

A Brief History Of The 2d Marines



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A Brief History of the 2d Marines

Revised by

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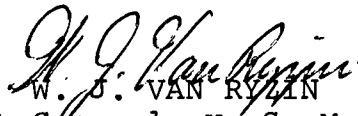
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PREFACE

"A Brief History of the 2d Marines" is a concise narrative of regiments bearing the designation "2d" prior to 1913, and of the 2d Marines since its initial organization over a half-century ago. Official records and an update of appropriate historical works were used in compiling this revised chronicle. It is published for the information of those interested in events in which the 2d Marines have participated.



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SECTION I

The Provisional Regiments

The first "2d Regiment" of Marines came into existence early in 1901 when unsettled conditions in the Far East required the presence of a Marine expeditionary force to protect American lives and property. The regiment was formed at Cavite, Philippine Islands on 1 January(1), by utilizing personnel from units recently returned to the Philippines from service during the Boxer Rebellion in China, namely, the 1st Regiment and the 4th and 5th Independent Battalions. The 2d Regiment, under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Allen C. Kelton, became part of the 1st Brigade of Marines stationed in the Philippines as a ready force to be committed wherever needed in Far Eastern Waters.(2) Following the collapse of the Philippine Insurrection, the 2d was given an additional mission of helping carry out United States Navy responsibilities for the military government of Cavite Peninsula and the Subic Bay area.

The Marines of the regiment established garrisons and outposts, and continually patrolled their assigned areas with an objective of capturing the remaining insurgents and maintaining law and order. In order to execute the regiment's military government responsibilities, officers were appointed to special duties such as captains of the ports, district commanders, inspectors of customs, internal revenue collectors, and provost judges and marshals. As the political situation in the Philippines returned to normalcy, drill, practice marches, and general field training were emphasized to a greater degree.(3)

Company F of the 2d was part of a provisional battalion sent from Cavite, on 20 October 1901, to the island of Samar (in the southern Philippines) to reinforce and cooperate with United States Army troops in operations against insurgents on the island.(4) The Samar episode was one of the last guerrilla actions that occurred during the Philippine Insurrection. By April 1902, the 1st Brigade was primarily regarded as a force-in-readiness for employment anywhere in the Asiatic area.(5) To increase the effectiveness of such expeditionary forces, the Navy Department provided necessary logistical materiel at Cavite to be used in seizing and defending a forward base.(6)

Early in 1903, the 2d Regiment provided personnel for an expeditionary force of 200 Marines, accompanied by materiel (ammunition and equipment) from the advance base depot, which participated in a Navy advance base exercise. The Marines were to seize an undefended harbor on a hypothetical enemy coast and then defend it against invading hostile forces. The Marine force occupied Grande Island, at the entrance of Subic Bay, and

mounted guns for the protection of minefields in the channels on either side of the island.

After the maneuvers had been completed, the regiment, on 5 February, provided troops for an expeditionary force of 500 men established at Olongapo to hold itself in readiness for possible future employment.(7) At this time, the bulk of the regiment moved from Cavite to Olongapo, with only one company remaining at Cavite.

The 2d continued its garrison and patrol duties during its later years in the Philippines. Routine training life in the area was from time to time interrupted by minor clashes with bandits. Marine details were frequently provided for shipboard duty in Asiatic waters, with the ships' detachments sometimes being employed ashore to protect American interests.(8) In December 1911, for instance, Companies B and C were aboard the USS Rainbow cruising off the China coast, while, at the same time, Company E was assigned ashore at Peking. In August 1912, Company A rotated for its turn of duty on the Rainbow.(9)

In January of 1914, the regiment reassigned most of its units to ships and other stations in the Far East. With the transfer of the Field and Staff (Headquarters) to the Provisional Regiment, Guam on 20 January, the 2d Regiment was formally disbanded. Although Company A was left at Peking, Company B at Cavite, and Company D at Olongapo, these companies ceased to carry "2d Regiment" as part of their designation.(10)

Prior to 1913, there were a number of temporary organizations in the Marine Corps created for specific purposes or tasks and designated as regiments. However, when a particular unit was no longer needed (its purpose or task completed) it was generally disbanded and the attached companies returned to their original stations. It was not uncommon for the Marine Corps to have two or more regiments bearing the same designation. Consequently, at the same time a "2d Regiment" was serving in the Far East, the 2d Regiment, 1st Provisional Brigade consisting of a Field and Staff, and Companies A, B, C, and F was organized at League Island, Pennsylvania on 26 December 1903.(11) The regiment embarked and sailed this same date to Panama arriving there on 3 January 1904.

