

The Death March

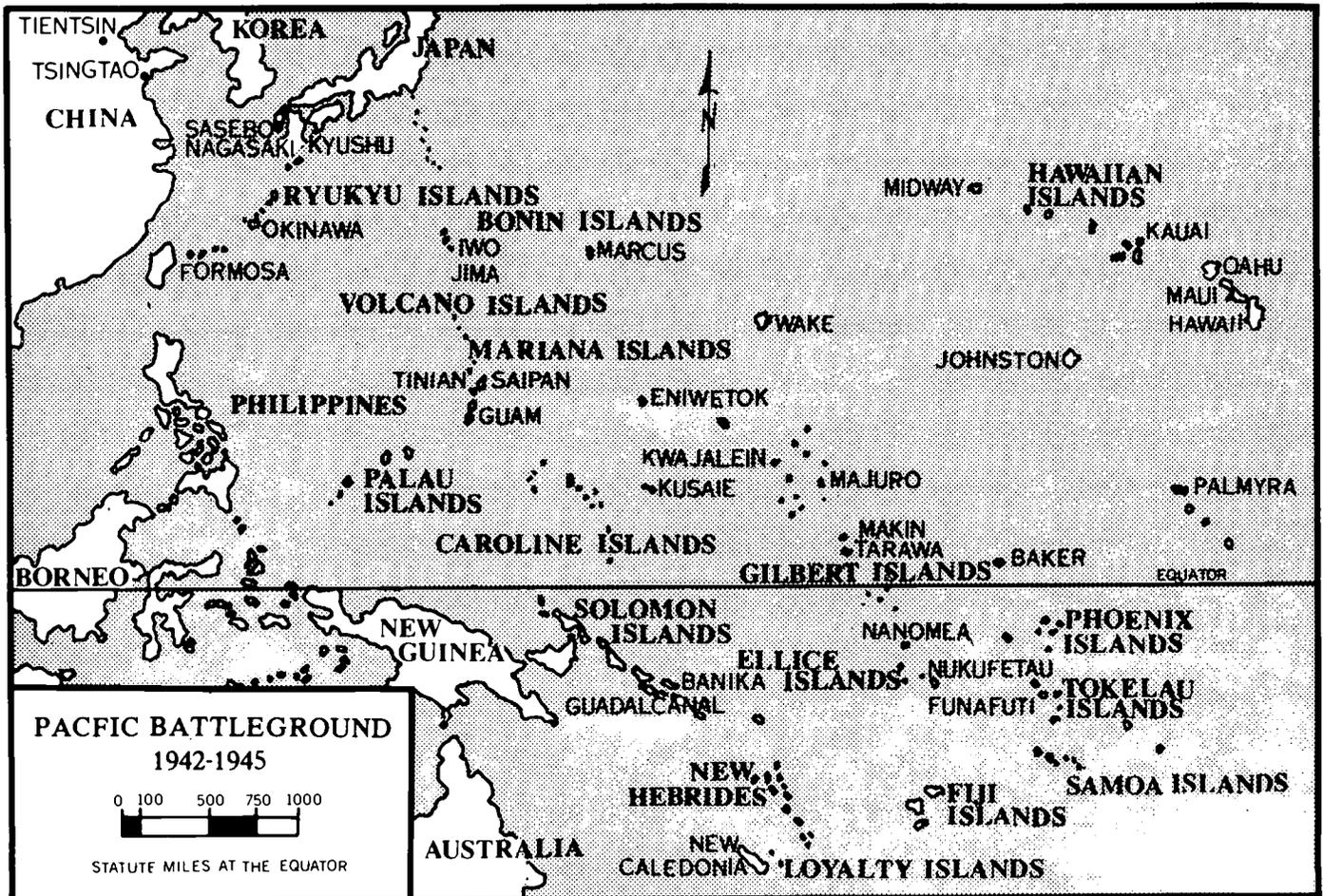
Fraser Road would figure in one of the legends of Montford Point, the so-called Death March. One of the black Marines living in the ramshackle barracks formerly occupied by the Civilian Conservation Corps grew bored and used his bayonet to punch a hole in a wall, which had all the durability of cardboard. The noncommissioned officers questioned the men, who refused to identify the person guilty of the vandalism. As a result, the sergeants staged a nighttime forced march—the Death March in the lore of the Montford Point Marines—but this failed to elicit the name they sought. According to one account, when the column reached the site of the brig on Fraser Road, the black Marines decided that to go further would dishonor the memory of a dead comrade, Corporal Gilbert Fraser, Jr., who was killed in a training accident. They broke ranks, rushed the brig, and demanded to be arrested—or so the legend states. Since the number of potential prisoners would have been far too many for the structure to accommodate—they were “hanging out the windows,” one of the black Marines has declared—the non-commissioned officers marched them back to the huts. Whatever the details, the incident became the source of pride and further intensified the solidarity among Montford Point’s African-American Marines.

a letter from the Commandant of the Marine Corps calling attention to the poor condition of the trucks and weapons his battalion had left behind in California. This chilling message tended to confirm LeGette’s reservations about the unit. His concerns focused on administrative procedures and the maintenance of equipment, activities that required close supervision by experienced noncommissioned officers, who were scarce in the unit. The battalion commander sought to fix the blame for the shortcomings that had been revealed and to correct them.

To fix responsibility, LeGette convened a board of investigation that condemned his predecessor for failing to whip the battalion into shape and recommended a trial by court-martial, but Stephenson responded with a spirited rejoinder that forestalled legal action. Most of the problems that troubled LeGette stemmed from something over which

to see black people in their lives.” A flurry of action briefly dispelled the feeling of loneliness. On 28 March, crews of the 155mm guns at Nanomea responded to the report of

a prowling submarine by firing 11 rounds, but the Japanese craft, if actually present, escaped unscathed. Colonel LeGette, who maintained his headquarters at Funafuti, received



The Route West

The 51st Defense Battalion's move across a segregated America began with a confrontation in Atlanta, Georgia, where one of the trains stopped so the men could have breakfast. Unaware of the layout of the Jim Crow railroad station, the noncommissioned officers moved the black Marines into a waiting room reserved for whites, only to be halted by white military police determined to uphold local law. The African-Americans stood ready to push their way through, but the train commander arrived, conferred with the officer in charge of the MPs, and prevented a tense situation from turning violent.

Elsewhere, the move to the West Coast went more smoothly. During a rest stop at Big Springs, Texas, one of the officers warned that this was Jim Crow country and urged the black Marines to be careful. They swarmed over the small town, however, and encountered no open hostility, obtaining service at the soda fountain or shooting pool at the facilities maintained for troops whose trains stopped at Big Springs. Further west, during a two-hour layover at Yuma, Arizona, Red Cross volunteers distributed candy, ice cream, fruit, magazines, and Bibles. One of the African-Americans, John R. Griffin, got the impression that "the entire city, including the Mexicans and Indians, came to the station to see the first Negro Defense Battalion go overseas."

At Camp Elliott, California, where the battalion made its final preparations for deployment to the Pacific, the racial climate more closely resembled Atlanta than Yuma or Big Springs. At an open-air movie, Jim Crow seating prevailed and the black Marines were ordered to the rear of the natural amphitheater that served as a theater. A spontaneous protest resulted in the expulsion of the men of the 51st, whose anger still boiled when they arrived at the battalion area. Stephenson tried to make up for the mistreatment of his Marines by liberally granting passes so they could find entertainment in nearby San Diego.

