

## Southward on Tinian<sup>1</sup>

### THE 2D DIVISION GOES ASHORE

The landing of the 2d Division on 25 July was partly accomplished before the 4th Division resumed its advance that morning. The Japanese counter-attack had depleted ammunition stocks and necessitated some reorganization of the Marine units that had been involved; the attack hour was delayed, therefore, from 0700 to 1000.

First to land was the 8th Marines, less its 1st Battalion already on Tinian. A double column of LCVPs carried the men from the transports to the reef off White Beach 1, where they waded the last 100 yards to the shore. The 2d Battalion had landed by 0922, and by 1100, Colonel Clarence R. Wallace's entire regiment was ashore. During

the landings, Japanese mortar and artillery fire, directed from the enemy observation post on Mt. Lasso, plagued the troops and caused some boat damage. American naval gunfire and artillery eventually quieted the enemy guns.

With the remainder of the 8th Marines coming ashore, 1/8 reverted to its parent regiment at 0920. The battalion had begun the day under the control of the 24th Marines, which had ordered it to relieve 1/24 along the coast on the extreme left flank of the beachhead. As the 8th Marines landed, the regiment was attached to the 4th Division and given the northernmost sector of the front.

At noon, after the 8th Marines had cleared the beach, the 2d Marines began landing and by 1755 was bivouacked some 500 yards inland.<sup>2</sup> The 6th Marines completed the loading of personnel and vehicles in LSTs at Saipan on 25 July and moved to the transport area off Tinian, but, except for 2/6, the regiment stayed on board ship until the next day. At 1745 of the 25th, the 2d Battalion was ordered to land on White Beach 2 and, upon moving to an assembly area 700 yards inland, it was detached from the 6th Marines and designated division reserve. General

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from: *TF 51 OpRpt*; *TF 52 OpRpt*; *TF 56 OpRpt*; *NTLF OpRpt*; *NTLF OpOs 31-44 through 37-44*, dtd 24-30Jul44; *NTLF G-2 Periodic Rpt 46, Anx A*, dtd 31Jul44; *NTLF G-3 Periodic Rpts 41-46*, dtd 25-31Jul44; *2d MarDiv OpRpt Tinian*; *2d MarDiv D-2 Periodic Rpts 75-80*, dtd 27-31Jul44; *2d MarDiv D-3 Rpts 72-77*, dtd 25-30Jul44; *2d MarSAR*; *6th Mar SAR*; *8th Mar SAR Tinian*; *4th MarDiv D-2 Periodic Rpts 71-78*, dtd 24-31Jul44; *4th MarDiv Translations (Tinian)*; Chapin, *4th MarDiv in WW II*; Crowl, *The Marianas*; Hoffman, *Tinian*; Isely and Crowl, *Marines and Amphibious War*; Johnston, *Follow Me!*; Morison, *New Guinea and the Marianas*; Proehl, *4th MarDiv History*; Smith and Finch, *Coral and Brass*; Stockman and Carleton, *Campaign for the Marianas*.

<sup>2</sup> Pending the commitment of the 2d Division, it was, except for the 8th Marines, in the status of NTLF reserve.

Watson, commanding the 2d Division, left the *Cavalier*, and at 1600 of 25 July, set up his command post on land. Division armor moved ashore during the evening. The landing of the 2d Tank Battalion had not been rushed; the tanks were not immediately required, and the beach congestion would not permit rapid deployment.

Before nightfall on the 26th, the 2d Division shore party, 2/18, had unloaded from LSTs a two-day reserve of rations, water, hospital supplies, and three units of fire. The work then went on under floodlights as a round-the-clock schedule was begun. On Saipan, the resupply machinery started to function when LCTs, with preloaded trucks and trailers, flowed toward Tinian.

### *THE SECOND DAY OF THE BATTLE*<sup>3</sup>

The objective of the 4th Division on 25 July was the 0-2 Line, which began at a point about 1,200 yards north of White Beach 1; it extended south through the middle of northern Tinian and formed a juncture with the Force Beachhead Line (FBHL), which lay like a relaxed rope below Mt. Lasso, crossing the island east to west. The 0-2 Line had first been mentioned in General Schmidt's operation order for 25 July, when he directed General

Cates to seize the 0-1 Line and then "on division order seize the division 0-2 line and be prepared to seize FBHL on NTLF order."<sup>4</sup> The landing plan had designated but two objectives: the 0-1 Line and the FBHL. (See Map 22.)

The withdrawal of Japanese troops from some areas to a new line, which Colonel Ogata had fixed south of Mt. Lasso, considerably eased the Marines' task on 25 July. The advance of 1/8 up the coast, however, was hindered by coral rocks and thick undergrowth and was not made easier by certain survivors of the counterattack, who harassed the Marines with rifle and machine gun fire from holes and caves. At 1115, a pocket of 20 to 25 well-hidden Japanese briefly checked the advance at a spot where tanks could not operate and where the fire of armored amphibians was not effective.

With the front of the 8th Marines expanding, Colonel Wallace committed the 2d Battalion on the right of 1/8 and ordered it to attack to the east. Units of 2/8 were soon at Airfield No. 1 and found the prized area weakly defended; most of the Japanese had left to join the counterattack of the night before, never to return. The battalion reached the middle of the airfield, and at the end of the day, made contact with 1/24, some 400 yards to the south. Colonel Hart had taken the 1st Battalion out of reserve to cover a gap between 3/24 and the 8th Marines for the night's defense.

The 3d Battalion, 24th Marines, moving out to the east, had reached the 0-2 Line at 1025 with no opposition. The unit then turned south along the

<sup>3</sup> Additional sources for this section include: 1/8 *Rpt Tinian*; 1/24 *Rpt of Ops*, dtd 25Aug44; 2/24 *AR*, dtd 5May45; 2/24 *Narrative Tinian*; 3/24 *AR*, dtd 5May45; 3/24 *Narrative of Tinian Is Op*, dtd 5May45; 1/25 *Rpt on FORAGER, Phase III*, dtd 19Aug44; 3/25 *CbtNarrative of Tinian Op*, n.d.; 2d *TkBn SAR*.

<sup>4</sup> NTLF OpO 31-44, dtd 24Jul44.

objective to support 2/24, which was receiving small arms fire while advancing toward Airfield No. 3. By mid-afternoon, the 2d Battalion was at the 0-2 Line, which crossed the airfield. The strip and the adjoining buildings were found to be abandoned.

At the end of the second day on Tinian, the 24th Marines was in contact with the 25th Marines on the right and the 8th on the left. That night, the Japanese attempted only petty infiltration, but a sharp clash occurred when Marines of a regimental combat outpost near a road junction ambushed an enemy patrol. Manning the outpost was a platoon of the division reconnaissance company, attached to the 24th Marines for the night.

By the evening of 25 July, the 23d Marines had advanced halfway to Faibus San Hilo Point. The 1st Battalion had relieved 2/23, which passed to division reserve, and then moved through cane fields and underbrush against the light opposition of Japanese stragglers from the counterattack. The 0-1 Line was reached at 1637, and a position in advance of it was secured before dark. The 3d Battalion, the regimental reserve which had followed 1/23 during the daylight hours, moved up for the night to relieve left elements of the 1st Battalion.

The hardest fighting on 25 July took place at Mt. Maga and involved the 25th Marines, advancing at the center of the division line.<sup>5</sup> Mt. Maga lay just inside the 0-1 Line and stood astride the path of the regiment.

<sup>5</sup> Battalion action reports referred to Mt. Maga as Hill 440, but a captured Japanese map put its height at 390 feet.

That side of the hill which rose before the advancing Marines was the most precipitous one; Colonel Batchelder saw that a frontal assault would be arduous, and probably costly in Marine lives. He settled, therefore, upon the tactic of a double envelopment, using the 1st Battalion on the left and the 3d Battalion on the right. The 2d Battalion would hold to the front of the hill, delivering suppressive fire upon it.

While the Japanese were retiring from other sections of their defenses, they still clung to Mt. Maga. Marines of 1/25 were able to get safely into position at the foot of the hill, but when they tried to climb the east side, they were opposed immediately by such a hail of rifle and machine gun fire that Lieutenant Colonel Mustain ordered withdrawal. A road to the peak was then discovered, and engineers searched it for mines. When the path had been cleared, tanks made a strike on top of the ridge, but after being unable to locate the well-concealed enemy firing upon them, the vehicles were ordered down from the ridge. A second attempt by 1/25 drew the same violent response as the first, but now the sources were spotted. The battalion commander then employed 81mm mortar fire on the top of the ridge, while tanks fired from the hill base into pillboxes and caves in the face of the cliff. These fires did the trick. At 1200, the infantrymen again started up the hill, encountering much less resistance. Once at the top, however, the Marines received considerable fire from Japanese positions to the front. As there were yet no friendly units either on the right or left, Colonel Batchelder ordered 1/25 to hold up the

attack. At 1330, the enemy succeeded in setting up machine guns and mortars on the open right flank, forcing 1/25 to withdraw 200 yards under this fire. The ground was soon retaken, however, after Marine mortar and machine gun fire, helped by 75mm fire from the tanks, destroyed the Japanese positions. Two hours later, Colonel Hart ordered the 1st Battalion to continue the attack to the right front, encircle Mt. Maga, and join forces with the 3d Battalion before digging in for the night.

As 3/25 had started along its envelopment route, the movement was delayed by enemy fire from the hill, causing Lieutenant Colonel Chambers to order tanks and combat engineers forward of the leading Company L. The fire by the tanks, added to the work of flamethrowers, bazookas, and demolitions employed by the engineers, appreciably lessened the resistance; another delay ensued, however, while 3/25 waited for restoration of contact with the approaching 23d Marines. During the hold-up, the battalion commander requested naval and artillery gunfire upon the west slope of Mt. Maga. Under such cover, combat patrols destroyed three unmanned 47mm guns near the foot of the hill.

When the 23d Marines came abreast, Chambers ordered resumption of the attack, and by 1600, all companies of 3/25 reported being at the top, where they established contact with 1/25. The 0-1 Line in the center of the division perimeter was secured by 1715. After dark, a few bypassed Japanese attempted vainly to get through the Marine lines. The mop up of the Mt. Maga area was left to 2/25, which

finished the task by noon the next day, when the battalion was put into regimental reserve.

Casualties in the assault of Mt. Maga had been light, but a tragic toll resulted elsewhere on 25 July, when at 0920, a Japanese 75mm shell exploded on the tent pole of the Fire Direction Center, 1st Battalion, 14th Marines. The battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Harry J. Zimmer, was killed, as were the intelligence officer, the operations officer, and seven assistants. Fourteen other members of the battalion headquarters were wounded. Major Clifford B. Drake, the executive officer, assumed command.

During the same morning, enemy artillery fire was laid upon the pier, under construction by Seabees, at White Beach 2, causing several casualties there. As the shells were believed to be coming from Mt. Lasso, the 14th Marines directed counterbattery fire at caves in the face of the hill. During the afternoon, however, the Japanese guns were again active for a few minutes, setting fire to one DUKW and causing more casualties among men at the beach. An air strike that morning had supposedly destroyed two guns at the base of Mt. Lasso, and fire support ships had been directed to search for and silence Japanese guns in the vicinity. It was evident, however, that some well-concealed weapons had escaped the best efforts to destroy them.

Japanese power in the Mt. Lasso area, both of guns and men, was hard to measure. At a point 1,000 yards northwest of the hill, Marine air spotters saw a force, reported of battalion size, moving south. The 14th Marines took the enemy under fire, reducing the

force by an estimated 25 percent; the rest of the enemy scattered into the cane fields where hiding was easy. The evasive Japanese soldier and the well-hidden gun would continue to be obstinate threats on Tinian. At the end of the second day, however, the Marines' attack was proceeding beyond expectations.

#### *PREPARING TO DRIVE SOUTH*

General Schmidt's operation order for 26 July took note of a rapidly changing picture. Although the southern half of the 0-2 Line and the entire FBHL had not been reached, the Marine commander omitted both objectives from the order. Instead, he spoke of 0-3 and 0-4 for the first time. He drew the 0-3 Line from the shore 1,000 yards south of Faibus San Hilo Point to the coast at a nearly equal distance north of Asiga Point. The line almost converged with 0-4 on the west, but the two lines diverged increasingly toward the east, finally becoming nearly 5,000 yards apart. General Schmidt put the 0-3 Line across the width of the island because it appeared that the 2d Division would reach the east coast with relative ease. After that, the two Marine divisions would be in position for the sweep to the south. The FBHL stretched across the island between 0-3 and 0-4, but the beachhead line was now omitted as being incompatible with a change of tactics then being considered at General Schmidt's headquarters. On 26 July, the 4th Division was to move toward Mt. Lasso, encompassed by 0-4A. The 2d Division, leaving NTLF reserve, would take over the left

sector of the front, advance east to the coast, and envelop Airfield No. 1 in the process. (See Map 22.)

Prior to the attack hour of 0800, General Watson regained control of those of his units which had been under 4th Division control. The 1st and 3d Battalions, 6th Marines had begun landing at 0630 over White Beach 2 and were moving inland to an assembly area to await attack orders. Over the same beach, during the morning, the 2d Tank Battalion completed landing, and its elements went up to positions from which the battalion could support the 2d Division attack.

General Watson's 1st and 2d Battalions, 2d Marines relieved 1/24 and 3/24 as the battle for Tinian went into the third day. The two battalions of Colonel Hart's regiment were put into division reserve, but 1/24 was designated at a later hour as NTLF reserve. The 2d Battalion, 24th Marines was attached to the 25th Marines and committed to the left flank of that regiment to maintain contact with the 2d Division. To the right of the 25th Marines was the 23d, ready to push further down the west coast. On the left of the front, the 8th Marines waited to bring Airfield No. 1 entirely into American hands for early use.

The pace of the advance on the morning of 26 July led General Schmidt to amend his operation order shortly before noon. Instead of requiring that the division commanders wait for NTLF orders before advancing to the 0-4 Line, he permitted them to continue south of the 0-3 Line at their own discretion.

The 8th Marines crossed Airfield No. 1 on 26 July, finding it abandoned, wet,

and cluttered with Japanese planes wrecked on the ground by the American bombardment. The adjoining village, which housed airfield personnel, was likewise deserted. The Marines left the airstrip to the 121st Naval Construction Battalion, and after just a few hours of clean up and repair, the Seabees had the field usable for small observation planes. Two days later, on 28 July, the first P-47 landed and took off from airfield No. 1 with no difficulty.

In the rapid advance of 26 July, Colonel Wallace had his assault battalions, the 1st and 2d, followed by 3/8, on the east coast at the 0-3 Line at 1140. That afternoon, the 8th Marines became division reserve. The next day, 27 July, the regiment took up position as NTLF reserve, but the 2d Battalion continued in division reserve the 8th Marines, Colonel Stuart took the 2d Marines to the east coast by 1230 on 26 July, at which time he realigned his regiment to begin the attack southward.

On the right of the corps front, the 23d Marines was at the 0-3 Line by 1200, despite thick cane fields and densely wooded areas along the coast. Once at the 0-3, Colonel Jones pushed on to a point well below Faibus San Hilo. His 2d Battalion was relieved from division reserve and mopped up the rear areas as the attack progressed. The resistance encountered by the 23d Marines was not heavy; it consisted mostly of isolated machine guns or individual riflemen employing hand grenades.

For the 25th Marines, Mt. Lasso was the chief objective on 26 July. As the

1st and 3d Battalions moved out from the Mt. Maga area, they expected considerable resistance on the higher hill, whose steep approaches made it a better citadel than Mt. Maga. Moreover, Colonel Ogata's command post had been set up on Mt. Lasso, and the guns on the hill had been effectively employed since J-Day. To the Marines' surprise, however, they were able to occupy Mt. Lasso without opposition; the enemy had pulled out during the night.<sup>6</sup>

While 1/25 climbed Mt. Lasso, the 3d Battalion, on the right, gained the 0-4A Line which circled around the hill. Lieutenant Colonel Chambers requested permission to advance to the 0-4 Line, some 1,000 yards farther south, but the regimental commander felt that a contact problem would result. The 3d Battalion 0-4A sector lay in a depression commanded by enemy positions visible on the 0-4 ridge, so the unit was pulled back 450 yards to a more favorable location. As the 1st Battalion dug in for the night, the men put a ring of defense around the summit of Mt. Lasso.

With the advance to Mt. Lasso, the Marines on Tinian had begun to outdistance the support of artillery on Saipan. Consequently, on 26 July, the 3d Battalion, 14th Marines moved across to Tinian where it was assigned the mission of general support. The 105mm howitzers of the battalion were the first artillery heavier than 75mm to land on Tinian. The next day, 3/14 was followed ashore by the 3d

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<sup>6</sup> A Japanese POW said that Colonel Ogata switched his command post from Mt. Lasso to a cave about two miles northeast of Tinian Town.

and 4th Battalions of the 10th Marines and the 4th 105mm Artillery Battalion, VAC.<sup>7</sup> Colonel Raphael Griffin of the 10th Marines set up his command post on Tinian, signifying the break up of Groupment A of the Corps Artillery which he had commanded on Saipan. As the colonel's regimental units landed on Tinian, they reverted at once to control of the 2d Division.

Movement of Corps Artillery 155mm howitzers from Saipan was begun on 27 July, and the next day the first of these guns began firing from Tinian positions. General Harper, commanding XXIV Corps Artillery, moved his headquarters to Tinian on the same day, leaving on Saipan only the long-range 155mm guns which could reach any part of Tinian. The increasing abundance of Marine and Army artillery on the island was reflected in the complaint of one Japanese POW: "You couldn't drop a stick," he said, "without bringing down artillery."<sup>8</sup>

As the Japanese withdrew under the pressure by Marine infantry, who were now supported by intensified artillery fire, any repetition of the initial enemy counterattack seemed most unlikely. Yet, on the night of 26-27 July, there were attempts to get through the lines of Lieutenant Colonel Richard C. Nutting's 2d Battalion, 2d Marines from both the front and rear. While enemy troops probed and poked along the entire battalion front, other Japanese, presumably some that had been bypassed, tried to break through the Ma-

rine rear areas, evidently hoping to get back to their units. A party of about 60 such Japanese, armed with a light machine gun and grenades, fell upon Company F from the rear and was destroyed. The enemy's activity cost him 137 dead, while the Marine battalion suffered 2 men killed and 2 wounded.

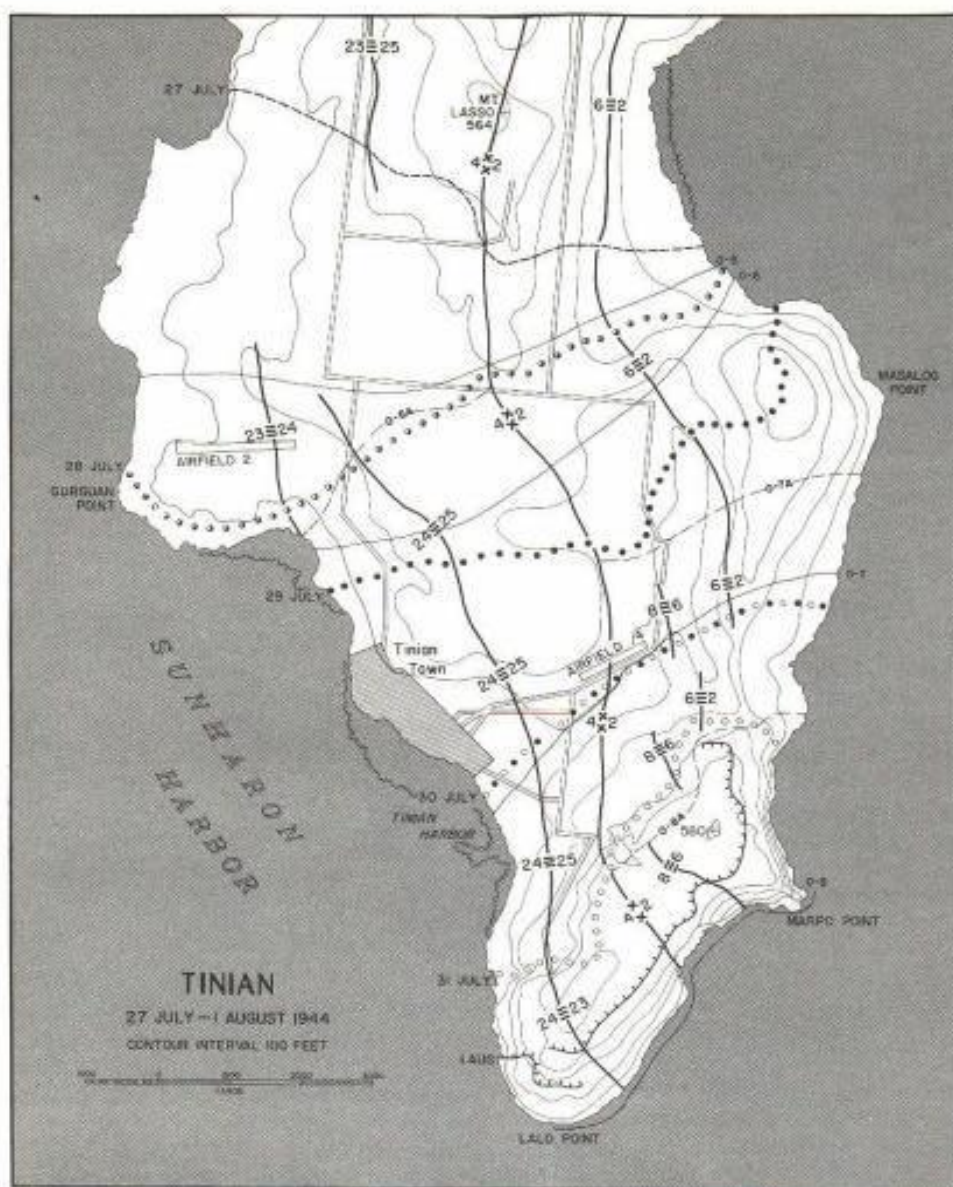
Despite the incident involving 2/2, the withdrawal of the enemy was becoming obvious. Marine patrols lost contact, so rapidly were the Japanese pulling back before the American advance. General Schmidt had his troops well forward, and the two Marine divisions were now spread across the width of the island.

After appraising the situation on 26 July, the NTLF commander decided to use elbowing tactics. In other words, he would not employ both divisions equally each day, but instead, would charge just one division with the main effort while the other made the secondary attack. On the following day, the roles would be switched; it would be like a man elbowing his way through a crowd.

By adopting such tactics, General Schmidt could put the bulk of the artillery support behind a single division. Each was to have a different attack hour; that is, the division chiefly involved that day would jump off at 0700 or 0730, while the other waited until 1000 to attack. The 0-4 Line lay much farther from the 0-3 on the east than on the west, so General Schmidt picked the 2d Division to receive the strongest support the next day. Then, looking ahead to 28 July, he drew the 0-5 Line farther from the 0-4 on the west than on the east, permitting a shift of em-

<sup>7</sup> The 4th 105mm Artillery Battalion, VAC, was referred to in 14th Marines reports as 5/14, its original designation.

<sup>8</sup> *4th MarDiv Translations (Tinian)*.



MAP 23

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phasis to the 4th Division. Two days of elbowing tactics would be tried. After that, plans would have to be reviewed against the situation. (See Map 23.)

27-28 JULY—"MAGNIFICENT WORK" <sup>a</sup>

At 0730 on 27 July, General Watson moved out to the attack, employing the 2d Marines on the left, along the east coast, and the 6th Marines on the right. The advance lay mostly across rolling farm country, marked by cane fields and patches of woods. Only scattered rifle and machine gun fire was encountered, and by 1345 the two assault regiments were at the 0-4 Line. The 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, on the extreme left, had moved 4,000 yards along the coast of Asiga Bay. Marines then sent patrols forward about 500 yards; only five Japanese were found by a patrol from 2/2. The strong positions near Asiga Bay had been abandoned without a fight, thanks considerably to naval gunfire. Just the day before, the battleship *Tennessee* had demolished a blockhouse by main battery fire.

In the 4th Division zone on 27 July, the 23d Marines continued the attack at 0950, and meeting no enemy resistance, was at the 0-4 Line an hour later. Both the 1st and 3d Battalions then sent patrols up to 1,000 yards forward of the line, but none of them reported enemy activity, and the regiment consolidated positions on 0-4 for the night.

<sup>a</sup> General Holland Smith departed for Guam at 1800 on 28 July. Before leaving, he sent a message to General Schmidt: "Magnificent work. Keep the heat on." NTLF G-3 OpDisps 27-29Jul44.

To the left, along the division boundary, the 25th Marines had moved out at 1000, with 2/25 following the assault battalions at 500 yards. Opposition was negligible, and the 0-4 Line was gained by 1200. The progress of the 2d Division during the day closed the previously existing gap on the 4th Division left flank, so 2/24 was pinched out and moved into regimental reserve, still attached to the 25th Marines.

It was planned to bring the 24th Marines back into the lines on 28 July, and with a view to that, General Cates took 3/24 out of division reserve. The 1st Battalion was returned from NTLF reserve to its parent regiment. At 1800 of 28 July, 2/24 was detached from the 25th Marines and replaced 1/24 in the corps reserve. Lieutenant Colonel Richard Rothwell, the regularly assigned commander of 2/24, had been able to rejoin his battalion, relieving Major Garretson, on 27 July, after being in the hospital during the first three days of the campaign.

Scarcity of opposition to the 4th Division advance on 28 July—the 0-5 Line was reached by 1250—made it unnecessary to use any unit of the 24th Marines that morning. Not until 1300 was the regiment put into attack position between the 23d and 25th Marines, and it was then utilized because the island expands to its widest where the 0-5 Line was located. About two miles south of the line, however, a bay cuts into the coast, narrowing the island. Here was where General Cates desired to end the day's advance, at a shorter and more defensible line, and he received permission to go beyond 0-5 to a line he designated 0-6A.

After naval gunfire and artillery pre-

pared the forward area, the 24th Marines moved out at 1325, initially in a column of battalions with 1/24 in assault. As the advance progressed, 3/24 was put into the expected gap that developed between the 24th and 25th Marines.

With resistance light, 0-6A was reached at 1730, when the 23d Marines, pinched out by the bay indentation, reverted to division reserve. The regiment had moved 7,300 yards on 28 July; the spectacular advance was "accomplished in blitz fashion," said the regimental report, "with troops riding on tanks and in half-tracks."<sup>10</sup> Progress of the regiment beyond the 0-5 Line had enveloped Airfield No. 2 near Gurguan Point. The field was secured at 1420 against ineffective fire from Japanese small arms and light automatic weapons.

Throughout the day, the armor of the 4th Tank Battalion had led the attack, demolishing cane stalks and other tropical vegetation to gain the infantry fields of fire. At such work the medium tanks were joined by flame tanks. The fast-moving Marine infantry set a merry pace for both armor and artillery. Units of the 14th Marines had to displace frequently to avoid getting out of range.

The 2d Division jumped off at 1024 on 28 July. The 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, which the day before had advanced 4,000 yards, now found itself restrained by division to a gain of only 350 yards, the distance from 0-4 to 0-5. With 2/8 attached for the day, the 2d Marines reached the 0-5 Line

at 1130, just an hour after moving out. Patrols roved 500 yards forward of the line and encountered no Japanese, but the regiment was kept at 0-5 for the night. At 1730, 2/8 was returned to its parent regiment, when the 8th Marines, less its 3d Battalion retained in NTLF reserve, became division reserve. The 6th Marines, which had more ground to cover than did the 2d Marines, reached the 0-5 Line by early afternoon. Both regiments dug in at 0-5 and reported minimum enemy activity that night: two Japanese soldiers tried to infiltrate the perimeter of the 2d Marines, and two small enemy patrols were discovered in cane fields near the 6th Marines.

#### LOGISTICS VERSUS WEATHER

Progress on Tinian had been all that could be wished; more than half of the island was already in American hands. It seemed too much to expect that the weather would likewise stay favorable. In fact, Admiral Hill had originally been hopeful of no more than three days of relatively quiet sea.

On the afternoon of 28 July, the period of moderate wind and rain suddenly ended. The Marianas felt the edge of a typhoon born in the Philippine Sea, and the storm caused such heavy swells off the White Beaches that unloading had to be suspended at 1800. The next day, the whipping winds prevented unloading except by LVTs and DUKWs; then, at last, by the amphibian trucks alone.

