



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 88088

*While some Marines were deposited "feet dry" beyond the ashore in the shallows from the amtracs which brought them to the shoreline of the beaches, others had to land "feet wet" wading in from the attack transports seen in the background.*

They hit us about midnight in K company's area. They hauled by hand a couple of 75mm howitzers with them and when they got them up to where they could fire at us, they hit us very hard. I think K company did a pretty damn good job but . . . about 150, 200 Japs managed to push through [the 1,500 yards] to the beach area . . . .

When the Japs hit the rear areas, all the artillery and machine guns started shooting like hell. Their fire was coming from the rear and grazing right up over our heads . . . . In the meantime, the enemy that hit L company was putting up a hell of a fight within 75 yards of where I was and there wasn't a damn thing I could do about it.

Over in K company's area . . . was where the attack really developed. That's where [Lt.] Mickey McGuire . . . had his

37mm guns on the left flank and was firing cannister. Two of my men were manning a

machine gun [Cpl Alfred J. Daigle and Pfc Orville H. Showers] . . . . These two lads laid out

*Although frontline Marines appreciated the support of the 1st and 2d Provisional Rocket Companies' truck-mounted 4.5-inch rocket launchers, they always dreaded the period immediately following a barrage. The dust and smoke thrown up at that time served as a perfect aiming point for enemy artillery and mortars which soon followed. Notice the flight of rockets in the upper left hand section of the picture.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 92269





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 87645

*For Tinian, as in the Marshall Islands and the Saipan and Guam operations, DUKWs (amphibian trucks) were loaded with artillery pieces and ammunition at the mount out area. At the objective beaches, they were driven ashore right to the designated gun emplacements enabling the gun crews to get their weapons laid in and firing quickly. Here, an A-frame unloads a 75mm pack howitzer from an Army DUKW.*

in front of their machine gun a cone of Jap bodies. There was a dead Jap officer in with them. Both of the boys were dead.

A Marine combat correspondent, described this action:

[Showers and Daigle] held their fire until the Japanese were

100 yards away, then opened up. The Japanese charged, screaming, "Banzai," firing light machine guns and throwing hand grenades. It seemed impossible that the two Marines—far ahead of their own lines—could hold on . . . . The next morning they were found slumped over their weapons, dead. No less than 251 Japanese bodies were piled in front of them . . . . The Navy Cross was awarded posthumously to Daigle and the Silver Star posthumously to Showers.

Just before daybreak, Chambers recalled, two tank companies showed up, commanded by Major Robert I. Neiman. They "wanted to get right at the enemy" and Chambers sent them off to an area held by Companies K and L. Neiman returned in about a half hour and said, "You don't need tanks. You need undertakers. I never saw so many dead Japs."

Another large contingent of Japanese troops was "stacked up" by

*On the night of 24-25 July, a Japanese counterattack accompanied by tanks failed completely with heavy losses. Here a*

*Marine inspects the enemy dead near a destroyed tank. Note the placement of the bullet holes in the helmets in the ditch.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 91047



the 75mm pack howitzer gunners of Battery D of the 14th Marines, supported by the .50-caliber machine guns of Batteries E and F: "They literally tore the Japanese . . . to pieces." Altogether about 600 Japanese were killed in their attack on the center.

On the left flank, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, came under attack at 0200 from about 600 *Special Naval Landing Force* troops out of the barracks at the Ushi Point airfields. Company A, hit so hard it was reduced at one point to only 30 men with weapons, was forced to draw reinforcements from engineers, corpsmen, communicators, and members of the shore party. Illumination flares were fired over the battlefield, allowing the Marines to use 37mm cannister shells, machine gun fire, and mortars to good effect. The fight continued until dawn when medium tanks from the 4th Tank Battalion lumbered in to break up the last attacking groups. At that point, many Japanese began using their grenades to commit suicide.

As the sun rose, 476 Japanese bodies were counted in this sector of the defensive crescent, most of them in front of the Company A position.

The last enemy attack that night hit the right or southern flank of the Marines beginning at 0330 when six Japanese tanks (half of the Japanese tank force on Tinian) clattered up from the direction of Tinian Town to attack the 23d Marines position. They were met by fire from Marine artillery, anti-tank guns, bazookas, and small arms. Lieutenant Jim Lucas, a professional reporter who enlisted in the Marine Corps shortly after the attack on Pearl Harbor and was commissioned in the field, was there:

The three lead tanks broke through our wall of fire. One began to glow blood-red, turned crazily on its tracks and careened into a ditch. A second, mortally wounded, turned its machine guns on its tormentors, firing into the ditches in a last

desperate effort to fight its way free. One hundred yards more and it stopped dead in its tracks. The third tried frantically to turn and then retreat, but our men closed in, literally blasting it apart . . . Bazookas knocked out a fourth tank with a direct hit which killed the driver. The rest of the crew piled out of the turret screaming. The fifth tank, completely surrounded, attempted to flee. Bazookas made short work of it. Another hit set it afire and its crew was cremated.