Stephenson had no control — the absence of a cadre of veteran black non-commissioned officers, itself the result of racial segregation and the exclusion of African-Americans from the prewar Marine Corps. Despite his successor's complaints, Stephenson considered the 51st Defense Battalion "the finest organization in the whole Negro program in the Marine Corps." Since the men of the unit did not know the details of the controversy involving the two commanders, morale remained high.

LeGette proposed a course of action to correct the flaws he had perceived. His remedy, however, included measures rendered impossible because of the demands of other units for officers and the policy of maintaining segregation in the enlisted force. He would have increased the number of white officers and warrant officers assigned to the unit

and avoided the "occupational neurosis" resulting from service with blacks by replacing those officers who desired to leave the battalion. He further recommended the replacement of enlisted men in Categories IV and V with individuals who had scored better in the classification tests, a goal that could have been achieved only by raiding other black units.

The 51st Defense Battalion remained in the Ellice Islands roughly six months. When the black Marines received orders to depart, they carefully cleaned and checked the equipment inherited from the 7th Defense Battalion before turning everything over to the white 10th Defense Battalion. LeGette's unit set sail on 8 September 1944 for Eniwetok Atoll, a vast anchorage kept under sporadic surveillance, and occasionally harassed, by Japanese aircraft. The

battalion stood ready to meet this threat from the skies, since it had reorganized two months earlier as an anti-aircraft unit, losing its 155mm guns but adding a fourth 90mm battery and exchanging its machine guns and 20mm weapons for a second 40mm battery. The restructured unit kept its searchlights and radar. While the black Marines manned positions on four of the atoll's islands, Colonel LeGette on 13 December handed over the battalion to Lieutenant Colonel Groves. A member of the unit, Herman Darden, Jr., remembered that the departing commander "took us out on dress parade before he left, and stood there with tears in his eyes and told us . . . , 'You have shown me that you can soldier with the best of 'em.'"

The possibility of action lingered into 1945, kept alive by a report of marauding submarines and the possibility of aerial attack. One night, while the men of the 90mm anti-aircraft group were watching a movie, the film abruptly stopped. Condition Red; Japanese aircraft were on the way. "I never saw such jubilation in my life," recalled Darden, for everyone responded eagerly. A Marine on a working party unloading ammunition might grumble about lifting a single 90mm round, but with combat seemingly minutes away, men "were running around with one under each arm." By dawn, the alert had ended; not even one Japanese aircraft tested the battalion's gun crews. "And from that high point on," Darden said, "the mental attitude seemed to dwindle."

Routine settled over Eniwetok, enveloping the unit that Groves now commanded. As one of its sergeants phrased it, "routine got boresome," punctuated only by the occasional crash or forced landing by American planes. A major change occurred on 12 June 1945, when the battalion commander formed a 251-man composite group, under Major William M. Tracy, for duty at Kwajalein

Atoll. Two days later, the group—consisting of a battery of 90mm guns, a 40mm platoon, and four searchlight sections—boarded an LST for the voyage. The contingent saw no combat at Kwajalein, nor did the remainder of the battalion at Eniwetok.

The 52d Defense Battalion

The second of the two African-American defense battalions took shape beginning on 15 December 1943 and rested firmly on a foundation supplied by the first. Colonel Augustus W. Cockrell, commanding officer of the 52d Defense Battalion, benefited from the cadre of 400 officers and men transferred from Colonel Stephenson's 51st Defense Battalion before it left Montford Point. These men, familiar with equipment and procedures after three

to six months with the 51st, enabled the 52d to avoid using on-the-job trainees as technicians and rapidly promoting men fresh from boot camp.

Like Woods, Stephenson, and LeGette, Cockrell was a Southerner, a native of Florida. He had enlisted in the Marines in 1918 and received a commission four years later. He had recently returned from the South Pacific, where he commanded the 2d and 8th Defense Battalions in Samoa and on Wallis Island. As time passed, Cockrell apparently won the affection of his noncommissioned officers, who respectfully called him "Old Gus," though not within his hearing.

In February 1944, the 52d Defense Battalion moved into the old CCC barracks at Camp Knox, which the last of Stephenson's men had just vacated.

The 7th Separate Pack Howitzer Battery, organized originally as a component of the 51st Defense Battalion according to since-rescinded tables of organization, disbanded in March 1944, and the men joined Cockrell's command, providing another infusion of experience. A change to the tables of organization and equipment deprived the battalion in June 1944 of its seacoast artillery. Men from that component transferred to the Heavy Antiaircraft Group and formed a fourth 90mm battery. At the same time, the Light Antiaircraft Group (formerly the Special Weapons Group) substituted 40mm guns for its lighter weapons.

The command structure of both the battalion and the Montford Point Camp underwent change during July. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph W. Earnshaw, a native of Kansas and a graduate of the Naval Academy, arrived after duty at the Navy's Bureau of Ordnance in Washington, D.C., and took over the 52d Defense Battalion. Cockrell thereupon reported to camp headquarters as the designated replacement for Colonel Woods.

The first task that Earnshaw faced was a move to the Pacific Coast. The 52d Defense Battalion, instead of loading its heavy gear on trains as the 51st had done, turned in its trucks, antiaircraft guns, and other such equipment and divided into two groups. Earnshaw commanded one and entrusted the other to his executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Thomas C. Moore, Jr., who hailed from Georgia and had commanded the 3d Defense Battalion on Guadalcanal in the Solomon Islands. The two contingents traveled on the same train to Camp Pendleton, California, to make final preparations for deployment to the islands of the Pacific.

The battalion arrived at Camp Pendleton on 24 August 1944, and on 21 September both components boarded the attack transport USS *Winged Arrow* (AP 170), which brought them to Pearl Harbor and

Black Marines practice climbing down a cargo net rigged in the swimming pool at Montford Point, developing an essential skill for amphibious warfare operations.

National Archives Photo 127-N-8275





"Hashmark" Johnson, shown posing with the mascot of the Montford Point Camp, became sergeant major of the 52d Defense Battalion on Guam in July 1945.

thence to the Marshall Islands, where they took over from anti-aircraft units already in place. One half of the divided battalion, the part that Moore led, landed at Majuro Atoll to protect Marine Aircraft Group 13 based there. The other, under Earnshaw, helped defend Roi and the adjacent island of Namur in Kwajalein Atoll, where Marine Aircraft Group 31 was located. For six months, October 1944 to March 1945, the battalion guarded against possible forays by increasingly feeble Japanese air power and, at Majuro, formed reconnaissance parties that boarded landing craft to search the smaller islands for Japanese and remove the natives from harm's way.

Lieutenant Colonel David W. Sil-

vey, who had reported to Montford Point in May 1944 from the 6th Defense Battalion at Midway Island, replaced Earnshaw at Kwajalein on 10 January 1945. When the two halves of the battalion reunited on the recaptured island of Guam on 4 May 1945, Moore, who was senior to Silvey, assumed command. At Guam, the unit formed a part of the island's garrison.

