

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE 25TH MARINES



HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION
HEADQUARTERS, U.S. MARINE CORPS
WASHINGTON, D.C.

First Lieutenant John E. Spadafora of Company I, 3d Battalion, 25th Marines, checks enemy movement during Exercise Alkali Canyon in 1973 at Twentynine Palms, California.

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by

Colonel Joseph B. Ruth, Jr.,
U.S. Marine Corps Reserve



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FOREWORD

This historical monograph is the first in a series of reserve regimental histories. When completed, this series will cover in similar fashion each reserve regiment in the Fleet Marine Force. The present narrative not only highlights the significant actions and activities of the 25th Marines, but also furnishes a general history of Marine Corps activities in which it took part.

Colonel Joseph B. Ruth, Jr., USMCR, took his reserve duty as a member of the Division of History and Museums from 1974 to 1977, during which time he prepared this monograph. He holds a Bachelor of Science degree in business administration from the University of South Carolina, and a Master of Arts degree in business administration from Boston College. Currently, Colonel Ruth is Chairman and Professor, Business Division, Mount Wachusett Community College in Gardner, Massachusetts.

In the pursuit of accuracy and objectivity, the Division of History and Museums welcomes comments on this booklet from key participants, Marine Corps activities, and interested individuals.



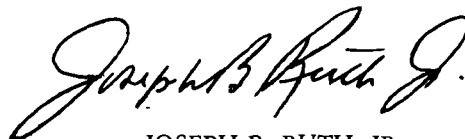
E.H. SIMMONS

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PREFACE

A Brief History of the 25th Marines is a concise narrative of the regiment from its initial activation in 1943 through its participation in the battles for Roi-Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima during World War II, to its reactivation in the 1960s as a regiment in the Marine Corps Reserve, and subsequent training and civic activities. Official records of the Marine Corps and appropriate historical works were utilized in compiling this short history. This booklet is published for the information of those interested in the 25th Marines and in the events in which it took part.

The monograph was produced under the editorial direction of Mr. Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Chief Historian of the History and Museums Division. Final review and preparation of the manuscript for printing was done by Mr. Charles R. Smith. Miss Catherine A. Stoll of the Publications Production Section set the manuscript in type. The maps were prepared by Mr. Richard A. Hillman, who also designed the book. All illustrations are official Department of Defense (Marine Corps) photographs from the files of the Still Photograph Depository, History and Museums Division, now a part of the Defense Audio Visual Agency.



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Colonel, U.S. Marine Corps Reserve

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A Brief History of the 25th Marines

Introduction

In striking contrast to the evolutionary development of Marine Corps units during peacetime, the demands of war brought the 25th Marines into instantaneous existence and propelled the new regiment into hard-hitting combat readiness. On 1 May 1943 at Camp Lejeune, located at New River, North Carolina, the Corps split its 23d Marines in two, with one-half of the force becoming the cadre of the 25th Marines.

Over the next 30 months, the 25th went from the uncertainty of this abrupt birth to the cockiness of a well-trained boxer, and thence to the poise of a seasoned fighter. Training in the sweltering heat of the North Carolina summer and in the freezing temperatures of the California hills gave the regiment the traditional hardness and strength of all Marine Corps regiments.

The mission which faced both Lieutenant Colonel Richard H. Schubert, the unit's first commanding officer, and Colonel Samuel C. Cumming, who later led the regiment into its first action, was to mold these Marines into a winning team. The prize was both victory and life itself.

The Regiment In Training

The first home for the Marines of the 25th was the quonset huts of Tent City in Camp Lejeune. The 25th Marines, together with the 23d, formed the east coast echelon of what later became the 4th Marine Division. Having been activated on 1 May 1943, the 25th began training immediately and continued at a feverish pace during the hot North Carolina summer months. New personnel arrived daily, and the ranks of the regiment began to swell. The days at Camp Lejeune were numbered, however, for the 25th was destined for the war in the Pacific.

On 20 August 1943 the regiment boarded transports at Norfolk, Virginia and sailed for San Diego via the Panama Canal. The regiment's march into history had begun. During a relatively uneventful trip, the men relaxed from the rigors of Camp Lejeune as best as possible on board the crowded transports. Disembarking at San Diego on 10 September, they moved approximately 60 miles up the coast to Camp Pendleton, the Marine Corps' newest training base. The 25th was the last of the units destined for the 4th Marine Division to arrive. On 11 September the regiment officially joined the 4th Division, then commanded by Major General Harry Schmidt.¹

Newly arrived from Headquarters Marine Corps where he had been Assistant to the Commandant, General Schmidt brought to the division 34 years' experience as a Marine Corps officer, including service in World War I and in Nicaragua. His progressive command and staff billet assignments together with the usual formal professional schooling, including the Army Command and General Staff School, had groomed General Schmidt for just such a responsible command.

Colonel Samuel C. Cumming, the second commanding officer of the 25th Marines, assumed his post on 28 July. The son of missionary parents, he was born in Kobe, Japan. In World War I, during which he saw extensive combat with the Marine forces in Europe, Colonel Cumming was awarded a purple heart with oak clasp for wounds received in battle and a Silver Star with two gold stars in lieu of second and third awards, the French Fourragere, the Croix de Guerre with two stars, the Silver Medal of Bravery (Montenegro), and the Star of Bravery (Roumania).²

Surrounded by hills familiar to many western movie fans, Camp Pendleton, the former Santa Margarita Ranch, was a welcome relief from the hot discomfort of Camp Lejeune. Training went on dur-



USMC Photo 5160

Aerial view of tent camp area, New River, North Carolina in October 1942. As temporary home of the

25th Marines, the tents, really pre-fabricated huts, were hurriedly built as the nation geared for war.

ing the pleasant days and evenings of the late summer and early fall of 1943. As winter approached the nights became increasingly cold and by December almost unbearable to the tent dwellers of the 25th Marines.³ In late November, the grim reports of 2d Marine Division losses at Tarawa added a sobering dimension to the preparations for combat. Greater emphasis then was placed on the training of assault demolition teams for employment against fortified positions.⁴ One observer of the 2d Marine Division landings was Lieutenant Colonel Walter I. Jordan, who would later be assigned as the 25th Marines Executive Officer.

The long, difficult days of training and the still longer nights were quickly forgotten during the

weekend liberties at San Diego, Los Angeles, and Hollywood. But the clock was running and these weekend adventures would soon be over. These happy and sometimes wild memories would have to last for 21 months — or for a lifetime. Beginning in the early part of November, division planners worked on Operation Flintlock, code name for the invasion of the Marshall Islands, which was to be the division's baptism of fire.

The Marine Corps has always prided itself on the thorough training its combat units undergo before commitment to battle, and that which the units of the 4th Division experienced was no exception. The December days were filled with command post exercises, field problems, pillbox assaults, hikes,

maneuvers, and landings. The culmination of the division's training period was a full-scale rehearsal for Flintlock capped by a landing at San Clemente island on 2-3 January. Of the exercise, Brigadier General James L. Underhill, assistant division commander, said "About everything that could go wrong went wrong."⁵ General Underhill felt that with a critique and another rehearsal the difficulties could be ironed out. Unfortunately, that luxury was out of the question. Time had run out; Operation Flintlock was about to begin.

A Host Of Islands

The regimental command post (CP) of the 25th Marines (reinforced) was already functioning on board the attack transport USS *Callaway* (APA 38) as the convoy sailed from San Diego on 13 January 1944. Other ships in the convoy carrying regimental units were the USS *Warren* (APA 53), USS *Sumter* (APA 52), USS *Biddle* (APA 8), and the attack cargo ship USS *Almaack* (AKA 10). The 4th Marine Division was now a part of the V Amphibious Corps (VAC), commanded by Major General Holland M. Smith. The other principal units in VAC were the 7th Infantry Division, 22d Marines, and the 106th Infantry.

The Marines, from private to general, watched as the shoreline receded, each alone with his own thoughts. This was wartime, they were trained, and now they soon would meet the enemy in battle. Life on board a crowded military transport was never easy and one never really became used to it. The troops conducted physical drill and schooling every day despite limited space, chow line interference, and ship drills. Maintaining the training schedule under these circumstances was a constant challenge to the various operations officers.⁶ Periodic inspections found the weapons to be in excellent condition. Impending battle was a great motivator. The Marines were in good spirits. Singing and bull sessions occupied the long nights on the blacked-out ships. The Marines in the convoy will long remember the harshness of reveille, the abandon-ship drills, the confusion of making their way to breakfast in the darkness, and the never-ending quest for a niche safe from the watery attack of the ship's crew following the order "clean sweepdown, fore and aft." With all the problems, however, they still found time for games of chance, writing letters home, reading pocket books, and standing in lines, and more lines. Yes, they would remember.

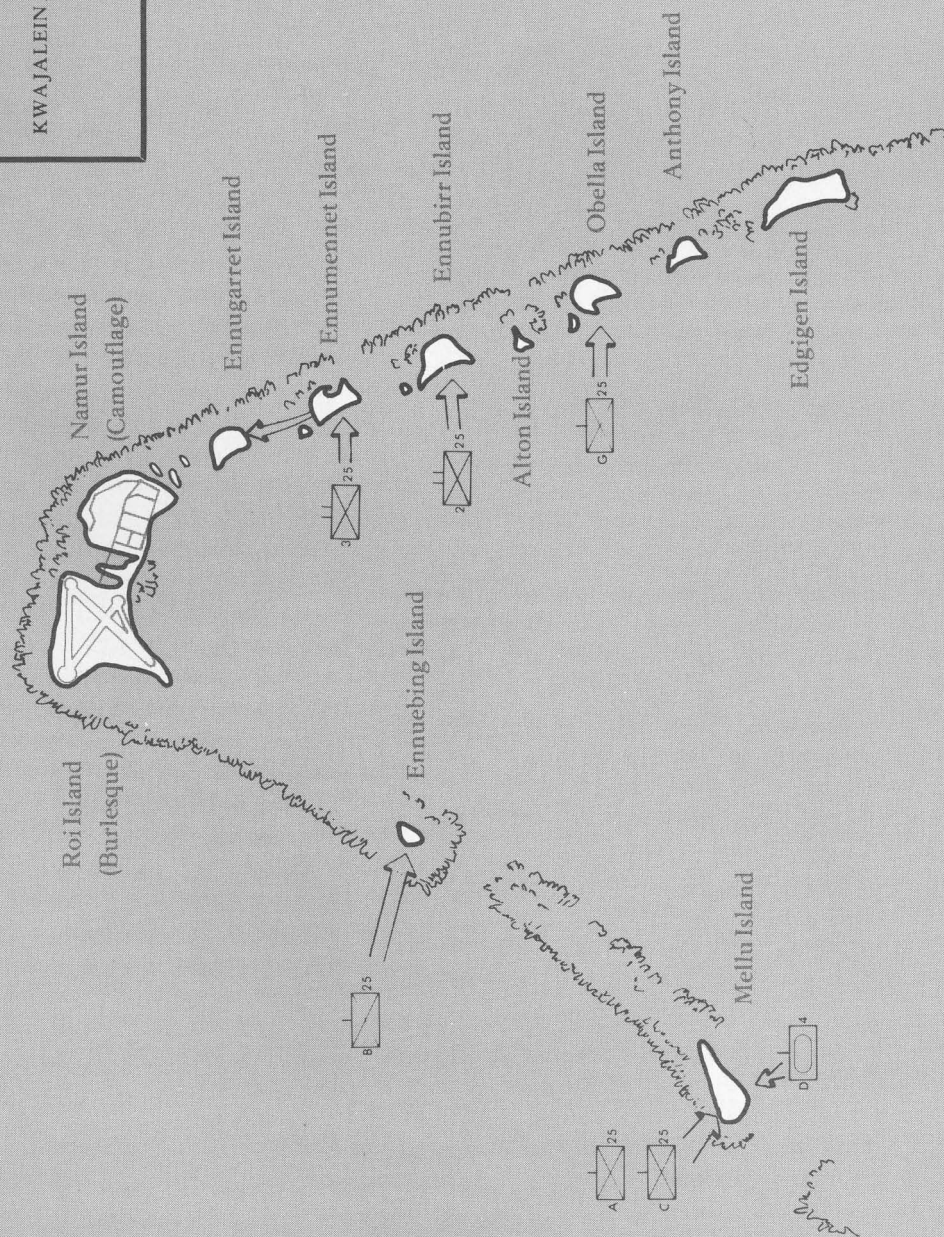
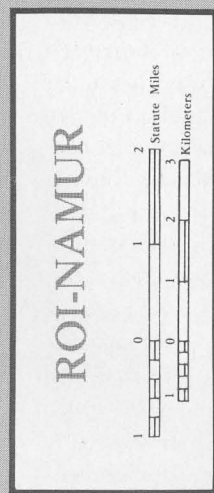
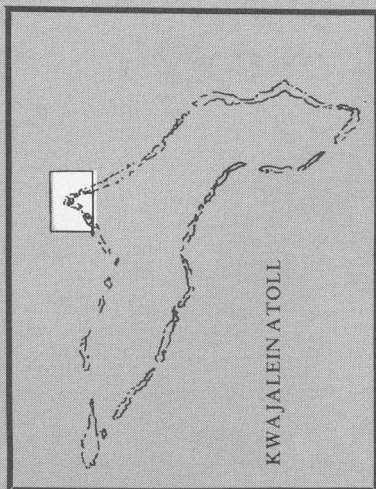
The men of the 25th Marines had their first look at Pacific islands when they reached Hawaii on 21 January. The convoy anchored off of Maui while amphibious group planners went on to Pearl Harbor for conferences and briefings.⁷ The island of Maui was an enticing sight to the Marines of the convoy, and it became tantalizing after the word was passed—look but do not touch. There would be no liberty on Maui. The planners returned from Pearl Harbor late in the day and on the following day, 22 January, the convoy sailed for the war zone.

After departing from Maui, the word was soon passed that the objective of the V Amphibious Corps was to be Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshall Islands. This atoll was the largest in the world, and was one of 32 such atolls forming the Marshall Islands chain. An atoll is an enclosed or semi-closed reef on which islands have developed. The word "atoll" was not new to the Marines' vocabulary; they had heard about Tarawa.

The decision to take the Marshall Islands had been made by the Combined Chiefs of Staff (CCS) at the Trident conference in Washington, D.C. in May 1943. With the ultimate destination the Japanese mainland, the Marshall Islands, located some 2,400 miles west of Hawaii and approximately midway between Hawaii and the Philippines, was a logical target. The Marshall Islands represented a part of the outer defense line protecting the Japanese mainland and a rupture anywhere in this line would have ominous portent for the enemy.

The original plan for this operation had the amphibious forces taking two well-defended atolls (Wotje and Maloelap) in the first phase, then concentrating on Kwajalein Atoll as a third target. Navy and Marine experience on Tarawa, however, convinced Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander-in-Chief Pacific Ocean Area (CinCPOA), that the plan was overly ambitious, and accordingly, the plan was revised with Kwajalein Atoll being the sole invasion target. By selecting Kwajalein, Admiral Nimitz was by-passing two strongly defended atolls and striking right into the heart of the Marshall Islands.

The Japanese had expected an attack in the Marshall Islands but were surprised by the selection of Kwajalein Atoll, as evidenced by the poor defenses of this atoll. The capture of Kwajalein Atoll would not only disrupt the enemy's vital lines of communication to the outer islands, but at the same time it would protect the United States' line of communication to South Pacific bases. Furthermore, its



HILLMAN

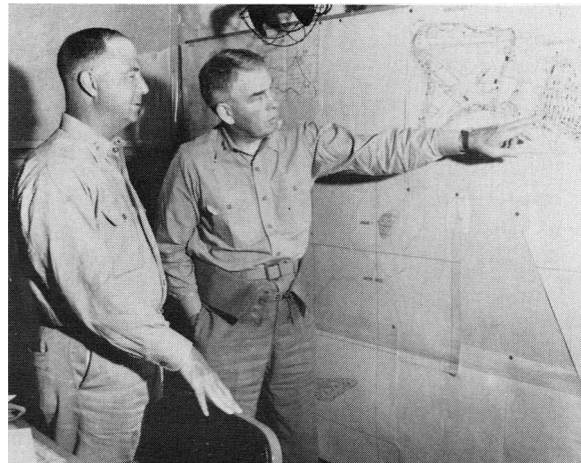
capture would give the United States Navy a fleet anchorage of more than 800 square miles and a new base from which to launch future offensives.