The primary mission of this force in Panama was the enforcement of provisions of the Hay-Herran Treaty made with Panama on 18 November 1903 which provided for the construction of a cross-isthmus canal. The treaty provided that any and all operations by the United States would be designed to ensure a stable government in that republic, to safeguard the construction of the canal, and the operation of the railroad.(12)

The 2d Regiment, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Littleton W. T. Waller, aided in establishing and maintaining peace and

order in the republic. The Marines gained considerable knowledge of the country while on reconnaissance to make studies for defense of both the canal and city of Panama.(13) On 14 February 1904, with the regiment's mission accomplished, the 2d was disbanded at Panama and personnel were utilized to form separate battalions, one of which relocated to Guantanamo Bay, Cuba for duty.(14)

A revolution broke out in Cuba in late 1906, and a Marine expeditionary force was dispatched to the island to establish and maintain law and order.(15) As part of this force, the 4th Expeditionary Battalion was formed at League Island, Pennsylvania on 27 September 1906.(16) With Lieutenant Colonel Franklin J. Moses in command, the battalion sailed for Cuba, arriving at Camp Columbia on 8 October. Here it was reorganized and redesignated as the 2d Regiment, 1st Expeditionary Brigade.(17) Order was soon restored, and upon the arrival of United States Army troops as occupation forces on 31 October, the 2d Regiment was disbanded. The major portion of its personnel were assigned to the newly created 1st Provisional Regiment stationed in Cuba for duty with Army forces.

The 2d Expeditionary Regiment was formed at Philadelphia in mid-December 1909,(18) to assist in maintaining order in Panama during the republic's elections that year. The regiment, with Colonel Eli K. Cole commanding, departed from Philadelphia on 14 December arriving in the Canal Zone several days later. The 2d remained in the Republic of Panama until 13 April 1910, when 200 of its Marines boarded the USS Buffalo for Mare Island, California. The following day, the bulk of the regiment again embarked on the Prairie for the return trip to Philadelphia, where it arrived on 25 April and disbanded.(19)

On 9 March 1911, yet another "2d" was formed at Philadelphia. This 2d Regiment, 1st Provisional Brigade was designed for duty in Cuba because of internal disorder which threatened United States interests.(20) The men of the 2d boarded the USS Dixie on 9 and 11 March and sailed for Guantanamo arriving the 15th. Within three months, order was restored on the island, and in June, the 2d returned to the United States where it was disbanded at Philadelphia on the 14th.(21)

In the spring of 1912, revolt again flared in Cuba, and Marines were once more called to the island. On 27 May, the 2d Provisional Regiment was formed at Philadelphia and Norfolk(22) to reinforce the 1st Provisional Regiment already in Cuba. Under command of Colonel James E. Mahoney, the 2d Regiment sailed in several Navy vessels for Cuba, where Companies B, D, and E helped quell the revolt. Within two months, peace again prevailed in the island, and on 1 August the 2d Provisional Regiment was deactivated and its personnel transferred to the newly reorganized 1st Provisional Regiment in Cuba or returned to the United States.(23)

Revolution occurred in the Dominican Republic in 1911 and 1912, resulting in the customs service being interrupted, particularly along the Haitian border, where the rebels captured and held several forts. To avert further trouble, the United States sent two commissioners to the republic to look into violations of the 1907 treaty, which provided for the collection of customs by United States agents.(24) These commissioners were backed up by the 2d Provisional Regiment, commanded by Colonel Franklin J. Moses. Formed at Philadelphia on 27 September 1912(25) and comprising Companies A through F, the regiment arrived off Santo Domingo City on 2 October. For the next two months, the Marines of the regiment remained onboard the Prairie as she patrolled the waters off the city while negotiations progressed. On 1 December, after a peaceful settlement had been reached between revolutionary factions in the republic, the regiment set sail for the United States, disbanding when it arrived at Philadelphia on the 7th.(26)

The final one of these temporary "2d Regiment" organizations to be formed was designated as the 2d Regiment, 2d Provisional Brigade on 19 February 1913 at Philadelphia.(27) Headed by Colonel Joseph H. Pendleton, the regiment was originally intended for duty in Mexico as part of an expeditionary brigade. Instead, it was sent to Guantanamo Bay and held in readiness for emergency duties there, while undergoing intensive training. On 1 May, this unit was redesignated 2d Regiment, Expeditionary Force, USMC.(28) As such, it remained in Cuba until the latter part of the month, when it boarded the Prairie for the United States, arriving at Philadelphia on 1 June, when it was dissolved.(29)