Combat Service Support

By the spring of 1943, the Marine Corps discovered a need for full-time stevedores within the logistics system that channeled supplies from factories and warehouses in the United States, through rear area and forward support bases, over the

beaches, to the Marines fighting their way inland. To provide the missing segment of the supply line, the Marine Corps organized two kinds of units, depot companies and ammunition companies. Their comparatively compact size—companies rather than battalions—meant that the new organizations could be formed and trained rapidly and deployed in numbers that corresponded to the size of the amphibious forces being supported.

According to Edgar Huff, whose wartime assignments included first sergeant of a depot company, the new units consisted largely of recruits who had just returned from the rifle range. He conceded, however, that "all they needed was a strong back . . . to load and unload ships and haul ammunition to the line for the fighting troops"; further training might vary from a few weeks for the depot companies to a couple of months for the ammunition outfits. Black Marines assigned to the ammunition companies—in part, perhaps, because of the longer training and the danger inherent in handling explosives—tended to develop noticeably higher morale, along with sound discipline and a strong sense of purpose.

White officers led both kinds of units, with black noncommissioned officers ultimately taking over in the depot companies from first sergeant downward. In contrast, the ammunition companies had white noncommissioned officers down to the level of buck sergeant. The fuzes and shells handled by the ammunition companies required noncommissioned officers with technical knowledge and the ability to use this knowledge in enforcing safety rules, but in the midst of war the Marine Corps felt it did not have time to train inexperienced blacks for these duties and relied instead on previously trained whites. Because Marine Corps policy forbade a black platoon sergeant, for example, from giving orders to a junior noncommissioned officer who

was white, the highest ranking African-American in an ammunition company could be only a buck sergeant, while the senior enlisted ranks remained exclusively white. The mess sergeant, who had no white cooks working for him, enjoyed the status of a staff noncommissioned officer, but he could not join the clubs available to whites of comparable rank, a source of annoyance to black enlisted men.

Although the Marine Corps envisioned these combat service support units as a source of labor, and the two defense battalions as combat outfits, wartime reality proved far different. The combat battalions fired not even a dozen rounds at what may have been a Japanese submarine, and their combat consisted of a few months of patrol action against surviving Japanese on the captured island of Guam. The depot and ammunition companies, however, saw savage fighting on the battlefields of Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Peleliu, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa. The combat service units suffered most of the casualties among African-American

Marines, who had seven of their number killed in action, two dead of wounds, 78 wounded in action, and nine victims of combat fatigue.

The 1st Marine Depot Company, the first of 51 such units, was activated on 8 March 1943 under Captain Jason M. Austin, Jr., assisted by two other officers. The initial enlisted complement consisted of nine white noncommissioned officers, who would serve only until blacks replaced them, 100 privates fresh from boot camp at Montford Point, and one African-American assistant cook, Ulysses J. Lucas, for a total of 110. Finding the necessary black noncommissioned officers proved so difficult that whites accompanied some of the depot companies overseas and remained with them until replacements became available, through either promotion or transfers from other black outfits.

The 1st Marine Ammunition Company was formed at Montford Point on 1 October 1943 under 2d Lieutenant Placido A. Gomez. This unit, as the 11 that followed, consisted of eight officers and 251 enlisted

men, the latter including specialists not available from the pool of black Marines at Montford Point, and had its own trucks, jeeps, and trailers for hauling ammunition. Because their job was considered more dangerous than the work of the depot companies, the ammunition companies trained for two months instead of three weeks. Some of the black noncommissioned officers underwent instruction in camouflage or the rudiments of ammunition handling, but only whites had the training or experience to fill the billets requiring higher-ranking technicians.

Although the organization of the ammunition companies remained essentially unchanged, the depot companies added a third platoon during the summer of 1943, increasing the aggregate strength to four officers and 162 enlisted men. In both types of units, the Marines carried rifles, carbines, or submachine guns, but had no mortars or machine guns. Between October 1943, when Lieutenant Gomez assumed command of the 1st Marine Ammunition Company, and September 1944, when the

The Marine Ammunition Companies and Marine Depot Companies helped deposit cargo on the beach, as at Iwo Jima, and move the supplies to the Marines fighting their way inland. They often were inserted into the front lines as riflemen.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 111947



12th and last of these units came into existence, Montford Point organized one ammunition company and two depot companies each month. The Marine Corps continued to form depot companies, with the last four—the 46th, 47th, 48th, and 49th—being organized in October 1945, a month after the war had ended. The anomaly in numbers, 51 companies but the highest number being the 49th Marine Depot Company, resulted from the organization of two 5th and two 6th Marine Depot Companies. The first pair went overseas in August 1943, provided reinforcements for previously deployed units so that each could add the authorized fourth platoon, and afterward disbanded.

Three weeks after its organization, the 1st Marine Depot Company boarded a train for the three-day journey to the West Coast. A veteran of a subsequent transcontinental deployment told of his company boarding a “sealed” train that stopped only for maintenance or emergencies. The Marines on board subsisted on rations loaded at Montford Point. Cars were crowded, toilets few, and showers non-existent. A fastidious few tried to take sponge baths. Everyone, however, had to shave every day or endure the consequences of the appearance of stubble: whatever number of push-ups a noncommissioned officer might demand.

The 1st Marine Depot Company arrived at San Diego on 5 April 1943, and according to the base newspaper, put on a “demonstration of close order drill that left observers gaping.” On 16 April, the unit sailed for Noumea, New Caledonia, the initial destination of the first five depot companies dispatched to the Pacific. The organizations soon deployed to the Solomon and Russell Islands to support operations in the South Pacific and Central Pacific. The 2d and 4th Marine Ammunition Companies also arrived in the Solomons to prepare for future action.

Meanwhile, the Hawaiian Islands became a principal staging area for the thrust across the Central Pacific, and the 1st and 3d Marine Ammunition Companies went directly there. Also in Hawaii were five depot companies, including two that had spent nine months in Funafuti in the Ellice group, loading supplies destined for the fighting in the Gilbert and Marshall Islands, early objectives of the Central Pacific offensive. The combat support companies sent to the Hawaiian Islands arrived there in time to help load the ships that carried the 2d and 4th Marine Divisions to Saipan and to join the shore parties in unloading and distributing cargo at the objective.

Seizing the Mariana Islands Saipan, Tinian, and Guam

On D-Day, 15 June 1944, the depot companies saw action at Saipan, manhandling cargo from ships’ holds into landing craft and finally distributing the supplies among the combat units. The 18th and 20th Marine Depot Companies landed with the 4th Marine Division on D-Day, while 19th company was going ashore with the 2d Marine Division. Attached to the 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, 4th Marine Division, one platoon of the 18th Company arrived at its assigned beach about two and one-half hours after the first wave. A mortar shell wounded four men of the depot company, who had to be evacuated for emergency treatment offshore, but the others kept moving inland. One squad fought as infantry to reinforce a thinly held line about a hundred yards from the water’s edge. The next morning, the bulk of the company helped eliminate Japanese infiltrators who had penetrated along the boundary between the 23d Marines and the 8th Marines of the adjacent 2d Marine Division.

When the immediate threat had passed, the 18th Depot Company resumed its normal duties, “standing

waist deep in surf unloading boats as vital supplies of food and water were brought in.” In addition, said the unit commander, Captain William M. Barr, the black Marines “set up ‘security’ to keep out snipers as they helped load casualties aboard boats to go on hospital ships.” In the face of intense fire, they “rode guard on trucks carrying high octane gasoline from the beach,” and one squad leader killed a Japanese infiltrator who crept by night into a neighboring foxhole.