To accomplish the mission, VAC was divided into a Northern Landing Force (NLF) and a Southern Landing Force (SLF). The NLF, commanded by Major General Schmidt, had as its principal component the 4th Marine Division, and its main objective would be Roi and Namur, the center of air activity in the Marshall Islands. Kwajalein Island, the main naval base in the atoll, was assigned to the SLF. The SLF, commanded by Major General Charles H. Corlett, USA, had as its principal component the 7th Infantry Division.

There was great activity throughout the chain of command as all levels reviewed their assignments. The too few maps, photographs, and intelligence reports were carefully studied and restudied. The operation plan for the NLF called for the 25th Marines to land on D-day to secure certain of the off-shore islands so that they could be utilized as artillery sites. The artillery then would be in position to provide fire support for the main thrust against Roi-Namur. This tactic was devised from the bitter experiences in the Tarawa battle where it was found that attempting to set up artillery on an assault beach was hazardous and did not permit the artillery to realize its full potential.⁸ This same tactic would also be used by the SLF prior to the main landing on Kwajalein.

The Marines of the 25th were chagrined that their assignment was not to be a part of the main attack; but this was partially offset by the knowledge that they would be the first to land. The 23d Marines would strike Roi on D plus 1 while simultaneously the 24th Marines would land on Namur. During this second day of the battle, the 25th Marines would be in reserve.

Reveille for Lieutenant Colonel Clarence J. O'Donnell's 1st Battalion, 25th Marines on the morning of 31 January was at 0330. This was D-day. In the darkness the troops found their way to a breakfast of fruit juice, cold meat, and hot coffee.⁹ There were final preparations and checking of equipment. Finally at 0530 they went over the landing nets of the USS *Warren* into waiting LCVs (landing craft, vehicle, personnel). The LCVs carried them to the LST (landing ship, tank) area where, with great difficulty, they transferred into amphibian tractors (LVTs). The Marines watched, trance-like, as battleships, cruisers, and destroyers shelled Roi-Namur and the battalion objectives of Ennuebing



USMC Photo 70547

Rear Admiral Richard L. Conolly, Northern Task Force Commander (left), and Major General Harry Schmidt, commanding the 4th Marine Division, discuss plans for the Roi-Namur operation.

and Mellu, two small islands south of Roi. Carrier aircraft dove in to bomb and strafe the same objectives.¹⁰ The sea that morning was unusually rough, and the wind was gusty, producing fringes of whitecaps on the water.¹¹ The ground swells and the strong wind tossed the LVTs up and down like seesaws. On board, the tractors, the Marines, their supplies, and their equipment were being drenched. The communications equipment was no longer operable because of the salt water. The LVTs continued to circle while the Marines, in wet discomfort, awaited the order to land.

The Marines of Captain Edward L. Asbill's Company B were still wet, when at 0952, they landed on Ennuebing to become the first assault troops to land on prewar Japanese soil. The original H-hour had been delayed because of the difficulties of transferring to the LVTs in the heavy seas. Enemy resistance to the landing was light and the Marines quickly occupied the island. There were 13 enemy dead on the island and another 3 Japanese were taken prisoner. In the early afternoon, 75mm batteries of the 14th Marines landed and took up positions to support the assault on Roi-Namur.

Original plans for the Mellu assault had called for a simultaneous landing on the seaward side of the island by Company C and the Scout Company of the Division Tank Battalion. Scout Company, unable to surmount the reef, was ordered to round the southern coast and land on the lagoon side directly across the island from where the original landing had been planned. Scout Company landed at 0955, but

Company C did not land at the time planned because of difficulty in locating its LVTs. This was a problem that would plague the entire operation. Company C finally landed at 1015 and with Scout Company, swept up the island, capturing two Japanese soldiers and killing the remainder. Company A also had problems in locating its LVTs, finally landing after the island was secured. Shortly thereafter the 14th Marines landed its 105mm batteries and positioned them facing Roi.

Enemy losses on Ennuebing and Mellu were 30 dead, including 8 apparent suicides, plus 5 prisoners of war. Capture of these islands opened Jacob Pass and enabled the minesweepers and supporting ships to enter the lagoon and carry out the rest of the D-day plan. The first D-day mission had been accomplished with dispatch.

Ennubirr, the site of the main Japanese radio transmitter in the atoll was the objective assigned the 2d Battalion. Ennubirr was located directly across the lagoon from Ennuebing. It was still dark when the men of the 2d Battalion, led by Lieutenant Colonel Lewis C. Hudson, Jr., went over the landing nets on D-day. By 0645 the battalion was transferring from LCVs into LVTs. Once loaded the LVTs began to circle. In the strong sea, water was coming up over the bows and gunwales of the tractors onto the Marine passengers. One tractor broke down and was swept onto a reef and overturned. This unfortunate accident cost the lives of four Marines.

Lieutenant Colonel Justice M. Chambers' 3d Battalion began debarking at 0830 destined for Ennubirr. *Brigadier General James L. Underhill, Assistant Division Commander, 4th Marine Division, from September 1943 to April 1944.*

USMC Photo 13229



numennet Island. The process was interrupted while the USS *Biddle* got underway to correct its position in the transport area. The remainder of the battalion debarked at 1130.

An unforeseen complication came about when the destroyer USS *Phelps* (DD 360), control vessel for the landings, was ordered into the lagoon to support a minesweeping operation. The USS *Phelps* turned over control to Brigadier General James L. Underhill, Assistant Division Commander of the 4th Division, who was on board a subchaser, the SC 997. This created serious problems since the SC 997 did not have communications facilities for such control. An officer of vast experience, General Underhill set about his task, much like a cowboy in a roundup, gathering together the craft carrying the two battalions and leading them through the Ennuebing Pass and onto the line of departure. The USS *Phelps* did return prior to the afternoon assaults.

LCI(G)s (gunboats) pounded both Ennumennet and Ennubirr. Planes from the Essex Class carrier USS *Intrepid* (CV 11) bombed and strafed both islands. At noon, Ennubirr was attacked by six Martin torpedo bombers (TBMs) and by seven Douglas Dauntless dive bombers (SBDs). The destroyers USS *Porterfield* (DD 62) and USS *Haraden* (DD 585) opened fire with their 5-inch batteries. The attack waves began their move to the beach. LCI(G)s, in the lead, released rocket salvos and swept the islands with 20mm and 40mm fire.¹² The two battalions landed on their objectives shortly after 1500.

The assault on Ennubirr was by Companies E and F. Company E moved in without resistance to occupy the communications building. Company F received sniper fire as it advanced through a wooded area. With the assistance of a platoon from the division tank battalion, Company F was able to clear the entire section. After the action, 7 Marines lay dead, but 24 of the enemy had also been killed. A platoon from Company G was dispatched to overrun nearby Obella, and both islands were declared secured by 1648.¹³

Assault companies of the 3d Battalion landed on Ennumennet, securing the island within 30 minutes at a cost of one Marine killed and seven wounded. Its next task was Ennugarret. Originally scheduled for 1600 on D-day, the assault was not made until after 1800, again because of difficulties in obtaining landing vehicles. Lieutenant Colonel Chambers commandeered four LVTs and made the landing with 120 men. The LVTs then shuttled back and forth carrying the rest of the battalion. By 1915 the island

was under control, but mopping up activities continued into the night.

The 2d Battalion, 14th Marines began landing on Ennumennet by 1900. Battery B, 4th Special Weapons Battalion and the 75mm platoon of the Regimental Weapons Company both landed on Ennugarret during the night and took up positions to support the D plus 1 assault on Namur. There was firing from Namur during the night and the Marines could hear the shells whistling overhead. They spent a restless night.

Its critical job done, the 25th Marines reverted to division reserve. Its work on D-day would be extolled by the voices of the newly emplaced artillery on the following morning, 1 February.

According to intelligence reports, up to 6,000 Japanese troops were waiting to greet the 23d and 24th Marines as they landed on Roi-Namur. The enemy defenders for the most part were members of naval guard units attached to the *6th Base Force* enemy unit. Not a great deal more was known about them, but the Marines had great respect for the Japanese capacity to die hard. That was enough to know. It was D plus 1 and all the confidence in the world was packed into those many LVTs in the shape of Marines. The Marines were impatient to land and get on with it.

The landings were scheduled for 1000 on 1 February. Beginning at dawn the artillery emplaced on Mellu, Ennuebing, Ennugarret, Ennubirr, and Ennumennet began pounding their appropriate targets. At 0700 the USS *Tennessee* (BB 43) fired 14-inch salvos into Roi-Namur. These fires were joined by those of the USS *Maryland* (BB 46) firing its 16-inch guns.

In order to avoid some of the problems experienced on D-day, the LSTs moved inside the lagoon from the open sea. The LSTs would then be able to launch their LVTs reasonably near the line of departure and protected from the heavier seas. It was a wise move. Unfortunately, however, there was a recurrence of problems with the LVTs, now compounded by the D-day losses. The time of the landing was delayed. Impatient, Colonel Louis R. Jones requested and received orders to land the 23d Marines on Roi. The landing was made at 1150 with two battalions abreast and met only disorganized resistance. The terrain on Roi did not present the problems that the 24th had on Namur. Roi was flat with the biggest part of the island being utilized for the landing strips. Namur's jungle growth and building ruins provided deadly firing positions, which were not

duplicated on Roi. The defensive installations on Roi were relatively poor, and the problems they presented were surmounted by the Marines without too much trouble. By 1800, the Marines reached the northern shore. During the evening and the early morning of D plus 2 there were some mopping up chores to do, but by 0800 the island was declared secured. Marine casualties at Roi were 18 killed and 68 wounded. The results were impressive.

Namur would never be mistaken for the identical twin of Roi. The bareness of Roi had prompted its code name, Burlesque. Namur, on the other hand, had a dense jungle and numerous concrete fortifications and buildings. Namur's code name was appropriately Camouflage. The air and naval bombardment had turned Namur into a labyrinth of jungle debris and shattered masonry which would impede the Marines at every turn.

As the echoes of the artillery rounds from the newly won islands rolled over the lagoon, the men of the 3d Battalion, 25th Marines massed the fires of every available weapon onto Namur from their positions on Ennugarret. These fires would be shifted inland only when the assault troops approached the shore.

Some of the transportation problems of the previous day were again present and even magnified because of the D-day losses of LVTs. Many of the LVTs needed service and gas and there was still the confusion of locating the parent ships for resupply. The assault battalions as a result were short about 50 LVTs. Faced with this dilemma, Colonel Franklin A. Hart, Commanding Officer, 24th Marines made the decision to send the balance of his assault troops ashore by LCVPs. At 1155 the assault battalions landed on Namur. Immediate problems arose when the LVTs stopped at the water line rather than move inland as they had been instructed. Fortunately, however, resistance on the beach was minor and Companies E and F of the 2d Battalion, which were the first to land, were able to move inland fairly rapidly.¹⁴ What resistance there was on the beach was limited to small groups of enemy soldiers armed only with light weapons. Companies I and K landed within 5 minutes of the 2d Battalion and faced similar light opposition. Both battalions drove hard and fast toward the first objective.

As the battle progressed all over the island, a tremendous explosion occurred at approximately 1300 which seemed to tear the island apart. A huge mushroom of smoke and fire careened into the air. Major Charles F. Duchain, an assistant operations officer for the 4th Marine Division, was observing in a



USMC Photo 70694-A

Tracked landing vehicles with rocket launchers and loaded with men of the 25th Marines head for shore.

Their objective was the occupation of the small islands flanking Roi-Namur.

carrier plane directly over Namur at the time. Major Duchein radioed "Great God Almighty! The whole damn island has blown up."¹⁵ It was learned later that something had set off a blockhouse containing torpedoes and other ammunition. About one-half of the casualties suffered by the 2d Battalion in the entire action were the result of this and two other blasts that occurred a short time later that day. These explosions killed 20 Marines and wounded 100.

Firefights continued along the entire line of advance. At 1630, the 3d Battalion, in an attack to the north, ran into noticeably stiffer resistance. Some of the shock effects of the naval bombardment had begun to wear off, and the enemy's effectiveness increased. The Japanese fighting man on Roi-Namur, as was true for the enemy troops throughout the Pacific, was brave and dedicated. He became even more daring and tenacious in the face of certain death, as was the case of Roi-Namur. These final actions would be his ticket to *Yasukuni*, the Shinto shrine to the war dead in Tokyo.

At 1930 the Marines dug in for the night, setting up a defense perimeter. Harassing fires from both front and rear went on through the night. The fires from the rear came from enemy positions that had been bypassed in the attack. Enemy soldiers had hidden in what the Marines called "spider holes." The enemy, masters in the art of camouflage, would dig a hole, covering both the hole and themselves by moving a palm leaf over the top. In the midst of all the other debris covering the ground, the palm leaf was not noticeable. Later, at a propitious time, the enemy soldier would come out of hiding and do his damage. Some enemy troops tried to escape at low tide under cover of breaking dawn by wading along the reef, skirting the 3d Battalion positions; all were killed.

On D plus 2, the 24th Marines completed the conquest of Namur, the island being declared secured at 1418. The battle of Roi-Namur was now history. This fast and complete victory had cost the 4th Marine Division 190 dead and 547 wounded.¹⁶

Also on D plus 2, while the 24th Marines was still battling on Namur, Colonel Cumming received orders to start Phase III of the operation, namely, clearing the remainder of the islands in the northern zone. The 2d Battalion moved out at once and soon had secured eight islands, all without resistance. The natives rounded up in this island-sweep were placed in a camp established on Ennubirr. The 1st Battalion, on its own expedition, secured Boggerlapp, Boggerik, and one other island. Finally on D plus 4, the 3d Battalion took over the remainder of the island-hopping tasks, and within 3 days, cleared 39 islands.

On 13 February, exactly a month to the day after it left San Diego, the 4th Marine Division, less the 25th Marines, sailed for Maui. Behind, the silence of 3,742 enemy dead acknowledged that the division had been tested and found to be a capable fighting force.

After the completion of its assignment, the 25th Marines was temporarily detached from the 4th Marine Division to become the atoll garrison force. The regiment set up camp on Roi and Namur until relieved on 28 February. Boarding transports on 28 February, the regiment sailed for Maui.

Hula Hands and Purple Hearts—

A Short Stay On Maui

Arriving at Maui on 8 March, the men of the 25th Marines were delighted to be on friendly soil again and finally to be off the crowded transports. Their first look at Camp Maui, however, was not too reassuring. There was much work to do and they set to it.

Training began almost immediately and it was back to basics. Pillbox assault techniques were practiced and perfected. Lumbering tanks joined with the infantry on the field exercises; each learned to operate with and to appreciate the other. At formations, decorations, including 211 Purple Hearts, were awarded.¹⁷ Colonel Cumming received the Distinguished Service Medal for valorous service.

New faces began to appear. Replacements arrived from posts and stations throughout the United States. The troops were given liberty on a battalion rotation basis, but somehow, the liberties at Wailuku, Kahului, and Lahaina, exotic as the names might be, just did not have the flavor of those in Los Angeles and Hollywood. There were other forms of



USMC Photo 310135

Colonel Merton J. Batchelder, Commanding Officer, 25th Marines from January to October 1944.

entertainment, such as the outdoor movies and occasional USO shows. Local groups of hula dancers were also enjoyed to the fullest.

As the weeks rolled on, the tempo of the training increased. In mid-April the 23d and 25th Marines went on amphibious maneuvers. Then toward the end of April, an increase in crating and packing made it clear to the Marines that their days on Maui were numbered. Other things were also happening; Colonel Cumming was promoted to brigadier general and named assistant division commander, with Colonel Merton J. Batchelder relieving him as commanding officer of the 25th Marines. Newly promoted Lieutenant Colonel Hollis U. Mustain took over the 1st Battalion and Lieutenant Colonel O'Donnell moved up to be regimental executive officer.

