



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 70650

The American flag is raised on Roi on 2 February 1944 to signify the end of the fighting. In the background is the shattered hulk of a three-story concrete blockhouse.

room to draw in the whole length of the weapon. Private First Class Edward Fiske fired his BAR at the hole; the dried fronds caught fire from the tracers. At that point Fiske ran out of ammunition.

Private First Class Julian Guterrez then took up the fire with his M1 [rifle]. He stood directly above the hole and fired down into it. Then the hole exploded; the Jap inside had turned a grenade on himself. A man's shattered arm came flying out of the hole and hit Guterrez on the shoulder, splattering blood all over his

face and clothing. The arm bounced off and fell to the side. As Guterrez looked at it, fascinated and horror-stricken, he saw another bayonet rising out of a patch of fronds just beyond the outstretched and still-quivering fingers. He yelled to a man behind him. The man relayed a grenade and Guterrez pitched it with all of his might into the patch of fronds. It erupted in a shower of palm leaves and blood and flesh.

Guterrez reeled over toward the lagoon to cleanse himself of the blood. Before he could reach the water, in sight of all

the other men, he vomited all over the beach. Minutes passed before he could gather himself together again.

As the two Army regiments began their third day of combat, it was dirty and dangerous work. One Marine historical summary of the Marshalls operation told their story:

Resistance during the day was continually stiffer as the enemy took advantage of every possible uncertainty of the terrain, and concentrated the fire of such mortars and artillery as were left to them. Despite the havoc wrought by the bombardments, there was still much cover available and positions were concealed with great adroitness. Many of the concrete installations still stood in partial ruin even though they had received direct hits from heavy naval guns, and the fire from 75mm [cannon] had little effect on them.

It was necessary to employ heavy demolition charges to breach emplacements sufficiently for the employment of flame throwers and grenades. In the utter turmoil, it was nearly impossible to maintain contact. Nothing was any longer recognizable. The situation was made doubly uncertain from the fact that fire might come from almost any direction at the flanks, frontally, or from the rear. The going was tough.

Weird things can and do happen in such fighting. A Japanese officer charged a U.S. tank with just his bare saber. In the dusk one evening Japanese riflemen tried to walk into the American lines carrying palm branches in front of their bodies so they would not be seen. A U.S. infantryman carrying a flamethrower approached a pillbox, and out through its door bolted a Japanese officer in counterattack. He was



Named "Dyess Field" in honor of the deceased battalion commander who earned the Medal of Honor, the Roi airstrip was

National Archives Photo 127-N-88477
 quickly converted from Japanese use to become a new base for Marine aircraft as the Central Pacific drive moved westward.

squirting a fire extinguisher towards the flame gun. The liquid doused the American soldier as he let the flame go. The Japanese officer dropped dead at his feet, burned to a crisp.

And so it went for four long days until the far tip of Kwajalein had been reached and the island was declared secured.

The successful battle for both ends of Kwajalein Atoll had been concluded, and a series of conclusions were drawn from it. Japanese deaths reached a total of 8,122, some 27 times the number of Americans killed. The relatively small scale of U.S. casualties gave Admiral Chester W. Nimitz the ready forces he needed to push forward rapidly with plans for further action: first, one more atoll in the Marshalls, and then quickly on to the vital Mariana Islands, the linchpin of Japan's inner line of defense. Kwajalein would provide the air base from which the B-29 bombers would conduct their raids on the Marianas, and the Army 7th

Navy corpsmen (in their Marine uniforms) are there on the front lines of combat, plasma in hand, saving riflemen's lives in the critical minutes after a wound.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 72399





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 36034
LtCol Aquilla J. Dyess was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for his heroic personal leadership on Namur. Known affectionately as "Big Red," he was the only person to have been awarded both the Medal of Honor and the Carnegie Medal for Heroism (in 1928). He was honored in 1945 by having a Navy destroyer named after him.

Infantry Division and the 4th Marine Division would play key roles in those future operations.

Tactically, there were a variety of innovations in the twin battles at Kwajalein, and these would continue to prove valuable in the future. There
1stLt John V. Power, after being seriously wounded attacking one pillbox, held his hand over his wound and went on to attack a second one. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 307689



was the first use of Navy underwater demolition teams; the first use of DUKWs in combat; the first use of command ships with special communications equipment to control the battle; the first use of airplanes to control naval gunfire; and the first use of armored amphibian tractors (LVTAs). In addition, the two battles saw the debut of new units designed to facilitate crucial communications during combat. These were the Joint Assault Signal Companies. The official Marine history of the Marshalls campaign described their complex responsibilities:

The primary mission of this unit was to coordinate all supporting fires available to a Marine division during an amphibious operation. In order to carry out this function, the company was divided into Shore and Beach Party Communications Teams, Air Liaison Parties, and Shore Fire Control Parties During training, the various teams were attached to the regiments and battalions of the division. Thus each assault battalion could become familiar with its shore and beach party, air liaison, and fire control teams.