Another Marine Depot Company, the 20th, landed in the fourth wave in support of the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, 4th Marine Division. In the words of Captain William C. Adams, the company commander, “all hell was breaking when we came in. It was still touch and go when we hit shore, and it took some time to establish a foothold.” The captain’s orderly, Private Kenneth J. Tibbs, suffered fatal wounds and died that very day, becoming the first African-American Marine killed in combat during the war. The remaining Marine depot company assigned to the operation, the 19th, supported the 2d Marine Division but did not come ashore until 22 June, one week after D-Day, and incurred no casualties.

During the D-Day landings at Saipan, while the depot companies underwent their baptism of fire, the 3d Marine Ammunition Company performed three closely related functions. As Sergeant Ernest W. Coney remembered that morning, some of the men helped move ammunition from ships into landing craft, and others worked on the pontoon barges, lashed to the sides of LSTs during the voyage from Hawaii and now moored on the ocean side of the reef, where they transferred the ammunition to DUKW amphibious trucks or LVT amphibian tractors for the final trip to shore. The rest of the company, Coney included, boarded landing craft to join the assault troops carving out a beachhead.

Since the boats could not cross the reef, the Marines shifted to amphibian tractors which clawed their way onto the beach at about 1400, as Japanese shells tore up the sand. "One team had an amphibian tractor shot out from under it as it was being unloaded," Coney reported, but "miraculously, all the men escaped without injury." Later that afternoon, Japanese fire cut down Private First Class Leroy Seals, who on the following day died of his wounds. On the night of 15 June, the black Marines of the ammunition company used their weapons to help beat back a Japanese counterattack, in the process silencing an enemy machine gun.

On Saipan, the black Leathernecks demonstrated they had earned the right to fight alongside their white fellow Marines. The accomplishments of the combat service support companies, reported the post newspaper at Camp Lejeune, so impressed the Commandant of the Marine Corps, Lieutenant General Alexander A. Vandegrift—who had replaced Holcomb on 1 January 1944—that he declared: "The Negro Marines are no longer on trial. They are Marines, period." *Time's* war correspondent in the Central Pacific, Robert Sherrod, wrote: "The Negro Marines, under fire for the first time, have rated a universal 4.0 on Saipan." In other words, they had earned the Navy's

highest possible rating.

At another of the Mariana Islands, Guam, which lay southwest of Saipan, amphibious forces attempted to regain American territory seized by the Japanese in December 1941. On 21 July 1944, three days before the landing at Tinian, three platoons of the 2d Marine Ammunition Company supported the 3d Marine Division as it stormed the northern beaches, while the 4th Ammunition Company and one platoon of the 2d assisted the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade at the southern beachhead. The black Marines with the 3d Marine Division suffered one man wounded and no one killed, even though the Japanese laid down in-

On Saipan, where black Marines earned praise from the Commandant of the Marine Corps, LtGen Alexander A. Van-

degrift, four members of the 3d Marine Ammunition Company pose with a Japanese bicycle they captured.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 86008



Mop-up on Guam

Although officially secure, Guam still teemed with thousands of Japanese, bypassed in the lightning campaign during July and August 1944, who opened fire from ambush and lashed out against rear area installations from the concealment of the jungle. Private First Class Luther Woodward of the 4th Marine Ammunition Company displayed a gift for tracking enemy stragglers. One afternoon, he came across fresh footprints near the ammunition dump and followed them to a hut where a half-dozen Japanese had taken refuge. He opened fire, killing one, wounding another, and scattering the rest. Woodward returned to the camp, got five other black Marines to join him, and hunted down the survivors. He killed one of them, and his companions killed another. This exploit earned him a Bronze Star for heroism, later upgraded to the more prestigious Silver Star.

Some Japanese stragglers still held out in March 1945 when Lieutenant Colonel Thomas C. Moore, Jr., arrived at Guam with the portion of the 52d Defense Battalion that had helped defend Majuro. The newcomers promptly clashed with the Japanese, who found concealment in dense vegetation that one of the black Marines said was "as thick as the hair on a dog's back." The patrols dispatched to secure the approaches to the battalion's camp could number no more than ten men, for larger groups lost cohesion in the jungle undergrowth. On 1 April, Sergeant Ezra Kelly

killed one of two Japanese discovered within a thousand yards of the camp. Subsequent probes of the jungle during April killed two more Japanese and wounded four others, but on the 26th enemy fire wounded one of the Marines, Private First Class Ernest J. Calland.

During the summer of 1945, the 52d Defense Battalion – the rest of the unit had reached Guam early in May – prepared to deploy to Okinawa, where aircraft based in Japan still posed a threat. Loading had already begun when, on 9 July, orders were changed; the unit would remain on Guam. According to Private First Class John Griffin, "morale dropped 99 percent, for the next week or ten days the men stayed around their tents writing letters and what not. Instead of being a Defense Unit, we turned out to be nothing more than a working battalion." The procession of trucks roaring into the area to take working parties to the harbor startled "Hashmark" Johnson, taking over as sergeant major of what he thought was a combat unit. He persuaded Lieutenant Colonel Moore to resume aggressive patrolling, as much to restore unit morale as to eliminate the die-hard Japanese. During this activity, Ezra Kelly added to his toll, killing a total of six Japanese on Guam; he received promotion to platoon sergeant, and earned high marks from Johnson, who described him as "really gung ho. Absolutely fearless." Like Kelly, Johnson led patrols into the boondocks and set up successful ambushes.

tense fire from the high ground overlooking the invasion site. In the south, the reinforced 4th Marine Ammunition Company set up the brigade ammunition dump and dug in to protect it throughout the night of D-Day. Under cover of darkness, the enemy tried to blow up the dump, but the African-American Marines killed 14 explosives-laden infiltrators at no loss to themselves. The ammunition and depot companies were still supporting the assault forces on 10 August, when the objective was declared secure. The Navy Unit Commendation awarded the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade included the black Marines of the 4th Marine Ammunition Company and the attached platoon from the 2d Company.

The final objective of the Marianas campaign was Tinian. African-American Marines who had seen action on Saipan boarded landing craft

there and proceeded directly to the nearby island. Elements of the 3d Marine Ammunition Company joined the assault troops of the 4th Marine Division on 24 July, and the depot companies followed up in support of that organization and the 2d Marine Division, which landed on the 26th. Because of the performance of the black Marines on Saipan and Tinian, the 3d Marine Ammunition Company and the 18th, 19th, and 20th Marine Depot Companies, components of the 7th Field Depot, shared in the Presidential Unit Citation awarded the 4th Marine Division.

Peleliu and Iwo Jima

When the 1st Marine Division, on 15 September 1944, attacked the heavily defended island of Peleliu in the Palau group, the 16th Field Depot supported the assault troops. The field depot included two African-

American units, the 11th Marine Depot Company and the 7th Marine Ammunition Company. The 11th Marine Depot Company responded beyond the call of duty and paid the price, 17 wounded, the highest casualty rate of any company of African-American Marines during the entire war. Major General William H. Rupertus, who commanded the 1st Marine Division, sent identical letters of commendation to the commanders of both companies, praising the black Marines for their "whole hearted cooperation and untiring efforts" which "demonstrated in every respect" that they "appreciate the privilege of wearing a Marine uniform and serving with Marines in combat."

