



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 51728

Native scouts lead a combat/reconnaissance patrol of the 2d Raider Battalion across the hills of Guadalcanal. The patrol lasted for less than a month, during which the Marines covered 150 miles and fought more than a dozen actions.

fit made contact with a patrol from 1st Battalion, 7th Marines, and learned of the enemy breakout. A few minutes later Company C ran into a large force of Japanese near Asamama on the Metapona River. The Marines had been crossing a wide grassy area. When the advance guard entered a wooded area on the opposite side it surprised the enemy in their bivouac. In the initial action, the advance guard inflicted significant casualties on the Japanese, but lost five men killed and three wounded. In short order the enemy had the remainder of the company pinned down in the open with rifle, machine gun, and mortar fire.

Carlson vectored two of his patrols in that direction to assist, and dispatched one platoon from the base camp. As it crossed the Metapona to reach the main battle, Company E tangled with another enemy group coming in the opposite direction. The more numerous Japanese initially forced the Marines to withdraw, but Major Richard T. Washburn reorganized his company and counterattacked the enemy as they attempted to cross the river. The raiders inflicted significant casualties on their opponent, but could not push through to link up with Charlie Company. In

mid-afternoon, Carlson himself led Company F toward Asamama.

By the time he arrived, Company C had extricated itself under covering fire from its own 60mm mortars. Carlson called in two dive bombers on the enemy, ordered Company E to break off its independent action,

Maj James Roosevelt, the president's son, served as executive officer of the 2d Raiders during the Makin raid and commanded the 4th Raiders after that unit was activated.

and launched Company F in a flanking attack against the main Japanese force. Those raiders completed the maneuver by dusk, only to find the enemy position abandoned. The battalion assembled back at Binu that night. There Company D reported that it had run into yet another group

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of enemy and been pinned down for most of the afternoon. The understrength unit had lost two killed and one wounded.

On 12 November Carlson led Companies B and E back to the woods at Asamama. Throughout the day enemy messengers attempted to enter the bivouac site under the mistaken notion that it still belonged to their side; the raiders killed 25 of them. In the afternoon Carlson ordered Company C to join him there. The next day he observed enemy units moving in the vicinity, and he placed artillery and mortar fire on five separate groups. After each such mission the raiders dealt with Japanese survivors trying to make their way into the woods. On 14 November Carlson decided to pull back to Binu. That same day a Company F patrol wiped out a 15-man enemy outpost that had been reported by native scouts.

After a brief period to rest and replenish at Binu, the 2d Raiders moved their base camp to Asamama on 15 November. During two days of patrolling from that site, Carlson determined that the main enemy force had departed the area. At Vandegrift's request, the raider commander entered the perimeter on 17 November. Vandegrift directed Carlson to search for "Pistol Pete," an enemy artillery piece that regularly shelled the airfield. The battalion also was to seek out trails circling the perimeter, and any Japanese units operating to the south. The raiders moved forward to the Tenaru River over the next few days.

On 25 November Company A arrived from Espiritu Santo and joined the battalion. For the next few days the 2d Raiders divided into three combat teams of two companies apiece, with each operating from its own patrol base. Each day they moved farther into the interior of the island, in the area between the headwaters of the Tenaru and Lunga rivers. Carlson remained with the

center team, from which point he could quickly reinforce either of the flank detachments.

On 30 November the battalion crossed over the steep ridgeline that divided the valleys of the Tenaru and Lunga. Discovery of a telephone wire led the raiders to a large bivouac site, which held an unattended 75mm mountain gun and a 37mm antitank gun. Marines removed key parts of the weapons and scattered them down the hillside. Farther on the advance guard entered yet another bivouac site, this one occupied by 100 Japanese. Both sides were equally surprised, but Corporal John Yancey charged into the group firing his automatic weapon and calling for his squad to follow. The more numerous enemy were at a disadvantage since their arms were stacked out of reach. The handful of raiders routed the Japanese and killed 75. Carlson called it "the most spectacular of any of our engagements." For this feat Yancey earned the first of his two Navy Crosses (the second came years later in Korea).

The next day, 1 December, a Douglas R4D Skytrain transport air-dropped badly needed rations, as well as orders for the battalion to enter the perimeter. Carlson asked for a few more days in the field and got it. On 3 December he held a "Gung Ho" meeting to motivate his exhausted men for one more effort. Then he divided the 2d Raiders in half, sending the companies with the most field time down to Marine lines. The rest he led up to the top of Mount Austen, where a raider patrol had discovered a strong but abandoned Japanese position. The force had barely reached their objective when they encountered an enemy platoon approaching from a different direction. After a two-hour fire fight and two attempts at a double envelopment, the Marines finally wiped out their opponents. The result was 25 enemy dead at a cost of four wounded Marines (one of

whom died soon after). The raiders spent a tough night on the mountain, since there was no water available and their canteens were empty. The next day Carlson led the force down into the Marine perimeter, but not without one last skirmish. Seven Japanese ambushed the point and succeeded in killing four men before the raiders wiped them out.

The long patrol of the 2d Raiders was extremely successful from a tactical point of view. The battalion had killed 488 enemy soldiers at a cost of 16 dead and 18 wounded. Carlson's subsequent report praised his guerrilla tactics, which undoubtedly played an important role in the favorable exchange ratio. Far away from the Marine perimeter, the Japanese became careless and allowed themselves to be surprised on a regular basis, a phenomenon other Marine units had exploited earlier in the campaign. Since the 2d Raiders operated exclusively in the enemy rear, they reaped the benefit of their own stealthiness and this Japanese weakness.

The stated casualty figures, however, did not reflect the true cost to the Marines. During the course of the operation, the 2d Raiders had evacuated 225 men to the rear due to severe illness, primarily malaria, dysentery, and ringworm. Although sickness was common on Guadalcanal, Carlson's men became disabled at an astonishing rate due to inadequate rations and the rough conditions, factors that had diminished significantly by that point in the campaign for other American units. Since only two raider companies had spent the entire month in combat, the effect was actually worse than those numbers indicated. Companies C and F had landed at Aola Bay with 133 officers and men each. They entered the perimeter on 4 December with a combined total of 57 Marines, barely one-fifth their original strength. Things would have been worse, except for the efforts of native carriers

The Raider Training Center

The Raider Training Center got its start in late 1942, when the Major General Commandant authorized a slight increase in the table of organization of the newly formed 4th Raider Battalion. These additional two officers and 26 enlisted men became the cadre for the center, which formally came into being at Camp Pendleton, California, on 5 February 1943. The purpose of the center was to train new men up to raider standards and thus create a pool of qualified replacements for the battalions overseas. Prior to this, each raider unit had solicited fresh volunteers from other organizations in rear areas and then incorporated them directly into their ranks. Since most of these young Marines had only rudimentary training in weapons and tactics, the raiders had to expend considerable effort on individual instruction. Worse still, that old system provided no means to replace casualties during prolonged

combat operations. Lieutenant Colonel Samuel B. Griffith II had been a prime proponent of the improved setup.

The course was eight weeks long. Carlson's vision of the raiders initially influenced the training program, probably via Lieutenant Colonel James Roosevelt's part in setting up the center. Their hands were obvious in the selection of classes on guerrilla warfare and "individual cookery." The latter was a fetish of Carlson's—he thought regular infantry relied too heavily on bulky field kitchens. There also was a week-long field problem in which the students divided into a main body and two guerrilla bands acting as aggressors. Rubber boat operations occupied a significant block of the schedule. Otherwise, the course focused heavily on traditional individual skills and small unit tactics: marksmanship, scouting, patrolling, physical conditioning, individual combat, and so forth.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 54683

While other raiders watch, two instructors demonstrate the dexterity required for hand-to-hand knife fighting. Clad in camouflage utilities and fully combat equipped, a raider vaults a barbed-wire obstacle while in training.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 55237



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 55234

Shown here is one aspect of raider training, crossing a river on a two-rope bridge, not often encountered in combat.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 54686A

Negotiating an obstacle course while TNT charges explode nearby, this raider carries a folding-stock Reising gun.

Hiking was a major training component for raiders, considering their primary mission as light infantry in combat.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 54678



to keep the raiders supplied. Guerrilla tactics inflicted heavy casualties on the enemy, but at an equally high cost in friendly manpower.

Nevertheless, the 2d Raiders could hold their heads high. Vandegrift cited them for "the consummate skill displayed in the conduct of operations, for the training, stamina and fortitude displayed by all members of the battalion, and for its commendable aggressive spirit and high morale."

Reshaping the Raiders

The 2d Raiders boarded a transport on 15 December and returned to Camp Gung Ho on Espiritu Santo. There they recuperated in pyramidal tents in a coconut grove along the banks of a river. The camp and the chow were Spartan, and the only relief came when a ship took the battalion to New Zealand in February 1943 for two weeks of liberty. The 1st Raiders had returned to Camp Bailey in New Caledonia in October 1942. Their living conditions were similar, except for a slightly better hillside site looking over a river. They spent a month in New Zealand over the Christmas holidays.

These were no longer the only raider battalions in the Marine Corps. Admiral Turner had tried to force each Marine regiment to convert one battalion to a raider organization, but General Holcomb, with an assist from Nimitz, put a stop to that interference in the Corps' internal affairs. However, the Commandant did authorize the creation of two additional battalions of raiders. The 3d Raiders came into being on Samoa on 20 September 1942. Their commander was Lieutenant Colonel Harry B. "Harry the Horse" Liversedge, a former enlisted Marine and a shotputter in the 1920 and 1924 Olympics. The battalion drew on volunteers from the many Marine units in Samoa, and also received small contingents from the 1st and 2d Raiders.

The Corps activated the 4th Raider Battalion in Southern California

on 23 October 1942. Major Roosevelt commanded this new unit. The 3d and 4th Raiders both arrived in Espiritu Santo in February 1943.

There as yet existed no common raider table of organization. Carlson retained his six companies of two rifle platoons and a weapons platoon. Griffith adopted the fire team concept, but added a fourth man to each team and retained the four rifle companies and a weapons company established by Edson. Roosevelt's battalion had four rifle companies plus a Demolition and Engineer Company.

