sened, the operation was called off.

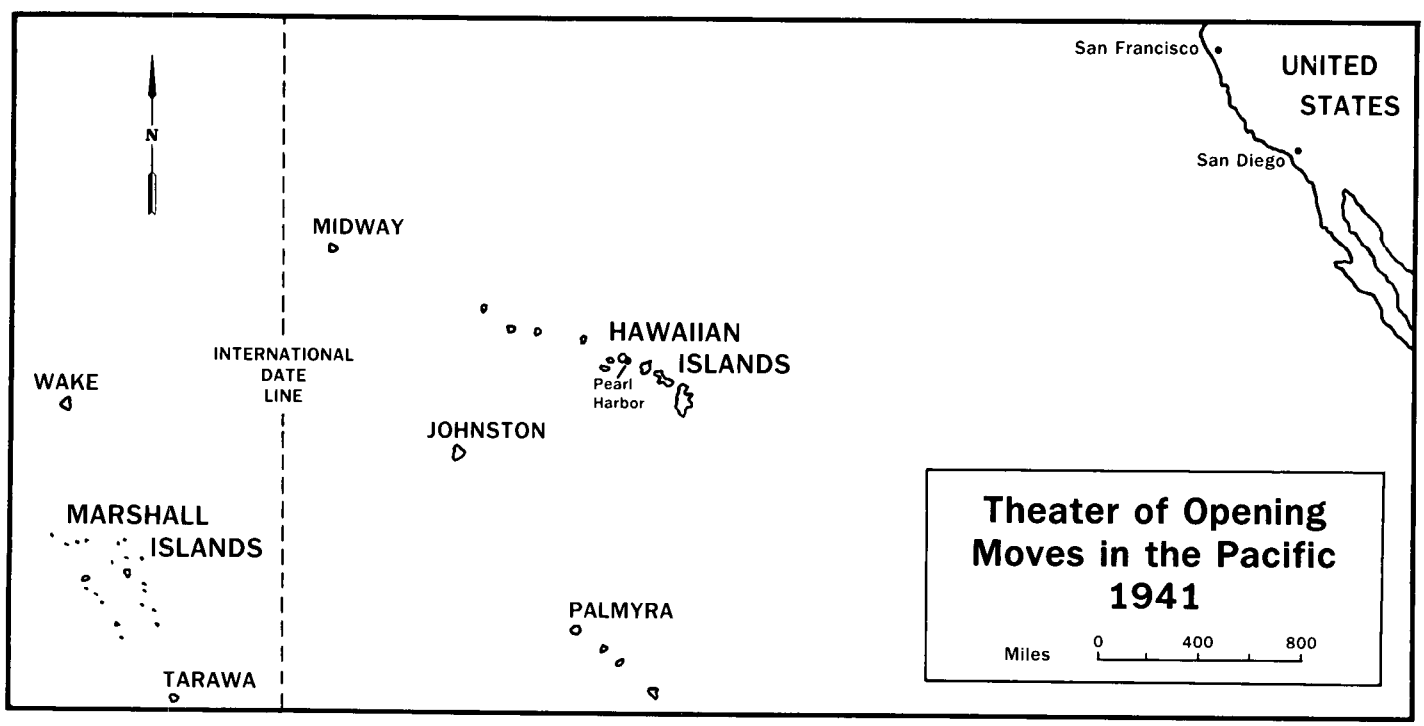
The buildup of forces for the potential Azores campaign did have a profound effect on the Marine Corps, however, despite its cancellation. The core regimental combat team of the 2d Division, the 6th Marines and its supporting units, judged the most ready for active employment, loaded out from San Diego in May 1941 to sail through the Panama Canal and augment the Marine troops on the east coast. Enroute, the Azores objective disappeared and another took its place, Iceland. The strategic island in the middle of the North Atlantic had been occupied by British troops to forestall a similar German move. The British wanted their Iceland occupation troops back in the United Kingdom and asked for Americans to take their place.

When President Roosevelt made the decision to comply with the British request, seeing the move as vital to protecting sea traffic from German raiders, the 6th Marines was at sea and, all unwitting, became the choice for the first American troops to deploy. When the regiment's troop ships reached Charleston, South Carolina, after the Panama passage, the 6th Marines was joined by the 5th Defense Battalion from Parris Island. A new unit, the 1st Marine Brigade (Provisional), was activated. When the ships began to load massive amounts of supplies, including winter protective gear and clothing, the favorite rumor of the Marines, that they were headed to a warm and sunny clime, was effectively scotched. The convoy left Charleston soon after and on 7 July 1941 made landfall at Iceland. For nine months thereafter, one of the precious few trained Marine infantry regiments was in garrison in Iceland, and the 2d Division was short a vital element of its strength. The sudden and unexpected deployment of the 6th Marines to the Atlantic was to have a considerable effect on the employment of Marine ground forces in the days after Pearl Harbor.

The drawdown on Marine strength represented by the departure of 5,000 men to Iceland was but a part of the drain of manpower that came about as a result of the fact that Marines could be sent anywhere at any time. In his zeal to support the British in ways short of war, and to enhance American hemispheric defenses, the President in mid-1940 had authorized a swap of 50 overage American destroyers of World War I vintage to Britain in return for 99-year leases to bases at British Atlantic possessions. These bases were all naval and naval bases required Marine guards. As a result, a senior Marine colonel, Omar T. Pfeiffer, was made a member and recorder of a board of naval officers, the Greenslade Board, that surveyed the British locations in the late summer of 1940 to recommend appropriate American base strength and facilities.

Flown first to Bermuda, the board members moved on by air to Argentia, Newfoundland, and Nassau in the Bahamas, and from there touched down at Guantanamo where they boarded the cruiser *St. Louis* for the rest of their journey. Sailing to Kingston, Jamaica; Port-of-Spain, Trinidad; and Georgetown, British Guyana, the board then checked the islands of Tobago, St. Lucia, and Antigua. At each of these places, it was determined that a Marine guard detachment was needed and 50-to-100-man companies were activated for that purpose in January 1941 so that the Marines could guard the facilities as they were built. It was not bad duty for the men involved, but their deployment meant a battalion less of Marines for the FMF.