An LST ventured to dock at the pier on White 2; it debarked 24 loaded trucks with their drivers and took on a number of casualties. While retract-

<sup>10</sup> 23d Mar SAR, Anx H, p. 23, to 4th Mar-Div OpRpt Tinian.

ing, however, the ship was seized by a squall and broached, then ran hard aground on the reef. The casualties were transferred to another ship, but all efforts to refloat *LST 340* proved unsuccessful. The same squall washed a control craft, *LCC 25473*, onto the reef north of White Beach 1, where it was salvaged the next day.

The causeways at each of the beaches held until the night of 29 July. Then the pier at White 1 broached when the anchor chains parted, and the pier at White 2 split. The causeway at the smaller beach was restored by the evening of 31 July, but it was then broached for a second time by the heavy surf.<sup>11</sup>

The entire burden of unloading could not be put upon the DUKWs, efficient as they were, and besides, Admiral Hill did not propose to do that. He had foreseen and prepared for a change in the weather. Plans included the readying of approximately 30 tons of varied supplies for delivery by parachute drop. Moreover, the admiral called forward a previously alerted Army Air Forces squadron of cargo aircraft at Eniwetok to supplement the planes available on Saipan for transporting supplies to Tinian.

On 29 July, the 9th Troop Carrier Squadron at Eniwetok sent its C-47s (Douglas Skytrains) to support the emergency air-supply plan for Tinian.<sup>12</sup>

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<sup>11</sup> The wrecking of these piers prevented the landing of the 4th Battalion, 14th Marines, which was kept on board the *Cambria* until 1 August. The unit then landed over the beaches at Tinian Town.

<sup>12</sup> The two-engine C-47, known as the R4D by the Navy and Marine Corps, was the aerial

Except for a few other priority items, only rations were actually delivered by air; on 31 July, approximately 33,000 (99,000 meals) were flown to Tinian. On the way back, the planes carried wounded men to Saipan. The 30 tons of parachute drop material, while valuable emergency resources, were never needed on Tinian.

By 28 July, the day when the good weather ended, supply requirements on Tinian consisted only of rations, ammunition, and fuel. A fourth indispensable, water, was never a problem; Marines were well taken care of by their initial supply and by the output of engineer distillation units, which at the beginning of the campaign, used a small lake near the White Beaches. As to rations, a reserve supply of approximately two days was kept undiminished, thanks partly to the airlift. The demands for ammunition rose with the flow of artillery ashore, but here again no shortages were suffered. Two ammunition ships, the *Rockland Victory*, which arrived on 26 July, and the *Sea Witch*, which anchored on the 27th, remained off shore until the island was secured, and DUKWs shuttled back and forth to keep the guns firing.

The only near supply shortage occurred in the matter of fuel. Here, the rapid advance of the Marines stepped up the estimated requirement of 400 drums a day. Beginning 27 July, a daily supply of 600 to 800 drums of fuel was provided via pontoon barge, from which the oil would be delivered to the dumps by amphibian tractors. A satis-

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workhorse of World War II, useful for transporting either soldiers or cargo.

factory reserve had not been built up on shore before the weather reverse made further unloading into the tractors too risky. Only the DUKWs could then be relied upon; so, in addition to their other chores, the tough amphibian trucks undertook the transporting of fuel. Their service, coupled with the fact that much gasoline was captured from the Japanese, averted a major fuel shortage on Tinian.<sup>13</sup> Delivery of fuel by air, though contemplated, did not become necessary.

#### *PROGRESS ON 29 JULY*

The logistics of the Tinian campaign were spared the complication of a pressing enemy. Until the withdrawing Japanese made a stand beside their comrades in southern Tinian, the path was devoid of collective opposition. General Schmidt, who moved his headquarters to Tinian on 28 July, desired to put no restraints upon his fast-moving Marines. Let the advance be as rapid as practical—such was the essence of the orders for 29 July. The elbowing technique was abandoned; both divisions would again move out at the same time, 0700, and their commanders, after seizing the 0-6 Line, could advance to the 0-7 Line as they saw fit. The usual preparatory fires were not to be delivered on the morning of 29 July. It seemed idle to draw upon the depleted supply of artillery shells left on Saipan, or waste naval gunfire on areas largely deserted by the enemy.

General Watson did not expect to

gain the 0-7 Line on the 29th because of the distance involved; 0-7 lay nearly 5,000 yards forward of the 2d Division line of departure. Instead, he fixed an intermediate 0-7A Line, 3,000 yards away. The 2d Marines and the 6th Marines both reached the 0-6 Line about 0800 with no difficulty; after that, however, fire was received periodically along the entire division front. Local resistance developed near the east coast when the 1st Battalion, 2d Marines, on the regimental left, approached a 340-foot hill on Masalog Point and was met by machine gun and mortar fire. In the center, 2/2 made good progress, and the same was true for 2/8, which had been again attached to the 2d Marines on 29 July.<sup>14</sup> Such relatively easy advances put those two units a few hundred yards past the 1st Battalion, prompting Colonel Stuart to bring up two companies of his reserve 3d Battalion to attack the Masalog Point elevation from the right. The companies moved through the area cleared by 2/2 and 2/8. By 1715, much of the high ground had been taken by the 2d Marines, and the entire capture of it was left to 3/2 for the next morning. The regiment dug in between 0-6 and 0-7A. The day's advance had been mostly across thick cane fields; Colonel Stuart reported a number of casualties from heat exhaustion.

Resistance to the advance of the 6th Marines on 29 July was erratic, as enemy groups kept up a constant fire from machine guns and mortars but fell back whenever units of the assault

<sup>13</sup> The 8th Marines, for example, captured 1,600 gallons of Japanese gasoline, 90 octane.

<sup>14</sup> 3/8 continued in NTLF reserve and 1/8 in division reserve.

battalions, 1/6 and 3/6, deployed to attack. By 1500, the regiment was on line just short of 0-7A but on the commanding ground of the area, so no further advance was attempted that day. During the night, a patrol of 20 Japanese tried to break into the lines of the 6th Marines; otherwise, there was no enemy activity.

To the right of the 2d Division, the advance of the 25th Marines lay across dense cane fields which impeded progress, especially when crossed diagonally. As the Marines pushed through, in the heat of the day, units had difficulty keeping contact. Scattered nests of Japanese, well-hidden in the fields, harassed the advance with rifle fire and occasional machine gun fire. Still, the 3d Battalion reached the 0-6 Line at 1030, and the 1st Battalion was there shortly after.

The 25th Marines chief encounter with the enemy on 29 July occurred after the 3d Battalion had gained 0-6 and been ordered to continue the attack. While moving along an unimproved road, Marines of the battalion came upon a number of well-dug-in Japanese, and a heavy firefight ensued, resulting in several Marine casualties before the resistance was overcome. The tanks supporting 3/25 were involved in the fight, and one light tank was knocked out by a mine. The crew was evacuated with one casualty.

Near the west coast, the 24th Marines reported no opposition before passing the 0-6 Line at 0900 on 29 July. Then the 1st Battalion, on the regimental right, encountered an enemy strongpoint, consisting of a series of mutually-supporting bunkers. They were believed to be defensive works

meant to oppose a landing at Tinian Town. It took a tank-infantry assault to destroy the resistance offered by rifle fire and crossfire from automatic weapons. Company B, 4th Tank Battalion reported that the area "had to be overrun twice by tanks."<sup>15</sup> By 1300, the Marines of 1/24 were again able to move freely. The 3d Battalion had preserved contact with the 25th Marines, and when the 24th Marines halted for the day, at 1525, a company of the regimental reserve, 2/24, moved into a gap which had developed between 1/24 and 3/24.<sup>16</sup> The 23d Marines (less 2/23) continued in division reserve; to keep up with the assault regiments, it had displaced twice during the day.

As the Marines of the 4th Division dug in for the night on 29 July, some of them could see Tinian Town from their foxholes and gun emplacements. The town and Airfield No. 4 lay inside the 0-7 Line. East of Tinian Town, a valley stretched across the island. Cheerful prospects of the campaign ending were dampened, however, by a night of heavy rain which soaked everything from the ground up. Added to this unpleasantness was incessant enemy artillery and mortar fire, which kept Marine gunners replying throughout the wet and dark hours. In front of 3/25, the rustling sounds of enemy movement were heard and silenced. The next morning, 41 Japanese dead were found, victims chiefly of Marine mortar fire.

<sup>15</sup> 4th TkBn Rpt, Encl B, p. 3 to 4th MarDiv OpRpt Tinian.

<sup>16</sup> 2/24 had reverted to regimental control at 0600 of 29 July, being relieved as NTLF reserve by 2/23.

### 30 JULY—TINIAN TOWN AND BEYOND

Inasmuch as 0-7 still lay ahead, General Schmidt had fixed no additional objective line for 30 July; he ordered simply that the divisions continue operations to complete the mission assigned. He set H-Hour at 0700 but moved it later to 0745, following a request from the 25th Marines. Colonel Batchelder had asked a delay to 1000 to permit the men time to clean and service weapons.

Preparatory artillery fire, omitted the day before, was resumed on the morning of 30 July. All battalions of the 14th Marines took part, opening 10 minutes of fire at 0735 and shelling areas just ahead of the Marine front lines. Then, at 0800, the gunners delivered five minutes of fire, lifting it to areas 400 yards farther out.

Two destroyers were assigned a preparation fire mission on the slopes just south of Sunharon Harbor from 0745 to 0845, and a cruiser was assigned to 1/24 to deliver preparatory fires in support of the attack on Tinian Town. By 1100 of 30 July, however, as Admiral Hill reported, the Marines "had advanced so rapidly that only four square miles of the island remained for safe firing by ships not supporting battalions (i.e., not with shore spotter)." <sup>17</sup>

For the 4th Division—specifically, the 24th Marines—Tinian Town was a significant objective on 30 July. For the Japanese, the coming of the Marines by land to the area where they had first been expected by sea must

have been a regretful event; against it they could summon only a shadow of the resistance once available. Indeed, the only tangible opposition to the 24th Marines as the regiment approached Tinian Town came not from the area itself but from caves along the coast north of the town, where Japanese machine gunners and riflemen were holed up. The 1st Battalion, 24th Marines had progressed about 600 yards from its line of departure when the left flank was stopped by enfilade fire. The resistance was overcome with the help of tanks and of armored amphibians offshore. Flame tanks seared the caves, and following that, combat engineers employed demolitions. It was the approach that had become a Marine classic, and it was extremely effective. In one cave the Marines destroyed a 75mm gun sighted toward Tinian Town.

At 1000, Colonel Hart committed his reserve 2d Battalion in a column of companies, between 1/24 and 3/24, in the vicinity of the cliff line. When 1/24 resumed the advance at 1100, the 2d Battalion was assigned to follow the attack. The 3d Battalion, ordered to preserve contact on the left with the 25th Marines, advanced rapidly; in fact it got so well forward that it stretched the battalion lines, causing a temporary gap inside the unit.

At 1420, the 24th Marines reached Tinian Town, to find it virtually leveled by the American bombardment and almost entirely deserted—the population had left, and only one Japanese soldier was discovered. By 1700, Marine infantrymen had thoroughly combed the ruins and gone on to occupy the 0-7 Line south of the town. The

<sup>17</sup> *TF 52 OpRpt*, Pt VI, p. 78.

only enemy fire received came, it was believed, from tanks in the distance and caused no harm. Enemy emplacements in the town had been evacuated as useless, for the guns were trained to repel an attack from the Tinian Town beaches. Nearby, there were also some deserted emplacements and abandoned caves. In the streets of the town, the Japanese had left barriers, such as log barricades or timber cribs filled with stones, but none of these obstacles was sufficient to stop a medium tank.

Where the peril lay for the Marines was in the mines which the Japanese had planted. From the Tinian Town area, the engineers removed a new type of antipersonnel mine. It consisted of a wooden box containing 10 to 12 pounds of dynamite. A pressure type of igniter required an estimated pressure of 200 pounds, while a companion pull type seemed explosive with just 8 pounds of pull. The enemy had also conceived a device to make the beach mines more dangerous. Some of the horned mines—78 were removed from the Red Beach alone—were joined by rods about 20 feet in length fastened to the horns. Pressure applied by a vehicle to any part of the rods could theoretically detonate two or three of the mines simultaneously.

While the 24th Marines found Tinian Town deserted, the 25th Marines beheld the same forlorn scene at Airfield No. 4, though enemy mortar fire from beyond it was received as the Marines pushed across the strip, gaining the 0-7 Line at 1430. Prior to reaching the airfield, the Marines had met little else but scattered enemy sniper fire. The area of advance was dotted with

concrete dugouts and emplacements but few Japanese.

The strip surface of Airfield No. 4 consisted of rolled coral, pocked with holes from artillery hits but repairable. Marines reported finding one small Zero-type plane. In a supply room, the Japanese had left some flying suits, helmets, and goggles. The field was still under construction; prisoners said that until the Marines came, it was being rushed to completion upon orders from Tokyo, to bring help by air. Such rumors gave enemy morale a needed lift.

The seizure of the Tinian Town airfield marked the last battle action of the 25th Marines on the island. The regiment, less its 3d Battalion assigned to division reserve, was put into NTLF reserve and continued there for the rest of the campaign. The 23d Marines relieved elements of the 25th Marines on the 0-7 Line at 1600 of 30 July; 3/23 reverted from NTLF reserve to its parent regiment.<sup>18</sup> The 1st Battalion, 25th Marines was relieved by 1/8 at 1800, shifting the division boundary.

On 30 July, the 2d Division had encountered fitful opposition, sometimes amazingly strong, which the Japanese offered as their hold on the island slipped away. Shortly before the attack hour, a 1/2 patrol, pinned down only 500 yards from the front lines by enemy machine gun fire, was rescued by a platoon of tanks. The offending strongpoint was destroyed by Marine artillery, removing it from the path of the battalion, which then moved rapidly

<sup>18</sup> 3/23 had relieved 2/23 as NTLF reserve at 1000 of 30 July.

south along the coast below Masalog Point.

A task for 3/2 that had been left unfinished on 29 July was the capture of the Masalog Point high ground, but most of the Japanese there had withdrawn under cover of darkness, and the Marines gained the objective early on 30 July. The battalion then hastened to catch up with 1/2 on its left. The advance of 3/2 was briefly delayed by a Japanese 70mm howitzer, which was destroyed by a combat patrol. At 1345, the 2d Marines reached the 0-7 Line. The 2d Battalion was then detached and designated as NTLF reserve, relieving 3/8. The attached 2/8 had been pinched out before noon, so both battalions of the 8th Marines were back with their parent regiment, whose 1st Battalion, however, was still in division reserve.

At 1700, after the 2d Marines dug in for the night along the 0-7 Line, the 3d Battalion began to receive enemy machine gun and mortar fire from caves in the cliffs to its rear. The positions were reduced by flamethrowers and demolitions prior to darkness. The night was quiet except for some movement to the front of 3/2, apparently from small groups of the enemy digging in caves. The Japanese attempted no fire upon the Marine positions.

The advance of the 6th Marines was mostly uneventful on 30 July. By 1245, the 1st Battalion, on the right, had reached the 0-7 Line. The 3d Battalion, however, received fire from a Japanese field piece which caused a brief delay. A combat patrol sent out to locate it was unsuccessful, but the

weapon did become silent; it was probably the 70mm howitzer which Marines of 3/2 had knocked out. At 1604, 3/6 reported its position on the 0-7 Line. The 2d Battalion had been detached at 1345 when General Watson ordered it into division reserve. The 3d Battalion, 8th Marines relieved 1/6, which then went into regimental reserve. By 1830, the 8th Marines, with its 2d Battalion as regimental reserve, was in position and wired in for the night, relieving extreme left elements of the 4th Division and the rightmost elements of the 6th Marines.

### THE FIGHT STILL AHEAD

The commitment of additional 2d Division troops took care of a widening in the division front, as General Schmidt prepared the concluding moves of the campaign. His operation order issued at 1730 on 30 July was more detailed than usual, and it had a single purpose—"to annihilate the opposing Japanese," now cornered in southern Tinian.<sup>19</sup> The two divisions, jumping off at 0830, were to seize 0-8, the southeast coastline between Lalo Point and Marpo Point.

Preparatory naval gunfire of exceptional intensity was scheduled to begin at 0600; assigned to deliver the goods were the battleships *California* and *Tennessee*, the heavy cruiser *Louisville*, and the light cruisers *Birmingham* and *Montpelier*. At 0710, the ships would cease firing for a period of 40 minutes, to permit a bombardment by 126 air-

<sup>19</sup> NTLF OpO 37-44, dtd 30Jul44.



craft.<sup>20</sup> Corps and division artillery were to step up their fires of the previous night. Once the Marines moved to the attack, all three supporting arms would be on call.

There were good reasons, indeed, for General Schmidt's cautious preparations. In the first place, the Japanese would be making their last desperate stand on Tinian, and experience indicated that it would be a very tough one. Marines speculated on whether the enemy would wait concealed, to exact a high price for the last one-fifth of the island, or stage a counterattack in a final *banzai*, the most likely tactic. A third but lesser possibility was a mass suicide by the enemy, using ammunition dumps and hoping to take some of the Marines with them.

According to a 4th Division intelligence report of 7 August,<sup>21</sup> based upon interrogation of Japanese prisoners, Colonel Ogata issued his last order on 29 July, directing Army and Navy units to assemble in the wooded ridges of southern Tinian, to make their last stand. It was to that area below Tinian Town that the Japanese commander moved his CP the same day. Captain Oya, supposedly, issued his own orders to the naval troops; they were to defend the high ground of southeast Tinian. A rumor among Oya's men was that their commander had received a radio message from

Tokyo on 29 July, advising that the Imperial Fleet was en route.

The Battle of the Philippine Sea, a month before, had rendered such help most illusory, for with its air arm destroyed, the Japanese fleet was crippled. Nevertheless, there were enough enemy troops left on Tinian to keep the Marines from undue optimism. A Japanese warrant officer of the *56th Naval Guard Force*, captured on 29 July, said there were about 500 troops left in that force. He believed the *50th Infantry Regiment* still had 1,700 to 1,800 men. Marines had met elements of the *50th*, but as the 4th Division D-2 emphasized, there was "no concrete evidence" that the regiment "has been committed in force."<sup>22</sup>

Another reason for General Schmidt's modified optimism on 30 July was the geography of Tinian at its southern end. Not only would the Marines probably experience their hardest fighting of the campaign, but most certainly they were approaching the most difficult terrain on the island. The gentle landscape around Tinian Town ended suddenly about a mile to the south. There, the ground rose to a high plateau, thick with brush and rock, measuring about 5,000 yards long and 2,000 yards wide, with altitudes over 500 feet. Approach was blocked by cliffs and jungle growth. Along the east coast, the cliffs rose vertically and were next to impossible to scale. In the center, a road leading to the plateau had to wind a tortuous way; a prisoner said it had been mined. Only on the

<sup>20</sup> Assigned for the air strike were 80 P-47s of the 318th Fighter Group, 16 B-25s of the 48th Bombardment Squadron (Medium), and 30 torpedo bombers from the escort carrier *Kitkun Bay*.

<sup>21</sup> SpecIntlRpt No. 4, D-2 Sec, 4th MarDiv, dtd 7Aug44, in *4th MarDiv Translations (Tinian)*.

<sup>22</sup> 4th MarDiv D-2 Periodic Rpt No. 77, dtd 30Jul44.

west were the cliffs relatively easy to negotiate.

Such was the picture as Marines dug in for the seventh night on Tinian.

The land itself, not the Imperial Fleet, would try to save the Japanese. The toughness of that ground matched the enemy's will.

# The Island Secured<sup>1</sup>

## ORGANIZED RESISTANCE DECLINES<sup>2</sup>

At 0200 on 31 July, a Japanese force of company size led by three tanks stole through the darkness upon the lines of the 24th Marines on the division right. A heavy outburst of fire stopped the enemy thrust, knocking out one of the tanks and scattering the attackers. Japanese mortar fire fell along the entire corps front that night but was eclipsed at daylight by the

thunder of American naval guns; they expended approximately 615 tons of shells in the preplanned bombardment. Aircraft dropped another 69 tons of explosives. For the cornered Japanese, the effect of such preparation fire was, according to prisoners, "almost unbearable."<sup>3</sup>

The cliff facing the 2d Division left and center was almost impossible to climb. A twisting road with hairpin turns led up to the plateau from the division right. General Watson's plans, therefore, were influenced by the terrain over which his troops had to fight. He set up an 0-8A Line which followed the base of the cliff except on the right. There he included not only the cliff but also 500 yards of plateau. On the division left, then, the 2d Marines would halt at the base of the cliff and remain in position to prevent Japanese escape along the east coast. In the center, the 6th Marines would not attempt the hopeless cliff but would turn west at the base and follow the 8th Marines up the road.

The 2d Marines moved out at 0830 and was opposed by sniper fire while advancing to the cliff, which was reached at noon. Large numbers of Japanese and Korean civilians who surrendered held up the advance much more than did enemy troops. In the center of the division line, the 6th

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this chapter is derived from: *TF 51 OpRpt*; *TF 52 OpRpt*; *TF 56 OpRpt*; *NTLF OpRpt*; *NTLF OpOs 38-44 and 39-44*, dtd 31Jul and 1Aug44; *NTLF G-2 Periodic Rpts 47-54*, dtd 1-8Aug44; *NTLF G-3 Periodic Rpts 47-57*, dtd 31Jul-3Aug44; *2d MarDiv OpRpt Tinian*; *2d MarDiv OpOs 52-55*, dtd 31Jul-10Aug44; *2d MarDiv D-2 Periodic Rpts 81-88*, dtd 2-8Aug44; *2d MarDiv D-3 Rpts 78-85*, dtd 31Jul-7Aug44; *2d Mar SAR*; *6th Mar SAR*; *8th Mar SAR Tinian*; *4th MarDiv OpRpt Tinian*; *4th MarDiv D-2 Periodic Rpts 79-84*, dtd 1-6Aug44, *4th MarDiv Translations (Tinian)*; Thomason, "Tinian"; Chapin *4th MarDiv in WW II*; Crowl, *Marianas Campaign*; Hoffman, *Tinian*; Isely and Crowl, *Marines and Amphibious War*; Johnston, *Follow Me!*; Morison, *New Guinea and the Marianas*; Proehl, *4th MarDiv History*; Smith and Finch, *Coral and Brass*; Stockman and Carleton, *Campaign for the Marianas*.

<sup>2</sup> Additional sources for this section include: *1/8 Rpt Tinian*; *1/24 Rpt of Ops*, dtd 25Aug44; *2/24 AR*, dtd 5May45; *3/24 AR*, dtd 5May 45; *3/24 Narrative of Tinian Island Op*, dtd 5May45; *2d TkBn SAR*.

<sup>3</sup> *4th MarDiv OpRpt Tinian*, Anx C, p. 11.

Marines moved forward against scattered rifle and machine gun fire coming from positions on the cliff face and light mortar fire dropping from the plateau above. After his advance elements reached the 0-8A Line at 1330, Colonel Riseley received permission to pull back about 400 yards to better defensive positions. Later that afternoon, General Watson committed the 3d Battalion, 2d Marines in relief of 3/6 and moved that battalion behind the 8th Marines as division reserve.

It was the 8th Marines that bore the major responsibility on 31 July and that posed the greatest threat to the enemy. It was expected that the Japanese would concentrate defensive fires along the route into their positions, yet unless Colonel Wallace could establish a foothold on the plateau the division plan would fail.

The first yards of the day's advance were relatively easy. Supported by tanks, the 1st and 3d Battalions moved out across a flat land where cane fields, brush, rocks, and a railroad track embankment gave concealment to some Japanese riflemen and machine gunners. In one instance, 15 Japanese left their hiding place to make a *ban-zai* charge upon a Marine tank; they caused no damage but lost their lives. Following 1/8 and 3/8, the reserve 2d Battalion advanced, mopping up behind the attack.

At noon, the 3d Battalion reached the foot of the plateau. The 1st Battalion had more yards to cover, but by 1500 it was also at the cliff base, in contact with 3/8 on the left and the 4th Division on the right. In front of the 1st Battalion there was a road, the only

practical route for tanks. The commander of the 3d Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Gavin C. Humphrey, wanted to move his supporting tanks up this tortuous path but was denied permission because 1/8 had not yet secured the path.

The cliffs which faced the 8th Marines had the same innocent appearance as the enemy's fortified hills of Saipan, which the Marines remembered so well. Vegetation masked the deep caves and fissures where Japanese riflemen and machine gunners were waiting. Their vigil ended as Marines of 3/8 started scrambling up the rocky incline. The sudden outburst of Japanese fire prompted Humphrey to hold up the infantry assault and look to measures for reducing the opposition. Exploratory fire from medium tanks failed to find the enemy positions, and the flamethrower tanks were able to burn off only part of the vegetation. The fire of the half-tracks was equally ineffectual. Permission to withdraw the battalion 400 yards and to call down artillery fire upon the cliff had to be withheld by the regimental commander because it would involve danger to 1/8 on the right. The 3d Battalion was then forced to dig in for the night.

While the Marines of 3/8 had struck vainly against the cliff in their area, the 1st Battalion turned to its mission of opening the road. Engineers removed mines; tanks moved up, withstanding the fire of 37mm and 47mm antitank guns, and destroyed Japanese bunkers in the cliff; the infantrymen climbed step by step, opposed by rifle and machine gun fire and by hand grenades

rolled downhill into their path. The thick vegetation alongside the road served both the enemy and the Marines. While it concealed the Japanese, it often obscured their view of the advancing men.

Movement was inescapably slow; by late afternoon it began to seem that the Marines would never get to the top that day. At 1650, however, Lieutenant Colonel Lawrence C. Hays, Jr., commanding the 1st Battalion, received the cheering report that a platoon of Company A was at the top. Several minutes later, a platoon of Company C dispatched the same good word.

Encouraged by such reports, Colonel Wallace ordered Hays to press the attack and get the entire battalion onto the plateau. The regimental commander, moreover, requested General Watson's permission to commit his reserve 2d Battalion, for the purpose of exploiting the success of 1/8 and gaining a surer foothold on the plateau before dark.

With the division commander's approval, the 2d Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Lane C. Kendall, began moving up the road shortly after 1700. By then, all three rifle companies of 1/8 were represented at the top. The 2d Battalion received heavy mortar fire while moving into position on the left of the 1st Battalion. Part of Kendall's mission was to attempt physical contact with 3/8 at the base of the cliff. The 1st Battalion had lost contact with the 4th Division, to the regimental right; in fact, a gap of 600 yards developed as 1/8 shifted to the east while 4th Division elements moved westward.

### *BATTLE FOR THE PLATEAU*

For the Marines on the plateau the situation was tense. The ground they intended to take was still commanded by hidden enemy positions, and the least motion invited a furious outburst of fire. Company E, leading 2/8 up the road, had just come upon the high ground when, at 1830, the Japanese openly attacked along the boundary between that company and Company A. The momentum of the assault forced a part of the Marine line back a few yards before it could be repulsed. Most of the 75-100 attackers were destroyed.

Company G of the 2d Battalion reached the base of the cliff at sunset, 1845, and went on to the top without delay. There it tied in immediately with Company E and disposed its line down the cliff to seek contact with 3/8. Still a gap of 350 yards existed between the 2d and 3d Battalions. Colonel Wallace was determined to remain on the plateau and elected to cover the gap with machine gun fire rather than commit the regimental reserve, Company F, with which he wanted to strengthen the forces at the top.

Two platoons of the reserve company and two 37mm guns established secondary positions at 2100 behind Company A, for if the enemy followed his usual tactics, he would direct another counterattack at the same spot. When, two hours later, the expected assault came, it was decisively broken up by the Marine guns. Yet the enemy persistently approached; Marine combat patrols fought groups of Japanese less than 20 yards from the front line. The night was foreboding; a major enemy coun-

terattack was surely yet to come. The enemy kept probing.

While the Marines on the plateau waited, the situation on the road became equally suspenseful. Over the white coral surface, visible in the dark, cargo jeeps lugged ammunition, barbed wire, and supplies, while jeep ambulances evacuated casualties. Half-tracks and tanks labored up the winding road, adding to a traffic which was intolerable to the enemy.

An attempt to cut the supply route took form about 0100. After locating the open flank on the right of 1/8, by their favorite practice of forcing return fire, a well-organized group of at least 100 Japanese, armed with rifles and grenade launchers, infiltrated through the gap between 1/8 and the 4th Division and moved to the rear of 2/8. A part of the force appeared on the road, burned two jeep ambulances, and started to block the supply route. In the same hour, nearer the top of the road, a platoon of Japanese captured a few parked vehicles belonging to the 2d Battalion.