SECTION II

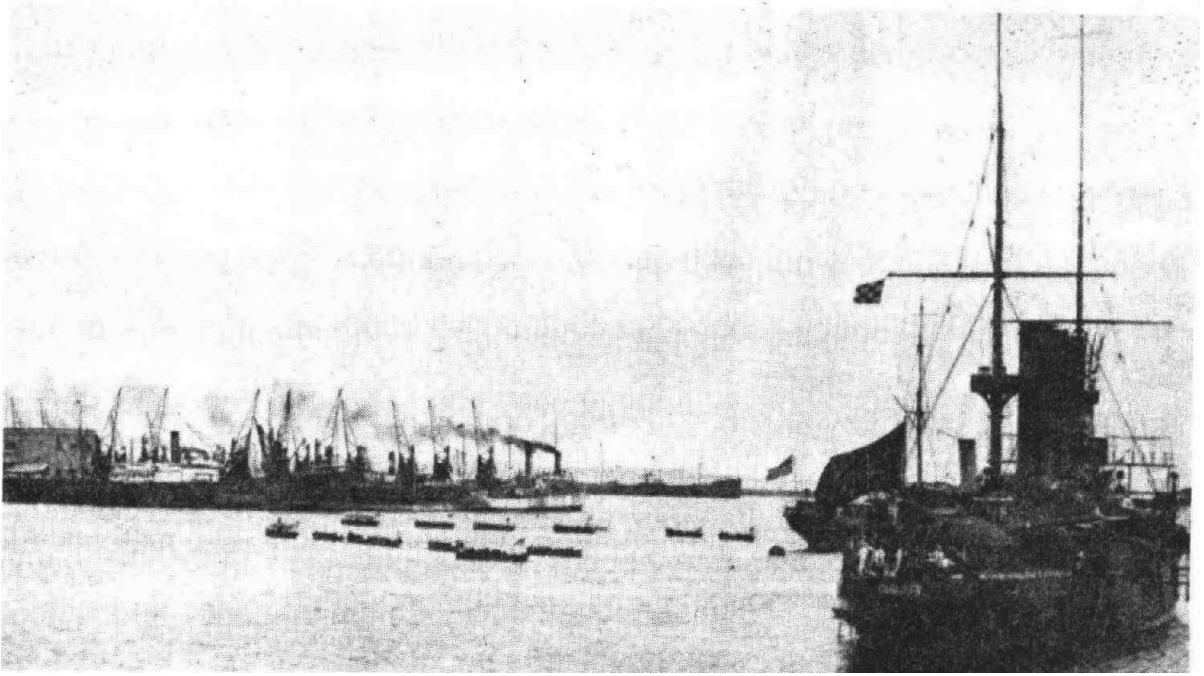
The 2d Marines

The lineage of the present day 2d Marines can be traced back to the activation of the 1st Advance Base Regiment at Philadelphia on 19 June 1913.(30) This regiment was composed of C Company, a mine company trained to handle harbor defense mines; E Company, a signal company trained in radio, telephone, telegraph, buzzers, and visual signalling; a field artillery battery which manned 3-inch field pieces; F and I Companies with responsibilities for fixed batteries to be mounted in harbor defense; and H Company which was trained both as an engineer company and as a machine gun company. The regiment was to provide the force of technical troops and equipment required for the seizure and defense of an advance base. In the beginning, the 1st Advance Base Regiment was generally referred to as the "Fixed Defense Regiment." However, each company was also thoroughly schooled in infantry weapons and tactics to ensure that all Marines were thoroughly familiar with their primary occupational specialty.

On 23 December 1913, this same regiment became part of the Advance Base Brigade formed at Philadelphia.(31) On 3 January 1914, it sailed with the brigade for maneuvers with the Atlantic Fleet at Culebra, Puerto Rico. These maneuvers, forerunners of many to come over the years, consisted of the occupation and defense of the island of Culebra by the Advance Base Brigade, with the landing force of the Atlantic Fleet acting as aggressor forces. The mission of the 1st Regiment, in defense, included emplacement of batteries of 3-inch guns on each side of the entrance to Culebra's harbor and the laying of control mines offshore. The signal company, in addition to laying mines, provided communications (telegraph and telephone) for the brigade, established radio stations, and operated day and night visual stations. The engineers assisted the fixed gun companies in the preparation of gun emplacements, built docks, and established machine gun positions on certain parts of the harbor shore line. The 1st 3-inch battery emplaced 4.7-inch guns in permanent positions, holding its 3-inch field pieces in reserve.