On the anniversary of the creation of the 2d Raiders, Carlson addressed his men in a "Gung Ho" meeting. He issued a press release later to publicize his words. In addition to an-

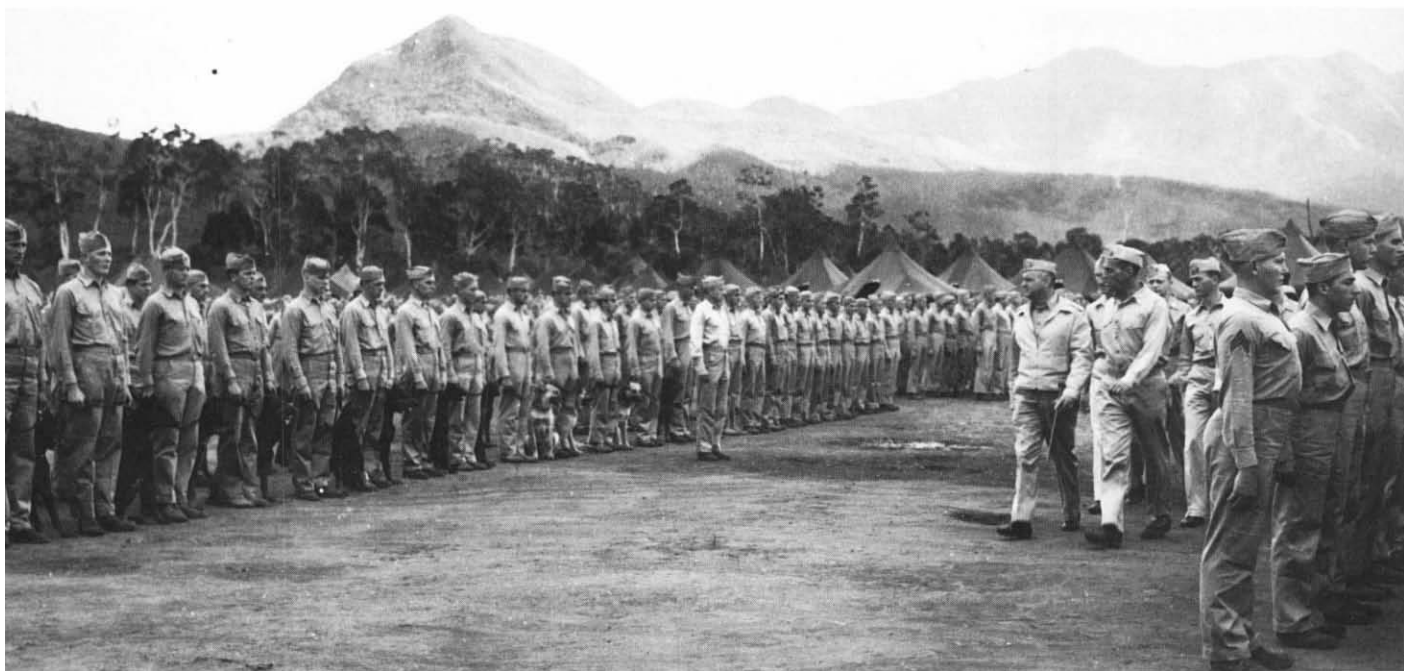
nouncing his decision to establish Marine Raider Organization Day, he reviewed the battalion's first year of existence. He noted that his morale had been "low" at times, as the officers and men struggled to learn and implement the philosophy of "Gung Ho." In his mind, the tactical successes of the outfit were less significant than the way in which he had molded it. "Makin brought the story of our methods of living and training to the world. Perhaps this fact was of even greater importance than the material gains of the raid." However, the days of Carlson's influence on the raiders were numbered.

On 15 March 1943 the Marine Corps created the 1st Raider Regiment and gave it control of all four

Col Harry B. "Harry the Horse" Liversedge brought the 3d Raider Battalion into existence in September 1942 and then became the first commander of the 1st Marine Raider Regiment upon its activation in March 1943. Here he cuts a cake for his raiders in honor of the Marine Corps birthday on 10 November 1943.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 67934





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 60133

MajGen Alexander A. Vandegrift (with riding crop) troops LtCol Alan Shapley, the battalion commander, is on Vandegrift's left. Shapley ended Carlson's "Gung Ho" experiments.

battalions. Liversedge, now a colonel, took charge of the new organization. A week later, Lieutenant Colonel Alan Shapley took over command of the 2d Raiders. He was an orthodox line officer who had earned a Navy Cross on board the *Arizona* (BB 39) on 7 December 1941. He thought the Makin Raid had been a "fiasco," and he had no interest in "Gung Ho." Shapley wasted no time in turning the unit into "a regular battalion." Carlson temporarily became the regimental executive officer, but served there only briefly before entering the hospital weak from malaria and jaundice. Soon thereafter he was on his way stateside. A month later Lieutenant Colonel Michael S. Currin, another officer with more orthodox views, took command of the 4th Raiders from Roosevelt.

The regiment enforced a common organization among the battalions. The result was a mixture of Edson and Carlson's ideas. Carlson bequeathed his fire team and squad to the raiders (and later to the Corps as a whole). But each battalion now had a weapons company, and four rifle companies composed of a weapons platoon and three rifle pla-

toons. Edson's other imprint was the concept of a highly trained, lightly equipped force using conventional tactics to accomplish special missions or to fill in for a line battalion. The 1st Raider Regiment was no guerrilla outfit. Given the changing thrust of the Pacific war, the choice was a wise one. In the future the Marines would be attacking Japanese forces holed up in tight perimeters or on small islands. Guerrilla tactics provided no answer to the problem of overcoming these strong defensive positions.

New Georgia

As the fighting on Guadalcanal drew to a close in early 1943, American commanders intensified their planning for the eventual seizure of Rabaul, the primary Japanese stronghold in the Southwest Pacific. This major air and naval base on the eastern end of New Britain was centrally located between New Guinea and the northwestern terminus of the Solomons. That allowed the Japanese to shift their air and naval support from one front to the other on short notice. Conversely, simultaneous American advances through New Guinea and the Solomons would

threaten Rabaul from two directions. With that in mind, Admiral William F. Halsey's South Pacific command prepared to drive farther up the Solomons chain, while MacArthur continued his operations along the New Guinea coast.

Halsey's planners initially focused on New Georgia, a large island located on the southern flank of the Slot about halfway up the Solomons chain. By December 1942, the Japanese had managed to complete an airstrip on New Georgia's Munda Point. Seizure of the island would thus remove that enemy threat and advance Allied aircraft one-third of the way to Rabaul. However, the South Pacific command also was worried about enemy activity in the Russell Islands, located 30 miles northwest of Guadalcanal's Cape Esperance. The Russells had been a staging point for the enemy's reinforcement and subsequent evacuation of Guadalcanal. Strong Japanese forces there would be a thorn in the side of an operation against New Georgia and possibly a threat to Guadalcanal itself. Halsey thus decided to seize the Russells prior to action elsewhere in the Solomons. As an additional benefit, American

fighter planes stationed in the Russells would be able to provide more effective support to the eventual assault on New Georgia.

The landing force for Operation Cleanslate (the codename for the Russells assault) consisted of the 43d Infantry Division and the 3d Raider Battalion. The Army division would seize Banika Island while the Marines took nearby Pavuvu. The APDs of Transdiv 12 carried the raiders from Espiritu Santo to Guadalcanal in mid-February. Four days prior to the 21 February D-day, a lieutenant and a sergeant from the raiders scouted both objectives—they found them empty of the enemy. The 3d Raiders thus made an unopposed landing in their first offensive action. The 159th Infantry followed them ashore and assisted in the occupation of the island.

The greatest challenges the Marines faced on Pavuvu were logistical and medical. Due to the Navy's legitimate concern about an enemy air and naval response, the landing plan relied on a rapid offload and quick withdrawal of the transports. The Higgins boats of the APDs were preloaded with raider supplies, while the men went ashore in their rubber boats. A rash of outboard motor failures played havoc with the landing formations, and Liversedge's after action report noted that this could have resulted in "serious consequences." Once ashore, the light raiders suffered from their lack of organic transport as they struggled to manhandle supplies from the beach to inland dumps. During the battalion's subsequent four-week stay on Pavuvu, the diet of field chow and the tough tropic conditions combined to debilitate the troops. Fully one-third developed skin problems, all men lost weight, and several dozen eventually fell ill with malaria and other diseases. Although it was not entirely the fault of planners, the hard-hitting capabilities of the Marine battalion were wasted on



Department of Defense Photos (USMC) 54765
A BAR man in the bow of the rubber landing craft provides covering fire as the 10-man boat crew reaches the undefended beach of Pavuvu in the Russell Islands.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 54468
The 3d Raider Battalion squad pulls its boat into cover on Pavuvu and heads inland. As the raider skirmish line maneuvers cautiously through the coconut groves and keeps an eye out for snipers in the treetops, it is also wary of enemy elsewhere.

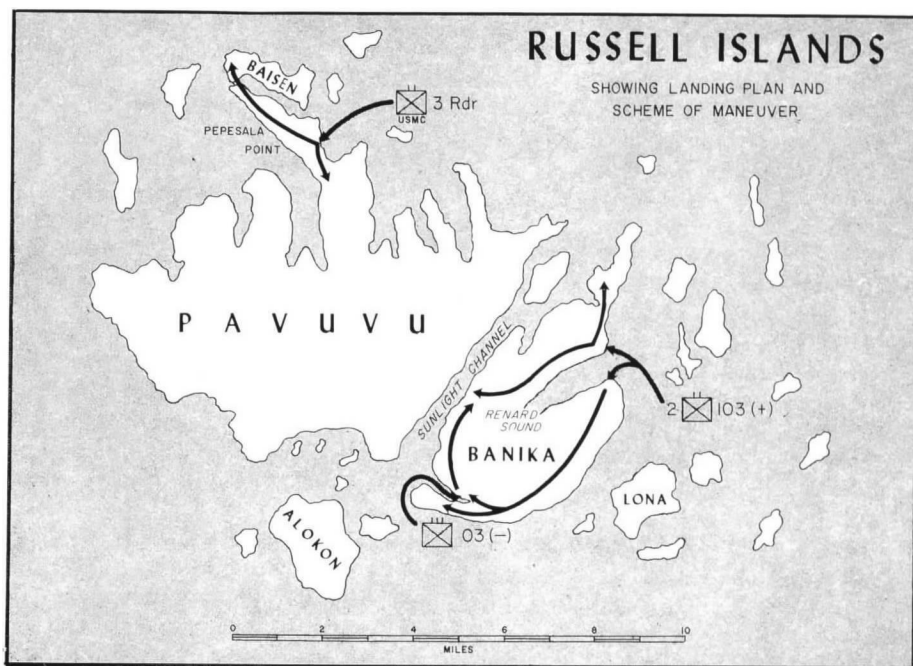
Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 54473



Cleanslate. Only the two-man scouting team had performed a mission in accordance with the original purpose of the raiders.