Black combat support units also took part in the assault on Iwo Jima, where, as at Peleliu, their presence confounded the policy of segregation. Because of the random inter-

mingling of white and black units, an African-American Marine, carrying a box of supplies, dived into a shell hole occupied by white Marines, one of whom gave him a cigarette before he scrambled out with his load and ran forward. Here, too, black stewards and members of the depot and ammunition companies came to the aid of the wounded. A white Marine, Robert F. Graf, who lay in a tent awaiting evacuation for further medical treatment, remembered that:

"Two black Marines . . . ever so gently . . . placed me on a stretcher and carried me outside to a waiting DUKW."

At Iwo Jima, the 8th Marine Ammunition Company and the 33d, 34th, and 36th Marine Depot Companies served as part of the shore party of the V Amphibious Corps. Elements of the ammunition company and the 36th Depot Company landed on D-Day, 19 February 1945, and within three days all the units

were ashore, braving Japanese fire as they struggled in the volcanic sand to unload and stockpile ammunition and other supplies, and move the cargo inland. Eleven black enlisted Marines and one of the white officers were wounded, two of the enlisted men fatally.

The depot companies landed cargo attached by steel straps to wooden pallets to simplify stowage in cargo holds and unloading at the objective. Unfortunately, the black Marines

The Third Battle of Guam

Some six months after the invasion of the Mariana Islands, violence shook the conquered island of Guam for the third time in the course of the war. The first battle of Guam took place on 10 December 1941, when the Japanese overwhelmed the almost defenseless American possession. During the second, Marines and Army troops landed on 21 July 1944 and recaptured the island. The third battle erupted in December 1944 between Americans, black and white, and culminated in a riot on Christmas night.

This third battle began with an attempt by whites of the 3d Marine Division, some of them replacements new to the unit, to prevent blacks, most of them sailors, from visiting the town of Agana and the women who lived there. A black Marine stationed on the island compared Guam to "a city deep down in the South" because of the hostility he encountered. "But as we all know," he explained, "where there are women and white and Negro men, you will find discrimination in large quantities." On Guam, discrimination against blacks involved attempted intimidation by whites who shouted insults, threw rocks, and occasionally hurled smoke grenades from passing trucks into the cantonment area for black sailors of the Naval Supply Depot.

By mid-December, the island's Provost Marshal, Marine Colonel Benjamin A. Atkinson, considered the situation so dangerous that he urged his commander, Major General Henry L. Larsen, to take action. Larsen, whose casual remarks at Montford Point, including the reference to "you people in our uniform," had become a legend among the black Marines, responded with an order that sought to unite the races. Using carefully chosen words, the general wrote that:

The present war has called together in our services men of many origins and various races and colors. All are presumed to be imbued with common ideals and standards. All wear the uniform of the United States. All are entitled to the respect to which that common service is entitled. There shall be no dis-

crimination by reason of sectional birth, race, religion, or political beliefs. On the other hand, all individuals are charged with the responsibility of conducting themselves as becomes Americans.

Larsen believed in the principles he thus enunciated and, as a subsequent investigation concluded, intended to put them into effect, but his words came too late. In a series of violent incidents, an off-duty white military policeman fired at some blacks in Agana but hit no one; a white sailor shot to death a black Marine of the 25th Depot Company in a quarrel over a woman; and a sentry from the 27th Marine Depot Company reacted to harassment by fatally wounding his tormentor, a white Marine. Courts-martial eventually convicted the men who fired the fatal shots of voluntary manslaughter, but before justice could prevail, a misunderstanding led to a race riot.

A rumor that the black victim had been a sailor killed by a white Marine, spread unchallenged among the African-Americans of the Naval Supply Depot. Some of them commandeered two trucks and drove into Agana seeking revenge, but Marine military police succeeded in defusing the situation. On Christmas night, however, 43 black sailors armed themselves with knives and clubs and invaded a camp that housed white Marines. The ensuing riot resulted in the arrest of the black sailors who carried out the attack.

General Larsen convened a court of inquiry, which took testimony for an entire month. As president, he selected Colonel Woods, the former commanding officer at Montford Point, who happened to be serving on Guam. Walter White, Secretary of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, was on a fact-finding tour of the Pacific theater and participated in the proceedings. His piecing together of a pattern of pervasive racial harassment—unofficial, spontaneous, but nonetheless cruel—may have helped bring about convictions, not of the black rioters alone, but also of some of the whites who tormented them.



National Archives Photo 127-GW-334-114329

Black Marines pose with one of the Army DUKW amphibious trucks used to bring cargo ashore and carry away the wounded for medical treatment to ships offshore.

had no tools, like bolt-cutters, that could easily sever the metal. An officer of one of the companies recalls that his men had to break the straps by hacking and twisting with their bayonets.

The hard-fought advance inland eased the pressure on rear-area installations but did not eliminate the danger to combat service support troops like the men of the 8th Marine Ammunition Company. On 1 March, for example, Japanese mortar shells started a fire in the ammunition dump operated by the company, but Second Lieutenant John D'Angelo and several black Marines, among them Corporal Ralph Balara, shoveled sand onto the flames and extinguished them. During darkness on the following morning, another enemy barrage struck the dump, this time detonating a bunker filled with high-explosive and white-phosphorous shells. The exploding ammunition started fires throughout the dump, generating heat so intense that it forced D'Angelo and his platoon to fall back and warped the steel barrel of a carbine they left behind. Not until the conflagration had burned it-

self out, could the platoon begin the dangerous job of extinguishing the embers and salvaging any usable ammunition. Sergeant Tom McPhatter – an African-American noncommissioned officer, who after the war became a clergyman and a Navy chaplain, attaining the rank of captain – helped search the ruins of the dump. On 4 March, D'Angelo's platoon braved sniper fire at a captured airfield to retrieve an emergency load of ammunition dropped by parachute to replace what the blaze had consumed.

On the early morning of 26 March, 10 days after Iwo Jima was declared secure, the Japanese made a final attack that penetrated to the rear area units near Iwo Jima's western beaches, including the 8th Ammunition and 36th Marine Depot Companies. The black Marines helped stop the enemy in a confused struggle during darkness and mop up the survivors at daybreak. Two members of the 36th Company – Privates James M. Whitlock and James Davis – earned the Bronze Star for "heroic achievement." One Marine from the depot company and another from the

ammunition company were fatally wounded, but four others, two from each unit, survived their wounds. The African-American companies that fought at Iwo Jima shared in the Navy Unit Citation awarded the support units of V Amphibious Corps.

Okinawa, Japan, and China

The fight for Okinawa, which proved to be the last battle of World War II, involved some 2,000 black Marines, a larger concentration than for any previous operation. On 1 April 1945, the 6th and 1st Marine Divisions stormed ashore alongside two Army divisions, while the 2d Marine Division engaged in a feint to pin down the island's Japanese defenders. The three ammunition and four depot companies assigned to the 7th Field Depot, supporting the III Marine Amphibious Corps on that day, were divided between the demonstration and assault forces. The 1st and 3d Ammunition Companies and the 5th, 38th, and part of the 37th Marine Depot Companies accompanied the 2d Marine Division, while the 12th Ammunition and 18th Depot Companies, along with the rest of the 37th, participated in the landings by the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions. Within three days, almost all of the amphibious force's black Marines were in action ashore, and reinforcements soon arrived. By the end of April, the 20th Marine Depot Company reached Okinawa from Saipan, and in May the 9th and 10th Depot Companies from Guadalcanal, together with the 19th from Saipan, joined the 7th Field Depot.