Another new element was the way rockets were used. This was a centuries-old technique of bombardment, but in the Marshalls the 4th Marine Division was the first American division to use rockets mounted on jeeps, pick-up trucks, and Navy gunboats in combat.

One other Marine resource was unique: the use of Navajo Indian "code talkers" in battle. They proved a perfect foil for the Japanese ability in previous battles to understand Marine voice-to-voice communications and Morse Code. To prevent this a group of Navajo Indians had been recruited and trained in special code words they could use in combat. When they were talking in the Navajo's exotic language, no Japanese



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 302952
PFC Richard B. Anderson was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for sacrificing his life when he threw himself upon a live Japanese hand grenade, in order to protect his fellow Marines.

would ever decipher the message! At Roi-Namur their walkie-talkie portable radios carried the urgent instructions back and forth between ship and shore, as well as between higher echelons and subordinate units, and did it so quickly that previous delays of up to 12 hours (intercepting, transmitting, and deciphering messages) were eliminated.

Pvt Richard K. Sorenson saved the lives of five Marines by throwing himself on a Japanese grenade which was thrown into the shell crater they occupied. He was awarded the Medal of Honor and later recovered from his terrible wounds.

Marine Corps Historical Collection





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 70200

Resolute and fanatic Japanese defenders who were not previously killed by the Marines very often committed hara-kiri, as did the two soldiers in the foreground.

Finally, the two battles for Kwajalein Atoll proved incontestably the effectiveness of prolonged and massive preinvasion naval gunfire and aerial bombing. The U.S. planes and warships had so thoroughly scoured not only the target islands, but also the other Japanese air bases in the Marshalls, that not a single Japanese plane was able to attack the American surface forces in the campaign.

The Final Attack: Eniwetok

With Kwajalein Atoll now in American hands, a review of the next operation immediately took place. Admiral Nimitz flew there from Pearl Harbor and met with his top commanders. The 2d Marine Division, tempered in the fires of Tarawa, had earlier been alerted to prepare for a May attack on Eniwetok Atoll, 330 miles northwest of Kwajalein. The planners decided to use instead the 22d Marines (under the command of Colonel John T. Walker) and two battalions of the Army's 106th Infan-

try Regiment, since they had not been needed in the quick conquest of Roi-Namur and Kwajalein. In addition, the date for the attack was jumped forward to mid-February.

The softening-up process had begun at the end of January, and the carrier air strikes increased the following month. Japanese soldiers caught in this deluge were dismayed. One wrote in his diary, "The American attacks are becoming more furi-

Men of the 17th Infantry Regiment go in by amtrac to occupy one of the islets adjacent to Kwajalein itself in preparation for the main landing the next day.

Department of Defense Photo (Army) 187435



ous. Planes come over day after day. Can we stand up under the strain?" Another noted that "some soldiers have gone out of their minds."

On D-Day, 17 February, the Navy's heavy guns joined in with a thunderous shelling. Then, using secret Japanese navigation charts captured at Kwajalein, the task force moved into the huge lagoon, 17 by 21 miles in size. Brigadier General Thomas E. Watson, the Marine in overall command of some 10,000 assault troops, had the responsibility for conducting a complex series of successive maneuvers. As at Kwajalein Atoll, the artillery was sent ashore on D-Day on two tiny islets adjacent to the first key target, Engebi Island. The Marines' 2d Separate [75mm] Pack Howitzer Battalion went to one islet, and the Army's 104th Field Artillery Battalion went to the other. There they set up to provide supporting fire for the forthcoming infantry assault.

The landing on Engebi came the next morning, D plus 1, 18 February, as the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 22d Marines headed for the beach in their amtracs. At this time there occurred "one of those pathetic episodes incident to the horrible waste of war." As one Marine report described it:

One tank was lost in the landings. It was boated in an LCM [Landing Craft, Medium]