The sixth tank was chased off, according to Colonel Jones, by a Marine driving a jeep. Some appraisers of this action believe only five tanks were involved. In any case, the destruction of these tanks did not end the fight on the right flank. Infantry units of the 50th Regiment continued to attack in the zone of 2d Battalion, 23d Marines. They were repulsed and killed in great numbers, largely through the effective use of 37mm

*A line of skirmishers was the formation normally used at Tinian even where there was no enemy contact. A platoon from the 2d Marines pushes forward while an observation plane (OY) circles overhead. High ground in the distance is part of a long spine extending straight south from Mount Lasso, an objective to be taken.*

Marine Corps Historical Collection



# Aerial Reconnaissance and Photography

In the months leading up to the invasion, intensive reconnaissance was undertaken. The first aerial photos of 1944 had been acquired back in February when U.S. carrier planes attacked Saipan. Others were obtained in April and May by photo planes based at Eniwetok. These early photographs were of little use to invasion planners. Their quality was poor and many were taken at angles that distorted the terrain.

These inadequacies hampered the Saipan planners but Tinian was another story. "Perhaps no other Pacific island . . ." Marine Corps analysts later concluded, "became so familiar to the assault forces because of thorough and accurate [photography and] mapping prior to the landings."

A lot of the familiarization came from first-hand observation by division, regimental, and battalion commanders who used observation planes to conduct their own reconnaissance of the Tinian beaches and inland terrain. Lieutenant Colonel Justice M. Chambers, commander of the 3d Battalion, 25th Marines, described his preinvasion visit to the island:

There was a lieutenant commander Muller, a naval aviator, who apparently had a set of roving orders. He had brought his flight of three Liberators to Saipan . . . I thought it would be a good idea to take my company commanders and overfly the beaches that we're going to use . . . So the 3rd Battalion group took the flight and practically all the battalions did the same.

We took off from Saipan and of course the minute you were airborne you were over Tinian. I had talked it over with Muller and told him that the last beach we would overfly would be the one we were going to hit. I said, "Let's take a look at a lot of other beaches first and fly over the interior." We made passes at several beaches. I was standing up in a blister where I could see and my officers had the bomb bays open and were looking down. We flew around maybe 20 or 30 minutes, and then we made a big loop and came back over the beaches we were going to land on. I'm glad we did because we spotted . . . mines in the water which the Navy got out.

We zoomed in on Mount Lasso, which was the only mountain on Tinian. The island was just one big cane field, and Mount Lasso was directly ahead of our beaches. Muller started pulling out and I began to see white things zipping by outside the plane . . . I was fighting to keep my stomach down because a fast elevator is too much for me. I asked: "What's that?" He replied, "Twenty millimeter. Where do you want to go now?" I said, "Saipan. There are no foxholes up here."

The photographic coverage of Tinian, along with prisoners and documents captured at Saipan, and other intelligence available to U.S. commanders, made them, according to the official history, "almost as familiar with the Japanese strength at Tinian as was Colonel Ogata [the Japanese commander]."

no particular order until there remained nowhere to withdraw.

That was a common judgment after the Tinian battle had ended. But at the time, according to the 4th Division intelligence officer, Lieutenant Colonel Gooderham McCormick, a Marine Reserve officer who later became mayor of Philadelphia, things were not so clear: "We still believed [after the counterattack] the enemy capable of a harder fight . . . and from day to day during our advance expected a bitter fight that never materialized."

Nevertheless, a lot of hard work lay ahead. One of the most demanding tasks was the simple but exhausting job of humping through cane fields in terrific heat, humidity, and frequent monsoon downpours, fearful not only of sniper fire, mines, or

booby traps, but fearful as well of fires that could sweep through the cane fields, incinerating anyone in their path.

## *The Drive South*

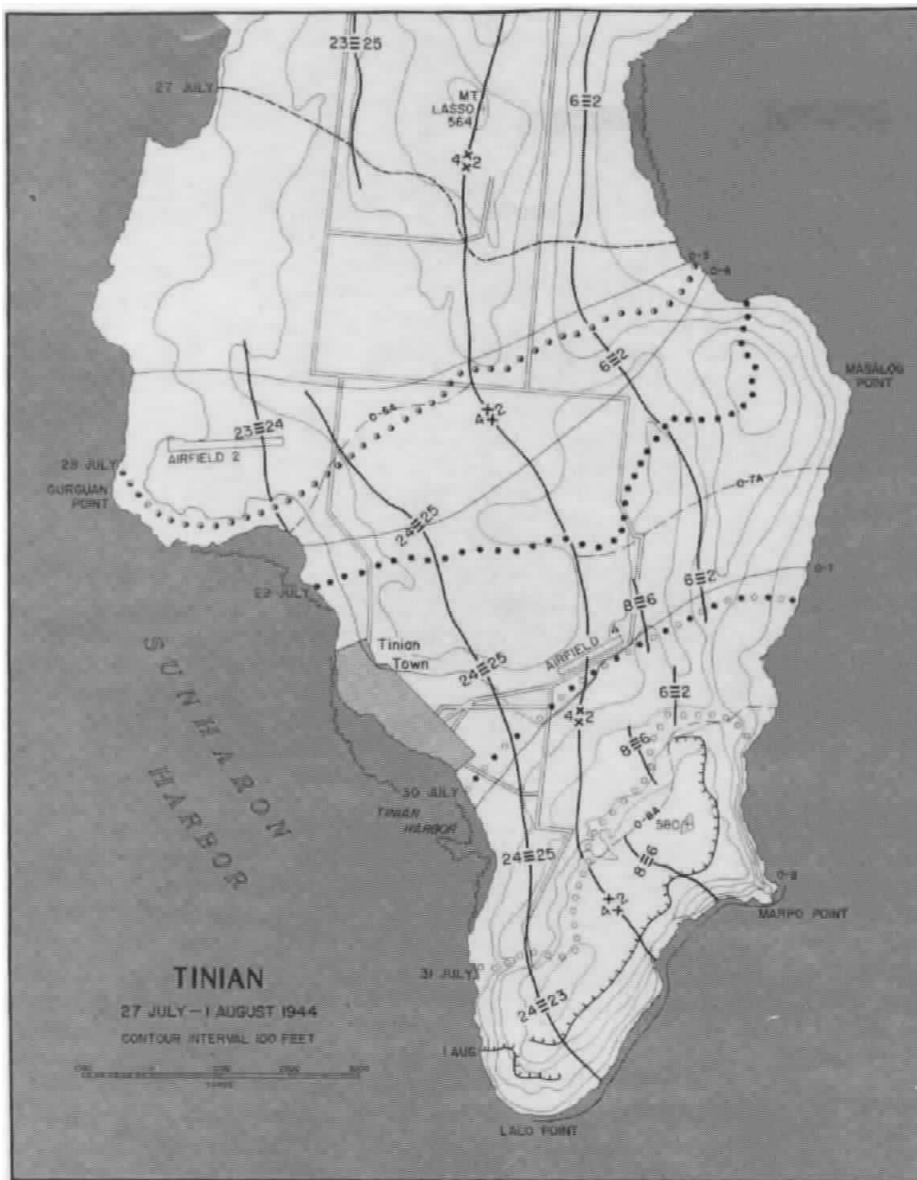
Lieutenant Colonel William W. "Bucky" Buchanan was the assistant naval gunfire officer for the 4th Division at Tinian. His career later took him to Vietnam. After his retirement as a brigadier general he recalled the Tinian campaign:

