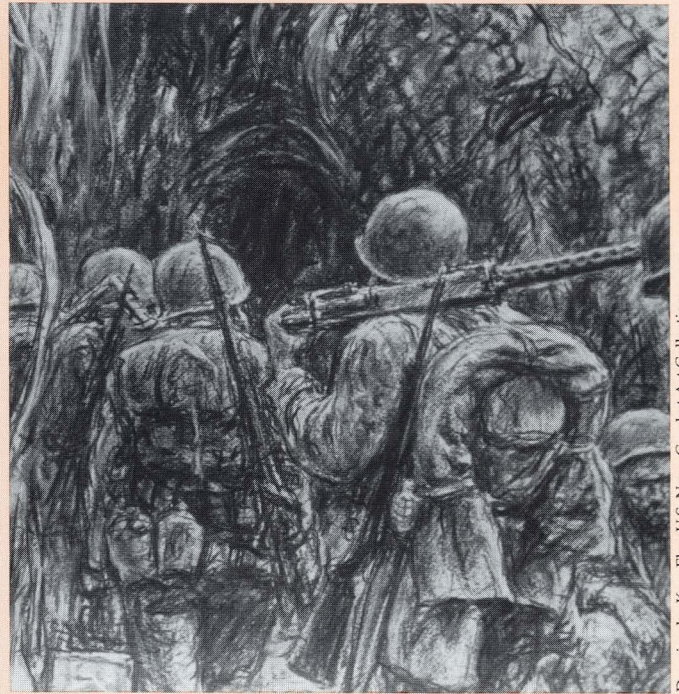


# Individual Combat Clothing and Equipment

**B**y 1943, the cotton sage-green herringbone twill utility uniform was being issued to the troops in the field (although some camouflage clothing was available) and to new Marines at the recruit depots. These jackets and trousers were worn with field shoes, leggings, and the M1 steel helmet. Individual combat equipment was the distinctive Marine Corps 1941 pattern that derived from earlier Army M1910 designs. Basic components included the cartridge belt, belt suspenders, haversack, and knapsack; supplemented by poncho, shelter half, entrenching tool, gas mask, and canteens. Lieutenant Colonel Samuel B. Griffith II, commanding the 1st Raider Battalion, recalled that officers and men landed with a basic allowance of ammunition, a canteen of water, a battle dressing, and individual first aid kit on the belt. In the pack were two days K-Rations, one D-Bar (a highly enriched and very hard chocolate bar), tobacco, a change of underwear, three pairs of socks, a poncho, and a pair of tennis shoes. The pack roll was made from a shelter half, blanket, and "one utility garment." A 4th Raider Battalion Marine noted that at Vangunu they "learned that one canteen of water was not enough. We all had been issued a second canteen."



Drawing by Kerr Eby, U.S. Navy Combat Art Collection

water. The 4th Raider Battalion lost 13 killed and 15 wounded in this action. The Japanese defenders withdrew, with an estimated 61 dead and 100 wounded. Currin turned the beachhead over to the Army occupation force and was taken back on board ship and returned to Guadalcanal. The remainder of the 4th Battalion headquarters and two companies, led by battalion executive officer Major James Clark, carried out separate tasks in accordance with plans to secure Wickham Anchorage at Vangunu Island to protect lines of communication from the Russells and Guadalcanal for the New Georgia operation. On 30 June, Captain Earle O. Snell, Jr.'s Company N and Captain William L. Flake's Company Q supported an Army landing force by going ashore at Oloana Bay, where it joined a scouting party and Coastwatchers already there. Raider Irvin L. Cross later wrote that he and the other raiders disembarked from his assault transport "in Higgins Boats

during a typhoon. In the dark it was impossible to see the landing craft from the deck." Despite a confused landing in poor conditions, by afternoon the Marines and units of the Army 2d Battalion, 103d Infantry reached the Kaeruka River and attacked the Japanese located there. This position was taken and then defended. A member of Company Q, John McCormick, recalled that the attack "was not very productive," but that a battle went on all day with the Japanese, who had gotten "quickly organized" and fought back with their machine guns and mortars. On 2 July, the Japanese tried to land three barges with supplies, but were met on the beach and shot up. The raiders lost 14 killed and 26 wounded securing Vangunu. The next raider deployment was like those at Viru and Vangunu, a supporting exercise to back the main XIV Corps effort to take Munda Point. Soon after the Rendova landings, Colonel Liversedge's mission was changed

from being the landing force reserve to being an assault force designated the Northern Landing Group directed to attack Japanese positions on New Georgia's northwest coast at the Dragon's Peninsula.