In the midst of the execution of Cleanslate Halsey continued preparations for subsequent operations in the Central Solomons. This included repeated use of the scouting capability demonstrated in the Russells. At the end of February a Navy lieutenant and six raiders landed at New Georgia's Roviana Lagoon. With the aid of coastwatchers and natives, they spent the next three weeks collecting information on the terrain, hydrographic conditions, and Japanese defenses. On 21 March Consolidated Catalina PBVs landed four raider patrols at New Georgia's Segi Point. From there they fanned out with native guides and canoes to scout Kolombangara, Vangunu, and New Georgia. Other groups visited these areas and Rendova over the course of the next three months. The patrols provided valuable information that helped shape landing plans, and the final groups emplaced small detachments near designated beaches to act as guides for the assault forces.

During May and June the Japanese reinforced their garrisons in the central Solomons to 11,000 men, but this number was grossly insufficient to cover all potential landing sites on the numerous large islands in the region. That gave Halsey's force great flexibility. The final plan called for several assaults, all against lightly defended or undefended targets. On D-day the Eastern Landing Force, consisting of the 103d Infantry, an Army regiment, and the 4th Raider Battalion, would occupy Wickham Anchorage, Segi Point, and Viru Harbor. Naval construction units would immediately build a fighter strip at Segi and a base for torpedo boats at Viru. The Northern Landing Group (the 1st Raider Regiment headquarters, the 1st Raider Battalion, and two army battalions) would simultaneously go ashore at Rice Anchorage, then at



tack overland to take Enogai Inlet and Bairoko Harbor. This would cut off the Japanese barge traffic that supplied reinforcements and logistics. The last D-day operation would be the Southern Landing Group's seizure of the northern end of Rendova and its outlying islands. On D plus 4 many of these same units from the 43d Infantry Division would conduct a shore-to-shore assault against the undefended beaches at Zanana and Piraka on New Georgia. Planes from Segi Point and artillery from the Rendova beachhead would render support as the Army regiments advanced overland to capture Munda airfield. D-day was 30 June.

Things did not go entirely according to plan. During June the Japanese used some of their reinforcements to extend their coverage of New Georgia. They ordered a battalion to Viru with instructions to clean out native forces operating in the vicinity of Segi. The Solomon Islanders, under command of Coastwatcher Donald G. Kennedy, had repeatedly attacked enemy outposts and patrols in the area. As the Japanese battalion advanced units closer to Segi Point, Kennedy requested support. On 20 June Admiral Turner ordered Lieutenant Colonel Currin and half of his 4th Raiders to move immediately

from Guadalcanal to Segi. Companies O and P loaded on board APDs that day and made an unopposed landing the next morning. On 22 June two Army infantry companies and the advance party of the airfield construction unit arrived to strengthen the position.

Viru presented a tougher problem. The narrow entrance to the harbor was flanked by high cliffs and covered by a 3-inch coast defense gun. Numerous enemy machine guns, including .50-caliber models, occupied supporting positions. Most of the defenses were oriented toward an attack from the sea, so American leaders quickly decided to conduct an overland approach. But that was not easy either, given the difficulty of the trails. After reconnaissance and consultation with higher headquarters, Currin decided to take his raiders by rubber boat to Regi, where they would begin their trek. The assault on Viru would be a double envelopment. Lieutenant Devillo W. Brown's 3d Platoon, designated Task Force B, would take the lightly defended village of Tombe on the eastern side of the harbor. The remainder of the force would attack the main enemy defenses at Tetemara on the opposite shore. The simultaneous assaults were to take place on the originally



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 60166C

Raiders cross one of the many rivers encountered during the New Georgia campaign. (Note that two of the men are armed with Boys .55-caliber antitank rifles.)

scheduled D-day. Once the approaches were secured, APDs would land two Army infantry companies.

The Marines departed Segi the evening of 27 June and landed at Regi just after midnight. They rested a few hours and then moved out single file on the narrow trail. Company O took the lead with Company P bringing up the rear. Native scouts served as guides and the point. The small force had not gone very far when the path disappeared into a swamp. After three hours of tough movement, firing erupted at the end of the column. One of the Japanese patrols known to be in the area had stumbled upon the rear guard. The raiders killed four of the enemy and suffered no casualties. About an hour later a Japanese force of about 20 men, possibly the same force, came up from a side trail and hit the rear guard in the flank. After an hour of firing the enemy broke off the action. There were no known casualties on either side, but the five-man rear point failed to rejoin the Marine column. (They later turned up back at Segi.)

The raiders crossed the Mohi River late in the afternoon and set up a perimeter defense for the night. The wicked terrain and the two forced halts convinced Currin that he would

not make it to Viru in time for D-day. Since he no longer had any working radios, he sent two native runners to Kennedy asking him to relay a message to higher command that the 4th Raiders would be a day late in making its attack.

After a miserable rainy night, the Marines moved out. They reached the Choi River late in the morning. As the rear elements crossed, an enemy force on a hill 300 yards to the battalion's flank opened up with heavy fire from machine guns and rifles. The battalion halted again as Currin tried to determine what was transpiring. After about three hours he knew that his rear had successfully engaged a small unit, probably another enemy patrol, so the remainder of the force proceeded on its way. The raiders crossed the snake-like Choi River twice more before halting for the night at 1800. The 3d Platoon reached the perimeter at 2100. They had lost five killed and another man was wounded, but they had counted 18 enemy dead.

It seemed likely that the enemy at Viru was now aware of the Marine presence. Since the native scouts indicated that the area north of the harbor was considered impassable, Currin suspected that the Japanese would reinforce Tombe against an at-

tack from the east. In view of that and the losses to Brown's unit, the colonel decided to strengthen that wing of his assault. Captain Anthony "Cold Steel" Walker would now lead two platoons of his Company P against Tombe. Given the difficulties with the terrain and communications, there would be no attempt to coordinate the two arms of the envelopment; Walker was free to attack whenever he chose after dawn on 1 July. With the plans finalized, the raiders settled in for another night of rain.

The battalion resumed the march early the next morning, but Walker's unit soon branched off on the shorter route to Tombe. During the course of the day the main force crossed several ridges and the Viru and Tita rivers. Everyone, to include the native bearers carrying the heavy weapons ammunition, felt exhausted. But the worst was yet to come. In twilight the Marines had to ford the Mango, a wide, swift river that was at least six feet deep. They formed a human chain and somehow managed to get everyone across without incident. The tough hills now disappeared, but in their place was a mangrove swamp waist deep. In the pitch darkness the men stumbled forward through the mess of water, roots, and mud. Finally the natives brought forward bits of rotting jungle vegetation from the banks of the Mango. With this luminescent material on their backs, each raider could at least follow the man in front. At the end of the swamp was a half mile climb to the top of a ridge where the unit could rest and prepare for the attack. The nightly rain and the struggles of hundreds of men soon made the steep slope nearly impassable. Several hours after nightfall the battalion finally reached level ground and the Marines huddled on the sides of the trail until dawn.

Unbeknownst to the raiders, the amphibious portion of the assault against Viru had taken place as previously scheduled. Although the Navy

The Raider Patch

The use of Marine Corps shoulder patches in World War II originated with the creation of the 1st Marine Division insignia following the Guadalcanal campaign. This was not a new practice for Marines, since members of the Fourth Marine Brigade wore the Star and Indian Head patch of the Army 2d Infantry Division in France during World War I.

The 1st Marine Division emblem consisted of the word "Guadalcanal" lettered in white on a red numeral "1" placed on a sky-blue diamond. The white stars of the Southern Cross surrounded the number. By July 1943, the I Marine Amphibious Corps had adopted a variation for its own patch—a white-bordered, red diamond, encircled by the white stars of the Southern Cross, on a five-sided blue background. Non-divisional corps units each had a specific symbol inside the red diamond. The emblem of the I MAC raider battalions was a skull. While the raider insignia may not have been the most artistic of Marine Corps shoulder patches in the war, it certainly was the most striking.

The skull device originated with the 2d Raider Battalion, which began using it not long after that unit came into existence. Carlson issued paper emblems, consisting of a skull-like face superimposed on crossed scimitars, to his raiders prior to the Makin raid. Each piece of paper was backed with glue and allegedly raiders were to use them to mark enemy dead for psychological effect, but they stuck together in the humid tropics and proved impractical. By the time Carlson's battalion reached Guadalcanal, the em-



blem had evolved into a skull backed by a crossed "Gung Ho" knife and lightning bolt. It is not clear who selected the skull for the official raider patch, but that device readily conveyed the image the raiders effectively cultivated—that of an elite force trained to close with and destroy the enemy in commando-style operations.

commander in charge was aware of Currin's message altering the date of the land attack, he chose to order his APDs to approach the harbor on 30 June. The Japanese 3-inch gun quickly drove them off. Unable to contact Currin, higher headquarters then decided to land the Army force embarked in the APDs near the same spot where the raiders had begun their trek. The new mission was to move overland and support the Marines, who were apparently experiencing difficulties. The Japanese commander at Viru reported that he had repulsed an American landing.

Both wings of the raider assault force moved out early on the morning of 1 July. By 0845 Walker's detachment reached the outskirts of Tombe without being discovered. The men deployed, opened fire on the tiny village, and then rushed for-

ward. Most of the defenders apparently died in the initial burst of fire. The two Marine platoons secured the village without a single casualty and counted 13 enemy bodies. Just as that engagement came to a close, six American aircraft appeared over the harbor. These were not part of the original plan, but headquarters had sent them to soften up the objective when it realized that the raider attack would be delayed. Although this uncoordinated air support could have resulted in disaster, it worked out well in practice. The planes ignored Tombe and concentrated their efforts on Tetemara. The Japanese abandoned some of their fixed defenses and moved inland, directly into the path of the oncoming raiders.