Colonel Pfeiffer was a participant in British-American discussions of



possible measures to be taken in the event of war with Germany and Japan (the Rainbow Plan) which took place in Washington in 1940 and 1941. In April 1941 he was posted to a new position as Fleet Marine Officer of the Pacific Fleet at Pearl Harbor which drew fully on his expertise and experience.

Despite the possible and actual overseas deployments of Marines in the Atlantic Theater throughout 1941, the weight of Marine commitment was in the Pacific. And there was no question of the potential enemy there. It was Japan.

Pacific Theater

Throughout 1941, the U.S. and Japan sparred on the diplomatic front, with the thrust of American effort aimed at halting Japanese advances on the Asian mainland. In March, the government of Premier Prince Konoye in Japan sent a new representative to Washington, Ambassador Kichisaburo Nomura, whose task was to negotiate a settlement of differences between the two nations. He was confronted with a statement of the basic American bargaining position that was wholly incompatible with the surging nationalism of the Japanese militarists who were emboldened by their successes in China. The U.S. wanted Japan to agree to respect the territorial integrity and sovereignty of all nations; to support the principle of noninterference in the internal affairs of other countries; to agree to a policy of equal access to all countries, including commercial access; and to accept the status quo in the Pacific.

The chance of Japan accepting any of these stipulations vanished with the German invasion of Russia in June. Freed from the threat of the Russians, the Japanese moved swiftly to occupy southern Indochina and reinforced their armed forces by calling up all reservists and increasing conscriptions. In the face of this new proof of Japanese intent, President

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 144602

An oblique aerial view looking northeast of Midway's Eastern Island and its airstrip.

Roosevelt froze all Japanese assets in the United States, effectively severing commercial relations between the two countries.

In October, a new militaristic government headed by General Hideki Tojo seized power in Tokyo, and a new special ambassador, Saburo Kurusu, was sent to Washington, ostensibly to revitalize negotiations for a peaceful settlement of differences. Short of a miracle, however, the Japanese Army and Navy leaders did not consider peace a likely outcome of the talks with the Americans. They were, in fact, preparing to go to war.

If war came, U.S. Marines would be among the first to experience its violence. In China, Marines had a garrison role in foreign concessions at Shanghai, Peiping, and Tientsin, and in the Philippines, they had sizeable guard units at the naval bases at Cavite and Olongapo on Luzon Island. They provided as well ships' detachments for the woefully few cruisers of the Asiatic Fleet headquartered at Manila. In the Western Pacific's Mariana Islands, there was a small naval station on the Navy-governed island of Guam, a certain Japanese wartime target.

American Samoa in the southeast Pacific, whose islands were also a Navy responsibility, was strategically vital as guardian of the sea routes to New Zealand and Australia from the States. At Pago Pago on Tutuila, American Samoa's largest island, there was a deep harbor and a lightly manned naval base. Recognizing its isolation and vulnerability to Japanese attack, the Navy began deploying Marines to augment its meager garrison late in 1940. The advance party of Marines who arrived at Pago Pago on 21 December were members of the 7th Defense Battalion, which had been formally activated at San Diego on the 16th.

Initially a small composite outfit of 400 men, the 7th had a headquarters battery, an infantry company, and an artillery battery as well as a detail whose task it was to raise and train a battalion of Samoan natives as Marine infantrymen. The Sa-

National Archives Photo 127-N-29309

F4F-3 Grumman Wildcats, such as these of Marine Fighting Squadron (VMF) 211, flew off the deck of the Enterprise *to Wake Island's new but unfinished airfield. From the island, the Wildcats were to rise to defend Wake against its attackers.*

moans, who were American nationals, would help the 7th defend Tutuila's 52 square miles of mountainous and jungled terrain. The defense battalion's main body reached Pago Pago in March 1942 and the 1st Samoan Battalion, Marine Corps Reserve, came into being in August. The Marines in Samoa, thinly manning naval coast defense and antiaircraft guns at Pago Pago and patrolling Tutuila's many isolated beaches were acutely aware that their relative weakness invited Japanese attack. They shared this heightened sense of danger with the Marines in the western Pacific, in China, on Luzon, and at Guam, as well as other defense battalion Marines who were gradually manning the island outposts guarding Hawaii. These few thousand men all knew that they stood a good chance of proving one again the time-honored Marine Corps recruiting slogan "First to Fight," if war came.

In 1938, the Navy's Hepburn Board had determined that four small American atolls to the south and west of Pearl Harbor should be developed as American naval air bases and defended by naval aircraft and Marine garrisons. The two largest atolls of the four were Wake, 2,000 miles west of Hawaii in the central Pacific near the Japanese Marshall Islands group, and Midway, 1,150 miles from Oahu, and not far from the international date line. Both islands were way stations for Pan American clipper service to the Orient. Midway also served as a relay station for the trans-Pacific cable. Eight hundred miles southwest of Pearl Harbor lay Johnston Atoll, whose main island could accommodate an airfield and a small garrison. Palmyra, 1,100 miles south of Hawaii, had barely enough room for an airstrip and a bob-tailed defense force. The islands at Wake and Midway each had room enough to accommodate a battalion of defending Marines as well as airfields to hold several squadrons of patrol and fighter aircraft.

The Navy's 14th Naval District, which encompassed the Hawaiian Islands and the outpost atolls, as well as Samoa, was responsible for building defenses and providing garrisons, both ground and air. The Marine contingents were the responsibility of Colonel Harry K. Pickett, Marine Officer of the 14th District and Commanding Officer, Marine Barracks, Pearl Harbor Navy Yard. Preliminary surveys of the atolls and Samoa were conducted by members of Pickett's staff in 1940 and early 1941. Civilian contractors were selected to build the airfields and their supporting installations, but most of the work on the coast defense and antiaircraft gun positions, the bunkers and beach defenses, fell to the lot of the Marines who were to man them. Midway was slated to have a full

defense battalion as its garrison, Wake drew about half a battalion at first, and Johnston and Palmyra were allotted reinforced batteries.