Drenching rain and seemingly bottomless mud hampered the work of the ammunition and depot companies as the troops advanced and supply lines grew longer. The same parties that moved ammunition and other cargo forward to sustain the fighting also brought back the wounded. Stewards, too, made an essential contribution to eventual victory by serving as stretcher bearers.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 111123

On the beach at Iwo Jima, two black Marines crawl past the smouldering hulk of a DUKW all the while being subjected to heavy Japanese machine gun, mortar, and artillery fire. They struggled in the volcanic sand to set up supply dumps.

Indeed, casualties were almost equally divided between combat service units, 11 wounded, and the Stewards' Branch, seven wounded, one of them twice, and one killed.

The exhausting work of handling supplies continued after Okinawa was declared secure on 22 June 1945, for the island became a base from which to invade Japan. When hostilities ended on 15 August, after the dropping of atomic bombs on Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the III Marine Amphibious Corps received orders to proceed to North China. Meanwhile, the V Amphibious Corps, which had conquered Iwo Jima, would participate in the occupation of Japan.

Assigned to the 8th Service Regiment (formerly the 8th Field Depot) in support of the Marine V Amphibious Corps, the 6th, 8th, and 10th Ammunition Companies arrived in conquered Japan between 22 and 26 September, along with the 24th, 33d, 34th, 42d, and 43d Depot Companies. The 36th Marine Depot Company joined the earlier arrivals by the

end of October. Even though the mingling of Marine units on the battlefields of the Pacific War had broken down, at least temporarily, the wall separating blacks from whites, the occupation forces in Japan – and in North China, as well – reestablished racial segregation.

The African-American Marines who landed in North China at the end of September 1945 – men of the 1st and 12th Ammunition Companies and the 5th, 20th, 37th, and 38th Depot Companies – encountered a cool initial reception from the Chinese. Edgar Huff recalled that a PFCs Willie J. Kanady, Eugene F. Hill, and Joe Alexander of the 34th Depot Company relax during a lull in the action on Iwo Jima, where danger persisted even after the island was declared secure. Before they left Iwo, the company would become engaged when the Japanese mounted a banzai charge against Marines and soldiers.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 113835





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 117624

Men of the 12th Marine Ammunition Company pose at a monument overrun during the Okinawa campaign, in which some 2,000 black Marines participated.

Chinese might run up to a black Marine and touch his face, as if to determine if the color would rub off on the fingers. Until the sight of African-Americans became familiar, the local civilians remained wary of them, but, Huff continued, "as soon as they found that this paint wouldn't come off, or what they thought was paint," the Chinese "got to be very charming and very lovely." Because local labor proved readily available, the men of the depot and ammunition companies frequently performed guard duty at American installations and on the trains that Communist guerrilla forces preyed upon in their war against the Nationalist govern-

ment, which was trying to assert its authority in the region.

Returning Home

Hostilities against Japan ended on 15 August 1945, and four days later, the 52d Defense Battalion at Guam began a transition from combat unit to support organization. The change received official confirmation on 30 September when the battalion came under the 5th Service Depot, which also controlled the black ammunition and depot companies still on the island. A detachment from the 52d sailed to the Marshalls in October, relieved the 51st Defense Battalion at Eniwetok and Kwajalein, and re-

turned to Guam in January. Some of the Marines not yet eligible for discharge cast off the role of depot troops and formed the Heavy Anti-aircraft Group (Provisional), based at Saipan until disbanded in February 1947. The Marines of the 52d Defense Battalion, who remained on Guam after the group departed for Saipan, sailed for San Diego in the transport USS *Wakefield* (AP 21) on 13 March 1946. As a rule, the Marine Corps discharged on the West Coast the men with homes west of the Mississippi River, while those living to the east of the river received their discharges on the East Coast. The men of the 52d Defense Battalion not discharged at Camp Pendleton returned to Montford Point, where Lieutenant Colonel Moore relinquished command on 21 April. The end came on 15 May when the wartime unit was redesignated the 3d Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion in the postwar Marine Corps.

After the unit's relief in November 1945 by African-American Marines from the 52d Defense Battalion, the bulk of the 51st Defense Battalion sailed from Eniwetok to San Diego and then went to Camp Pendleton, California, where some of the men with long service overseas received their discharges. The members of the Eniwetok detachment not yet discharged traveled by train to Montford Point where they met the Kwajalein group, which had arrived by sea at Norfolk. On 31 January 1946, the first African-American combat unit organized by the Marine Corps for service in World War II officially disbanded.

Along with the two defense battalions, the ammunition and depot units headed home from the Pacific and the Far East. Scarcely had the African-American combat service companies arrived in Japan for occupation duty when they became part of the postwar demobilization, either disbanding in place, transferring to Guam, or, in the case of the

Unfinished Business

Although African-American enlisted men earned acceptance on the battlefields of the war against Japan, the Marine Corps did not commission even one black officer in the course of the conflict. The black press showed enthusiasm from the outset for the men of Montford Point, but complained about the absence of African-American officers. "18,000 colored Marines," editorialized the *Baltimore Afro-American*, "but not one colored officer." At last, early in 1945, three senior black noncommissioned officers entered officer training at Quantico, Virginia, but not even one graduated, a failure rate that, in the words of "Hashmark" Johnson, raised "a number of questions" among Montford Point Marines and caused "quite a bit of consternation." These concerns may well have been justified, since all three of the men went on to successful careers as civilians: Sergeant Major Charles F. Anderson as an attorney; Sergeant Major Charles W. Simmons as a college professor and author; and First Sergeant George F. Ellis, Jr., as a physician. Three more African-American officer candidates failed to win commissions, and not until 10 November 1945, the birthday of the Marines, did the Corps commission the first black officer in its history. On that day, Frederick C. Branch, a veteran of the 51st Defense Battalion, became a Second Lieutenant in the Reserve.

Unlike the Army and Navy, the Marine Corps barred blacks from its wartime Women Reserves. In adopting this ban, it could cite the expense of building segregated quarters and the fact that enough white applicants were available to maintain the organization at authorized strength. The first African-American to join the Women Reserves, Annie E. Graham, did not enlist until September 1949, four years after Japan's formal surrender.

10th Marine Ammunition Company, returning by way of San Diego to Montford Point and disbanding there. Except for a few stewards, the last black Marines left Japan in April 1946.

As part of the reduction of Marine Corps strength in Japan, the 8th Marine Ammunition Company and 33d, 34th, and 36th Marine Depot Companies joined the 5th Service Depot (formerly the 5th Field Depot) at Guam, where other African-American Marine units already served. The disbanding of the black units on Guam began on 31 October 1945 with the 4th Depot Company and ended with the 8th Ammunition Company and 49th Depot Company on 30 September 1947.