Currin's point made contact with the enemy shortly after the bombing ceased. Company O, leading the bat-

talion column, quickly deployed two platoons on line astride the trail. The raiders continued forward and destroyed Japanese outposts, but then ran into the enemy main body, which was bolstered by several machine guns. Progress then was painfully slow as intermittent heavy rains swept the battlefield. Company O's reserve platoon went into line to the left as noise indicated that the enemy might be gathering there for a counterattack. As the day wore on the raiders pushed the Japanese back, until the Marine right flank rested on high ground overlooking the harbor. Currin fed some of Company P's machine guns into the line, then put his remaining platoon (also from Company P) on his right flank. Demolitions men moved forward to deal with the enemy machine guns.

In mid-afternoon a handful of

Japanese launched a brief banzai attack against the Marine left. Not long after this effort dissolved, Currin launched Lieutenant Malcolm N. McCarthy's Company P platoon against the enemy's left flank, while Company O provided a base of fire. McCarthy's men quickly overran the 3-inch gun and soon rolled up the enemy line, as the remainder of the Japanese defenders withdrew toward the northwest. The raiders had suffered 8 dead and 15 wounded, while killing 48 of the enemy and capturing 16 machine guns and a handful of heavier weapons.

The 4th Raiders consolidated its hold on Viru and conducted numerous patrols over the next several days. The two Army companies landed near Regi finally reached Tombe on 4 July. The Navy brought in more Army units on 9 July and the Marines boarded the LCIs for Guadalcanal.

The other half of the 4th Raider Battalion (Companies N and Q) received its baptism of fire during this same period. This unit was under command of the battalion executive officer, Major James R. Clark. It was assigned to assist the Army's 2d Battalion, 103d Infantry (Lieutenant Colonel Lester E. Brown) in seizing Vangunu and the approaches to Wickham Anchorage on 30 June. Intelligence from the coastwatchers in-

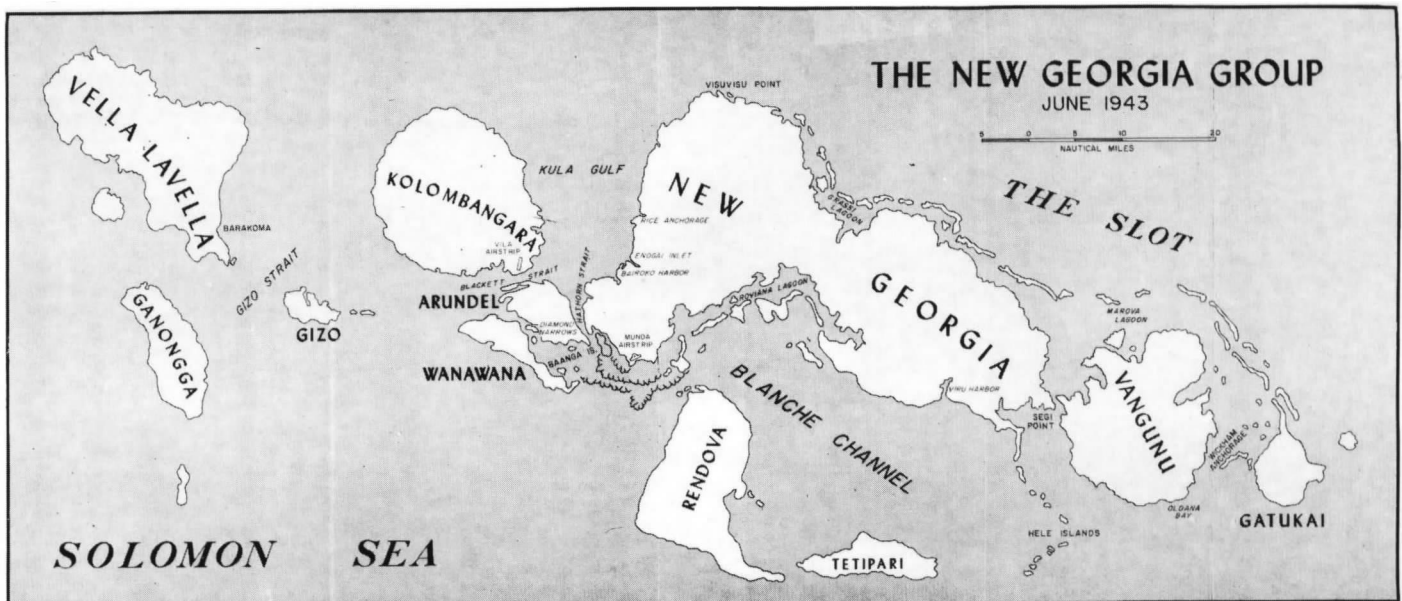
dicated that there were about 100 Japanese occupying the island. The plan called for the raiders to make a predawn landing at undefended Oloana Bay. The Army would follow them ashore after daylight, establish a beachhead, and then deal with the enemy, thought to be located in a village along the coast several miles to the east.

The night landing under conditions of low visibility and heavy seas turned into a fiasco. The APDs began debarkation in the wrong spot, their Higgins boats lost formation when they attempted to pass through the LCIs loaded with soldiers, and the two raider companies ended up being scattered along seven miles of coastline. When the Army units began to land after daylight, they found just 75 Marines holding the designated beachhead. A two-man patrol (one lieutenant each from the raiders and the Army battalion) had been ashore since mid-June to reconnoiter with the aid of native scouts. They provided the exact location of the Japanese garrison, and the joint force soon headed to the northeast toward its objective. Native scouts and the handful of Marines led the way, with two Army companies (F and G) in trace. The remaining raiders were to join up with their unit as soon as they could. All but one platoon did catch up by the time the Americans

reached their line of departure a few hundred yards north of the village.

The plan of attack was simple. The Army units passed through the raiders on the east-west trail to assume the eastern-most position. The entire column of files then merely faced to the right, which placed the composite battalion on line and pointing toward the enemy to the south. Company Q held the right flank on the bank of the Kaeruka River. Company N in the center and Company F on the left flank would guide on the movements of Q. Company G held back and acted as the reserve. Within minutes of beginning the advance, the attack ran into resistance. Japanese fire from the west bank of the river was particularly heavy and Company Q crossed over to deal with this threat. At the same time Company F moved to its left to skirt around strong defenses. Company G soon moved in to fill the gap. By late afternoon the Americans were able to clear the east bank of the river. Lieutenant Colonel Brown ordered Company Q to disengage from the west bank and join in the battalion's perimeter defense at the mouth of the river. The Marines had lost 10 dead and 21 wounded, while the Army had suffered similarly.

The enemy made no ground attack that night, but periodically fired mortars and machine guns at Ameri-



can lines. During a lull at 0200 three Japanese barges approached the beach, apparently unaware that ownership of the real estate was under dispute. As they neared shore, the Marines guarding the seaward portion of the perimeter opened up. One craft sank and the other two broached in the surf. Two Marines and one soldier died in the firefight, but the entire enemy force, estimated at 120 men, was destroyed in the water or on the beach.

The next morning Brown decided to disengage and move to Vura Village, where he could reorganize and direct fire support on the remaining enemy at Kaeruka prior to launching another attack. The Americans received only harassing fire as they withdrew. After a day of preparatory fire by air, artillery, and naval guns, the composite battalion returned to Kaeruka on 3 July. They seized the village against minimal resistance, killed seven more Japanese, and captured one. The raiders returned to Oloana Bay by LCI later the next day. On 9 July they made a predawn landing from an LCT on Gatukai Island to investigate reports of a 50-man Japanese unit. The Marines found evidence of the enemy but made no contact. They returned to Oloana Bay on 10 July and departed for Guadalcanal the day after. There they joined up with Lieutenant Colonel Currin and the rest of the 4th Raider Battalion.

Enogai

The 1st Raider Battalion and the raider regimental headquarters joined in on the New Georgia operation in the early hours of 5 July. They spearheaded the night landing of the Northern Group at Rice Anchorage, a spot selected because previous reconnaissance showed it to be undefended. Coastal guns from Enogai and the island of Kolombangara fired on the APDs during the landing, but their accuracy was poor in the driving rain. The only serious interference came from enemy destroyers; a



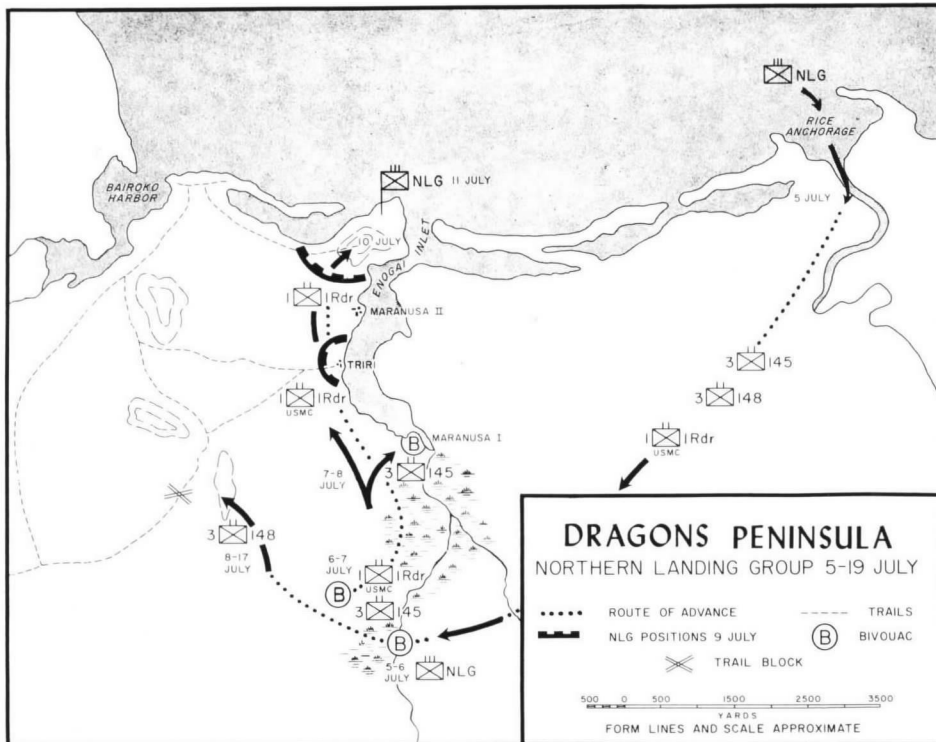
Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 59009A
The 1st Raider Battalion captured this Japanese 140mm coastal defense gun after striking Enogai from the rear following the unopposed landing on 5 July 1943.

long-range torpedo sunk one of the American transports. Nevertheless, the troops and most of their equipment and supplies made it ashore, and the amphibious group was able to withdraw before daylight left them vulnerable to further enemy counteraction.