Three of the 1st Raider Regiment's four battalions had been sent elsewhere. Liversedge's landing group consisted of the Marine raider regimental headquarters, the 1st Raider Battalion; the 3d Battalion, 145th Infantry; and the 3d Battalion, 148th Infantry. Because the operating area was too far from the main landing force for support, fire support and supply came from the sea and air. Communications were dependent upon radio until a land-line linkup could be made with the rest of the occupation force to the south.

Liversedge was assigned several tasks. First he was to land and move against the Japanese forces at Enogai Inlet and Bairoko Harbor. Then he was to block the so-called Bairoko Trail and disrupt Japanese troop and supply movements be-



Department of Defense Photo (USA) 111SC324513

*Soldiers and Marines consolidate their positions and construct barbed wire obstacles on the Dragons Peninsula after the attack on Bairoko. Their apparent condition, mixture of clothing, and the ever-present jungle provide eloquent testimony to the physical demands of the campaign.*

tween Bairoko Harbor and Munda. The enemy, weather, and terrain together conspired against this venture from the beginning and the raiders found themselves in a protracted frontline fight rather than a swift strike in the Japanese rear. One of Liversedge's battalion commanders, Lieutenant Colonel Samuel B. Griffith II, observed on embarking at Guadalcanal that although they shot off no fireworks on Independence Day, "we consoled ourselves with the knowledge that there would be plenty of those later."

On 5 July, the Northern Landing Group landed at Rice Anchorage east of Enogai and Bairoko. A narrow beach, difficult landing conditions, and concerns for an enemy naval attack caused the destroyer-transport force to depart, taking the raiders' long-range radio with it. The landing from eight APDs and destroyers (DDs) was unopposed and met only by porters and scouts (Corry's Boys) under Australian Flight Officer John A. Corrigan. Griffith described them as small men, "but their brown bodies were wiry and their arm, leg and back muscles were powerful. They wore gaudy cheap cotton lap-lap, or lavalavas." These 150 New Georgians were the Northern Landing

Group's supply transport in a region without roads.

Undeterred by the situation, Liversedge moved out on jungle trails in pouring rain to his first objectives, leaving two Army companies to secure the rear. In Griffith's words, they "alternately stumbled up one side of a hill and slipped and slid down the other." The 1st Raider Battalion pushed on to reach the Giza Giza River by the night of 5 July with the larger and heavier Army battalions following. Here Liversedge split his force. The 3d Battalion, 148th Infantry was sent south to block the Bairoko Trail and the remaining units went north towards the Japanese on the Dragons Peninsula. On the night of 6 July, the naval Battle of Kula Gulf erupted with the resultant loss of the cruiser USS *Helena* (CL 50). This isolated the Northern Landing Group from even naval support. The villages of Maranusa I and Triri were occupied and patrols were soon in contact with the enemy, members of the *6th Special Naval Landing Force*, so-called Japanese "marines."

On 9 July, the Enogai defenses were reached and, after an air strike, Liversedge launched an immediate attack with Lieutenant Colonel Griffith's 1st Raider Battal-

ion. Captain Thomas A. Mullahey's Company A was on the left, Captain John P. Salmon's Company C in the center, Captain Edwin B. Wheeler's Company B on the right, with Company D under Captain Clay A. Boyd in reserve. Employing machine guns and grenades, the battalion advanced toward the Japanese position until halted at nightfall. The Japanese were well dug-in and well armed with machine guns and mortars, but their heavy-caliber coast defense artillery could only be used seaward. Supported by 60mm mortars, the raiders resumed the attack the morning of 10 July, and took Enogai Village. Richard C. Ackerman, a Marine with Company C, remembered "we soon came to a lagoon which stopped our forward motion. Our right flank, though, did overrun the enemy's warehouse and food storage area." The Japanese lost 300 men at a cost of 47 Marines killed, another 74 wounded, and 4 men missing. The battalion had fought for 30 hours without rations or water resupply. Army troops carried up water and K-rations and candy bars received in an air drop. The elimination of the Japanese coast defense artillery at Enogai allowed American destroyers and torpedo boats to operate unhampered in the Kula Gulf, where they disrupted Japanese barge traffic.