Upon the successful completion of these maneuvers, the regiment sailed to Pensacola, Florida and then on to New Orleans, Louisiana. Here, on 18 February 1914, the 1st Advance Base Regiment was redesignated 1st Regiment, Advance Base Brigade.(32) For the next two months, under command of Lieutenant Colonel Charles G. Long, the regiment operated onboard ship off New Orleans and Algiers, Louisiana.

The location of the regiment at this time was no accident; its operation in waters just north of Mexico was part of another



First Marine Landing Party leaves USS Prairie at Vera Cruz, 21Apr14. (USMC Photo #521570)



Marines at Vera Cruz, Mexico 1914. (USMC Photo #514627)

show of force by the United States in protest of the rule of the latest revolutionary victor in that country.(33) The Mexican situation worsened, and Marine forces were ordered to land at Vera Cruz in response to an insult to the American Flag, in order to seize the customs house and prevent the landing of arms and ammunition by belligerents. The 1st Regiment landed on 22 April and joined other forces in clearing the city.(34) Sectors of Vera Cruz were assigned to each regiment with orders to search every building for arms, to arrest all suspicious persons, and to prevent snipers from operating. The search, hampered by continuous sniping, was exhausting and difficult. On the 23d, opposition slackened with the Marines occupying a large area of the city. On 30 April, United States Army forces moved in with the Marine Advance Base Brigade. The 1st Regiment took its turn at outpost duty and used the opportunity for field training. On 23 November, its Mexican tasks completed, the regiment returned to Philadelphia.(35)

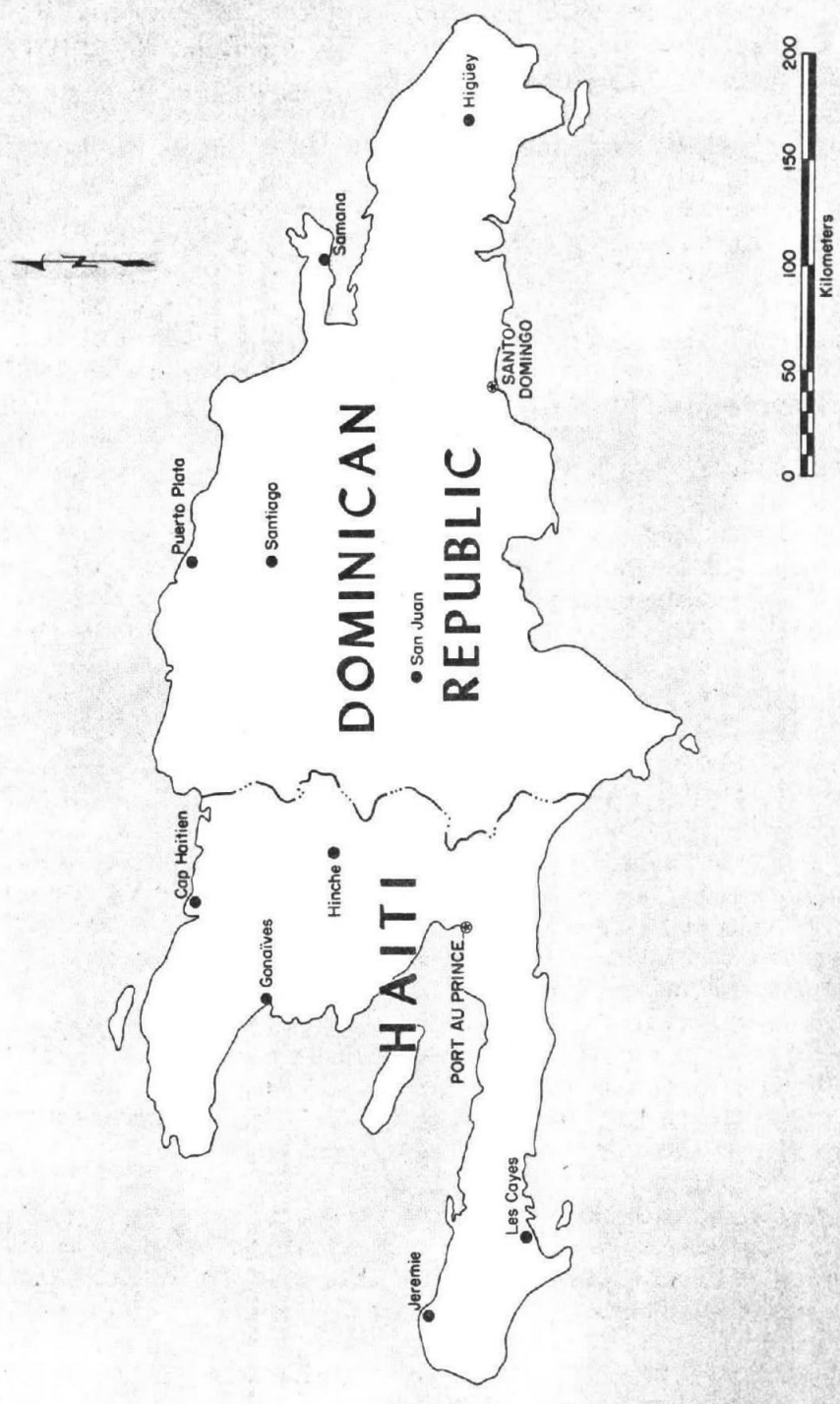
On 3 December, the entire brigade was reorganized with one regiment given the mission of fixed defense and the other, that of mobile defense. The 1st Regiment, the fixed defense regiment, was assigned a fire control unit and eight companies. These included four 5-inch gun companies, a searchlight company, a mine company, an engineer company, and an anti-aircraft company. (36) The increase of firepower inherent in this reorganization strengthened the regiment's capabilities in keeping with Navy interests for the further development of the Marine Advance Base Force.