From Rice Anchorage the 1st Raider Battalion was to advance overland to seize Dragons Peninsula and the enemy's barge bases at Enogai and Bairoko. The Army's 3d Battalion, 148th Infantry, would head deeper into the interior and establish a blocking position on the trail connecting Enogai-Bairoko with Munda. Another Army unit—3d Battalion, 145th Infantry—would divide itself, with half securing the beachhead and the remainder serving as the reserve force. Intelligence reports indicated 500 Japanese troops were in place on

Dragons Peninsula. Liversedge and the regimental headquarters accompanied the 1st Raiders.

A reconnaissance patrol headed by raider Captain Clay A. Boyd had already been on the island for some time when the American force landed on 5 July. His small detachment, a coastwatcher, and the ever-present native scouts helped guide the initial waves of Marines to shore. The natives had also cut fresh trails leading to the Giza Giza River at the head of Enogai Inlet. With this advance preparation, the units covered the seven miles of rough terrain to the Giza Giza before nightfall. With darkness came heavy rain. There were no trails through the swamp on the far side of the Giza Giza, and the rain rendered the Tamoko River unfordable, so it took all of the next day for the force to move less than a mile



occupied. Griffith then ordered his right flank to attack through the open terrain near the inlet. Mortars provided valuable support and Company B advanced quickly. With their flank turned, the Japanese began to pull out and cross to the spit of land on the north side of Leland Lagoon. Company A's machine guns turned that into a bloody retreat, but its infantry platoons still could not crack the tough resistance in their immediate front. By evening, however, the raiders had surrounded these final holdouts. At first light the following day (11 July), Company D attacked with hand grenades and cleaned out the area.

American losses in the campaign against Enogai were 54 dead and 91 wounded. But the Marines and soldiers had killed 350 Japanese and seized 23 machine guns and four 140mm coastal defense guns. These results were remarkable given the handicaps which the American forces faced. The rough terrain had made it impossible for the troops to carry all the rations and ammunition they needed. (The 1st Raiders had gone without food for more than a day when supplies air-dropped to Triri finally reached them on the front lines at Enogai the evening of 10 July.) With the exception of one air strike, fire support had come entirely from the raiders' handful of 60mm mortars.

There was also no way to quickly evacuate wounded to adequate hospitals until the Marines had taken Enogai. Then, on July 11, three PBVs flew in to carry the casualties to the rear. That mission almost had an unhappy ending when two Japanese planes appeared and strafed the PBVs as they sat on the water boarding the wounded. Luckily damage was slight and the amphibian planes were able to take off after the attack. When the PBVs departed they carried two of Liversedge's staff officers with a plea for better aerial resupply and for the 4th Raider Battalion.

and cross the Tamoko. There they halted and endured another night of rain.

Late in the morning on 7 July the raider advance guard met up with the enemy for the first time. In a brief fight it killed two men and captured the remaining five members of a small Japanese patrol near the village of Maranusa. From there the trail followed the steep sides of a coral ridge for a mile. In the village of Triri, at the western end of the ridge, the advance guard encountered a second patrol. The raiders killed 11 Japanese here, but lost three dead and four wounded. The attackers set up around Triri for the night and arranged ambushes along the trails entering the village. At dawn on 8 July a strong enemy force bumped into the platoon of raiders from Company D blocking the trail to Bairoko. The fight lasted all morning and the Japanese did not break off till Company C arrived on the scene. The enemy left behind 50 dead.

While the Army companies held Triri, the raider battalion moved out in the afternoon for Enogai. That trail entered yet another swamp along the southern edge of the inlet.

This one was so bad that Griffith decided to return to Triri and try a new route the next day. It was just as well, for the Japanese had renewed their counterattack on the Bairoko trail and were pressing hard on the soldiers. A raider platoon from Company B slipped around the enemy flank and soon caused the Japanese to withdraw again.

On the morning of 9 July the 1st Raider Battalion headed down a different trail toward Enogai. It crossed the swamp by an easier route and led onto the high ground that dominated the objective. At 1500 Company C made contact with the Japanese defenses. Company A went into line on the left of Company C, anchoring its left flank on Leland Lagoon. Company B took the right flank. Thick jungle canopy prevented the use of mortars, but the lack of light also kept undergrowth to a minimum, leaving good fields of fire for small arms. Companies A and C were soon pinned down, though Company B reported no contact to its front. As night fell the firing slacked off.

Early the next morning Company B patrols moved forward and discovered their portion of the front un-

Bairoko

Things were worse for the 3d Battalion, 148th Infantry. After breaking off from the line of march of the 1st Raiders on 6 July, the soldiers had moved over equally difficult terrain to assume their blocking position on the Munda-Bairoko Trail on 8 July. After initial success against surprised Japanese patrols, the Army battalion fought a bloody action against an enemy force of similar strength that pushed the American soldiers off high ground and away from the important trail. Heavy jungle and poor maps prevented aerial resupply of their position, while illness and casualties sapped manpower. Liver- sedge led a reinforcing company from the 3d Battalion, 145th Infantry, to the scene on 13 July. Disappointed at the results of this portion of the operation, and unable to reinforce or resupply this outpost adequately, the raider colonel decided to withdraw the force to Triri. There the soldiers would recuperate for the upcoming move on Bairoko and disrupt enemy movement on the Munda-Bairoko Trail with occasional patrols.

Prior to dawn on 18 July four APDs brought the 4th Raider Battalion and fresh supplies to Enogai.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 54650

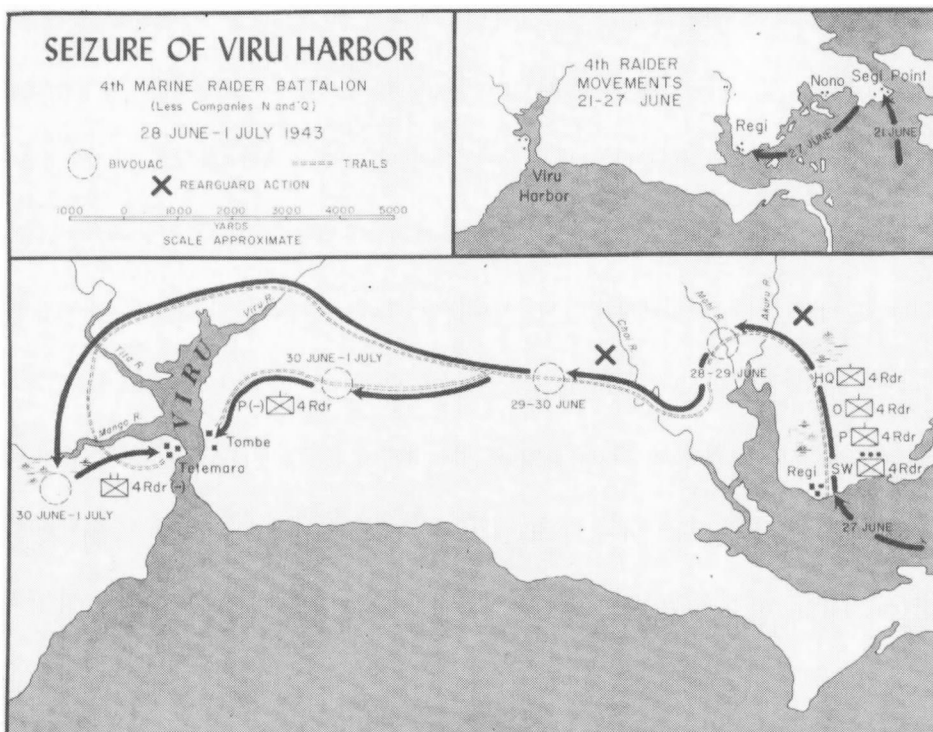
A raider 60mm mortar crew goes into action on New Georgia. Because the raiders had no heavier weapons, their initial efforts at Bairoko were mostly unsuccessful.

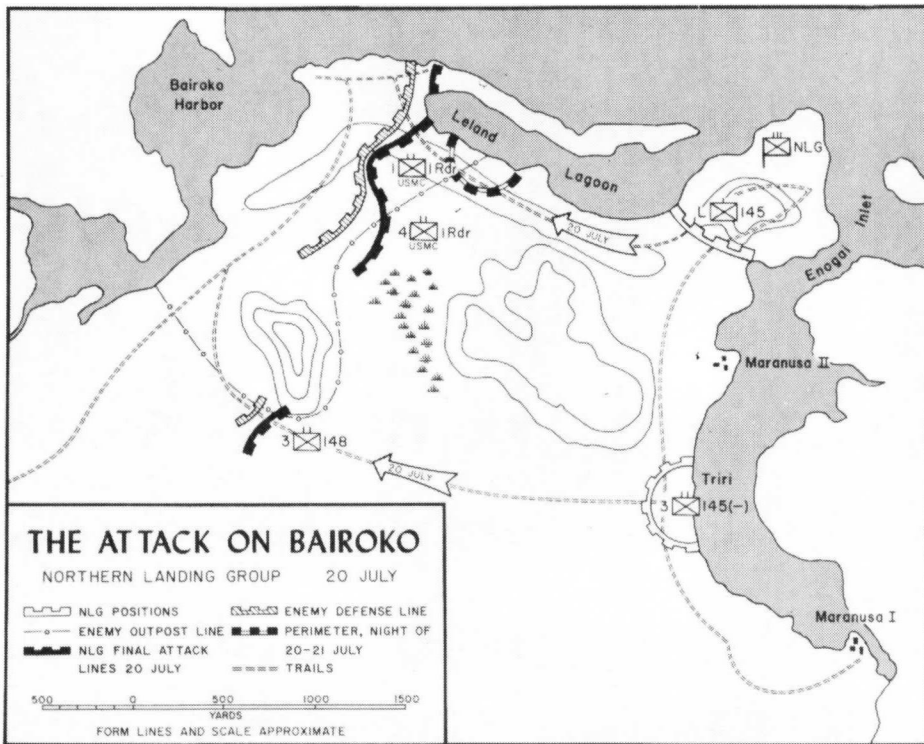
Most of the Rice Anchorage garrison had also moved up to join the main force. This gave Liver- sedge four bat- talions, but all of them were signifi- cantly understrength due to losses already suffered in the New Georgia campaign. The 4th Raider Battalion was short more than 200 men. The 1st Raiders reorganized into two full companies (B and D), with A and C becoming skeleton units. A detach- ment of the 3d Battalion, 145th In- fantry, remained at Rice Anchorage. More important, the enemy at Bairoko was now aware of the threat

to its position. Marine patrols in mid- July noted that the Japanese were busily fortifying the landward ap- proaches to their last harbor on the north coast of the island.

