

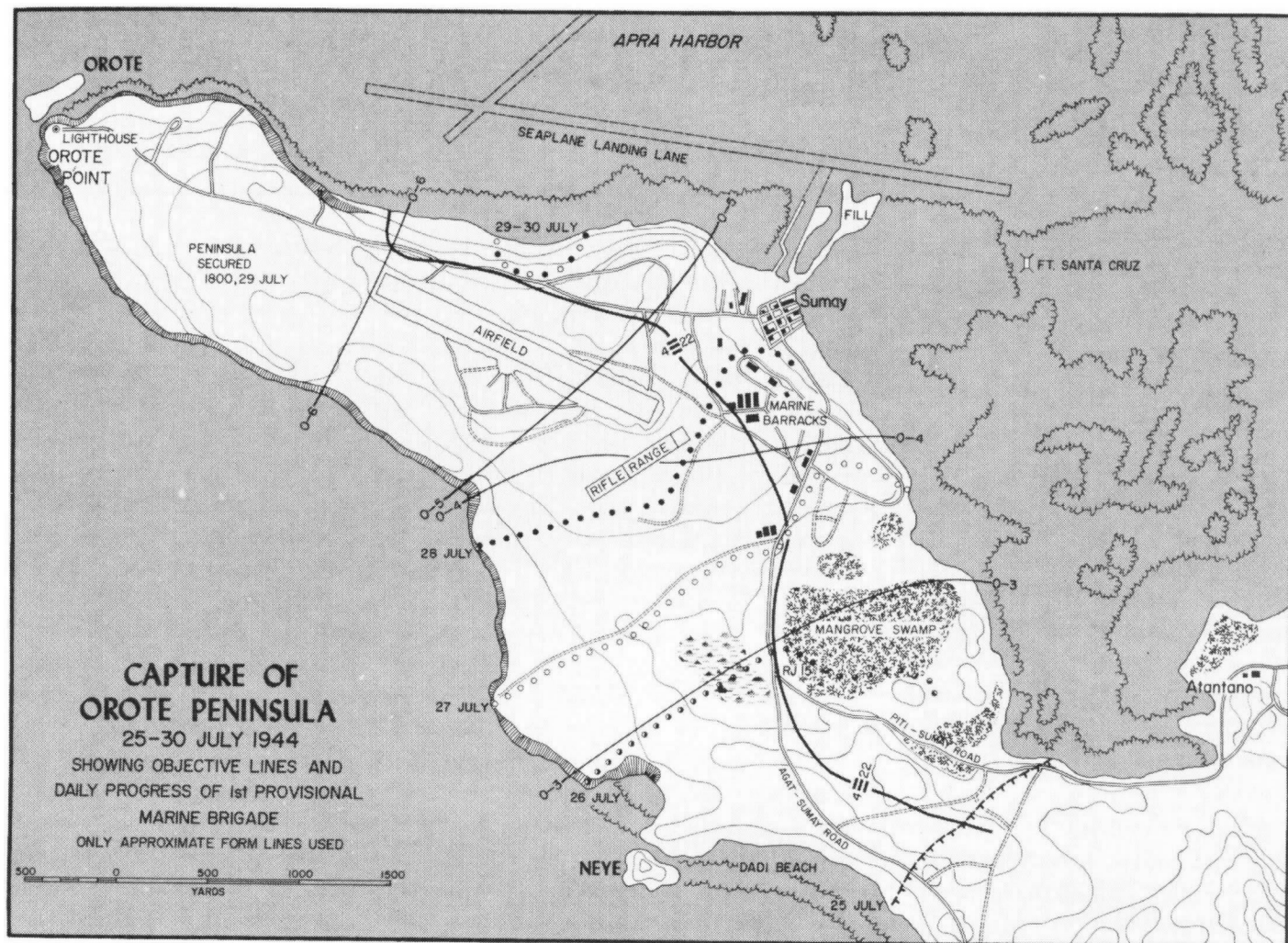
talion, 4th Marines, facing a well-defended ridge, a coconut grove, and a sinister clearing, was nearing the sentimental and tactically important goals of the old Marine barracks, its rifle range, and the runways of Orote airfield. With heavy tank support, the 22d Marines surged forward past the initial obstacles and by afternoon had reached positions well beyond the morning's battles. On the left of the 4th Marines, where resistance was lighter, the assault was led by tanks that beat down the brush. While inspecting positions there, Lieutenant Colonel Samuel D. Puller, the 4th's executive officer and brother of famed Lieutenant Colonel Lewis B. "Chesty" Puller, was killed by a sniper.

By mid-afternoon, the 4th Marines' assault elements broke out of the grove just short of the rifle range, only to stall in a new complex at dug-

in defenses and minefields. Strangely, and yet not unusual in the climax of a losing engagement, a Japanese officer emerged to brandish his sword at a tank. It was easier than ritual suicide.

The horror of the American guns again must have been too much for the Japanese defending the immediate front. Surprisingly, they just cut and ran from their strong, well-defended positions. The elated Marines, who did not care why the enemy ran—just that they ran—now dug in only 300 yards from the prized targets. Their capture would wait for tomorrow, 28 July. The Japanese were now squeezed into the last quadrant of the peninsula. All of their strongly entrenched defenses had failed to hold. The Orote airfield, the old Marine barracks, the old parade ground which had not felt an American boot since 10 December

1941, were all about to be retrieved. General Shepherd sounded a great reveille on 28 July for what was left of the Japanese naval defenders: a 45-minute air strike and a 30-minute naval gunfire bombardment, joined by whatever guns the 77th Division, brigade, and anti-aircraft battalions could muster. At 0830 the brigade would attack for Orote airfield. Colonel Schneider's 22d Marines would take the barracks and Sumay and Colonel Shapley's 4th Marines would take the airfield and the rifle range. Japanese artillery and mortar fire had diminished, but small arms and machine guns still spoke intensely when the Marines attacked. At this bitter end, the Japanese were evoking a last-ditch stubbornness. American tanks were called up but most had problems with visibility and control. Wherever the thick scrub brush concealed the enemy,



Major John S. Messers' 2d Battalion, 4th Marines called for increased tank support when one of his companies began taking heavy casualties. In response to General Shepherd's request, General Bruce sent forward a platoon of Army tank destroyers and a platoon of light tanks to beef up the attack.

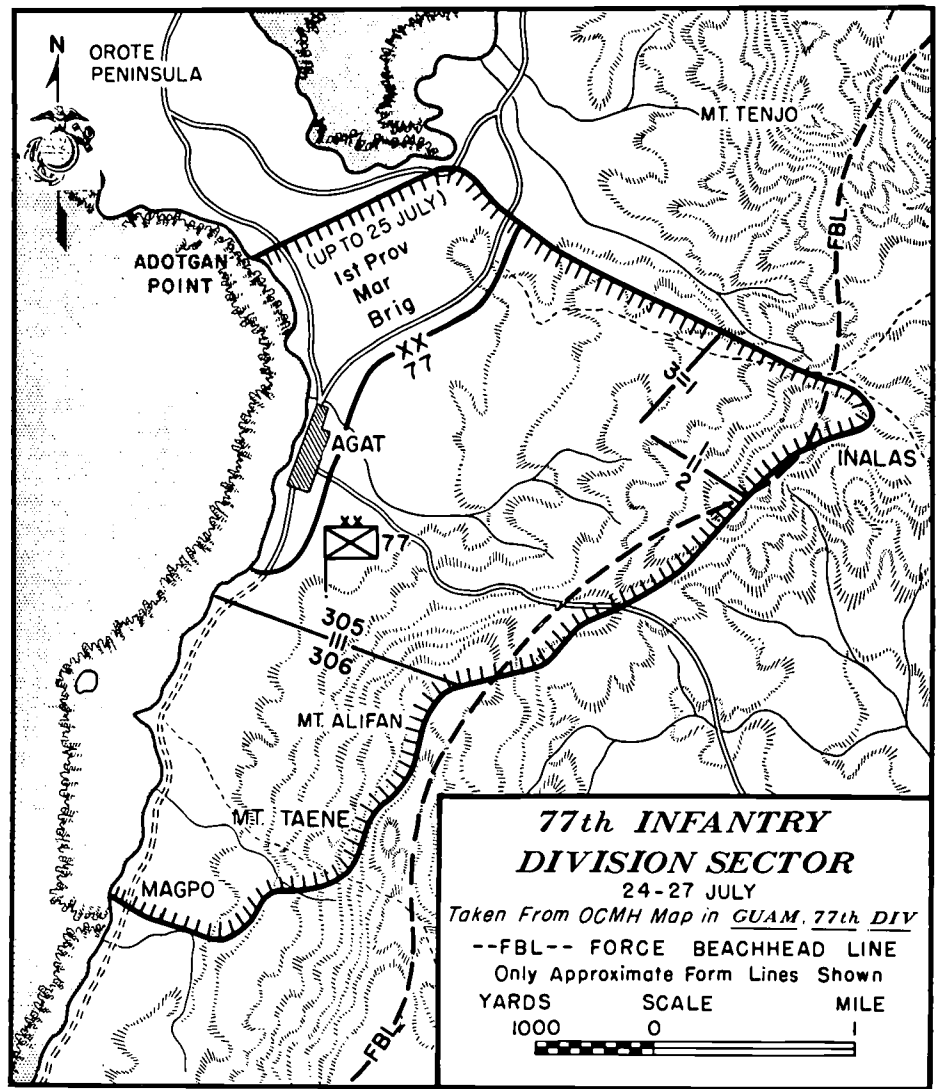
General Shepherd wanted the battle over now. He ordered a massive infantry and tank attack which kicked off at 1530 on the 28th. The Japanese did not intend to oblige this time by quitting; this was do or die. By nightfall all objectives were in plain sight, but there were still a few hundred yards to be gained. The Marines stood fast for the night, hoping the Japanese would sacrifice themselves in counterattack, but no such luck occurred.