By the summer of 1915, however, it became necessary to put aside advance base work for immediate problems. This time, the 1st Regiment, headed by Colonel Theodore P. Kane was called to reinforce Marine forces in Haiti. The policy which dictated United States intervention resulted from requests by American business interests and the chaotic conditions which then existed in Haiti. Also, the United States felt obligated by the Monroe Doctrine to protect the interests and property of foreign (European) nations.(37)

On 15 August, the 1st Regiment, minus the 2d Company which remained at Philadelphia for instruction in submarine mining, landed the 4th, 6th, and 22d Companies at Port au Prince and the 5th, 11th, 19th, and 23d Companies at Cape Haitien.(38)

In addition to rendering assistance in maintaining the economic stability of the country, the regiment carried out extensive patrolling into the interior of the country. An estimated 25,000 to 50,000 Cacos lived in the rugged mountains contiguous with the Dominican Republic. These people were soldiers of fortune who lived on the country as bandits in normal times and supported one or the other of the candidates for the presidency during revolutionary periods. The mission of the 1st Regiment in the next few months was to seek out and

HAITI / DOMINICAN REPUBLIC



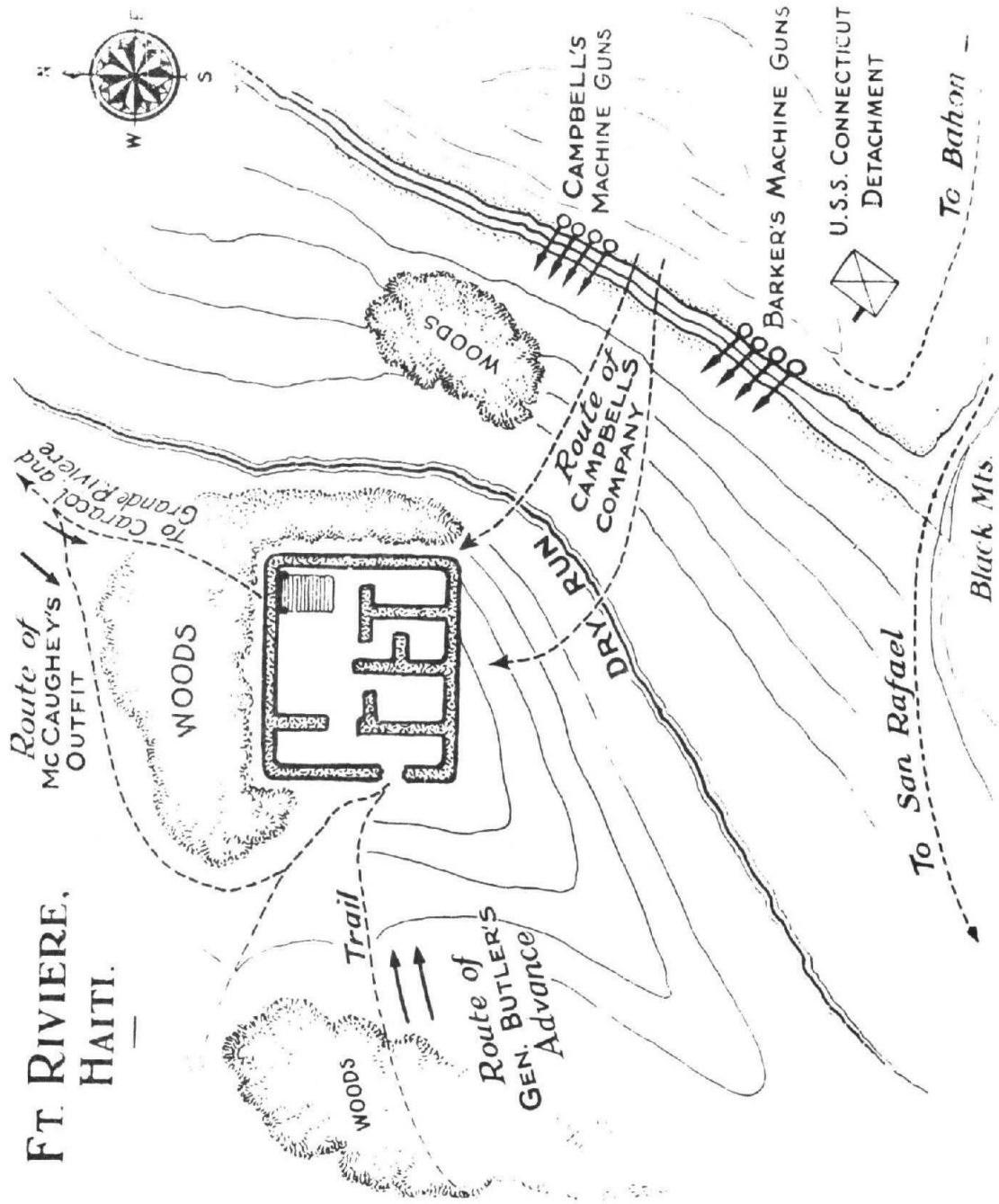
appease, or "tame" the Cacos. The Marines had many skirmishes with these rebels, with the attack and capture of Fort Riviere on 17 November being an engagement of particular note.

The fort was situated on the summit of Montagne Noir, 4,000 feet above the sea, which commanded the surrounding country for miles in every direction. The fort itself was an old French bastion of approximately 200 square feet with thick walls of brick and stone. The walls had been loopholed to command the plain at the foot of the height.