We used the same tactics on Tinian that we did on Saipan: that is, a hand-holding, linear operation, like a bunch of brush-beaters, people shooting grouse or something, the idea being to flush out every man consistently as we go down, rather than driving down the

main road with a fork and cutting this off and cutting this off in what I call creative tactics, you see. But this was the easiest thing and the safest thing to do. And who can criticize it? It was successful. Here, again, what little resistance was left was pushed into the end of the island . . . and quickly collapsed.

The grouse-shooting metaphor is simplistic but even the 4th Division commander, Major General Clifton B. Cates, thought the campaign had its sporting aspects: "The fighting was different from most any that we had experienced because it was good terrain . . . It was a good clean operation and I think the men really enjoyed it."

Before the "brush beating" could



command post on Mount Lasso which fell to the Marines without a struggle.

The third objective – to create for the drive south a skirmish line of infantry and tanks stretching all the way across the island – was also accomplished on the 26th. The 4th Division lined up in the western half of the island with the 23d Marines on the coast, the 24th in the center, and the 25th on the left flank. The 2d Division lined up with the 2d Marines on the east coast and the 6th Marines in the center, tied in to the 25th. The 8th Marines remained in the north to mop up.

All this was accomplished with only minor casualties. For 26 July, for example, the 2nd Division reported two killed and 14 wounded. The heaviest losses since the first day and night of fighting had been sustained by the 14th Marines, the 4th Division's artillery regiment, in the hours following the Japanese counterattack. An enemy shell hit the 1st Battalion's fire direction center killing the battalion commander (Lieutenant Colonel Harry J. Zimmer), the intelligence officer, the operations officer, and seven other staff members; 14 other Marines at the battalion headquarters were wounded. Virtually all

begin in proper order, three things needed to be achieved. First, the 2d Marine Division had to be put ashore. This task was completed on the morning of 26 July – Jig plus 2.

Second, Japanese stragglers and pockets of resistance in the island's northern sector had to be squashed. That job, for all practical purposes, was pretty well completed on the 26th as the 2d Division swept across the Ushi Point airfields, reached the east coast, and made a turn to the south. (Two days later, Seabees had the Ushi Point fields in operation for Army P-47 Thunderbolt fighters). Also on the 26th, the 4th Division had seized Mount Maga in the center of the island and had forced Colonel Ogata and his staff to abandon their

*Tramping the cane was a tiring work, especially when the direction of the advance did not parallel the rows of the fields. Each stalk was strong enough to trip a man careless about where he stepped. Advancing through such a field was fraught with danger, also, from hidden trip wires attached to demolitions, and from dug-in Japanese. In addition, the dry cane fields could easily catch fire and trap the Marines.*

Marine Corps Historical Collection





Department of Defense Photo (USMC 87900)

*Marines of the 2d Division find some of the most difficult terrain on Tinian as they move up towards the top of Mount Lasso, one of the highest points on the island. Tinian, for the most part, was flat and level, and was under cultivation.*

of the casualties sustained by that regiment during the Tinian campaign were taken on this single day, 25 July: 13 of the 14 killed, and 22 of the 29 wounded.

On the morning of 27 July, the "brush beating" drive to the south began in earnest. General Schmidt's plan for the first two days of the drive alternated the main thrust between the two divisions. In the official history of the operation, the tactic was likened to "a man elbowing his way through the crowd," swinging one arm and then the other.

The 2d Division got the heavier work on the 27th. XXIV Corps Artillery, firing from southern Saipan, softened up suspected enemy positions early in the morning and the division jumped off at 0730. It advanced rapidly, harassed by

sporadic small arms fire. By 1345 it had reached its objective, gaining about 4,000 yards in just over six hours. The 4th Division moved out late in the morning against "negligible opposition," reached its objective by noon and then called it a day. A Japanese prisoner complained to his captors, "You couldn't drop a stick without bringing down artillery."