When the attack resumed on the 29th, after the usual Army and Marine artillery preparation and an awesomely heavy air strike, Army and Marine tanks led the way onto the airfield. Resistance was meager. By early afternoon, the airfield was secured and the 22d Marines had occupied what was left of the old Marine barracks. A bronze plaque, which had long been mounted at the entrance to the barracks, was recovered and held for reinstallation at a future date.

The Japanese found this latest advance difficult to accept. Suicides were many and random. Soldiers jumped off cliffs, hugged exploding grenades, even cut their own throats.

Private First Class George F. Eftang, with the 4th Marines' supporting pack howitzer battalion, saw the suicides: "I could see the Japanese jumping to their deaths. I actually felt sorry for them. I knew they had families and sweethearts like anyone else."

While the embattled peninsula still swarmed with patrols, Admiral Spruance; Generals Smith, Geiger, Larsen (the future island commander), and Shepherd; Colonels Shapley and



Schneider, and others who could be spared, arrived for a ceremonial flag raising and heartfelt tribute to an old barracks and those Marines who had made it home. General Shepherd called it hallowed ground and told the distinguished assemblage, which included a hastily cleaned-up honor guard of brigade troops: "you have avenged the loss of our comrades who were overcome by a numerically superior force three days after Pearl Harbor. Under our flag this island again stands ready to fulfill its destiny as an American fortress in the Pacific."

Many of the Marines standing at attention, watching the historic ceremony, could only thank God that they were still alive. At the end of this ceremony, engineers moved onto the airfield to clear away debris and fill the many shell and bomb holes.

Only six hours after the first bulldozer clanked onto the runways, a Navy torpedo bomber made an emergency landing. Soon the light artillery spotting planes were regularly flying from them.

The capture of Orote Peninsula had cost the brigade 115 men killed, 721 wounded, and 38 missing in action. The enemy toll of counted dead was 1,633. It was obvious that on Orote as at Fonte, there were many Japanese still unaccounted for and presumably ready still to fight to prevent the island's capture.

Securing the Force Beachhead Line

With the breakthrough at Fonte and failure of Takashina's mass counterattack, the American positions could be consolidated. The 3d and 21st Marines squared away their



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 88153

A Marine uses a flamethrower on a Japanese-occupied pillbox on what had been the Marine golf course on Guam, adjoining the Marine Barracks on Orote Peninsula.

holds on heights and the 9th Marines (July 27-29) pushed its final way up to Mount Alutom and Mount Chachao.

The most serious resistance to occupying the Mount Alutom-Mount Chachao massif and securing the Force Beachhead Line (FBHL) across the hills was a surprisingly strong point at the base of Mount Chachao. Major Donald B. Hubbard, commanding the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines (replacing Lieutenant Colonel Asmuth, wounded on W-Day), called down artillery, and, after the

barrage, his Marines attacked with grenades and bayonets. They destroyed everything that stood in their path. When that fight was over, Major Hubbard's battalion counted 135 Japanese dead. As the assault force pushed up these commanding slopes, the Marines could spot men of Company A of the 305th Infantry atop Mount Tenjo to the west. Lieutenant Colonel Carey A. Randall's 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, then moved up and made contact with the Army troops. Originally, Mount Tenjo had been in the 3d Division

zone, but General Bruce had wanted to get his men on the high ground so they could push ahead along the heights and not get trapped in the ravines. He also wanted to prevent the piecemeal commitment of his division and to preserve its integrity.

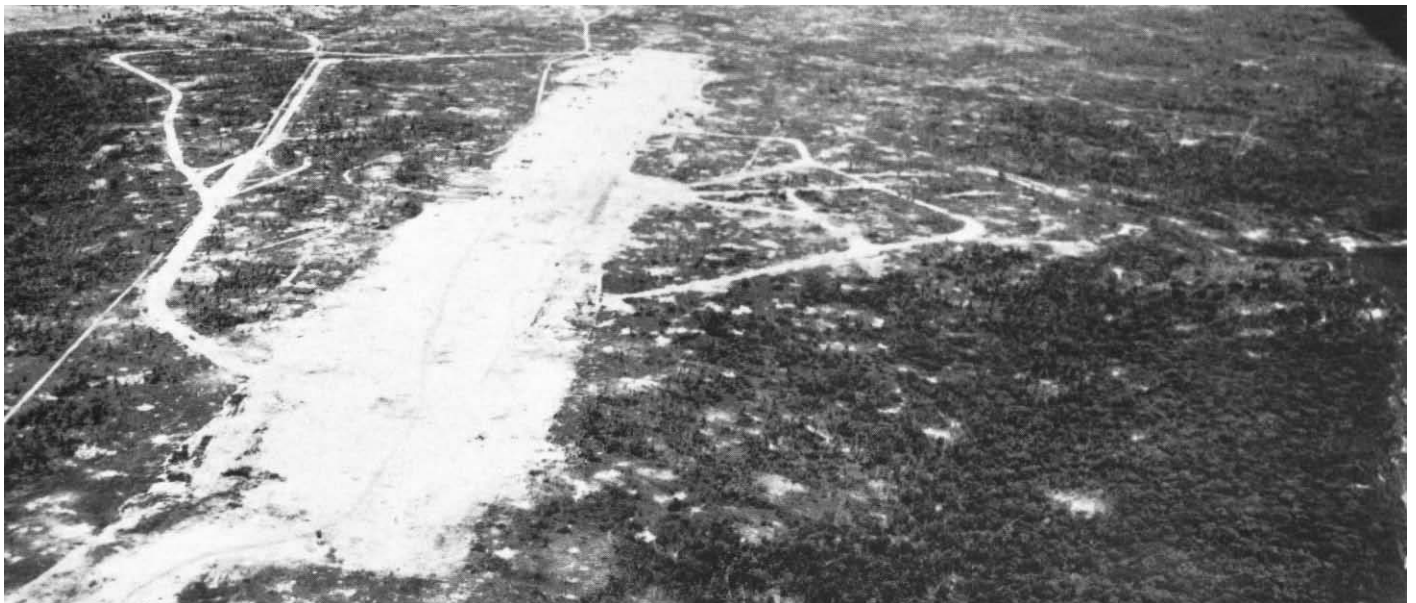
Conservative estimates put the Japanese dead as a result of the counterattack at 3,200 men. The loss of Takashina's infantry officers, including General Shigematsu, who had commanded the *48th Independent Mixed Brigade*, was held to be as high as 96 percent. Takashina himself fell to the fire from a machine gun on an American tank as he was urging survivors out of the Fonte position and on to the north to fight again. With Takashina's death, tactical command of all Japanese forces remaining on Guam was assumed by General Obata. He had only a few senior officers remaining to rally the surviving defenders and organize cohesive units from the shattered remnants of the battalions that had fought to hold the heights above the Asan-Adelup beaches.

All through the night of 28 July, Japanese troops trudged along the paths that led from Fonte to Ordot, finding their way at times by the light

This Japanese airstrip on Orote Peninsula was one of the prime objectives of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade in its zone.

Pockmarks on the strip resulted from the aerial, ships' gunfire, and artillery bombardments directed at this target.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC)88134





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 88152

A tank-infantry team from the 4th Marines advances slowly through the dense scrub growth that characterized the terrain in the regiment's zone on Orote Peninsula. The attack moved forward yard by yard until the objective was secured.

of American flares. At Ordot, two traffic control points guided men toward Barrigada, where three composite infantry companies were forming, or toward Finegayan, where a force of five composite companies was to man blocking positions. As he fully expected the Americans to conduct an aggressive pursuit on the 29th, General Obata ordered Lieutenant Colonel Takeda to organize a delaying force that would hold back the Marines until the withdrawal could be effected.

Contrary to the Japanese commander's expectations, General Geiger had decided to rest his battle-weary troops before launching a full-scale attack to the north. The substance of his orders to the 3d and 77th Divisions on 29 July was to eliminate the last vestiges of Japanese resistance within the FBHL, organize a line of defense, and patrol in strength to the front. With capture of the beachhead line and its critical high ground and the annihilation of great numbers of Japanese, the turning point of the Guam campaign had been reached.