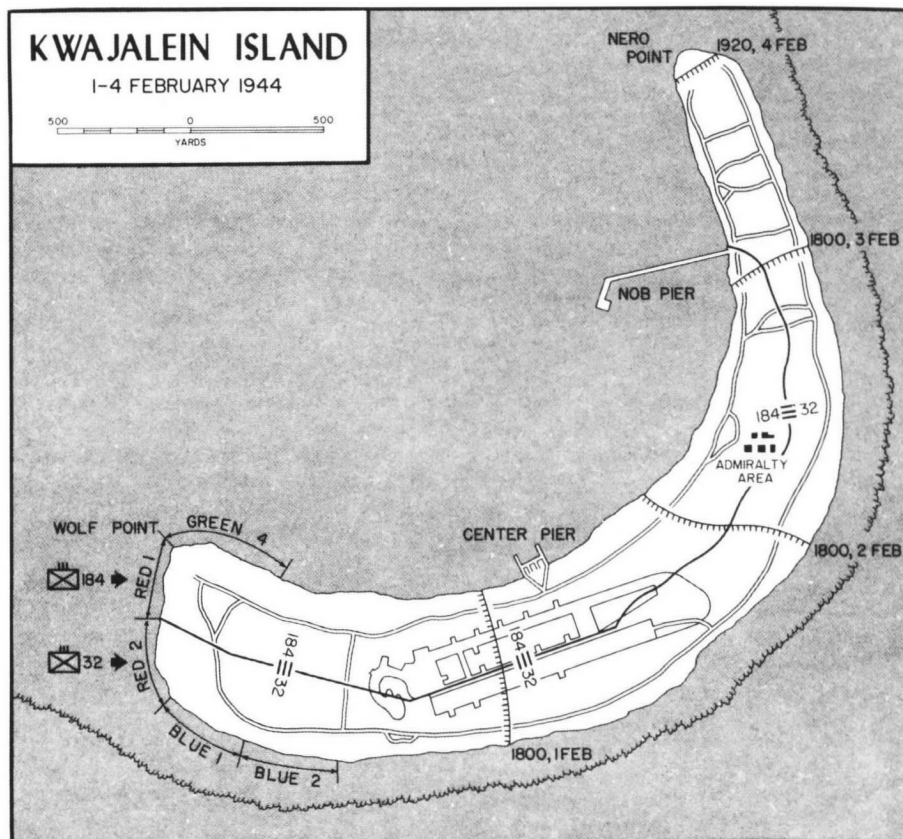
Department of Defense Photo (Army) 324729

Troops of the Army's 7th Infantry Division make the tricky transfer from their landing craft to the amphibian tractors which will now carry them in across the reef fringing Kwajalein, for the final leg of their assault of the island.

on which, unfortunately, only one engine was functioning. By some mischance the lever depressing the ramp was operated with the result that the craft began to flood rapidly while still 500 yards offshore. The tank crew had "buttoned up" and could gain but [a] small idea of the accident. Despite the frantic efforts of the LCM's crew to warn the occupants, the desperate urgency of the situation was not appreciated. The LCM gradually filled, listed, and finally spilled her load into the lagoon, turning completely over. At the last possible moment, one of the crew of the tank managed to escape as the tank actually hit bottom forty feet down.

Once the two battalions hit the beach, they found the core of the enemy defenses to be a palm grove in the middle of the island. This area was riddled with "spider holes," and

Map of the attack on Kwajalein Island, with the landings at the west end, 184th Regiment on the left and 32d on the right. Demarkation lines show daily progress.



R F STIBIL



Department of Defense Photo (Army) 212590

The 37mm gun provided invaluable direct fire support throughout the campaigns of the Pacific War. Here, one of the guns takes on a stubborn Japanese position on Kwajalein, reinforcing the ability of riflemen to deal with the enemy.

Army soldiers lie warily on the ground as their flamethrower often multiple exits from the strongpoints, these soldiers are on the alert for any of the enemy who may try to escape.

Department of Defense Photo (Army) 212770





Department of Defense Photo (Army) 233727

Victorious Army soldiers relax by the ruins of a Japanese plane, smashed by the preinvasion bombardment of one of the islets adjacent to Kwajalein. One enterprising man still has the energy and the curiosity to climb on board for a look.

the American shelling had added fallen trees to the cover provided to the Japanese by the dense underbrush. Thus their positions were extremely difficult to locate. It was dangerous work for the individuals and small groups who had to take the initiative, but they did and the assault ground ahead against enemy defenses.

With these advances and some direct fire from self-propelled 105mm guns against concrete pillboxes, the whole of Engebi had been overrun by the Marines by the afternoon of D plus 1. On the following morning the American flag was raised to the sound of a Marine playing "To the Colors" on a captured Japanese bugle. An engineer company, however, spent a busy day using flamethrowers and demolitions to mop up by-passed enemy soldiers. More than 1,200 Japanese, Koreans, and Okinawans were on Engebi, and only 19 surrendered.