All avenues of approach had been previously closed so that no Cacos could escape. The only real difficulty encountered by the Marines, was in crossing an open plain 800 yards wide under heavy fire. Fortunately for the Marines, the fire of the Cacos was inaccurate. One company of Marines advanced while covering fire was provided by two other companies. The main entrance to the fort on the north had been sealed by the Cacos and a breach in the south wall had been made for passage. It was through this hole that the Marines forced their way, overwhelming the enemy within the fort in a vicious 10-minute, hand-to-hand fray which resulted in a total of 51 Cacos being killed, including their leader General Joseph Dorzeme Michels. The Marines suffered no casualties. The forces involved in the attack on Fort Riviere were the 5th Company (Captain W. W. Low), the 13th Company (Captain C. Campbell), Marine Detachment, Connecticut (Captain Barker), Seaman Company, Connecticut (Lt (jg) S. D. Mc Caughey) and Automatic Gun Detachment, 3d Company. The actual assault on the fort was made by the 5th Company which accounted for 29 of the 51 Cacos. The remaining 22 jumped from the fort during the hand-to-hand combat and were killed by the covering forces.

With the capture of Fort Capois shortly thereafter, Haiti became relatively stable and its inhabitants resumed more peaceful pursuits. The regiment continued to patrol and garrison a number of towns until called to the neighboring Dominican Republic where internal disorder in the early months of 1916 threatened American lives and property.