Yet, few Japanese had surrendered and those captured were usually dazed, wounded, or otherwise unable to resist. Almost all of the enemy died fighting, even when their lives were lost without sense or purpose. Still, a substantial number of

troops from the 29th Division were still not accounted for.

General Geiger's intelligence sections could only list about one quarter of the estimated soldier-sailor strength that had been on the island, and he needed to make certain that his rear was secure from attack before heading north after the enemy. Captured Japanese documents and prisoners of war, and sightings from aircraft, all indicated to Geiger that the Japanese had withdrawn to the north to better roads, denser and more concealing jungle, and commanding terrain for strongpoints.

To ensure that his rear area was not threatened, General Geiger had the 77th Division detail patrols to scour the southern half of Guam, repeating and intensifying the searches the brigade had made. These soldiers, as the Marines before

them, found Guamanians everywhere, some in camps established by the Japanese, others on their farms and ranches. The natives, some surprised to see Americans so soon after the landings, reported the presence of only small bands of Japanese and often only single soldiers. It became increasingly evident that the combat units that remained were in the north, not the south. The best estimates of their strength ranged around a figure of 6,000 men.

Obata had expected a hasty pursuit, and set up strong rear guards to give time for his retreating forces to organize. Victory was no longer even a hope, but the Japanese could still extract a painful cost. General Geiger, who had a little time now, could give his troops a rest and move into attack positions across the width of the island. Strong and frequent patrols were sent out to find routes cross

Marines of the 1st Provisional Brigade hurl hand grenades at enemy positions on the other side of one of the rice paddies that slowed their advance toward Orote.





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 93468

Marines bypass two smoldering Japanese light tanks, knocked out of action by Marine Sherman medium tanks on the road to Sumay on Orote Peninsula.

country and glimpse clues of enemy strength and dispositions.

Obata organized delaying defenses to include the southwest slopes of Mount Barrigada, midway across the island from Tumon Bay, and the little town of Barrigada itself, barely 20 houses. On all approaches to his final defensive positions near Mount Santa Rosa, in the northwest corner of the island, he organized road-blocks at trail and road junctions, principally at Finegayan and Yigo,

and concealed troops in the jungle to interdict the roads which were the only practical approach routes to the northern end of the island. The Japanese commander felt sorely besieged, and as his notes later revealed: "the enemy air force seeking our units during daylight hours in the forest, bombed and strafed even a single soldier." Perhaps even more damaging than the air attacks were artillery and naval gunfire bombardments brought down on men, guns,

trenches, anything, by the Navy, Marines, and Army spotter planes which were constantly overhead.

The Attack North

III Corps's Geiger knew Obata's probable route of retreat and drew up a succession of objectives across the island which would incrementally seize all potential enemy strong-points. Jump-off for the drive north was 0630 31 July with the 3d Marine Division on the left and the 77th Infantry Division on the right, dividing the island down the middle. The Marine zone would include the island capital of Agana, the Japanese airfield at Tiyan, Finegayan, and the shores of Tumon Bay. The 77th would have Mount Barrigada, Yigo, and Mount Santa Rosa in its zone. The 1st Marine Brigade relieved the 77th Division of the defense of the southern portion of the FBHL and would continue to patrol the southern half of Guam. As the Corps attack moved northward and the island widened, the brigade would eventually take part in the drive to the extreme north coast of the island.

Marine artillerymen, members of Battery C, 7th 155mm (Long Toms) Gun Battalion, III Amphibious Corps Artillery, take advantage of a lull in fire missions to swab the bore of their gun. Soon after, the gun was back in battery firing missions.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 91347





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 93543
Fleet Marine Force, Pacific commander LtGen Holland M. Smith, right, stands with the leaders of the successful retaking of Orote Peninsula. From left to right, LtCol Alan Shapley; BGen Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr.; and Col Merlin F. Schneider.

The 3d Division reached Ordot in the center of its zone where Obata had directed some of his survivors. The 3d Battalion, 21st Marines, ran into them and one of their pillboxes, which the Marines thoroughly gutted. The Americans also accounted for 15 infantrymen and two light tanks which were the targets of M-1s and bazookas.

The honor of liberating Agana fell to the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines. The riflemen entered the town's ruins treading carefully, sizing up the stark, dusty building walls for snipers. A few enemy riflemen emerged from behind concrete outcroppings then dropped back into eternity. The Japanese guards were stragglers, the wounded, or a few foolish enough to stay. In one house, a Marine opened a closet to reveal a Japanese officer, sword in hand. The Marine slammed the door, riddled it with an automatic rifle, and didn't bother to look again. The once-beautiful old Plaza de Espana was in American hands 15 minutes after the town was entered. By noon it was secured.

The 1st and 2d Battalions, 3d Marines, moved along to the critical Agana-Pago Road. At 1350 the 21st

Marines was right up there with them after the few engagements with pillboxes, snipers, and tanks. By 1510, Colonel Craig's 9th Marines on the division's right was partially across the road and seized the remaining portion of that highway in its sector on the next day. Hard-surfaced, with two lanes across the

As the regimental field music sounds "To the Colors," Col Schneider and his 22d Marines staff and command salute as the American flag is raised over Guam for the first time since it was taken down by the Japanese invaders in December 1941.



midriff of the island, the Agana-Pago Road would prove critical in winning the battle of Guam.

Leaving Agana and its historic rescue of the capital, the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, under Major Royal R. Bastian, Jr., who had taken command when Lieutenant Colonel Houser was wounded on 22 July, moved on with relative ease. Before dusk the battalion had seized 1,400 yards of other critical roads and trails which led to strategic and defended strongpoints of Finegayan and Barrigada.

General Turnage got well within striking distance of the Tiyan airfield and the little town of San Antonio, on the 31st, but the next day, 1 August, his advance was seriously slowed by mines. It took the cool skill and slow and steady hands of the bomb disposal specialists of the 25th Naval Construction Battalion and the 19th Marines' engineers to reduce those obstacles.

Students of the battle and those who were there consider the taking of the cross-island Agana-Pago Road as a major factor in guaranteeing the success of the drive northward. Its capture solved a host of logistic



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 93571

Troops of the 3d Battalion, 3d Marines, enter the wreckage of Agana in the trace of retreating Japanese forces, who had planted land mines before they left.

problems, for the 77th particularly. The Army division, for example, had no roads heading north initially in its zone of advance and needed such a road over which it could supply its troops as they came down out of the hills and cut their way through the jungle. Frontline troops in the Army zone were soon running low on supplies, especially water. General Bruce promised his people a hot breakfast as soon as they and the Marines could give him the road. Trucks were soon thick on the road even while SeaBees and engineers were enlarging and repairing it.

The 77th had moved out on schedule just after daylight on 31 July, with the 307th Infantry in the advance, followed by the 305th. As was the situation facing the 3d Division, enemy resistance to the Army advance was negligible. Within two hours, both Army regiments had secured the cross-island road in their zones. The 307th rescued 2,000 Guamanians in the detention camp at Asinan. Unop-

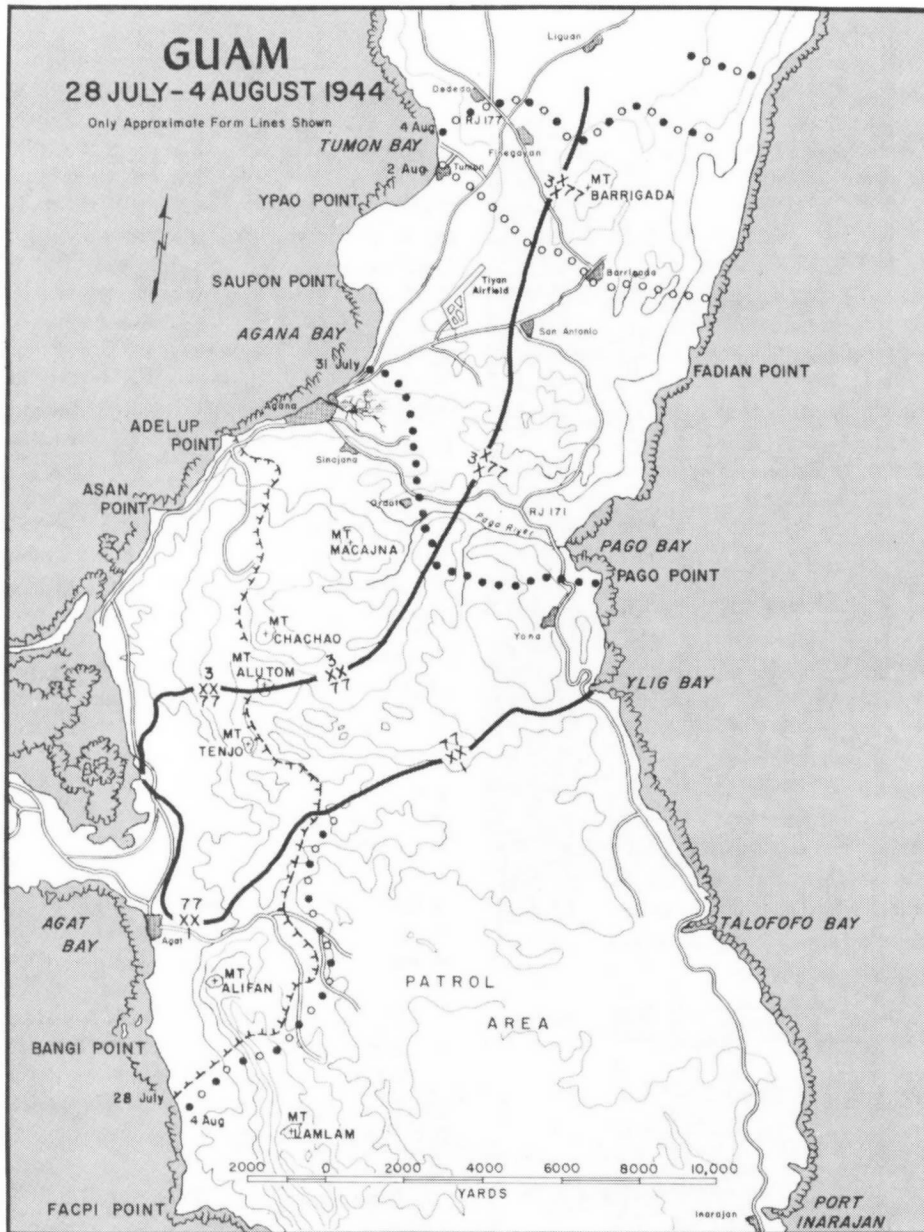
posed, the 77th by noon of 1 August was across the Pago River. Residents of the area said the Japanese had left in a hurry for Barrigada, a destination where III Corps intelligence already anticipated the enemy would hold up. The jungle-covered mountain there, 674 feet high, dominated the area.