Under Japanese air attacks, the 1st Marine Raider Regiment consolidated its gains and blocking positions, while Colonel Liversedge studied the Bairoko Harbor defenses. Communications, resupply, and fire support were problem areas. The Japanese improved their own dispositions and continued to bring in troops and supplies from Kolombangara by sea and then moved them overland to Munda Point. The main Japanese line was on a ridge in front of the Americans. The enemy fighting positions were log and coral bunkers that made excellent use of terrain and in-



terlocking machine-gun fire supported by heavy mortars. On the night of 12–13 July, the Navy intercepted a Japanese troop landing at Kolombangara. Four days later, on 17 July, Liversedge pulled the 3d Battalion, 148th Infantry back to Triri Village for closer mutual support, while other Army companies continued to hold the Rice Anchorage area and communications routes.

Reinforced on 18 July by the 4th Raider Battalion, Liversedge planned to attack Bairoko on 20 July 1943. The attack was launched on schedule despite the failure of a requested airstrike to arrive. Liversedge sent in Griffith's battalion, followed by Currin's battalion, to find an undefended flank or a breakthrough point. Griffith committed Wheeler's Company B and Company C under First Lieutenant Frank A. Kemp. His other companies had been used to bring these two up to strength. Currin's battalion fielded four companies, but was some 200 men understrength. Companies B and C soon stalled on the Japanese defenses. Captain Walker took Company P forward for support, while Snell's Company N tried to find an open flank along

the shoreline to the north. One of Snell's men, Frank Korowitz, remembered feeling that he wanted to get up and run when Japanese attacked by surprise at close range, but "I also felt that I would rather be killed than have anyone know I was scared." Liversedge fed in his remaining units to cover the gaps that developed between the two battalions and no longer had a reserve. Walker recalled, "without some kind of fire support (naval gunfire or air) these raiders could not penetrate the fortified enemy line." McCormick, with Company Q, wrote that the Japanese had plenty of time to prepare and had "machine gun pits in the natural shelter provided by the roots of banyan trees and cut fire lanes through the underbrush." The combination of machine guns, mortars, and snipers guaranteed "almost instant death" to any Marine caught in these fields of fire.

At 1445, a Japanese mortar barrage was followed with a counter attack in the 1st Battalion area. After this, another assault attempted by the Marines of Company Q lead by Captain Lincoln N. Holdzkom bogged down within

sight of Bairoko Harbor. By now there was a loss of almost 250 Marines, a 30 percent casualty rate. The 1st Marine Raider Regiment had 46 killed and another 200 or so wounded, and about half the wounded were litter cases. Liversedge made no further headway and withdrew that night to Enogai. It required another 150 men to move the casualties back and all units were in defensive positions by 1400, 21 July.

By then, the effects of the fighting and living conditions had taken a toll in sickness and exhaustion of the Northern Landing Group. Liversedge was ordered to hold what he had with available forces. Resupply and casualty evacuation were by air and there was no further reinforcement, except a 50-man detachment under Captain Joseph W. Mehring, Jr., of the 11th Defense Battalion that provided needed 40mm and .50-caliber antiaircraft guns at Rice Anchorage.