By late 1941, the standard table of organization of a defense battalion had evolved to include a unit of about 900 men, composed of three 5-inch coast defense gun batteries, three 3-inch antiaircraft gun batteries, a sound locator and searchlight battery, a battery of .50-caliber antiaircraft machine guns, and a battery of .30-caliber machine guns for beach defenses. That was the standard; the actuality varied with the location. The characteristic all defense battalion garrisons had in common was lots of guns and gun crews. What they were all short of was infantrymen. If an enemy landing force reached the island beaches, the gun crews and other specialists could expect, and would be expected, to prove once again that every Marine was a rifleman before all else.

The 1st and 3d Defense Battalions were the first Marines to reach the island outposts. Advance elements of the 3d Battalion landed at Midway in May 1940 to conduct reconnaissance and undertake preliminary construction. The rest of the battalion remained at Pearl Harbor providing reinforcing and relief parties until January 1941 when the whole battalion was ordered forward. In February, while the men of the 3d were unloading their heavy equipment at Midway, the advance party of the 1st Battalion left San Diego on board the carrier *Enterprise*, transferring at Pearl to a small cargo ship, and moving on to Johnston, where two 5-inch guns and an eight-man caretaker detail landed, while the rest of the party, three officers and 45 enlisted men, proceeded to Palmyra. After the rest of the 1st Defense Battalion shipped out to Pearl Harbor, small reinforcing detachments moved forward to the outpost islands to join in the pick and shovel work of emplacing guns and digging in command posts, magazines, and fire direction centers. It was August 1941 before the first elements of the 1st Battalion reached Wake where a contractor's work force was already building an airfield.

On all the outpost islands where Marines were stationed, the work was constant and boring. The arrival of a plane or ship was an event to celebrate. There was no liberty. If there had been, there was no place to go and nothing to see but the Pacific in all directions. The 14th District established a rotation policy (back to Pearl) for the outpost Marines, but this reward was countered by a pervading urgency to get on with the job at hand, protecting the approaches to Hawaii.

The 6th Defense Battalion, which arrived at Pearl Harbor in January 1941 as a replacement and reserve unit, moved forward to Midway in September to replace the 3d Battalion as the defending ground garrison. The 3d moved back to Oahu for a well earned rest from construction work. On 1 December, the 4th Defense Battalion, fresh from duty at Guantanamo Bay, arrived at Pearl. It was scheduled to replace the half battalion of the 1st on Wake, but its arrival and strengthened force was too late to effect relief. Wake did receive a substantial and welcome reinforcement on 4 December, however, when 12 F4F-3 Grumman Wildcats of Marine Fighting Squa-

Grumman F3F-2s, the last biplane fighter produced for either the Navy or the Marines, served in the FMF from 1937 to 1941. The VMF-2 planes pictured here were stationed at North Island, Coronado near San Diego, California during this period.

Department of Defense Photo (USN) 83924

Grumman F4F Wildcat

The Grumman Wildcat served as the primary fighter of the United States Marine Corps at the outbreak of the Pacific War. By December 1941, Grumman Wildcats were being flown by three of four Marine fighter squadrons then in existence.

Designed in 1936 as Grumman's first monoplane fighter aircraft, the Wildcat had retractable handcranked landing gear, vacuum-powered flaps, and a simple electrical system. Although it lost a design contest to its main competitor, the Brewster F2A Buffalo, in 1938, the Navy nonetheless continued to encourage Grumman in the aircraft's development. Wildcats were delivered to the Marine Corps in 1941, replacing the obsolescent Grumman F3F-2 fabric and metal biplanes which had been in service since 1937. The all-metal F4F-3 Wildcat was powered by a Pratt & Whitney R-1830-66 Twin Wasp engine and had four .50-caliber Browning machine guns mounted in each wing.

By October 1941, Marine Fighting Squadrons (VMFs) 111, 121, and 211 were fully equipped with Wildcats; only VMF-221 was equipped with Brewster Buffaloes. A forward detachment from Marine Fighting Squadron 211 flew to Wake Island in December 1941 as part of a Marine Corps air-ground team just prior to the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. During the following defense of Wake Island, they fought the Japanese for 14 days and inflicted heavy losses on the attackers' shipping and aircraft before losing all 12 F4F-3s.

Despite the fact that the Wildcat's performance was inferior to its primary adversary, the Japanese Zero, its staunch ruggedness and greatly superior firepower in the hands of skilled and determined pilots would enable it to compile a distinguished record during the war. There were 34 recorded Marine Corps Wildcat aces.

—Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 145098

A SB2U-3 Chance-Vought Vindicator scout-bomber conducts field carrier landing practice at Ewa Field in June 1941.

dron (VMF) 211 flew off the decks of the *Enterprise* to the atoll's new and unfinished airfield.

The spread of defense battalion Marines at the beginning of December found 422 officers and men of the 1st Battalion at Wake, 162 at Johnston, 158 at Palmyra, and 261 at Pearl Harbor. Midway's 6th Battalion garrison had 33 officers and 810 enlisted men. The 3d Battalion was 863 strong at Pearl and the newly arrived 4th mustered 818. Both of the larger atolls had six 5-inch coast defense guns and twelve 3-inch antiaircraft guns; Johnston had two 5-inch guns and four 3-inch guns; Palmyra had four of each. Machine guns for defense matched the garrisons' size; Midway had 30 .50-calibers and 30 .30-calibers; Wake had 18 and 30; Johnston and Palmyra each had eight apiece.