Liversedge issued his order for the attack. It would commence the morning of 20 July with two compa- nies of the 1st Raider Battalion and all of the 4th advancing from Enogai while the 3d Battalion, 148th In- fantry, moved out along the Triri- Bairoko Trail. The American forces would converge on the Japanese from two directions. The remaining Army battalion guarded Triri; Companies A and C of the raiders defended Enogai. These units also served as the reserve. Liver- sedge requested an air- strike on Bairoko timed to coincide with the attack, but it never materi- alized.

The movement toward Bairoko kicked off at 0800 and the 1st Raid- er Battalion made contact with ene- my outposts two hours later. Companies B and D deployed into line and pushed through a series of Japanese outguards. By noon Griffith's men had reached the main defenses, which consisted of four forti- fied lines on parallel coral ridges just a few hundred yards from the har- bor. The bunkers were mutually sup- porting and well protected by coconut logs and coral. Each held a





machine gun or automatic weapon. Here the 1st Battalion's attack ground to a halt. Liversedge, accompanying the northern prong of his offensive, committed the 4th Battalion in an attempt to turn the enemy flank, but it met the same heavy resistance. The raider companies slowly worked their way forward, and by late afternoon they had seized the first two enemy lines. However, throughout this advance enemy 90mm mortar fire swept the Marine units and inflicted numerous casualties.

The southern prong of the attack was faring less well. The Army battalion made its first contact with the enemy just 1,000 yards from Bairoko, but the Japanese held a vital piece of high ground that blocked the trail. With the lagoon on one side and a deep swamp on the other, there was no room for the soldiers to maneuver to the flanks of the enemy position. With the approval of the executive officer of the raider regiment, the commander of the Army battalion pulled back his lead units and used his two 81mm mortars to soften the defenses.

When news of the halt in the southern attack made it to Liversedge at 1600, he asked the commanders of

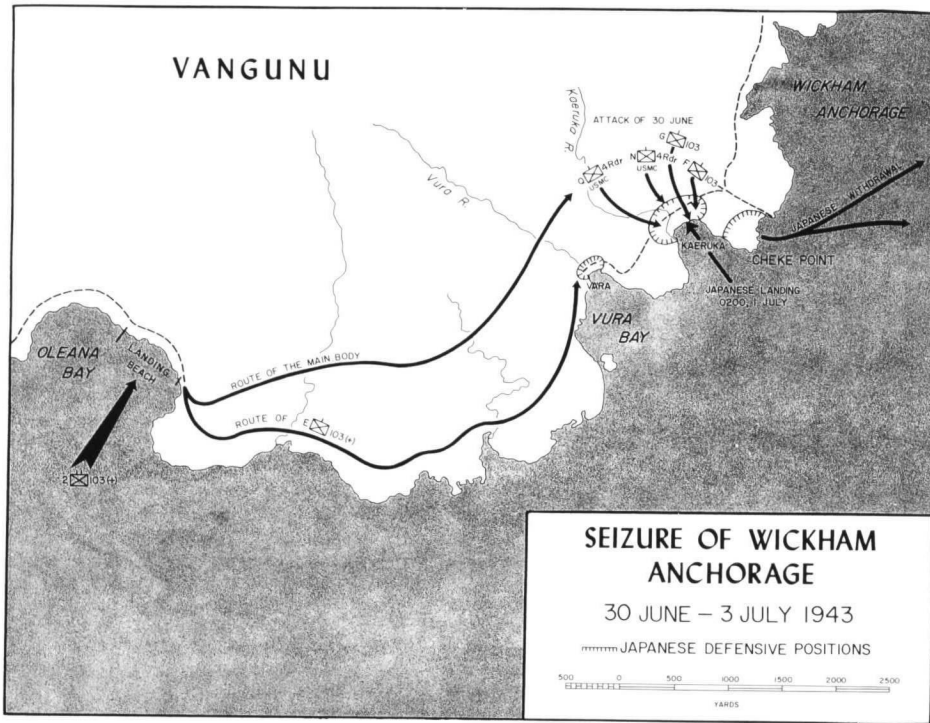
the raider battalions for their input. Griffith and Currin checked their lines. They were running out of water and ammunition, casualties had been heavy, and there was no friendly fire support. Neither battalion had any fresh reserves to commit to the fight. Moreover, a large number of men would be needed to hand-carry the many wounded to the rear. The 4th Raiders alone had 90 litter cases. From their current positions on high ground the Marine commanders could see the harbor just a few hundred yards away, but continued attacks against a well-entrenched enemy with fire superiority seemed wasteful. Not long after 1700 Liversedge issued orders for all battalions to pull back into defensive positions for the night in preparation for a withdrawal to Enogai and Triri the next day. He requested air strikes to cover the latter movement.

The move back across Dragons Peninsula on 21 July went smoothly from a tactical point of view. After failing to provide air support for the attack, higher echelons sent 250 sorties against Bairoko to cover the withdrawal. The Japanese did not pursue, but even so it was tough going on the ground. Water was in

short supply and everyone had to take turns carrying litters. The column moved slowly and halted every few hundred yards. In the afternoon rubber boats picked up most of the wounded and ferried them to the rear. By that evening the entire force was back in its enclaves at Enogai and Triri. PBVs made another trip to evacuate wounded, though this time two Zero fighters damaged one of the amphibian planes after take-off and forced it to return to Enogai Inlet. Total American casualties were 49 killed, 200 wounded, and two missing—the vast majority of them suffered by the raider battalions.

The failure to seize the objective and the severe American losses were plainly the result of poor logistics and a lack of firepower. A Joint Chiefs of Staff post mortem on the operation noted that "lightly armed troops cannot be expected to attack fixed positions defended by heavy automatic weapons, mortars, and heavy artillery." Another factor of significance, however, was the absence of surprise. The raiders had taken Enogai against similar odds because the enemy had not expected an attack from anywhere but the sea. Victory at Enogai provided ample warning to the garrison at Bairoko, and the Japanese there made themselves ready for an overland assault. The raiders might still have won with a suicidal effort, but Bairoko was not worth it.

The 1st Raider Regiment and its assorted battalions settled into defensive positions for the rest of July. The sole action consisted of patrols toward Bairoko and nuisance raids from Japanese aircraft. In early August elements of the force took up new blocking positions on the Munda-Bairoko Trail. On 9 August they made contact with Army troops from the Southern Landing Group. (Munda Airfield had fallen four days earlier.) Later in the month two Army battalions moved cautiously



Bougainville

In the immediate aftermath of the fall of New Georgia, the Allies seized other islands in the vicinity, to include Arundel, Vella Lavella, and Kolombangara. Thereafter the South Pacific command turned its attention to the next major step in the encirclement of Rabaul. There were several options, but the final choice was a landing on Bougainville, the largest island in the Solomons group. A month later MacArthur's command would assault Cape Gloucester on the western end of New Britain. Rabaul would then be within range of Allied land-based fighter aircraft coming from two directions. Air power thus could neutralize the Japanese bastion and allow it to be by-passed. The scheduled D-day for Bougainville was 1 November 1943.

Several factors dictated Halsey's scheme of maneuver for the offensive. First, he had too few transports and Marines to make a direct assault on the heavily defended enemy airfields located on the northern and

against Bairoko and found their way barred by only an occasional small outpost. The main enemy force had escaped by sea and the soldiers took control of the harbor on 24 August.