Bairoko Harbor was attacked by destroyers and torpedo boats, and bombed by B-17 Flying Fortresses. On 2 August, XIV Corps informed Liversedge that Munda Point was reached and his force should cut off retreating Japanese near Zieta. On 9 August, the Northern Landing Group linked up with elements of the 25th Infantry Division advancing from Munda Point and assumed control of the 1st Marine Raider Regiment. Scattered fighting continued around Bairoko until 24 August when it was occupied by the 3d Battalion, 145th Infantry. The Japanese defenders, the *Special Naval Landing Force* men, had pulled out by sea. Occupying Corrigan's "Christian Rest and Recreation" camp of thatched lean-to's, the Marines totaled their casualties for this effort; regimental headquarters had 1 killed and 8 wounded, 1st Raider Battalion lost 74 killed and 139 wounded, 4th Raider Battalion had 54 dead and 168 wounded; and all suffered from the unhealthy condi-

*1st Raider Regiment casualties from the attack on Bairoko had to be treated in place or evacuated by aircraft. Some 200 casualties were carried from the field, then taken by rubber boat to Consolidated PBY Catalinas. After this picture was taken a Japanese air attack disrupted this effort and damaged one aircraft.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 152113





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 60483

*The dead had to wait until the wounded were taken care of and the battlefield was secured to be buried. In some cases it was not until after the Japanese had withdrawn or been solidly beaten before burial details could recover the dead Marines.*

tions of the area. By 31 August 1943, the 1st Marine Raider Regiment was back on Guadalcanal for reorganization scheduled in September, officially noting the presence of "bunks, movies, beer, chow."

### *The Munda Drive and the Fighting Ninth*

Elements of four Marine defense battalions played an important part in the Central Solomons campaign. Attached to the XIV Corps to support of the attack on Munda Point was the 9th Defense Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William J. Scheyer. The battalion was organized with an artillery group (Batteries A and B), a heavy antiaircraft group (Batteries C through F), a light antiaircraft group (Batteries G through I), and a headquarters and service battery. The 9th Defense Battalion's participation in the Guadalcanal campaign from December 1942 had provided it needed experience, as the island was typical

of conditions to be found in the Central Solomons. Some Marines from the light antiaircraft group were withdrawn from gun crews to train with the battalion's tank platoon for tank-infantry operations. The greatest challenge in preparing for the campaign was Lieutenant Colonel Archie E. O'Neil's conversion of his seacoast artillery into a field artillery unit, at the same time absorbing 145 new men into the group. This was

accomplished in 22 days, a feat that Admiral Halsey complimented.

One of the major equipment changes for the campaign was the acquisition of 155mm guns as replacements for the older M1918 French Grande Puissance Filloux (GPF) guns. The battalion exchanged 90mm guns with the Army 70th Coast Artillery Battalion, giving the antiaircraft group new guns. High-speed and standard dual-

*This picture gives a clear view of the beach congestion that plagued the landing of the artillery group with its 155mm guns. At right is a .50-caliber antiaircraft gun of the Special Weapons Group.*

Marine Corps Historical Collection







Marine Corps Historical Collection.

*The antiaircraft group of the 9th Defense Battalion moves ashore at Rendova. Here a TD9 tractor pulls a 90mm gun from an LST. The TD9 tractor would soon prove too light to move through the muddy terrain beyond the beach.*

mounts for 20mm guns were also obtained. These were adapted by the 9th from 37mm gun mounts, giving the light antiaircraft group greatly increased mobility by replacing the stationary naval single-mounts. The 9th Defense Battalion obtained additional .30-caliber heavy, water-cooled machine guns, and trained the battalion band to employ them with Headquarters and Service Battery. The battalion acquired three Landing Vehicle Tracked Alligator amphibious tractors for the operation, and then was

augmented by a whole amphibious tractor platoon of nine vehicles from the 3d Marine Division.

On 27 June 1943, the battalion consisted of a total of 1,459 officers and men, reinforced with additional personnel from the 3d Marine Division and I Marine Amphibious Corps. Most of these Marines had been on Guadalcanal for seven months. At one time or another, 40 percent of them had malaria and the debilitating effects of the tropics had been felt by the entire unit. But the 9th was a well-trained, experienced unit, outfit-

ted with the best equipment then available to Marine defense battalions. In the words of Lieutenant Colonel Scheyer, "the prospect of closing with the enemy was all that was needed to supply morale."