General Bruce assigned the capture of Barrigada to the 307th. It was to maintain contact with the 3d Marine Division on the left and push through the town, then continue about a mile to seize Mount Barrigada. The 305th to the right of the 307th would attack in the same direction east of the town and Barrigada mountain and protect to the coast. The town was in a clearing fully swept with defensive machine gun fire. In the same clearing was a much-desired well. Its capture meant the world to the parched troops.

At 0630, 2 August General Bruce dispatched a dozen tanks of the 706th Tank Battalion on a reconnaissance. As the "recon" armor turned into Bar-

Soldiers of the 77th Division reach the end of the road bulldozed by the 302d Engineer Combat Battalion, and strike out cross country in the 31 July advance.





rigada town, the enemy opened up with a torrent of fire. The determined Japanese fiercely resisted the 307th when it reached the town and were equally determined to stop the 305th on the right as that regiment's assault companies tried to outflank the town. Repeated tank attacks and heavy artillery support netted only a few yards at a time, but the soldiers kept advancing and by 4 August, the 77th Division held the town, or what was left of it, its precious well, and the crest of the mountain.

Captured documents and interviews with prisoners again left little doubt that the 77th Division's major obstacle would be rugged, heavily

crevassed, and jungled Mount Santa Rosa. It is six and a half miles north-east of Barrigada and a short distance from the ocean on the east coast.

First to be addressed on the way were well-armed outposts like Finegayan and Yigo. Each promised casualties, blood, and delay. General Geiger employed the 77th to reduce Yigo and take Santa Rosa, and left the capture of Finegayan and the rest of northern Guam principally to the 3d Marine Division. He brought up General Shepherd's brigade to assist in the final drive. To protect the Force Beachhead Line, care for the Guamanians, and hunt down enemy stragglers in the south, General Geiger

tasked the 1st Battalion, 22d Marines; the 7th Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion; and the 9th Defense Battalion, all under Lieutenant Colonel Archie E. O'Neil, who commanded the 9th.

Before moving on, the brigade had aggressively sought out Japanese holdouts, brought the fearful Guamanians into friendly compounds, and provided security for those who chose to remain in their own homes and again work their own ranches. As late as 2 August, 4th Marines' patrols approaching Talofofu Bay on the southeast coast, came across some 2,000 natives, still apprehensive of the Japanese, who were directed to a compound which promised safety and at least minimum comforts. The Guamanian people in their own residential and farm areas could, however, still readily call upon the civil affairs sections for food, protection, medicine, and shelter. Such civil care was integral to the American occupation and was controlled by Marine General Larsen, who would head the garrison force as soon as the island was again under the American flag.

During the night of 2-3 August, the 12th Marines delivered 777 rounds of harassing and interdiction fire on the roads and trails the division would encounter around Finegayan. At 0700 on 3 August, the 3d and 9th Marines moved in assault well past the Tiyon airfield. Then, about 0910 the 9th encountered a block at the cross roads approaching Finegayan village. The situation and terrain favored the Japanese with excellent fields of fire. After the Japanese position was finally overrun with tanks, Lieutenant Colonel Carey Randall, commanding 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, said that these defenses were the toughest he had faced on Guam.

That contest for Finegayan was the last major battle for the 3d Division on Guam. The Japanese made it something to remember. A 3d Divi-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 92327

The Catholic cemetery of Anigua became the home of approximately 7,000 Guamanians liberated from Japanese rule. Here a family lives in a temporary shelter.

sion armored reconnaissance patrol headed for Ritidian Point on the northernmost point of the island ran into Japanese defenses located on the Finegayan trails bristling with anti-tank weapons and artillery pointed in the direction of the patrol. The Americans were surprised and bruised, did the Japanese some harm, but sensibly cancelled the mission.

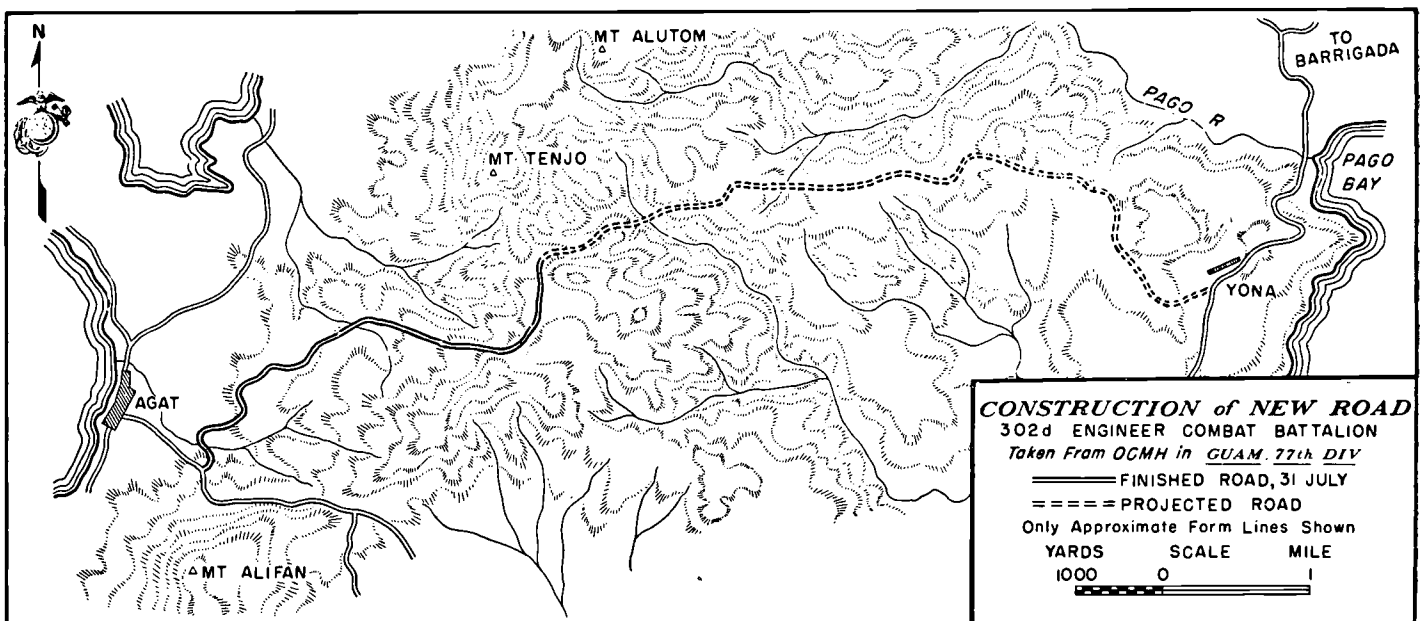
The Japanese were plenty feisty at Finegayan, and in a telling thrust dispatched two medium tanks which skirted the crossroads of the 9th Marines at Junction 177 and went up the Finegayan-Mount Santa Rosa Road. Impervious to Marine fire, the tanks shot up the area and got away. Another tank force of undetermined size then rumbled down under cover

of a mortar barrage and it looked like the beginning of a counterattack. Artillery stilled that Japanese effort. The enemy tanks were driven off but survived to reappear again another day.