By the end of April, the 1st Regiment had joined the 1st, 9th, 13th (artillery), 14th, and 24th Companies from the 2d Regiment in Haiti, and in the early part of May, these companies, together with the 4th, 5th, 6th, and 19th Companies of the regiment were moved to Santo Domingo City to protect the American Legation and later to occupy the city during a period of insurrection. On 1 July, the companies remaining in Haiti were detached from the 1st Regiment. On this same date, the 1st Regiment was redesignated the 2d Regiment and vice versa. Consequently, the 1st Regiment, which was in Haiti, was then, through redesignation, the 2d Regiment. All lineage and honors of the old 1st Regiment than belonged to the 2d Regiment. On 1 July the 2d Regiment was comprised of Field and Staff, Naval



Capture of Fort Riviere. (USMC Photo #522218)

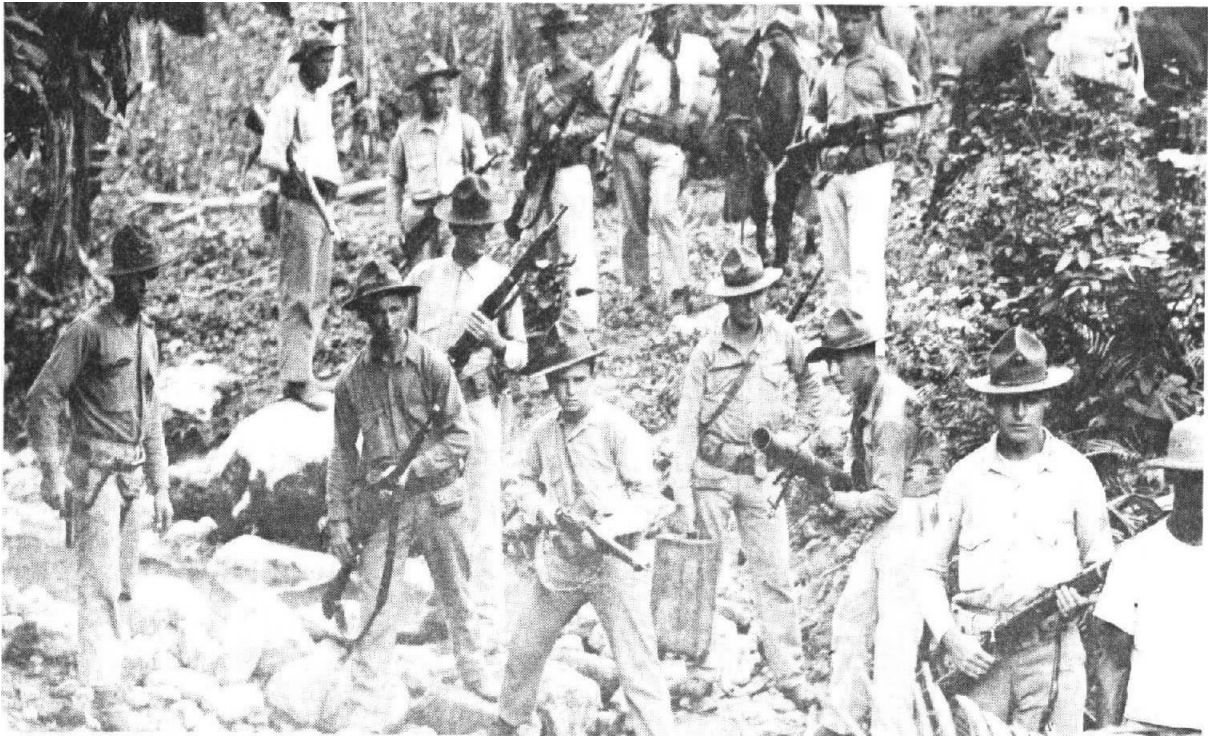
Detachment, 1st and 2d Sections of the 7th and 17th Companies, and the 15th, 16th, 20th, and 23d Companies. The 11th, 19th, and 22d Companies joined the 2d during July and the 18th Company joined on 8 September.(39) The 11th Company went on an expedition to the Dominican Republic late in July to seek arms of the revolutionists while the remaining companies remained with the 2d in Haiti. By the end of the summer, bandit activity had quieted down and the regiment settled into a more normal routine. Although some patrolling continued, the main activity centered around training the Marines of the 2d and the men of the newly organized Haitian Constabulary.(40)

The 15th Company of the regiment formed part of a mounted expedition sent to Azua, Dominican Republic, in September to quell a rebellion. On 12 November, its range firing completed, the 10th Company rejoined the regiment and was stationed at Fortaleza de San Luis, Santiago, Dominican Republic.(41)

When the decrease in bandit activity and the active participation of the United States during 1917 and 1918 in World War I, the frustrated 2d Regiment spent the war years in routine barracks duty. Occasional patrol activity and frequent changes in organization and personnel did little to alleviate the disappointment of those Marines stuck in the tropics and who were not able to take part in the great war. In the early months of 1917, the 53d, 54th, and 57th Companies joined the regiment and the 7th, 11th, 17th, 20th, and 22d Companies were detached. Later that spring, the 2d began to benefit from the war mobilization efforts of the United States. When the 16th and 23d Companies were detached on 25 May, sufficient personnel were available to organize the 64th and 65th Companies. The only notable events of the next year and a half were the frequent changes of command.