On 29 June, the 9th Defense Battalion was attached to XIV Corps for the duration of the New Georgia operation. The battalion was given the mission assisting in the capture, occupation, and defense of Rendova Island, by landing on the beaches south of Renard Channel entrance. Here it was to move immediately into position to provide antiaircraft defense. A third mission was to fire 155mm guns on the enemy installations, bivouac areas, and the airfield at Munda. As a fourth task, the tank platoon would support the attack on Munda Airfield. Fifth, the battalion would be prepared to repel attack by hostile surface vessels. When the Japanese forces on New Georgia Island were overrun, the battalion would then move as a whole or in part to Munda to defend the field when Allied air units moved in and began operating. All these assigned tasks reflected the battalion's varied capabilities.

*The first Japanese aircraft shot down from the beach was credited to this gun crew on its first day ashore. From the left are 1stLt William A. Buckingham, PFC Francis W. O'Brien, Cpl Paul V. Duhamel, and PFC Nemo Hancock, Jr., of the 9th Defense Battalion.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 56812





Marine Corps Historical Collection

*A 40mm gun and crew look skyward for Japanese aircraft as the XIV Corps landing continues. Landing Craft Infantry (LCIs) are run up on the beach in the background, as working parties unload them by hand.*

Lieutenant Colonel Scheyer said on leaving Guadalcanal that the Japanese "have a mistaken notion that they must die for their Emperor and our job is to help them do that just as fast as we possibly can." At 1600 on 29 June, the 9th's first echelon, 28 officers and 641 enlisted Marines, combat loaded on board the USS *Libra* (AK-53) and USS *Algorab* (AK-25), the vessels assigned to transport the battalion, and sailed from Guadalcanal. At Munda, a Japanese defender observed that a "blue signal flare from Rendova Point went up. I saw four enemy warships . . . this morning, rain clouds hovered over us. At Rendova, four cruisers, three destroyers, eight transports and countless numbers of boats appeared."

At 0635 the morning of 30 June, the first units of the XIV Corps' assault wave began landing on Kokorana Island and East Beach of Rendova. They were met by Coastwatcher Flight Lieutenant D. C. Horton and guides from the amphibious reconnaissance patrols.

Both on Kokorana and on Rendova, lead elements of the 9th found themselves landing ahead of the assault

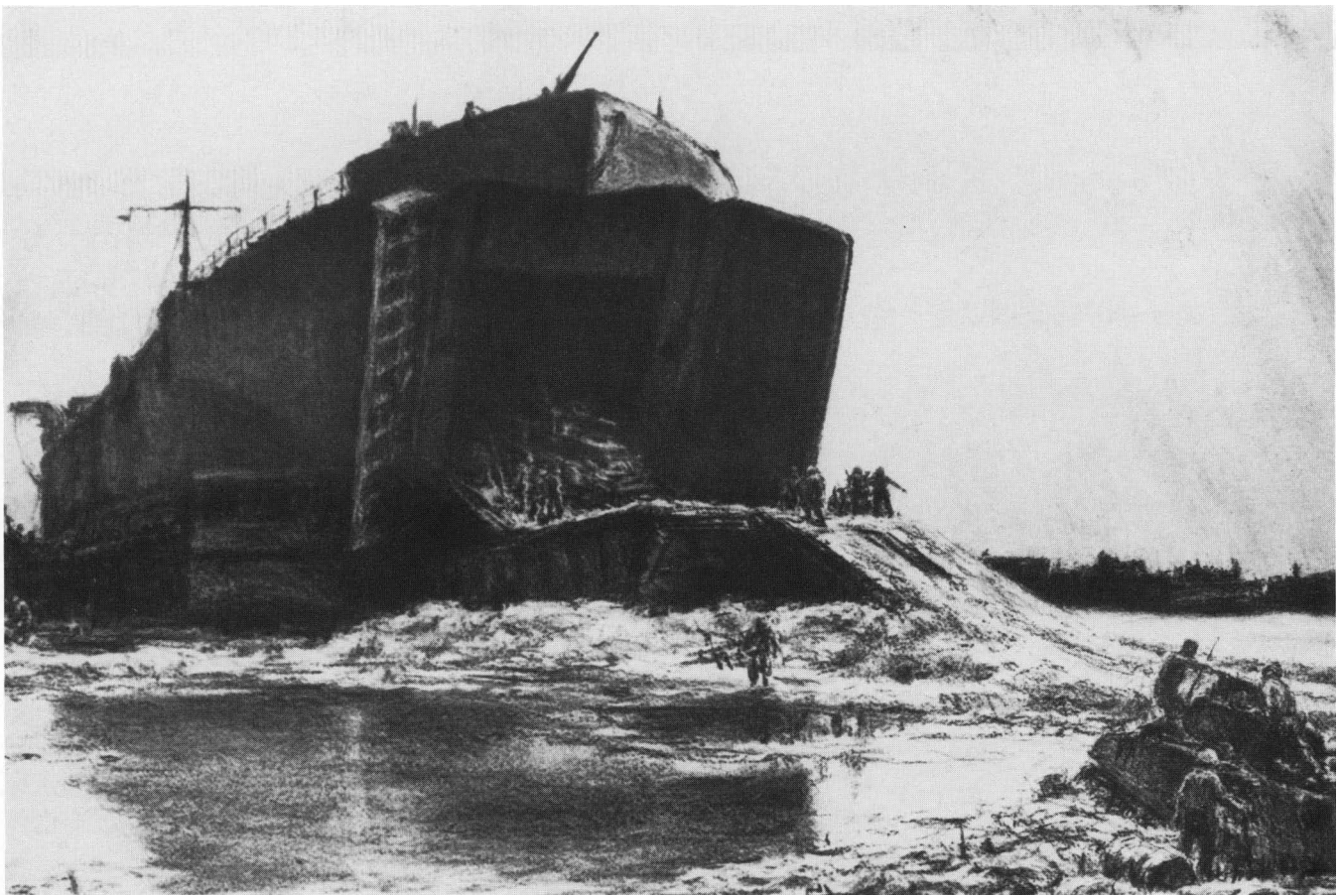
forces, meeting only light resistance. The battalion band soon took out an enemy machine gun position. Major Robert C. Hiatt's reconnaissance party from the artillery group killed another enemy soldier, who was said to have been stripped of souvenirs before hitting the ground. The defenders withdrew inland to harass the Americans from the hills and swamps.

