive at Gilolo, and from thence to continue their voyage to Ternate. The same day, at noon, they had an observation, by which they perceived, that the currents carried them violently to the north, for the northern trade-wind began then to blow, the effects of which they felt very sensibly.

On March 2d, they had sight of the high mountain of Gammanacor, which is on the coast of Moco [Moro], at the [north-]west end of Haremanera, or the great island of Gilolo, on the west side of which lie the islands of the Moluccas.

A4. Extract from Captain Burney's edition

The Nassau Fleet.

December 15th [1624], the latitude was 15°15' N.¹

The Nassau Fleet was 57 days from the coast of New Spain to making the Ladrone Islands. In the course of this passage, on January the 15th (1625) they saw land before them to the West, extremely low; and surrounded with reefs over which the surf broke so high that it was judged dangerous to approach with the fleet. This land the Hollanders judged to be the Islands of **Gaspar Rico**. It is however more probable that they fell in with the island or islands and shoals of **San Bartolomé**.² No latitude is given in the Journal for a month before making them; and in ten days afterwards, the fleet came in sight of **Guahan**, one of the Ladrões. It is to be supposed that in all the latter part of the passage from New Spain, they sailed in or near the parallel of Guahan. In the title page to the German translation, is a planisphere Map of the World, whereon the track is described; the Map is indeed on a very small scale, and was evidently designed chiefly for decoration; but as far as it may be taken for authority, it shews that the fleet sailed in the parallel of Guahan a considerable time before making the island, and consequently that their track was much nearer to the San Bartolomé than to the Gaspar Rico islands.

[Guam episode]

In the evening of January the 25th, they had sight of Guahan, and the next morning, above 150 canoes came to them from the shore, to traffic with cocoa-nuts and yams. These were welcome visitors; for the scurvy had broke out and got to such a height in the fleet, that in some of the ships there was scarcely strength enough left to manage the sails. In the afternoon the fleet anchored on the West side of Guahan, in depths

1 Ed. note: This effectively rules out Wake Island as the island they sighted north of the Marshalls.

2 Ed. note: Both of these names correspond to the same island, Taongi.

from 10 to 30 fathoms, sandy bottom, at the distance of a cannon shot and a half from the shore.

On a review which the Admiral made here of the fleet, the number of men mustered amounted to 1,260, in which number were included 32 prisoners, part Spaniards, part Indians.

At Guahan, the fleet watered, and in exchange for iron, procured rice, fowls, coconuts, yams, potatoes, and bananas. Cocoa-nuts were here in inexhaustible quantities; rice was cultivated in many places, and the natives sold it by weight, in bales of between 70 and 80 lbs. each; but not one bale was found which had not been increased in weight by the addition of sand and stones. The people of Guahan were stouter than the people of Ternate. It was not found safe for the Hollanders to ramble about the island singly or unprovided with arms. The canoes of the Ladroners were remarked for being well made and well adapted for sailing near the wind.

[Ulithi sighted]

February the 11th, the fleet sailed from Guahan for the Moluccas.

The course steered by the compass on leaving Guahan is not stated. On the 14th, at noon, according to the Journal, they were in latitude 10°30' N, at which time an island was seen to the WSW, about eight German miles distant, which they supposed to be one of the Isles of Saavedra.

[Discovery of Yap]

The next morning (the 15th) at 9 o'clock, they saw another island to the SE, which was high land like Guahan. Its latitude was estimated to be 9°45' N. The NE and NW points were four German miles distant one from the other; and from what was seen, the island was judged to be of the like extent in breadth. From the NE point, a great reef stretches about two German miles into the sea.¹

This island was inhabited, and appeared well cultivated and populous. Some canoes put off from the shore, and paddled towards the fleet, but the breeze was fresh, and the ships sailed too fast for them to come up. The people in the canoes had long black hair, and in size and appearance resembled the Ladrone islanders. The fleet continued its route for the Moluccas with the wind from the NE, going cautiously and under small sail by night.

The 23d at noon, by the latitude observed [what that was the Journal does not specify] it was found that currents had set strong towards the North, although the Northern monsoon was then blowing. It was therefore determined by the council, that the course should be SSW to latitude 3° N; that they would then steer to make the land of Gilolo, and afterwards for the Moluccas.

1 *Journal van de Nassausche Vloot*, p. 93. Ed. comment: There may have been a misprint in the original journal to the effect that NW point should have read SW point, hence the length of the island, as seen from a ship NW of the island.

The 25th at noon, the latitude was 6°20' N.

The 26th, continuing the course SSW, the latitude was 4° N; and on the 27th, they were in 2°45' N.

The 28th, they made the land of Morotai, bearing West, distant six German miles.

The Journal gives no other particulars of the navigation from Guahan to Morotai than what are recited above. They are of consequence only as they help to indicate the situations of the islands discovered on the 14th and 15th of February. It is evident the course of the fleet from Guahan until the 23d, was more westerly than SSW. Assuming a SW course to the 14th, and the rate of sailing to have been uniform, will give the longitude of the two islands about 3-1/2 degrees West from the anchorage at Guahan; and their relative positions nearly North and South of each other.¹

March the 2d, the fleet came in sight of the mountain of Gammacanor, on the Island Bachian [sic], and on the 4th, anchored at Ternate.

Here the voyage of the Nassau Fleet may be considered to have terminated...

1 Ed. note: The difference in longitude between Guam and Ulithi is more like 5°, and the relative positions of Ulithi and Yap is more nearly East and West of each other.