The next morning, 28 July, the 4th got the "swinging elbow" job. It was now evident that the remaining Japanese defenders were rapidly retiring to the hills and caves along the southern coast. So opposition to the Marine advance was virtually nil. The 4th moved more than two miles in less than four hours with troops riding on half-tracks and tanks. Jumping off again early in the afternoon in "blitz fashion," they overran

the airfield at Gurguan Point, led by Major Richard K. Schmidt's 4th Tank Battalion, and quit for the day at 1730 after gaining 7,300 yards—a little more than four miles. The 2d Division, given light duty under the Schmidt plan, moved ahead a few hundred yards, reached its objective in a couple of hours and dug in to await another morning.

General Cates later recalled how he spurred on his 4th Division troops: "I said, 'Now, look here men, the [Hawaiian] island of Maui is waiting for us. See those ships out there? The quicker you get this over with, the quicker we'll be back there.' They almost ran over that island."

On the 29th General Schmidt dropped the "elbowing" tactic and ordered both divisions to move as far and as fast as "practical." Opposition

had been so light that preparatory fires were canceled to save unneeded withdrawals from the diminishing supplies of artillery shells left on Saipan and to prevent "waste of naval gunfire on areas largely deserted by the enemy."

The 2d Marines on the eastern terrain ran into pockets of resistance on a hill at Masalog Point; the 6th Marines encountered a 20-man Japanese patrol that attempted to penetrate the regiment's lines after dark. The 25th took sniper fire as it moved through cane fields and later in the day engaged in a heavy firefight with Japanese troops fighting from dug-in positions. The Marines suffered several casualties and one of their tanks was disabled in this fight. But the resistance was overcome. The 24th Marines, operating near the west coast, ran into Japanese positions that included a series of mutually supporting bunkers. The 4th Tank Battalion reported that the area "had to be overrun twice by tanks"

before resistance ended.

By nightfall, more than half of Tinian island was in Marine hands. Troops of the 4th Division could see Tinian Town from their foxholes. This was good for morale but the night was marred by the weather and enemy activity. A soaking rain fell through the night. Enemy mortar tubes and artillery pieces fired incessantly, drawing counterbattery fire from Marine gunners. There were probes in front of the 3d Battalion, 25th Marines, silenced by mortar and small arms fire; 41 Japanese bodies were found in the area at daylight.

On 30 July—Jig plus 6—Tinian Town became the principal objective of the 4th Division and, specifically, Colonel Franklin A. Hart's 24th Marines. At 0735 all of the division's artillery battalions laid down preparatory fires in front of the Marine lines. After 10 minutes, the firing stopped and the troops moved out. At the same time, two destroyers and cruisers lying in Sunharon Harbor off the

Tinian Town beaches began an hour-long bombardment of slopes around the town in support of the Marines. The regiment's 1st Battalion had advanced 600 yards when it came under heavy fire from caves along the coast north of the town. With the help of tanks and armored amphibians operating offshore this problem was overcome. Flamethrowing tanks worked over the caves, allowing engineers to seal them up with demolition charges. In one cave, a 75mm gun was destroyed.

The regiment entered the ruins of Tinian Town at 1420. Except for one Japanese soldier who was eliminated on the spot, the town was deserted. After searching through the rubble for snipers and documents, the Marines drove on to the 0-7 line objective south of town. Their greatest peril was from mines and booby traps planted in beach areas and roads.

As the 24th moved south, the 25th Marines were seizing Airfield Num-

*BGen Merritt A. Edson, (with binoculars) assistant division commander of the 2d Marine Division, follows the progress of his troops not far from the scene of action. Gen Edson was awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroism on Guadalcanal.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 87824



ber 4 on the eastern outskirts of Tinian Town. The unfinished facility, a prisoner revealed, was being rushed to completion to accommodate relief planes promised by Tokyo. Only one aircraft was parked on the crushed-coral air strip—a small, Zero-type fighter. Flying suits, goggles, and other equipment were found in a supply room.

Enroute to the airfield, the 25th had taken light small arms fire and while crossing the airstrip was mortared from positions to the south. This was the 25th's last action of the Tinian campaign. It went into reserve and was relieved that night by units of the 23d Marines and the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines.

The 2d Division, operating to the east of the 4th, ran into occasional opposition from machine gun positions and a 70mm howitzer. The 3d Battalion, 2d Marines, had the roughest time. After silencing the howitzer, it attacked across an open field and chased a Japanese force into a large cave where, with the help of a flame-throwing tank, 89 Japanese were killed and four machine guns were destroyed. Soon afterward the battalion came under mortar fire. "It is beyond my memory as to the number of casualties the 3d Battalion suffered at that time," the unit's commander, Lieutenant Colonel Walter F. Layer, later reported. "I personally rendered first aid to two wounded Marines and remember seeing six or seven Marines who were either wounded or killed by that enemy mortar fire. Tanks and half-tracks . . . took the enemy under fire, destroying the enemy mortars."

These were minor delays. The division reached its objective on time and was dug in by 1830. About 80 percent of the island was now in American hands.

### *Final Days*

The Japanese were now cornered in a small area of southeastern Tinian. The Marines "had advanced so rapidly that only four square miles

of the island remained for safe firing by ships not supporting battalions [i.e., not with shore spotters]," according to a report on 30 July by Rear Admiral Harry W. Hill, commander of the Northern Attack Force.

The Marine commander for the operation, Major General Schmidt, saw the end in sight and late on the afternoon of 30 July issued an operations order calling on the divisions to drive all the way to the southeast coastline, seize all territory remaining in enemy hands and "annihilate the opposing Japanese."