The command post of 2/8 was still at the base of the cliff, its headquarters personnel tied in with the left of Company G. On the plateau, the battalion executive officer, Major William C. Chamberlin, was organizing the defenses. When the Japanese attempted to cut the road, he took two platoons of Company F and elements of Company A, issued the simple oral order—"Let's go!"—and led the Marines in removing the threat. Major Chamberlin then positioned two platoons of Company F left of the road and a support platoon of Company G on the right, halfway down the cliff, as a preventive measure.

Most of the infiltrating Japanese had been killed by the Marine counterattack, but an isolated group of 20 were discovered the next day on the hill—suicides by grenade. The vehicles captured by the Japanese were retaken intact.

The imperiling of Marine rear positions and the virtual certainty of a much larger enemy attack upon the front lines hastened commitment of the 2d Division reserve. Upon request by Colonel Wallace, 3/6 was attached to the 8th Marines at 0320, and the battalion at once started moving toward the cliff. Beginning then also, artillery fire by the 10th Marines was employed to prevent the enemy from bringing up reserves. Both the 2d Marines and the 6th Marines, whose sectors had been quiet, were alerted to the danger of a massive breakthrough in the wide gap which existed between the 8th Marines and the 4th Division. The two battalions of the 8th Marines were practically alone on the plateau, a fact probably understood by the Japanese, who struck before that situation could change.

At 0515, a well-organized force totaling more than 600 soldiers and sailors, equipped with nearly every weapon except tanks, charged the Marine positions, especially those of 2/8. Here the enemy tried to disable the two 37mm guns that strengthened the Company E position, but were unable to stop the fearful canister fire. Japanese 13mm machine guns tore holes in the upper shield of one of the Marine guns. Eight of the 10 37mm crew members were casualties of the assault, but other Marines kept the guns firing. "Without these weapons," said the regimental

commander, "the position would have been overrun."<sup>4</sup>

The 1st Battalion received a lesser attack, numerically considered; about 150 Japanese charged the left flank, which adjoined 2/8, and were driven off "without great difficulty" by Marine fire.<sup>5</sup> The same *banzai* fervor which marked the larger attack excited these Japanese. Neither here, however, nor elsewhere along the front, was the enemy able to penetrate, though some of their number were killed just five yards from Marine positions.

In less than one hour of fighting, which cost the 8th Marines 74 casualties, the enemy suffered a loss of 200 killed—about half of the number fell in an area only 70 yards square. Despite the terrific repulse, however, the Japanese preserved organizational integrity and staged a very orderly withdrawal to the woods and cliffs to the southeast. The enemy rear guard was destroyed by Marine tanks.

The situation on the plateau appeared favorable to a steady Marine advance, but still unrectified was the gap which existed between the 2d and 4th Divisions. Progress of the 23d Marines on 31 July had been good until the left flank of the 1st Battalion, exposed by the gap, received machine gun and mortar fire from the cliff line. The attached tank platoon, advancing in front of the 1st Battalion, then suddenly ran into close range, high velocity antitank fire from beyond the tree line of the cliff. The left flank tank received six hits in rapid succession, one of them penetrating the turret. The tank com-

mander backed off about 15 yards to a defiladed spot from which he fired two smoke shells to bracket the area in the cliff to the left front, where he believed the enemy gun was located. Rockets, naval guns, and tanks then plastered the suspected ground.

In the quiet that followed, the tanks went forward once more, this time with another tank on the left flank, the disabled vehicle following about 10 yards behind. When the replacement tank came to the spot where the other had been struck, it too was hit six times, three of the shells tearing through the armor plate. Then, however, the enemy gun was located; it was 30 yards to the left, beyond the tree line which paralleled the Marines' advance. The two battered tanks took their revenge. One of them fired a blinding smoke shell in front of the gun, while the other tank maneuvered behind the gun, knocked it out, and killed about 20 Japanese running out of the emplacement. The enemy position had been roofed over and enclosed on three sides with concrete. From an aperture a 47mm antitank gun was able to cover a fire lane about 10 yards wide. Into that lane the two Marine tanks had unhappily moved.

After the encounter, 3/25, then in division reserve, was assigned to the 23d Marines to form a perimeter defense around the tanks and service vehicles of 1/23 on the low ground. The 1st Battalion had secured the high ground in its zone by 1745, but mines along the only road to the top prevented moving the machines up until the next day. The regimental reserve battalion, 3/23, which had followed the advance, moved onto the high ground to the rear of the

<sup>4</sup> *8th Mar SAR Tinian*, p. 10.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*, p. 8.



*MACHINE GUN on a half-track lays searching fire along a tree line on Tinian to cover advancing 4th Division Marines. (USMC 88220)*



*PACK HOWITZER, firmly lashed in position, fires on enemy caves in cliffs along the Tinian coast. (USMC 94660)*



1st Battalion. There the two battalions established a perimeter defense with flanks bent back and anchored on the cliff line. One company of 3/23 stayed on the low ground, however, for the protection of the left flank and to contain those Japanese that still remained in the gap between the Marine divisions. Patrols from the units of 3/23 on the high ground roved the gap but were unable to locate any elements of the 2d Division. The 23d Marines settled down to a night marked only by sniper fire and infiltration attempts.

To the right, next to the two battalions on the high ground was one company of 2/23, which had worked its way to the top before dark by moving through the zone of 1/23. Progress of the 2d Battalion on 31 July had been good until the afternoon. Then the attached tank platoon leading 2/23 reached a well-seeded minefield planted across the valley road which led to the high ground. Engineers started to clear lanes through the field for each tank of the platoon; two engineers walked in front of each tank, removing the mines as they were discovered. Suddenly, Japanese riflemen and machine gunners opened up from a trench 20 yards away and across the route of advance. The engineers, as well as the accompanying Marine infantrymen, were pinned down.

Tanks took the trench under fire; one of them started toward the end of the trench, to fire down the length of it. Traversing some ground which was judged the least dangerous, the tank got to just five yards from the objective when it hit a mine. The explosion shattered the tank's suspension system and injured the tank commander, the

driver, and the assistant driver. Emboldened by this success, a number of Japanese darted from concealment to attack the Marines openly and were either killed or pinned down by point-blank fire. One of the tanks rescued the crew of the disabled vehicle and after pulling back saw the Japanese trying to set up machine guns in the wreck. To prevent this, the Marine tanks blew it apart.

Darkness approached before the strong enemy position could be reduced, so Lieutenant Colonel Edward J. Dillon, commanding 2/23, left one infantry company behind to contain the pocket. Other Marines of the battalion moved around to the left and went on to the base of the high ground, digging in there for the night. The tanks remained with the containing company until it had set up its defenses. During the night the Marines at the foot of the cliff received some enemy fire from caves near the base.

For the 24th Marines on 31 July opposition developed early along the west coast south of Tinian Town. The 1st Battalion received light artillery fire shortly after moving out; then at 1000 the Marines of Company C, advancing along the beach, were stopped short by rifle and machine gun fire coming from an isolated enemy position defended by 70 naval troops. It took an hour of hard fighting to subdue the Japanese. The mopping up of the beach area behind Company C was left to Company E of 2/24, which followed the advance at 600 yards.<sup>6</sup> In overcoming the resistance of the Japanese naval troops,

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<sup>6</sup> 2/24, though then in division reserve, was under the control of the 24th Marines.

and of other enemy groups hiding in caves or jungle brush, the 1st Battalion was aided by armored amphibians off-shore. Flame tanks seared enemy caves and also burned off some of the vegetation which entangled the individual Marines or hid Japanese positions.

The movement of 3/24 on 31 July was interrupted at noontime by a loss of contact with the 23d Marines on the left. After an hour or so the gap was closed, and 3/24 resumed the advance. At 1600, however, as the battalion neared the cliff, the enemy opened up with machine gun and mortar fire from the ridge line to the left front. Tanks and half-tracks were called upon to overcome the resistance, but the terrain forbade their movement except along the road to the high ground, a path which the enemy had thoroughly and meticulously mined. Engineers began the tedious and delicate work of removing the threat—they cleared 45 mines from an area 30 yards long. In view of the late hour, the battalion halted for the day. Neither here nor in the zone of 1/24 was the Marines' position especially good. Division reported that the troops dug in for the night "on the least unfavorable ground."<sup>7</sup>

#### 1 AUGUST: THE NINTH DAY

Victory on Tinian was obviously near, but the situation of the Marines was momentarily difficult. General Watson ordered that the attack by the 2d Division on 1 August, scheduled for 0700, be delayed an hour, for not until daylight would there be more than two battalions, 1/8 and 2/8, at the top of the

cliff, and both of those units had suffered a number of casualties from the Japanese counterattack. The 2d Battalion, the hardest hit, was put into regimental reserve when 3/6 reached the plateau at daybreak. The 3d Battalion, 8th Marines, which also climbed the hill that morning, took up a position to the left of 3/6.

By 0800 then, General Watson had three battalions ready to attack across the plateau—3/8, 3/6, and 1/8. The 2d Battalion, 6th Marines, which followed 3/6 up the cliff, would be committed when necessary. To the division left, the 2d Marines was kept at its mission of preventing any Japanese escape up the east coast. On the plateau, it was Colonel Wallace of the 8th Marines who would command the advance to the 0-8A Line.

The first battalion to reach the objective was 1/8; it was on the line just 15 minutes after moving out. The other two battalions were at the objective well before noon. Resistance was negligible and came mostly from isolated groups of Japanese. It had been planned that when 0-8A was reached the 6th Marines would be more fully committed with the regiment scheduled to assume responsibility for the left half of the division zone. Colonel Riseley was to take over the two left battalions, 3/8 and 3/6. The right half of the division zone would still be under Colonel Wallace, but with 2/8 in reserve, he would have only 1/8 in the assault. Such a weighting of the division line indicated the slant of the concluding push, due southeast, chiefly against Marpo Point.

To the 6th Marines, which had not suffered the violent enemy counterat-

<sup>7</sup> *4th MarDiv OpRpt Tinian*, Sec. IV, p. 31.

tack of the night before, went the major effort on 1 August. Neither 1/8 nor the 6th Marines, however, met any organized resistance while advancing to the cliff above the shore; one company of the 8th Marines reached the objective by 1455. The most significant fact revealed by the easy advance was that a tedious mop up would ensue after the campaign itself was over. Innumerable caves sheltered the remnants of the enemy force; these Japanese lacked command and organization, but they still possessed some weapons and ammunition.

Other caves had been the refuge of frightened civilians, but as Japanese resistance collapsed they began to emerge from hiding. In fact, the progress of the 6th Marines was interrupted on 1 August by the flock of civilians who approached waving white cloths. The large-scale surrender was partly in response to leaflets and voice broadcasts by Marine language personnel, who sought to avoid a repetition of the mass suicides which occurred on Saipan. Division intelligence had estimated that from 5,000 to 10,000 civilians were in hiding on the southeast part of the island. Some had been living in caves since J-Day.

Many of the civilians that surrendered were thirsty and hungry, but few lacked clothing. Some of them came forth lugging suitcases full of clothes, which they had taken upon leaving Tinian Town. A few wore their Sunday best, to greet the Americans they no longer feared. A number of the civilians needed medical attention, but remarkably few of the Tinian population had been wounded by the American bombardment of the island.

The outflow of confused humanity—they were all either Japanese or Korean—reached such a number in the path of the 6th Marines that at 1510 Colonel Riseley received orders to halt for the day, even though the regiment was short of the cliff above Marpo Point. No Japanese troops were observed, but the colonel took the precaution of committing his 2d Battalion on the regimental right, to tighten the lines. Moreover, when he received 1/6 back from division reserve at 1730, he put Company A on watch near the cliff where many Japanese soldiers were known to be hiding.

The processing of civilians that surrendered on 1 August was not a problem for the 6th Marines, because at 0600 that day the control of civilian internment was assumed by the Island Commander, Major General James L. Underhill, who took over a NTLF internment camp established south of the old 0-4 Line on 31 July. Few civilians or prisoners of war had been taken by the Marines until late in the campaign. By the evening of 2 August, however, NTLF G-1 reported that 3,973 civilians had been received, while 48 prisoners were in custody. By 4 August, the number of civilians had reached 8,491 and the prisoners totaled 90.<sup>8</sup>

Early in the campaign, the 2d Division had established a stockade, to care for both civilians and prisoners, near the Ushi Point Airfield. The 4th Division tried regimental stockades which were moved forward with the regimental CP. For Marines who had fought only in jungles and on barren atolls,

<sup>8</sup> NTLF G-1 Periodic Rpts No. 48, dtd 3Aug44, and No. 50, dtd 5Aug44.

the handling of civilians and their property was, even after Saipan, still a new experience. Not until Tinian did the 4th Division use civil affairs teams on a regimental level.

As it happened, the 4th Division met fewer civilians on 1 August than the 2d Division did, and those were mostly Korean field laborers. On the west side, the enemy soldier proved the more obstructive element. Until 1045 the 2d Battalion, 23d Marines was occupied at reducing the strong point encountered the day before. Tanks and vehicles then started up the hillside road which engineers had cleared of mines. As the battalion climbed, one rifle company was posted to prevent ambush of following troops and vehicles.

The other two battalions of the 23d Marines, already on the plateau, were harassed by considerable enemy machine gun and rifle fire as they adjusted frontage before moving out at 1000. About 50 Japanese ventured near the lines of 1/23 and were destroyed by Marine machine gunners hitting them from two sides. Enemy opposition the rest of the day consisted of rifle and machine gun fire from cane fields and tree lines. At 1715 the two battalions reached the furthest possible line of advance, a cliff overlooking the sea on the east coast. Patrols then reconnoitered routes to the low ground in front of the cliff and along the coast; they reported a honeycomb of caves and deep recesses, hiding Japanese. The two battalions encountered no immediate trouble, however; nor did 2/23, which had halted to the rear on commanding ground.

The 24th Marines reported that 1 August "was almost a prototype of the

day before."<sup>9</sup> So it was, in the respect that more rocks and more of the same dense undergrowth kept the advance to a plodding pace. The sort of enemy resistance was much the same also—isolated groups, usually hidden by caves or vegetation and ever ready to fire or throw some hand grenades at the Marines.

The regiment had moved out at 0800, with 3/24 and 1/24 from left to right. Artillery of the 14th Marines fired a 5-minute preparation 600 yards forward of the front lines, and two others subsequent to the attack hour, the last one 1,200 yards forward of the line of departure. After that, however, the restricted area of combat made risky not only any artillery support but also call strikes by aircraft, or assistance from gunfire support ships.

At 1500 the 2d Battalion, released from division reserve, was committed to the attack. The Marines were then reaching curious terrain "of a palisade-like nature."<sup>10</sup> It consisted of three levels, descending from the cliff top to the sea. The regimental lines were consequently readjusted, all three battalions being deployed abreast. The 3d occupied the high ground on the regimental left, 2/24 moved onto the center level, and 1/24 stayed on the low ground, its flank on the coastline.

After such an adaptation the advance was resumed, turning from a southward to an easterly direction around the tip of the island. The advance was not rapid here; the Marines received intermittent machine gun and

<sup>9</sup> 24th Mar SAR, Anx I, p. 13, to 4th MarDiv OpRpt Tinian.

<sup>10</sup> *Ibid.*

rifle fire before reaching the 0-8 Line on Lalo Point at 1800. Delay was once occasioned when several dozen civilians had to be removed from a cave. In some areas, progress was only by small fire groups, working their way through the obstructive vegetation between coral boulders. The Japanese took advantage of such difficulty. After the daylight turned to pitch darkness, some Marine casualties resulted from mines actually thrown down upon the men from the cliff.

#### FIGHTING OFFICIALLY ENDS

The hostile fire received by the Marines on 1 August did not suggest that organized resistance was over, but General Schmidt recognized the essential facts: Colonel Ogata's well-planned defense of Tinian had irrevocably collapsed; most of the Marines were either on or near the concluding objective line. At 1855 on 1 August, the American commander declared the island secured.

A statement like that, however, was a sort of partial truth on any Pacific territory captured from the Japanese. On Tinian, even more than elsewhere, the residue of the enemy force was troublesome. Some of the Japanese preferred self-destruction to surrender, but the proportion of soldiers and civilians that committed suicide on Tinian was smaller than on Saipan.<sup>11</sup> The Japanese soldier that chose to live was

<sup>11</sup> Some of the Japanese civilians who killed themselves were members of the Civilian Militia, or *Zaigogunjin*, which had been quite inoperative. The men had received a bit of military training but no weapons, and their prime interest was fleeing to safety with their families.

a die-hard type, able to hide out for months.

Most of the Marine casualties after 1 August were caused by those Japanese, who faithful to their military code, decided to forego security and die in combat. The 4th Division D-2 correctly predicted that the enemy would "sally forth from the caves in group *banzai* charges."<sup>12</sup> Just before the dawn of 2 August nearly 200 Japanese, armed with rifles, machine guns, and grenades, attacked the command post of the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines. The pistols, carbines, and two automatic rifles available to the Marines seemed insufficient against the do-or-die spirit of the Japanese, and the outcome was uncertain until the Headquarters Company commander obtained a medium tank, along with a rifle platoon, from nearby Company F of 2/6. Two hours of combat left 119 Japanese dead. The Marines lost their battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel John W. Easley, and suffered other casualties. Major John E. Rentsch, the executive officer, assumed command of the unit.

The 2d Battalion, 6th Marines reported a similar assault upon their command post. Developing shortly before 3/6 was hit, the incident appeared to have been connected with the same enemy outbreak. The brunt of the Japanese attack here was borne by the Mortar Platoon of the Headquarters Company. Three Marine tanks, which had bivouacked for the night at the CP, proved handy. The Japanese pulled back, leaving 30 of their number dead, but they withdrew toward the com-

<sup>12</sup> 4th MarDiv D-2 Periodic Rpt No. 79, dtd 1Aug44.

mand post of 3/6, either by design or mistake.

The next morning at 0530, 3/6 and 3/8 (still attached to the 6th Marines) had to withstand a second enemy attack, staged by a composite group of 150 Japanese soldiers and sailors.<sup>13</sup> Here also the enemy achieved only the wish to die in battle, rather than surrender; 124 Japanese lay dead after the attack. On succeeding days, the hopeless efforts were repeated. On 3 August, the 4th Division killed 47 of the enemy. On 4 August, when Battery I of the 14th Marines was attacked by 15 Japanese in a cane field, 12 of the enemy were killed.

The protracted chore of mopping up on Tinian went to the 8th Marines, which on 6 August became Ground Forces Tinian, under the command of Brigadier General Merritt A. Edson, assistant commander of the 2d Marine Division. He thereupon assumed tactical responsibility for the island. At the same time, he released one rifle company to the control of the Island Commander to assist the Civil Affairs Officer in the handling of prisoners and civilians on Tinian. The Japanese troops were removed to Hawaii.

On 25 October 1944, the 8th Marines went back to Saipan, but its 1st Battalion remained on Tinian until 1 January 1945. In the period from the securing of the island until the end of

the year, more than 500 Japanese were killed during exchanges of fire, but such encounters cost the 8th Marines 38 killed and 125 wounded.

These losses appear high when compared to the Marine casualty figures for the campaign itself. The 2d Division reported 105 killed and 653 wounded;<sup>14</sup> the 4th Division, 212 killed and 897 wounded.<sup>15</sup> Marines missing in action came to 27 for the two divisions. NTLF records, which included Army casualties, show a total of 328 killed and 1,571 wounded.<sup>16</sup> For the Japanese, the price of the vain defense of Tinian had been extremely high; nearly 5,000 men were killed.<sup>17</sup>

While patrols of the 8th Marines hunted enemy survivors, units of the 2d Division departed for Saipan; by 7 August, 2/6 and 3/6 had left via LSTs. On Saipan the division was to relieve the 27th Infantry Division and remain on that island until the Okinawa campaign the next spring. The 4th Division went back to Camp Maui, the last units boarding ship on 14 August. In Hawaii, the division would prepare for its next battle: Iwo Jima.

At 1200 on 10 August, upon orders from Admiral Spruance, General Schmidt passed the command of all forces on Tinian to the Island Com-

<sup>14</sup> 2d MarDiv G-1 Periodic Rpt No. 83, dtd 5Aug44.

<sup>15</sup> 4th MarDiv OpRpt Tinian, Anx A, p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> NTLF G-1 Periodic Rpt No. 50, dtd 5Aug44, Anx B; NTLF OpRpt, Encl H (LVT Rpt), pp. 5-6. A unit breakdown of NTLF casualties is contained in Hoffman, *Tinian*, p. 150. Final official Marine casualty totals are contained in Appendix H.

<sup>17</sup> NTLF G-2 Periodic Rpt No. 48, dtd 2Aug44, gives the figure of 4,858 enemy killed prior to 1800 of 1 August.

<sup>18</sup> Some prisoners said that Colonel Ogata was involved and became a casualty. Marines did find his last command post, which afforded a view of Tinian Town, the harbor, and the airfield. American artillery and naval gunfire had demolished the headquarters; a prisoner said that Colonel Ogata had left the area on 31 July.

mander, who thereafter handled the embarkation of men and equipment. NTLF was dissolved on 12 August. On the same day, TF 52 closed its books; Admiral Hill had eminently fulfilled his responsibility for the capture of Tinian.

### *LOGISTICS AT TINIAN TOWN*

The garrison troops had begun landing the day after the island was secured, unloading by LCTs at Tinian Town.<sup>18</sup> The units went ashore over Green Beach, where once the land mines had been cleared and four wrecked Japanese small craft removed, three LCTs could be received simultaneously. One additional LCT could be handled alongside South Pier, which, being hardly damaged, was easily put into commission.

On 1 August, upon orders from the NTLF Shore Party Commander, the 4th Division Shore Party, less the 1341st Engineer Battalion, had left the weather-battered White Beach 2, to take over all supplies landed over the Tinian Town beaches.<sup>19</sup> The shore party immediately opened up and operated South Pier and that section of Green Beach which extended south of it. The depth of the water at South Pier did not permit landing LSTs either alongside or at the end, so pontoon causeways, brought from White

Beach 1 and Saipan, were installed at the end. On 4 August, the first LST docked there.

North Pier had been severely damaged by bombardment, and like the other pier, rigged with booby traps; complete repair took until 3 August. The 2d Battalion, 20th Marines then began operating that pier, turning over South Pier to the Island Commander.<sup>20</sup> By 5 August, the stretch of beach between the two piers (the wider section of Green Beach) had been cleared of land mines and surfaced with coral. Here it was possible to land 15 LCMs simultaneously. The waters of Sunharon Harbor presented no problem except for the sunken Japanese hulks which had to be blasted by UDT men. The Japanese had not mined the waters.

American merchant ships soon crowded the harbor, bringing equipment to reconstruct Tinian. On 3 August, the Stars and Stripes had been officially raised over the island, marking its commission as a naval base. Primarily, however, Tinian would serve the Army Air Forces. They had wanted Saipan and Guam also, but Tinian was the most suitable of the three islands because of its relatively level ground. The Navy, on the other hand, had less interest in Tinian, whose Sunharon Harbor was unable to berth many ships.

Tinian would be "developed as an air base for . . . heavy, medium, and light aircraft," said General Underhill when

<sup>18</sup> The Tinian garrison force eventually numbered 5,235 men—2,527 Marines, 2,693 Navy, and 15 Army.

<sup>19</sup> White Beach 1 was closed shortly after. Yellow Beach was never used, even after the mines had been cleared away, because of the consistently heavy surf and the nature of the reef.

<sup>20</sup> Both piers were under the Island Commander after 10 August, when the 4th Division Shore Party was disbanded. Until then, however, the shore party helped embark Marines and their equipment.

he was designated Island Commander.<sup>21</sup> Navy and Marine aircraft did use the base, but the island became particularly a home for the Army Air Forces giant Superforts. Two wings of the Twentieth Air Force operated from Tinian, flying the B-29s nonstop to Japan itself. The island was developed into the largest B-29 combat base in the Pacific.

Immediate responsibility for construction and defense fell upon General Underhill, who reported to the Commander Forward Area Central Pacific, Task Force 57 (Defense Forces and Land-Based Air, Vice Admiral John H. Hoover). To prevent Japanese interference with construction, the Island Commander relied upon two Marine antiaircraft artillery battalions, the 17th and 18th, assigned there. They formed the Antiaircraft Defense Command. The 17th Battalion set up 90-mm guns and two platoons of automatic weapons for defense of the port area. Not until November, however, did any Japanese planes fly near the island, and never were any bombs dropped.

### THE CAMPAIGN REVIEWED

The absence of enemy air or sea interference, following the Battle of the Philippine Sea, had been one of several ways in which Tinian differed from other Pacific island campaigns. The major differences arose, as we have seen, from the nearness of Saipan. Such proximity of the staging base to the objective permitted a shore-to-shore operation, the first large-scale one in the Central Pacific, and that, in turn,

allowed the landing and supplying of two Marine divisions over the extremely narrow beaches.

The plan was not only a bold one, it was the only possible plan if the Marines were to be spared a bloody assault of the well-defended beaches at Tinian Town. Success of the attempt hung upon two unpredictable elements—the will of man and the fancy of the wind. If Colonel Ogata, by a flash of insight, had decided to wait for the Americans at the northwest beaches instead of near Tinian Town, or if the weather had suddenly changed, the logistically complex landings could have ended in disaster. To save Marine lives, the gamble was taken; fortunately, all went well. The tactical surprise unbalanced Colonel Ogata's defense plan beyond repair, leading to General Holland Smith's opinion that "our singular success at Tinian lay in the boldness of the landing."<sup>22</sup>

It was ironic that the Japanese were caught by surprise here on an island where they were absolutely certain of an American invasion. The loss of Saipan made that inevitable. Long before then, however, the Japanese had seen American planes flying over Tinian from the captured fields of Saipan or ships nearby—reconnaissance planes getting photographs and bringing Marine commanders for a view of their next battlefield, or P-47s and carrier planes bombing defense installations. Most of all, it was the preparatory bombardment which had destroyed any Japanese illusion that Tinian would not be invaded.

The nearness of Saipan made possi-

<sup>21</sup> Directive issued by CG, TG 10.12 and Prospective Island Comdr, dtd 15May44.

<sup>22</sup> Smith and Finch, *Coral and Brass*, p. 203.



ble the unusual bombardment of a Pacific island objective by land-based aircraft and artillery positioned on adjacent soil. The fact that artillery support would be available from Saipan had influenced the choosing of the northwest beaches, and, next to the landings, the preassault bombardment by artillery, ships, and planes was decisive. For never did a single island of the Pacific war receive a more prolonged and continuous pounding before the Marines landed. Afterwards, when the artillery was moved to Tinian, the Marines enjoyed the wealth of such support, especially at the last when the restricted area of combat made naval gunfire and air strikes impractical.

The task of naval gunfire was somewhat lightened at Tinian because land-based artillery joined the preparatory bombardment. Still, according to Japanese prisoners, there was plenty of hell from the sea. Naval gunfire had been improved by the Saipan experience and was even more effective than before. Call-fire procedure was carried out better than at Saipan. The TF 56 naval gunfire officer noted that ships and shore fire control parties "worked in far greater mutual understanding than on any prior operation."<sup>23</sup> He recommended the addition of another battalion spotter, to ensure best results.

The fire support ships did not have the complications with artillery which were occasionally reported by the pilots of P-47s. Field guns were sometimes firing into the same area assigned to planes. To avert such a difficulty in the future, Admiral Hill suggested a Combat Liaison Team, to be composed

of air, naval gunfire, and artillery officers, each with his portable radio set. The team would move forward as a unit and decide just which weapon should be used on the target in question. Spotting and the checking of results was simplified at Tinian by the absence of Japanese ships or planes and by the next-door nature of the targets. The busy Marine observation planes, which did much of that work, were controlled entirely by artillery units.

The mission of preparatory air bombardment was vigorously executed by the P-47s on Saipan and by Navy planes from the escort carriers. After J-Day, the Army Air Forces and the Navy complied with requests for air support by a system of alternating, each furnishing four call strikes a day, assigned by Commander Support Aircraft in the *Cambria*.

The P-47s also undertook a new kind of mission at Tinian: the dropping of the napalm bomb, initially used there and then later on other Pacific islands in a more improved form. During the entire Tinian operation, 147 jettisonable tanks were dropped from 21 July to 1 August. Fourteen of them were duds, but 8 of the 14 were subsequently set afire by strafing runs. Owing to a shortage of napalm powder on Saipan, only 91 of the fire bombs contained the napalm mixture; the rest consisted of an oil-gasoline mixture.<sup>24</sup>

For the airmen, as for artillerymen and naval gunners, the relatively level terrain of Tinian made targets easier to

<sup>23</sup> TF 56 OpRpt, NGF Sec, p. 138.