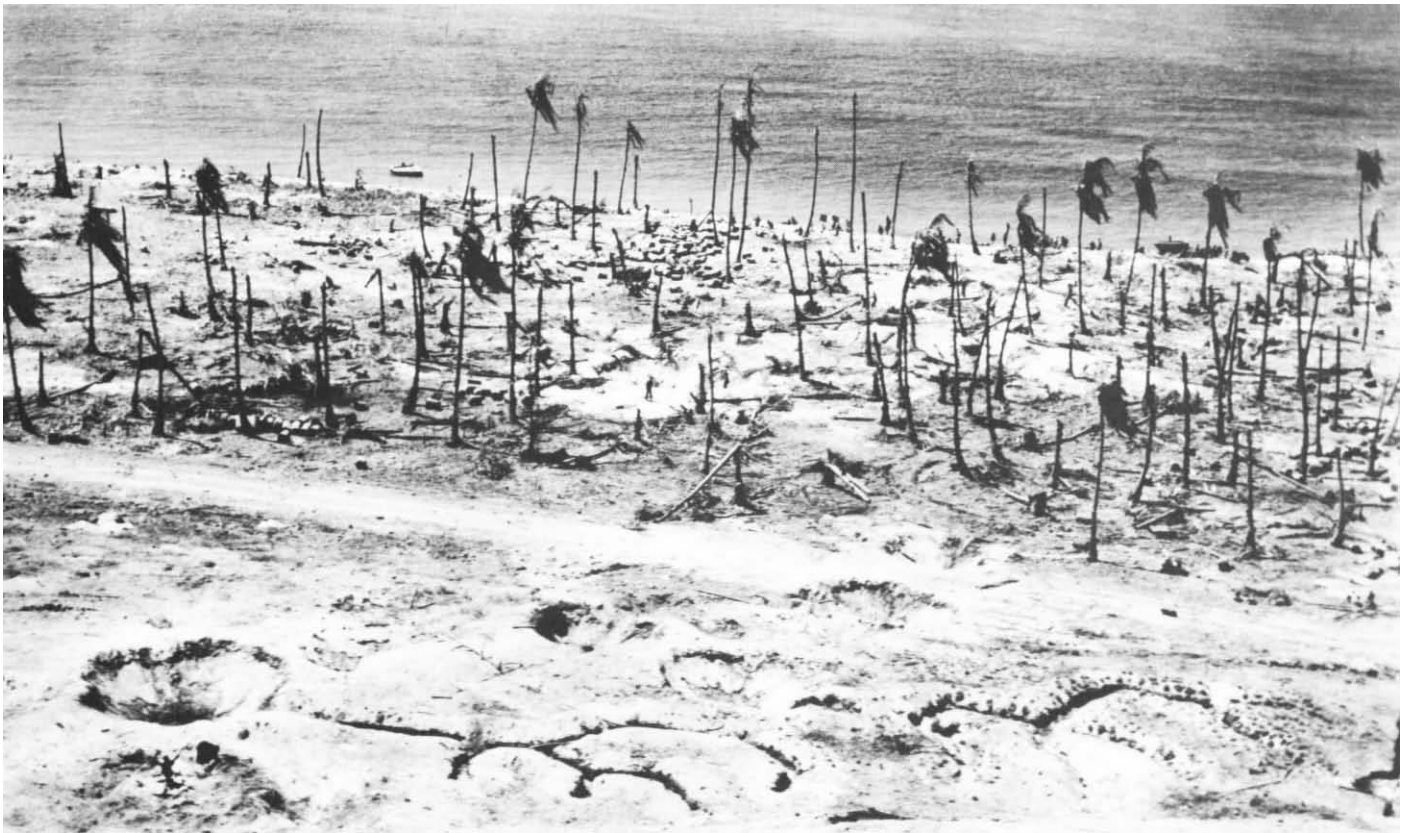
The main action now shifted quickly on D plus 2 to the attack on

Eniwetok Island. This mission was assigned to the 1st and 3d Battalions of the Army's 106th Infantry Regiment. When they landed, their advance was slow. Only 204 tons of naval gunfire rounds (compared to the 1,179 tons which had plastered Engebi) hit Eniwetok. "Spider hole" defenses held up their advance. A steep bluff blocked the planned inland advance of their LVTAs, resulting in a traffic jam on the beaches. Less than an hour after the initial landing, General Watson felt obliged to radio Colonel Russell G. Ayers, commanding the 106th, "Push your attack."

Things were clearly not going as planned, for General Watson had hoped to secure Eniwetok quickly, and then have the battalions of the 106th immediately ready for an attack on the final objective, Parry Island. To speed the progress on Eniwetok, the reserve troops, the 3d Battalion of the 22d Marines, were ordered to land early in the afternoon. Moving forward, they were soon in heavy combat. Japanese sold-

iers who had been by-passed kept up their harassing fire; permission to bring the battalion's half-track 75mm cannon ashore was flatly denied Colonel Ayers. The Marines had to take responsibility for clearing two-thirds of the southern zone on the island. Tanks were ashore but "not available," and coconut log emplacements provided the Japanese with strong defensive positions.

Nevertheless, the attack inched forward with the repeated use of flamethrowers and satchel charges. Halting for the night several hundred yards from the tip of the island, the Marines were greeted the following morning (D plus 3) by an astonishing sight. The Army battalion supposed to be on their right flank had, without notifying the Marines, pulled back 300 yards to the rear during the night and left a large gap in the American lines. The Marines then had to stem a small but furious Japanese night counterattack. When the soldiers returned in the morning, the American attack began again, and by mid-afternoon the Marines



Department of Defense Photo (Navy) 218615

A crater from U.S. Navy gunfire marks the left end of a series of Japanese trenches designed to provide mutually supporting enfilade fire against attackers. The shattered trunks of the palm trees show the effects of the Navy's bombardment.

Brigadier General Thomas E. Watson

Commander of Tactical Group-1 built on the 22d Marines, he led the conquest of Eniwetok. For this he was awarded a Distinguished Service Medal. Promoted to major general, he received a second DSM for his service while commanding the 2d Marine Division at Saipan and Tinian. He retired in 1950.