Although VMF-211's Wildcats on Wake were the only Marine aircraft yet to reach the outpost defenses, most of the squadron's parent Marine Aircraft Group 21 had moved from California to Hawaii by December. MAG-21 was the 2d Wing's only tactical air group. Part of the group's ground echelon moved west to Midway in November to await aircraft due to arrive shortly. Meanwhile, all Marine aircraft in Hawaii were concentrated at the Marine Corps Air Station, Ewa, 10 miles west of Pearl Harbor, the site of a Navy dirigible mooring mast field in the 1920s. Those planes of MAG-21 not at the airfield were deployed on board carriers for transportation to reinforce Wake and Midway. VMF-221 with 14 F2A-3 Brewster Buffalo fighters boarded the *Saratoga* at North Island, San Diego on 7 and 8 December. The *Lexington* got 18 SB2U-3 Chance-Vought Vindicators of Marine Scout-Bombing Squadron 231. With the fall of Wake, both squadrons were used to reinforce Midway. At Ewa, there were 48 fighters, scout-bombers, and utility aircraft, most scheduled for forward deployment.

Aviation units were not the only elements of the FMF to move forward into the Pacific by December 1941. A sizeable portion of the 2d Marine Division's 2d Engineer Battalion was also deployed to Oahu in the fall in order to build a camp capable of accommodating 5,000 Marines. The location of the new facility, Camp Catlin, was in the canefields east of Honolulu along the island's main highway. Its site selected by a board of Marine colonels, Catlin eventually would see tens of thousands of Marines pass through its gates into the farther reaches of the Pacific as it became the principal replacement and redistribution center for the FMF. In December it was half completed, and its Marine engineer constructors were destined to be the first members of the 2d Division to see combat in World War II.

Back in California, the 2d Marine Division was rounding into shape, engaged as was the 1st Division in constant training and maneuvers. Neither unit had reached its full strength yet as constant demands for Marines for base, fleet, and barracks duty drained the available manpower pool as fast as it filled. San Diego's recruit depot was crowded with men striving to become Marines, but it no longer had to call on the 2d Division for extra drill instructors as it had often in 1940 after the President declared a National Emergency and the recruiting stations were flooded with applicants. The recruit training cycle, down to as few as 24 days on both coasts in 1940, was fairly sta-

The F2A-3 Brewster Buffalo single-engine fighter planes with which the Marine Corps entered World War II were almost all lost in the Battle of Midway.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 25414

Department of Defense Photo (USN) 92493

A SBD-3 Douglas Dauntless dive bomber runs-up for takeoff from the flight deck of the Saratoga *in late 1941. The Dauntless was a multi-seat, low-wing monoplane which carried a 500-pound bomb under the fuselage and bombs under the wings.*

For training in the field before World War II, Marines wore either summer service khaki or one-piece blue denim coveralls with their field hats. The Marines below are communicators with state of the art equipment at Camp Elliott in 1941.

Photo courtesy of C. M. Craig

ble at seven weeks, with three on the rifle range.

The Fleet Marine Force units in the west, like those in the east, were itching for action, although the Commandant noted at the time that Marines still needed "to train (further) for combat," a quite different situation. Most of the planes and crewmen of the 2d Wing were already at least as far west as Hawaii. The 2d Division was poised to join them.

Still in the future, the near future, were the great air and amphibious training centers at El Toro and Camp Pendleton. Pendleton, in particular, was to be part of the experiences of most Marines who served in the Pacific either going or coming. In December 1941, the area, as one private on its original survey team remembered, was "pretty barren country" fit only for cattle. His observation was not an uncommon sentiment of later

Photo courtesy of C. M. Craig

Every Marine in the prewar era was required to qualify annually with his T/O weapon and generally spent two weeks in preparing to fire for record. Here, West Coast FMF troops are at the La Jolla rifle range in 1940 for their weapons training.

Marines, who followed him into the seemingly endless brown hills and valleys.

The Stage is Set

On 22 November 1941, General Holcomb spoke to the American public on NBC radio as part of a Navy public relations program. In his brief remarks, he summed up the Corps' situation in the context of the country's readiness. He noted that there were 61,000 Marines in uniform and that:

> Beyond the continental limits of the United States, Marines do duty as the frontiersmen of the nation's huge new defense network. The existing stations from the Philippines to the Virgin Islands have had their garrisons increased. The Navy's new bases—Iceland, Newfoundland, Bermuda, Santa Lucia, Antigua, Trinidad, Jamaica, British Guiana, Dutch Harbor, Samoa, Kodiak, the Hawaiian Island group, and other outlying stations—all are garrisoned and guarded, at least partially, by United States Marines.

On the same day, he wrote to Brigadier General John Marston, commanding the 1st Provisional Brigade in Iceland, telling him that it was "important to get the Brigade home" and promising "you can be sure that we will leave no stone unturned to accomplish it." Its men were wanted back in the 2d Marine Division and the arrival of U.S. Army reinforcements in strength in Iceland gave the Marine Corps strong argument for the recovery of its forces. The fact that the Marines had come under Army command did nothing to lessen the urgency of the situation.

In his radio report, the Commandant did not mention the Marines stationed in China, perhaps because the decision had been made to withdraw them. In September, the American Consul-General at Shanghai, the Navy commander of the Yangtze River Patrol, and the Commanding Officer, 4th Marines had jointly recommended that all U.S. naval forces in China be pulled out of Japanese-controlled territory, a recommendation heartily endorsed by the Commander, Asiatic Fleet. The authorization for the evacuation was delayed by State and Navy Department negotiations until 10 November and it was the 27th before the first of two chartered passenger liners, the *President Madison*, loaded half the 4th Marines and its equipment and departed Shanghai. The next day, the rest of the regiment boarded the *President Harrison* and sailed.

Marine recruits are drilled on the parade ground at Parris Island in the early 1940s. Note the sun helmets on the troops as they march to the cadence of the DI.