This was not a trifling assignment; it produced the heaviest fighting since the counterattack on the night of Jig Day. A Japanese warrant officer captured on 29 July estimated that 500 troops of the *56th Naval Guard Force* and from 1,700 to 1,800 troops of the *50th Infantry Regiment* remained in the southeastern area in a battle-ready condition. American intelligence estimates on 29 July, based on daily reports from the divisions, reckoned that 3,000 Japanese soldiers and sailors had been killed or taken prisoner up to that point. If that was the case, two-thirds of the

nearly 9,000 Japanese defenders were still alive on the island.

The terrain occupied by the Japanese main force was rugged, difficult to reach or traverse and well-suited for defense. Outside of Tinian Town the gentle landscape ended, with the ground rising to a high plateau 5,000 yards long and 2,000 yards wide, with altitudes higher than 500 feet. The plateau was rocky and covered with thick brush. There were many caves. Along the east coast, the cliff walls rose steeply and appeared impossible to scale. The approaches to the plateau were blocked by many cliffs of this sort as well as by jungle growth. A road in the center of the plateau, leading to its top, was reported by a prisoner to be mined. The plateau was the enemy's last redoubt.

It became the object of the most intense bombardments any Japanese force had yet experienced to date in World War II. Marine artillery regiments on the island and the XXIV Corps Artillery on southern Saipan fired throughout the night of 30-31 July on the wooded cliffines the Marines would face during their assault.

*As a Navy corpsman administers a bottle of plasma to a wounded Marine, the stretcher bearers wait patiently to carry him on board a landing craft which will evacuate him to a hospital ship offshore, where he will be given full treatment.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 87434







Marine Corps Historical Collection

*Some badly wounded casualties died of their severe injuries after having been evacuated from Tinian. Those who succumbed to their wounds were buried at sea.*

At 0600, the battleships *Tennessee* and *California*, the heavy cruiser *Louisville*, and the light cruisers *Montpelier* and *Birmingham* began the first of two sustained bombardments that morning. They fired for 75 minutes, then halted to allow a 40-minute strike on the plateau by 126

P-47s, North American Mitchell B-25 bombers, and Grumman Avenger torpedo bombers from the escort carrier *Kitkun Bay*. The planes dropped 69 tons of explosives before the offshore gunfire resumed for another 35 minutes. All told, the battleships and cruisers fired approximately 615 tons

of shells at their targets. Artillerymen of the 10th Marines fired about 5,000 rounds during the night; 14th Marines gunners fired 2,000. The effect, one prisoner said, was "almost unbearable."

As you faced south on that morning, the regimental alignments from west coast to east coast were the 24th, 23d, 8th, 6th and 2d Marines. The task of the 24th was to clear out the western coastal area, with one battalion assigned to seizure of the plateau. The 2d Marines was to seal off the east coast at the base of the plateau. The 6th, 8th, and 23d Marines would assault the cliff areas and make their way to the top of the plateau.

The 24th, jumping off with the 23d at 0830, moved into the coastal plain and immediately encountered brush and undergrowth so dense that tank operations were severely hampered. As compensation, armored amphibians lying offshore provided heavy fires against enemy beach positions and covered the regiment's right flank as it made its way down the coast. A platoon-size Japanese beach unit launched a foolish counterattack on

*Two Marines escort two apparently healthy, hearty, and willing Japanese prisoners to be turned in at the POW stockade*

*in the rear of the fighting. Most of the prisoners taken on Tinian, however, were civilian workers rather than military men.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 91365





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 152074

*Tank-infantry tactics perfected in prior operations proved successful on Tinian as well. The riflemen served as the eyes of the armored vehicle and would direct the tank crewmen over a telephone mounted in a box on the rear of the tank.*

the 1st Battalion, 24th Marines at about 1000. The Japanese were annihilated. Later, flame-throwing tanks burned off brush and undergrowth concealing Japanese riflemen.

On the regiment's left flank, the 3d Battalion was in assault at the base of the plateau. It encountered minimal opposition until about 1600

when it began to receive rifle and machine gun fire from cliff positions. Tanks were called on but soon found themselves mired in a minefield and were held up for several hours while engineers cleared 45 mines from the area.

The 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, encountered similar troubles. As the

regiment approached the plateau, it ran into dense small arms fire from two positions — a small village at the base of the cliff and from the cliff face itself. It also began receiving fire from a "large-caliber weapon." Lacking tank support the Marines pressed forward, running a few yards, diving on their bellies, getting up, and advancing again. Medium tanks finally came up in search of this elusive and well-concealed weapon. One of them took six quick hits from the concealed position of this Japanese gun. A second tank was hit but in the process the enemy position was discovered: a camouflaged, concrete bunker housing a 47mm antitank gun and 20 troops, all of whom were killed.

The 2d Battalion of the 23d had similar difficulties. After coming under fire from riflemen and machine gunners, one of its supporting tanks was disabled by a mine. After its crew was taken to safety by another tank, the disabled vehicle was seized by the Japanese and used as an ar-

*MajGen Clifton B. Cates, center, visits the command post of 24th Marines commander Col Franklin A. Hart. On the left is*

*LtCol Charles D. Roberts, S-3 of the 24th Marines. Gen Cates would become the 19th Commandant of the Marine Corps.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 143760



mored machine gun nest. Other tanks soon took it out. The 23d also lost that day two 37mm guns and a one-ton truck belonging to the regiment's half-track platoon. The guns and the vehicle got too far out front, came under heavy fire and were abandoned. A detail from the platoon later retrieved one of the guns, removed the breech block from the other one and brought back the .50-caliber machine gun from its mounting on the truck.