<sup>24</sup> Figures for the employment of napalm bombs are derived from 318th FAGru Intel-Rpt, dtd 1Aug44, cited in Dr. Robert F. Futrell, USAF HistDiv, ltr to Head, HistBr, G-3, HQMC, dtd 29Nov63.

hit than was true on Saipan. Indeed, the nature of the ground appears hardly second to the nearness of Saipan as an influence upon the campaign. Except at the southern end, the landscape of Tinian is fairly gentle, offering little opposition to the advance of troops or vehicles. The Marines employed more tanks here than ever before on a Pacific island. Many of the enemy were killed in the open by medium tanks leading infantry attacks. Traversing the cane fields did impose a problem, however. Rows of high stalks obscured the already restricted vision of a tank platoon leader, who normally had to poke his head out the turret to observe his vehicles. The difficulty prompted one tank officer to suggest a new type periscope or a protected turret. Tank communication, however, was better on Tinian than before. The efficient SCR-500 series of push-button type radio had recently become standard for Marine tank battalions and was first employed at Tinian.<sup>25</sup>

The flat stretches of Tinian were favorable to wire communication; the Japanese had prepared the entire island for sending messages by telephone, only to have the system wrecked by the American bombardment. Moreover, until the last days of the Tinian campaign, the Marines advanced so rapidly that their communications men were hard-pressed to string wire fast enough.

In such a short campaign, however, contact by radio was often sufficient,

the infantry again finding the SCR-300 a reliable set. This Army Signal Corps radio had become the standard field radio used by Army and Marine infantry in World War II. Tank commanders on Tinian also had an SCR-300 for communicating in infantry command nets. It was a portable radio set, adapted for carrying on a soldier's back. The SCR-536, a small hand-carried radio was also used at Tinian by platoon leaders and company commanders. The range of these field sets, however, did not exceed a mile or so; the water-proofing was inadequate for the almost daily rain; and transmission was often blanketed by other stations on the net.

In getting supplies across country to the fast-moving Marines, the level nature of the island was helpful. Moreover, the Japanese had constructed a good network of roads. Yet, logistically, the Tinian operation was constantly challenged: first by the beaches and then by the weather. Problems had begun at the planning stage. General Schmidt gathered enough LVTs to form a provisional LVT group, but he saw the necessity for a permanent LVT group organization for corps-size landings. The labors of the shore party, herocially performed, emphasized likewise the need for a permanent corps shore party organization, large enough for a major amphibious assault.

When the weather turned, it was the DUKW that saved the day. The tough amphibian truck again demonstrated its usefulness under conditions risky for other craft. Colonel Martyr, who commanded the NTLF Shore Party, said that without the DUKW "supply in this operation would have

<sup>25</sup> The Marine Corps Table of Organization for a tank battalion, T/O F-80, dated 4 April 1944, authorized the Army Signal Corps radios 508 and 528, the short-range, frequency-modulated sets expressly created for armored divisions and well liked by Army tankmen.

been practically impossible.”<sup>26</sup> He recommended that henceforth amphibian trucks should be supplied not only to the artillery but also to the shore party—and in greater numbers. Admiral Hill advised that DUKWs, manned by Navy crews, replace the LCVPs then carried on deck by transports and attack cargo ships (AKAs).

Two of the four amphibian truck companies at Tinian were Army units: the 477th Amphibian Truck Company and the 27th Division Provisional Amphibian Truck Company. Much credit belongs to both Army and Marine drivers of the DUKWs, who worked long hours through a taxing surf.

The same weather reverse which forced reliance upon the DUKWs invoked the employment of C-47s for transporting rations and supplies from Saipan and evacuating wounded men. For the Tinian campaign, cargo delivery by air had been planned only as an emergency method, and no more than 60 tons of air cargo was actually delivered. It was enough, however, to show that cargo delivery by air was very practicable and open to future development.

The battle for Tinian had required logistic ingenuity from the very beginning of plans, but there was less demand for tactical adaptation once the troops were ashore. Because of the narrow beaches, General Schmidt had concentrated power behind a single assault division on J-Day, thus combining mass with economy of force. In the elbowing technique, he applied the same principles. Mostly, however, there was little necessity for tactical in-

ventiveness at Tinian. The Japanese, disorganized by the preassault bombardment and the surprise landings, fell back upon their usual *banzai* attacks and cave warfare, tactics which the Marines were prepared by experience to meet.

After the Americans landed on Saipan, Colonel Ogata had prepared an elaborate battle plan, issued new rifles and other field equipment to a well-trained garrison, and hastened the construction of defenses. He was short of tanks, having only 12, but he possessed a large stock of other weapons; even on the last day of the battle, Marines encountered well-armed Japanese. A poor command relationship existed between Army and Navy officers, but whether it was consequential is hard to tell.

In preparing the defense of Tinian, Colonel Ogata worked in a sort of glass headquarters. Documents captured by Marines on Saipan revealed his strength and order of battle; photo reconnaissance, the best yet obtained of a Pacific objective, located every major Japanese installation. In the preassault bombardment a number of the defense positions were destroyed, one exception being the well-camouflaged guns which damaged the *Colorado* and the *Norman Scott* on J-Day. Many of the enemy artillery positions illustrated the Japanese art of camouflage. Guns were well-hidden in caves and wooded terrain, so that Marines were able to locate them only by observation of gunflashes and by sound ranging.

Among the objects visible to photo reconnaissance were Japanese planes idle on the fields of Tinian. The headquarters of the *First Air Fleet* and two

<sup>26</sup> NTLF OpRpt, Encl J (2), p. 9.

naval air groups had been identified as located on the island, but the pilots left in May or June for missions elsewhere, and survivors were unable to get back. Photo reconnaissance was unrestrained, therefore, except by Japanese antiaircraft fire.

Air observation was unfortunately limited to what lay above the ground. At Tinian, the Japanese seeded the earth with a larger number of mines than Marines had encountered elsewhere. The certainty of invasion allowed the enemy time for planting many antipersonnel, antitank, and antiboat mines, besides setting booby traps. The usual home-made types of mine appeared, but the only true novelty at Tinian was the interconnection of horned mines.

Some destruction resulted from the enemy's antitank mine; a Marine tank commander was killed by one which a Japanese lodged upon the hatch. The enemy sometimes buried a 500-pound bomb beneath the anticipated flight path of low-flying American aircraft. Then when a plane appeared they would electrically detonate the bomb from a remote vantage point. One Army flier was killed by such a device. Most of the time, the vigilance of Marines and the tireless efficiency of their engineers minimized casualties and damages. The antiboat mines resulted in far less damage than the Japanese expected they would.

No obstacle the enemy imposed, whether a mine underfoot or a hidden gun, equalled the well-trained Japanese soldier himself. On Tinian, he exhibited the usual professional skill in attack and a calm order in withdrawal which contrasted to the emotion of the *banzai* charge. The enemy withdrawals before the pressing Marine advance, which marked the battle on Tinian, illustrated, as did camouflage, the Japanese art of furtive action. Troops moved usually at night, in small groups and with few losses due to detection. The heavy Japanese casualties resulted from impatience to defeat the invader not by a well-concealed defense, at which they were masters, but by a hopeless open attack against superior firepower and Marine infantrymen who were second to none at close combat.

The opening fires of the American bombardment foretold the capture of Tinian. With a numerically inferior garrison, isolated from reinforcement, the Japanese commander fought a losing battle. Yet if he had made a more subtle judgment on where the Americans intended to land, the campaign would probably have been longer and the ratio of casualties different. As it was, Tinian became a model victory for Navy and Marine Corps amphibious tactics.

PART VI

*The Return to Guam*

## Preparing for Guam

### PLANS MADE—AND REVISED <sup>1</sup>

The battle to recapture Guam took place at the same time as the Tinian campaign, but it was the former that drew more attention from the American people. A possession of the United States since the island was taken from Spain in 1898, Guam had fallen to the Japanese just three days after Pearl Harbor.<sup>2</sup>

To regain the island was not only a point of honor; Guam was now definitely wanted for an advance naval base in the Central Pacific and for staging B-29 bomber raids upon Japan

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: FifthFlt FinalRpt on Ops to Capture the Mariana Islands, dtd 30Aug44, hereafter *FifthFlt FinalRpt*; TF 51 OpRpt; TF 56 OpRpt; TF 53 Rpt on PhibOps for the Capture of Guam, dtd 10Aug44, hereafter *TF 53 OpRpt*; IIIAC SAR, dtd 3Sep44, hereafter *IIIAC SAR*; Maj Orlan R. Lodge, *The Recapture of Guam* (Washington: HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, 1954), hereafter Lodge, *Recapture of Guam*; Crowl, *Marianas Campaign*. Throughout this and succeeding chapters dealing with the Guam campaign, Lodge, *Recapture of Guam*, and Crowl, *Marianas Campaign*, have served as overall guidelines. For this reason, they will be cited only in direct reference hereafter. Unless otherwise noted, all documents cited are located in the Marianas Area OpFile and Marianas CmtFile, HistBr, HQMC.

<sup>2</sup> The Japanese seizure of Guam in December 1941 is related in Volume I of this series, pp. 75-78.

itself. Recapture of Guam had been scheduled as phase II of the FORAGER operation; it was slated to follow phase I immediately after the situation at Saipan permitted.<sup>3</sup> In May 1944, when the preparations for Guam were taking shape, the tentative landing date was expectantly set as 18 June, three days after the scheduled D-Day at Saipan. As it turned out, however, the landings on Guam did not come until 21 July.

There were several reasons for postponing W-Day, as D-Day of Guam was called. The first was the prospect of a major naval engagement, which evolved as the Battle of the Philippine Sea. Intelligence that a Japanese fleet was headed for the Marianas had been confirmed by 15 June, and Admiral Spruance cancelled W-Day until further notice to prevent endangering the transports and LSTs intended for Guam. These vessels were then ordered to retire 150 to 300 miles eastward of Saipan.

On 20 June the Battle of the Philippine Sea was over; Japanese ships and planes were no longer a substantial threat to American forces in the Marianas. By then, however, there were other facts to consider before W-Day could be reset. Japanese resistance on

<sup>3</sup> For the background and planning of FORAGER, see Chapter 1 of Part IV, "Saipan: The Decisive Battle."

Saipan had required the commitment of the entire 27th Infantry Division, the Expeditionary Troops Reserve. The only available force was the 77th Infantry Division, which was then ashore in Hawaii.

The Marines assigned to recapture Guam had been deprived of their reserve; yet the dimensions of the approaching battle appeared to increase. Japanese prisoners and documents captured on Saipan confirmed what aerial photographs of Guam were indicating, that enemy strength on the island had been increased. Anticipating a campaign even more difficult than Saipan, Admiral Spruance saw the necessity for having an adequate reserve immediately available. At the same time, he realized that additional troops might yet be needed on Saipan, so the task force slated for Guam was retained as a floating reserve for the Saipan operation during the period 16-30 June.

Admiral Nimitz was willing to release the 77th Division to General Holland Smith as Expeditionary Troops Reserve, and on 21 June, he sent word that one regimental combat team would leave Hawaii on 1 July, with the other two following as the second echelon after transports arrived from Saipan. In a hastily assembled transport division of five ships, the 305th RCT and an advance division headquarters sailed from Honolulu on 1 July. On 6 July, General Holland Smith assigned the 77th Division to General Geiger's control. Admiral Nimitz then sent for the 26th Marines to serve as Expeditionary Troops Reserve for Guam, and the regiment departed San Diego on 22 July.

It was Nimitz' wish that Guam be attacked as soon as the 305th reached the area. Further postponement of the landings would give the Japanese more time to prepare. Besides that, the weather normally changed for the worse in the Marianas during late June or early July. The rainfall increased, and to the west of the islands, typhoons began to form, creating sea conditions unfavorable for launching and supporting an amphibious operation.

Just as anxious as Nimitz to avoid prolonged delay, Spruance reviewed the situation with the top commanders assigned to the Guam operation. At a meeting off Saipan on 30 June, they concurred in his judgment that "the Guam landings should not be attempted until the entire 77th Division was available as a reserve."<sup>4</sup> To that decision, Nimitz agreed. On 3 July, Spruance designated the 25th as tentative W-Day. On 8 July, after learning that the entire Army division would be at Eniwetok by the 18th, four days before it was expected, he advanced the date to 21 July, and there it stood.

The Fifth Fleet commander had postponed W-Day "with reluctance,"<sup>5</sup> knowing that for the Marines due to land on Guam, it meant more days of waiting on board crowded ships under the tropical sun. Except for the replacement of the 27th Division by the 77th, the command and troop organization for the Guam campaign had not been changed, and troop movements until the middle of June had gone ahead as planned. The task

<sup>4</sup> *FifthFlt FinalRpt*, p. 5.

<sup>5</sup> *Ibid.*

force charged with the recapture of Guam sailed from Kwajalein for the Marianas on 12 June, to act as reserve at the Saipan landings before executing its primary mission.

#### COMMAND AND TASK ORGANIZATION <sup>6</sup>

The top commands for Guam were the same as those for Saipan and Tinian. Under Admiral Spruance, commanding Central Pacific Task Forces, Admiral Turner directed the amphibious forces for the Marianas, and General Holland Smith commanded the landing forces. Guam was to involve Admiral Turner's and General Smith's subordinate commands, Southern Attack Force (TF 53) and Southern Troops and Landing Force (STLF). At Guam, unlike Saipan, the hard-hitting senior Marine general would not take direct command of operations ashore, but would leave it to Major General Roy S. Geiger, whose III Amphibious Corps had been designated the landing force for the Guam campaign.

In direct command of the Southern Attack Force, activated on 24 May 1944, was Admiral Conolly, who had taken Roi and Namur in the Marshalls a few months before. Admiral Nimitz had assigned to TF 53 a number of ships from the South Pacific Force, which until 10 May, had been engaged

in General MacArthur's Hollandia operation. As the attack plan for Guam envisaged simultaneous landings at two points, Admiral Conolly divided his task force into a Northern Attack Group, which he himself would command, and a Southern Attack Group, to be led by Rear Admiral Lawrence F. Reifsnider. To facilitate joint planning, Conolly and key members of his staff flew to Guadalcanal, arriving on 15 April, and set up temporary headquarters near the CP of the landing force.<sup>7</sup>

Admiral Conolly's task force was the naval echelon immediately superior to the Southern Troops and Landing Force. That organization traced back to the I Marine Amphibious Corps (IMAC) activated in November 1942. On 10 November 1943, after the successful start of the Bougainville operation, the then corps commander, Lieutenant General Alexander A. Vandegrift, left the Pacific to become 18th Commandant of the Marine Corps. He was relieved by Major General Geiger, who had led the 1st Marine Aircraft Wing at Guadalcanal.<sup>8</sup> On 15 April 1944, IMAC became the III Amphibious Corps (IIIAC), still under

<sup>7</sup> This move by CTF 53 "permitted detailed planning between the two staffs of very great benefit to both, as well as cementing personal relations, neither feasible by dispatch communication." LtGen Merwin H. Silverthorn ltr to CMC, dtd 9Jun65.

<sup>8</sup> It was the introductory command of a large ground force for the veteran Marine airman, who had commanded a bombing squadron in World War I. General Geiger had been so much a part of Marine aviation since its early years that friends liked to say he had been "weaned on aviation gasoline." *Newsweek*, 31Jul44, p. 25.

<sup>6</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *TF 51 OpRpt*; *TF 56 OpRpt*; *TF 56 OPlan 2-44*, dtd 11Apr44; *TF 53 OpRpt*; *IIIAC SAR*; *IIIAC OPlan 1-44*, dtd 11May44, hereafter *IIIAC OPlan 1-44*; *III Corps Arty SAR*, dtd 2Sep44, hereafter *Corps Arty SAR*.



Geiger and with headquarters on Guadalcanal.

The III Amphibious Corps consisted largely of the 3d Marine Division, the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, and Corps Artillery. The division had returned to Guadalcanal in January 1944 after its first campaign, the battle for Bougainville, and had camped at Coconut Grove, Tetere. Few command changes took place. Major General Allen H. Turnage retained command for the Guam campaign; Brigadier General Alfred H. Noble became assistant division commander, relieving Brigadier General Oscar R. Cauldwell; and Colonel Ray A. Robinson relieved Colonel Robert Blake as chief of staff, the latter assuming command of the 21st Marines. On 21 April, Colonel Blake was relieved by Lieutenant Colonel Arthur H. Butler who was promoted to colonel shortly thereafter and then led the regiment on Guam. The other regiments that comprised the division were the 3d, the 9th, the 12th (artillery), and the 19th (engineer).

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was just a few months old, having been organized at Pearl Harbor on 22 March 1944, but the Marines that composed it were battle-trying men. The historic 4th Marines, with its traditions of Dominican and China service, and lastly of Corregidor,<sup>9</sup> had been reactivated on Guadalcanal on 1 February 1944, absorbing the famed

Marine raiders, veterans of fighting in the Solomons.<sup>10</sup> Lieutenant Colonel Alan Shapley, who had commanded the 1st Raider Regiment, was assigned to command the 4th Marines; he led the regiment in the seizure of Emirau Island in March.

The other major unit in the brigade was the 22d Marines, which had fought at Eniwetok before coming to Guadalcanal in April 1944. Colonel John T. Walker, who had commanded the 22d in the Marshalls, became temporary commander of the brigade on 10 April 1944, when Brigadier General Thomas E. Watson, its first commander, was assigned to lead the 2d Marine Division. On 16 April, Brigadier General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr. assumed command of the brigade, but Colonel Walker remained as chief of staff, leaving the 22d Marines under Colonel Merlin F. Schneider. The new commander of the brigade had served with the old 4th Marine Regiment, having been its adjutant in Shanghai for a period during the 1920s. Now, with the new 4th Marines part of his command, General Shepherd arrived at Guadalcanal on 22 April from duty as ADC of the 1st Marine Division during the Cape Gloucester campaign on New Britain.

Planning for the Guam operation began immediately, but as General Shepherd later noted:

<sup>9</sup> For the story of the 4th Marines at Corregidor see Volume I of this series, pp. 155-202, and Kenneth W. Condit and Edwin T. Turnbladh, *Hold High the Torch, A History of the 4th Marines* (Washington: HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, 1960), pp. 195-240, hereafter Condit and Turnbladh, *Hold High the Torch*.

<sup>10</sup> In the reactivation of the 4th Marines, the Headquarters and Service Company of the 1st Raider Regiment became the same type of unit for the new regiment. The 1st, 3d, and 4th Raider Battalions became the 1st, 2d, and 3d Battalions, 4th Marines. The Regimental Weapons Company was formed from the 2d Raider Battalion.

. . . the limited staff provided the 1st Brigade and lack of an adequate Headquarters organization, placed a heavy load on the Brigade Commander and his Chief of Staff. Since each of the two Regiments composing the Brigade had operated independently in previous campaigns the task of molding these infantry units and their supporting elements into a unified command presented many problems to the new commander and his embryo staff in the limited time available before embarkation for the Guam operation. With customary Marine sagacity, however, plans were completed and units readied for embarkation on schedule.<sup>11</sup>

The artillery component of IIIAC had been activated originally in IMAC on 13 April 1944 and then consisted of the 1st 155mm Howitzer Battalion and the 2d 155mm Gun Battalion, in addition to the 3d, 4th, 9th, 11th, 12th, and 14th Defense Battalions. Two days later, when IMAC was redesignated, the artillery organization became III Corps Artillery and the 2d 155mm Gun Battalion was redesignated the 7th.<sup>12</sup> For the Guam operation, it was decided to employ the two 155mm artillery battalions and the 9th and 14th Defense Battalions. Elements of the 9th were attached to the brigade, and units of the 14th would serve with the division. On 16 July, the 2d 155mm Howitzer Battalion of the V Amphibious Corps was added. It replaced the 305th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm) and the 306th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm howitzer), which were reattached to their parent 77th Division for the landing.

<sup>11</sup> Gen Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., cmts on draft MS, dtd 22Jun65.

<sup>12</sup> The designation "III Corps Artillery" appears in the organization's documents and will be used here.

Named to command the III Corps Artillery was Brigadier General Pedro A. del Valle. He had led an artillery regiment, the 11th Marines, in the battle for Guadalcanal. At Guam he would have control over all artillery and antiaircraft units in the STLTF. Under his command also would be a Marine observation squadron (VMO-1), equipped with eight high-wing monoplanes.

Once Guam was again under the American flag, Marine Major General Henry L. Larsen's garrison force would begin its mission. The prospective island commander and part of his staff arrived at IIIAC headquarters on Guadalcanal on 29 May. The time proved somewhat early, considering the postponement of W-Day, but it helped to unify the total plans for Guam.

#### *GUAM, 1898-1941*<sup>13</sup>

The delay of the Guam landings was not without some benefits. For one thing, it permitted American military intelligence to gain a better knowledge of the island and of Japanese defenses there. The easy capture of Guam by the enemy in 1941 followed years of neglect by the United States. In 1898 the American Navy had wanted

<sup>13</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: TF 53 OPlan No. A162-44, Anx B, dtd 17May44, hereafter *TF 53 OPlan No. A162-44*; Capt Lucius W. Johnson (MC), USN, "Guam—Before December 1941," *USNI Proceedings*, v. 68, no. 7 (Jul42); Laura Thompson, *Guam and Its People* (Princeton, N. J.: Princeton University Press, 1947), hereafter Thompson, *Guam and Its People*.

Guam chiefly as a coaling station for vessels going to the Philippines. The other islands of the Marianas, including Saipan and Tinian, were left to Spain, which sold them the next year to Germany.<sup>14</sup> In 1919, by the Treaty of Versailles, Japan received those islands as mandates, a fact that put Guam in the midst of the Japanese Marianas.

At this time, it seemed unlikely to many Americans that they would ever be at war with Japan. In 1923, when one of the worst earthquakes of history devastated Japan, Americans gave generously to relieve the suffering. A year before, the United States had joined with Japan, Great Britain, France, and Italy in a treaty that restricted naval armament and fortifications in the Pacific. As one result, the United States agreed to remove the six 7-inch coastal guns that had been emplaced on Guam. The last gun was removed by 1930.

Japan withdrew from the arrangement in 1936, but by then the treaty had quashed some ambitious planning by American naval officers to fortify Guam. The idea of turning the island into a major base had not been supported, however, either by the Secretary of the Navy or by the Congress, which was averse to large military appropriations.<sup>15</sup> As late as 1938, it refused to fortify Guam.

<sup>14</sup> The Spanish occupation of Guam had begun in 1668 when a few Jesuits and soldiers founded a mission on the island.

<sup>15</sup> In a letter to the Navy General Board on 10 June 1920, Secretary Josephus Daniels cited Rear Admiral Alfred T. Mahan, then the oracle of naval thought. It was Mahan's view that unless Guam were impregably fortified,

The collapse of efforts to transform Guam from a naval station into a major naval base did not, however, put an end to preparing plans on paper. In 1921, the Commandant of the Marine Corps approved a plan of operation in the event of war with Japan. From 1936 on, officers attending the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico bent over a "Guam Problem," dealing with capture and defense of the island.<sup>16</sup>

As for Guam, it remained a minor naval station, useful mainly as a communications center. It had become a relay point for the trans-Pacific cable, and the Navy set up a powerful radio station at Agana, the capital.<sup>17</sup> Few ships docked at the large but poorly improved Apra Harbor. In 1936, Pan American clippers began to stop at the island, bringing more contact with the passing world. No military airfield existed, although plans were underway to build one in late 1941.

The Governor of Guam was a naval officer, usually a captain, who served also as Commandant of the United

a costly project, military resources should not be squandered on the island simply for Japan to take if war came. Quoted in Stockman and Carleton, *Campaign for the Marianas*. "The Guam Operation," p. 1.

<sup>16</sup> Actually, the solution to the Guam problem taught at the Marine Corps Schools was rather out of date by 1944, so rapid had been the development of Marine Corps amphibious craft and techniques. A number of the officers that later served at Guam were grateful, however, for what they had learned about the island. Col William F. Coleman ltr to CMC, dtd 5Sep52.

<sup>17</sup> In the spelling of Agana and other Spanish proper names the anglicized usage of American reports has been followed.

States Naval Station. He controlled the small Marine garrison with its barracks at the village of Sumay, overlooking Apra Harbor. The Marines guarded installations such as Piti Navy Yard and the governor's palace. Ten Marine aviators and their seaplanes had been sent to Guam in 1921, but they were withdrawn in 1931 and no others came until 13 years later.<sup>18</sup>

The American, however, is a Robinson Crusoe on whatever island he finds himself. On Guam he fostered the health of the natives, developed compulsory education, and improved the road and water supply systems. The naval administration also took some interest in the economic welfare of the island, encouraging small industries such as those manufacturing soap and ice, but avoiding interference with the farmers' preferred old-fashioned methods. Little was exported from the island except copra, the dried meat of the ripe coconut. The largest market for native products was the naval colony itself. In addition, the Navy employed many Guamanians in the schools, the hospital, and other government departments. A heritage of that service was a devoted loyalty to the United States, which was not forgotten when war came and the Japanese occupied the island. The enemy made no attempt to use the conquered people as a military force but did press them into labor digging trenches, constructing fortifications, and carrying supplies.

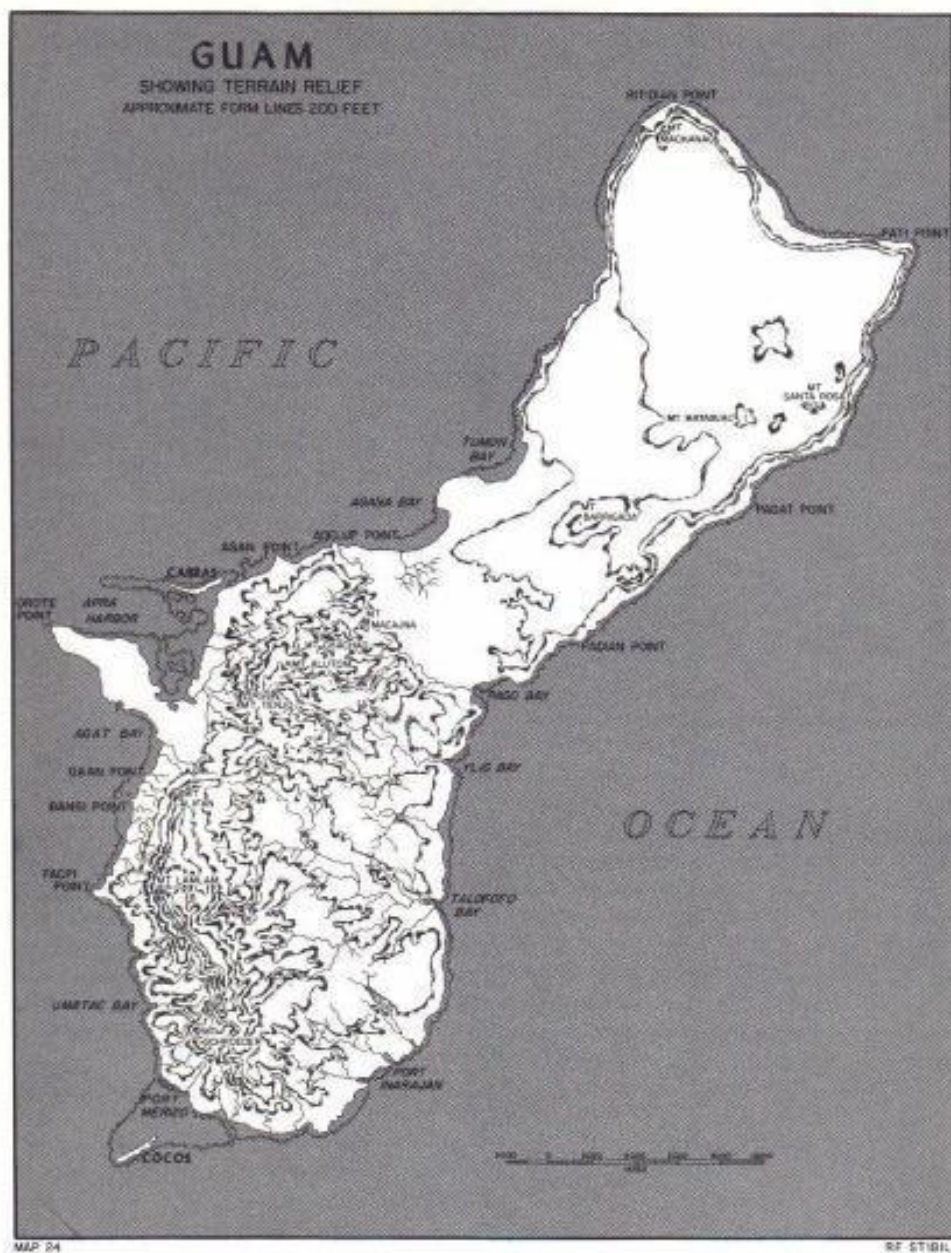
The Guamanians are a racial mixture of the original islanders—the intelligent and gentle Chamorros, a Polynesian people from Asia—and Spanish

or Filipino colonists. In 1940, the governor reported the native population as 21,502. It was concentrated near the harbor of Apra; about half of the number dwelt at Agana, and another 3,800 lived in villages close to the capital. Piti, the port of entry for Agana, located about five miles southwest of it, contained 1,175 inhabitants. Asan, a village between Agana and Piti, had 656. The municipality second in size to Agana was Sumay, with a population of 1,997, on the northeast shore of the Orote Peninsula. Here, in addition to the Marine barracks and rifle range, were the headquarters of the Pacific Cable Company and of Pan American Airways. The rest of the peninsula consisted of rolling terrain, marked by tropical vegetation, with some mangrove swamps and a few coconut groves. (See Map 24).