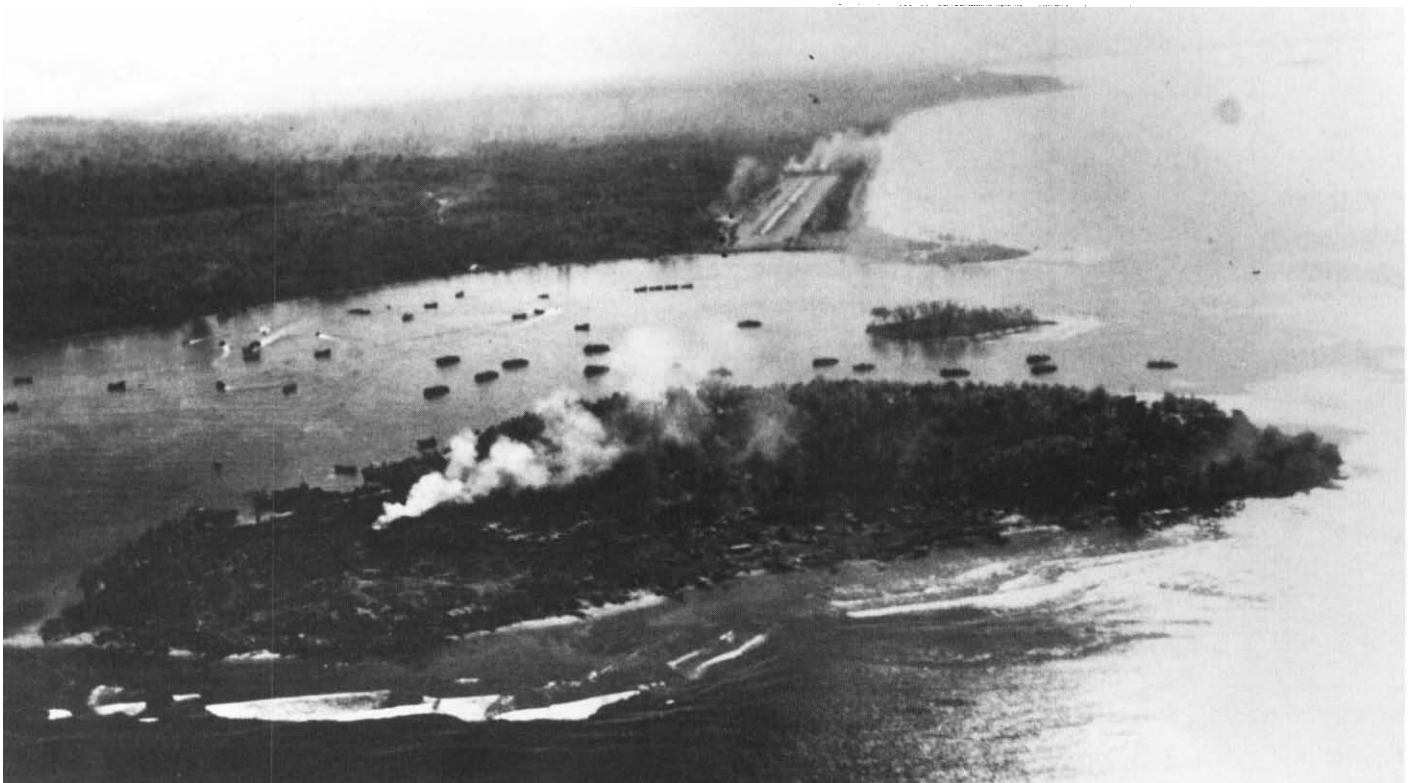
The raider headquarters and both Marine battalions embarked in transports on 28 August and sailed for

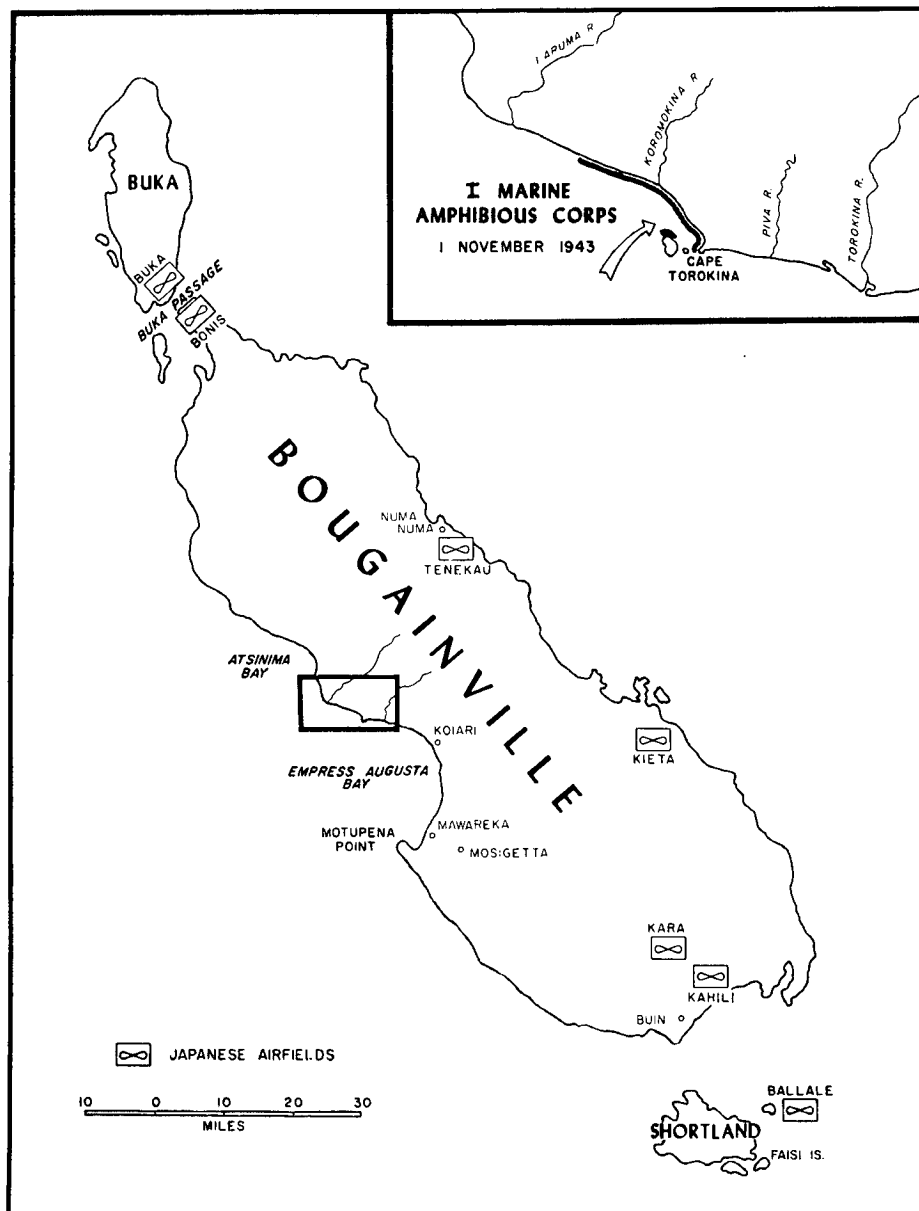
Cape Torokina on Bougainville is seen after the Allies built an airstrip. Threatening Puruata Island, assaulted by the 3d

Guadalcanal. The New Georgia campaign had been a costly one. Each raider battalion had suffered battle casualties of more than 25 percent. In addition, sickness had claimed an even greater number. The 1st Raiders now had just 245 effectives; the 4th Raiders only 154.

Raider Battalion on 1 November 1943, is in the foreground. Tiny Torokina Island lies in between Puruata and the Cape.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 68047





Battalion, seized a swath of the coast from Cape Torokina to the northwest. At the same time, the 3d Raider Battalion (less Company M) assaulted Puruata Island off Cape Torokina. Japanese defenses in the landing area consisted of a single company supported by a 75mm gun. One platoon occupied Puruata and a squad held Torokina Island, while the rest of the Japanese infantry and the gun were dug in on the cape itself.

The small Japanese force gave a good account of itself. The 75mm gun enfiladed the eastern landing beaches, while machine guns on the two small islands and the cape placed the approaches to this area in a cross-fire. The result was havoc among the initial right flank assault waves, which landed in considerable disorder. The 75mm gun destroyed four landing craft and damaged 10 others before Sergeant Robert A. Owens of the 1st Battalion, 3d Marines silenced it. (He received a posthumous Medal of Honor for his single-handed charge against the key position.)

The 2d Raider Battalion, landing just to the left of Owens' battalion, suffered from the gun, and from mortar and machine gun fire raking the beach. McCaffery succeeded in reorganizing his force on the beach and launching an attack that swept away the enemy defenses, but he fell mortally wounded in the process. Other battalions farther to the west met little or no resistance, except from high surf that caused many landing craft to broach. Company M, 3d Raiders, temporarily attached to the 2d Raider Battalion, moved out at noon and occupied a blocking position 1,500 yards up the Piva Trail, the main avenue of approach into the beachhead. The 3d Raiders silenced the machine guns on Puruata on D-day, and destroyed the last defenders on that island by late afternoon on 2 November. Total raider casualties to this point were three killed and 15 wounded.

Over the next several days the Marines advanced inland to extend their

southern ends of the island. Another consideration was the range of land-based fighters from bases in the Central Solomons—they could only effectively cover a landing in the southern half of Bougainville. The planners settled on the Empress Augusta Bay-Cape Torokina region on the western side of the island. Defenses were negligible there, and Bougainville's difficult terrain would prevent any rapid reaction from enemy ground forces located elsewhere on the island. Once ashore, the invasion force would seize a defensible perimeter, build an airfield, and eventually neutralize the remainder of the island from this enclave. A patrol landed by submarine in late September discovered that the areas

back of the landing beaches were swampy. Aerial reconnaissance in October also discovered the construction of new defenses. Neither of these facts changed the plan, however.

For this operation, the 2d and 3d Raider Battalions were organized as the 2d Raider Regiment, with Shapley in command. Lieutenant Colonel Joseph P. McCaffery took over the 2d Raider Battalion. Because of insufficient shipping, the initial landing consisted of just two regiments of the 3d Marine Division, reinforced by the raiders and the 3d Defense Battalion. The remainder of the Marines and the Army's 37th Division would follow at a later time.

On 1 November, the 3d and 9th Marines, assisted by the 2d Raider



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 63165

Demolition men of the 3d Raider Battalion landed on Torokina Island on 3 November, but found that supporting arms had already killed or driven off all Japanese.

Raiders pose during a lull in the battle next to one of the Japanese dugouts they cleared on Cape Torokina on 1 November.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 68117





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 70785A

Raiders move up the muddy Piva Trail to safeguard the flank of the beachhead.

Two small attacks hit Company E at the roadblock the night of 5 November, and a larger one struck Company H there two days later. Company G came forward in support and the enemy withdrew, but the Japanese kept up a rain of mortar shells all that night. On the morning of 8 November Companies H and M occupied the post and received yet another assault, this one the heaviest yet. In midafternoon Companies E and F conducted a passage of lines, counterattacked the enemy, and withdrew after two hours.

The next morning Companies I and M held the roadblock as L and F conducted another counterattack preceded by a half-hour artillery preparation. Japanese resistance was stubborn and elements of Companies I and M, and the 9th Marines eventually moved forward to assist. Shortly after noon the enemy retired from the scene. Patrols soon discovered the abandoned bivouac site of the Japanese *23d Infantry Regiment* just a few hundred yards up the trail. In the midst of this action PFC Hen-

ry Gurke of Company M covered an enemy grenade with his body to protect another Marine. He received a posthumous Medal of Honor for his heroic act of self-sacrifice.