Late in the afternoon, the 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, and a company from the 2d Battalion gained a foothold on top of the plateau; the 3d Battalion soon followed. To their left, the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines, shrugged off small arms fire early in the day and reached the base of the cliff where it stalled for the night.

*Tinian Town was made a shambles because U.S. commanders knew that the enemy was well emplaced, dug in, and expected landings on the beaches fronting the town. As a result, they*

The 1st Battalion had better luck. Company A made it to the top of the plateau at 1650, followed by a platoon from Company C. Soon after, the whole battalion was atop the hill. It was followed by Companies E and G of the 2d Battalion.

The Company G commander was Captain Carl W. Hoffman, who later wrote the definitive histories of the Saipan and Tinian campaigns. In an oral history interview, he described his own experiences on top of the plateau the night of 31 July:

By the time we got up there . . . there wasn't enough daylight left to get ourselves properly barbed-wired in, to get our fields of fire established, to site our interlocking bands of machine gun fire—all the things that should be done in prepar-

ing a good defense.

By dusk, the enemy commenced a series of probing attacks. Some Japanese intruded into our positions. It was a completely black night. So, with Japanese moving around in our positions, our troops became very edgy and were challenging everybody in sight. We didn't have any unfortunate incidents of Marines firing on Marines . . . [because they] were well-seasoned by this point . . .

As the night wore on, the intensity of enemy attacks started to build and build and build. They finally launched a full scale *banzai* attack against [our] battalion . . . The strange thing the Japanese did here was that they executed one wave of

*directed a large share of the pre-J Day bombardment into the waterfront and surrounding area, thereby reinforcing Japanese beliefs that this is where the Marines would land.*

Marine Corps Historical Collection





Marine Corps Historical Collection

*A lone member of the 24th Marines, 4th Marine Division patrolling through the outskirts of Tinian Town, pauses at a torii of a Shinto shrine. The ruins about him give proof of the heavy shelling visited upon the town before the landing.*

attack after another against a 37mm position firing cannister ammunition . . . .

That gun just stacked up dead Japanese . . . As soon as one Marine gunner would drop another would take his place. [Eight of 10 men who manned the gun were killed or wounded]. Soon we were nearly shoulder-high with dead Japanese in front of that weapon . . . . By morning we had defeated the enemy. Around us were lots of dead ones, hundreds of them as a matter of fact. From then on . . . we were able to finish the rest of the campaign without difficulty . . . . People have often said that the Tinian campaign was the easiest campaign . . . in the Pacific . . . .

For those Marines who were in that 37mm position up on

the escarpment, Tinian had to be the busiest campaign within the Pacific war.

Hoffman had another lively experience before leaving the island. He was a trumpet addict and carried his horn with him all through the Pacific war:

For Tinian, I didn't take any chances such as sending my horn ashore in a machine gun cart or a battalion ambulance. I had it flown over to me. One evening, my troops were in a little perimeter with barbed wire all around us on top of the cliff. My Marines were shouting in requests: "Oh, You Beautiful Doll" and "Pretty Baby" and others. While I was playing these tunes, all of a sudden we heard this scream of "banzai." An individual Japanese soldier was charging right toward me

and right toward the barbed wire. The Marines had their weapons ready and he must have been hit from 14 different directions at once. He didn't get to throw [his] grenade . . . I've always cited him as the individual who didn't like my music. He was no supporter of my trumpet playing. But . . . I even continued my little concert after we had accounted for him.

A final *banzai* attack on the night the 37mm guns had their big harvest, occurred in the early morning hours of 1 August. A 150-man Japanese force attacked the 1st Battalion, 28th Marines, on Hoffman's left flank. After 30 minutes, the main thrust of the attack was spent and at dawn the Japanese withdrew; 100 bodies lay in an area 70 yards square in front of the position of Company E, 2d Battalion, 28th Marines. The 8th Ma-

ines took 74 casualties that night.

The following morning the two divisions went back to work. The 2d moved across the plateau toward its eastern cliffs, the 4th toward cliffs on the south and west. When they reached the escarpment's edge, overlooking the ocean, their job was essentially done. At 1855, General Schmidt declared the island "secure," meaning that organized resistance had ended. But not the killing. Hundreds of Japanese troops remained holed up in the caves pockmarking the southern cliffs rising up from the ocean.

On the morning of 2 August, a Japanese force of 200 men sallied forth in an attack on the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines. After two hours of

combat, 119 Japanese were dead. Marine losses included the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel John W. Easley. Shortly afterwards, the regiment's 2d Battalion, led by Lieutenant Colonel Edmund B. Games, was hit by 100 Japanese, 30 of whom were killed before the unit withdrew.

Contacts of this kind continued for months. By the end of the year, Colonel Clarence R. Wallace's 8th Marines, left on Tinian for mopping-up operations, had lost 38 killed and 125 wounded; Japanese losses were 500 dead.

Beginning on 1 August, there were large-scale surrenders by civilians leaving the caves in which they had taken refuge. Marine intelligence officers estimated that 5,000 to 10,000

civilians had been hiding out in the southeast sector.