Sketch by Vernon H. Bailey, Navy Art Collection

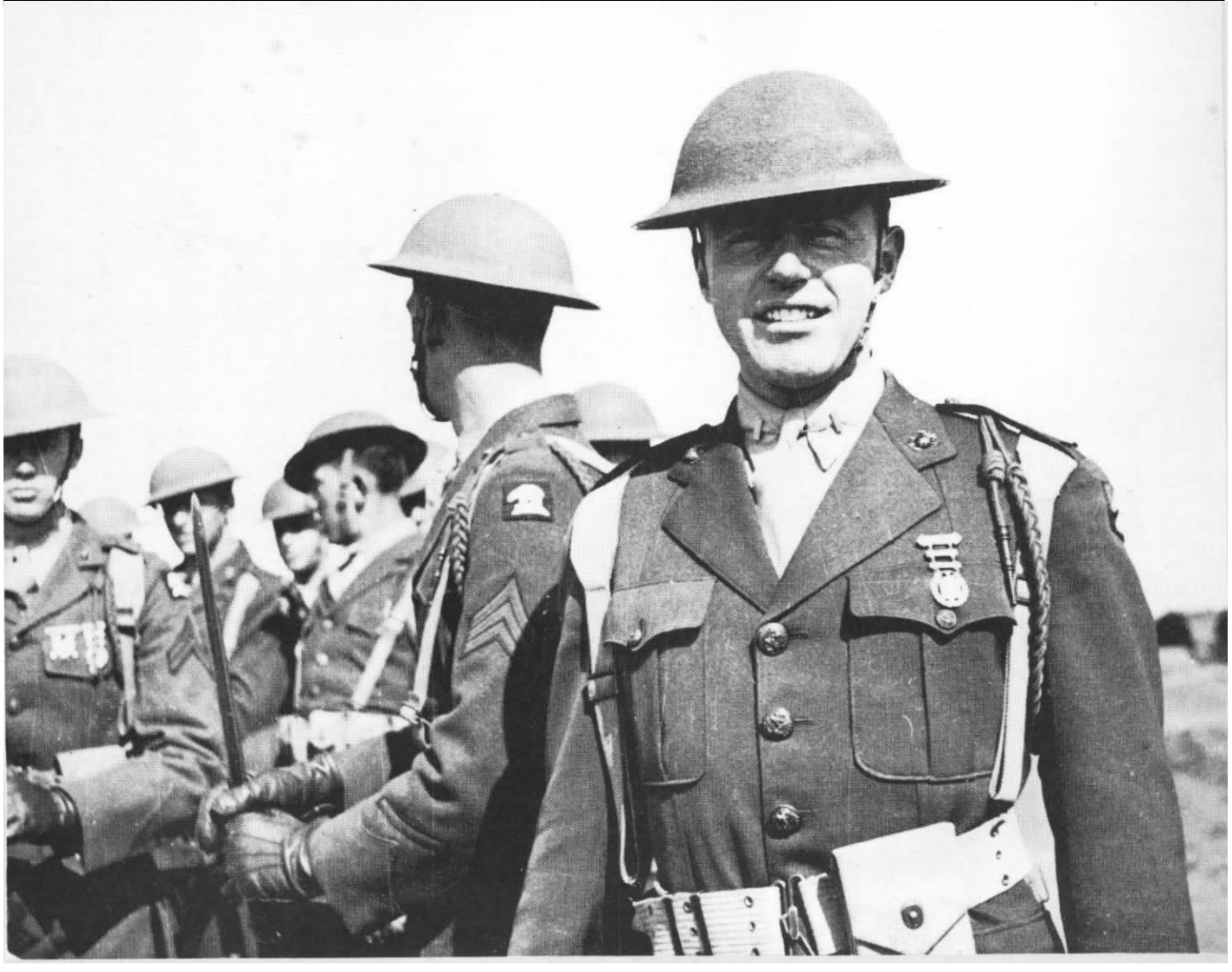
Helmets of World War II

One of the most noticeable changes in the Marine Corps uniform at the outset of World War II was the transition from the M1917A1 helmet reminiscent of World War I to the familiar M1 helmet of World War II, Korea, and Vietnam.

At the outbreak of World War II, Marines were wearing a modernized version of the helmet first introduced to Marines serving in France during World War I. The American M1917 helmet was nearly identical to the British "Brodie Pattern" helmet. In 1939, this helmet was superceded in the Marine Corps by the improved M1917A1 helmet (as shown below, worn by men of the 6th Marines in Iceland). The padded leather liner and two-piece canvas chinstrap of this updated version of the "tin hat," as it was then called, made it far more comfortable and sturdier than its predecessor. The steel helmet shell remained the same. In the Marine Corps, the helmet was worn both with and without insignia and, while most Marines wore the helmet in the rough olive drab paint, some units, most notably those in China, burnished, waxed, and polished theirs.

Less than two years after the Marine Corps' adoption of the M1917A1, a U.S. Army research team at Fort Benning under of Major Harold G. Sydenham, began working on a new design for a two-piece helmet which offered far more protection for the wearer. Adopted by the government as the M1 helmet on 9 June 1941, the Hadfield manganese steel helmet was first made by the McCord Radiator Company of Detroit, Michigan, while the fiber liner was manufactured by the Hawley Products Company. At the suggestion of General George S. Patton, the liner's suspension system was patterned after a design by John T. Riddell that was used in contempory football helmets. The new helmet was issued to the Marine Corps in the spring and early summer of 1942 and, by the time of the Guadalcanal campaign later that summer, had all but supplanted the old "dishpan" helmet. – *Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas*

Photo courtesy of Col James A. Donovan, USMC (Ret)



The destination of both liners was the naval base at Olangapo in the Philippines where the 4th was to join the naval forces defending the islands, in particular the 1st Separate Battalion at Cavite. The ships arrived on 30 November and 1 December. The *President Harrison*, as planned, was unloaded quickly in order to return to China and pick up the Marines stationed at Peiping and Tientsin, but it was too late. The Japanese Pearl Harbor attack force was already well on its way to its target.