It was in one of those typical sudden enemy attacks around Finegayan that Private First Class Frank P. Wittek, with automatic rifle and grenades, raced ahead of his own tanks to destroy an eight-man Japanese position which was holding back elements of his 1st Battalion, 9th Marines. He succeeded, but was killed. He was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

Beginning of the End

On 4 August, the new frontlines and scheme of maneuver were being set up to keep pressure on General Obata and his holdouts, and make a place for General Shepherd and his brigade. During the afternoon, the brigade reached its northern assembly area and General Shepherd set up his CP near San Antonio. In the final advance north, the brigade would be on the left with its inland flank within a mile of the western beaches. The 3d Division would be in the center deploying its units on a three-regiment front which would swerve to the east to take in the whole northern end of the island and as well sup-



port the 77th Division.

The Japanese now faced an overwhelming number of attack forces. And there would be plenty of help from the sea and from the air. General Bruce's soldiers made the principal corps drive to destroy the remaining Japanese and attacked Mount Santa Rosa. Priority of fires of corps ar-

tillery, air support, and ships gunfire was now given to the Army. These new arrangements were to take effect on 7 August.

Making new strides to end the campaign, the 3d and 21st Marines progressed handily but the 9th Marines kept running into dense jungle that was such a tangled mess that

tanks passed each other 15 feet apart without knowing the other was there. The division accelerated its advance in battalion columns. On 6 August, it had progressed 5,000 yards along the road to Ritidian Point, the end of the island and the end of the battle for Guam. As that evening fell, the 3d Division was in visual contact

During the night of 2-3 August, U.S. artillery delivered many rounds of harassing and interdiction fire on the enemy in the

north of Guam. Here, a blinding flash from a Long Tom lights up the dark Guam night as it joins other guns in the shelling.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 93340



PFC Witek's Medal of Honor Hailed 'Inspiring Acts'

Private First Class Frank Peter Witek'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 1st Battalion, 9th Marines, 3d Marine Division, during the Battle of Finegayen at Guam, Marianas Islands, on 3 August 1944. When his rifle platoon was halted by heavy surprise fire from well camouflaged enemy positions, Private First Class Witek daringly remained standing to fire a full magazine from his [Browning] automatic [rifle] at point-blank range into a depression housing Japanese troops, killing eight of the enemy and enabling the greater part of his platoon to take cover. During his platoon's withdrawal for consolidation of lines, he re-

mained to safeguard a severely wounded comrade, courageously returning the enemy's fire until the arrival of stretcher bearers, and then covering the evacuation by sustained fire as he moved backward toward his own lines. With his platoon again pinned down by a hostile machine gun, Private First Class Witek, on his initiative, moved forward boldly to the reinforcing tanks, and infantry, alternately throwing hand grenades and firing as he advanced to within 5 to 10 yards of the enemy position, and destroying the hostile machine-gun emplacement and an additional eight Japanese before he himself was struck down by an enemy rifleman. His valiant and inspiring action effectively reduced the enemy's firepower, thereby enabling his platoon to attain its ob-



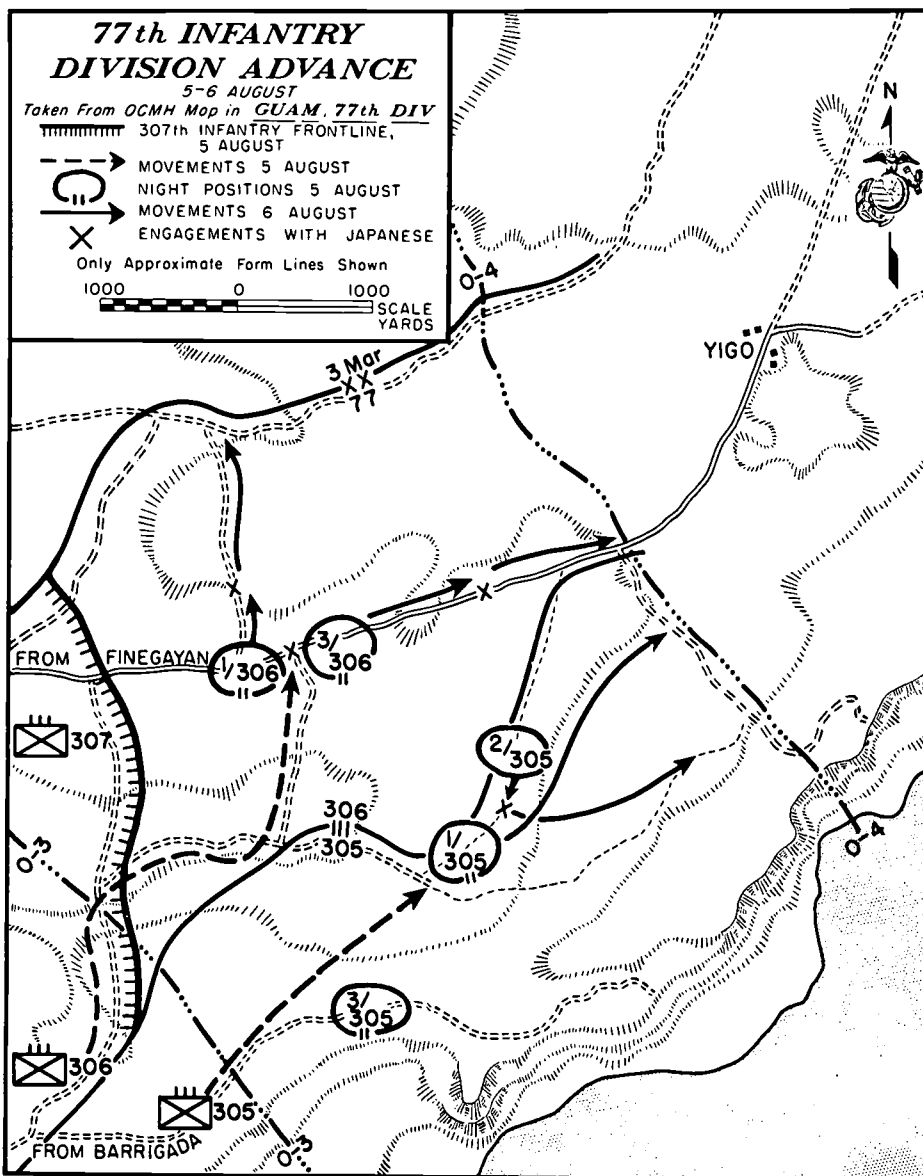
jective, and reflects the highest credit upon Private First Class Witek and the United States naval service. He gallantly gave his life for his country."

Captured by 1st Brigade Marines, rebuilt by Marine engineers, and in full-scale operation, the Orote Peninsula airstrip is home to Marine Aircraft Group 21 and its Marine Fighter

Squadrons 217, 225, and 321, and Marine Night Fighter Squadron 534. Taxiing down the strip are Vought F4U Corsair fighters, while parked off the runway are Grumann F6F Hellcats.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 92396





fresh regiment, the 306th, which had come up from the south where it had patrolled with the brigade. It was in contact with the 9th Marines on the division boundary. Colonel Douglas C. McNair, 77th Division chief of staff, was there, too, seeking a site for a division CP and was killed by a sniper. Colonel McNair's father, Lieutenant General Leslie J. McNair, was killed in France 12 days earlier during an American bombing raid.

The attack on Mount Santa Rosa began at noon, 7 August. Behind the rumble of artillery and rattle of tanks, answered in kind by the enemy, the 77th took Yigo, the door to Santa Rosa, and continued General Bruce's wheeling maneuver. Bulldozers blazed trails, and tanks and infantry overran machine gun positions. The 77th was dug into positions on the night of 7-8 August ready for the final attack on the mountain. The expected big Japanese counterattack still did not come. The rapid advance of the Americans accompanied by heavy artillery support likely forestalled that forelorn hope.

Two regiments, the 305th and 307th, proceeded rapidly on 8 August. By 1240, the northern half of

with the 77th Infantry Division, wherever the all-encompassing jungle allowed.

Meanwhile, heavy Seventh Air Force bombing as well as artillery and naval shelling of enemy areas had been going on for days. Night fighters were now assigned to support the advance, so even darkness afforded the Japanese no protection. By that same 6 August, the defense line that General Obata had set across Guam had been shattered and overrun. Only isolated pockets now existed before Santa Rosa.

No American commander could say on 7 August when the fight for Guam would be over. General Bruce in his attack first to Yigo and then Santa Rosa would have a relatively

Sherman tanks of the Army 706th Tank Battalion pass through Agana before taking the cross-island road to join the 77th Division prior to the Barrigada action.

