

The American advance was measured in yards per day. The majority of the 3d Marine Division had landed on the fifth day and was thrown into the fight. The 3d moved up the middle of the island, while the 5th fought on the left flank and the 4th on the right.

Japanese positions were taken only after brutal hand-to-hand combat or the use of hand-tossed demolitions.

Towards the end of the campaign, Japanese resistance became localized, with every man fighting for himself or for the few men left in his band.

Marines ran these groups down. The end result was almost always the same: the Japanese, once cornered, would fight to the death.





The last organized position was encountered in what became known as Bloody Gorge near Kitano Point. Here the remaining members of the Imperial Navy Land Force and a few Japanese soldiers put up a terrific fight in the confines of the narrow, rocky gorge.

U.S. Army fighter aircraft, now based on the repaired Airfield No. 1, tried unsuccessfully to dislodge them with bombs. Again, it was the individual riflemen, doggedly pressing forward, who finally swept over the last pocket.



But the Japanese were not through. On the morning of March 26, at 4 a.m., scattered groups joined together in a bloody banzai attack on the operating airfield. Four hours later 44 airmen were killed and 88 wounded. A total of 262 Japanese were killed and 18 taken prisoner.

The redoubtable General Kuribayashi was rumored to have led this assault. His body was never identified. A Japanese survivor has pictured Admiral Ichimaru hobbling forward waving his sword as he led 20 survivors in another futile charge the next day. The island was declared secured on March 26.



## *The First Save...*

Shortly after the flag raising on Suribachi, as if to show the Marines the importance of their fight, a B-29 nicknamed "Dinah Might" made the first emergency landing. She spent a few hours on Iwo, refueling and being repaired. Then she clawed back into the air off the fighter-length runway, bound for her base in the Mariana Islands.

By the end of the war, 2,400 B-29s with 27,000 grateful crewmen aboard had made unscheduled landings on Iwo Jima.