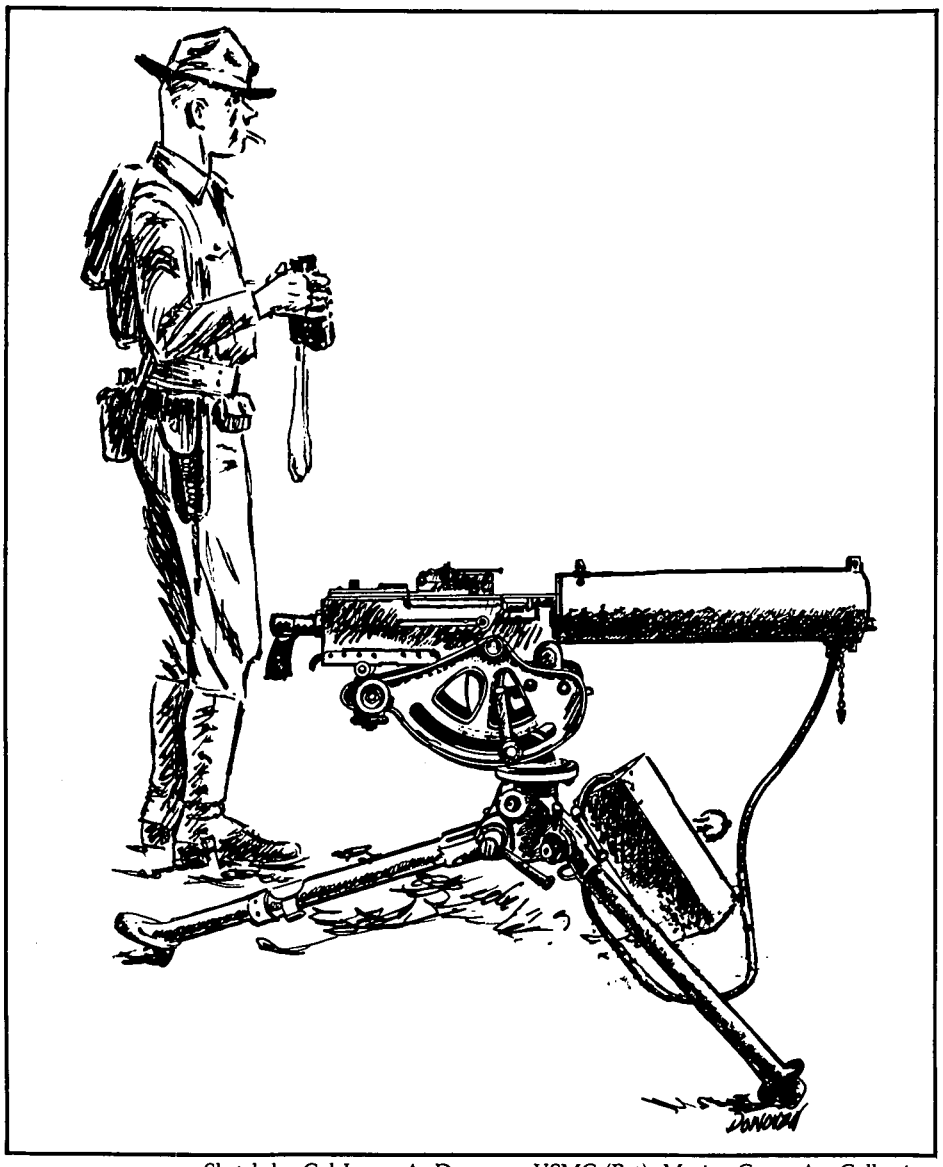
The embassy guard detachments in China were assembling their gear to ship out through the all-weather port of Chinwangtao. The small Marine camp there was named Camp Holcomb, a fact that annoyed the

Photo courtesy of Col James A. Donovan, USMC (Ret)

Scene at Camp Elliott in spring 1941. The new base, near San Diego, was activated in mid-1940. It housed west coast FMF units and also served for advanced training.

In 1940, Fleet Marine Force units stationed at the San Diego Recruit Depot conducted some small unit training in the open fields of the Mission Bay area, in khaki uniforms with the 1903 Springfield rifle, and wearing World War I helmets.

Photo courtesy of Col James A. Donovan, USMC (Ret)



Sketch by Col James A. Donovan, USMC (Ret), Marine Corps Art Collection

Prewar Marine infantry battalions each rated 12 of these Browning .30-caliber, 1917 water-cooled machine guns. The overall weight of the gun with its tripod was 85 pounds. Each weapon had a cyclic rate of fire of 400-520 rounds per minute.

Commandant somewhat as he believed no Marine facilities should be named after living persons. He pointed out in his 22 November letter to General Marston that the camp still bore his name "but it will be a thing of the past in a few days." The Commandant was obviously referring to the impending evacuation of the embassy Marines, but in fact these men, trapped in a hopeless situation, less than 200 in number, were captured on the first day of the war.

In a general sense, the Marine Corps was ready to fight on 7 December 1941, as it has always been regardless of its size. Nearly a third of the Corps' strength was already overseas deployed to stations and outposts, where it shared, often with Navy and Army forces, the challenge of being in the forefront of battle if war came. The few thousand Marines who could realistically picture themselves at risk of immediate attack embodied the spirit of thousands more who knew their turn would come.

In the immediate future, once war began, the Corps would grow to unheralded numbers, far beyond what any prewar Marine had imagined. The nucleus of Marines that would give strength to this vast assemblage, almost half a million men and women by 1944, was already in place in the beginning of the war. Recruits were also billeted in barracks and tents at the depots on both coasts until late 1945.