On 2 May the combat-loading of ships began and 10 days later the 25th Marines embarked at Kahului for final maneuvers and an unknown destination. The 2d and 4th Marine Divisions made two joint landings, one at Maalaea Bay, Maui, and the other on 45-square-mile Kahoolawe, Hawaiian Island.

In the Kahoolawe landing, actual naval gunfire and aircraft strafing with live ammunition added

realism to the exercise. The maneuvers over, the convoy moved to Pearl Harbor, arriving there on 20 May. On 25 May, the slower ships of the convoy left for the war zone, while the faster ships sailed 4 days later. The troops learned soon after leaving Pearl Harbor that their next assault would be on an island that was located on the inner perimeter of the Japanese defense line, just 1,270 miles from Tokyo. The island was Saipan in the Marianas.

Seven Lives To Repay Our Country — The Battle of Saipan

The danger to the U.S. flanks presented by the island fortress of Truk no longer existed. Naval carrier air strikes against Truk in the Caroline Islands had destroyed the Japanese air fleet there and had sunk numerous combat and cargo ships in its harbor. In addition, there was now a long-range bombing access to that island via the Admiralties and Emirau. The specter was checkmated.¹⁸ The Truk landing, so often contemplated in the most awesome terms by all Marines, would never come to pass. There would be no disappointed Marines. The timetable could now be adjusted ahead by 6 months with the invasion of the Marianas. Saipan, Tinian, and the enemy occupied U.S. possession, Guam, were the three operations that were scheduled. This move to the west would cut the lines of sea and air communications between Japan's home islands and its outlying island empire. The conquest of the Marianas would, in addition, extend U.S. sea control and provide air bases from which to send long-range bombers against Japan proper. The Japanese, solemnly aware of this, could be expected to react accordingly.

Saipan, located in the southern Marianas, is oddly shaped, reminding one of a giant seal. This island is of coral-volcanic origin, 14¼ miles long and 6½ miles wide. Missing were the thick jungles of the Solomons and the bleak coral construction of the Marshalls and Gilberts. Saipan with its mountains, plateaus, plains, and swamps would offer new lessons to be learned. The sharp ridges and fissure-like valleys with natural faults and caves would be a new experience for the Marines and, as the saying goes, experience is a hard teacher.

The Japanese were alarmed by American victories in the Marshalls and Gilberts; consequently, they poured troops, equipment, and supplies into the Marianas. The troops sent to reinforce this new bastion came from the homeland, from China, and from Manchuria, including veterans of the Kwan-

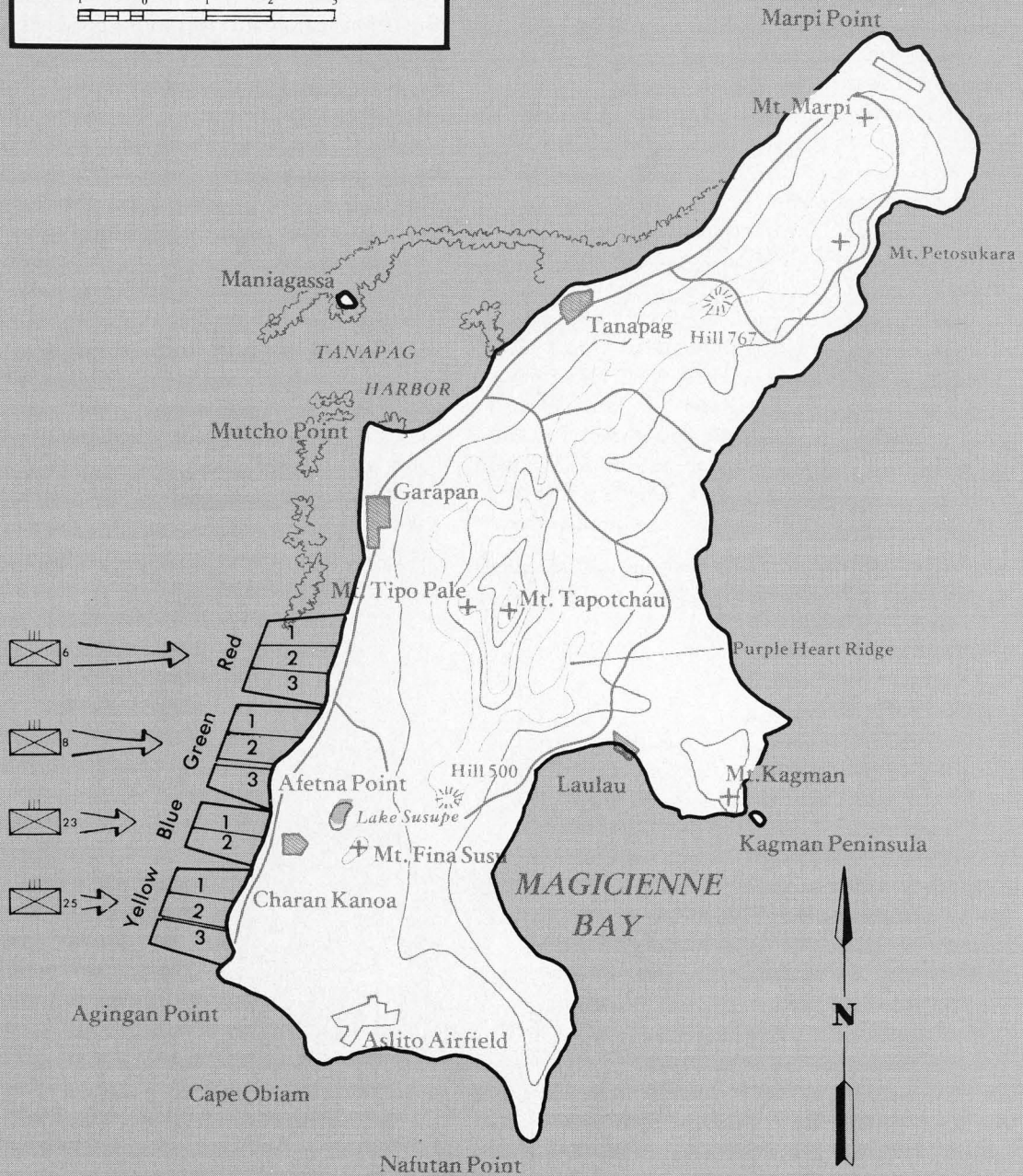
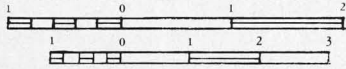
tung Army. So on Saipan approximately 30,000 Japanese were poised to repel their enemy, an enemy referred to as American devils by Lieutenant General Yoshitsugu Saito, commanding the *Northern Marianas Army Group* and the island's commander. General Saito's forces on Saipan included the *43d Infantry Division*, the *47th Independent Mixed Brigade*, the *55th Naval Guard Force*, and the *1st Yokosuka Special Naval Landing Force*. Tank and artillery units supported these forces.

The first stop of the attack convoy was at Eniwetok on 8 June. The slower ships that had left Maui before the main part of the convoy were already there. The slower ships sailed the next day with the balance of the convoy following on 11 June. The days on board the transports continued to be spent pouring over maps, plans, photographs, relief models of the island, and the latest intelligence reports. On the evening of 14 June the convoy was off Saipan; the landing would take place in the morning.¹⁹

On the day that the main part of the convoy left Eniwetok, Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher's Task Force 58 began an intense 3½-day air and naval bombardment of Saipan, Tinian, Guam, Rota, and Pagan. On the very first plane sweep of the Marianas, 150 Japanese aircraft were destroyed on the ground or in the air. It was truly a clean sweep; this crippling strike would go on paying dividends throughout the entire campaign. On 14 June, fire support ships of the Northern and Southern Attack Force (Task Force 52 and 53) arrived at Saipan under the command of Rear Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf, joining Task Force 58 in the bombardment of beaches and installations. The Navy's new and daring underwater demolition teams (UDT) moved inshore to investigate the presence of mines and other obstacles. None were found needing destruction, but the intelligence the teams gathered concerning the landing beaches was invaluable. Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith was wearing two hats, that of commander of the Northern Troops and Landing Force (NTLF), which would strike Saipan, and also of the Expeditionary Troops, the latter consisting of both the NTLF and the Southern Troops and Landing Force (STLF). The STLF, scheduled to assault Guam on 18 June, was commanded by Major General Roy S. Geiger. The NTLF had as its principal assault components the 2d and 4th Marine Divisions and the 27th Infantry Division.

The plan for the Saipan landing called for the 2d Marine Division to land on the left and abreast of the 4th Marine Division, with the town of Charan

SAIPAN



HILLMAN

Kanoa, located on the lower western side of the island, being the center of the landing zone. The 27th Infantry Division would be in NTLF reserve. The reserve regiment of the assault divisions would conduct a demonstration off Tanapag Harbor north of the actual landing beaches. The broad plan would then be for the 4th Marine Division to secure the southern end of the island including Aslito airfield, then to turn north and sweep up the island with its right flank being on the eastern coast. After landing, the 2d Marine Division would strike north also, sweeping toward Mt. Tapotchau, the point of highest elevation on the island, and to Garapan, the principal town on the island. Then abreast, the divisions would continue up the long axis of the island to the northernmost tip.

At 0520, D-day, the transports carrying the assault divisions eased into position approximately 18,000 yards off Charan Kanoa. The traditional order "land the landing force" came at 0542 from Vice Admiral Richmond K. Turner, Commander, Joint Amphibious Forces. The 0830 designated H-hour was later moved ahead to 0840. After a last check of their gear, the Marines went over the side of the APAs and down the landing nets into the waiting LCMs and LCVPs. The sea was relatively calm so that the transfer into LVTs was without the problems ex-

perienced at Roi-Namur. At 0812 the LVTs carrying the assault battalions churned across the line of departure, and with LVT(A)s armed with 75mm guns and LCI(G)s in the lead, headed for the shore under the protective cover of the carrier planes which were diving and strafing along the length of the beaches.²⁰

As the leading wave reached the reef, some 800 and 1200 yards from the beach, it began receiving fire from automatic weapons, antiaircraft guns, artillery, and mortars. As each succeeding wave reached the reef, the fire increased in intensity. The whistling of the high angle shells being fired from the shore added an eerie dimension to the final beach approach. The comforting fires of the main batteries of the U.S. ships lifted when the leading wave was 1,000 yards from the beach. As the wave reached a point 300 yards offshore, the fires of the 5-inch batteries lifted. The first wave, carrying members of the assault battalions, hit the beaches at 0842 amidst the fires of mortars and artillery. Within 20 minutes 700 LVTs landed 8,000 Marines on Saipan's beaches. The 25th Marines landed on the extreme right, with the 2d Battalion on the left flank landing on Yellow Beach 1, and the 1st Battalion landing on Yellow Beach 2. The 3d Battalion was in reserve.

Marines of the first wave landing on Saipan crawl forward for protective cover. They fought down

heavy Japanese opposition for following waves.

USMC Photo 83222



The 1st Battalion immediately received heavy enfilade fire from Agingan Point on its right flank, causing many casualties. Agingan Point was a virtual beehive of enemy installations, with all their weapons firing into the flank of the 1st Battalion. The battalion was not able to make any headway. An air strike called in by Lieutenant Colonel Mustain, combined with the mighty fires of the USS *Tennessee*, were used to counter the enemy efforts. The 1st Battalion was badly in need of a total reorganization, but this was prevented by the incoming artillery fire.²¹ This artillery fire was coming from enemy positions located 800 yards inland on the high ground. The hard-pressed 1st Battalion had penetrated no more than a dozen yards in some places and was extremely vulnerable, but it held on tightly.²² At about 0930 an enemy force counterattacked, but with the help of some tanks from the 4th Tank Battalion, the assault was repulsed. The going continued slow, but by the end of the day the battalion had reached its objective.

The 2d Battalion, still commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Hudson, had greater success with its initial thrust over the landing beaches. About one-half of the 2d Battalion was carried inland from 500-700 yards by the LVTs. The remainder of the 2d Battalion had little protection from the heavy fires as it moved across the beach. Shells were bursting overhead fired by antiaircraft guns that were depressed to fire at ground targets. To add to the 2d Battalion problems, mortars were being fired into the battalion positions from bypassed positions to its rear. Carrier planes spotted these positions and wiped them out.

As Lieutenant Colonel Chambers' 3d Battalion crossed the line of departure, he was directed to send one company to assist the hard-put 1st Battalion. Company K was designated for this assignment but in the confusion of landing under such heavy fire, 1st Battalion guides instead had led two platoons from Company I and two platoons from Company L to the aid of the beleaguered battalion. Later in the day, around 1300, Company K was again designated to assist the 1st Battalion in clearing the enemy from Agingan Point. This time there was no mix-up. Still later, the balance of Company I was also attached to the 1st Battalion.

The 4th Marine Division plan called for the LVTs carrying the assault troops to cross the beaches and to continue inland to the high ground, a distance of about 1,200-1,500 yards to the front. In light of the unexpected heavy fires this plan proved to be overly



USMC Photo A551327

Brigadier General Lewis C. Hudson, Jr. As a lieutenant colonel he commanded the 2d Battalion, 25th Marines during World War II.

ambitious. Some of the LVTs did manage to move a considerable distance inland, but the majority of them were forced to discharge their passengers on the beach. The terrain was also a deterrent to the LVTs. Not far inland there was an incline rising vertically, in some places four to five feet, heights the LVTs could not surmount.

One other problem developed in that the 2d Marine Division in landing shifted its area to the left about 1,000 yards. This left an unoccupied stretch initially, that developed into an unconquered corridor as the divisions moved inland and created an exposed flank for each. This situation was remedied when the 1st Battalion, 23d Marines moved into the gap to mop up the bypassed enemy. The deadly 75mm and 105mm fire hitting along the entire 4th Marine Division front came from excellently emplaced artillery on the high ground approximately 1,500 yards to the front. These positions were ideal in that they offered good observation and concealment. Moreover, the crew's living quarters and the ammunition dumps were located on the reverse slope, and, as such, immune to all but direct hits.



USMC Photo 15192

With tanks in the lead, Marine riflemen drive across a field on Saipan. The hills would be different.

The infantry units needed tank support. The LCMs should have had no problem at all in carrying the tanks of 2d and 4th Tank Battalions ashore since there was a convenient channel through the reef. The Japanese, however, were not playing the role of gracious host and had the channel interdicted with murderous mortar and artillery fires. Because of this, the tanks were brought in across the reef. This crossing became more perilous as the afternoon wore on because of the ground swells that developed. The last tank finally landed on the beach at about 1530. Some had been lost to enemy fire, some were put out of action when seawater got into their electrical systems, and still others simply disappeared in the sea.

Company A of the 4th Tank Battalion moved out to support the 1st Battalion in its hard-fought battle for Agingan Point. As noted earlier, the first tanks arrived just as two companies of enemy soldiers attacked the 1st Battalion from Agingan Point. The fires of the 1st Battalion now assisted by Company A tanks destroyed the entire Japanese force.

At 1315 the 14th Marines began landing and continued moving ashore until dusk. The enemy with their excellent observation of the entire beachhead area rained heavy fires on the artillery units of both Marine divisions as they landed.²³ By late afternoon, the 24th Marines, which had taken part in the demonstration off Tanapag Harbor, landed. Companies A and B were put in between the 2d Battalion, 23d Marines and 2d Battalion, 25th Marines. The 25th Marines had doggedly inched forward during the day and by 1700 had reached the initial ob-

jective line, but the regiment's extreme right flank was still being harassed by the enemy. The 25th Marines had heavy casualties for the day; the total 4th Marine Division losses reached 2,000—caused mostly from mortars and artillery. The Japanese registration points had taken their toll. LVTs were kept busy carrying wounded out to the reef edge where they were transferred to LCVPs and LCMs.