With a birth date of 1892, and an enlistment date of 1912, he fully qualified as a member of "the Old Corps." After being commissioned in 1916, he served in a variety of Marine assignments in the Caribbean, China, and the United States.

Given the nickname "Terrible Tommy," Watson's proverbial impatience was later characterized by General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., as follows: "He would not tolerate for one minute stupidity, laziness, professional incompetence, or failure in leadership. . . . His temper in correcting these failings could be fiery

and monumental." And so, both Marine and Army officers found out at Eniwetok and later Saipan!

BGen Thomas E. Watson, USMC, commanded Tactical Group-1, built around the 22d Marines, as he led his Marines in the capture of Eniwetok. He later commanded the 2d Marine Division in the ensuing Saipan-Tinian operation.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 11986



and the Army battalion had secured the southern part of the island.

Progress was still very slow in the northern sector, so Marine tanks and engineers moved in to assist the other Army battalion there. Finally, in the afternoon of D plus 4, 21 February, the northern area was also declared secure.

With the elapse of all this time (96 hours instead of the 24 hours expected), General Watson was forced to alter his plans for the final phase of the operation: the assault on Parry. He brought down from Engebi the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 22d Marines, pulled that regiment's other (3d) battalion off Eniwetok, and designated them for the landing on Parry.

Amidst all of this purposeful activity, the ludicrous side of war emerged in one episode. A U.S. float plane moored in the lagoon, and a boat was sent to take off the crew. Coming alongside, the boat cleverly



Department of Defense Photo (Navy) 217679

Waves of amtracs, each one crammed with Marines uncertain of what they will find when they hit the beach, churn in for the assault of Engebi on 18 February 1944. They are hoping to find an enemy dazed by the preparatory artillery fire.

managed to capsize the plane.

The exact timing of an amphibious assault is a crucial decision based on a delicate balancing of a host of factors, such as the condition of the troops and their equipment, provision of fire support, etc. General Watson decided to hold off the landing on Parry until D plus 5 (22 February). An official report explained the reasons for the delay:

(a) To rehabilitate and reorganize [the battalion of the 22d Marines] which had been in ac-

tion for three successive days.

(b) To reembark, repair, and service medium tanks and rest their crews.

(c) To make light tanks, which were still engaged on Eniwetok, available for the assault on Parry Island if required.

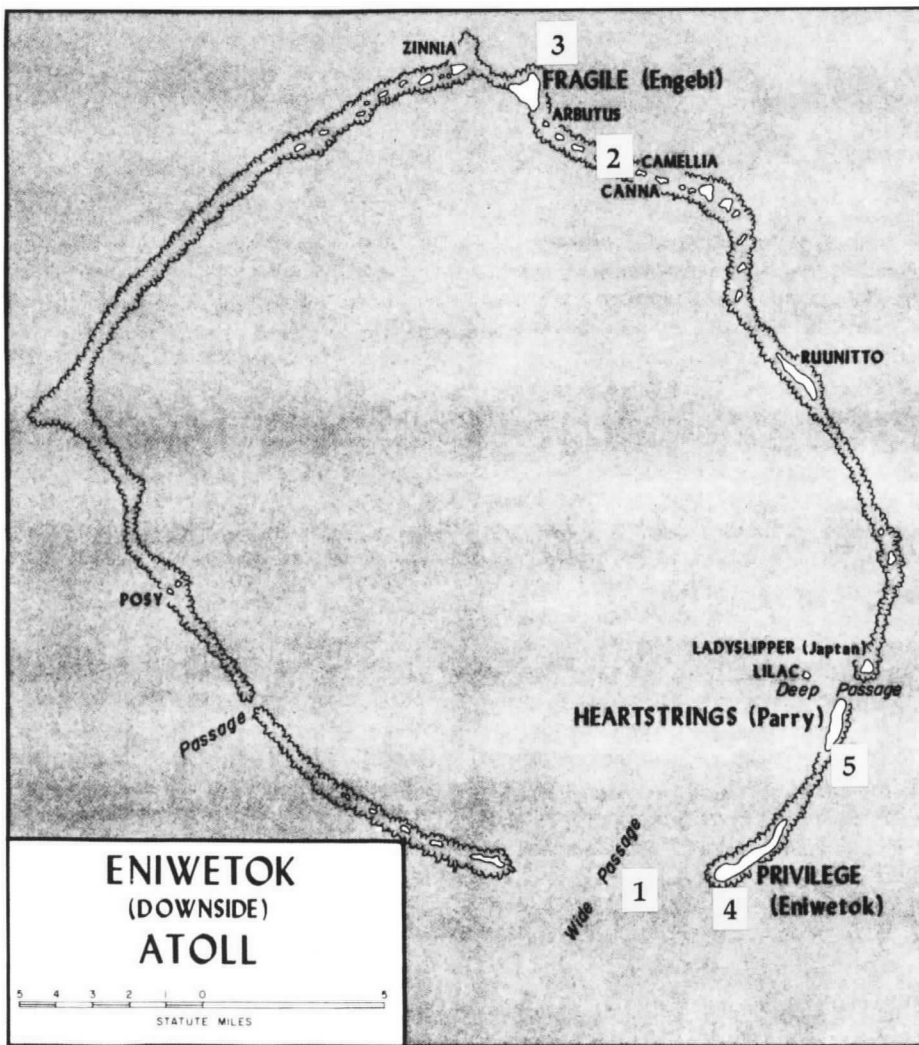
(d) To provide one [battalion] of the 106th Infantry as support reserve in the event it was required.