Throughout the day, enemy air attacks were turned back by friendly fighters. Allied fighters over the area on 30 June reportedly destroyed over 100 enemy aircraft. One attack by Japanese float planes got through to strike at the naval task force and damaged Admiral Turner's flagship, USS *McCawley* (AP 10), so heavily that it had to be sunk that night by a PT boat. At 1600, a lone Mitsubishi A6M Zeke fighter strafed the beach without causing any damage and was driven off by defense battalion machine gun fire, without causing damage. Both the *Algorab* and *Libra* were unloaded with the assistance of the 24th Naval Construction Battalion. The 24th, and other Seabee units, supported the 9th in unloading cargo and moving equipment

and contributed materially to the general success of the battalion on those first days and the battalion was "in their debt." On the first day of landing, Battery E of the Antiaircraft Group set up on Kokorana and was prepared to fire by 1645; all Special Weapons Group light antiaircraft guns landed and were emplaced along the coast to protect the XIV Corps' beachhead; sites were located for the 155mm and the remaining 90mm batteries. Battery demolition crews ventured near and into enemy territory to blast out fields of fire for the gun positions.

Weather and terrain made unloading and emplacement extremely difficult for XIV Corps, the 43d Infantry Division, and the 9th Defense Battalion. Torrential rains began on 30 June and continued almost without cessation, rendering what passed for roads impassable and causing great congestion on the beaches as men and supplies came ashore. Areas believed suitable for occupation proved to be swampy. Steel matting and corduroy roads constructed with coconut logs were utilized, but even these were ineffective. Tanks, guns,





Drawing by Kerr Eby, U.S. Navy Combat Art Collection

## The 'Green Dragon' Landing Ship, Tank

**A**mphibious warfare in the Pacific required ships with ocean-going capabilities that could also be "beached" in the course of landing operations. This requirement was met with the design and production of the Landing Ship, Tank (LST) that was used in combat for the first time in the Central Solomons, where it earned its nickname because of a camouflage paint scheme. There were 1,052 LSTs built during World War II for the U.S. Navy, with

minor differences between the various classes. The LSTs had elevators and deck ramps to connect the main deck and tank deck, providing for smaller landing craft to be transported on the main deck, and a conning tower added over the pilot house. They were armed with 40mm and 20mm antiaircraft guns in twin and single mounts. The LSTs displaced 1,653 tons, with a length of 328 feet, a beam of 50 feet, and were driven by General Motor diesels.

and vehicles of all types mired down in the incredible mud and only the sturdiest tractors or manpower extricated them. The congestion of supplies on the beachhead rendered them and the troops moving themselves and the supplies inland vulnerable to enemy air attack.