As darkness came on, it found both Marine divisions stretched out in a 10,000-yard beachhead with a depth of about 1,500 yards. The landing had been successful, but it was painfully obvious that the Japanese were going to fight for every inch of ground. The Japanese soldier was a dedicated warrior, seasoned by the *Senjinkun* (Battle Ethics), which, among other things, gave both courage and battle-death an aura of holiness. One enemy soldier commented in his diary that he was "pleased to think . . . [that he would] die in true *Samurai* style."²⁴ The toughness of the Japanese soldier was not news to the Marines; they knew he was tough, and tougher still as long as he occupied the dominating ridgeline to their front. The Japanese counterattacked in various strengths and intensities throughout the night along the entire front. The 25th Marines' center was attacked at 0320 and again at 0430. In the latter attack, the Japanese drove civilians before them, using them as shields. This was a new experience for the Marines and they were reluctant to harm the civilians but they had no choice except to open fire. The artillery of the 1st Battalion, 14th Marines opened up on the attackers, firing until out of ammunition at which time the 3d

Battalion, 14th Marines took over the mission. These artillery fires, combined with the aggressive response of the 25th Marines destroyed the Japanese force. In another part of the line, blasts from Japanese bugles and high-pitched screams heralded an all-out attack on the 6th Marines. With the help of illumination shells fired by U.S. destroyers, the 6th Marines repulsed the attack with devastating fire. With the failure of these counterattacks, the opportunity to destroy the American landing force on the beach was lost. Had these enemy efforts been well coordinated and of sufficient size, the story might have been different. The Marines were on the island, and they meant to stay.

Perhaps the Japanese defenders would have had another chance to destroy the invading force if a U.S. submarine had not spotted an enemy fleet steaming toward Saipan. The mission of this Japanese task force of carriers, battleships, cruisers, and destroyers was obvious: destroy the U.S. fleet and relieve the Saipan garrison.²⁵ Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, Commander of the Fifth Fleet, knew what action he had to take to counter the threat of the enemy task force: destroy it. Rear Admiral Marc A. Mitscher's Task Force 58 fast carriers were ordered to sortie and engage the enemy in what was to become known as the First Battle of the Philippine Sea. While the Fifth Fleet had the strength to handle the situation, some changes appeared prudent. Accordingly, the Guam assault scheduled just 2 days later on 18 June was canceled.²⁶ Further, as an added safety measure, the transports at Saipan would put out to sea and into safer waters. This, in turn, meant that these ships would have to stop the general unloading, at dusk on 17 June, to resume at a later time not yet known. Only those transports carrying supplies and equipment vital to the immediate operation would remain behind and continue to unload. The escort carriers would remain in the vicinity to provide aerial support to the land operations.

The battle continued to rage back on Saipan as the 4th Marine Division prepared to surge inland toward the east coast on D plus 1. To reinforce the hard-hit 25th Marines, Lieutenant Colonel Alexander A. Vandegrift, Jr.'s 3d Battalion, 24th Marines was put in the line relieving the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines which had been fighting steadily since landing. As the 1st Battalion came off the line, those units which had been attached since the previous day reverted back to 3d Battalion, 25th Marines' control. His battalion now intact, Lieutenant Colonel Chambers

turned his attention to reorganizing his scattered units just to the rear of the 2d Battalion lines. As 3d Battalion units began to arrive in the area, several hundred Japanese were spotted moving through a gap between the 24th and 25th Regiments. A firefight developed. In this action, Company L and 6 tanks from Company A, 4th Tank Battalion destroyed 5 machine guns, and 2 mountain guns, and killed 60 of the enemy. Compared to the activity of D-day, things were relatively quiet along the lines of the two Marine divisions, the only sustained action of the day being the successful push of the 8th Marines in clearing the enemy from Afetna Point. The Japanese did not discourage easily and in the small hours of the next morning a sizable force of tanks, infantry, and naval landing force troops struck the 6th Marines lines in a frenzied attack that lasted all through the early morning hours until about 0700 on 17 June. The 6th Marines not only held fast, but its fires exacted a heavy toll from the attackers.²⁷

In view of the imminent departure of the transports, Lieutenant General Smith had the 27th Division land on 16 June. The 165th Infantry of the 27th Division was put into the line on 17 June to the right of the 25th Marines. The NTLF order for the day was to attack along the entire front. The 25th Marines, with the 2d Battalion in the lead, attacked in a column of battalions, advancing 1,500 yards to the day's objective. The 24th Marines to the left of the 25th had reached the day's objective but then had withdrawn 600 yards to avoid heavy enemy rifle, machine gun, and knee mortar fire. At this new position the 24th Marines dug in for the night. With the faster movement of the 25th Marines during the day, a gap developed between it and the 165th Infantry. Colonel Batchelder filled the gap with Companies I and L, sending one platoon of Company L, under Lieutenant Maurice W. Savage to make contact with the 165th. When contact was made, Lieutenant Savage recommended to the commanding officer, Colonel Gerard W. Kelley, that his regiment should move onto Aslito airfield since it was clear of the enemy. In view of the hour (late afternoon), Colonel Kelley decided that it would be prudent to remain where he was on the high ground for the night. Colonel Batchelder moved the rest of his 3d Battalion into the gap on the right flank. The regiment then dug in for the night.

The NTLF operation order for D plus 3 was relatively simple — all three divisions attack. The 4th Marine Division, with the 25th Marines on the division's right flank, began its move at 1000 with all



USMC Photo 86006

Brigadier General Samuel C. Cumming, Assistant Division Commander, 4th Marine Division (left),

views action at Hill 500 with the 25th Marines Commanding Officer, Colonel Merton J. Batchelder.

three regiments abreast. The 25th Marines made good progress during the day and reached the coast of Magicienne Bay. In order to keep moving fast in the attack, the 24th Marines had bypassed a heavily defended cliff line. This area had to be cleared out and the task was assigned to the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, the division reserve. The main task was in clearing the enemy out of caves. This process usually was handled by teams of four or five Marines. When a team was unable to flush or kill the inhabitants, it would seal the cave.²⁸ At this point in the operation it was painfully apparent that this was going to be a long, tedious, hard-fought battle. Total casualties for the assault divisions were already over 5,000.

The 19th and 20th of June were workdays for Rear Admiral Mitscher's Task Force 58, and as usual, it earned its pay. The Japanese lost three aircraft carriers, two of these sunk by submarines, one by aircraft, and a tanker was severely damaged. The bombs and torpedoes that had struck the hulls of the doomed carriers also served to sound the death knell

for the defenders of Saipan; the last chance for relief now rested on the floor of the Philippine Sea.

The 4th Marine Division made a pivoting attack on 20 June as it struck to the north. As soon as its mopping up duties around Magicienne Bay had been assumed by the 27th Infantry Division, the 25th Marines replaced the 23d Marines in the line. With Hill 500 as the objective, the 25th Marines moved to the attack with the 3d Battalion in the lead, reaching its objective before nightfall. The 1st battalion chore for the day was to clear the cliff line leading to the hill. Preparatory fires were furnished by the Regimental Weapons Company, the battalion's organic 81mm mortars, the 1st Provisional Rocket Detachment, and the 1st Battalion, 14th Marines. Smoke was used to cover advances across any flat terrain encountered along the way. The end of the day found both Marine divisions facing north. During the night the 3d Battalion repelled several small, uncoordinated attacks. The next morning 31 dead Japanese soldiers were found in the front of the

Marine perimeter. The following day the 3d Battalion concentrated on clearing out the caves on Hill 500.

The 4th Marine Division continued the attack north at 0600 on 22 June. The 25th Marines was on the division left in a column of battalions. Progress was excellent with the 3d Battalion reaching its intermediate objective by 0630.²⁹ Company K, situated on the battalion left, was attacked and a ferocious hand-to-hand fight developed. One enemy tank was knocked out and 90 enemy soldiers were killed. In the day's action, Company K had one commanding officer killed and two others wounded. As the 25th Marines approached its objective, enemy machine gun fire halted the advance. Company L, caught between two fires, was forced to withdraw. A short time later, an enemy ammunition dump exploded injuring, among others, the 3d Battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Chambers. Major James Taul, the executive officer, took over and ordered a resumption of the attack. The fires from the slopes of the battalion's intermediate objective continued heavy and prevented forward movement and the 25th called it a day. The regiment had made gains during the day of roughly 2,000 yards. All during the ensuing night infiltrators harassed the regimental lines, preventing any rest from the strain and rigor of the day's continuous action.

On the next day, 23 June, the 25th Marines was ordered back to Hill 500 to serve as the division reserve. As the regiment passed through the 27th Infantry Division, it reverted to NTLF reserve. Lieutenant Colonel Chambers, who had been evacuated earlier with a concussion, returned to resume command of the 3d Battalion.

The attack order on 24 June was to continue the drive to the division objective. Once accomplished, the Kagman Peninsula would be under U.S. control and thereby narrow the entire front. This maneuver involved the division in a swing to the east right onto the Kagman Peninsula. Meanwhile, the 2d Marine Division and the 27th Infantry Division would strike directly north. The attack was launched at 0800. By hard fighting the 4th Division reached its intermediate objective by 1630 but could not move further since there was no contact on the left flank with the 27th Infantry Division. Contact was finally achieved with the 165th Infantry by nightfall. The 106th Infantry, in an area formerly held by, 3d Battalion, was held up by enemy fires coming from a cliff line on its left flank. Company F, 106th Infantry finally did tie in with the 2d Marine Division but a

vertical gap of several hundred yards stretched back to the lines of the balance of the 27th Infantry Division. The 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, concentrating on Nafutan Point, was unable to make substantial headway.

The objectives for the following day, 25 June, were both the Kagman Peninsula and Mt. Tapotchau. The 0815 planned kickoff was delayed 45 minutes in order for tanks to move up in position to support the day's action. The 23d and 24th Marines surged forward toward Mt. Kagman and the high ground on the eastern tip of the peninsula. The 24th Marines advanced rapidly, but the 23d ran into difficulty, being hit from the rear by isolated pockets of enemy infantry in the 27th Division's area of responsibility. Finally by 1530 the entire peninsula had fallen to the Marines. The success on the Kagman Peninsula and the 2d Marine Division's winning of Mt. Tapotchau were morale boosters for the men in these divisions. To the south, the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry was still having trouble on Nafutan Point.

On 26 June the 23d and 24th Marines mopped up bypassed pockets of the enemy on the Kagman Peninsula. Artillery rounds were dropping in on the peninsula, fired from positions in the 27th Infantry Division's zone, the so-called Purple Heart Ridge. The 4th Division requested permission to fire into the 27th's zone, but the affirmative reply was so delayed that by then the enemy had changed the gun positions. During the day, the 2d Battalion, 25th Marines was attached to the 8th Marines until 1500 when it reverted back to NTLF reserve. It would rejoin the 8th Marines on the following day.

As Captain Sasaki, commanding the *317th Independent Infantry Battalion*, reviewed his situation on Nafutan Point, the picture was not bright. His troops were receiving fire from all sides and their food and water were just about gone. His only course was to break out and join with the main Japanese force which he, mistakenly, thought was on Hill 500. The resulting plans called for a breakout at midnight 26 June. The password assigned for the operation was *Shichi Sei Hokoku* (seven lives for one's country). As planned, the breakout commenced at 2400. The enemy movement remained undiscovered until about 0200 when the enemy force came upon the CP of the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry. In the resulting melee, 24 soldiers and 27 enemy were killed. At 0230 a part of the force hit Aslito airfield but determined Seabees and engineer troops successfully fought them off. Upon reaching Hill



USMC Photo 88773

Marines pushing forward on Saipan pause for a rest. Mt. Tapotchau, site of heavy battles, looms in the

500, another part of the enemy force discovered, to its dismay, that the 3d Battalion, 25th Marines and not the 47th Independent Mixed Brigade was in possession of the hill. A fierce small arms and hand grenade battle ensued for the remainder of the night. During the entire breakout 500 of the enemy lost their lives. U.S. losses were light.³⁰

Progress was rapid as three divisions abreast attacked on D plus 12. At 1000 the 2d Battalion of the 25th Marines was attached to the 2d Marine Division, replacing the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines on the right boundary. Before nightfall, the 4th Marine Division advanced 3,000 yards, creating a supply problem without serious consequences, thankfully. The 165th Infantry made the greatest advance of the 27th Division to the point where its reserve battalion was stretched very thin in order to avoid a vertical gap with the balance of the division. The 2d Marine Division made only modest gains as it traversed the western slope of Mt. Tapotchau. The big problem of the 2d Marine Division was on its right flank where contact with the 27th Division was nonexistent. All divisions dug in for the night and all was quiet.

background, dominating the island and blocking the way.

At 0730 the next morning, 28 June, the 2d Battalion, 25th Marines again reverted to NTLF reserve. The orders for the day had the 4th Marine Division holding its positions ready to assist the advance of the 27th Division with its fires. The steady plodding since 15 June was taking its toll and a sluggishness was evident in the troops. They were tired. At the close of the day, the 27th Division was still well behind the Marine divisions.

During the next 3 days, the attack went on. On 2 July, the 2d Marine Division captured Garapan, the largest town on the island. The next day it moved into the seaplane base. The 25th Marines rejoined the 4th Marine Division and immediately attacked to the west pinching out the 27th Division. The 3d Battalion in the center of the 25th Marines lines was hard hit. With the large number of casualties, Lieutenant Colonel Chambers reduced his battalion to two companies with three officers and fifteen men per unit. The 1st Battalion was passed through the 3d Battalion and the attack continued.

The Marines and soldiers had never known a quiet 4th of July, and this one was no different. Quite ap-

appropriately for this national holiday the American forces were winning as enemy resistance gave way. The 25th Marines objective for the day was Hill 767. As the regiment moved forward, the left of the 1st Battalion came under heavy rifle and machine gun fire. Lieutenant Colonel Mustain called for tank support. In moving up, the tanks in moving up became lost and found themselves 700 yards in front of the Marine position. The Japanese grabbed the opportunity to attack the unprotected tanks, knocking out two of them one after another in quick succession. Surrounded, the tank crewmen fought on until rescued by Major Fenton J. Mee, the battalion operations officer, some headquarters personnel, and a platoon of Company A. The 3d Battalion was taken out of reserve and put back in the line. On 5 July the attack was set for 1200 but got off to an uncertain start since the 25th Marines had to displace about 2 miles to the east then fight 400 yards to reach the line of departure. The 24th Marines began its attack before the 25th even reached the line of departure, creating a separation that would last throughout the day. The 25th Marines covered the vertical gap by the use of a strong combat patrol. Additionally,

Men of the 25th Marines push through a canefield on Saipan as Japanese mortars pound their flank.

machine guns were emplaced and mortars and artillery registered to cover the 400-yard separation. The big job, however, for Colonel Batchelder's 25th Marines for the day was the 2-mile lateral move through the right half of the 23d Marines. A few anxious moments occurred when an enemy machine gun began firing bursts into the 1st Battalion CP. The engineers of the 1st Platoon, Company A, 20th Marines, fighting as infantry, knocked the machine gun out. The long hike in the hot and humid weather resulted in many cases of heat exhaustion.

Early on the morning of 6 July, Lieutenant General Saito, realizing that the end was only a matter of days, issued his last order to his troops:

I am addressing the officers and men of the Imperial Army on Saipan.

For more than twenty days since the American devils attacked, the officers, men, and civilian employees of the Imperial Army and Navy on this island have fought well and bravely. Everywhere they have demonstrated the honor and glory of the Imperial Forces. I expected that every man would do his duty.

Heaven has not given us an opportunity. We have not been able to utilize fully the terrain. We have fought in unison up to the present time but now we have no materials with which to fight and our artillery for attack has been completely destroyed. Our

The scattered canefields were in striking contrast to the rugged terrain on other parts of the island.

USMC Photo 83918



comrades have fallen one after another. Despite the bitterness of defeat, we pledge "seven lives to repay our country."

The barbarous attack of the enemy is being continued. Even though the enemy has occupied only a corner of Saipan, we are dying without avail under the violent shelling and bombing. Whether we attack or whether we stay where we are, there is only death. However, in death there is life. We must utilize this opportunity to exalt true Japanese manhood. I will advance with those who remain to deliver still another blow to the American devils, and leave my bones on Saipan as a bulwark of the Pacific.

As it says in the 'Senjinkun' (Battle Ethics), "I will never suffer the disgrace of being taken alive," and "I will offer up the courage of my soul and calmly rejoice in living by the eternal principle."