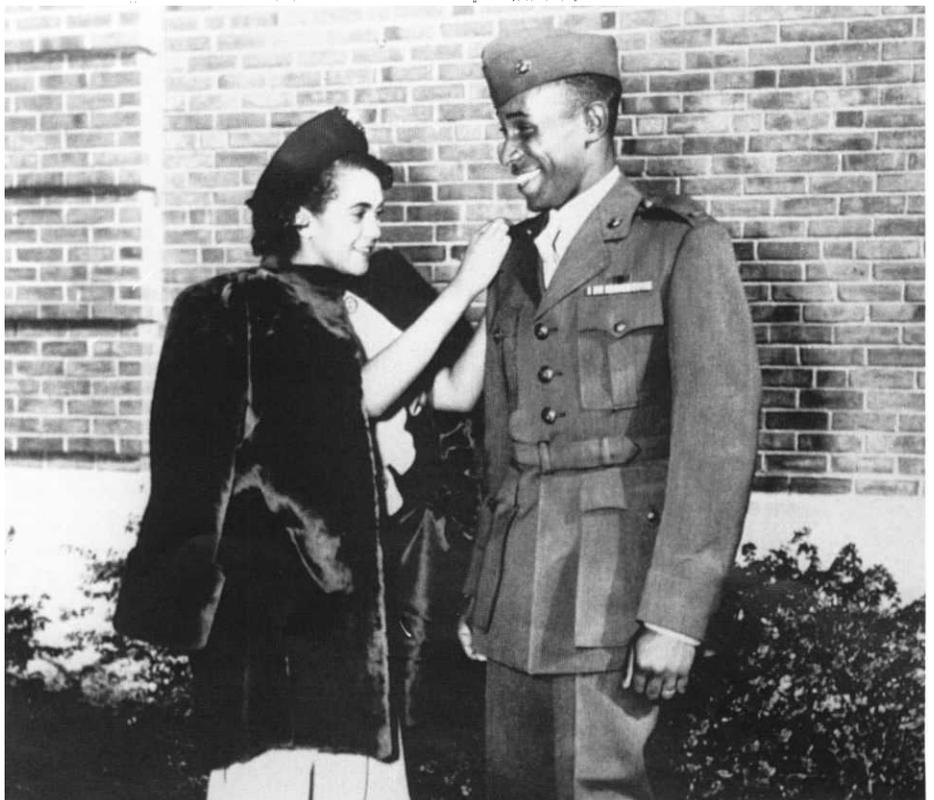
The postwar reduction of strength affected the black units in North China, as it did those in Japan. The 5th and 20th Depot and 1st Ammunition Companies left China in January 1946, passed through San Diego and Camp Pendleton, and disbanded on

21 February at Montford Point. On 2 March, the other African-American units sent to North China sailed eastward across the Pacific. The 12th Marine Ammunition Company paused at Pearl Harbor to transfer to the 6th Service Depot those men not yet eligible for discharge. The company's veterans, however, arrived at Montford Point in time for their unit to disband on 5 April, three days after the 37th and 38th Depot Companies had ceased to exist.

The 6th Service Depot (originally the 6th Base Depot) had functioned in Hawaii throughout the Central Pacific offensive, and since 1944 it included a succession of ammunition and depot companies manned by African-American Marines. While the fighting raged, the men of these units had worked 12-hour shifts to channel supplies to the Marines closing in on Japan. The coming of peace changed all that. By mid-summer 1946, only the 47th Marine Depot Company and one platoon of the

On 10 November 1945, Frederick C. Branch, the first African-American ever commissioned in the Marine Corps, and a veteran of the 51st Defense Battalion, smiles proudly as his wife pins the gold bars of a second lieutenant on his uniform.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 500043



Guam-based 8th Ammunition Company remained on the island of Oahu. The depot outfit disbanded on 31 October 1946, and in November, the platoon sailed to Guam, where its was absorbed into its parent company, which disbanded at the end of September 1947.

Pride Mixed with Bitterness

Of the 19,168 African-Americans who served in the Marine Corps during World War II, 12,738 went overseas in the defense battalions or combat support companies or as stewards. Those who remained in the United States performed numerous duties: stewards in officers' messes at various headquarters; staff members at the Montford Point Camp or recruits in training there when the conflict ended; or service troops at supply depots at Philadelphia or Norfolk or the Naval Ammunition Depot at McAlester, Oklahoma.

While the African-American Marines in the United States braved loneliness and racial discrimination, those overseas might wait on distant islands for Japanese attacks that never came; manhandle heavy containers out of ships' holds; load all sorts of supplies into landing craft; sort out the cargo on the beachhead, often under deadly fire; and move the desperately need material inland to the fighting units. Men in the defense battalions sometimes unloaded ships, whereas members of the combat support companies became infantrymen in an emergency, and stewards often doubled as stretcher bearers. Looking back at a succession of exhausting, dangerous, and at times boring assignments with the 3d Marine Ammunition Company, Robert D. Little said: "If I had to do it all over again, I'd still be a black Marine . . . I think they made a man of me."

Brooks E. Gray, who helped form the Montford Point Marine Association to preserve the heritage of the wartime black Marines, has spoken of the "pride mixed with

bitterness" experienced by the African-Americans who wore the uniform of the Marine Corps during World War II. Segregation prevailed at the time, even following the black Marines across the Pacific to Japan and the Asian mainland. "The injustices . . . in those segregated units," Gray recalled, "sparked a fierce determination to excel." And these African-Americans did excel. "We represented," he believed, "the breakthrough of the final barrier"—the obstacle of racism—"by being part of the elite corps." Events proved Gray correct, for the post-World War II Marine Corps could never return to

the racial policy of 1940. Blacks had won the fight for the right to serve; they were in the Marine Corps to stay. Moreover, integration of the races would come to the Corps, though that radical change had to await President Harry S. Truman's executive order banning racial discrimination in the armed forces, issued in 1948, and the demands for manpower imposed by the Korean War, which broke out two years later. By the time Gray retired in 1969 as a master gunnery sergeant after 24 years of service, the Marine Corps had committed itself to racial integration.