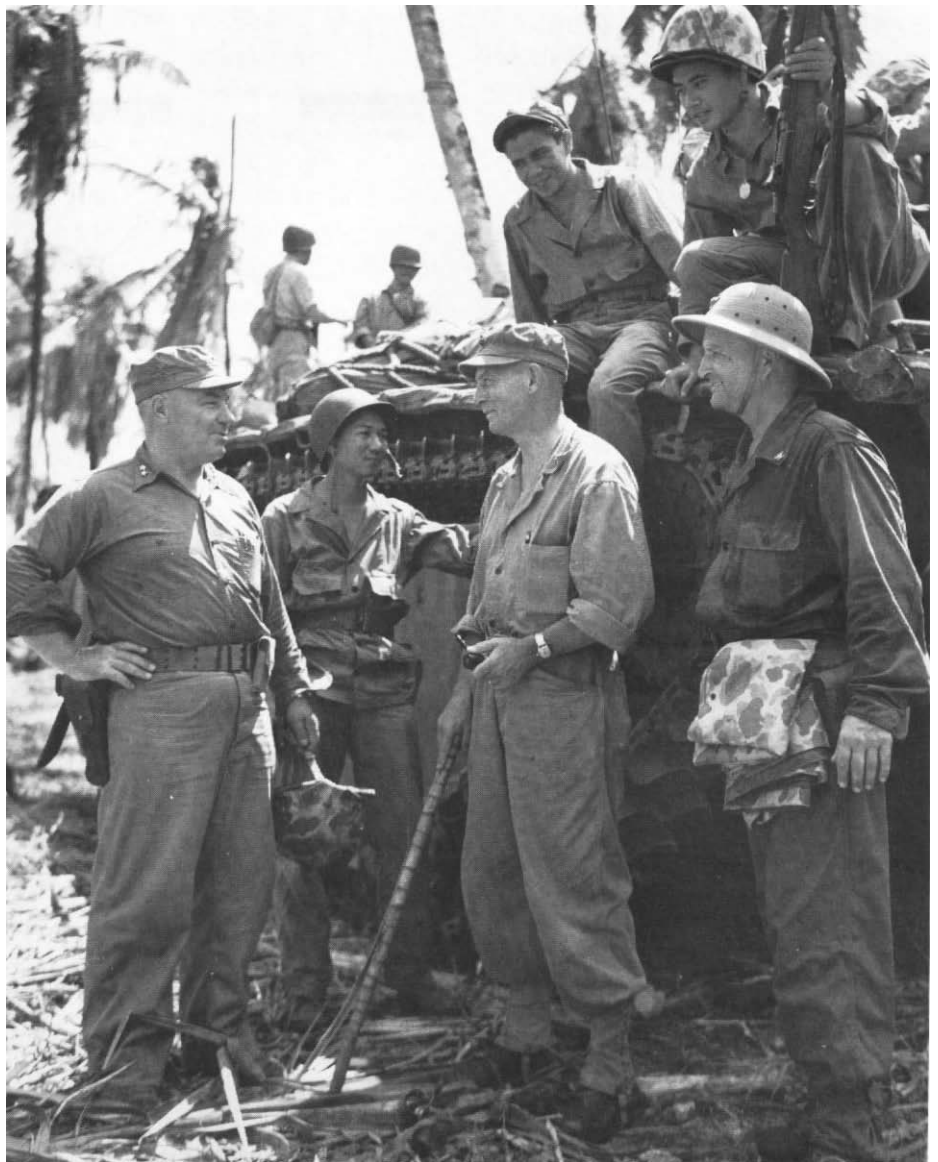


Mount Santa Rosa was in American hands, and the troops moved to secure the rest of the mountain. By 1440 the Army had reached the cliffs by the sea and could look right down to the ocean. The 306th infantry had also completed an enveloping move to take the northern slopes of Mount Santa Rosa.

Only 600 enemy bodies were found after the two-day fight for Yigo and Santa Rosa. Yet, estimates of the enemy personnel at Santa Rosa had been as high as 5,000. So this meant that enemy troops in significant number now infested the jungled terrain everywhere on Guam. Worse, some enemy tanks were also unaccounted for. Enemy survivors of the Mount Santa Rosa battle kept drifting into the 9th Marines lines on the Army flank, slowing the regiment's advance. Sharp-eyed Marines noted more than a smattering of enemy movement near a particular hill in the Army zone. This was believed to be the command post area of General Obata.

The 3d Marines on the left of the division's zone had progressed with the same occasional enemy opposition. A 19-man roadblock held up the Marines, but was taken out quickly. Searching a corridor between the 3d and the 9th Marines, the 21st Marines came upon the bodies of 30 Guamanians near Chagui-an. They had been beheaded.

The brigade had it a little easier on the far west, for it found negligible resistance as it advanced along fairly good trails. On 8 August, a patrol of the 22d Marines reached Ritidian Point, the northernmost point of the island. Moving along a twisting cliff trail to the beach, the Marines encountered less-than-aggressive Japanese defenses which they quickly overcame. General Shepherd's 1st Provisional Marine Brigade had the distinction of being first to reach both the southernmost point of the island in the early days of the campaign and



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 94395

MajGen Henry L. Larsen, left, designated island commander, meets with BGen Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., commanding general of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, and Col Robert Blake, Gen Larsen's chief of staff. With them are three Guamanians who enlisted in the Navy before the war and are now visiting their homes.

the northernmost section of Guam at Ritidian Point at this time.

General Shepherd's Marines began vigorously patrolling the area it they occupied, but found few Japanese. As a result, General Geiger reduced the amount of naval gunfire placed on the area, while Saipan-based Seventh Air Force P-47's made their last bombing and strafing runs on Ritidian Point. The 22d Marines was down below the cliffs at Ritidian, scouring along the beaches where there are many caves. The 4th Marines was on the north coast at Mengagan Point and tied by patrols to the 22d Marines. At 1800, 9 August,

General Shepherd declared organized resistance had ceased in his zone.

It was not so easy for the 3d Marines. On the night of 8-9 August near Tarague, the regiment was hit by a last-resort Japanese mortar and tank attack. Marine antitank grenades and bazooka rockets were wet and ineffective and the Japanese blazed away with impunity and then ducked back into the woods. Amazingly, when Major William A. Culpepper, commanding the 2d Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel de Zayas had been killed on 26 July), counted heads, he found that he had suffered not a single casualty.

Patrols of the 9th Marines advanced to Pati Point, the northeast projection of the island. Intelligence sources then reported to Colonel Craig that a mass of Japanese (maybe 2,000) troops were holed up at Savana Grand, a wild tract of jungle, coconut trees, and high grasses near the coast. Colonel Craig did not want to risk casualties so close to the end of the campaign, so the artillery supporting the 9th Marines fired a total of 2,280 rounds. The few Japanese survivors were either killed or became prisoners. The final American positions formed along the coast. By nightfall of 8 August, Colonel Craig's Marines could wave to the soldiers of the 306th patrolling to their south.