Here I pray with you for the eternal life of the Emperor and of the country and I advance to seek out the enemy.

Follow me!³¹

A few hours later Lieutenant General Saito bid farewell to his staff and following a last meal of canned crab meat and sake, committed hari-kiri.

Things began happening quickly. Drove of civilians came through the line, 800 in the 1st Battalion area alone. Company K got into a violent fire fight with a bypassed pocket of Japanese soldiers, killing 61 of the enemy. The enemy was trapped. The Marines knew it and the enemy knew it. The Marines also knew how the Japanese reacted in similar situations and, accordingly, were on the alert for an all-out attack, but none developed during the day. With darkness, activity began increasing all along the line seeming to build like a crescendo passage in music. The 2d Battalion, 25th Marines, on Mt. Petosukara beat off a furious assault by a Japanese rifle company. During the attack, the Marine's mortar shells were falling within 50 yards of the front lines. In the early morning hours the enemy struck again, this time hitting the battalion aid station. Corpsmen, doctors, and Marines beat off the attackers. During the entire night, the 2d Battalion accounted for 60-70 enemy killed. The enemy also hit the exposed left flank of the 24th Marines, but they were beaten off by aggressive return fires.

The largest assault, the *banzai* charge of both fact and fable, hit the front, flanks, and rear of the 1st and 2d Battalions, 105th Infantry. The very fanatical force of the attack carried the enemy troops right through the lines of the 1st and 2d Battalions, smashing up against the 3d Battalion. The 3d Battalion, located on the high ground, absorbed the shock but its lines did not dent. Ferocious fighting continued on into the afternoon. The combined casualties of the three battalions totaled 668, with only 25 percent of the command intact at the end of the battle. The *banzai* charge penetrated the U.S. lines and hit the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines. Battery

H was overrun by 400-500 of the enemy, forcing the Marines to abandon the firing positions. Severe losses were suffered by the 3d Battalion, 25th Marines, including Major William L. Crouch who was killed during the action. The total *banzai* force, estimated at somewhere between 1,500-3,000 in number, was annihilated. The final American thrust came on 9 July when the 25th, 24th, and 2d Marines took Marpi Point. Beyond was the sea. In these last days hundreds of Japanese, both civilians and military, committed suicide. Some shot themselves while most jumped from the cliffs into the sea.

Mopping up the pockets of the enemy that remained on the island would continue on for months to come. For now, however, the eyes and thoughts of the V Amphibious Corps turned to the south, toward Tinian.

Three Miles to the White Beaches

For 25 days the V Amphibious Corps had slugged it out on Saipan against a dedicated and stubborn enemy. The tenacity of the Japanese defense had turned each inch of ground into a costly piece of real estate. The U.S. forces had paid the heavy cost for victory, but another job remained. Complete victory required seizure of Tinian 3 miles to the south of Saipan. As was true with Roi-Namur, the Saipan and Tinian area was a joint tactical locality and was considered so by Japanese and Americans alike.

The invasion of Tinian was an integral part of the operation as evidenced by the wording of the Expeditionary Troops operations plan, "... seize ... Saipan, then be prepared to seize Tinian on order" The Marine divisions of VAC were prepared and the order came as scheduled. Its capture would deny the enemy the use of the four airfields on the island, in turn, making them available as U.S. bases from which attacks could reach the Japanese home islands. Further, because of Tinian's location, the enemy would be denied a perfect observation post with resulting intelligence loss to the Japanese high command in Tokyo.³²

About two-thirds of the size of Saipan, Tinian differs in other geographical respects as well. Words such as "rugged" or "mountainous" aptly describe Saipan, but not so Tinian, which has a low, open terrain over most of the island, most of which was cultivated with 10-foot-high sugar cane. Another difference is in the heavy, jungle-like vegetation, so



USMC Photo 151854

Marine tanks assist in the battle for Marpi Point. The victory here signalled the end of Japanese resistance

on Saipan. The American cost of Saipan was over 3,000 killed and 11,000 wounded.

abundant on Saipan but found only in the higher elevations on Tinian. These higher elevations are located only on the extreme northern and southern ends of the island. This new target was 12¼ miles long with its widest point being approximately 5 miles, covering an overall area of 50 square miles. Forbidding cliffs, reaching from the sea to heights varying from 6 to 100 feet, border the entire island except for a few beach areas. The terrain on Tinian did not have the treacherous geographical aspects of Saipan, but instead a low, open, rolling landscape ideal for the employment of tanks. The tanks of the 2d and 4th Marine Divisions were far superior in quality and number, hence the land favored the U.S. forces.³³

The Japanese troops on Tinian were well trained and considered to be of a higher quality than the defenders of Saipan. The principal enemy unit on the island was the *50th Infantry Regiment*, recently transferred from Manchuria. The unit was commanded by a talented professional soldier, Colonel Kiyochi Ogata. Other units were the *1st Battalion*, *135th Infantry* led by Captain Izumi and the *56th Naval Guard Force*, commanded by Captain Goichi Oya. This defense force was about one-half Army

and one-half Navy, the highest ranking Japanese officer on the island was Vice Admiral Kakuji Kakuda.

As was the case with other Japanese joint Army-Navy commands elsewhere in the Pacific, interservice rivalries prevailed to prevent joint planning for the defense of Tinian. Kakuda operated independently of the Army, and Colonel Ogata, with his larger Army command, filled the role of island commander. As a matter of fact both Ogata and Oya had their own separate defense plans, independent of each other and with no coordination whatsoever. This division of forces almost certainly guaranteed U.S. success in the upcoming operation. Hence, in violating the basic tactical maxim relating to unity of force, the Tinian defenders ensured their own destruction.³⁴

The plans for the Tinian operation were an adjunct of those prepared for the Saipan campaign. These plans provided for a continuous gathering of intelligence that went on right up until the actual landings. Aerial photographic missions were regularly assigned and flown. The resulting photographs were closely studied and evaluated by NTLF intelligence officers who were thus able to monitor changes in defense installations and movement of

troops. Another source of intelligence was the abundant supply of enemy documents captured on Saipan. Adding to this, commanders assigned to the operation were flown over the island enabling them to make a personal reconnaissance of their future target area.

Tinian received other attention as well, for beginning on 11 June Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher's Task Force 58 bombarded the island for 43 days prior to the landing. Destroyers and Saipan-based artillery, the latter beginning on 20 June, contributed to the bombardment. The intensity of these attacks increased right up until the day of the landing 24 July. On 23 July, Brigadier General Arthur M. Harper's XXIV Corps Artillery fired 155 missions and even this increased on 24 July when all 13 artillery battalions on Saipan blasted the target. Added to the sea- and land-based bombardment was assault from the air. Army Air Forces Republic P-47 "Thunderbolts" of the 318th Fighter Group flew 131 sorties on Jig minus 1 while an additional 249 sorties were flown by planes from 4 carriers.

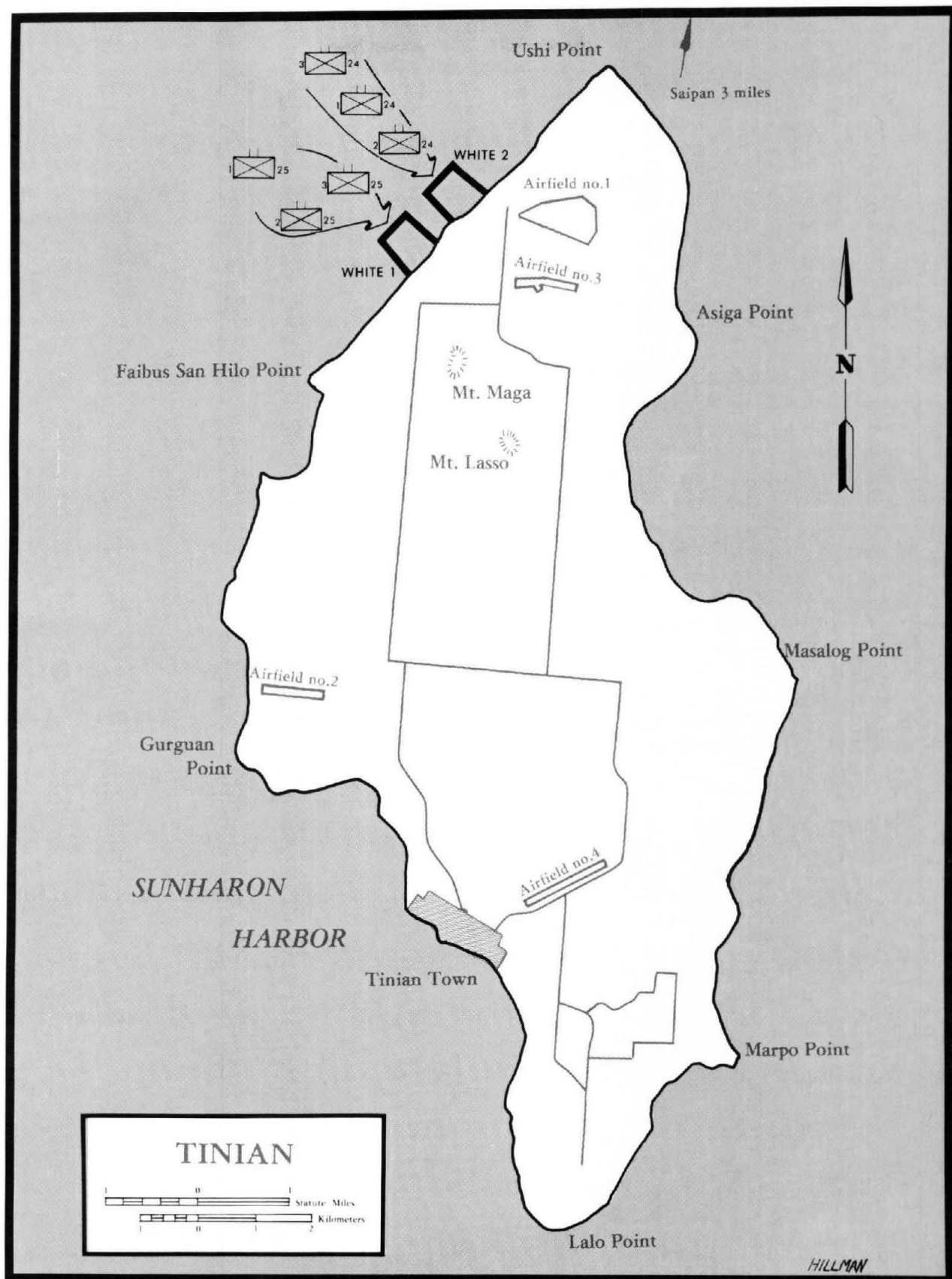
The P-47s carried out still another mission on Tinian. *Reconnaissance photograph of White Beach 2 on Tinian. On Jig-Day the 25th Marines would assault*

the island, adding a new word to the vocabulary and another page to military history. These aircraft dropped containers of a new highly incendiary substance called napalm. Napalm was a powder and when mixed with fuel and exploded by a detonator became a deadly fire bomb. On Jig minus 1, P-47s dropped 30 of these new bombs on the landing beaches. They burned out foliage and defenders alike. The V Amphibious Corps would have still another shock in store for the enemy.

Good landing beaches were at a premium on Tinian. There were only two beach areas on the whole coastline that were considered adequate under normal doctrine. One was located on the west coast near Tinian Town and the other was at Asiga Harbor. That one of these two beaches would be the invasion point seemed so obvious to Colonel Ogata that he was blind to any other possibility. In fact, Ogata had only two contingency defense plans, one assuming a landing at Tinian Town and the other based on the premise that an invading force had landed at Asiga Harbor. More fortunate yet for the Marines was that the defense installations at these locations were fixed *the 160-yard beach, followed by two light artillery battalions and the 23d Marines.*

USMC Photo 151970





to fire in only one direction. Marine observers had also noted these two landing areas but disregarded them to finally settle on two small beaches on the northwest side of the island. For the upcoming operation, the Marines dubbed them White Beach 1, only 60 yards wide, and White Beach 2, 160 yards wide.

Just prior to the Tinian operation, certain changes were made in the Marine command structure. Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith was named to head the new Fleet Marine Force, Pacific command (FMFPac). The organization of such a new command was necessitated by the step-up in tempo and expansion of future Marine operations. Major General Harry Schmidt stepped up to the NTLF command and Major General Clifton B. Cates, future Marine Corps Commandant, was given command of the 4th Marine Division.³⁵

The fast operational pace did not permit a leisurely familiarization of their duties by the new commanders—but none was needed; they were experienced professionals. The intensified shelling by the XXIV Corps Artillery and the gathering invasion force gave proof of the imminence of battle. The ships, landing craft, and other amphibious vessels and vehicles assigned to the Tinian operation numbered over 900. The NTLF plan designated the 4th Marine Division as the assault division, and it would make the 3-mile, island-to-island amphibious landing in 37 LSTs. Before their final dash to the shore, the assault regiments of the division would transfer to LVTs.

On Jig minus 1, 23 July, the Marines moved on-board their assigned ships. The landing called for the 24th Marines to attack over White Beach 1 while the 25th Marines landed over White Beach 2. The 23d Marines would remain afloat as the division reserve. Also on Jig-Day, but prior to the actual landing, the 2d Marine Division would stage a sunrise demonstration landing off of Tinian Town. The ruse worked successfully as planned. The Japanese lost valuable hours while attempting to oppose a landing that was never to be. Had the enemy not been so duped, many Marines would have been killed by the defenders of the White Beaches.

The trip covering the 3 miles between Saipan and Tinian aboard the LSTs was an uneventful one. By 0600 the assault regiments of the 4th Marine Division were in their assigned areas off of the landing beaches. The sounds of the Saipan-based artillery could be heard as round after round exploded on the island. For 3 weeks this artillery had been firing on

targets on Tinian. Air strikes and naval bombardment had plagued the enemy for 6 weeks, the combination of air, ground, and sea making this one of the longest periods of preparation fire in the Pacific War.³⁶

Naval gunfire support ships firing from their assigned sectors lifted their fires at 0620 as fighters and torpedo bombers dove in bombing and strafing the landing beaches. Once the air attack was ended, the artillery and naval ships resumed their bombardment in an ever-increasing tempo. The time had come for the Sunday punch; at 0717 the first 24 LVTs carrying the assault waves of the 24th and 25th Marines crossed the line of departure and churned the remaining 3,000 yards to White Beaches 1 and 2. As the LVTs approached the shore, an east wind blew thick smoke and dust, byproducts of the bombardment for the most part, into their path. The coxswains, blinded, were confused as to distance until Army P-47s, flying low over the attacking force, led the way to shore. Armored amphibians leading boat waves kept firing as they turned to the flanks 300 yards from the beach. The attack waves rolled on to the shore.

The 25th Marines hit White Beach 2 beginning at 0755 with Company G landing on the right and Company I on the left. The opposition to the 25th Marines' landing was greater than that being experienced by its sister regiment (the 24th) over on White Beach 1. The assault companies on White Beach 2 received fire from antiboat and antitank guns protected by two blockhouses spouting withering machine gun fire. There were about 50 enemy soldiers opposing the landing on White Beach 2. Other hazards facing the 25th Marines were antitank and antipersonnel mines and booby traps. The presence of mines forced all vehicular traffic to land over White Beach 1 until the engineers could clear White Beach 2. The assault companies bypassed the blockhouses and continued to press inland. Later waves would put the blockhouses out of business. By 0820 all of the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 25th Marines were ashore and attacking toward the high ground, Mt. Maga. The reserve battalion (1st) was hit by mortar, artillery, and small arms fire as it came ashore about 0930. The 1st Battalion's Lieutenant Colonel Mustain landed with his Marines and moved them about 300 yards inland. The 25th's regimental headquarters advance party landed at 1230.³⁷

The 1st Battalion, 14th Marines landed in the early afternoon. By 1430 this artillery battalion had moved 300 yards inland and was firing in support of



USMC Photo 88088

Additional Marines land on Tinian. Leisurely attitude is explained by the absence of resistance, as

the beach was secured by the 25th Marines the day before.

the 25th Marines. These fires were reinforced by those of the 1st Battalion, 10th Marines. The assault battalions moved steadily inland, but at 1630, General Cates ordered the advance halted so that the troops could set up a defense line in preparation for the inevitable counterattack. The 25th Marines, 1,000 yards short of its objective when the order was given, dug foxholes, strung barbed wire, and waited.