BLACK MARINE UNITS OF THE FLEET MARINE FORCE, WORLD WAR II

<i>Date of Activation</i>	<i>Unit Designation</i>	<i>Date of Deactivation</i>	<i>Where Deactivated</i>
18 Aug 1942	51st Composite Def Bn	31 Jan 1946	Montford Point
8 Mar 1943	1st Marine Depot Co	4 Jan 1946	Montford Point
23 Apr 1943	2d Marine Depot Co	4 Jan 1946	Montford Point
23 Apr 1943	3d Marine Depot Co	4 Jan 1946	Montford Point
1 June 1943	4th Marine Depot Co	31 Oct 1945	Guam
8 Jul 1943	5th Marine Depot Co	31 Oct 1943	New Caledonia
8 Jul 1943	6th Marine Depot Co	31 Aug 1943	New Caledonia
16 Aug 1943	7th Marine Depot Co	11 Dec 1945	Montford Point
16 Aug 1943	8th Marine Depot Co	10 Dec 1945	Montford Point
15 Sep 1943	9th Marine Depot Co	31 Dec 1945	Montford Point
15 Sep 1943	10th Marine Depot Co	22 Dec 1945	Montford Point
1 Oct 1943	1st Marine Ammunition Co	21 Feb 1946	Montford Point
7 Oct 1943	11th Marine Depot Co	4 Dec 1945	Saipan
7 Oct 1943	12th Marine Depot Co	11 Dec 1945	Montford Point
1 Nov 1943	13th Marine Depot Co	30 Nov 1945	Guam
1 Nov 1943	14th Marine Depot Co	30 Nov 1945	Guam
1 Nov 1943	2d Marine Ammunition Co	20 Jan 1946	Guam
1 Dec 1943	15th Marine Depot Co	30 Nov 1945	Allen Island
2 Dec 1943	16th Marine Depot Co	29 Jan 1946	Montford Point
2 Dec 1943	3d Marine Ammunition Co	25 Feb 1946	Montford Point
15 Dec 1943	52d Defense Bn	14 May 1946	Montford Point
1 Jan 1944	17th Marine Depot Co	16 Jan 1946	Montford Point
1 Jan 1944	18th Marine Depot Co	29 Jan 1946	Montford Point
1 Jan 1944	4th Marine Ammunition Co	8 Mar 1946	Guam
1 Feb 1944	19th Marine Depot Co	25 Feb 1946	Montford Point
1 Feb 1944	20th Marine Depot Co	21 Feb 1946	Montford Point
1 Feb 1944	5th Marine Ammunition Co	4 Jul 1946	Montford Point
1 Mar 1944	21st Marine Depot Co	2 Apr 1946	Montford Point
1 Mar 1944	22d Marine Depot Co	2 Apr 1946	Montford Point
1 Mar 1944	6th Ammunition Co	15 Dec 1945	Sasebo
1 Apr 1944	23d Marine Depot Co	5 Apr 1946	Montford Point
1 Apr 1944	24th Marine Depot Co	15 Nov 1945	Nagasaki
1 Apr 1944	7th Marine Ammunition Co	8 May 1946	Montford Point
1 May 1944	25th Marine Depot Co	2 May 1946	Montford Point
1 May 1944	26th Marine Depot Co	2 May 1946	Montford Point
1 May 1944	8th Marine Ammunition Co	30 Sep 1947	Guam
1 Jun 1944	27th Marine Depot Co	16 Apr 1946	Montford Point
1 Jun 1944	28th Marine Depot Co	2 May 1946	Montford Point
1 Jun 1944	9th Marine Ammunition Co	4 Jul 1946	Montford Point
1 Jul 1944	29th Marine Depot Co	8 May 1946	Montford Point
1 Jul 1944	30th Marine Depot Co	8 Apr 1946	Montford Point
1 Jul 1944	10th Marine Ammunition Co	6 May 1946	Montford Point
1 Aug 1944	31st Marine Depot Co	30 Nov 1945	Mau
1 Aug 1944	32d Marine Depot Co	8 May 1946	Montford Point
1 Aug 1944	11th Marine Ammunition Co	4 Jul 1946	Montford Point
1 Sep 1944	33d Marine Depot Co	31 Jan 1946	Guam
1 Sep 1944	34th Marine Depot Co	31 Jan 1946	Guam
1 Sep 1944	12th Marine Ammunition Co	5 Apr 1946	Montford Point
1 Oct 1944	35th Marine Depot Co	6 Jun 1946	Montford Point
1 Oct 1944	36th Marine Depot Co	17 Jun 1946	Montford Point
1 Nov 1944	37th Marine Depot Co	2 Apr 1946	Montford Point
1 Nov 1944	38th Marine Depot Co	2 Apr 1946	Montford Point
1 Nov 1944	5th Marine Depot Co	21 Feb 1946	Montford Point
1 Dec 1944	6th Marine Depot Co	31 Dec 1945	Guam
1 Dec 1944	39th Marine Depot Co	10 Jun 1946	Guam
1 Dec 1944	40th Marine Depot Co	4 May 1946	Saipan
3 Mar 1945	41st Marine Depot Co	23 Mar 1946	Mau
14 Mar 1945	42d Marine Depot Co	15 Mar 1946	Sasebo
14 Mar 1945	43d Marine Depot Co	15 Mar 1946	Sasebo
18 Apr 1945	44th Marine Depot Co	8 Apr 1946	Montford Point
10 Aug 1945	45th Marine Depot Co	6 Jun 1946	Montford Point
1 Oct 1945	46th Marine Depot Co	15 Jul 1946	Montford Point
1 Oct 1945	47th Marine Depot Co	31 Oct 1946	Oahu
1 Oct 1945	48th Marine Depot Co	10 Jun 1946	Guam
1 Oct 1945	49th Marine Depot Co	30 Sep 1947	Guam

Sources

Three books contain narratives of varying lengths that recount the history of African-American Marines in World War II. Perry E. Fisher and Brooks E. Gray, veterans of the 8th Marine Ammunition Company, have written *Blacks and Whites Together Through Hell: U.S. Marines in World War II* (Turlock, California: Millsmont Publishing, 1993). In his *Defense Studies: Integration of the Armed Forces, 1940-1965* (Washington: Center of Military History, 1981), Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., devotes part of one chapter to the black Marines of World War II. The most detailed account of the Montford Point Marines may be found in Henry I. Shaw, Jr., and Ralph W. Donnelly's *Blacks in the Marine Corps* (Washington: History and Museums Division, Headquarters U. S. Marine Corps, 1975, reprinted 1988).

Many of the directives, memoranda, and reports dealing with the topic of African-Americans in the Marine Corps during World War II appear in Volume 6 of *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces: Basic Documents* (Wilmington, Delaware: Scholarly Resources, 1977), edited by Morris J. MacGregor, Jr., and Bernard C. Nalty.

The Marine Corps Oral History Collection includes a number of interviews that deal with the recruitment, training, and employment of African-American Marines during World War II, grouped together under the title "Black Marines." The Marine Corps Personal Papers collection includes accounts of wartime service by black veterans.

Henry I. Shaw, Jr., co-author of *Blacks in the Marine Corps*, commented on this manuscript, as did Joseph H. Carpenter, who is National Historian of the Montford Point Marine Association.



About the Author

Bernard C. Nalty, a civilian member of the Marine Corps history program from October 1956 to September 1961, collaborated with Henry I. Shaw, Jr. and Edwin T. Turnbladh on *Central Pacific Drive*, volume three of *History of Marine Corps Operations in World War II*. Together with Morris J. MacGregor, he edited the 13-volume series *Blacks in the United States Armed Forces: Basic Documents* and its one-volume abridgement, *Blacks in the Military: Essential Documents*. His other works include *Strength for the Fight: A History of Black Americans in the Military*.

ERRATA

In the pamphlet *Closing In: Marines in the Seizure of Iwo Jima*, in this series, two Marine units are incorrectly identified. On page 31, the correct reference is "Captain Thomas M. Fields, commanding officer of Company D, 2d Battalion, 26th Marines . . ." On page 36, it is "Captain Frank C. Caldwell, commanding Company F, 2d Battalion, 26th Marines . . ." In *Breaching the Marianas: The Battle for Saipan*, GySgt Robert H. McCard, 4th Tank Battalion, 4th Marine Division, was inadvertently omitted from the list of recipients of the Medal of Honor. In *Free a Marine to Fight: Women Marines in World War II*, the photo caption on page 18 should read: "Pvt Billie J. Redding married her hometown beau, Navy Ens William A. Lewis, in a military wedding in San Diego. In order not to violate uniform regulations, both the bride and her maid of honor, Helen Taylor, carried rather than wore their corsages."



WORLD WAR II



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