Marine Major General James L. Underhill, who took command of the island as military governor on 10 August, became responsible for the care and feeding of these civilians. The flow of civilian refugees began on August 1, he recalled:

About 500 came through immediately, the next day about 800, then a thousand and then two thousand and so on in increasing numbers until about 8,000 were in. The remaining 3,000 hid out in caves and dribbled in over a period of months. About 30 percent adult males, 20 percent adult females, and

*This cliff was a formidable obstacle to movement on 31 July. Cutting practically across the entire island, it provided problems for both divisions. Here, 2d Division Marines climb*

*the rocky slopes toward the flat plateau on top. The 1st and 2d Battalions, 8th Marines, spent a busy night (31 July-1 August) of the operating holding a road that curled up this slope.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 87898





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 94350

*The end of the battle is in sight as troops of the 24th Marines and tanks of the 4th Tank Battalion comb across the coastal plateau at Tinian's extreme southern end. The 23d Marines,*

*whose zone ended at the top of the steep cliff seen in this picture, had to retrace its steps in order to reach the lowlands. Aguijan Island may be seen dimly in the misty background.*

*This 75mm pack howitzer, nicknamed "Miss Connie," is firing into a Japanese-held cave from the brink of a sheer cliff*

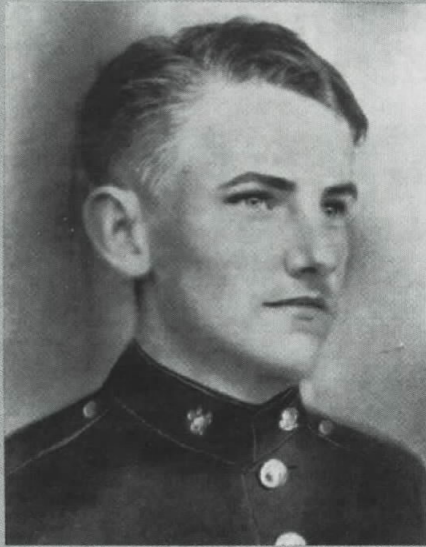
*in southern Tinian. The gun was locked securely in this unusual position after parts were hand-carried to the cliff's edge.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 94660



# Medal of Honor Recipients

**P**rivate First Class Robert Lee Wilson's Medal of Honor citation reads as follows: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with the Second Battalion, Sixth Marines, Second Marine Division, during action against enemy Japanese forces at Tinian Island, Marianas Group, on 4 August 1944. As one of a group of Marines advancing through heavy underbrush to neutralize isolated points of resistance, Private First Class Wilson daringly preceded his companions toward a pile of rocks where Japanese troops were supposed to be hiding,



Fully aware of the danger involved, he was moving forward while the remainder of the squad, armed with automatic rifles, closed together in the rear when an enemy grenade landed in the midst of the group. Quick to act, Private First Class Wilson cried a warning to the men and unhesitatingly threw himself on the grenade, heroically sacrificing his own life that the others might live and fulfill their mission. His exceptional valor, his courageous loyalty and unwavering devotion to duty in the face of grave peril reflect the highest credit upon Private First Class Wilson and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.

**P**rivate Joseph W. Ozbourn's Medal of Honor citation reads as follows: "For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a Browning Automatic Rifleman serving with the First Battalion, Twenty-third Marines, Fourth Marine Division, during the battle for enemy Japanese-held Tinian Island, Marianas Islands, 30 July 1944. As a member of a platoon assigned the mission of clearing the remaining Japanese troops from dugouts and pillboxes along a tree line, Private Ozbourn, flanked by two men on either side, was moving

forward to throw an armed hand grenade into a dugout when a terrific blast from the entrance severely wounded the four men and himself. Unable to throw the grenade into the dugout and with no place to hurl it without endangering the other men, Private Ozbourn unhesitatingly grasped it close to his body and fell upon it, sacrificing his own life to absorb the full impact of the explosion, but saving his comrades. His great personal valor and unwavering loyalty reflect the highest credit upon Private Ozbourn and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country.



about 50 percent children. Many of them were in bad shape—hungry, wounded, ill and with few possessions beyond the clothes they were wearing.

It was estimated that about 4,000 civilians were killed in the bombardments of Tinian and in fighting on the island. On Saipan, Marines had been helpless to prevent mass suicides among the civilian population. They were more successful at Tinian. Unfortunate incidents occurred—civilians, for example, dying under Marine fire after wandering into the lines at night.

There were also suicides and ritual murders, as indicated in a report from the 23d Marines on 3 August:

Several freak incidents occurred during the day: (1) Jap children thrown [by their parents] over cliff into ocean; (2) [Japanese] military grouped civilians in numbers of 15 to 20 and attached explosive charges to them, blowing them to bits; (3) Both military and civilians lined up on the cliff and hurled themselves into the ocean; (4) Many civilians pushed over cliff by [Japanese] soldiers.

Efforts to prevent incidents of this kind were generally successful. Marines used amplifiers on land and offshore to promise good treatment to civilians and soldiers who would surrender peacefully. "Thousands of civilians," Hoffman wrote, "many clad in colorful Japanese silk, responded to the promises—though it was plain from the expressions on their faces that they expected the worst."

## Aftermath

By 14 August the entire 4th Division had embarked on the long trip to its base camp on Maui. It had suf-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 87678

*In an impromptu command post set up behind his 8th frontline troops on a situation map. The overhead poncho provides some protection from Tinian's constant rains.*

fered in this brief operation more than 1,100 casualties, including 212 killed. Its next assignment would be Iwo Jima.