The entire 4th Marine Division was put ashore within a period of 9 hours. By 1630 the division had established a front 4,000 yards long and 2,000 yards deep. The day's action had cost the division 15 killed and 225 wounded. The known enemy dead numbered 438. Called the perfect landing operation by Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith, it had achieved complete tactical surprise. American success was enhanced because of enemy miscalculation. However, the Japanese now knew where the Americans were, and they would strike at night in their traditional but futile fashion—in a *banzai* charge.

The 23d Marines, the division reserve, had landed about 1630 with orders to move into the line to the right of the understrength 25th. This it did, taking up positions to the right of and in contact with the 2d Battalion, 25th Marines.³⁸ At 1830 the 75mm

halftracks of 25th Marines' Regimental Weapons Company landed on White Beach 1 and moved directly to reinforce the defensive positions of its parent regiment. Company A, 4th Tank Battalion with attached flamethrower tanks (M3A1 light tanks) also moved up on the line with the 25th Marines.

The Marines of the 25th, their confidence bolstered still more by the presence of the tanks and halftracks, nevertheless wondered what the night would bring. Darkness arrived early and seemed endless, while rain periodically fell together with incoming enemy fire. At about midnight the shelling increased. Enemy patrols could be heard in the darkness as they kept probing for a weak spot along the lines of the 25th Marines. Two hours later a Japanese naval unit, its officers wearing white gloves, struck the extreme left flank of the 24th Marines in a violent counterattack. The lines of the 24th held and over 400 of the attackers died in the encounter. Another attack was made at 0230 by the *135th Infantry*, reinforced with a few tanks, against the boundary between the 24th and 25th Marines. The extreme left flank of the 3d Battalion, 25th Marines took the thrust and by superior fire power repulsed the enemy.

In a second attempt, 200 enemy soldiers broke



USMC Photo 93379

Once the White Beaches were cleared, amphibian tractors and heavy equipment moved steadily

ashore. Extreme narrowness of the beaches required rapid unloading of all materiel coming ashore.

through Company K lines and split into two groups. One group attacked Battery D, 2d Battalion, 14th Marines and a fierce firefight ensued. Marines from Batteries E and F joined the fray as infantry, and destroyed the enemy. The second force hit the rear of the 25th but was stopped in its tracks by the fires of a 3d Battalion rifle platoon. The fight was a fierce one and 91 of the enemy were killed. Still another attack was made on the lines of the 23d Marines, but this attack was beaten off with an assist from the 37mm Platoon of the 2d Battalion, 25th Marines. This force retreated but at 0330 hit again, this time plowing into the 2d Battalions of both the 23d and 25th Marines. The attackers this time had the added impetus of a force of five or six tanks. These Marines, however, were primed and ready and with deadly fire cut down 267 of the attackers. These desperate attacks, too little and too late, cost the enemy dearly. A total of 1,241 had fallen, one-seventh of Colonel Ogata's defense force.³⁹ Over 500 bodies were counted in the 3d Battalion area alone.

The Marines of the 25th were tired and wet as they greeted the sunrise. This was 25 July, and the objective for the day was Mt. Maga, a 390-foot hill. The 2d Battalion took up position directly in front of Mt. Maga while the 1st and 3d Battalions encircled the objective from the east and west approaches respec-

tively in a double envelopment. As the 1st Battalion started up to the top, heavy rifle and machine gun fire poured down upon it. Having no protection against this onslaught, the battalion was forced to withdraw. A short time later a road leading up the hill was discovered. Engineers were called up to clear the road of mines and when the job was completed the tanks attached to the 1st Battalion rolled up the road right to the top without encountering enemy troops. The tanks returned to escort their charges back up Mt. Maga but again murderous fire tore into the advancing Marines. Withdrawing a second time, the Marines put their 81mm mortars into action against suspected enemy positions while the tanks fired into caves spotted from the bottom of the hill. After a thorough shelling of the suspected positions by the mortars, the Marines cautiously ascended the hill again. It was noon when they started up, and it was soon obvious that the shelling by the mortars and tanks had done its job. The hill quickly became 25th Marines' property. The enemy however, was still active, for at 1330 machine guns and mortars began firing on the battalion's right flank. The deadly accurate enemy guns were located on a plateau to the south. The Marine tanks and mortars returned heavy fire, soon silencing the enemy. When the firing had begun, the battalion was forced

to move back about 200 yards to an area offering better cover, but now moved back to the top, this time to stay.⁴⁰

The 3d Battalion, in a column of companies, was moving along the western route and was being assisted by Army Air Forces P-47s which strafed and bombed ahead of the advancing Marines. Many of the enemy survived the air attack and remained to challenge the advancing troops, and challenge they did. Company I in the lead came under heavy fire and requested assistance. Lieutenant Colonel Chambers ordered tanks and combat engineers forward. The engineers were armed with bazookas, demolitions, and flamethrowers. This additional force went to work doing a thorough job so that Company I Marines were able to continue their advance. Later the 3d Battalion lost contact with the 23d Marines and stopped until the 23d moved up abreast. During the halt, Lieutenant Colonel Chambers called down naval gunfire and artillery upon suspected enemy positions to the front. Combat patrols were sent out by Company I and they discovered and destroyed three 47mm guns. Contact was reinstated with the 23d Marines at which time the 3d Battalion resumed the attack, swinging up the side of Mt. Maga and on to the top.

For two days the 2d Battalion was kept busy mopping up the northwestern face of Mt. Maga. On 26 July all three of the battalions moved out, the 1st Battalion to even higher ground, 540-foot Mt. Lasso. The attack began at 0800 after a 5-minute artillery preparation. The going was tough as the Marines slipped repeatedly on the muddy slope. The enemy withdrew and the 1st Battalion reached the summit unopposed. This was a fortunate day for the Marines. Had the enemy defended Mt. Lasso, he could have exacted a heavy price from the men of the 25th.

A problem of no contact with the 2d Marine Division still existed on the left flank. The 2d Marine Division, after taking Airfield 1 had made a wide swing to the left to encompass the northern end of the island. Upon reaching the northern shore the division swung to the right along the east coast. This was a sizable amount of real estate to cover and understandably resulted in a loss of contact with the 3d Battalion, 25th Marines. The 3d Battalion had been moving rapidly, circling Mt. Lasso when it was forced to stop because of the gap that existed. After making the wide swing across the northern end of the island, the 2d Division moved south, soon making contact with the 4th. Both divisions then moved



USMC Photo 87900

Marines find the slopes of Mt. Lasso on Tinian tough going. The mountain was the high point on an otherwise flat Pacific island.

down the long axis of the island, the 4th Division given responsibility for the western half. Neither division encountered any significant enemy opposition on 27 and 28 July. A new foe was upon them, cold rain driven by gusty winds beat down on the Marines. The wind and rain were especially severe on 28 July resulting from the fringes of a typhoon that was creating havoc off to the west. Also on 28 July the 24th Marines was moved up between the 23d and 25th. All the infantry regiments of the division were now on line and heading south.

On the following day, both divisions, led by tanks, moved out in attack at 0700. Pockets of Japanese soldiers kept harassing the advancing regiments with rifle and occasional machine gun fire. The 3d Battalion, 25th Marines ran headlong into enemy troops that were all dug in. After a sharp firefight and several American casualties, the defenders were overcome. The day ended with the 25th in defensive positions some 600 to 1,000 yards forward of the day's objective. Tinian Town could be seen in the distance. The combination of falling rain and mortar shells made certain that there was little rest during the night. An enemy night attack was discouraged by Marine mortars and artillery. The following morning 41 dead Japanese soldiers were found in front of the defense positions.⁴¹

The Marine attack resumed in the morning at 0745 following a violent 10-minute artillery preparation. The attack had originally been set for 0700, but additional time was needed for the men to clean their weapons. Colonel Batchelder headed his men for Airfield 4 encountering some mortar fire and harassment by isolated snipers. The airfield was taken and the regiment, less the 3d Battalion, reverted to NTLF reserve. The 3d Battalion was attached to the 23d Marines and took up position on the left flank of the regimental front.

As the Marines neared the end of the island, resistance stiffened. The final drive was made on 1 August, when the 23d and 24th Marines abreast pushed to the southern tip of the island. The desperate enemy fought on to the very end but by 1955 the island was declared secured. Over 5,000 dead Japanese defenders attested to the violence of the battle. Over 1,800 Marines had been wounded and 389 of the Leathernecks had fought their last battle. The 25th Marines suffered 59 killed and 269 wounded in action.

A little over a year later a bomber would take off from the airfield near White Beach 1. With the massive air raids that were devastating the Japanese mainland, perhaps few would give special attention to the Enola Gay as she took off into history from this little airfield captured by United States Marines. This flight to Hiroshima would signal the end of an age and the beginning of another.

On 5 August, the 4th Marine Division left Tinian. These battle-weary Marines had fought and defeated the best the Japanese had to offer on two strongly defended islands. For its exemplary performance the 4th Marine Division was awarded a Presidential Unit Citation. The Marines were proud of what they had

achieved, but that was yesterday; today the important thing was that they were going back to Maui.

Maui Marines

The distance from the Marianas to Kahului Bay could not be measured solely in miles; the 4th Division Marines had traveled from one world to another.⁴² The tropical splendor of Maui surrounded the returning Marines as division trucks wound up the long dirt road to Camp Maui. The delights of this island reassured the Marines that they were alive and they basked in the beauty. The extinct volcano, Haleakala, towering behind the camp looked down in silence on her returning Marines. In the embrace of this peaceful island the Marines gradually relearned how to relax.

These were not the same Marines that left San Diego in January 1944. That was another era and three battles had changed them. The pleasures that once seemed endless were now known to be ephemeral and, accordingly, the Marines lived for the moment, savoring each day, for the long hours of training made them realize what must come on some tomorrow. After an early reveille, the Marines would spend numerous hours on field problems. At day's end the mud-Marines would drop into the luxurious comfort of their cots.

Daily, busses and trucks drove liberty-bound Marines to the nearby towns of Makawao, Haiku, Kahului, and Wailuku. Those back at Camp Maui on any one day had to be satisfied with the daily ration of two bottles of beer and the nightly outdoor movie. It was miraculous how a couple of beers and a class "D" movie could ease the soreness of muscles and the gnawing uncertainties of the war. It seemed more often than not that the movies were endured in the rain, the wind-driven wetness finding its way into the camouflaged ponchos. Things could be worse; they had been worse before and the Marines knew instinctively that they would be worse again. How right they were! But all in all, Maui was quite a place and problems here seemed somehow more manageable. The Marines enjoyed the island, and they were truly fond of the people.

The days and weeks sped by, measured by liberties and hard marches. On 28 October Colonel John R. Lanigan relieved Colonel Batchelder as Commanding Officer, 25th Marines. Colonel Batchelder, in turn, moved up to division as Chief of Staff.

Replacements arrived to fill the depleted ranks of the regiment. The Christmas season came and departed and the training went on. It would have been nice to have spent the holidays at home, but that was the least of their worries, for time was running out. Soon the Maui Marines would be going back to work.

As suddenly as the Marines had been immersed in the beauty and serenity of this Hawaiian island, they departed. Pearl Harbor was the first stop. The Marines on the decks of the transports looked hard for vestiges of the December 7th attack, but the war had moved on since that time and the naval base had been almost wholly restored. But so much for Pearl Harbor, the thoughts of the Marines turned rapidly to the possibility of a liberty in Honolulu. The dream was realized by only a few when, on 6 January, the transports sailed for Maalaea Bay to take part in a practice amphibious landing. On 9 January the troops returned to Pearl Harbor and, finally, all of the Marines spent precious liberty hours in Honolulu. From 13-18 January the Marines were back at Maalaea Bay where a full dress rehearsal of the coming invasion took place. Returning once again to Pearl Harbor, the Marines tried to cram a possible lifetime of liberty into a few hours; many did a good job of trying.

But now the time had come to go back to war and on 22 January, the LSMs and LSTs headed west, with the balance of the 4th Marine Division departing 5 days later. An unknown fate waited over the horizon on Island X or Sulphur Island, or, in Japanese, Iwo Jima.

The monotony of shipboard life soon displaced the memories of the pleasures of Honolulu. Each Marine experienced a varying degree of loneliness as he inhaled the sea air, felt the deck roll beneath his feet, and tasted the salt as the misty spray swept over the bow. The waking hours included the usual long chow lines, periods of calisthenics, rifle inspections, and schooling. With these activities, somehow time was squeezed in to permit the reading of paperback novels, a hand or two of poker or pinochle, and for a few, the inevitable crap game. Each day was just like the last as the convoy forged more deeply into the Pacific. The 5th of February 1945 found the transports anchored in the unbelievably large natural harbor of Eniwetok. The war was coming closer and closer as the convoy headed to sea again, this time towards the Saipan-Tinian area. Arriving in the Marianas, a last dress rehearsal was executed from choppy seas onto the western beaches of Tinian on 13 February. Three days later the armada headed for

the island of sulphur. Perhaps there were those who reflected that another name for sulphur was brimstone and further that the words "fire and brimstone" are reputed in rhyme and fable to be the ingredients of hell.

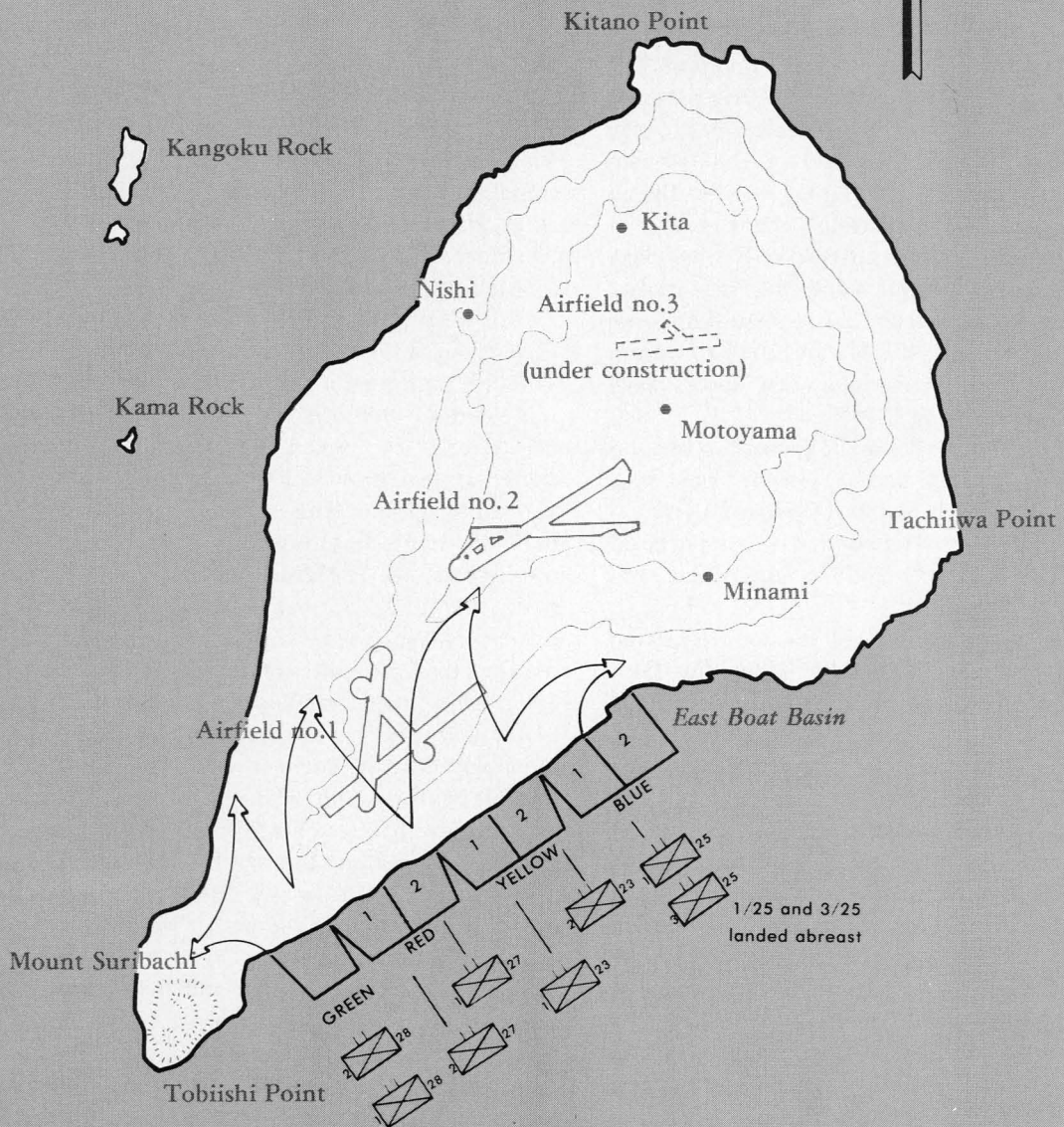
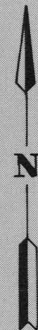
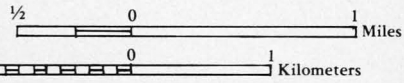
Iwo Jima

The nights grew colder as the 800-ship convoy steamed north to Iwo Jima. Frequent school sessions on board the transports familiarized the troops with the size, shape, relief, and landmarks of the island, but no amount of lectures or study could have prepared the 25th Marines for the ferocity of the coming battle. Their destination was one of the Volcano Islands which were, in turn, part of an archipelago named Nanpo Shoto. This archipelago extends from the Japanese homeland southward for 700 miles. A beachhead on Nanpo Shoto would be a foot in the door of the homeland itself.