These Quonset huts at Marine Corps Recruit Depot, Parris Island, South Carolina, housed the large influx of recruits at

Sketch by Vernon H. Bailey, Navy Art Collection

85. **Uncle Sam—Marine**

Cargo Net Landing

One of the things that have been said about the Marines is that they are "first ashore and at the scene of action." This means that the men who join Uncle Sam's Marine Corps must be well trained in the duty of getting ashore quickly. One of their drills that teaches them to make a rapid landing from their transport employs a cargo net slung over the ship's side. With their rifles dangling from their shoulders the "Leathernecks" line up on the deck of the ship. Then at a given signal they climb over the side, using the cargo net as a rather unsteady ladder. The first men down grab opposite sides of the net to help steady it for those who follow. For training purposes the men land on a stationary platform or pier over which the cargo net is hung (see picture).

90. **Uncle Sam—Marine**

Marine Sky Troops

Not to be outdone by their Soldier cousins, the "Soldiers of the Sea"—the United States Marines—have also been experimenting with Parachute Troops. This new idea of landing troops from the sky promises to be a valuable addition to Marine training, fitting nicely into their landing party duty. Similar to the training of Army Sky Troops, the Marines who volunteer for this service practice jumping from various heights to become skillful in making a sudden landing from the sky. They attempt to drop from lower and lower heights to cut down the time it takes to reach the earth and thus to lessen the danger of discovery by the enemy. The 'chute opens automatically. There is also an emergency 'chute which can be opened by the jumper if necessary. The picture shows a detachment of jumpers being dropped from a slow-moving Navy blimp during an initial stage of training.

63. **Uncle Sam—Marine**

Field Radio

The problem of field detachments of troops keeping in touch with headquarters and bases of supplies is today largely solved by radio. At the Marine Radio Operators School, selected marines have an opportunity to study elementary radio theory, elementary electricity, radio sending and receiving, typing, Naval radio procedure and field radio sets. It qualifies them for positions of greater trust and responsibility while in Service for Uncle Sam and fits them for good-paying positions on the outside when their period of enlistment is ended. In the picture two marines are operating a portable radio sending and receiving set in the field. In this case they are keeping in touch with headquarters aboard a transport anchored in the harbor a good many miles away.

29. **Uncle Sam—Marine**

Shore Duty

On shore marines live in large barracks or Service buildings where they can be quickly mobilized for emergencies. When stationed on shore at the Navy Yards and at Naval Stations their duties are to protect government property from theft, injury, or fire, and to prevent disorders of any kind. They also perform duties as infantrymen, artillerymen, machine gunners, signal men, motor transport, and occasionally as mounted infantry. The picture shows marines on Guard Duty in a Navy Yard during a war emergency. At these times the regulations are tightened and the marines have to be on the alert to prevent suspicious-looking individuals from gaining any information that would be harmful to Uncle Sam's interest.

Save to get all these picture cards showing Uncle Sam's soldiers, sailors, marines, airmen and civilians in training for National Defense.

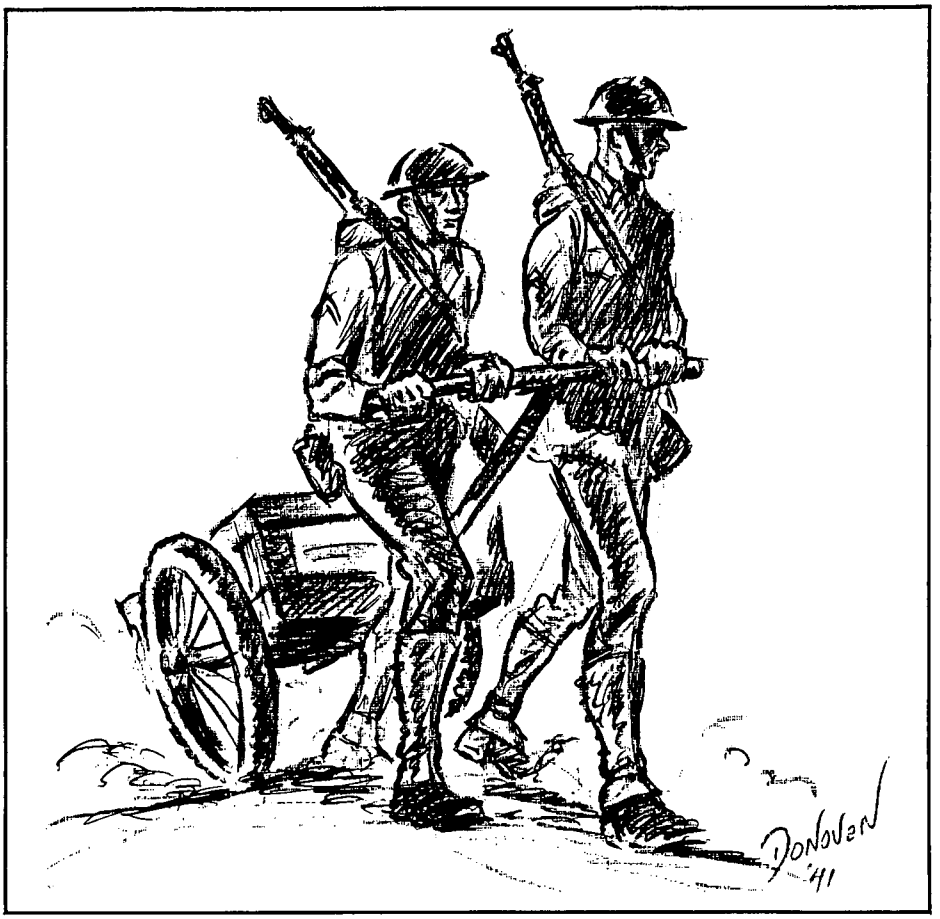
GUM, INC., Phila., Pa. **Printed in U. S. A., 1941**

Collector cards donated by LtGen William R. Maloney, USMC (Ret)

Popular bubblegum cards printed in 1941 illustrate how the American public viewed the Marines of the prewar period.