The 2d Division remained in the Marianas, setting up a base camp on Saipan where the 2d and 6th regiments took up residence in mid-August. The 8th Marines remained on Tinian for mopping-up purposes until October 25, when the 2d and 3d Battalions moved to Saipan, leaving an unhappy 1st Battalion behind until its relief at the end of the year.

The campaign for Tinian had cost the division 760 casualties, including 105 killed. These numbers did not include casualties suffered after the island was "secured" on 1 August.

Japanese military losses, based on bodies counted and buried, totaled 5,000. Other thousands are assumed to have been sealed up in caves and underground fortifications. The number of prisoners taken was 250 by some counts and 400 by others.

The capture of the Marianas gave the Army Air Corps the B-29 bases it needed for the bombing of Japan.

*It was not long after the initial landing that Marines encountered the civilian population of Tinian. Here Marines bathe a tiny Tinian girl after she and her family had been removed from a hillside dugout. Following the scrubbing, new clothes were found for the children and the entire family was taken to a place of safety in the rear.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 90441







Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 419222

Former Marine Corps Combat Correspondent SSgt Federico Claveria looks at photograph of himself giving an interned Tinian child candy 25 years earlier. Claveria participated in the initial landings on Roi-Namur and Saipan also.

They were located 1,200 nautical miles from the home islands of Japan, a distance ideal for the B-29 with its range of 2,800 miles. Tinian became the home for two wings of the Twentieth Air Force. Three months after the conquest of Tinian, B-29s were hitting the Japanese mainland. Over the next year, according to numbers supplied by the Air Force to historian Carl Hoffman, the B-29s flew 29,000 missions out of the Marianas, dropped 157,000 tons of explosives which, by Japanese estimates killed 260,000 people, left 9,200,000 homeless, and demolished or burned 2,210,000 homes.

Tinian's place in the history of warfare was insured by the flight of *Enola Gay* on 6 August 1945. It dropped

Top commanders gather for the flagraising on 3 August 1944 at the conclusion of Tinian operations. From left are RAdm Harry W. Hill; MajGen Harry Schmidt; Adm Raymond L. Spruance; LtGen Holland M. Smith; VAdm Richmond Kelly Turner; MajGen Thomas A. Watson; and MajGen Clifton B. Cates.

Marine Corps Historical Collection



a nuclear weapon on Hiroshima. Two days later a second nuclear weapon was dropped on Nagasaki. The next day, the Japanese government surrendered.

In his official history of the 2d Marine Division, Richard W. Johnston records the reaction when news of the surrender reached the division at its base on Saipan:

They looked at Tinian's clean and rocky coast, at the coral boulders where they had gone ashore, and they thought of the forbidding coasts of Japan—the coasts that awaited them in the fall. "That Tinian was a pretty good investment, I guess," one Marine finally said.

The anecdote may be apocryphal. The sentiment is historically true.



Marine Corps Combat Art Collection

"Japanese Backyard in Tinian Town," by Gail Zumwalt

The hand salute in its various forms is rendered by those present as the colors are raised over Tinian on 1 August. At

the extreme right is VAdm Richmond K. Turner, commander, Expeditionary/ Northern Attack Force for the Tinian landings.

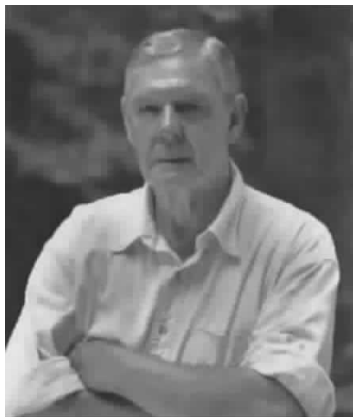
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The transcripts of the following retired Marines interviewed for the Marine Corps Oral History Program reside in the Oral History Collection, Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. Their roles at Tinian are as indicated: BGen William W. Buchanan, assistant naval gunfire officer, 4th Marine Division; Gen Clifton B. Cates, commanding general, 4th Marine Division; LtCol Justice M. Chambers, commanding officer, 3d Battalion, 25th Marines; MajGen Carl W. Hoffman, commanding officer, Company G, 2d Battalion, 8th Marines; Gen Robert E. Hogaboom, G-3, Northern Troops Landing Force; MajGen Louis R. Jones, commanding officer, 23d Marines; BGen Frederick J. Karch, S-3, 14th Marines; MajGen Wood B. Kyle, commanding officer, 1st Battalion, 2d Marines; MajGen William W. Rogers, chief of staff, 4th Marine Division; LtGen James L. Underhill, island commander, Tinian.



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Richard Harwood, a journalist and news executive, retired as deputy managing editor of *The Washington Post* in 1988. He now writes an editorial column for *The Post* which is distributed nationally by the Los Angeles Times-Washington Post News Service. He served in the U.S. Marines from 1942 until 1946, and spent 30 months in the Pacific. As a radio operator in the V Amphibious Corps he participated in four operations, including Tinian.

## Errata

In *A Different War: Marines in Europe and North Africa*, page 32 reports Adm Hewitt visited the cruiser "Helena (CL-50)" in spring 1946. This cruiser was sunk in 1943. The ship the admiral boarded was its successor, the heavy cruiser *Helena* (CA-75). On page 27 of *Liberation: Marines in the Recapture of Guam*, the 77th Infantry Division patrolled hills to the east, rather than to the west. The date of the action which merited a Medal of Honor for PFC Harold G. Epperson is 25 June 1944, not July, as stated on page 30 of *Breaching the Marianas: The Battle for Saipan*



**WORLD WAR II**



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