Iwo Jima was born in violence, being thrust, lifeless, out of the ocean bottom 10,000 years before. This ugly pork chop shaped island has been variously compared to the surface of the moon, a devil's playground, and even hell itself. The island is anchored at the narrow southern tip by Mt. Suribachi, an extinct volcano. This 550-foot-high landmark is dark and forbidding, unlike its lush tropical green counterpart, Mt. Haleakala, back on Maui. Looking north from Mt. Suribachi's base the land rises, dramatically in places, with a broad plateau stretching along most of the central section of the island. Steep ridges are plentiful on the northern part of the island constituting natural fortresses and they were so employed by the enemy commander. Finally, the extreme northern end of the island drops abruptly into the sea. The rotten-egg smell of the sulphuric fumes, eerily spewing through fissures from the fiery core far below the surface, seemingly attested to the island's relationship to the nether world.⁴³

Two suitable landing beaches exist on Iwo Jima, one located on the east coast and the other on the west coast. Because of the narrowness of the southern end of the island, the Japanese guns on Suribachi could defend either beach. Additionally, both beaches are surrounded by commanding ground, a fact not lost to the enemy. The Marines were destined to land on the southeastern shore, but a landing on either beach would have found them poised against a determined enemy occupying high ground.

IWO JIMA



HILLMAN

No matter where the Marines landed, there would be nowhere to go but up.

This island was the key to the air war against Japan. Iwo Jima was an unsinkable carrier from which Japanese fighters could intercept American bombers heading to and from the homeland. In Allied hands, the use of Iwo's three airfields would shorten the bombing run considerably, permitting the carrying of additional bombs in place of the decreased fuel load. Fighters from these airfields could escort the bombers all the way to Japan. The airfield could also be used as a haven for damaged aircraft, which were, up until now, forced to ditch into the sea, the survival of the crew depending on the fortuitous location of friendly naval units. Both sides appreciated the significance of Iwo Jima, and girded their respective forces accordingly.

Selected to conduct the defense of Iwo Jima was 54-year-old Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi. General Kuribayashi, a cavalry officer with extensive line and staff experience, significantly, had great respect for American fighting ability. Perhaps this appreciation was gained when the general served as a military attache with the Japanese Embassy in the United States 20 years earlier. A true *samurai*, he considered it a great honor to have been selected for this important post, an assignment from which he did not expect to return. The general had been further honored by being accorded the rare privilege of an audience with Emperor Hirohito before his departure for Iwo Jima.

General Kuribayashi arrived on Iwo Jima sometime between 8-10 June 1944, in time to witness an air raid by U.S. carrier aircraft. The severe losses of Japanese aircraft both in the air and on the ground vividly demonstrated that the Americans had won air and sea superiority and could bomb and shell at will. The Japanese defenders, realizing the vulnerability of their installations, began moving them all underground.⁴⁴

Not long after General Kuribayashi arrived on the island, news was received of Saipan's fall. Feverish activity followed in setting up Iwo's elaborate system of defense. The black volcanic ash covering the island was ideal for making concrete, the result being that the island, like the mythical Phoenix, rose stronger than ever from its own ashes. Miles of tunnels also were built. Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith in his *Coral and Brass* referred to the Japanese defenses as the "most ingenious, elaborate and indestructible system of underground fortifications ever devised."⁴⁵

Facing the Marine invasion was the most heavily fortified island in the Pacific: 21,000 defenders, the majority of whom were the best soldiers the Japanese had to offer, and to top it off, a brilliant leader steeped in the *samurai* tradition. The invading force, on the other hand, had 71,000 well-trained and disciplined Marines and the advantages of air and sea superiority. The ingredients were there for the epic struggle that ensued.

Beginning on 19 February, both sides would battle relentlessly for 36 torturous, death-filled days. The dogged aggressiveness of the attacking Marines would overcome the natural and manmade defensive positions, and the *yamato* (warrior) spirit of the Japanese who held them; but at battle's end the news of the staggering casualty figures would horrify the American people.

Air strikes against Iwo Jima began in the early summer of 1944.⁴⁶ American carrier planes bombed and strafed and Army Air Force's B-24s, B-25s, and B-29s dropped tons of bombs and, as the date of the invasion drew nearer, these attacks intensified. Unfortunately, the damage to the island's defenses was not significant, a fact the Marines would soon discover to their chagrin. Even the airfields were never completely knocked out at any time.

General Smith and the planners of the V Amphibious Corps requested a 10-day naval gunfire bombardment of the island. This was considered essential by the Marine planners, but the request was denied. A simultaneous carrier strike on Toyko was also planned and, therefore, ships would only be available for a 3-day bombardment to commence on D minus 3. All of General Smith's efforts to get the desired 10-day bombardment failed.⁴⁷

On D minus 3, 16 February, the naval bombardment of Iwo Jima began. When it ended, the defenses still remained formidable. On 18 February, two battleships, the USS *Tennessee* (BB 43) and the USS *Idaho* (BB 42) fired more than 600 rounds into the base of Mt. Suribachi and into an area north of the eastern landing beaches known as the Quarry. The damage brought by the battleships was considerable, but 18 February was the last of the promised 3 days of naval gunfire and the landing was scheduled for the next day.

By dawn on 19 February the flotilla of invasion ships had taken up positions off the eastern beaches. Corporal Kofuku Yamakage, one of the island's defenders, wrote, "I have never seen so many ships in my life." The fact that all of the defenders could see the ships and, subsequently, all of the troops as



USMC Photo 110108

Men of the 25th are pinned down as they hit the beach. Making their fourth assault in 13 months, the veteran fighters are ready to secure the beachhead's right flank on Iwo Jima.

they landed would have dire consequences for the Marines. At 0640 the battleships, the USS *North Carolina* (BB 55), USS *Washington* (BB 56), USS *New York* (BB 34), USS *Texas* (BB 35), USS *Arkansas* (BB 33), and the USS *Nevada* (BB 36) began shelling the island fortress. Less than an hour later other ships fired salvo after salvo of rockets. The naval fires lifted at about 0800 as 120 fighters and bombers, in their turn, raked the landing beaches and the adjoining high ground, as well as the giant blister-shaped Mt. Suribachi.⁴⁸

Following the by now almost regulation pre-invasion breakfast of steak and eggs, the Marines of the assault battalions retrieved their weapons and packs below decks then reported to debarkation stations. The bombardment was still going on as they went over the side into the waiting assault craft. The first assault wave crossed the line of departure at 0830 and churned toward the beach 4,000 yards away. Other waves followed at 250-300 yard intervals. The naval bombardment shifted into the interior of the island as the amphibious tractors covered the last 400 yards to the macabre blackness of the Iwo beach.

The coarse volcanic ash, the sands of Iwo Jima, seemed to swallow the field shoes of the Marines as they left the amtracs for the greater uncertainty of the beach. It was planned that the amtracs would carry the assault troops further inland, but the steep terrace of volcanic ash running the length of the

beach stopped them. The tractors were unable to climb the slopes.⁴⁹

Colonel Lanigan's 25th Marines landed on Blue Beach 1 at the extreme right of the invading force. The 1st Battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel Mustain, was on the left, while the 3d Battalion led by Lieutenant Colonel Chambers was on the right, infringing slightly onto Blue Beach 2.* The landing took place shortly after 0900. The Japanese quickly responded to the landing; mortar and machine gun fire ranged across the volcanic sand. Unseen enemy defenders in cleverly camouflaged positions and in pillboxes swept the beach with deadly fire.

On the far left of the beachhead, the 28th Marines was making good progress as it headed toward Mt. Suribachi. The mountain suddenly appeared to explode as heavy mortars and artillery opened up on the attackers. It was obvious that this regiment had its own piece of hell to worry about. By now the entire beachhead had come under fire; the debris of battle along the dark beach gave mute testimony to the violence encountered.

In spite of heavy fire from the front and the right flank, the 25th Marines moved inland. The 3d Battalion swung to the right so that its right flank was along Blue Beach 2. The left flank, in contact with the 1st Battalion, was receiving heavy and continuous fire. By noon a gap of about 100 yards developed between the two battalions. The 2d Battalion led by Lieutenant Colonel Hudson, was ordered ashore to fill the gap and to seize the high ground located about 500 yards inland from Blue Beach 2 and southwest of a quarry. From there the 2d Battalion would assist the advance of the 3d Battalion into the quarry. The fire hitting the 25th Marines was the heaviest faced by the entire landing force. Moving into the quarry, the 3d Battalion was hit by murderous flanking fire, causing severe losses. Before nightfall the 3d Battalion was in a disorganized state, only 150 effectives remained. Twenty-two of the battalion's officers had been killed or wounded. The total casualty count for the battalion was 750 dead or wounded. There was no choice but to take the battalion out of the line. Accordingly, the 1st Battalion, 24th Marines which had already sent in two companies was ordered to make the relief. The relief was completed around midnight.⁵⁰

At 1700, all units were ordered to stop their ad-

*Blue Beach 2 was not used for landing because of its proximity to the high ground on the right, which was to be neutralized by supporting fires.



USMC Photo 109817

A short distance inland, Marines struggle to increase their hold on Iwo Jima as their tanks move north.

vance and to dig in in anticipation of the usual *banzai* charge. Japanese military doctrine called for the destruction of a landing force on the beach. General Kuribayashi, however, did not subscribe to this doctrine, consequently the traditional charge did not take place. The Japanese commander would exact a heavier price for each defender of Iwo Jima than heretofore experienced by Marines in other Pacific battles.

The ferocity of the day's battle kept up during the long night as enemy artillery and mortars continued to pound the Marine positions. The weather grew colder as the night progressed and the Marines, fresh from the tropics, shivered in their foxholes. At about 0400 an enemy shell hit the 25th Marines' ammunition dump, causing a tremendous explosion. Three hours later, another shell landed squarely in the 2d Battalion command post. Lieutenant Colonel Hudson, commanding officer of the battalion, his executive officer, Major William P. Kaempfer, and Major Donald K. Ellis, the operations officer, were all seriously wounded. Lieutenant Colonel James Taul, the 3d Battalion executive officer, was sent to take over the 2d Battalion.

So ended the first 24 hours. On the first of 36 terrible days, 30,000 Marines were landed. Of this number, 500 were killed and 1,775 wounded in the first day's battle. The tenacious and accurate mortar, artillery, and machine gun fires had claimed a grisly toll.

When the long, cold night ended, artillery, air, and naval gunfire opened up on the enemy defenders. All along the line the Marines of the 4th and 5th Divisions attacked following preparatory fires. The 25th Marines, with the 23d Marines on its left, surged forward at 0830 with three battalions abreast. On the left of the regimental line was the 1st Battalion; the 2d Battalion in the center, was now commanded by Lieutenant Colonel James Taul. The 1st Battalion, 24th Marines was on the right. The 3d Battalion, 25th Marines now formed the regimental reserve.

The 2d Battalion was ordered to seize the high ground to the front, then support Lieutenant Colonel Mustain's 1st Battalion with fire. Tanks from Company B, 4th Tank Battalion, supported the regimental attack, but were ineffective on the rough terrain. Worse, the armored vehicles attracted heavy

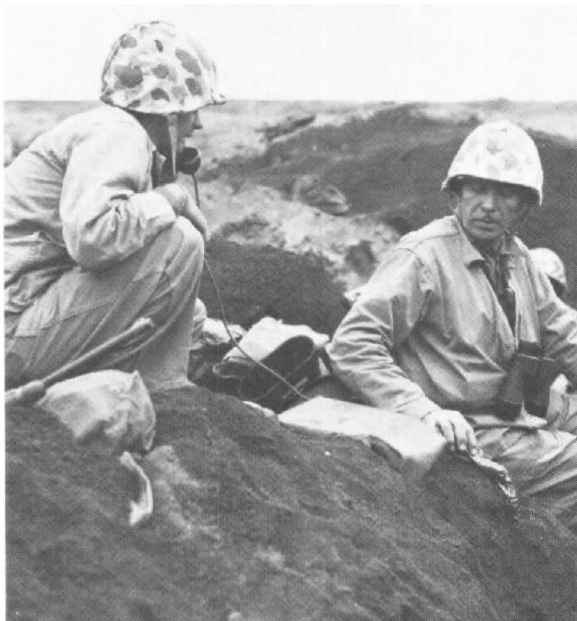
mortar and artillery shelling. Progress was difficult, the attacking Marines were caught in a deadly crossfire from machine guns and rifles. The enemy's positions afforded them perfect observation. In the rear of the line, an artillery shell hit the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines' aid station killing six hospital corpsmen and wounding seven others. Gains made by the 25th Marines on D plus 1, 20 February, ranged from 200 to 300 yards. The day's attack was halted at 1800 to allow the Marines to dig in for the night.⁵¹ Casualties for the 4th Marine Division during the first 2 days were over 2,000.

The night of the second day was a repeat of the first with the damp air chilling the Marines as they huddled in their foxholes. Enemy mortar and artillery fire continued throughout the night. The 25th Marines' left flank was hit hard at about 0500 when an enemy force of about 100 struck the 1st Battalion line. After a sharp encounter, the enemy attackers were effectively repulsed.

D plus 2 action began with carrier planes flying close air support missions. Artillery furnished additional preparation fire as a prelude to the day's attack. The 25th Marines moved forward shortly after 0800 to be greeted by heavy and accurate fires. By 1000, Marine casualties were heavy. The 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, striking northeast lost among others its commander, Lieutenant Colonel Mustain,

On Iwo, 400 yards inland, Colonel John R. Lanigan, Commanding Officer, 25th Marines, discusses the situation with his operations officer.

USMC Photo 109819



who was killed in action. Major Fenton J. Mee, the battalion executive officer, took over the battalion. During the morning because of varied yardage gains, a gap developed between the 1st and 2d Battalions. To permit the 1st Battalion to reorganize, the 3d Battalion was inserted into the line, between the other two battalions, pinching out the 1st Battalion. This called for a renewed effort from the 3d Battalion due to the mauling it received on D-day. Further attempts to move forward were deferred to the next day to permit the regiment to consolidate. The cold drizzle during the long night added to the misery of the Marines.⁵²

On D plus 3, 22 February, the drizzle turned into torrents of cold rain, reducing visibility to a bare minimum which was a mixed blessing. The 25th was ordered to attack at 0800 or when 3d Marine Division units came abreast on the left. The 3d Marine Division had landed during the night and was advancing slowly against heavy enemy action.