Six other villages in the southern half of the island accounted for 5,000 of the population: Agat, Umatac, Merizo, Inarajan, Yona, and Sina-jana.<sup>19</sup> Most of the other natives lived on farms, some near rural centers like Talofofo in the south, or Dededo, Barrigada, Machanao, and Yigo in the north. Such centers included simply a chapel, a school, and a store. On the farms, most of which were located in southern Guam, the natives raised livestock, corn (the chief food staple), vegetables, rice, and fruit. Villagers, too, would sometimes have a plot of land that they tilled. The farmers took their products to market on carts

<sup>18</sup> Sherrod, *Marine Air History*, p. 27.

<sup>19</sup> On the southwest coast at Umatac was a marker claiming that in 1521 the explorer Magellan stopped there while on his famous voyage around the world. He is credited with discovery of the Marianas.



drawn by the carabao, a water buffalo.

The people of Guam were under the supreme authority of the governor, but not unhappily. They did not receive American citizenship, but they had the status of American nationals and their leaders served on the governor's staff of advisors. When the Japanese seized the island in 1941, they tried at first to preserve the contentment of the natives.<sup>20</sup> They offended the Guamanians, however, by changing the name of their homeland to "Omiyajima" (Great Shrine Island) and that of their capital to "Akashi" (Red or Bright Stone). The schools were ordered to teach Japanese instead of English. In 1944, as the Japanese rushed work on island defenses, they closed the schools and required labor even by children. Much of the island food supply was taken over by the expanded garrison. Native health and welfare was neglected because the Japanese became engrossed in preparing for the American invasion.

The enemy had a sizable territory to get ready. Guam is the largest island north of the equator between Hawaii and the Philippines. With an area of 225 square miles, it is three times the size of Saipan and measures 30 miles long by 4 to 8½ miles wide. The island is encircled by a fringing coral reef, ranging in width from 25 to 700 yards. For the most part, the coastline was familiar only to the na-

<sup>20</sup> Prior to the Japanese invasion, there had been only 39 Japanese adults on the island and 211 Japanese-Guamanian children. According to the same count, in 1940, only 13 Spaniards still dwelt on the island, though Spain had possessed Guam for nearly 200 years.

tive fishermen, although the United States Navy had prepared some good hydrographic charts.

Guam consists actually of two topographic entities, the north and the south, joined by a neck of land between Agana and Pago Bays. A small river starts in the Agana lowland and empties into the bay. North of that central strip, the island is largely a *cascajo* (coral limestone) plateau, covered with hardwood trees and dense tropical vegetation, but partly useful for agriculture. The southern half of Guam is the truly agricultural section, where streams flow through fertile valleys. Cattle, deer, and horses graze upon the hills. A sword grass, called *neti*, is common to the whole island.

A warm and damp air hangs over the land, but the temperature seldom rises much above the average of 87 degrees. Like the rest of the Marianas, Guam was often called "the white man's tropics." From July to December, however, the island is soaked by rain nearly every day. The road system became rough to travel when it rained. A mere 100 miles of hard-surfaced roads were joined by unsurfaced roads and jungle trails which turned to mud when wet.<sup>21</sup> The main road on the island ran from Agat along the west coast to

<sup>21</sup> The commanding officer of the 9th Marines noted that the hard-surfaced roads were actually very narrow with just enough room for two cars to pass. "They were surfaced with a combination of native *cascajo* and crushed stone which was rolled down. Apparently little maintenance had been done during the Japanese occupation and in addition ships' gunfire and air bombing had seriously damaged them in hundreds of places." LtGen Edward A. Craig ltr to ACofS, G-3, dtd 22Jun65, hereafter *Craig 22Jun65 ltr*.

Agana, thence northeast to Finegayan, east of Tumon Bay. There it split into two parallel branches, both ending near Mt. Machanao. Despite the high precipitation, problems of water supply had occurred until the Americans constructed some reservoirs. The water system was then centered in the Almagosa reservoirs around Agat.

A number of elevations, high and low, appear on the landscape, but there are no real mountains. Cliffs rim the shoreline of the northern plateau, from Fadian Point to Tumon Bay. Above the tableland itself Mt. Santa Rosa (840 feet) rises in the northeast. At the center of the plateau is Mt. Mataguac (620 feet), and near the northern tip lies Mt. Machanao (576 feet). Marking the southern edge of the plateau, Mt. Barrigada rises to 640 feet, and from its slopes a 200-foot bluff reaches west to upper Agana Bay. These hills are not so high as those of southern Guam, but they are comparably rocky at the top and covered on the sides with shrubs and weeds.

A long mountain range lies along the west side of southern Guam from Adelup Point south to Port Ajayan at the tip of the island. Parts of the mountain range, such as Chonito Cliff near Adelup Point, rise very close to the shore. Inland of Apra Harbor is a hill mass, with a maximum height of 1,082 feet. Here are Mt. Chachao, Mt. Alutom, and Mt. Tenjo. The highest hill on Guam—Mt. Lamlam (1,334 feet)—rises from the ridge line below the Chachao-Alutom-Tenjo massif. Conspicuous in the ridge, which starts opposite Agat Bay, are the heights of Mts. Alifan and Taene. Near Agana Bay and the central lowland,

which links northern and southern Guam, lies Mt. Macajna.

Several prominent points of land that figured in the fighting jut from the west coast of the island—Facpi, Bangi, Gaan, Asan, and Adelup. On the northern end are Ritidian Point and Pati Point. The largest island off the coast is Cabras, a slender finger of coral limestone about a mile long; the island partly shelters Apra Harbor. Others, like Alutom, Anae, Neye, and Yona, are hardly more than islets. Rivers are numerous on Guam but most of them are small. The Talofoto and the Ylig are difficult to ford on foot, but others are easy to cross except when they are flooded.

Such geographic forms were known to Navy and Marine officers that had been stationed on Guam, and from those men was gleaned much of the intelligence necessary for planning the operation. Other sources were natives that were serving in the United States Navy at the time the Japanese seized Guam. Despite the fact that Guam had been an American possession for almost a half-century, the sum total of knowledge held by American authorities concerning the island was relatively small. In February 1944, the Office of Naval Intelligence issued a useful "Strategic Study of Guam;" the data was compiled by Lieutenant Colonel Floyd A. Stephenson, who had served with the Marine garrison on the island, and who returned in July 1944 as Commanding Officer, IIIAC Headquarters and Service Battalion.

The Marine Corps Schools had prepared some materials in connection with the "Guam Problem," and its map of the island was of particular use. It

formed the basis of the maps drawn by the Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Areas and furnished to the III Amphibious Corps. The cartographers at the Marine Corps Schools had worked from ground surveys made by Army engineers, but the Corps C-2 complained that the contours on the maps they received "did not portray anything like a true picture of the terrain except in isolated instances."<sup>22</sup> The road net, they said, was "generally correct" but did not show recent changes or roads built by the Japanese.

To correct such omissions and errors, aerial photography was called for. The first photo mission, flown on 25 April 1944, suffered the handicap of cloud cover, but subsequent flights in May and June produced somewhat better results, and photographic reconnaissance was kept up until after the landings. A naval officer, Commander Richard F. Armknecht, who had been a public works officer on Guam, prepared an excellent relief map, based largely upon his own thorough knowledge of the terrain. Admiral Conolly was so impressed with the map that he ordered several more made to give the fire support ships for study. By these means, information about the island was expanded, but knowledge of it was still deficient, especially regarding the areas of vegetation and the topography.<sup>23</sup>

<sup>22</sup> *IIIAC SAR*, Encl C, p. 1.

<sup>23</sup> The lack of information regarding the reefs off the landing beaches and the belief that they might drop off sharply on the seaward side prompted the 3d Division to provide for a certain number of LVT(A)s, "after landing and providing support fire for the infantry . . . to return to the edge of the reef

Intelligence of the coastline was obtained by a submarine and by UDT men. The USS *Greenling* got some good oblique photographs of the beaches and also took depth soundings and checked tides and currents. The underwater demolition teams started their reconnaissance and clearing of the assault beaches on 14 July. The men destroyed 940 obstacles, 640 off Asan and 300 off Agat; most of these were palm log cribs or wire cages filled with coral. Barbed wire was sparsely emplaced, however, and no underwater mines were found. On the reef that men of the 3d Division would cross, the UDT men put up a sign: "Welcome, Marines!"<sup>24</sup>

#### *THE JAPANESE ON GUAM, 1941-1944*<sup>25</sup>

The size of the Japanese force and the state of its recent defenses indicated that the enemy did not plan a

at the time of the landing of the tanks in LCMs. The LVT(A)s were then to provide 'anchors' for the LCMs and to guide the tanks onto the beach." BGen Louis Metzger memo to ACofS, G-3, HQMC, dtd 19Jul65, hereafter *Metzger memo*.

<sup>24</sup> Morison, *New Guinea and the Marianas*, p. 380.

<sup>25</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *TF 56 OpRpt*; *IIIAC SAR*; LtCol Hideyuki Takeda, IJA, "Outline of Japanese Defense Plan and Battle of Guam," encl to LtCol William F. Coleman ltr to CMC, dtd 4Oct46, hereafter *Takeda ltr I*; Mr. Hideyuki Takeda ltr to Dir of MarCorps Hist, dtd 20Feb52, hereafter *Takeda ltr II*; Japanese GSDF Staff School, "How the Guam Operation Was Conducted," translation of a series of articles published in the staff school journal, *Kambu Gakko Kiji* (Oct-Dec62), hereafter *GSDF Study*.



cordial welcome for the Marines.<sup>26</sup> After the Japanese seized Guam in 1941 they undertook no better preparation to defend it than the Americans had done. The enemy left only 150 sailors on the island—the *54th Keibitai*, a naval guard unit. Guam and other isolated Pacific islands were regarded merely as key points of the patrol network, not requiring Army troops for defense.

In late 1943, Japan became fearful of an American push through the Central Pacific and put new emphasis upon defense of the Marianas. As a result, the *13th Division*, which had been fighting in China since 1937, was slated for duty in the Marianas. In October 1943, an advance detachment of about 300 men sailed for Guam, but military developments in south China prevented the sending of the rest of the division. Instead, the *29th Division* was substituted. It took up the great responsibility indicated by advice from Tokyo: "The Mariana Islands are Japan's final defensive line. Loss of these islands signifies Japan's surrender."<sup>27</sup>

The *29th Division* had been a reserve for the *Kwantung Army*. In February 1944, while undergoing anti-Soviet combat training in Manchuria, the unit received its marching order for the Marianas. Horses were left behind,<sup>28</sup>

the troops were supplied with summer uniforms, and on 24 February the division embarked in three ships at Pusan, Korea. On board the *Sakito Maru* was the *18th Infantry Regiment*; on another ship, the *50th Infantry Regiment*; and on the third, the *38th Infantry Regiment* and division headquarters.

Disaster befell the *Sakito Maru* when it was just 48 hours' sailing distance from Saipan. The American submarine *Trout* sank the ship by a torpedo attack at 1140 on 29 February. The regimental commander and about 2,200 of the 3,500 men on board ship were drowned. In addition, eight tanks and most of the regimental artillery and heavy equipment were lost.<sup>29</sup> The two destroyers of the convoy picked up survivors and took them to Saipan, where the *18th* was reorganized. The *1st Battalion* stayed on Saipan, and the tank company went to Tinian. The regimental headquarters, newly commanded by Colonel Hiko-Shiro Ohashi, and two battalions were sent to Guam, arriving there on 4 June. The regiment brought along two companies of the *9th Tank Regiment*. The two infantry battalions each had three rifle companies, a trench mortar company (seven 90mms), and a pioneer unit. Minus the battalion on Saipan, the regiment numbered but 1,300 men after the reorganization.

The *50th Infantry Regiment* went to Tinian. Division headquarters, with Lieutenant General Takeshi Takashina

<sup>26</sup> The C-2 of the IIIAC compiled a final Japanese order of battle summary, which proved remarkably accurate. The tabulation is the basis for Appendix VII, "Japanese Order of Battle on Guam," in Lodge, *Recapture of Guam*, pp. 196-197.

<sup>27</sup> *GSDF Study*, p. 68.

<sup>28</sup> Before departing for the Marianas, the *29th Division* was streamlined into an RCT type of organization. The engineer, cavalry,

and transport regiments were dropped, and a tank unit was added. Each of the infantry regiments was assigned an artillery battalion and an engineer company.

<sup>29</sup> Losses according to *GSDF Study*, p. 68.

commanding, and the *38th Infantry Regiment* (Colonel Tsunetaro Suenaga) proceeded to Guam, arriving there on 4 March. This regiment numbered 2,894 men and included signal, intelligence (finance and quartermaster), medical, transport, and engineer units. Its three infantry battalions each contained three rifle companies, an infantry gun company, and a machine gun company. Attached to each infantry battalion was one battery of 75mm guns from the regimental artillery battalion.

The second largest Army component sent to Guam was the *6th Expeditionary Force*, which sailed from Pusan and reached Guam on 20 March. This unit totaled about 4,700 men drawn from the *1st* and *11th Divisions* of the *Kwantung Army*; it comprised six infantry battalions, two artillery battalions, and two engineer companies. On Guam, the force was reorganized into the 2,800-man *48th Independent Mixed Brigade (IMB)*, under the command of Major General Kiyoshi Shigematsu, who had brought the force to the Marianas, and the 1,900-man *10th Independent Mixed Regiment (IMR)*, commanded by Colonel Ichiro Kataoka.

The infantry battalions of the *48th IMB* and the *10th IMR* included three rifle companies, a machine gun company, and an infantry gun company (two 47mm antitank guns and either two or four 70mm howitzers). The infantry battalions of the *38th Regiment* had the same organization, except that the gun company had four 37mm antitank guns and two howitzers.

The total number of Army troops, including miscellaneous units, came to

about 11,500 men.<sup>30</sup> The overall command of both Army and Navy units on Guam went to General Takashina, whose headquarters strength was estimated at 1,370. Upon arrival on the island, he had been given the Southern Marianas Group, which included Guam and Rota, and, after the fall of Saipan, also Tinian. Defense of the entire Marianas was the responsibility of General Obata, commander of the *Thirty-first Army*, into which the *29th Division* had been incorporated, but the general left the immediate defense of Guam to the division commander.

In February 1944, the Japanese naval units on Guam had comprised about 450 men. From then on, however, the *54th Keibitai* was steadily reinforced by additional coast defense and antiaircraft units, so that by July the organization totaled some 2,300 men commanded by Captain Yutaka Sugimoto, once island commander. Two naval construction battalions had 1,800 men relatively untrained for fighting. With nearly 1,000 miscellaneous personnel, the figure for naval ground units reached about 5,000. Naval air units probably held some 2,000 men.<sup>31</sup> Most accounts agree that the entire Japanese troop strength on

<sup>30</sup> Major Lodge gives this total in *Recapture of Guam*, p. 197. It is lower and more precise than the IIIAC C-2 figure of about 13,000 because the latter estimate included several units which, as it turned out, were not present during the battle for Guam. See *IIIAC SAR*, Encl C, Intelligence.

<sup>31</sup> This figure, cited in Lodge, *Recapture of Guam*, App. VII, p. 197 embraces facts revealed later than the IIIAC C-2 report which put enemy air unit strength at 600.

Guam totaled a minimum of 18,500 men.<sup>32</sup>

On 23 June, the *1st Battalion* of the *10th IMR*, with one artillery battery and an engineer platoon attached, moved to Rota for garrison duty. Shortly thereafter, the battalion was joined by a task force composed of the *3d Battalion*, *18th Regiment*, supporting engineers, and amphibious transport units; the object, a counterlanding on Saipan. The condition of the sea made such a mission impossible, however, so *3/18* returned to Guam on 29 June. The *1st Battalion*, *10th IMR* remained on Rota, but since it could possibly be transferred in barges to Guam, both American and Japanese listings included it as part of defensive strength of the larger island.

Documents showing enemy strength figures and unit dispositions fell into American hands with the capture of *Thirty-first Army* headquarters on Saipan. Such information helped IIIAC intelligence officers prepare a reliable sketch map indicating the main Japanese defensive dispositions as of late June. General Takashina had set them up on the premise that the landing of a division-level unit was possible on beaches in the Tumon Bay-Agana Bay-Piti coastal section and the beach of Agat Bay. The Japanese were expecting four or five American divisions, a force adequate for landing operations at two fronts. (See Map 25.)

The enemy's immediate concern was the defense of Apra Harbor and of the island airfields. Construction of a mil-

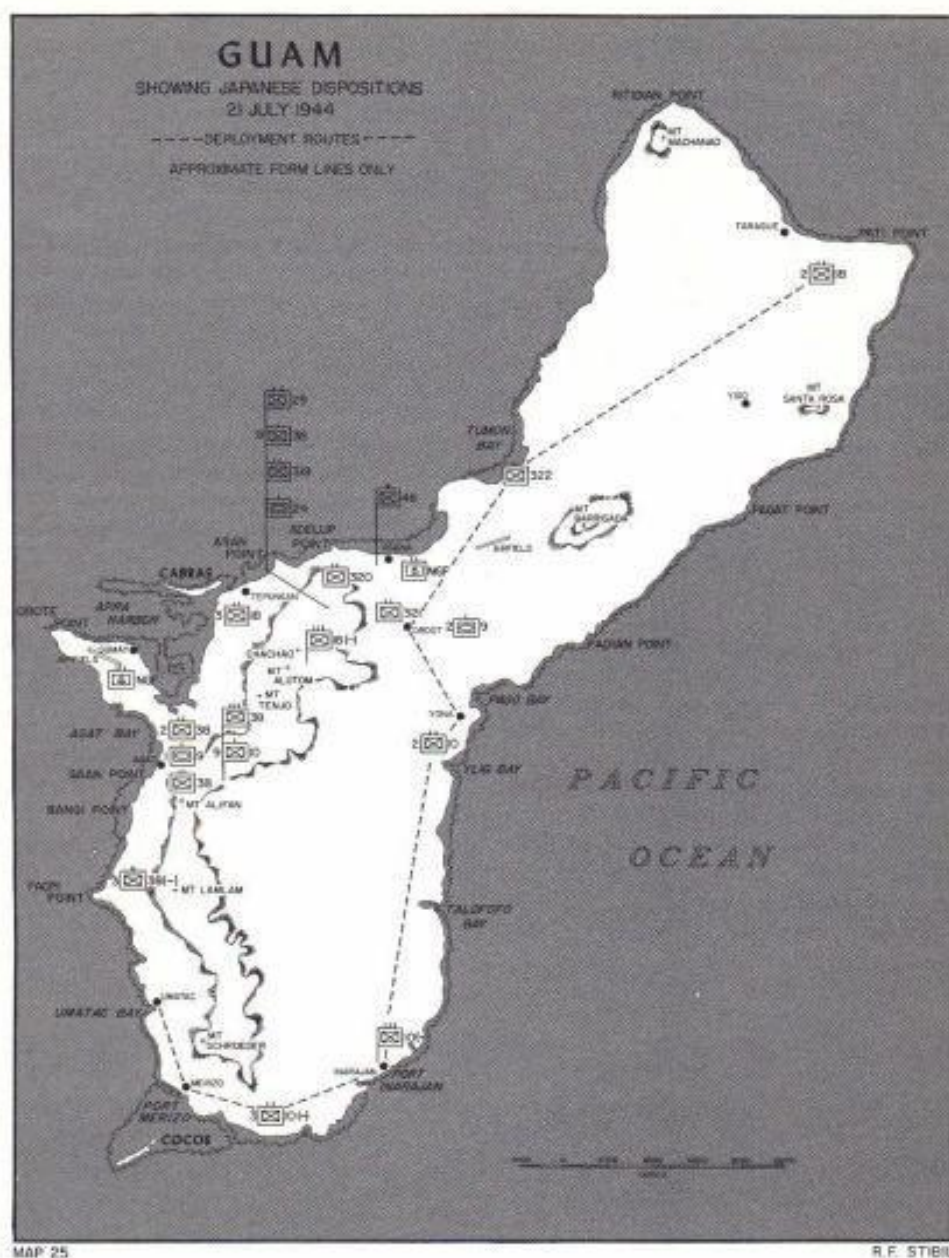
itary airfield near Sumay on the Orote Peninsula (occupying the golf course of the former Marine Barracks) had not been started until November 1943. The Japanese based about 30 fighter planes here. In early 1944, construction was begun on two other airfields, one at Tiyan near Agana and the other in the vicinity of Dededo. The Tiyan (Agana) airfield became operational by summer. This was intended for use by medium attack planes; the Japanese had six of those on the island.

Assigned to the Agana sector, which covered that part of the west coast from Piti to Tumon Bay, were the four infantry battalions of the *48th Brigade*. The *319th Independent Infantry Battalion* was positioned inland, east of Agana, in reserve. The *320th Battalion* manned defenses near the coastline between Adelup Point and Asan Point. The *321st Battalion* was located around Agana Bay, and the *322d Battalion* at Tumon Bay. The Agana sector received most of the Army artillery: the brigade artillery unit and the two artillery batteries of the *10th IMR*, all under the control of the *48th IMB*.<sup>33</sup> In the Agana sector also were naval land combat troops holding the capital city, most of the *29th Division* service troops, and General Takashina's command post at Fonte. The *3d Battalion*, *38th Infantry*, initially stationed in reserve behind the *48th Brigade* positions, was returned to Colonel Suenaga's control in July and moved south to rejoin its regiment.

The rest of the *38th Infantry* had

<sup>32</sup> The G-2 of TF 56 put the figure at 18,657, "excluding aviation." *TF 56 OpRpt*, Encl D, App H, p. 3.

<sup>33</sup> The brigade artillery unit was formerly the *3d Battalion*, *11th Mountain Artillery Regiment*, *11th Division*.



been put into the Agat sector, which stretched along the coast between Agat Bay and Facpi Point, with 1/38 covering the Agat Beach area. Colonel Suenaga's command post was located on Mt. Alifan. The Agat sector included the Orote Peninsula, where most of the naval infantry, the *60th Anti-aircraft Defense Unit*, and coast defense elements of the *54th Keibitai* were stationed; 2/38 occupied the base of the peninsula. Completing the troop organization for the peninsula was the *755th Air Group*, which had reorganized its 700 men for ground combat.

Until General Takashina was fairly sure where the unpredictable Americans would land, he kept some troops in other parts of the island. Stationed in southeast Guam until July was the *10th IMR* (less 1/10 on Rota). In extreme northern Guam was the *2d Battalion, 18th Regiment*. The *3d Battalion* of the regiment, after failing to get to Saipan, took up defense positions between Piti and Asan Point in the Agana sector. General Shigematsu, commanding the *48th IMB*, had the responsibility for island defense outside the Agat sector, which was under Colonel Suenaga.

In early July, the Japanese virtually abandoned other defense positions and began to localize near the expected landing beaches on the west coast. The *10th IMR* went to Yona, thence to positions in the Fonte-Ordot area—ominously near the Asan beaches. The *9th Company* of the regiment was ordered into a reserve position near Mt. Alifan to lend support to the *38th Regiment*. Most of the *2d Battalion, 18th Regiment* was brought south to

back up the *320th Independent Infantry Battalion*; the *5th Company* of 2/18 was put to work constructing defenses in the hills between Adelup Point and Asan Point. These troop movements, made mostly at night, were handicapped by the American bombardment.

The enemy's armor was shifted around as the Japanese got ready. The tank units were positioned in reserve, prepared to strike the beachhead with the infantry. One was the *24th Tank Company*, assigned as the division tank unit, with nine light tanks (eight of its tanks had been lost in the sinking of the *18th Regiment* transport). That company was put at Ordot, inland of Fonte. The *2d Company, 9th Tank Regiment*, with 12 to 14 tanks, mostly mediums, was turned over to the *48th IMB*. The *1st Company, 9th Tank Regiment*, with 12 to 15 light tanks, was assigned to the *38th Regiment* and took up a position to the rear of the Agat beaches.

The Japanese fortification of Guam was, like the buildup of manpower on the island, a hasty development. Before the *29th Division* was stationed here, the enemy had only a few batteries on the island, and these were not dug in. The principal armament consisted of 75mm field guns, the largest caliber artillery was 150mm. Two cave-type dugouts for the communications center at Agana were under construction, and a concrete naval communications station was being built at Fonte.

In the fever of preparations after 1943, the Japanese armed the ground from Tumon Bay to Facpi Point, providing concrete pillboxes, elaborate trench systems, and machine gun em-

placements. Mortars, artillery, and coast defense guns were positioned along the coast. The number of anti-aircraft weapons was increased; the *52d Field Antiaircraft Battalion* was assigned to the Orote airfield and the *45th Independent Antiaircraft Company* to Tiyan. In the defense of the Orote Peninsula, the 75mm anti-aircraft guns of the *52d* could serve as dual-purpose weapons, augmenting the artillery.

An unfortunate result of the postponing of W-Day was the extra time it afforded the Japanese to prepare. They overworked the naval construction battalions and native labor to bulwark the island, mostly in the vicinity of the beaches and the airfields. Some inland defenses were constructed, however, and supply dumps were scattered through the island.

American photo reconnaissance between 6 June and 4 July showed an increase of 141 machine gun or light anti-aircraft positions, 51 artillery emplacements, and 36 medium anti-aircraft positions. Better photographs may have accounted for the discovery of some of the additional finds; still, the buildup was remarkable considering the short period involved. The number of coast defense guns, heavy anti-aircraft guns, and pillboxes had increased appreciably also. The distribution of weapons to Army forces on Guam was indicated from a captured document dated 1 June 1944:

- 14—105mm howitzers
- 10— 75mm guns (new type)
- 8— 75mm guns
- 40— 75mm pack howitzers  
(mountain)
- 9— 70mm howitzers  
(infantry)

- 8— 75mm anti-aircraft guns  
(mobile)
- 6— 20mm anti-aircraft machine cannon
- 24— 81mm mortars
- 9— 57mm antitank guns
- 30— 47mm antitank guns
- 47— 37mm antitank guns
- 231— 7.7mm machine guns
- 349— 7.7mm light machine guns
- 540— 50mm grenade dischargers<sup>34</sup>

Of grim significance in the enemy's defensive organization was their intention to deny land access to Orote Peninsula. A system of trenchworks and foxholes was constructed in depth across the neck of the peninsula and supported with large numbers of pillboxes, machine gun nests, and artillery positions. Rocks and tropical vegetation provided concealment and small hills lent commanding ground.

### THE PREPARATORY BOMBARDMENT<sup>35</sup>

If the postponing of W-Day permitted the Japanese to put up more defenses, it also gave American warships and planes time to knock more of them down. Beginning on 8 July, the enemy was subjected to a continuous 13-day naval and air bombardment. It was the wholesale renewal of the first naval gunfire on 16 June, when two battleships, a cruiser, and a number of destroyers from Task Force 53 shelled the Orote Peninsula for some two hours, exciting Japanese fears of imminent invasion. Planes from Task

<sup>34</sup> *TF 56 OpRpt*, Encl D, App H, p. 7.

<sup>35</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *TF 51 OpRpt*; *TF 53 OpRpt*; *TF 53 OPlan No. A162-44*; *IIIAC SAR*; *Takeda ltr II*; Morison, *New Guinea and the Marianas*.