The raider regiment celebrated the Marine Corps' birthday on 10 November by moving off the front lines and into division reserve. Other than occasional patrols and short stints on the line, the next two weeks were relatively quiet for the raiders. The Army's 37th Division began arriving at this time to reinforce the perimeter. On 23 November the 1st Parachute Battalion came ashore and temporarily joined the raiders, now acting as corps reserve. Two days later the 2d Raider Battalion participated in an attack extending the perimeter several hundred yards to the east, but it met little opposition.

On 29 November Company M of the 3d Raider Battalion reinforced the parachutists for a predawn amphibious landing at Koiari several miles southeast of the perimeter. This operation could have been a repeat of the successful Tasimboko Raid, since the

Marine force unexpectedly came ashore on the edge of a large Japanese supply dump. However, the enemy reacted quickly and pinned the Marines to the beach with heavy fire. Landing craft attempting to extract the force were twice driven off. It was not until evening that artillery, air, and naval gunfire support sufficiently silenced opposition that the parachutists and raiders could get back out to sea.

Army troops continued to pour into the enlarging perimeter. On 15 December control of the landing force passed from the I Marine Amphibious Corps to the Army's XIV Corps. The Americal Division gradually replaced the 3d Marine Division, which had borne the brunt of the fighting. For much of the month the 2d Raider Regiment served as corps reserve, but these highly trained assault troops spent most of their time on working parties at the airfield or carrying supplies to the front lines. On 21 December the raiders, reinforced by the 1st Parachute Battalion and a battalion of the 145th Infantry, assumed the position formerly occupied by the 3d Marines. The regiment remained there until 11 January, when an Army outfit relieved it. The raiders boarded transports the next day and sailed to Guadalcanal.

The Raider Legacy

While the 2d Raider Regiment had been fighting on Bougainville, the raiders who had participated in the New Georgia campaign had been recuperating and training in the rear. Both the 1st and 4th Battalions enjoyed a month of leave in New Zealand, after which they returned to their base camps in New Caledonia. Just after Christmas 1943 Colonel Liversedge detached and passed command of the 1st Raider Regiment to Lieutenant Colonel Samuel D. Puller (the younger brother of "Chesty" Puller). The regiment embarked on 21 January and arrived at Guadalcanal three days

later. In short order the 2d Raider Regiment disbanded and folded into the 1st, with Shapley taking command of the combined unit and Puller becoming the executive officer.

Bougainville, however, was the last combat action for any raider unit. Events had conspired to sound the death knell of the raiders. The main factor was the unprecedented expansion of the Corps. In late 1943 there were four divisions, with another two on the drawing boards. Even though there were now nearly half a million Marines, there never seemed to be enough men to create the new battalions needed for the 5th and 6th Divisions. In addition to the usual drains like training and transients, the Corps had committed large numbers to specialty units:

defense battalions, parachute battalions, raider battalions, barrage balloon detachments, and many others. Since there was no prospect of increasing the Corps beyond 500,000 men, the only way to add combat divisions was to delete other organizations.

Another factor was the changing nature of the Pacific war. In the desperate early days of 1942 there was a potential need for commando-type units that could strike deep in enemy territory and keep the Japanese off balance while the United States caught its breath. However, there had been only one such operation and it had not been a complete success. The development of the amphibian tractor and improved fire support also had removed the need

for the light assault units envisioned by Holland Smith at the beginning of the war. Since then the raiders generally had performed the same missions as any infantry battalion. Sometimes this meant that their training and talent were wasted, as happened on Bougainville and Pavuvu. In other cases, the quick but lightly armed raiders suffered because they lacked the firepower of a line outfit. The failure at Bairoko could be partially traced to that fact. With many large-scale amphibious assaults to come against well-defended islands, there was no foreseeable requirement for the particular strengths of the raiders.

Finally, there was institutional opposition to the existence of an elite force within the already elite Corps.

Weary members of the 2d Raider Battalion catch a few moments of rest in the miserable, unrelieved wetness that was

the hallmark that all troops experienced as soon as they advanced inland from the beach in the Bougainville operation.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 70777





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 59036
Marine raider Pvt Roy Grier examines the Nambu pistol he liberated from an enemy officer of the Special Landing Force in an encounter on Bairoko.

The personnel and equipment priorities given to the first two raider battalions at a time of general scarcity had further fueled enmity toward these units. Now that the war was progressing toward victory, there was less interest on the part of outsiders in meddling in the details of Marine Corps organization. Just as important, two senior officers who had keenly felt pain at the birth of the raiders—Vandegrift and Thomas—were now coming into positions where they could do something about it. On 1 January 1944 Vandegrift became Commandant of the Marine Corps and he made Thomas the Director of Plans and Policies.

In mid-December 1943 Thomas' predecessor at HQMC had already set the wheels in motion to disband the raiders and the parachutists. Among the reasons cited in his study was that such "handpicked outfits . . . are detrimental to morale of other troops." A week later, a Marine officer on the Chief of Naval Operation's staff forwarded a memorandum through the Navy chain of command noting that the Corps "feels that any operation so far car-

ried out by raiders could have been performed equally well by a standard organization specially trained for that specific mission." The CNO concurred in the suggestion to disband the special units, and Vandegrift gladly promulgated the change on 8 January 1944. This gave Thomas everything he wanted—fresh manpower from the deleted units and their stateside training establishments, as well as simplified supply requirements due to increased uniformity.

The raiders did not entirely disappear. On 1 February the 1st Raider Regiment was redesignated the 4th Marines, thus assuming the lineage of the regiment that had garrisoned Shanghai in the interwar years and fought so gallantly on Bataan and Corrigedor. The 1st, 3d, and 4th Raider Battalions became respectively the 1st, 3d, and 2d Battalions of the 4th Marines. The 2d Raider Battalion filled out the regimental

weapons company. Personnel in the Raider Training Center transferred to the newly formed 5th Marine Division. Leavened with new men, the 4th Marines went on to earn additional distinctions in the assaults on Guam and Okinawa. At the close of the war, the regiment joined the occupation forces in Japan and participated in the release from POW compounds of the remaining members of the old 4th Marines.

The commanders in the Pacific Theater may not have properly used the raiders, but the few thousand men of those elite units bequeathed a legacy of courage and competence not surpassed by any other Marine battalion. The spirit of the raiders lives on today in the Marine Corps' Special Operations Capable battalions. These infantry units, specifically trained for many of the same missions as the raiders, routinely deploy with amphibious ready groups around the globe.

Seabee Chief Earl J. Cobb and Marine raider Cpl Charles L. Marshall shake hands at the site of a sign erected near Bougainville's travelled "Marine Drive Hi-Way."

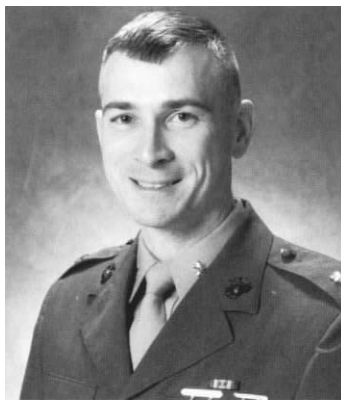
Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 73151



Sources

The best primary documents are the relevant operational and administrative records of the Marine Corps held by the Washington National Records Center in Suitland, Maryland. Of particular note are the files of the Amphibious Force Atlantic Fleet, which detail the efforts of Edson and Holland Smith to create their version of the raiders. Another important source is the Edson personal papers collection at the Library of Congress Manuscript Division. The various offices of the Marine Corps Historical Center provide additional useful information. The Reference Section holds biographical data on most significant individuals. The Oral History Section has a number of interviews with senior raiders and other Marines, particularly Brigadier General Charles L. Banks, Brigadier General Fred D. Beans, Colonel Justice M. Chambers, Brigadier General Samuel B. Griffith II, Major General Oscar F. Peatross, Lieutenant General Alan Shapley, and General Gerald C. Thomas. The Personal Papers Section holds numerous items pertaining to the raiders.

A number of secondary sources deal with the history of the raiders in some depth. The Marine Corps' own World War II campaign monographs were based on interviews and other sources of information in addition to the service's archives. Jeter Isely and Philip Crowl's *The U.S. Marines and Amphibious War*, James Roosevelt's *Affectionately, F.D.R.*, Michael Blankfort's *Big Yankee*, and Samuel Griffith's *Battle for Guadalcanal* are valuable books. The *Marine Corps Gazette* and *Leatherneck* contain a number of articles describing the raiders and their campaigns. Of particular interest is Major General Peatross' account of the Makin raid in the August and September 1992 issues of *Leatherneck*. Charles L. Updegraph, Jr.'s *U.S. Marine Corps Special Units of World War II* and Lieutenant Colonel R. L. Mattingly's *Her-ringbone Cloak—GI Dagger* are two monographs specifically addressing the formation of the raiders. The publications of the two raider associations, *The Raider Patch* and *The Dope Sheet*, contain a number of first-person accounts written by former raiders.



About the Author

Major Jon T. Hoffman, USMCR, has spent more than 12 years on active duty as an infantry officer, an instructor at the Naval Academy, and a historian at Headquarters Marine Corps. Presently he is serving as a reserve field historian for the Marine Corps History and Museums Division. He has a master's degree in military history from Ohio State University and a law degree from Duke University. In 1994 Presidio Press published his biography of Major

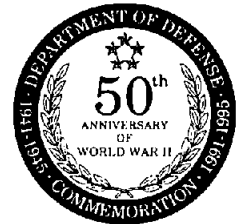
General Edson, *Once A Legend*, which won the Marine Corps Historical Foundation's Greene Award. He is the author of numerous articles in the *Marine Corps Gazette*, *Naval Institute Proceedings*, *Naval History*, *Leatherneck*, and *Vermont History*. His works have earned several writing prizes, including the Marine Corps Historical Foundation's Heintz Awards for 1992, 1993, and 1994.

ERRATA

In the pamphlet, *The Right to Fight: African-American Marines in World War II*, in this series, among "Sources" listed on page 29 is *Blacks and Whites Together Through Hell: U.S. Marines in World War II*. The bibliographic listing misspells the name of one author and assigns a wrong World War II unit to the second. The volume is by Perry E. Fischer, a veteran of the 8th Marine Ammunition Company, and Brooks E. Gray, who was a member of the 51st Defense Battalion.



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