In many cases, 9th Defense Battalion equipment had to be dismantled and carried to assigned areas. The 9th's motor transport section performed as best it could with the resources available and until the

majority of its vehicles burned out from the strain of operating in the Rendova muck. Their task was made easier by the amphibious tractors, which were the only sure means of transportation and these had troubles of their own as they threw off their tracks on uneven terrain. "Frances," "Tootsie," and "Gladys" were three amphibious tractors in the beach area manned by nine 3d Division Marines who operated continuously keeping supplies moving from position to posi-

tion. All tractors were damaged eventually in the Japanese air attacks that followed.

The 9th Defense Battalion's second echelon arrived on LSTs (Landing Ships Tank) 395 and 354 and disembarked at Rendova on 1 July as Allied fighter cover continued to turn back enemy air attacks. Joseph J. Pratl with Battery A, which came in on LST 354, wrote the ship was "big and slow moving, loaded with ammunition of every description. . . . Unloading was done quickly, 155mm guns



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 60590

*Supplies are landed by XIV Corps for ComAir New Georgia. The terrain behind the beach did not allow for rapid movement and for*

*the dispersal of supplies which soon piled up at an unmanageable rate and became extremely vulnerable to Japanese attack.*

and their tractors soon made mud and made a slime which made walking around difficult to say the least." By the end of the day, Captain Henry H. Reichner's Battery A was in firing position. A third battalion echelon arrived in LSTs 342 and 398 and disembarked on 2 July. That morning Captain Walter C. Well's Battery B was emplaced and Battery A commenced shelling enemy positions in the Munda area. On 3 July, both batteries of "Long Toms" fired for effect on the Munda airfield and enemy artillery positions on Baanga Island. At Munda a defender wrote, "They must be firing like the dickens. Sometimes they all come at once. I don't exactly appreciate this shelling."

The combat experience of the 9th paid dividends, especially during the first week ashore. The Marines knew how to dig in for air attacks and this saved lives. At 1335, 2 July, 18 Mitsubishi G4M Betty bombers and Zeke fighter escorts entered the area from the southwest and pattern-bombed the beachhead, causing considerable damage and many casualties. Zero fighters flew over the beach area at tree-top level, strafing and bombing the beach and landing craft. Gasoline storage tanks



Marine Corps Historical Collection

*Sailors and soldiers make a corduroy road from coconut logs across an exceptionally muddy spot.*

*A 155mm Long Tom is dragged through the mud of Rendova en route to a new position from which it could punish Japanese positions and at the same time defend against Japanese counterattacks.*

Marine Corps Historical Collection







Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 60656

Capt Henry H. Reichner's Battery A loads its Long Toms on an LCT to move to Piru Plantation from Tambusolo Island. These moves were staggered to provide continuous artillery support during this phase and were carried out with speed and efficiency.

and an explosives dump were hit and several fires were started in the area. Battery A's Pratl recounted, "we saw the bombers, we assumed them to be American B-25s. We hit foxholes and the earth shook like a rubber band as three bombs fell" near his battery.

On board a beached landing ship, tank, Francis E. Chadwick, of

Battery B, was hauling ammunition for a Navy 40mm antiaircraft gun when the "LST was showered in water. You could feel the heat from the bombs. The noise was deafening." Army and Navy units suffered the most from lack of preparation and the area around the landing beach became known as "Suicide Point."