The spring of 1919, however, witnessed a considerable increase in bandit activity in Haiti. On 26 March, the 36th, 100th, 148th, and 153d Companies joined the regiment, and a month later, the 2d took to the field as the native gendarmerie was unable to contain the increasing banditry. Four of the regiment's companies operated in southern Haiti, while two companies moved into the rural areas in the central part of the island. During the month of May, all companies of the 2d Regiment, except the 148th, participated in a concerted drive to clear the republic of thieves and bandits. The 196th and 197th Companies joined the 2d in June, and both companies assisted in mopping up the bandit strongholds during the following several months.

On 17 December, the 36th, 57th, 63d, 100th, 148th, and 196th Companies were transferred to the 8th Regiment.(42) With the organization of the Supply Company on 24 January 1920, the 2d Regiment was composed of Field and Staff, Supply, 53d, 54th, 62d, 64th, 153d, and 197th Companies.(43) The Field and Staff



Marines in search of bandits in Haiti, 1919. (USMC Photo #519898)



2d Regiment in formation at MB, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 22 Feb 1932. (USMC Photo #515035)

was redesignated Headquarters Company on 1 February.

During 1920-21, with banditry finally suppressed and peace restored, the regiment continued its garrison duties with reduced personnel, assisting in the training of the native constabulary and performing other duties incident to the occupation.(44)

The years 1922-1929 were peaceful ones for the Marines of the 2d Regiment as Haiti remained quiet, with considerable progress being made in sociological and technological areas in the country. Patrolling and mapping continued as the regiment increased its knowledge of Haiti and its ways. At this same time, Marines of the 2d Regiment were thoroughly indoctrinated on how to deal with the natives. Military training occupied most of the 2d's time with frequent exercises being held.(45)

Changes in the command and organization of the regiment continued throughout the next two years. On 1 July 1924, Headquarters Company, Service Company (formerly Supply Company), and the 62d Company (recently rejoined) were reorganized.(46) Headquarters and the 62d Companies were combined into a new Headquarters Company on 3 June 1925.(47) When the 8th Regiment was disbanded in Haiti on 1 July, its Headquarters, 100th, 63d, and 64th Companies joined the 2d Regiment.(48) Headquarters Company of the 2d Regiment was redesignated Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion, 2d Regiment. Headquarters and the 100th Companies from the 8th Regiment were combined and designated Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 2d Regiment, 1st Brigade. On this same date, the 26th, 54th, and 53d (Machine Gun) Companies joined the 2d Regiment. As a result of these changes, the regiment, as of 1 July, was composed of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, 36th, 53d (Machine Gun), 63d, and 64th Companies stationed at Port-au-Prince. The 2d Battalion, composed of Headquarters and Headquarters Company, and the 54th Company, was stationed at Camp Haitien. On 1 March 1926, the 63d Company was transferred to the 2d Battalion, relieving the 54th Company, which joined the 2d Regiment at Port-au-Prince.(49)

In the fall of 1926, Marines of the regiment assisted in quelling political disturbances in Haiti, but most of the 2d's occupational activity was turned to improving the lot of the natives and developing natural resources on the island. During these latter years of its Haitian tour, the regiment assisted in building roads and schools, improving sanitary conditions, and training and supervising the native constabulary.

On 1 January 1933, as part of a Marine Corps-wide redesignation of units, the 2d Regiment was redesignated 2d Marines, its present and permanent designation.(50) On the same date, the 36th and 54th Companies were disbanded, and the 53d, 63d, and 64th Companies were redesignated Companies D, B, and C respectively.

Companies C and D were transferred to the United States on 26 July 1934, and on 8 August, Company B was disbanded. With evacuation of the 1st Brigade from Haiti, Headquarters Company of the 2d was dissolved on 15 August 1934, and the 2d Marines disappeared from the official records for nearly seven years. (51)