(e) To allow additional time

for the air and surface bombardment of Parry.

Awaiting the amtracs of the 22d Marines, the Japanese commander on the island issued a very succinct order to his troops:

At the edge of the water scatter and divide the enemy infantry in their boats—attack and annihilate each one. Launch cleverly prepared powerful quick thrusts and vivid sudden attacks, and after having attacked and having destroyed the enemy landing forces, first



RF STIBIL

The capture of this atoll followed a carefully planned sequence, using a variety of geographic points: (1) entrance of U.S. ships into the lagoon through Wide Passage in the south and Deep Entrance in the southeast; (2) artillery set up on "Camellia" and "Canna" in the northeast; (3) landing on Engebi in the north; (4) landing on Eniwetok in the south; and, finally (5) landing on Parry in the southeast.

of all, then scatter and break up their groups of boats and ships. In the event that the enemy succeeds in making a landing annihilate him by means of night attacks.

The enemy plans to "annihilate" failed. For two days before the Marine assault, the Navy had moved its big guns in as close as 850 yards offshore and pounded the defenders with 944 tons of shells. This was supplemented by artillery fire from the neighboring islands and rocket fire from the gunboats as the Marines went in. This rain of shells crept ahead of the tanks and infantrymen as they tenaciously slogged their way across the island.

As always, there was the unexpected. When a shell from a U.S. warship hit directly on top of an underground bunker, all the Japanese inside poured out and ran – of all places – into the sea. Another shell hurled a coconut tree aloft and catapulted the body of an enemy sniper from its branches through the air to his death.

For the assault troops, it was a continuing story of "spider holes," tunnels, underground strong points, and enemy resistance to the death. Another young Marine, Second Lieutenant Cord Meyer, Jr., in his first combat fought on both Eniwetok and Parry. The grueling experiences he had were typical of everyone who took part in these battles. He was

landed with his machine gun platoon in the second wave of assault troops, three minutes after the first men to hit the beach on Eniwetok. Moving quickly inland, the platoon came to the edge of a blasted coconut grove. Then, as the lieutenant later wrote home:

We were hard hit there, and with terrible clarity the reality of the event came home to me. I had crawled forward to ask a Marine where the Japs were – pretty excited really and enjoying it almost like a game. I crawled up beside him but he wouldn't answer. Then I saw the ever widening pool of dark blood by his head and knew that he was dying or dead. So it came over me what this war was, and after that it wasn't fun or exciting, but something that had to be done.

Fortune smiled on me that day, or the hand of a Divine Providence was over me, or I was just plain lucky. We killed many of them in fighting that lasted to nightfall. We cornered fifty or so Imperial [Japanese] Marines on the end of the is-

Cpl Anthony P. Damato, V Amphibious Corps, was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor for having saved the lives of his fellow Marines by throwing himself on a Japanese hand grenade.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 303037





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 72434

Poised in a shallow trench, riflemen of the 22d Marines await the order to attack an enemy coconut-log strongpoint on Eniwetok. While the most of the men are carrying M-1 rifles, the flamethrower in their midst may well prove crucial.

land, where they attempted a banzai charge, but we cut them down like overripe wheat, and they lay like tired children with their faces in the sand.

That night was unbelievably terrible. There were many of them left and they all had one fanatical notion, and that was to take one of us with them. We dug in with orders to kill anything that moved. I kept watch in a foxhole with my sergeant, and we both stayed awake all night with a knife in one hand and a grenade in the other. They crept in among us, and every bush or rock took on sinister proportions. They got some of us, but in the morning they all lay about, some with their riddled bodies actually in-

side our foxholes. With daylight it was easy for us and we finished them off. Never have I been so glad to see the blessed sun.

With that battle over, the lieutenant and his men were hustled back on ship. For a day and a night they were "desperately trying" to get their gear into proper shape to go right back into combat. The following morning, they went in on the attack on Parry.

They found the beach was swept with machine-gun and mortar fire, but they surged inland over ruined, shell-blasted soil rocked by the continual mortar bursts. Then their captain suddenly pointed, and above the brush line they saw 150 or so men bending forward, moving on a parallel course about 50 yards away.

The Marines, however, waved, thinking that they must be fellow Marines. The men paid little attention to the Marines and seemed to be setting up machine guns. The realization struck home: they were Japanese.