1941. The generals were all veterans of World War I, Caribbean, and China service; the officers who would lead the battalions and regiments, squadrons and air groups in the first months of war were also veterans of extensive foreign and expeditionary duty. Many of the company commanders and flight leaders were products of the 1930s when the Marine Corps wisely recruited the pick of Army ROTC honor graduates. The pilots of all ranks, although as yet only a few hundred in number, were skilled and capable, men who could look forward to leading thousands of men who were in the training pipeline.

Dominating the whole scene of Corps mobilization and increases in strength was a solid core of noncommissioned officers who had shared the veteran officers' experiences and who were, in the words of many qualified to comment, truly "the backbone of the Corps." In a real way, these sergeants and corporals of whatever stripe were the ones who epitomized the Marine Corps traditions of leadership and loyalty to fellow Marines. They imbued in the men with whom they served a feeling of what it means to be a Marine, of what if takes to be a Marine.



Sketch by Col James A. Donovan, USMC (Ret), Marine Corps Art Collection

Handy items in the prewar Fleet Marine Force were Cole carts, used to carry such weapons as heavy machine guns and their tripods, 81mm mortars and their base plates, and ammunition for all the weapons in the infantry battalion.

Marine Corps Strength and Dispositions 30 November 1941

Continental U.S. (non-FMF)	
Major Bases (5)	14,707
Posts and Stations (43)	10,089
Headquarters and Staff	780
Recruiting (4 Districts)	847
Total	26,423
Continental U.S. (FMF)	
1st Marine Division	8,918
2d Marine Division (less detachments)	7,540
2d Defense Battalion	865
1st Marine Aircraft Wing	1,301
2d Marine Aircraft Wing (less detachments)	682
Miscellaneous	633
Total	19,939
TOTAL OF CHART: 64,641	

Overseas (non-FMF)	
Posts and Stations (24)	3,367
Tactical Units	5,498
4th Marines (801)	
1st Separate Battalion (725)	
1st Marine Brigade (Provisional) (3,972)	
Ships' Detachments (68)	3,793
Total	12,658
Overseas (FMF)	
Defense Battalions (5)	4,399
2d Marine Division (detachments)	489
2d Marine Aircraft Wing (detachments)	733
Total	5,621
TOTAL MARINE CORPS: 65,881	

In the war that was to come, on the eve of the Pearl Harbor attack, these Marines of all ranks had a strong identity with the past. They were the inventors, in General Holcomb's words in his 1941 Marine Corps Birthday message, of "this high name of distinction and soldierly repute" won for all by "those who have preceded us in the Corps." The prewar Marines, both boot and veteran, were to add immeasurably to the Corps' laurels and traditions in the first year of fighting at Wake, Guam, Bataan, Corregidor, Midway, Makin, and Guadalcanal. Throughout the course of World War II, they were the men of "The Old Corps" whose accomplishments set the standard for all Marines.

Sources

The basic source work for this period is the first volume of the series *History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II*, titled *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal* and written by LtCol Frank O. Hough, Maj Verle E. Ludwig, and Henry I. Shaw, Jr. (Washington: Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters U.S. Marine Corps, 1958).

Other histories of value for this period include: Col Robert D. Heinl, Jr., *Soldiers of the Sea: The United States Marine Corps, 1775-1962* (Annapolis: U.S. Naval Institute, 1962); Allan R. Millett, *Semper Fidelis: The History of the United States Marine Corps* (New York: Macmillan Publishing Company, 1980); and Robert Sherrod, *History of Marine Corps Aviation in World War II* (Washington: Combat Forces Press, 1952).

All oral history transcripts addressing the prewar years in the Oral History Collection, Marine Corps Historical Center, Washington, D.C., were examined. The interviews with the following officers were found particularly useful:

Col James R. Aichele; BGen Charles L. Banks; MajGen Robert Blake; Col Justice M. Chambers; MajGen John P. Condon; Gen Robert E. Cushman, Jr.; LtGen Karl S. Day; MajGen Marion L. Dawson; LtGen Pedro A. del Valle; BGen Lester A. Dessez; BGen Edward C. Dyer; LtGen George F. Good, Jr.; MajGen Louis R. Jones; MajGen Raymond L. Murray; LtGen Herman Nickerson; MajGen Omar T. Pfeiffer; LtGen Donn J. Robertson; and LtGen Julian C. Smith.

The Personal Papers Collection of the Historical Center was also consulted for relevant material. The correspondence of Gen Thomas Holcomb, MajGen William P. Upshur, and Gen Alexander A. Vandegrift contain many significant letters that bear upon the prewar period.

In addition to researching, writing, and editing significant portions of the prewar years narrative in the above mentioned *Pearl Harbor to Guadalcanal*, the author also consulted the histories of the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions and was fortunate enough to talk with many of the Marines mentioned in the oral history references about their experiences.

About the Author

Henry I. Shaw, Jr., former chief historian of the History and Museums Division, was a Marine Corps historian from 1951-1990. He attended The Citadel, 1943-1944, and was graduated with a bachelor of arts cum laude in history from Hope College, Holland, Michigan. He received a master of arts degree in history from Columbia University. Mr. Shaw served as a Marine in both World War II and the Korean War. He is the co-author of four of the five volumes of the official history of Marine Corps operations in World War II and was the senior editor of most of the official histories of Marines in Vietnam. In addition, he has written a number of brief Marine Corps histories. Mr. Shaw has written many articles on military history for professional publications and has had more than 50 signed book reviews appearing in such publications as *Military Collector & Historian, Military Affairs, Marine Corps Gazette, Leatherneck, The Washington Post, New York Historical Society Quarterly*, and the *United States Naval Institute Proceedings*.

About the Cover: In 1940, Fleet Marine Force units stationed at the San Diego Recruit Depot conducted small unit training in the open fields of the Mission Bay area, in khaki uniforms with 1903 Springfield rifles, gas masks, and World War I helmets. (Photo courtesy of Colonel James A. Donovan, USMC [Ret]).

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