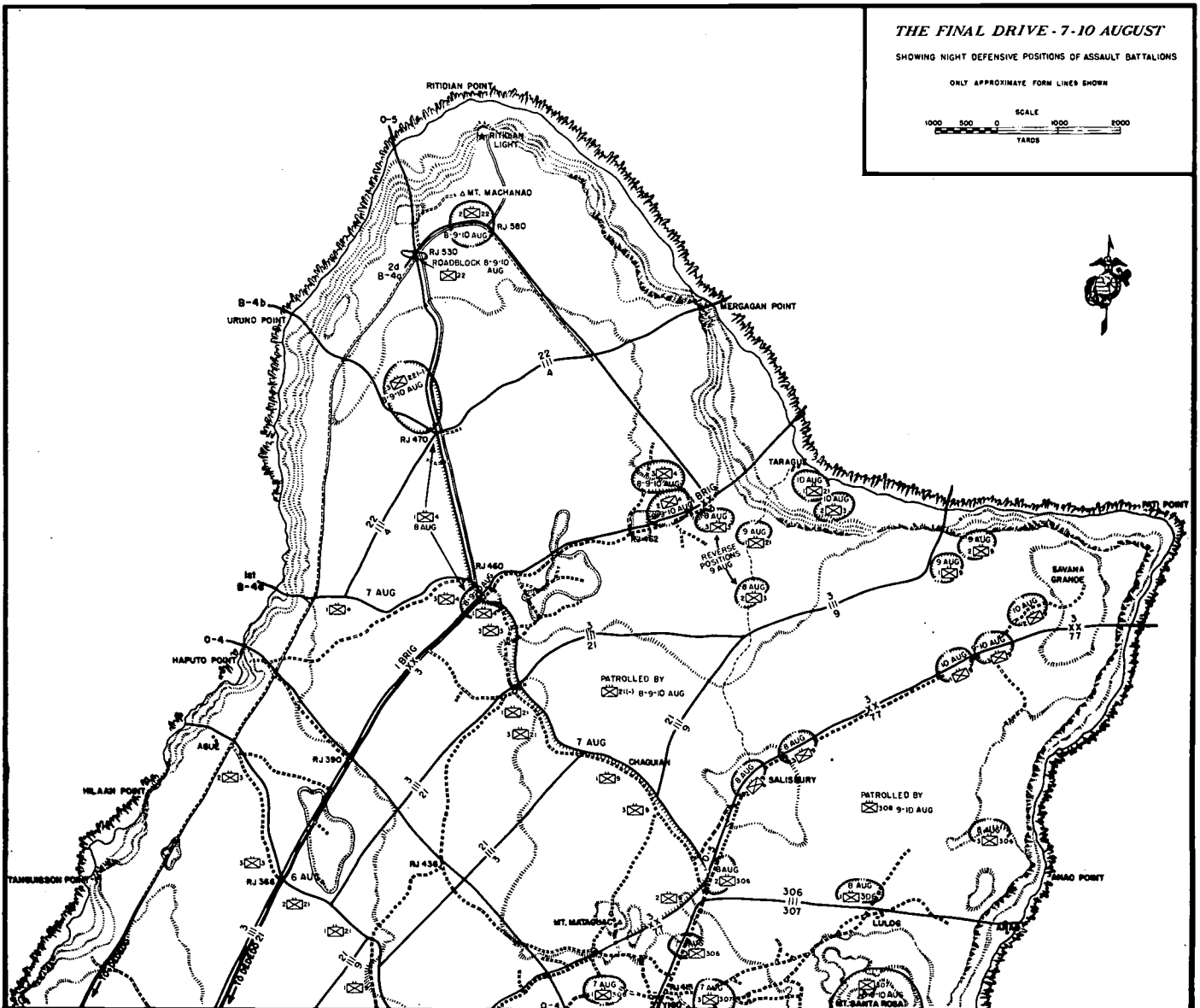
General Geiger was not ready to

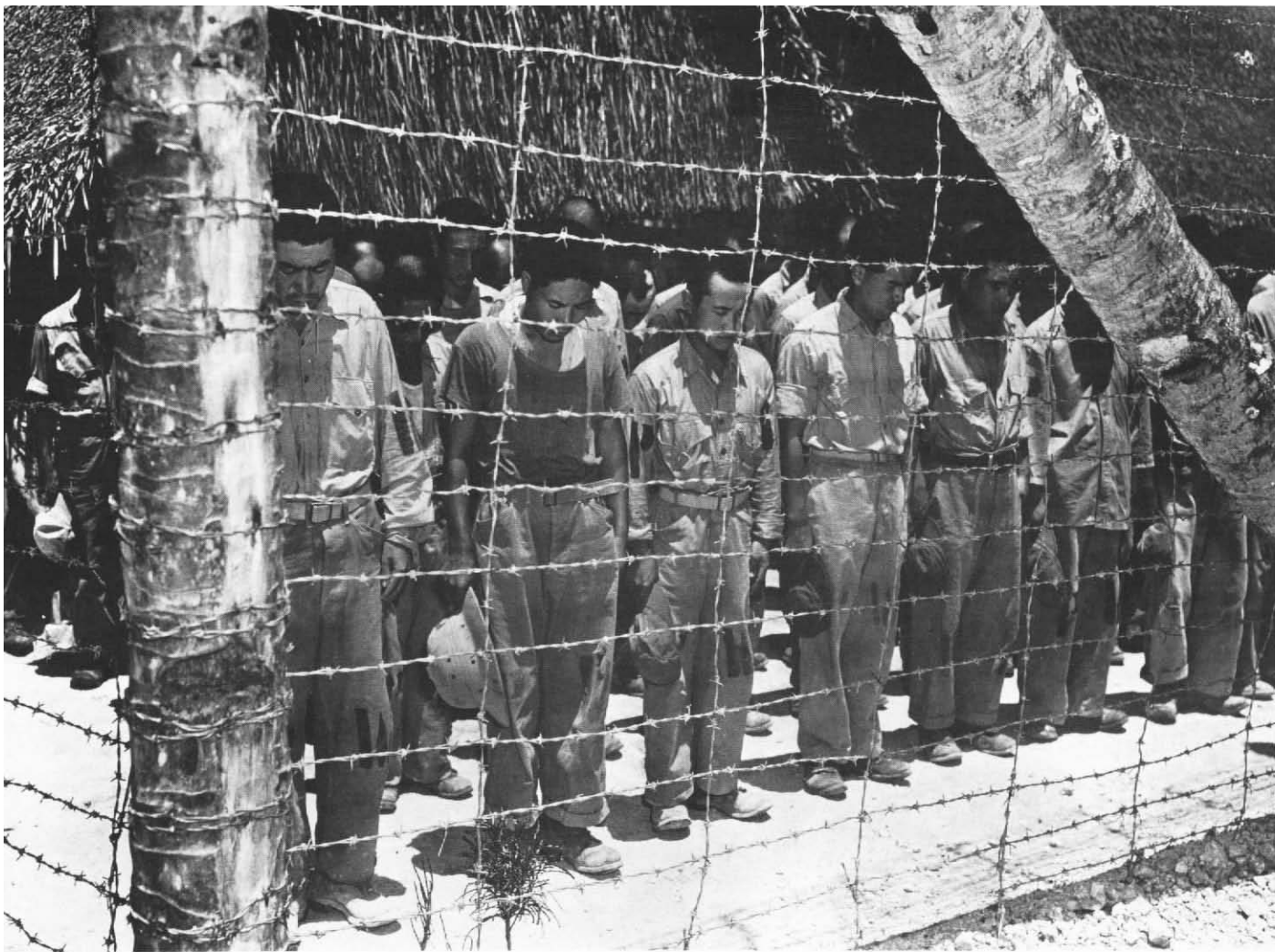
declare Guam secure until a pocket of tanks still existing in the 3d Division zone was wiped out. That had to be done by the 10th, for that was the day Admiral Nimitz was scheduled to arrive on a visit. There were tanks indeed and the task of finding and eliminating them was given to Major Culpepper's 2d Battalion, 3d Marines. Advancing at 0730, the battalion and a platoon of American Sherman tanks soon found two enemy mediums firing, only 400 yards up the trail the Marines were following. The Shermans left their counterparts black and burning. Seven more enemy mediums were abandoned. A Japanese infantry platoon withdrew to the coastal cliffs and was killed there.

On that day, 10 August, at 1131 as he learned that the last Japanese tanks still in action had been destroyed, General Geiger declared all organized resistance on Guam had ended. It was a great day for the Guamanians. The island was theirs again.

It was also the next to the last day for General Obata. His Mount Mataguac position was strongly defended, so much so that when the 306th had tried to force it earlier it failed. On the morning of 11 August 1944, when the general knew his headquarters had been discovered and that his enemy was coming for him, Obata signalled to his emperor:

. . . . We are continuing a





Prisoners of war in the Guam stockade stand with bowed heads as they are read the August 1945 surrender announcement.

desperate battle. We have only our bare hands to fight with. The holding of Guam has become hopeless. Our souls will defend the island to the very end. I am overwhelmed with sorrow for the families of the many officers and men. I pray for the prosperity of the Empire.

The 306th made the last assault supported by tanks and demolition squads. The enemy defenders killed seven Americans and wounded 17 before they went down to defeat, buried in the rubble of blown caves and emplacements. General Obata took his own life or was killed sometime during those last hours of the battle of Guam.

Major General Henry L. Larsen assumed command of the Guam Island Command at 1200, 15 August. Un-

der him, and largely with the forces of the 3d Marine Division, the mop-up continued.

Part of Japan's terrible cost on Guam was the 10,971 bodies already counted. Yet there were some 10,000

Enemy holdouts accompanied by their mascot are brought in to surrender after intensive preparations by the Island Command Psychological Warfare Unit.



Japanese still on the island. At first some of these men fought and staged ambushes, and a few sniped at the Americans, but soon the remaining Japanese sought only one thing—food! Most of the others fled when encountered. The Japanese now had no central command. They starved, died of dysentery, became too weak to flee, and then blew themselves up with the one precious grenade which they saved to take their own lives. Aggressive American patrols were soon killing or capturing 80 Japanese soldiers and sailors a day. A daring few stole into Marine food storage areas at night. One soldier scribbled: "All around me are enemy only. It takes a brave man indeed to go in search of food."

In addition to the battlefield casualties, more than 8,500 Japanese were killed or captured on Guam between August 1944 and the end of

the war in August 1945.

In the 21 days of the Guam campaign ending 10 August, Marine units of the III Amphibious Corps reported 1,190 men killed in action, 377 dead of wounds, and 5,308 wounded. The 77th Division's casualties were 177 soldiers killed and 662 wounded. The Army and the Marines were a closely knit team in the recapture of Guam. It is reputed that General Holland Smith was the first to refer to General Bruce's troops as the "77th Marines." Major Aplington, a battalion commander in the 3d Marines, commented on the soldiers:

In their fatigues so different from our herringbone utilities and their olive drab ponchos (ours were camouflaged) so different from us . . . there was no doubt in our minds that the 77th were good people to have alongside in a fight and as a result we referred to them as "The 77th Marine Division."