Force 58 had started bombing Guam on 11 June, hitting the enemy airfields particularly; by 20 June, the Japanese planes based there had been destroyed and the runways torn up.<sup>36</sup> On 27 June, Admiral Mitscher's airmen bombed Japanese ships in Apra Harbor. Then, on 4 July, destroyers of TF 58 celebrated the day by exploding 5-inch shells, like giant firecrackers, upon the terrain in the vicinity of Agana Bay, Asan Point, and Agat Bay.

Such gunfire, however, was a mere foretaste of what was to come from the sea and air. On 8 July, Admiral Conolly began the systematic bombardment, day after day, which was to assume a scale and length of time never before seen in World War II.<sup>37</sup> Destroyers and planes struck at the island, and on 12 July they were joined by battleships and cruisers. Two days later, Admiral Conolly, arriving in his command ship, the *Appalachian*, took personal charge of the bombardment. From then on it reached, the Japanese said, "near the limit bearable by humans."<sup>38</sup> The incessant fire not only hindered troop and vehicle movements and daytime work around positions, but it also dazed men's senses.<sup>39</sup>

Admiral Conolly, justifying his nickname "Close-in," took his flagship to

<sup>36</sup> "As a result, there was no Japanese plane in the sky over Guam" on W-Day. *Takeda ltr I*, p. 3.

<sup>37</sup> From 8 July until W-Day the expenditure of naval ammunition against shore targets amounted to 836 rounds of 16-inch, 5,422 of 14-inch, 3,862 of 8-inch, 2,430 of 6-inch, and 16,214 of 5-inch shells. *TF 56 OpRpt*, Encl G, p. 71.

<sup>38</sup> *GSDF Study*, p. 117.

<sup>39</sup> There were "scattered outbreaks of serious loss of spirit." *Takeda ltr II*, p. 9.

3,500 yards from the shore and went to his task with dedication. "He made a regular siege of it," wrote a naval historian.<sup>40</sup> On the *Appalachian*, a board of Marine and Navy air and gunnery specialists kept a daily check of what had been done and what was yet to be done. General Geiger, who was on board with Conolly, said that "the extended period of bombardment, plus a system of keeping target damage reports, accounted for practically every known Japanese gun that could seriously endanger our landing."<sup>41</sup> It was the belief of Admiral Conolly's staff that "not one fixed gun was left in commission on the west coast that was of greater size than a machine gun."<sup>42</sup>

Every exposed naval battery was believed destroyed; more than 50 percent of the installations built in the seashore area of the landing beaches were reported demolished.<sup>43</sup> A number of guns emplaced in caves, with limited fields of fire, were reduced in efficiency when naval shells wrecked the cave entrances. Some permanent constructions, however, which were thickly walled with concrete and *cascajo*, and at least partially dug into the earth, resisted even a direct hit.

Certain installations and weapons escaped. The Japanese reported later that their antiaircraft artillery on

<sup>40</sup> Morison, *New Guinea and the Marianas*, p. 378.

<sup>41</sup> *IIIAC SAR*, Encl G, p. 3.

<sup>42</sup> *TF 53 OpRpt*, Encl B, p. 11.

<sup>43</sup> These estimates of destruction were confirmed later by the Japanese. *Takeda ltr II*, pp. 7-9, contains a credible summary of what was and was not accomplished by the American preparatory bombardment.

Guam "sustained damage from naval gunfire only once,"<sup>44</sup> and only once did water pipes receive a direct hit. Communications installations were constructed in dead spaces immune to bombardment, and practically no lines were cut by naval gunfire. Moreover, no damage was done to power installations because generators were housed in caves. The interior of the island was, of course, less the province of ships' guns than of roving aircraft; the Japanese claimed that naval gunfire had very little effect beyond four kilometers (roughly, two miles) from the shoreline. It thus did little damage to enemy construction in the valleys or the jungle.

While air bombardment and strafing was able to reach where naval gunfire could not, the Japanese mastery of the art of concealment still hampered destruction. On 28 June, Admiral Mitscher's aircraft began periodic strikes against Guam; then on 6 July, TF 58 and two carrier divisions of Admiral Conolly's TF 53 started the full-scale preparatory air bombardment. Targets included supply dumps, troop concentrations, bridges, artillery positions, and boats in military use. Most such craft were sunk by strafing, the rest by naval gunfire. Harbor installations were spared for use after the battle. In the period of the preparatory bombardment, the island was divided into two zones—naval gunfire and air alternated zones morning and afternoon. Aircraft were particularly useful at hindering Japanese troop movements; they were less effective against enemy gun emplacements.

<sup>44</sup> *Takeda ltr II*, p. 8.

On 12 July, before leaving Eniwetok for Guam, Admiral Conolly met with Admiral Mitscher, and they set up a schedule of intensified strikes, which were to take place from 18 July through W-Day. Mitscher greatly increased the number of aircraft available to Conolly for the final all-out attacks. Until 18 July, TF 58 had made strikes on Guam independently of Commander, Support Aircraft, Guam. For the period 18–20 July, the combined tonnage reached the figure 1,131, including bombs, depth charges, and rockets. The explosives were not delivered, however, without some losses to American aircraft. Sixteen naval planes were brought down by the Japanese antiaircraft fire before W-Day.

#### JAPANESE FORTUNE TELLING<sup>45</sup>

It was the focus of the intensified bombardment starting 18 July which tipped off American intentions. From the action of the ships at sea, rather than from any leaves in a teacup, the Japanese were able to foretell more specifically where the invaders would come ashore.<sup>46</sup> When UDT men

<sup>45</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: CinCPac–CinCPOA Items No. 10452–10791, Translations of Captured Japanese Documents, dtd 29Sep44, hereafter *CinCPac–CinCPOA Item*, with appropriate number; *GSDF Study*; *Takeda ltr I*; *Takeda ltr II*.

<sup>46</sup> Some American naval officers felt that the bombardment on 16 June was a tip-off to the Japanese. The enemy knew, however, that the Orote Peninsula, as well as Apra Harbor, would be early objectives of an invasion, wherever it came. From the beginning, the Japanese had suspected that the landings would be on the west coast.



cleared obstacles from the chosen beaches, all doubt was removed.

In 1941, the Japanese had landed their main force at Tumon Bay, so at first they had supposed the Americans would attempt the same; the beach was ideal for an amphibious assault (at least two miles of sand), the reef was not impassable, and inland the ground rose gently. This judgment regarding the Tumon beaches did not give much weight to the factors that decided American planners against them—their distance from Apra Harbor and the highly defensible terrain that blocked the way to the harbor.

The enemy had not, however, really expected a repetition of their other landings elsewhere on the island, where neither the surf nor the ground was appropriate for a large-scale invasion. It was not until the middle of June, when the Americans began shelling the beaches below Tumon Bay, that the Japanese gave serious attention to fortifying the west coast south of the bay. Before then, they had viewed as dismaying to an invader the wide reef protecting the beaches here—"a reef varying in width from 200 to 500 yards offshore."<sup>47</sup> Moreover, on the commanding ground just inland, the defenders would have excellent observation for mortar and cannon fire.

As late as 16 July, General Shigematsu regarded the Agana sector as the probable area of invasion, with the Agat sector as a second target area if a two-front attack were staged. A landing force at Agat Bay could seize the Orote airfield. The white sandy beach along most of Agat Bay was

comparable to that of Tumon Bay. Before the American bombardment shattered the picture, the beach was fringed with palm trees. The northern coastline of Agat Bay, along the Orote Peninsula, is different, however; there a fringe of cliffs ranges from 100 to 200 feet high.

The Japanese did not rule out a possible small American landing at Pago Bay on the east coast for the purpose of getting behind their lines, but General Takashina's defense efforts were almost wholly devoted to the west coast. *Imperial General Headquarters* doctrine insisted upon the destruction of the assault forces at the beaches, though Lieutenant Colonel Hideyuki Takeda, the perceptive operations officer of the *29th Division*, favored a deployment in depth at Guam.<sup>48</sup> If the Japanese beach defense units should fail to destroy the American landing force at the beaches, General Takashina had instructed the *10th IMR* and the two battalions of the *18th Regiment* to counterattack in force.

#### AMERICAN TACTICAL PLANS<sup>49</sup>

American tactical spadework for the assault on STEVEDORE, the code

<sup>48</sup> *Imperial General Headquarters* soon modified its policy. In September 1944, Marines met a preplanned Japanese defense in depth for the first time at Peleliu.

<sup>49</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *Fifth Flt Final Rpt*; *TF 51 OpRpt*; *TF 56 OpRpt*; *TF 56 OPlan A162-44*; *IIIAC SAR*; *IIIAC OPlan 1-44*; *Corps Arty SAR*; 1st ProvMarBrig Op and SAR, dtd 19Aug44, hereafter *1st ProvMarBrig SAR*; 1st ProvMarBrig OPlan 1-44, dtd 26May44, and Mod No. 5, dtd 12Jul44,

<sup>47</sup> *TF 53 OpRpt*, Encl H, p. 5.

name assigned to Guam, had been started at Pearl Harbor as early as March 1944. General Geiger's staff prepared the tentative operation plan, which was approved by General Holland Smith on 3 April and shortly after by Admirals Turner and Spruance. The working out of details went forward on Guadalcanal, where, with the establishment of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade command post on 2 May, every major unit of the corps was present.

On 17 May, General Geiger circulated the corps operation plan. As originally evolved at Pearl Harbor, it provided for a 3d Marine Division landing on beaches between Adelup Point and Asan Point, while to the south the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade was to go ashore between Agat village and Bangi Point. Subsequent junction of the beachheads was planned.

Early capture of the Orote Peninsula-Aprra Harbor area was imperative to secure the use of the harbor and the Orote airfield. Here was, as General Holland Smith said, "the focal point of attack."<sup>50</sup> Upon General Shepherd's brigade fell the hard assignment of seizing the Orote Peninsula, a rock-bound fortress. In order to free the brigade for such a mission, the 305th Infantry of the 77th Division was attached on 10 July to follow the brigade ashore, while the rest of the Army division remained as corps reserve.<sup>51</sup>

hereafter *1st ProvMarBrig OPlan 1-44*; 77th InfDiv G-3 Jnl, 6Jun-10Aug44, hereafter *77th InfDiv Jnl*.

<sup>50</sup> Smith and Finch, *Coral and Brass*, p. 214.

<sup>51</sup> The attachment of the 305th RCT involved a modification of the brigade tactical plan, which had been issued on 26 May.

Major General Andrew D. Bruce, commanding the 77th, wanted to use his other two regiments for a secondary landing on northwest Guam about W-Day plus four to attack the Japanese rear, but it was felt that the Army troops should be kept in reserve, available for support at the beachheads.

The 305th Regiment was to relieve the brigade on the Force Beachhead Line (FBHL), which extended from Adelup Point along the Mt. Alutom-Mt. Tenjo-Mt. Alifan ridge line to Facpi Point. The brigade could then reorganize for the attack on the Orote Peninsula. Once that area was secured, the brigade would again take over the defense of the FBHL, while Army troops joined with the 3d Marine Division in seizing the rest of Guam.

The two assault points were five miles apart, creating the situation of two almost separate military operations by the same landing force. Owing to this distance, each of Admiral Conolly's two attack groups, northern and southern, would land and support its own assault troops.

In the north, the three regiments of the 3d Marine Division would land abreast on a 2,500-yard front—the 3d Marines on Beaches Red 1 and 2, the 21st Marines in the center on Beach Green, and the 9th Marines on Beach Blue. At one end of the front jutted Adelup Point and at the other, Asan Point; both had cave-like holes appropriate for enemy machine gun positions. Beyond the beaches lay dry rice paddies, yielding to the Fonte Ridge which overlooked the landing area. On 15 July, General Shigematsu moved his battle command post to this high ground. (See Map VII, Map Section.)

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade would go ashore with two regiments abreast—the 22d Marines on Yellow Beaches 1 and 2; the 4th Marines on White Beaches 1 and 2, to the south. These beaches stretched more than a mile between Agat village and Bangi Point, with Gaan Point at the middle. The cliffs of the Orote Peninsula 2,000 yards to the north flanked the landing area. Neye Island, just off the peninsula, and Yona Island, near the White Beaches, rose from the water like enigmatic bystanders, probably carrying hidden weapons.

Two 155mm battalions of the III Corps Artillery were to land behind the brigade, whose artillery group included the 75mm pack howitzer battalion of each regiment and two other units to be attached on landing—the Army 305th Field Artillery Battalion and Battery C, 1st 155mm Howitzer Battalion. Artillery support for the 3d Division would be provided by the 12th Marines, comprised of two 75mm pack howitzer battalions and two 105mm howitzer battalions. The fires of the 12th Marines were to be reinforced by the 7th 155mm Gun Battalion firing from the southern beachhead, while the brigade artillery group would be backed up by the 1st 155mm Howitzer Battalion.

### LOGISTICS <sup>52</sup>

The 105mm howitzers would be taken ashore in amphibian trucks of the IIIAC Motor Transport Battalion,

<sup>52</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *TF 51 OpRpt*; *TF 56 OpRpt*; *TF 53 OpRpt*; *IIIAC SAR*;

which had been converted to a DUKW organization for Guam. DUKWs would also carry radio jeeps, 37mm antitank guns, and infantry ammunition; after that, they would be used for resupply. Of the 100 amphibian trucks in the battalion, the 40 of Company C were assigned to the brigade, while the remaining 60 would support the 3d Division.

Other supplies would be moved by amphibian tractors from the reef edge across the beaches to dumps inland. The 180 LVTs of the 3d Amphibian Tractor Battalion would serve the Marine division; the 4th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, with 178 LVTs, was attached to the brigade.<sup>53</sup> After the securing of the beaches, LSTs would anchor at the reef edge for unloading.

At the northern beaches the reef was dry at low water, and trucks would be able to run out from the shore to the edge. At the southern beaches the water over the reef was always too deep for trucks to operate; LVTs and DUKWs would have to bear the cargo, risking the usual coral heads and pot-holes.

Neither reef was covered at any time with water deep enough for shallow draft craft to pass over. In fact, nowhere along the entire coastline of Guam was the reef covered at high tide by more than two feet of water. Cranes could be operated on the northern reef, but only those cranes that

3d MarDiv SAR, dtd 19Aug44, hereafter *3d MarDiv SAR*; *1st ProvMarBrig SAR*; *77th InfDiv Jnl*.

<sup>53</sup> Both battalions had been reinforced: Company A of the 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion was attached to the 3d, and Company A of the 11th to the 4th.

were mounted on pontoon barges would be usable on the southern reef. Forty-four 9 x 21-foot barges and twelve 6 x 54-foot pontoon causeways were to be carried to Guam on the sides of LSTs to save deck space for troop cargo; brackets for that purpose were installed on 17 of the landing ships.

Task Force 53 mounted out in the Solomons, where ships drew upon the storage dumps at the Naval Base, Tulagi, and the floating storage in Purvis Bay. The transports anchored close to Cape Esperance and Tetere, Guadalcanal, to be near the Marine camps to facilitate training and combat loading. Kwajalein and Roi Islands in the Marshalls served as the staging area, but owing to the postponement of W-Day it was necessary to restage at Eniwetok. The restaging involved topping off with fuel, water, provisions, and ammunition.

Adequate shipping had been provided to lift the units originally assigned to IIIAC, but additional units to be embarked required some reductions of cargo, particularly vehicles. On 4 May, for instance, Admiral Conolly was directed to take on board the entire first garrison echelon, comprising 84 officers and 498 enlisted men, an addition that somewhat complicated the allotment of space between assault and garrison troops.

In general, the logistic planning for operations on the large island of Guam had been so efficiently accomplished that no serious difficulty arose. The shipping available for FORAGER was never really enough, but miracles of adjustment were performed. Square pegs were practically fitted into round holes, and the distances between Gua-

dacanal and the chief sources of supply at Pearl Harbor, Espiritu Santo, and Noumea were telescoped by fast ships.

Outstanding and new in the logistic preparation for Guam was the IIIAC Service Group, an organization used again later at Okinawa. Staffs of the Corps Engineer and Corps Quartermaster formed the nucleus of the group, which shortly after W-Day, would include personnel of the engineer, construction, medical supply, and transport services. The Corps Engineer, Lieutenant Colonel Francis M. McAlister, was assigned to command the group; he would supervise the corps shore party operations once the Japanese port facilities had been seized. Until the garrison commander took over, the Service Group would operate the port to be established in Apra Harbor and also the airfields to be built. In a word, no time was going to be lost in transforming Guam into an advance base.

For landing the mountain of supplies, the harbor offered Piti Navy Yard and the seaplane ramp at Sumay as the best unloading points, at least at the start. The corps shore party planned to operate Piti with the 2d Battalion, 19th Marines, and Sumay with the two pioneer companies of the brigade. Two naval construction battalions, the 25th and the 53d, had been attached to IIIAC; initially the Seabees, along with corps engineers, would develop the road net in the beachhead area. After the battle was over, the 5th Naval Construction Brigade, comprised of three regiments, would begin its work under the Island Command.

Essential to the ambitious plans for developing a base, however, was the recapture of the island. The American

ground forces to be engaged totaled 54,891 men:

3d Marine Division .....	20,328
1st Provisional Marine Brigade ....	9,886
77th Infantry Division .....	17,958
III Amphibious Corps Troops .....	6,719 <sup>64</sup>

A provisional replacement company (11 officers and 383 enlisted men) embarked with the assault troops. The unit would help with unloading until its men were needed to replace combat losses. A provisional smoke screen unit, formed to augment a Seabee battalion, was also to be available for frontline combat.<sup>65</sup> For the handling of casualties, the landing force had a corps medical battalion, which embarked with equipment and supplies to operate a 1,500-bed field hospital. In addition, there were two medical companies with the brigade and the division medical battalion. The 77th Division would bring an Army field hospital.

As at Saipan, the APAs would bear the initial casualty load from the beach assault. After treatment by frontline medical personnel, wounded men would be taken either by stretcher bearers or ambulance jeep to the beaches, where they would be received by beach medical parties and placed in an LVT or DUKW for movement to transports and LSTs equipped and staffed to handle the casualties.

<sup>64</sup> *TF 56 OpRpt*, Encl F.

<sup>65</sup> No replacements arrived while the Guam operation was in progress, but some 2,600 were en route directly to the 3d Marine Division from Administrative Command, FMFPac, when the operation ended. In later Pacific campaigns, Marine divisions took along an entire replacement battalion, and used its men for beach and shore party duties until they were required in combat.

## TRAINING AND SAILING<sup>66</sup>

Most of the Marines that would fight on Guam were veterans of recent combat and experienced in an amphibious operation, but training on Guadalcanal was none the less intensive. Emphasis lay upon development of efficient tank-infantry teams. From 12 to 22 May, training included six days of ship-to-shore practice (three for each attack group), two days of air support exercises in conjunction with regimental landings, and two days of combined naval air and gunfire support exercises. On the 22d, the Northern Attack Group sortied from Guadalcanal and Tulagi, cruised for the night, and then made its approach to the rehearsal beach at Cape Esperance. All assault troops and equipment of the 3d Division were landed, supported by air and naval gunfire bombardment. Only token unloading of heavy equipment, such as tanks and bulldozers, was made. The Southern Attack Group conducted a similar rehearsal in the same area during 25-27 May. The practice was particularly designed to test communications and control on the water and on the shore.

Training on Guadalcanal was some-

<sup>66</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *TF 53 OpRpt*; *IIIAC SAR*; *Corps Arty SAR*; *3d MarDiv SAR*; *1st ProvMarBrig SAR*; *77th InfDiv Jnl*; Cdr H. E. Smith (CEC), USN, "I Saw the Morning Break," *USNI Proceedings*, v. 72, no. 3 (Mar46), hereafter Smith, "I Saw the Morning Break"; Lt Robert A. Aurthur and Lt Kenneth Cohlma, *The Third Marine Division* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1948), hereafter Aurthur and Cohlma, *The Third Marine Division*; Maj Frank O. Hough, *The Island War* (Philadelphia: J. B. Lippincott Co., 1947).

what handicapped because the island has no fringing reef, such as would be encountered at Guam. In the ship-to-shore phase, troops had to practice transferring from boats to tractors at an arbitrary point simulating the edge of the reef. Reality was lent to the rehearsals, however, by the use of live bombs and ammunition in the naval air and gunfire support exercises.

The Army troops due for Guam went straight from Hawaii to their staging area at Eniwetok, so they did not take part in the IIIAC training on Guadalcanal. The 77th Infantry Division had not yet experienced combat, but the men had been schooled in amphibious warfare, desert and mountain warfare, village fighting, and infiltration tactics at Stateside camps and then had spent some time at the Jungle Training Center on Oahu.<sup>57</sup> The 305th Infantry Regiment joined Task Force 53 at Eniwetok on 10 July, and the remainder of the 77th Division reached there a week later.

Marines of the 3d Division, their dress rehearsals over, embarked on transports and LSTs from docks at Tetere. Other ships loaded brigade troops at Kukum. On 1 June, the tractor groups left for the staging area at Kwajalein. The faster transport and support groups of TF 53, which included the *Appalachian* with IIIAC Headquarters on board, followed on 4 June. The ships stayed in the Marshalls long enough to take on fuel, water,

and provisions and to transfer assault troops from transports to landing ships. By 12 June, Admiral Conolly's entire task force had left in convoy formation, bound for the Saipan area. For 10 days, from 16 June, Marines waited on board ships near Saipan, retiring every night and returning every morning, to be ready in the event they were needed on shore. On 25 June, Admiral Spruance sent ships of the Northern Transport Group, which was carrying the 3d Marine Division, to a restaging area at Eniwetok, but he detained the brigade for five more days before returning it to the Marshalls.

Among the Marines sidetracked at Eniwetok were men of Marine Aircraft Group 21. On 4 June, the forward echelon of MAG-21, then attached to the 4th Marine Base Defense Aircraft Wing, had sailed from Efate in the New Hebrides for Guadalcanal, expecting to go on to Guam. The pilots of Marine Corsairs were prepared to fly close support missions on Guam once Orote airfield was secured and made ready. To their dismay, the men were kept on board ship at Eniwetok from 19 June to 23 July.

While the ships lingered at Eniwetok, Marines were debarked, a few at a time, for exercises on sandy islets of the lagoon, but that was hardly a respite from the average of 50 days that troops had to spend on board the hot and overcrowded ships before getting off at Guam. Marines tried to shield themselves from the burning sun by rigging tents and tarpaulins on the weather decks of LSTs. As was common on every troop ship in the Pacific, men would leave the stuffy holds to seek a cool sleeping spot topside. In the ships

<sup>57</sup> LtGen Andrew D. Bruce, USA ltr to ACofS, G-3, HQMC, dtd 18Jun65. The Army's 77th, which was suddenly pitched into a hard Pacific campaign and fought like veterans, consisted mostly of draftees from the New York metropolitan area.

due for Guam, there were several platoons of war dogs, who shared the discomfort of the voyage but were not bothered by the dwindling supply of cigarettes. A variation of shipboard monotony occurred on 17 June when a formation of Japanese torpedo bombers approached the Northern Tractor Group; the attackers were turned away by the fire of LSTs and LCTs, which shot down three of the enemy planes. One of the prized LCI(G)s was hit; the gunboat was taken under tow, but finally had to be sunk by destroyer gunfire.<sup>58</sup>

General Geiger reported that "contrary to popular opinion, this prolonged voyage had no ill effect upon the troops."<sup>59</sup> Nevertheless, everyone breathed a sigh of relief when finally, beginning on 11 July, elements of Task Force 53 again sailed for Guam. The bulk of the troops, including RCT 305, departed in transports on 18 July.

<sup>58</sup> The LCI(G)s had been used in their new role as gunboats at Saipan, but they were planned for wider use at Guam, again preceding the first assault wave to the shore. At Guam the reefs were near enough to the shore, so that the gunboats could fire their rockets successfully. These little vessels, with a five-foot draft, were armed with five 20mm cannon and three 40s, and their forward decks were packed tight with rocket frames. Originally, the LCIs had been used to carry assault infantry from shore to shore. The LCI(G) now carried a crew of 70 and 6 officers, about thrice its original T/O.

<sup>59</sup> *IIIAC SAR*, p. 2.

The ships which had been sent from Saipan to Pearl Harbor to pick up RCTs 306 and 307, arrived at Eniwetok just before the main force got underway for Guam. They continued on their long voyage to the objective on the 19th. On 20 July, the *Indianapolis*, bringing Admiral Spruance, joined the great task force, and, on the same day, Admiral Turner and General Holland Smith departed Saipan in the *Rocky Mount* to observe the Guam landings. The Japanese, viewing the armada from the crest of Mt. Tenjo, counted 274 vessels.

By the afternoon of 20 July, every ship that would be connected with the amphibious assault was either at or approaching its designated position off Guam. Prospects for success on W-Day appeared to be good, except for a flurry of concern lest an impending typhoon move near the area—and that worry was dismissed by Admiral Conolly's hurricane specialist. The weather prediction for W-Day was optimistic: a friendly sky, a light wind, a calm sea.

Admiral Conolly confirmed H-Hour as 0830. In a dispatch to the task force, he felt able to say, that because of the excellent weather, the long preparatory bombardment, and the efficient beach clearance, "conditions are most favorable for a successful landing."<sup>60</sup> Events of the next day would show whether he was right.

<sup>60</sup> *TF 53 OpRpt*, p. 11.

# W-Day

## THUNDER AT SUNRISE<sup>1</sup>

"My aim," Admiral Conolly had remarked, "is to get the troops ashore standing up."<sup>2</sup> In the preparation fires at Guam, he had left no shell unused if it would remove some peril to the landings. The same zeal to accomplish maximum results went into the bombardment on the morning of W-Day.

Some improvements upon fire support had been suggested by the experience at Saipan on D-Day. It was felt that the beach preparation there could have been enhanced by continuous deep fires along the high ground 1,500 yards in the rear of and overlooking the beaches, started well before H-Hour and kept up until the assault troops were reorganized ashore and had pushed out toward their objectives. That moment was anticipated to occur at H plus 90, or 1000. Such a procedure appeared especially worth trying at Guam, where the most serious opposition would probably come not from fixed defense guns at the beach—most of them were be-

lieved to be out of commission—but from mobile artillery inland which had not fired and had not been located. In addition, simultaneous naval gunfire and air bombardment was going to be attempted to increase overall volume and the shock effect upon the enemy. Finally, a greater use of rocket-equipped gunboats had been planned for Guam. Nine thousand 4.5-inch rockets were scheduled to be fired between 0530 and 1000.

The morning twilight of 21 July, beginning at 0445, erased a tropical sky "bespangled with stars."<sup>3</sup> At 0530, a half hour before sunrise, all fire support ships were on their assigned stations, and at 0535 four battleships off Orote Peninsula and Cabras Island opened fire with 12 14-inch guns each. Inside Agat Bay, the old *Pennsylvania* thundered at the cliff line of the peninsula. Other battleships, cruisers, and destroyers up and down the west coast immediately joined with slow and deliberate fire on the landing beaches, their flanks, and the areas just inland. Admiral Conolly in the *Appalachian* directed the bombardment of the Asan beaches, while Admiral Reifsnider in the *George*

<sup>1</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *TF 51 OpRpt*; *TF 56 OpRpt*; *TF 53 OpRpt*; *TF 53 OPlan A162-44*; *IIIAC SAR*; Smith, "I Saw the Morning Break."

<sup>2</sup> A hope expressed to General Geiger and recalled by the Corps C-2. Col William F. Coleman ltr to CMC, dtd 5Sep52.

<sup>3</sup> Smith, "I Saw the Morning Break," p. 409. War seemed out of place on a beautiful tropical night over the Pacific, and the sky would inspire poetic description by witnesses such as Commander Smith. His account of the events of W-Day morning is personal and vivid.



*Clymer* handled the shelling of the Agat beaches.<sup>4</sup>

By 0615, 12 fighters, 9 bombers, and 5 torpedo planes from the carrier *Wasp* were on station as a roving combat air patrol, an experiment at Guam. In the first air strike of W-Day, the nine bombers hit at buildings, machine gun nests, and antiaircraft emplacements on Cabras Island. The Commander, Support Aircraft, in the *Appalachian*, planned that such roving patrols be kept on station through most of W-Day, to seek out hidden guns and mortars in defiladed positions inaccessible to naval gunfire.