The lieutenant by now had just half a platoon of men and two machine guns. They set the guns up and started firing at the enemy. One gun jammed, so they buried the parts in the sand, because they thought that the Japanese would charge and they couldn't possibly stop it or prevent the capture of the gun. When they didn't attack, the Marines moved in against them. The two sides threw grenades back and forth for what seemed like hours. Many were killed on both sides. Finally the lieutenant and his men threw a whole

The Deadly Spider Holes

Later accounts explained what the Marines ran into at Engebi—and what they did to keep their advance moving forward.

Those defenses were of the “spider web” type to which there were many entrances. They were constructed by knocking out the heads of empty gasoline drums and making an impromptu pipeline of them, sunk into the ground and covered with earth and palm fronds. The tunnels thus constructed branched off in several directions from a central pit and the whole emplacement was usually concealed with great skill and ingenuity. If the main position was spotted and attacked the riflemen within could crawl off fifty feet or so down one of the corridors and emerge at an entirely different and unexpected spot from which they could get off a shot and dive down to concealment before it was

possible to determine whence the fire proceeded. Every foot of ground had to be gone over with the greatest precaution and alertness before these honeycombs of death could be silenced by the literal process of elimination.

The attacking Marines soon hit upon a method of destroying completely these underground defenses. When the bunker at the center of the web had been located, a member of the assault team would hurl a smoke grenade inside. Although this type of missile did no harm to the Japanese within, it released a cloud of vapor which rolled through the tunnels and escaped around the loosefitting covers of the foxholes.

Once the outline of the web was known, the bunker and all its satellite positions could be shattered with demolitions.

F6F “Hellcat” fighters from carrier decks played an important part in the U.S. Navy’s elimination of Japanese airpower

on a number of islands in the Marshalls, as well as in the devastating air strikes supporting the assault landings.

Department of Defense Photo (Navy) 80-K-100





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 149144

In one of the classic photographs of the Pacific War, dog-tired and battle-grime-coated Marines, thankful to be off the island and still alive, relax with a hot cup of coffee on board ship after victoriously ending the bruising fight for Eniwetok.

volley of grenades and charged in and got to the beach. Down it they could see a whole group of Japanese, so all 12 of the Marines, standing, kneeling, or lying prone, fired their rifles and carbines. The enemy fell like ducks in a shooting gallery, but still they closed in on the little group of Marines who then had to back away.

Now the lieutenant continued his story:

But we got some tanks and reinforcements some half hour later and moved through them in skirmish line, which brings this tale to the most extraordinary incident of all. I was following some ten yards behind

the tanks, when a Jap officer came out of a hole pointing his pistol at me; so instinctively I shot my carbine from the hip and hit him full in the face. I walked forward and looked into the trench and saw another with his arm cocked to throw a grenade. He didn't see me. I was only six feet away. I pulled the trigger but the weapon was jammed with sand. I had to do something, so I took my carbine by the barrel and hit him with all my might at the base of the neck. It broke his neck and my carbine.

Finally we killed them all. They never surrender. Again the night was a bad one, but

with the dawn came complete victory, and those of us who still walked without a wound looked in amazement at our whole bodies. There was not much jubilation. We just sat and stared at the sand, and most of us thought of those who were gone — those whom I shall remember as always young, smiling, and graceful, and I shall try to forget how they looked at the end, beyond all recognition. . . .

The lieutenant's letter went on to praise his men:

They obeyed with an unquestioning courage. One of my section leaders was hit by a bullet

in his arm. It spun him clear around and set him down on his behind. A little dazed, he sat there for a second and then jumped up with the remark, "The little bastards will have to hit me with more than that." I had to order him back to the dressing station an hour later. He was weak with loss of blood but actually pleaded to stay.

My runner was knocked down right beside me with three bullet holes in him and blood all over his face. Stupidly I said, "Are you hit, boy?" He was crying a little, being just a kid of eighteen, and said, "I'm sorry, sir. I guess I'm just a sissy." I damn near cried myself at that.

And so it went all through the day, but by evening it was nearly all over. Early the next morning (D plus 6, 23 February) Parry was completely in American hands, and the conquest of Eniwetok Atoll's vital objectives was complete. Some 3,400 Japanese had been eliminated there at a cost of 348 American dead and 866 wounded.

Mopping up operations on many of the tiny islets in the Marshalls continued until 24 April. The troops encountered a few scattered Japanese soldiers – quickly dispatched – and an oddity. On one atoll they found a German who had married a native woman and had lived there since he had originally been shipwrecked in 1891. One of the obscure atolls was later to become famous as a U.S. nuclear testing ground, and as a name given to a sensational new woman's bathing suit: Bikini.

The 22d Marines had performed superbly. Recognition of their achievements came in the form of a Navy Unit Commendation, which praised its "sustained endurance, fortitude, and fighting spirit throughout this operation."

Thus the Marshall Islands operations were successfully concluded. With relatively light American

casualties, a big step had been taken in the Central Pacific campaign. U.S. forces were now within 1,100 miles of their next objective, the Mariana Islands. The timetable for that leap was moved up by at least 20 weeks. The 2d Marine Division and the remainder of the Army's 27th Division were now free for that operation,

since they were not needed in the Marshalls. The basic techniques for victorious amphibious assaults were now clearly proven. Another large contingent of American troops had received its baptism of fire, and the Americans had broken the outer ring of Japan's Central Pacific defenses with impressive skill and courage.