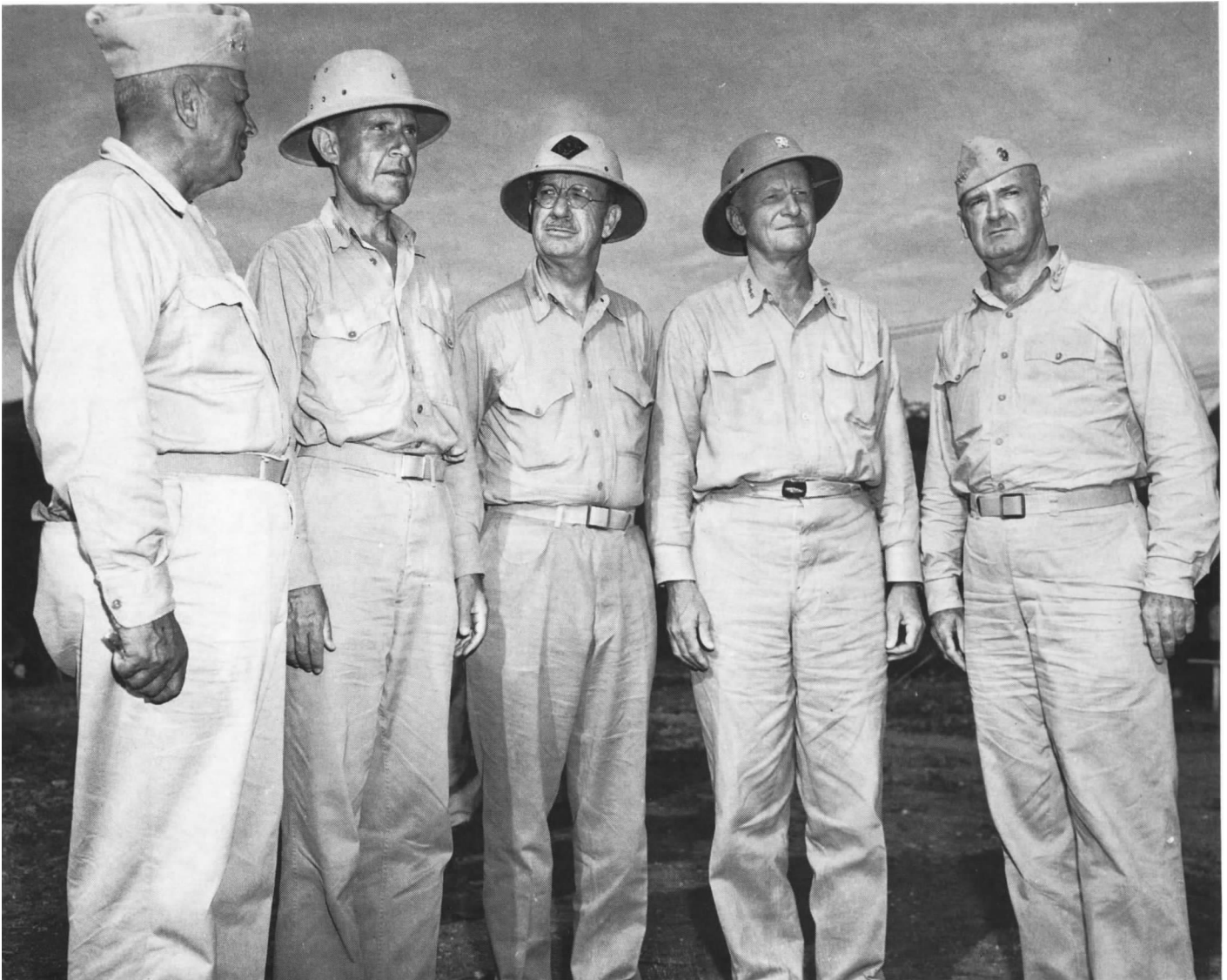
On the same busy day, 10 August, only hours after Major Culpepper's battalion had knocked out the last of the Japanese tanks, the *Indianapolis* (CA 35) steamed into Apra Harbor with Marine Corps Commandant

Lieutenant General Alexander A. Vandegrift on board, accompanying Admiral Nimitz. On 15 August, Admiral Nimitz directed that his forward CinCPac-CinCPOA headquarters be established on Guam, and from here, he directed the rest of the Pacific War. Soon after, from airfields on Guam, as well as those on Tinian, B-29s were blasting the Japanese home islands. Hard fighting was yet to be experienced by Marine divisions on Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. But whether they knew it or not, the end of the war was less than a year away.

The architects of victory in the Pacific met together on Guam on 10 August 1944, when Indianapolis (CA 35) brought Commandant of the Marine Corps LtGen Alexander A. Vandegrift together with Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet, Adm Chester W. Nimitz and Fifth Fleet Commander Adm Raymond L.

Spruance to the island. From left are MajGen Roy S. Geiger, Commanding General, III Amphibious Corps; Adm Spruance; LtGen Holland M. Smith, Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific; Adm Nimitz; and Gen Vandegrift. While together they discussed the future course of the Pacific War.

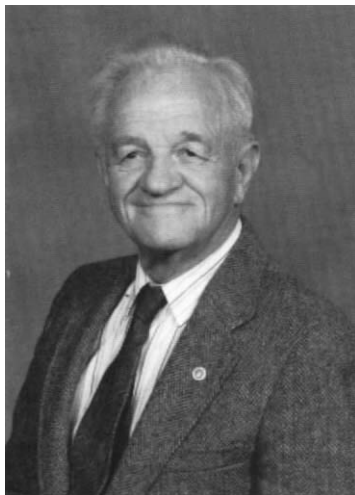
Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 92087



Sources

In addition to the official Marine Corps histories of the Guam campaign, Major O. Robert Lodge's *The Recapture of Guam* (Washington, 1954), and Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Bernard C. Nalty, and Edwin H. Turnbladh's *Central Pacific Drive*, vol III, *History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II* (Washington 1966), the author consulted the Army's official history, Philip A. Crowl's *Campaign in the Marianas* (Washington, 1960). Of value also were the 3d Division's history by Robert A. Aurthur and Kenneth Cohlma, *The Third Marine Division* (Washington, 1948), the classic *U.S. Marines and Amphibious War* by Jeter A. Iseley and Philip A. Crowl (Princeton, 1951), RAdm Samuel Eliot Morison's *The Two Ocean War* (Boston, 1976), *The Fall of Japan* by William A. Craig (New York, 1967), and LtGen Victor H. Krulak's *First to Fight* (Annapolis, 1984).

Historians at all the Services' Washington historical offices were universally helpful, but I would particularly like to thank Dr. Terrence J. Gough of the Army's Center of Military History and Dr. Robert Browning, the Coast Guard historian for their assistance. Conversations and correspondence, and oral history interviews, with the following were helpful: Jack Kerrens; MajGen Charles L. Davis, AUS (Ret); BGen Vincente (Ben) Blaz, USMC (Ret); Col Martin J. "Stormy" Sexton, USMC (Ret); Col Fraser E. West, USMC (Ret); LtCol Wilcie A. O'Bannon, USMC (Ret); Col Henry Aplington II, USMC (Ret); Dr. William H. Putney; Dale M. Quillan; William L. Dunlap; Paul Ulrich; and Alfred G. Don. Even if their words were not used, their thoughts and observations were carefully considered. The author's own experiences on Guam as a Marine combat correspondent pervaded his whole account.



About the Author

Cyril J. O'Brien served in a line company with the 3d Marines, 3d Marine Division, on Bougainville, and then as a Combat Correspondent in the battles for Guam and Iwo Jima. Following World War II, he covered Capitol Hill as a Washington correspondent, then joined the staff of the John Hopkins University Applied Physics Laboratory where he was a science writer and supervisor of media relations. He attended St. Joseph's University, Philadelphia, and the American University, Washington, D.C. He lives in Silver Spring, Maryland.

Erratum

An editing error appears in the 1994 History and Museums Division pamphlet, *A Different War: Marines in Europe and North Africa*, by Lieutenant Colonel Harry W. Edwards, USMC (Ret), from the "World War II Commemorative Series." On page 8, the photo caption which begins "Then-Col Julian C. Smith, left . . .", should read "Then-Col Julian C. Smith, below"



WORLD WAR II



THIS PAMPHLET HISTORY, one in a series devoted to U.S. Marines in the World War II era, is published for the education and training of Marines by the History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, Washington, D.C., as a part of the U.S. Department of Defense observance of the 50th anniversary of victory in that war.

Editorial costs of preparing this pamphlet have been defrayed in part by a bequest from the estate of Emilie H. Watts, in memory of her late husband, Thomas M. Watts, who served as a Marine and was the recipient of a Purple Heart.

WORLD WAR II COMMEMORATIVE SERIES

DIRECTOR OF MARINE CORPS HISTORY AND MUSEUMS
Brigadier General Edwin H. Simmons, USMC (Ret)

GENERAL EDITOR,
WORLD WAR II COMMEMORATIVE SERIES
Benis M. Frank

CARTOGRAPHIC CONSULTANT
George C. MacGillivray

EDITING AND DESIGN SECTION, HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION
Robert E. Struder, Senior Editor; W. Stephen Hill, Visual Information
Specialist; Catherine A. Kerns, Composition Services Technician

Marine Corps Historical Center
Building 58, Washington Navy Yard
Washington, D.C. 20374-5040

1994

PCN 190 003126 00

50th

1941 WWII 1945