A spectacular sweep of the 14 miles of coastline from Agana to Bangi Point was executed between 0715 and 0815 by carrier planes flying parallel to the beaches. Assigned to the mission were 85 fighters, 62 bombers, and 53 torpedo planes. An unusual feature was that naval gunfire accompanied the attack. Under what was called Plan Victor, the firing calculations of the ships had to be adjusted so that the trajectory of their projectiles would bring them no higher than 1,200 feet. Pilots pulled out of their runs before reaching as low as 1,500 feet.

### SHIP TO SHORE<sup>5</sup>

To the familiar sounds of the pre-

<sup>4</sup>One witness of the preassault bombardment, an officer of the 9th Marines, wrote later: "I was particularly impressed to see Japanese soldiers still alive right on the landing beaches after almost 24 hours of incessant bombardment by naval gunfire." LtCol Calvin W. Kunz ltr to HistBr, G-3, HQMC, dtd 27Feb52.

<sup>5</sup>Unless otherwise noted, the material in

landing preparation,<sup>6</sup> Marines moved closer to the island. The 1st Provisional Brigade arrived in the transport area 12,000 yards east of Agat at approximately 0600. The ships carrying the assault troops of the 3d Marine Division stopped about the same time at an equivalent distance from the Asan beaches.

The brigade and the division each used 16 LSTs, and these moved into the launching area about 0700. There the landing ships opened their bow doors to disgorge LVT(A)s and LVTs carrying assault troops. On board the transports, Marines of the reserve battalions waited to debark into LCVPs. Once loaded with troops, the boats would proceed to the reef transfer line and stand by until the first waves of tractors returned from the beach. About the same time that the reserves began landing, the tanks that had moved to the target by LSD would start rumbling across the reef. Each LSD (two served the division and one the brigade) carried 20 medium tanks, loaded in a LCT and 14 LCMs.

Close on the tracks of the tanks, the direct support artillery would begin to

this section is derived from: *TF 51 OpRpt*; *TF 53 OpRpt*; *IIIAC SAR*; *3d MarDiv SAR*; *1st ProvMarBrig SAR*; 1stLt Millard Kaufman, "Attack on Guam," *Marine Corps Gazette*, v. 29, no. 4 (Apr45), hereafter Kaufman, "Attack on Guam"; Smith, "I Saw the Morning Break"; Aurthur and Cohlma, *The Third Marine Division*.

<sup>6</sup>Marine veterans of the Pacific campaigns sometimes felt that "when you've seen one naval prelanding bombardment, you've seen them all." This quip is recalled in Hough, *op. cit.*, p. vii. At Guam, however, the innovations would seem to make such a comment less applicable.

land, either in DUKWs that carried 105mm howitzers direct from ship-to-shore or in LVTs that picked up 75mm pack howitzers at the reef edge. Detached from the LSTs that had carried them to the target, pontoon barges, some mounted with cranes, would move to the reef to facilitate the transfer of supplies and equipment. As soon as the situation ashore permitted, the LSTs themselves would nose up to the coral shelf and begin landing vehicles and supplies directly on the reef.

The ships off Guam on 21 July included the 12 transports of the 3d Marine Division and the 8 of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, besides the destroyers which screened the transports. Five assault cargo ships (AKAs) shared the task of supplying thousands of Marines on Guam. The 77th Infantry Division had 12 transports, 5 cargo ships, and 3 LSTs, which rounded out a weight of shipping which lay upon some of the deepest water of the Pacific Ocean.<sup>7</sup>

Waiting to lead the assault were 18 gunboats, the LCI(G)s—evenly divided between the Marine division and the brigade. These vessels had each been fitted with 42 rocket launchers, in addition to their 20mm and 40mm guns, for the Guam operation. The craft would form the vanguard at the landings, shelling the beaches and then swinging to the flanks when about 200 yards from the reef.

Following the gunboats would be the 1st Armored Amphibian Battalion (Major Louis Metzger), its turreted LVT(A)s firing their 37mm guns at

targets on the beach. Running behind such interference, 360 LVTs were to land the assault troops almost on the heels of the first wave of LVT(A)s. Such was the usual pattern, and at Guam on the morning of 21 July, no hitches developed. "The ship to shore movement," Admiral Conolly proudly reported, "was executed with perfect precision and exactly on schedule."<sup>8</sup>

A few minutes before 0800, the gunboats crossed the line of departure and headed toward the beaches, followed seconds later by the wave of armored amphibians. Behind were six waves of LVTs, formed up and ready for the attack. H-Hour was just 30 minutes away. So far a silent enemy appeared dazed by the constant air and naval gunfire bombardment, and while there were no illusions about what could happen later, a minimum of resistance was expected to the landings.

On the northern front, as the LVTs took the assault troops shoreward, the smoke and dust of the bombardment obscured the beaches where the men were to land. The 2,500 yards of enemy-held coastline which lay between Asan Point and Adelup Point had been parceled out among the three infantry regiments of the 3d Marine Division, which were to land abreast in a column of battalions, each regiment keeping one battalion as a reserve afloat.<sup>9</sup> (See Map VII, Map Section.)

On the left, the 3d Marines, commanded by Colonel W. Carvel Hall, would go ashore over Red Beaches 1 and

<sup>8</sup> *TF 53 OpRpt*, p. 11.

<sup>9</sup> The division, lacking a floating reserve, would have to rely upon the corps reserve (77th Infantry Division, less the 305th Regiment).

<sup>7</sup> About 200 miles southwest of Guam, the ocean floor is five miles below the surface.

2. The immediate task of the regiment was to secure Adelup Point, Chonito Cliff, and the high ground southeast of the cliff, thus protecting the left flank of the division. The 21st Marines (Colonel Arthur H. Butler), landing on Green Beach, would seize the cliff line to its front and hold there until the division was ready to move inland. Upon securing the objective, Colonel Butler would assign one battalion as division reserve. On the right, the 9th Marines (Colonel Edward A. Craig) was to cross Blue Beach and take the low ridges just beyond. Colonel Craig's 3d Battalion, which was landing in assault, would become regimental reserve once the other two battalions were ashore, and it would be prepared, if so ordered, to make an amphibious landing on Cabras Island. The Piti Navy Yard, down the coast from Blue Beach, appeared also as a probable objective for the 9th Marines.

To the south, the assault troops of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade moved toward narrower beaches than those that faced the 3d Marine Division. The lesser width was compensated for by more favorable ground immediately inland; the hills were lower and the terrain more open. This promise of an easier initial advance had played a large part in influencing the choice of beaches to be hit by the two major assault units of IIIAC. Despite its smaller size, the brigade was "a two-regiment division, if I ever saw one," said Admiral Conolly later, in tribute to its accomplishments.<sup>10</sup> Actually, the

brigade was substantially a division once its reserve, the Army 305th RCT was called into action.

On the morning of W-Day, Colonel Schneider's 22d Marines was to land on Yellow Beaches 1 and 2, occupy Agat, and then turn north to seal off the Orote Peninsula. The 4th Marines under Lieutenant Colonel Shapley would go ashore over White Beaches 1 and 2, establish a beachhead, and protect the right flank of the brigade. A major and perhaps costly mission lay ahead of the brigade once the 305th was ashore—the seizure of the Orote Peninsula.

Japanese opposition to the oncoming waves of Marines was late in appearing. The enemy's coastal defense guns had either been destroyed by the bombardment or left unmanned. At 0800, the division air observer saw no activity inland of the beaches. Twelve minutes later, when the first LVTs in the assault waves were well under way, he reported "no enemy fire from the beach observed."<sup>11</sup> At 0810, the brigade air observer reported "no firing on our boats of the leading wave."<sup>12</sup> The American gunboats were then firing tremendous salvos. At the southern beaches a number of the rockets fell short, but the division air observer reported at 0820 that "the rockets are landing and giving them hell."<sup>13</sup>

The armored amphibians of the lead-

<sup>10</sup> Quoted in "Combat Leadership," The John A. Lejeune Forum, compiled by Capt Robert B. Asprey, *Marine Corps Gazette*, v. 46, no. 11 (Nov62), p. 26.

<sup>11</sup> *TF 53 OpRpt*, Encl A, p. 27. These air observers were infantry officers assigned by the IIIAC. From carrier planes they reported to headquarters ships by voice radio (the SCR 694).

<sup>12</sup> 1st ProvMarBrig Jnl (App 2 to 1st Prov-MarBrig SAR), 21Jul44, hereafter 1st Prov-MarBrig Jnl.

<sup>13</sup> 3d MarDiv SAR, p. 1.

ing assault wave, moving forward at 150 yards per minute, were then about 1,200 yards from the beaches—the scheduled time for air observers to drop their white parachute flares as a signal to the gunfire ships. Major caliber guns were then to raise their fire inland, while the rate of 5-inch gunfire would be stepped up until the armored amphibians started across the reef.

The white flares were also a signal for a special air strike by 32 Navy fighters. They were each to drop a depth bomb and then strafe the beaches until the Marines were almost on land. Following that strike, 12 other planes were to strafe just inland from the beaches until the troops set foot on the shore. Adding to the last violent preparation by naval shelling and air bombardment, the armored amphibians would fire their guns when crossing the reef, while, stationed on the flanks of the beaches, the gunboats employed their 20mm and 40mm weapons to disrupt any enemy movement sighted.

As the LVTs carrying the assault troops headed for the beaches, there was no sign of enemy activity. Admiral Conolly turned naval gunfire upon Gaan Point and Bangi Point, both of which were believed to contain well-hidden defenses, and upon Yona Island, where the brigade observer had noticed some firing. The gun there was later found to be a 75mm field piece. Except from such scattered positions, however, the Japanese did not return fire.

It was not until the Marines were within the last few yards of the beaches that the situation changed. The cumbersome amphibian tractors had nego-

tiated the reef successfully, but they fared badly thereafter from enemy fire and mines, as the beach defenses suddenly came to life. Off the northern shore, the armored amphibians and the following wave of LVTs were nearly at the beach when they received fire from Japanese small arms and antiboat guns ranging from 37mm to 75mm in size. Several tractors were hit; at least one was disabled by .30 caliber armor-piercing bullets.<sup>14</sup> Admiral Conolly's hope of getting the troops ashore standing up took an ironic twist when Marines had to leave a crippled tractor and wade in to the beach. From the high ground just inland, the Japanese turned mortar and artillery fire upon other approaching LVTs; a number of the vehicles were damaged by shell fragments.

Off the southern beaches, 24 of the tractors serving the brigade were put out of commission either by enemy fire, by damage to the treads caused by jagged coral, or by mechanical trouble.<sup>15</sup> When the first wave of the 22d Marines was about 100 yards from the beaches, intense enemy fire was received.<sup>16</sup>

<sup>14</sup> A mountain gun located on Adelup Point hit several armored amphibians. The weapon was "silenced by a destroyer that closed to the reef edge in a beautiful bit of seamanship. The destroyer's action saved the lives of a lot of Marines." One antiboat gun located at the junction of Asan Point and the beach hit two armored amphibians. That weapon was silenced by LVT(A) 37mm guns. LtCol Louis Metzger ltr to CMC, dtd 29Oct52.

<sup>15</sup> The leading waves of the brigade had 10 LVT and LVT(A) casualties. The division reported nine LVTs and LVT(A)s destroyed by enemy fire during the landing.

<sup>16</sup> One officer of 3/22, which went ashore at noon on W-Day, recalled later that "the gun

"Looks like 75mm," the brigade air observer radioed. "Can you locate source of fire?" came the query in reply.<sup>17</sup> The source proved to be a concrete blockhouse on Gaan Point. Built deep into a small coral hill, the installation had evaded photographic detection. Here was a 75mm gun lodged below four feet of rock. A shelter for a companion 37mm gun was also walled with concrete.<sup>18</sup> A few of the LVTs bound for the Yellow Beaches were damaged by the enemy fire, and some of the Marines they carried were hit.

Crossfire from Gaan Point and from Yona Island raked White Beach 2, a 300-yard strip of sand where the 1st Battalion, 4th Marines was landing. Scattered resistance came from pillboxes between Agat and Bangi Point; other fire developed from well-concealed guns at Bangi Point and artillery on the south side of the Orote Peninsula. Some resistance to the landings was offered even by guns at Faapi Point, down the coast.

Despite such spirited attempts, however, the Japanese plan of stopping the American return to Guam at the beaches had been set back, thanks in large part to Admiral Conolly's efforts. His planes and guns had not destroyed as many enemy installations as he

believed; still, as the Japanese explained later, it was "the interruptive operation of the severe bombardments" that upset their plan.<sup>19</sup>

Nowhere were the Marines prevented from landing on schedule. They were not delayed either by damage to tractors or by opposition from those enemy riflemen and machine gunners who had not yet deserted the shell-ridden beaches. Marines had a foretaste, however, of the hard fighting due on Guam; the 3d Marines received ominously heavy fire from the vicinity of Adelup Point.

At 0833, the division air observer, flying over the Asan beaches, reported: "Troops ashore on all beaches."<sup>20</sup> The brigade was on the island by 0832. Now, said the division report, "the capture of Guam was in the hands of the foot soldier."<sup>21</sup>

### THE NORTHERN BEACHES<sup>22</sup>

Once the Marines were ashore, and at least until the end of W-Day, the battle for Guam shaped up as two

was firing on line of fire as landing craft passed without traversing." Maj Samuel A. Todd ltr to CMC, dtd 30Oct52.

<sup>17</sup> *1st ProvMarBrig Jnl*, 21Jul44.

<sup>18</sup> The guns "were in a double cave, one above the other. . . . The mouth of the caves could not be seen from the sea, and trees and shrubbery prevented them from showing in aerial pictures." Col Edwin C. Ferguson interview by HistBr, G-3, HQMC, dtd 28Nov52.

<sup>19</sup> *Takeda ltr I*, p. 3.

<sup>20</sup> *3d MarDiv SAR*, Encl A, p. 1.

<sup>21</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>22</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *TF 53 OpRpt*; *IIIAC SAR*; *SARs of 3d MarDiv regiments and organic and attached units enclosed with 3d MarDiv SAR*, hereafter cited separately as necessary, e.g., *9th Mar SAR*, *3d TkBn SAR*; *3d Mar Jnl*, 21Jul-12Aug44, hereafter *3d Mar Jnl*; 1/3 Jnl, 21Jul-16Aug44, hereafter *1/3 Jnl*; 2/3 Jnl, 21Jul-24Aug44; hereafter *2/3 Jnl*; 3/3 Jnl, 21-31Jul44, hereafter *3/3 Jnl*; *9th Mar URpts*, 21Jul-19Sep44, hereafter *9th Mar URpts*; 2/21 Jnl on Guam, hereafter *2/21 Jnl*; 3/21 Jnl, 21Jul-1Nov44, hereafter *3/21 Jnl*; Aurther and Cohlma, *The Third Marine Division*.

separate military operations on beaches miles apart. On the left of the 3d Division beaches, the 3d Marines had the hardest going on the morning of 21 July. The whole division was landing between what the Marines called "a pair of devil's horns"—Adelup Point and Asan Point.<sup>23</sup> The latter, on the right, had been dulled by the naval and air bombardment, but was still infested with enemy troops.<sup>24</sup> The devil's left horn, the reports understate, "still had some life in it."<sup>25</sup> To be more specific, the Japanese had weathered the terrific preassault gunfire and explosives, emerged from their caves and wooded folds on the reverse slopes of the high ground, and returned to their prepared gun and mortar positions on Chonito Cliff, which overshadowed the Red Beaches, and on the ridges to the south and southeast. (See Map VII, Map Section.)

Expecting grim resistance to the advance of the 3d Marines, Colonel Hall drew his first objective line across the enemy's well-defended high ground immediately inland. He was landing the 1st Battalion over Red Beach 2 and the 3d to the left over Red Beach 1. The 2d Battalion was to land in reserve and move to an assembly area behind Red 1. The regimental commander planned to put the reserve either at the center of the objective line once it was gained, or else to pass it through the left com-

pany of the 3d Battalion, to seize Adelup Point.

The immediate situation at the Red Beaches was not favorable. Minutes after the leading waves of the 3d Marines were ashore, the Japanese opened up in earnest, turning artillery, mortars, and machine guns upon the beaches and the reef, lobbing well-directed mortar shells squarely among the LVTs. Some of the Marines were casualties before getting on land; others were hit when they were barely on the beaches by an enemy enjoying perfect observation. At 0912, the commander of 3/3, Lieutenant Colonel Ralph L. Houser, reported "mortar fire and snipers very heavy," resulting in "many casualties."<sup>26</sup>

The optimistic hope of a dash to the initial objective, Chonito Cliff, before the enemy revived from the preassault bombardment dissolved into grim acceptance of the struggle ahead. The danger posed by the Japanese in their caves on Chonito Cliff led to some exaggerated news reports of its size. The cliff itself was only the seaward edge of the steep ridge which overlooked the whole length of the Red Beaches; it lay northeast of Red Beach 1. While Chonito Cliff's rugged terrain was a boon to its defenders, it was curiously obstructive to the Japanese on adjoining Adelup Point. Projecting to the edge of the water, Chonito Cliff walled off Red Beach 1 and restricted the enemy guns on Adelup Point to attacking the approaching LVTs rather than the Marines on the beach. That fire was fi-

<sup>23</sup> *3rd MarDiv SAR*, Encl A, p. 1.

<sup>24</sup> Asan Point and ridge running inland from it came alive with enemy fire as the 9th Marines advanced inland. Many Japanese held their fire as the assault troops passed and then opened up on support and CP echelons. *Craig 22Jun65 ltr.*

<sup>25</sup> *3d MarDiv SAR*, Encl A, p. 1.

<sup>26</sup> *3/3 Jnl*, 21Jul44. The spare litters were soon used up. Others were constructed from poles and ponchos.



*3D DIVISION ASSAULT TROOPS take cover along the Asan beaches as messengers crouch low to avoid enemy fire. (USMC 88167)*



*MARINES watch tensely as a flamethrower blasts an enemy dugout in the advance inland on Guam. (USMC 88072)*

nally silenced by a destroyer which moved up to "rock throwing" range,<sup>27</sup> but the Marines were not yet through with Adelup Point.

In the approximate 400 yards between Adelup Point and Chonito Cliff lay a deep dry stream bed where the beach road which followed the west coast went over a concrete bridge after cutting through Chonito Cliff. "The bridge and the ridge tip between the beach and the road formed an enemy strong point," recalled a Marine officer of 3/3. "The cut and the bridge afforded excellent protection from bombardment and bombing."<sup>28</sup> The Japanese had dug an ingenious tunnel system, permitting them to fire upon both the road and the beach. South of the cliff was a draw leading inland.

Company I, landing on the right of Red Beach 1, tried to get through the draw but was stopped by enemy fire. Company K crossed the stream bed and started up Chonito Cliff but without success. The support platoon of Company K then attempted to force a way through the cut but was badly hurt by machine gun fire and grenades. The enemy rolled some of the grenades down the cliff.

To break up the impasse, Lieutenant Colonel Houser employed flamethrowers and called upon tanks of Company C, 3d Tank Battalion, which took position along the beach road and fired squarely into the caves.<sup>29</sup> The battalion com-

mander then committed his reserve, Company L, which "breeched the cut and pushed on to the flat land north of Chonito Cliff. This move required the entire company to move down the beach road with the sea on the left and the steep cliff face on the right."<sup>30</sup>

By noon, the danger of Chonito Cliff had been removed, and here, at least, the 3d Marines had reached its initial objective.<sup>31</sup> The situation permitted Colonel Hall to confer with battalion commanders on top of the cliff at 1300. That afternoon, Marines of 3/3, supported by tanks and armored amphibians, overcame some Japanese resistance on Adelup Point; a few of the enemy guns there had escaped the sea bombardment. Meanwhile, Lieu-

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into action on Guam. The rest of the division's 40 medium tanks were ashore by 1000. General Craig commented in regard to this feat: "The tanks did a wonderful and dangerous job in getting ashore. Transferring those big 45-ton tanks from Navy landing craft to a sheer reef edge in choppy seas and then driving them through rough coral spotted with deep potholes to the beach is an accomplishment which I believe deserves special note. The method devised of holding the Navy landing craft against the face of the reef by using LVTs and cables is also worthy of note. The tanks would probably have never made it if someone had not worked out this method." *Craig 22Jun65 ltr.*

<sup>30</sup> *Bastian ltr.*

<sup>31</sup> Later, while enlarging the beach road, engineers and Seabees altered the appearance of Chonito Cliff so that, as one Marine officer recalled, "the area was not recognizable when I returned several weeks after the landing." *Ibid.* General Craig noted that the same situation held true regarding Asan Point, where Army engineers set up a quarry and rock crushing machine and tore down most of the ridge leading from the point for road construction material. *Craig 22Jun65 ltr.*

<sup>27</sup> BGen W. Carvel Hall ltr to CMC, dtd 4Dec52, hereafter *Hall ltr.*

<sup>28</sup> LtCol Royal R. Bastian, Jr., ltr to CMC, dtd 23Aug52, hereafter *Bastian ltr.*

<sup>29</sup> Company C had landed from LCMs on Red Beach 1 at H-Hour plus 29 minutes, and just a half hour later its tanks were the first to go



tenant Colonel Houser moved the battalion command post from the beach to a bend of the road.<sup>32</sup> The subsequent movement of 3/3, however, was handicapped not only by enemy fire from the front but also, particularly, by the Japanese defenses on Bundschu Ridge, which lay in the path of 1/3, commanded by Major Henry Aplington, II.

Bundschu Ridge was one of those inherently worthless pieces of land which were emotionally remembered by the men who fought there in World War II. On board ship, before the landing, it had been named for Captain Geary R. Bundschu, commander of Company A, who had been assigned to take the ridge. It was also referred to in the reports as "Our Ridge." Similar to Chonito Cliff, but farther inland and beyond some rice paddies, the ridge stood near the boundary of the two Red Beaches, a rock pile 400 feet high and 200 yards square, thatched with jungle vegetation. It was so situated that even a handful of well-hidden men, using mortars and machine guns, could repel a much larger force moving up from below.

Captain Bundschu's company had already suffered from enemy fire while on the water and on the beach. Now, with but a few minutes for reorganization, he started the attack, moving across the rice paddies toward the ridge, with two platoons in assault and one in support. By 0920 the lead platoons were pinned down in a gully to the west of the ridge by Japanese mortar and machine gun fire, so the support platoon was com-

mitted to the left, or east side. Captain Bundschu was then able to get up to within 100 yards of the ridge top. At the same time, 1045, he called for more corpsmen and stretcher bearers. Company B was somewhat better off. Advancing on the right, it was delayed more by jungle and rock than by enemy fire; still the company lost five men killed in the day's action. Company C, the reserve, was not committed to the fighting on W-Day, but Major Aplington did receive permission to use two platoons for a combat outpost on the right flank.

The plight of Company A led the regimental commander to drop his original plan of massing 81mm mortar fire on Adelup Point, where enemy resistance had proved relatively minor.<sup>33</sup> Instead, at 1045, he reassigned control of the 1st Battalion 81s to Major Aplington. The platoon was pinned down, however, shortly after moving up to Bundschu Ridge. Its gunnery sergeant and four men were hit, and late that day the unit was still unable to move. Colonel Hall committed the reserve 2d Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Hector de Zayas, to the center of the regimental front and ordered renewal of the attack at 1500 along the entire line.

For Captain Bundschu, the situation had been frustrating and saddening, as the hidden enemy exacted a toll of Marines for every step taken. About 1400 he asked Major Aplington for permission to disengage, a request which had

<sup>32</sup> A branch of the beach road wound from near Adelup Point into the Fonte hill mass, where General Shigematsu's battle command post was located.

<sup>33</sup> The battalion mortar platoons were to land with their parent units and then combine into a mortar groupment near the boundary of Red Beaches 1 and 2. 3d Mar OPlan 3-44, dtd 27May44.

to be denied because the company was so involved. It was Colonel Hall's view that a second attack on the ridge should be attempted, but he "did not specify a frontal assault."<sup>34</sup>

Apprehensive about the results, Captain Bundschu reorganized what was left of Company A and prepared to undertake again the last 100 yards of the ridge. At nearly the end of a day oppressive with tropical heat, the Marines tried again, knowing the odds. They once more encountered the machine gun fire that had stopped the initial assault; now, however, with the effective support of 40mm guns of Battery I, 14th Defense Battalion, "a thin line of Company A men reached the crest."<sup>35</sup> Other Marines, shot en route up the steep slope, fell backwards to the ground far below. At the top of the ridge, enemy fire of savage intensity prevented a reorganization for defense of the ground gained; the foothold became untenable. The second attack on the ridge had cost the life of Captain Bundschu and further depleted Company A. At nightfall, the enemy still held Bundschu Ridge, and the Marines were reminded of this fact by the Japa-

nese fire which kept up through the unhappy night.

While 1/3 was stalled at the initial regimental objective line, the 2d Battalion was past it, yet still short of the first division objective, which Colonel Hall had fixed as the goal of a renewed attack at 1500. The arc of steep hills which circled the Asan beachhead was everywhere well-defended by the enemy who had started moving up reserves from the Fonte area to combat the invasion.<sup>36</sup> This movement was impeded but not prevented by the fire of 75mm and 105mm howitzers of the 3d Division artillery regiment. The first battery of the 12th Marines had landed and registered by 1215. By 1640, all the division artillery was ashore. Close support artillery, however, was not available to the 3d Marines on W-Day; the range was too short, and the fire could not be seen by forward observers.<sup>37</sup>

W-Day had ended with the 3d Marines still out of contact with the 21st Marines on its right. Colonel Butler's regiment had landed on Beach Green in a column of battalions, in order 3d, 2d, and 1st. Nowhere were the results of the naval gunfire preparation more evident than here on Beach Green; it was "extremely effective."<sup>38</sup>

The Japanese had abandoned their

<sup>34</sup> *Hall ltr.*

<sup>35</sup> BGen James Snedeker ltr to CMC, dtd 28Sep52. Colonel Snedeker, executive officer of the 3d Marines, assumed fire direction of the 40mm guns. He recalled "sitting on a sand dune with a portable radio. From this position I could see the 40mm guns and the enemy, but neither could see the other. Enemy machine gun fire picked up the sand all about my exposed position." The 14th Defense Battalion was armed chiefly with antiaircraft weapons; however, with the absence of enemy planes over Guam, the weapons were handy for other uses.

<sup>36</sup> Even on W-Day, the 3d Marines were already opposed by an enemy force of at least three companies "with a large number of automatic weapons." 3d MarDiv D-2 Periodic Rpt No. 70, dtd 23Jul44.

<sup>37</sup> Once the Marines were farther inland, artillery was employed more often. In fact, the 3d Marines reported that "for close support, there is no substitute for artillery." *3d Mar SAR*, p. 7.

<sup>38</sup> *21st Mar SAR*, p. 1.

organized defenses in the beach area; no enemy dead were found there. The scene of wreckage included a demolished coconut grove along the beach; trunks of the trees lay across the road. The assault waves of the 3d Battalion encountered no resistance in landing but received mortar fire from the Japanese positions on the high ground just inland. Such fire on the beach area became more intense by the minute and resulted in a number of casualties. When the regimental headquarters landed in the 11th wave, it had to set up temporarily in a ditch near the beach to obtain cover.

At Guadalcanal, officers had been briefed on the "almost impossible" cliffs which the 3d Marines and the 21st Marines would face shortly after landing.<sup>39</sup> Colonel Butler had mapped out a tactical plan based on aerial photos which identified two defiles, or narrow passages—one at each end of the regimental zone—which permitted access to the cliff tops via the steeply rising ground inland of Beach Green. The defiles were related to the two forks of the Asan River, which joined to emerge into the rice paddies.

According to Colonel Butler's plan, the 2d Battalion, landing behind the 3d Battalion, would pass through the left of 3/21 when the latter had reached its first objective, a moderate height beyond the village of Asan. The 2d Battalion would then move up the defile on the left toward the steep cliffs, while the 3d Battalion undertook the other passage. The two units would not try for contact until they had gained the

plateau, where they would extend to form a new line. Behind the advance to the cliffs, the regimental reserve, 1/21, would mop up and then revert to division reserve.