The Secretary of the Navy
Washington

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in commending the
**Twenty-Second Marines, Reinforced, Tactical Group One,
Fifth Amphibious Corps**

consisting of

Twenty-second Marines; Second Separate Pack Howitzer Company; Second Separate Tank Company; Second Separate Engineer Company; Second Separate Medical Company; Second Separate Motor Transport Company; Fifth Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company; Company D, Fourth Tank Battalion, Fourth Marine Division; 104th Field Artillery Battalion, U.S. Army; Company C, 766th Tank Battalion, U.S. Army; Company A, 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion, U.S. Army; Company D, 708th Provisional Amphibian Tractor Battalion, U.S. Army; and the Provisional DUKW Battery, Seventh Infantry Division, U.S. Army.

for service as follows:

"For outstanding heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces during the assault and capture of Eniwetok Atoll, Marshall Islands, from February 17 to 22, 1944. As a unit of a Task Force, assembled only two days prior to departure for Eniwetok Atoll, the Twenty-second Marines, Reinforced, landed in whole or in part on Engebi, Eniwetok and Parry Islands in rapid succession and launched aggressive attacks in the face of heavy machine-gun and mortar fire from well camouflaged enemy dugouts and foxholes. With simultaneous landings and reconnaissance missions on numerous other small islands, they overcame all resistance within six days, destroying a known 2,665 of the Japanese and capturing 66 prisoners. By their courage and determination, despite the difficulties and hardships involved in repeated reembarkations and landing from day to day, these gallant officers and men made available to our forces in the Pacific Area an advanced base with large anchorage facilities and an established airfield, thereby contributing materially to the successful conduct of the war. Their sustained endurance, fortitude and fighting spirit throughout this operation reflect the highest credit on the Twenty-second Marines, Reinforced, and on the United States Naval Service."

All personnel attached to and serving with any of the above units during the period February 17 to 22, 1944, are authorized to wear the Navy Unit Commendation Ribbon.

Sources

All of the basic Marine histories for World War II contain detailed accounts of the Marshalls operation. This monograph represents a summary, supplemented by individual experiences drawn from the Personal Papers and Oral Histories Collections in the Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C.

Among the most useful were: 1stLt John C. Chapin, USMCR, *The 4th Marine Division in World War II* (Washington: Historical Division, HQMC, 1945); LtCol Robert D. Heintz, Jr., USMC, and LtCol John A. Crown, USMC, *The Marshalls: Increasing the Tempo* (Washington: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, HQMC, 1954); Historical Division, HQMC. "The Marshall Islands Operations." Unpublished draft, n.d. World War II—Marshall Islands Records File. Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C.; LtCol S. L. A. Marshall, AUS, *Island Victory* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1944); Carl W. Proehl, ed., *The Fourth Marine Division in World War II* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1946); Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Bernard C. Nalty, and Edwin T. Turnbladh, *Central Pacific Drive—History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, vol 3 (Washington: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, HQMC, 1966).

In the Personal Papers Collection Unit, Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C., the following files have been useful: First Lieutenant John C. Chapin (PC 671); Master Sergeant Roger M. Emmons (PC 304); Private First Class Robert F. Graf (PC 1946); Princeton University Collection (PC 2216).

Transcripts of interviews in Oral History Collection, Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C.: BGen William W. Buchanan; BGen Melvin L. Krulewitch; Col William P. McCahill; MajGen William W. Rogers; LtGen James L. Underhill.

Other Titles

The following pamphlets in the Marines in World War II Commemorative Series are now in print: *Opening Moves: Marines Gear Up For War*; *Infamous Day: Marines at Pearl Harbor, 7 December 1941*; *First Offensive: The Marine Campaign for Guadalcanal*; *Outpost in the North Atlantic: Marines in the Defense of Iceland*; *A Magnificent Fight: Marines in the Battle for Wake Island*; *Across the Reef: The Marine Assault of Tarawa*; *Up the Slot: Marines in the Central Solomons*; *Time of the Aces: Marine Pilots in the Solomons, 1942-1944*.



About the Author

Captain John C. Chapin earned a bachelor of Arts degree with honors in history from Yale University in 1942 and was commissioned later that year. He served as a rifle-platoon leader in the 24th Marines, 4th Marine Division, and was wounded in action during assault landings on Roi-Namur and Saipan.

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Now a captain in retired status, he has been a volunteer at the Marine Corps Historical Center for 10 years. During that time, he wrote *History of Marine Fighter-Attack (VMFA) Squadron 115*. With support from the Historical Center and the Marine Corps Historical Foundation, he then spent some years researching and interviewing for the writing of a new book, *Uncommon Men—The Sergeants Major of the Marine Corps*. This was published in 1992 by the White Mane Publishing Company.



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