Four 9th Defense Battalion men were killed, one was missing, and 22 were wounded as a result of the raid. Damage to the battalion included two 155mm guns hit, two 40mm guns hit, three amphibious tractors hit, one TD18 tractor demolished, and an unknown amount of supplies and personal gear destroyed. One bomb landed between

The Japanese struck back hard at the New Georgia invasion force with bombers and fighters. Allied combat air patrols shot down many of the enemy, but some got through to damage Marine positions on Rendova. This area became known as "Suicide Point" after fuel and explosives dumps were hit during the 2 July 1943 raid.

Marine Corps Historical Collection





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 60624

*Behind a revetment of sandbags and coconut logs, this 9th Defense Battalion crew manning a 90mm anti-aircraft gun keeps a vigilant watch against Japanese air attacks on positions at the beach at Rendova.*

the trail legs of one 155mm gun in Battery A, but failed to detonate. This put the gun out of action until the bomb was excavated, pulled clear, and detonated. That day, the battalion bomb disposal teams successfully removed or destroyed a total of 9 bombs and 65 unexploded projectiles of 105mm or larger (Over 9,000 pieces of smaller enemy or damaged friendly ordnance were recovered by the end of the campaign by these teams). Some light anti-aircraft guns fired at the raiding planes, but downed none. The damage caused by this attack was due in part to the lack of working surveillance radar, and friendly fighter cover had been withdrawn because of weather. The battalion's SCR270 and 516 radars had not yet been installed and the E Battery SCR268 radar had been fueled with diesel from a drum marked "gasoline," putting it out of action at the time of the attack.

Earning special credit during this period were the battalion's attached Navy corpsmen and doctors, who performed their work in the midst of enemy raids and under the most

trying conditions. Besides caring for the 9th's casualties at the battalion aid station set up on the exposed East Beach of Rendova, battalion surgeon Lieutenant Commander Miles C. Krepelas treated many Navy wounded, and Army troops

returning from New Georgia who could not locate their own medical detachments.

Battalion S-4 Major Albert F. Lucas was faced with the extremely difficult task of supplying the widely dispersed elements of the

*Casualties were treated at the 9th Defense Battalion and 43d Infantry Division medical clearing stations. More than 200 Americans were killed or injured during the 2 July raid.*

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 56829





# The 'Long Tom' 155mm M1A1 Gun

The first defense battalions were equipped with naval ordnance designed for shipboard mounting and modified for use ashore, often requiring extensive engineering and manhandling to emplace in static positions. The war soon required the ordnance to be mobile, which was accomplished by adapting Army ordnance material. Obtained first were the standard M1918 GPF 155mm guns. These were followed by the

M1A1 155mm gun employed by defense and corps artillery battalions throughout the war. This piece weighed 30,600 pounds, had a split trail and eight pneumatic tires, was moved by a tractor, and was served by a combined crew of 15 men. It could be pedestal mounted on the so-called "Panama Mount" for its coast-defense mission. It remained in the Marine Corps inventory long after World War II.



Drawing by Kerr Eby, U.S. Navy Combat Art Collection

battalion. Captain Lynn D. Ervin, Battery G commander, remembered that after he landed, working parties from headquarters brought around water and rations to the dispersed firing batteries until they had established their own field kitchens. The preparation and delivery of food required a major effort throughout the campaign because the battalion elements were widely spread out in the target area and the battalion had to feed all other units which did not have their own messing facilities. Hot meals were provided once a day and the artillery group's pastry cook raised

morale by providing doughnuts and other baked goods during some of the more difficult periods.

At this same time, XIV Corps began its Munda drive by moving from Rendova to New Georgia, supported by the Army 136th Field Artillery Battalion and the 9th Defense Battalion. Zanana Beach had been selected for the 43d Infantry Division's landing. The division order stated that the 43d, less the 103d Regimental Combat Team, would "land on New Georgia Island, capture or destroy all enemy encountered, and secure the Munda Airfield." On 3 July, the 172d In-

fantry moved by landing craft to New Georgia, followed the next day by the 169th Infantry. The Munda drive had begun.

The 9th's communications and radar personnel carried on vital installation work and respliced telephone lines as soon as they were damaged in the air raids. The air control and reporting system of the defense battalion and Commander Aircraft New Georgia was installed on 4 July when Condition Red was sounded again. At 1430, the Japanese attempted a repetition of the 2 July raid as 16 Betty bombers and their fighter escort broke through