Starting up the Asan River valley, the 3d Battalion suffered casualties from enemy mortar fire. At one point, the advance was held up by a Japanese machine gun platoon which was so positioned that it could also fire southwest into the zone of 1/9 on the right of 3/21. Here Lieutenant Colonel Carey A. Randall, commanding 1/9, joined with Lieutenant Colonel Wendell H. Duplantis of 3/21 in removing enemy threats. He laid down preparatory fires for an attack on the machine gun position by 3/21, while naval gunfire, directed by 3/21, neutralized a mortar position on the objective of 1/9. "Approximately 14 machine guns, heavy and light, 6 mortars, and the entire supply of ammunition were seized in this section."<sup>40</sup> Two Japanese were captured in the machine gun position; they were "believed to be the first prisoners seized in the campaign."<sup>41</sup>

By midmorning, the 3d Battalion had reached the high ground behind Asan, and at 1250, the 2d Battalion passed through the lines of Company K. For 2/21, the ordeal of the cliff area, which was to drag out for days, began in earnest. Some Marines would remember it in total as the battle for Banzai Ridge.<sup>42</sup> Actually, the battle involved a

<sup>39</sup> Col Wendell H. Duplantis ltr to CMC, dtd 30Oct52, hereafter *Duplantis ltr*.

<sup>40</sup> *Ibid.*

<sup>41</sup> See 1stLt Anthony A. Frances, "The Battle for Banzai Ridge," *Marine Corps Gazette*, v. 29, no. 6 (Jun45), hereafter Frances, "The Battle for Banzai Ridge."

<sup>42</sup> Aurthur and Cohlma, *The Third Marine Division*, p. 147.

series of cliffs, "where every ridge gained by the 21st Marines disclosed another pocket of the enemy behind it." <sup>43</sup>

After travelling almost a mile from the beach, the 2d Battalion, moving up through the defile, approached a steep 100-foot cliff which cut diagonally across the main axis of attack. The Japanese expected no one to be hardy or bold enough to attempt a frontal attack here, but the terrain required it; there was no room to maneuver troops. Upon Company F fell the burden of the assault. Company E was echeloned to the right rear, while Company G took its position below the cliff as the reserve.

The rifle platoons of Company F started up the rocky cliff face, climbing via three indentations which permitted some concealment. "Slowly the men pulled themselves up the cliff, clinging to scrub growth, resting in crevices, sweating" under the tropical sun—it was a story often to be repeated on Guam. "Scouts on the left drew the first enemy fire. The platoons kept climbing. The platoon on the right was nearly decimated." <sup>44</sup> Company E started two squads and a patrol up the cliff and also suffered casualties. Results of the shipboard confinement seemed to show here; a few of the men

were unable to finish the arduous climb.<sup>45</sup> The Marines who did get to the top received machine gun fire there from a ridge less than 50 yards away, but they held on while the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Eustace R. Smoak, set up the defense for the night; he put Company G on the left, Company F in the center, and Company E on the right flank. The battalion dug in on the objective under artillery and mortar fire from the ridge beyond.

The 3d Battalion, moving upon the high ground to the right, was able to tie in with 2/21 by outposts only; the jungle vegetation made contact difficult. The 1st Battalion, after mopping up to the rear and encountering few of the enemy there, reverted to division reserve. To the regimental left, a deep jungle-thick ravine separated the 21st and 3d Marines, leaving a gap of 150 yards, despite the efforts of patrols to make contact. Yet it was "a well neutralized gap," the division reported. "Enemy mortar fire kept the gap open; our own kept out the enemy." <sup>46</sup>

To the right, contact was well established between the 21st and the 9th Marines. Of the division infantry regiments, the 9th Marines had met the least resistance from the terrain, although as much from enemy troops. It was able to make the most actual progress on W-Day. The regiment landed in a column of battalions, with 3/9 in the assault, followed by 2/9 in support and 1/9 in reserve. The mis-

<sup>43</sup> *3d MarDiv SAR*, Encl A, p. 3. The Commandant of the Marine Corps, Lieutenant General Alexander A. Vandegrift, a veteran of jungle and mountain warfare in the Caribbean and in the South Pacific, later inspected the terrain here and in the zone of the 3d Marines; he called it "some of the most rugged country I have ever seen." *Ibid.*, p. 4.

"Frances, 'The Battle For Banzai Ridge,'" p. 13.

<sup>45</sup> A shortage of water added hardship to a hot day. At 1730, however, 3/21 reported that "one canteen of water arrived at CP for each man." *3/21 Jnl*, 21Jul44.

<sup>46</sup> *3d MarDiv SAR*, Encl A, p. 3.

sion of the 3d Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Walter Asmuth, Jr.) was to seize the high ground immediately inland, including Asan Point. The other two battalions would then pass through when so ordered, while 3/9 became regimental reserve. The 1st and 2d Battalions, the latter on the right, were scheduled to seize the next objective, a line 1,000 yards from the beach and just short of the Tatgua River.

The 9th Marines landed under Japanese mortar and artillery fire directed at LVTs in the water, on the reef, and on the beach; a considerable number of casualties resulted.<sup>47</sup> Once past the beach, the troops encountered negligible small arms fire while crossing the dry rice paddies. Further along, however, the southeasterly course of Company I on the right was slowed by fire from caves on Asan Point and along the ridge which extended from Asan Point to the mouth of the Nidual River, but no line of enemy resistance was set up. Lieutenant Colonel Asmuth used the reserve Company L to assist in taking and clearing the ridge, while tanks provided overhead fire support. Company K, on the battalion left, fared very well; after a steady advance across the rice paddies, it took the ridge to its front "with astonishing rapidity."<sup>48</sup>

<sup>47</sup> Here, as along the entire division landing area, the enemy fire benefited from perfect observation. The commander of the 9th Marines remarked later that "until the FBHL in the Mt. Alutom-Mt. Tenjo area was taken by us, direct observation of practically all our rear areas was possible by the enemy." LtGen Edward A. Craig ltr to CMC, dtd 30Sep52, hereafter *Craig ltr*.

<sup>48</sup> Col Walter Asmuth, Jr., ltr to CMC, dtd 11Sep52.

Following the seizure of the rice paddy area near the mouth of the Asan River, the 12th Marines (Colonel John B. Wilson) began setting up its firing batteries to support the infantry assault.

At 1350, the 3d Battalion, 9th Marines reached its objective, and 1/9 and 2/9 waited orders to pass through. At 1415, just eight minutes after receiving the word from the division commander, Colonel Craig attacked, advancing to within 400 yards of the Tatgua River by 1600. There the troops dug in for the night.

The progress of 1/9 and 2/9 had not been devoid of enemy resistance. Though Asan Point had been previously well covered by 3/9, there were still small groups of Japanese in concealed firing positions.<sup>49</sup> When the 2d Battalion crossed the bridge over the Nidual River, enemy machine guns on the point opened up, and the Marines had to fight to the rear a short distance in order to reduce the opposition.<sup>50</sup>

Colonel Craig had set up his advance command post immediately to the rear of the 3d Battalion, and it was fire from Asan Point apparently which wounded the regimental executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Jaime Sabater, on W-Day.<sup>51</sup> A Marine antitank gun at the command post knocked out a con-

<sup>49</sup> Three weeks later, the Marines were still finding Japanese in the honeycomb of caves on Asan Point. *Craig ltr*.

<sup>50</sup> Besides the machine gun positions on Asan Point, there was a battery of three 8-inch naval guns in concrete emplacements. The battery covered the beaches and seaward to the west of Asan Point; Marines found it abandoned.

<sup>51</sup> The 9th Marines then had no executive officer until 30 July when Lieutenant Colonel Ralph M. King joined the regiment.

cealed Japanese antitank gun in the vicinity. Like the machine guns that covered the Nidual River bridge, the enemy weapon, manned by eight men, was so well camouflaged that it escaped detection by 3/9.

At 1830, the 9th Marines tied in with the 21st Marines. The progress of the 9th Marines on W-Day—the regiment had secured a beachhead 1,500 yards in depth—was dearly won, for casualties had been high.<sup>52</sup> Included in the figure of 231 were 20 officers killed or wounded. Lieutenant Colonel Asmuth of 3/9 was among the wounded; he was relieved on 22 July by Major Donald B. Hubbard. The commanders of Company I and Company K were both killed in action.

#### *SUNSET OVER THE ASAN BEACHHEAD*<sup>53</sup>

The first day on Guam had cost the 3d Marine Division 105 men killed, 536 wounded, and 56 missing in action. A number of these casualties had resulted from the mortar, artillery, and sniper fire which fell upon the beaches—hand-

icapping but never stopping the movement of supplies.<sup>54</sup>

To get the immediate necessities ashore, every available man was employed; bakers of the 3d Service Battalion, who did not have to bake bread until later, turned to as boat riders and handled cargo. It was the 19th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. Fojt, which formed the backbone of the division shore party. Company B, 5th Field Depot, of the Supply Service, FMFPac, had been attached to the division and at 1030 the unit landed on Red Beach 2 to operate the supply dumps. The 5th Field Depot, which was part of the Island Command, had been assigned a string of prospective dump sites on Guam, totaling more than 600 acres, but most of the areas “proved to be suitable for rice cultivation and not much else.”<sup>55</sup>

As General Geiger reported, the ship-to-shore movement was “skillfully executed.”<sup>56</sup> There were instances where some things could have been done differently and better, but they were relatively few in proportion to the size of the division landing.<sup>57</sup> Men trans-

<sup>52</sup> This was the maximum depth of the division beachhead at the end of W-Day. In width it measured 4,000 yards. Such figures are illusory, however, because of the numerous gaps in the line and the fact that the enemy held strong positions overlooking the beachhead.

<sup>53</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *TF 53 OpRpt*; *IIIAC SAR*; *3d MarDiv SAR*; *5th FldDep SAR*, dtd 25Aug44, hereafter *5th FldDep SAR*; Capt Edwin H. Klein, “The Handling of Supplies at Guam,” *Marine Corps Gazette*, v. 29, no. 2 (Feb45), hereafter Klein, “The Handling of Supplies at Guam.”

<sup>54</sup> Such enemy fire kept up all day and “had troop leaders been less aggressive in moving their units off the beach, casualties would have been much heavier.” Lodge, *Recapture of Guam*, p. 47.

<sup>55</sup> Klein, “The Handling of Supplies at Guam,” p. 26. Company B was attached to the 3d Service Battalion for the landing.

<sup>56</sup> *IIIAC SAR*, Encl B, p. 2.

<sup>57</sup> Teams of the 3d Joint Assault Signal Company (JASCO) landed less than 20 minutes after H-Hour, much sooner than necessary. They had their ship-to-shore and lateral beach communications set up by 1100, but there was no traffic until more than two hours later. Major John H. Ellis, the company commander, recommended after the campaign that “the

ferred tons of cargo from landing craft to LVTs and DUKWs, using large cranes mounted on pontoon barges anchored just off the reef. The amphibian tractors and trucks then took the cargo from the reef to the shore.<sup>58</sup>

The reef here extended at distances varying from 100 to 350 yards from the beaches. At high tide it was covered by 30 inches of water and at low tide by 6 inches. The edge dropped off abruptly; the reef detachment often worked in waist-high water. When fuel drums were deposited from landing craft at the reef edge they were floated in by wading Marines. Unloading was continued for some hours after dark—an unusual procedure on the day of a landing, for it required partial lighting on the ships—but the absence of enemy aircraft allowed such a risk.

By sunset of W-Day, the 3d Marine Division was well started on the battle to recapture Guam. At 1715, General Turnage assumed command ashore.

### THE SOUTHERN BEACHES<sup>59</sup>

The 1st Provisional Marine Brigade on W-Day encountered more favorable

teams should not be landed until they are operationally useful. Four JASCO teams," he said, "took boat spaces of 80 infantrymen and then waited on the beach for more than four hours before their services were required." *3d JASCO SAR*, p. 1.

<sup>58</sup> Marines of the 2d Separate Engineer Battalion comprised the reef transfer battalion. For the immense job at the reef, they were helped by men of the 3d Service Battalion.

<sup>59</sup> Unless otherwise noted, the material in this section is derived from: *IIIAC SAR*; *1st ProvMarBrig SAR*; *5th FldDep SAR*; *1st ProvMarBrig URpts* Nos. 1-12, 21Jul-1Aug44,

terrain than the division. The enemy, however, supplied the resistance which the earth itself did not. In spite of the preassault bombardment, there were Japanese waiting for the Marines—deafened and shocked, but waiting grimly. The beach defenses, some of them intact although scarred by gunfire, included concrete pillboxes and a trench system with machine gun emplacements and tank traps. Casualties were numerous at Yellow Beach 2, where Marines received savage fire from the concrete blockhouse on Gaan Point—a cornerstone of the beach defense—and small arms, mortar, and machine gun fire from other well-concealed positions overlooking the beach. (See Map VII, Map Section.)

Brigade assault troops set foot on Guam at 0832. At the extreme left, the 1st Battalion, 22d Marines landed on Yellow Beach 1, while 2/22 went ashore on Yellow Beach 2 and the 3d Battalion, boated in LCVPs, marked time at the line of departure, in ready reserve. When ordered, the Marines of 3/22 would transfer at the edge of the reef to LVTs returning empty from

hereafter *1st ProvMarBrig URpts*; 22d Mar Jnl, 21Jul-16Aug44, hereafter *22d Mar Jnl*; 1/4 WarD, 30May-9Sep44, hereafter *1/4 WarD*; 3/4 WarD, 21Jul-9Aug44, hereafter *3/4 WarD*; 1/22 Jnl, 21Jul-9Aug44, hereafter *1/22 Jnl*; 6th TkBn SAR, dtd 30Mar45, hereafter *6th TkBn SAR*; Condit and Turnblad, *Hold High the Torch*; Charles O. West, et. al., eds., *Second to None! The Story of the 305th Infantry in World War II* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1949), hereafter West, *Second to None*; LtCol Max Myers, ed., *Ours to Hold it High: The History of the 77th Infantry Division in World War II* (Washington: Infantry Journal Press, 1947), hereafter Myers, *Ours to Hold it High*.

the beach.<sup>60</sup> Led by their share of the 37 armored amphibians assigned to the brigade, assault troops of the 4th Marines landed on White Beaches 1 and 2—the 2d Battalion on the left and the 1st on the right, with 3/4 in reserve.<sup>61</sup> At 0846 Lieutenant Colonel Shapley reported “battalions landed and received mortar fire on beaches.”<sup>62</sup> The brigade had begun its battle for Guam.

The 22d Marines suffered a considerable loss of men and equipment while landing, but once the troops were some 200 yards inland, out of range of the Japanese guns aimed at the beaches, progress was easier—at least briefly so. The 2d Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Donn C. Hart) had advanced to high ground about 1,000 yards inland before noon, when it began to receive artillery fire, a foretaste of the resistance beyond the beaches. Such fire increased as Lieutenant Colonel Hart reorganized on the high ground and prepared to move out at 1250 to seize his portion of the brigade objective, a line which included the crest of Mt. Alifan and the village of Agat. Progress that afternoon was measured by inches. When a Japanese dual-purpose gun stopped Company E, the battalion commander requested an air strike. But the strafing hit the front lines, and casual-

ties resulted when several bombs fell in the vicinity of Company F. The accident prevented resumption of the attack before the battalion received orders to dig in for the night.

The 1st Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Walfried H. Fromhold) had wheeled left toward Agat after landing. The villagers had long since deserted the town, but the rubble left by the naval and air bombardment was still inhabited—by Japanese snipers. The Marines expected to encounter organized resistance from the surrounding area, if not from the town itself. While Company A moved rapidly across the rice paddies, Company B, to the left, advanced up the beach. Both units reported little opposition, but Lieutenant Colonel Fromhold took the precaution of committing the battalion reserve, Company C, on the seaward flank.<sup>63</sup>

In the ruins of Agat, the Marines received some sniper fire, but at 1020 Lieutenant Colonel Fromhold reported: “We have Agat.”<sup>64</sup> By 1130 the 1st Battalion was at Harmon Road, which led from the middle of Agat to the Maanot Pass on the northern shoulder of Mt. Alifan, and the regimental commander ordered the capture of the rest of the town.

Company C, on the extreme left of

<sup>60</sup> “The LVT waves had been ordered to proceed inland a distance of 1,000 yards from the beach before stopping to unload, but that was found to be impracticable, except in isolated places, due to obstacles and mines inland of the beach.” *1st ProvMarBrig SAR*, p. 4.

<sup>61</sup> The 3d Battalion began landing on White Beach 2 at 0930. Due to failure of radio communications, the reserve battalion of the 22d Marines did not receive orders to land until 1236.

<sup>62</sup> *1st ProvMarBrig Jnl*, 21Jul44.

<sup>63</sup> Regimental headquarters then attached Company I as the 1/22 reserve, after landing the company on Yellow Beach 2 at 1010. The 3d Battalion headquarters and Company K landed at 1255 and moved to an assembly area. At 1615, Company L was attached to 2/22. At 1630, the 3d Battalion, less Companies I and L, moved to set up defenses for Yellow Beach 1.

<sup>64</sup> *22d Mar Jnl*, 21Jul44.



the brigade, had some rough going that afternoon. While attempting to flank an insignificant mound east of Agat, the Marines received machine gun fire from the beach 50 yards away, which forced their withdrawal to a series of trenches near the foot of the hill. Here the men were pinned down for an hour. When a reserve platoon of Company I was sent forward, the Marines renewed the attack, only to be turned back again by the intolerable fire of automatic weapons concealed in a maze of underbrush.

In graphic language, a Marine officer described the situation: <sup>65</sup>

. . . the Marines didn't know where the emplacements were, and many of them died trying to find out. The men wondered and waited, and dug in for the night.

Then occurred one of those inexplicable things known to every Marine who has fought Japs, and understood by none. Down a trail leading to the center of the trench marched 12 Japs. They carried the machine guns—three heavies and a light—which had held up the American advance all afternoon. The Japs were riddled by Marine bullets. 'Those Nips were so heavy with slugs we couldn't lift them,' said one of the men.

The fighting had depleted Company C. At 1705, the commander reported he had only 100 effectives, including the reserve platoon, and would "need help for tonight." <sup>66</sup> A second reserve platoon was moved up. The battalion commander ordered Company C to fall back 50 yards to a better position for the night and to tie in with Company B. At 2000, all companies of the battalion

were dug in, believing they could hold their positions until morning.<sup>67</sup>

The 1st Battalion, 22d Marines had lost a number of men on W-Day. The handling of casualties had been complicated for hours after the landing because a shell from a Japanese 75mm field gun hit an aid station party, destroying medical supplies and injuring every member except one. Not until afternoon did the battalion have a doctor, but it was still short of corpsmen, stretchers, and bearers. Evacuation was hampered until an amphibian tractor was obtained.

It was the shortage of amphibian tractors, due to losses, that was chiefly responsible for the supply headaches that plagued the brigade on W-Day. Commanders called for more ammunition at the frontlines. When the situation did not improve, General Shepherd sent word to the commander of the Southern Transport Group and to the control vessel:

Supplies not coming ashore with sufficient rapidity. Believe delay at transfer line at edge of reef. Expedite movement, with preference to all types ammunition.<sup>68</sup>

Getting supplies transferred at the reef was never a picnic; with insufficient LVTs, the difficulties were compounded and the tasks made even harder. Another handicap was the deposit of silt at the inner edge of the reef, which caused some of the amphibian tractors and DUKWs to bog down.

<sup>67</sup> General Shepherd had ordered that the brigade attack cease not later than 1700 and that particular attention be paid to defenses in depth and maintenance of a local reserve against possible counterattacks. 1st ProvMarBrig OpO No. 9, dtd 21Jul44.

<sup>68</sup> 1st ProvMarBrig Jnl, 21Jul44.

<sup>65</sup> Kaufman, "Attack on Guam," p. 3.

<sup>66</sup> 1/22 Jnl, 21Jul44.

Rubberboat causeways and ship life rafts partially helped to relieve the congestion on the reef, and every available man was put to work here.<sup>69</sup>

Among the brighter aspects of W-Day were the optimum conditions for use of armor. With the advance inland, 1/22 came to "good tank country" before noon and reported it "would like to use the tanks here."<sup>70</sup> The 22d Marines armor support had reached the reef at 0840 and run into mortar fire, mines, and shell holes while moving onto the beaches; two tanks submerged before getting ashore.

Due to the condition of the reef, the tank company of the 22d Marines had been ordered to land on the 4th Marines beaches and then travel along the waterline to join its regiment. The detour took time but it was not without benefit, for en route the tanks destroyed the troublesome Japanese emplacement at Gaan Point, knocking out one of the guns at a range of 50 yards.<sup>71</sup> Machine gun and mortar positions along the beach were also fired upon. The tanks reported to 2/22, according to orders, but the lack of opposition and the unsuitable terrain there suggested support of 1/22 instead, and armor led the afternoon attack by Company A. To-

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<sup>69</sup> Except for Company B, which went ashore on Red Beach 2, the assault echelon of the 5th Field Depot was landed over the Yellow and White Beaches and attached to the brigade. The pioneer companies of the 4th and 22d Marines passed to control of the brigade shore party.

<sup>70</sup> 1/22 *Jnl*, 21Jul44.

<sup>71</sup> A misfortune of the trip was that two tanks got stuck in shell holes on the beach. In retrieving the vehicles, the Marines suffered several casualties from mortar and artillery fire.

ward evening, tanks were sent to reinforce the hard-hit Company C.

Before dark of W-Day, the Marines of 2/22 could see the 4th Marines to their right, across a deep gully. Lieutenant Colonel Shapley's regiment had moved rapidly inland after meeting negligible enemy resistance at the beaches. Up to an hour after the landing, casualties were still "very light."<sup>72</sup>

The immediate ground encountered by the 4th Marines was more flat than that the 22d Marines had met; in fact, the elevations were so low that the maps did not show them. The Japanese knew of them, however. One such rise—it was 10 to 20 feet high—lay in the path of the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines, at a distance of less than 100 yards from the beach. The Japanese were dug in on the reverse slope, and the pocket of resistance briefly delayed the advance of 2/4. By 0947, however, Lieutenant Colonel Shapley reported that the 2d Battalion (Major John S. Messer) was 700 yards inland.

The 1st Battalion (Major Bernard W. Green) had landed with Company A and Company B in the assault. When 30 yards from the beach, Company B, on the left, had two Marines killed and three wounded by machine gun fire before the pillbox from which it came was located and its five defenders killed. Company A reported less opposition, but a platoon leader was killed by enemy fire while crossing an open rice paddy.

When Companies A and B were some 700 yards inland, in contact with 2/4, the reserve Company C was landed and turned right to attack Hill 40 and

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<sup>72</sup> 1st *ProvMarBrig Jnl*, 21Jul44.

Bangi Point. The latter had been heavily worked over by naval gunfire and was readily occupied, but Hill 40 was still bristling with live Japanese and machine guns whose fire halted the attack by Company C. When Company A, to the left, also caught some of the fire, Major Green called up two tanks, which supported a second and successful assault of the hill. At 1130 two companies of the reserve 3d Battalion (Major Hamilton M. Hoyler) started forward to relieve the 1st Battalion and free it to push on toward Mt. Alifan. Company K took over Hill 40 and Bangi Point, relieving Company C which reverted to regimental reserve. Company I moved up on the left flank in the battalion zone and relieved Company A. One platoon of the reserve Company L was assigned to seize Alutom Island off Bangi Point, which it found undefended. The rest of the company moved into a small river valley 300 yards upstream and straight east of Alutom Island.

Before noon, the two assault battalions of the 4th Marines had reached the initial regimental objective line, over 1,000 yards inland. At 1345, on brigade order, Lieutenant Colonel Shapley resumed the attack to seize the brigade objective, including the peak of Mt. Alifan. Scattered resistance was encountered as the Marines crossed open fields, but by 1700 they reached the rough and wooded ground at the foot of the mountain.

Digging in for the night, the men prepared for an expected counter-attack. Company B set up a roadblock on Harmon Road; five tanks of the 4th Marines Tank Company were parked in a hollow just off the road, not far from

the 2/4 CP. The regimental line stretched from heights above the Ayuja River around the lower slopes of Mt. Alifan to the beach at Bangi Point. It was a long line, measuring about 1,600 yards, and strongpoints had to be wisely located to cover the gaps with fire. Lieutenant Colonel Shapley also bolstered the line by tying in his Reconnaissance Platoon and an engineer detachment on the Company A left. Company C, kept in reserve near the regimental command post, would be ready for action if needed.

The brigade command post, located about 200 yards southeast of Gaan Point, had opened at 1350, when General Shepherd assumed command ashore. When he reported the brigade situation at the end of W-Day, the southern beachhead measured about 4,500 yards long and 2,000 yards deep:

Own casualties about 350. Enemy unknown. Critical shortages fuel and ammunition all types. Think we can handle it. Will continue as planned tomorrow.<sup>73</sup>

The next day the brigade commander would have the reserve 305th Infantry Regiment at hand. Its 2d Battalion had landed on the afternoon of W-Day. With no LVTs to use—no Marine amphibian tractors were available and the Army had none—the soldiers had to wade ashore from their LCVPs, which could not cross the reef or negotiate the shallow waters beyond it. It was a blessing that the Japanese were too involved with the Marines to endanger the Army landing with fire, but the curse of sharp coral and deep potholes plagued the watery approach by foot. After reorganizing on White Beach 1,

<sup>73</sup> *1st ProvMarBrig Jnl*, 21Jul44.

the battalion moved to an assembly area about 400 yards inland from Gaan Point.

At 1430, General Shepherd ordered the rest of the 305th to land; owing to communication problems, the regimental commander (Colonel Vincent J. Tanzola) did not receive the message for an hour. He had only enough craft to move one battalion, and he turned to the 1st (Lieutenant Colonel James E. Landrum), but naval officers had received no landing instructions and refused to dispatch the boats to the reef. As a result, the men of 1/305 waited in their LCVPs until 1730 when the brigade confirmed the movement. With darkness fast approaching, Colonel Tanzola suggested suspension of the battalion landing. General Shepherd, however, desired that the reserve get ashore that night, so the 1st Battalion continued on to the beach. Again the troops had to wade ashore, but now the water had become chest-high from the incoming tide, and, though weighted with their gear, some soldiers attempted swimming. By 2130, 1/305 was digging in on land. The 3d Battalion followed; it was 0200 before the leading waves got to the reef, and 0600 before the last men got to shore. An hour later, the battalion was still wet and tired but reorganized.<sup>74</sup> The landing of the 305th had been a confused and dragged-out affair, but it revealed a stamina that

<sup>74</sup> The commander of 3/305, was able to borrow five LVTs from the Marines, and the later waves of the battalion were taken across the reef by four of the vehicles while the fifth LVT was used as a control vehicle. Col Edward A. Chalgren, Jr., USA, ltr to Head, HistBr, G-3, HQMC, dtd 23Jan53.

was to be indicated again in battle.

One battery of the 305th Field Artillery Battalion was landed at dark on White Beach 1 and attached to the Brigade Artillery Group.<sup>75</sup> General Shepherd stressed the early landing of artillery, and he wanted the Corps 1st 155mm Howitzer Battalion to get ashore before the second day on Guam. At 1835, however, he could report that only three 155mm howitzers had been landed.<sup>76</sup>

The brigade's two pack howitzer battalions were in position with batteries registered before dark. The weapons of these battalions had been loaded on DUKWs, which delivered the goods despite jagged coral heads and potholes. Actually, there was only one point where it was practical for the amphibian trucks to move to the beach from the reef edge, so their traffic was restricted. As soon as they had delivered their loads of howitzers and ammunition, the DUKWs were pressed into service as cargo carriers, joining the LVTs at the transfer line.

Unlike the operations at the northern

<sup>75</sup> The battalion had been loaded on five different ships, complicating the task of getting ashore. The unit report describes some of the woe of landing on a tropical Pacific island: the battalion "was brought to the edge of the reef in LCMs, and then an attempt was made to drive across the reef. In most cases vehicles stalled and had to be towed. Equipment was soaked in salt water, and two howitzers were out of action for several days." 305th Fld-ArtyBn OpRpt, dtd 14Aug44 (WW II Recs-Div, FRC, Alexandria, Va.)

<sup>76</sup> The 1st 155mm Howitzer Battalion of the Corps Artillery was to reinforce fires of the brigade. Battery C would be attached on landing to the Brigade Artillery Group.

beachhead, where the water was more shallow and it was possible to set up some cranes on coral heads at the sharp edge of the reef dropoff, all cranes off the Agat beaches had to be barge mounted. Most cargo transfer took place in deep water, utilizing the barges or makeshift raft platforms as floating dumps. The shortage of LVTs, as a result of W-Day casualties, was the

crowning logistic difficulty and kept the supply situation tight on shore. Recognizing this, Admiral Conolly ordered unloading to continue through the night to insure that the brigade had adequate supplies for its mission. Regardless of the logistic situation, General Shepherd felt that his men could handle whatever the enemy should attempt that night or the next day.