The 3d Battalion on the regiment's left was in a position along a ridgeline separated by a shallow valley leading to another ridgeline (Charlie-Dog) some 300 yards to the front. The ridgeline to the front was a part of the Japanese main line of resistance. The 3d Battalion, with all of its automatic weapons in its frontline, directed fire into the enemy line. Artillery and naval gun fires joined in the attack on Charlie-Dog Ridge. Lieutenant Colonel Chambers contacted regiment at 1600 suggesting that the jumpoff be put off until the following morning when the 3d Marine Division would be in position to join the assault. Regiment concurred and so ordered. The rocket platoon launched 128 rockets into the enemy position within a 3-minute period. Enemy soldiers could plainly be seen wandering about their positions in a dazed and shocked condition. Fires of the 3d Battalion opened up on the visible enemy troops. Lieutenant Colonel Chambers at about this time was severely wounded by enemy machine gun fire. Chambers was evacuated with Captain James C. Headley taking command of the battalion for the balance of the battle.

The 2d Battalion remained in position throughout the day, but was pelted with a heavy mortar barrage during the morning, resulting in many casualties. The night of the third day was a repeat of the previous one with the Marines trying to stay warm in the cold dampness, without much success. The wet and the cold seemed to spur the activities of the enemy; about 100 Japanese soldiers tried to infiltrate the lines of the 2d and 3d Battalions during the early



USMC Photo 142472

Marines flush out remaining Japanese hidden in Iwo's numerous caves. These Marines have just

thrown a grenade and are standing by with rifles and BARs at the ready.

morning hours. The alert Marines repulsed all attempts.

On Friday, 23 February, the 25th Marines, less the 2d Battalion, was relieved by the 24th Marines and placed in division reserve. There had been no let up in the mauling received by the 25th Marines, which by then had lost all three battalion commanders who had made the initial landing. The shift into reserve, however, was not tantamount to rest and relaxation; the regiment was kept busy mopping up pockets of resistance. The Marines did find the time to give their weapons a much needed cleaning.

Ferocious encounters marked the balance of the day on 23 February, and the 2d Battalion, now attached to the 24th Marines, received its share. The day's action was topped off at 1830 by a lively enemy counterattack against the battalion position. The battalion's fire and an assist from the supporting artillery combined to beat off the attack.

The bright spot of the day, 23 February, was the raising of the American flag over Suribachi by the 28th Marines. Damp eyes and cheering, emotion-choked voices greeted this dramatic accomplishment. It was a proud moment for all Americans on the island. A second, and more famous, flag raising took place 3 hours later, the exact moment being

captured for posterity by the lens of civilian photographer Joe Rosenthal. The joy and the pride of the moment, however, were soon forgotten as the Marines pressed on with the war.⁵⁴

The regiment stayed in reserve until 26 February, D plus 7. During the intervening 3 days the 24th Marines, with the 25th Marines' 2d Battalion still attached, fought a determined enemy force.⁵⁵ The enemy hit the Marines with everything they had from masterfully defended stretch Charlie-Dog Ridge. This ridge runs along the southeast edge of Airfield 2, curving at the far end to form a natural amphitheater and became so known.

Now out of reserve, the 25th Marines attacked at 0830 on D plus 7, moving out with all three battalions abreast. In the 7 days of fighting already gone by, the Marines had captured 40 percent of the island at a cost of 8,000 casualties. Until now the Japanese had withdrawn from one defense position to another in accordance with General Kuribayashi's defense strategem. Now, however, with the Marines hitting the central island defenses, the enemy stood and died. This central area, known collectively as the "Meat Grinder," consisted of Hill 382, the second highest elevation on the island; the Amphitheater; Turkey Knob, a hill bristling with defenses, in ap-

pearance not unlike a miniature Suribachi; and the village of Minami. The 25th Marines attacked into the Meat Grinder, its specific target being Turkey Knob. As the Marines moved into the range of the Turkey Knob defenders, machine gun fire and mortar shells challenged the oncoming attackers. Four tanks were called up to pour direct fire onto the hill, but their presence attracted still heavier mortar fire. At about 1400, a platoon from Company C attempted an envelopment of Turkey Knob, but its every step was impeded by accurate fire. It finally became necessary to order the withdrawal of this platoon. This was accomplished under the cover of a smoke screen. The 3d Battalion had greater success during the day. On the extreme right of the regimental line, it cleared the remaining enemy from the East Boat Basin which was located on the east coast, just north of the landing beaches. The battalion also seized the cliff line that overlooks the basin.

The night that followed was but an extension of the daylong nightmare. Japanese rockets sailed overhead, striking the rear areas, while to the front of the Marine lines small enemy groups probed, attempting to infiltrate. The formidable defenses of the "Meat Grinder" were integrated and mutually supporting; their interlocking fire was penetrable only by aggressive perseverance and then only at great cost.⁵⁶ The description of these defenses is somewhat reminiscent of the Russian defenses in the "Valley of Death" so aptly described by Alfred Lord Tennyson in his "Charge of the Light Brigade."

On 27 February, the regiment, once again with all of its battalions abreast, headed into the Meat Grinder. The attack got off to a halting start as the regiment was forced to move 150 yards across open terrain. The 2d and 3d Battalions moved eastward, making gains of, 200-300 yards. The 1st Battalion, on the regiment's extreme left, was bogged down by fire coming from Hill 382. Hill 382 was the responsibility of the 23d Marines and the 1st Battalion was dependent on success there before attacking Turkey Knob. The day's battle was hard-fought but without significant gains. The attack halted at 1600, at which time, the 3d Battalion was ordered into reserve and given the responsibility of defending the East Boat Basin against an enemy landing from the sea, still considered within the realm of possibility. During the night, the Japanese kept up a steady mortar barrage.⁵⁷

At 0815, the last day of February, the 3d Battalion moved north along the coast, while the 1st and 2d Battalions attacked Turkey Knob. The 1st Battalion,

with one company from the 3d Battalion, 24th Marines, began an envelopment of the target from the north. Company B headed toward the low ground southwest of the Knob to attack eastward around the Amphitheater, forming a pincers with the balance of the 1st Battalion.

Moving from the north, the 1st Battalion less Company B, entered a wooded area and advanced about 50 yards when a devastating mortar and artillery barrage hit the force. Heavy machine gun fire then opened up on the advancing Marines both from the front and the left flank. The casualties mounted, but the battalion kept firing in support of Company B.

Company B was having its own problems as the Japanese attacked with hand grenades from the high ground and swept the company with machine gun fire. With both attacks stalled, there was no choice for the Marines but to fall back to their starting positions.

The 2d Battalion gained only 75 yards, and this only after some innovative action on the part of Lieutenant Colonel Taul. When the battalion became bogged down by enemy fire, the battalion commander ordered that a 75mm pack howitzer be broken down, carried up from the rear, reassembled, and put into action. The spirits of the Marines received a boost, when after the howitzer fired 40 rounds, they were able to move forward.

The 3d Battalion, pacing itself on the beleaguered 2d Battalion, had to hold after advancing 100 yards. All battalions of the 25th Marines had battered and rammed the enemy during the day-long attack, but at day's end Turkey Knob was still in enemy hands. During the night the enemy kept raining mortar and artillery rounds onto the Marine positions. At one point during the night, a massing of enemy troops, a suspected prelude to a counterattack, was dispersed by naval gunfire and artillery.

March opened with the 25th Marines again attacking Turkey Knob with results as before. The Marine attackers hit, and hit again; they probed, punched, and in all too many cases, perished. The reduction of Turkey Knob was another job, and the Marines were relentless as they went about their work. The only significant gain for the day, about 100 yards, was made by the 2d Battalion. The night of 1-2 March was relatively quiet.

On 2 March, in an attempt to surprise the enemy, Colonel Lanigan led his regiment toward Turkey Knob without the usual artillery preparation fires. At 0630 elements of the 1st Battalion attacked the



USMC Photo 110253

Marines strike a warlike pose amongst wrecked Japanese planes along the side of the airstrip on Iwo

Jima. During the battle, the wreckage provided cover and concealment for the advancing Marines.

high ground north of Turkey Knob while the balance of the battalion, with elements of the 3d Battalion, 23d Marines, attempted envelopments from both the northwest and the south. About 20 minutes after the attack began, the enemy caught on to the maneuver and opened up with machine guns. Marine mortars and artillery then responded. By 1430 the two enveloping forces were only 65 yards apart when a heavy enemy barrage fell on Company B causing many casualties. With the number of dead and wounded, Company B was no longer an effective unit and was withdrawn.⁵⁸

The 2d and 3d Battalions spent most of the day mopping up in their respective areas. Later in the day, both battalions moved to the high ground 300 yards directly to their front. The only bright note of the day in the 4th Marine Division sector was the capture of Hill 382 by the 24th Marines.

At 0500 the 23d Marines relieved the 25th Marines in the line. The 1st Battalion, 23d Marines passed through the 25th Marines' 1st Battalion and took over its position. The 2d and 3d Battalions, 25th Marines stayed in the lines and were attached to

the 23d. The battle continued through Saturday and on into Sunday. On Sunday, D plus 13, the constant pressure paid off. The Amphitheater and Turkey Knob finally were hammered into silence and bypassed. The 4th Division Marines had broken through the island's main defense. General Kuribayashi's days were coming to an end. Also on 4 March, the costly battle for Iwo paid its first dividend, a disabled B-29 landed safely on the island.

Resistance remained stubborn as the 4th Marine Division continued its dogged offense. The 2d and 3d Battalions of the 25 Marines still were attached to the 23d Marines and held the division right. The enemy had been driven from the high ground and, having lost their observation posts, the accuracy of their artillery and mortars suffered accordingly. Enemy snipers remained active and continued to take their grim toll. After 14 days of fighting the men of the 25th were exhausted, and their casualties continued to mount.

The following day, 5 March, was a day of rest, rehabilitation, and reorganization. The 2d and 3d Battalions reverted to their parent regiment. The 1st

Battalion, 25th Marines moved back into the line, relieving the 1st Battalion, 23d Marines, and found itself in the same positions that it had left on 2 March. A provisional battalion was formed, composed of Company L and the 4th Division Reconnaissance Company. Major Edward L. Asbill was given command of the new battalion. While both the day and the night were relatively quiet, the division still suffered more than 400 casualties.

General Schmidt ordered the VAC to attack in echelon on 6 March, D plus 15. The attack was preceded by preparation fire both from naval guns and 12 battalions of Marine artillery. First the western half of the front was plastered for 30 minutes, then the eastern half for a like period. In that one hour over 22,500 rounds were fired. At the end of the hour the Marine divisions moved forward, every foot of ground fiercely contested by the Japanese defenders. Only the 1st Battalion took part in the day's attack. The 2d and 3d Battalions were in reserve and were utilized in necessary mopping up activities. At the end of the day, two acute problems existed: sheer fatigue within the ranks of the VAC and a serious shortage of experienced leaders. During the day a new and worrisome Japanese tactic was discovered; five enemy bodies were found fully dressed in Marine utilities.⁵⁹

Darkness brought no respite for the men of the 1st Battalion. Approximately 50 enemy soldiers soon infiltrated the 1st Battalion's line, some actually jumping or crawling right into Marine foxholes. In the

Men of the 2d Battalion, 25th Marines display trophies won on Iwo Jima.

USMC Photo 142372



hand-to-hand encounters that ensued 13 Marines were killed. Practically the entire Japanese force was wiped out.

At 0800 on D plus 16, the division swung to the east to drive the enemy into Tachiiwa Point. The 25th Marines on the division right held a blocking position. The regiment set up a strong defensive position, machine guns were set up to cover likely avenues of approach, and 37mm guns and 60mm mortars were zeroed in. The 25th Marines' Provisional Battalion started mopping up around Turkey Knob and in the Amphitheater. During the day and night, the 25th Marines stayed in its position and waited.

On 8 March, General Schmidt's order to the VAC was to capture the remainder of the island. The 23d and 24th Marines encountered stiff resistance as they surged forward in their push onto Tachiiwa Point. The 25th Marines spent the day strengthening its defensive positions. The night brought on more cold weather. As the night progressed enemy activity increased and violent mortar, artillery, and rocket fires hit the lines of the 4th Marine Division. At 2300, the leader of the encircled *Naval Land Force*, Captain Samaji Inoue, led his men in their last charge. The enemy hit the Marine's lines with a ferocity honed by tradition. The night-long battle cost the Marines 90 dead and 257 wounded, the majority of these casualties from the 23d and 24th Regiments. The attacking force destroyed by the Marines.⁶⁰

On 9 and 10 March there was no let up of the Marine attack. Marine forces moved forward 300 yards on 9 March. On 10 March, the 25th Marines replaced the 24th in the line. The 1st and 3d Battalions drove to the southeast toward the high ground, while the 2d Battalion drove northeast, a linkup between the 2d and 3d Battalions being made around noon. The day's action had completely encircled the remaining enemy defenders in the Amphitheater and on Turkey Knob. Organized resistance was waning. The end was near.

On the morning of 11 March the 25th Marines swept to the southeast on its way to the coast. The battle continued until 14 March when the 2d Battalion, seriously depleted in numbers, was relieved by the 2d Battalion, 24th Marines.

Continuously pressuring the enemy as it moved toward the sea, the 25th Marines eliminated one enemy pocket after another, one cave at a time, during the next 2 days. At 1030 on 16 March Colonel Lanigan declared all organized resistance to be at an end in his zone.⁶¹ Colonel Walter I. Jordan's 24th

Marines moved in and relieved the 25th on the same day. The regiment pulled back and boarded transports, its job on the island finished.

The loss of Iwo Jima was considered by the Japanese high command to have, nevertheless, been a strategic victory, in that the high cost in American lives to take one small island would alert the American nation to the perilous consequences of an invasion of the Home Islands. The American people got the message.

On 19 March the 25th Marines departed for Maui. The regiment had been spawned for battle less than 2 years before, and now, four battles later, it left the war with unhealed wounds but with undaunted spirit.

The regiment spent the remainder of the war on Maui. Lieutenant Colonel William F. Parks succeeded Colonel Lanigan as commanding officer on 15 May 1945 when he, in turn, was relieved some three months later on 4 September 1945 by Colonel William W. Davis. By this time, following the atomic bombing of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, Emperor Hirohito had surrendered unconditionally. The abrupt end to the hostilities signalled a new and uncertain direction for the entire world.

In October the men of the 25th Marines bid their last aloha to Mt. Haleakala and to the people of Maui as they sailed for California. At Camp Pendleton, on 10 November 1945, its job finished, the regiment was deactivated. In the 2½ years since its birth, the 25th Marines had traveled "to hell and back."

In Reserve and Proudly

On 1 July 1962, 16½ years after its colors had been folded following its service in World War II, the 4th Marine Division was reactivated as a Reserve division.⁶² On the same date, all battalions of the 23d, 24th, 25th and 14th Marines were also reactivated as units in the 4th Division. This reactivation was the result of a recommendation to the Congress by Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara. The proud 4th was back in business. The reservist members of organized units could now identify, not only with the division, but with their own regiment as well, each having an admirable combat record.

The first battalion commanders of the 1st, 2d, and 3d Battalions of the 25th Marines were, respectively, Lieutenant Colonels Ernest J. Graustein, Joseph J. Fater, and Robert F. DeMeter. The history of these battalions from 1 July 1962 until the reactivation of

the Headquarters Company on 1 February 1966, covers many activities peculiar to Reserve organizations and more that are traditional duties for both regular and reserves. These activities included "Toys for Tots" collections, civic action programs, speaking before civic groups, ceremonies, parades, and funeral details. Most importantly, the history covers the training of these Marine reservists.

The training periods (drills) were usually scheduled for one weekend a month and a 2-week annual training period (ATD) each summer. The task facing the battalion and company commanders was a traditional one for Reserve commanders—make them ready. Weekend drill at nearby training areas vividly showed how effective the training had been. The final examination each year was the performance of each unit during the ATD period, usually held at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, for these east coast Marines, but sometimes at the Landing Force Training Unit located at Little Creek, Virginia.

The reactivated battalions of the 25th Marines inherited an unfaltering tradition from their World War II predecessors, and there exists a continuous challenge to match that previous performance.

Reserve Year 1966

On 1 February 1966, the 1st Communications Company, Force Troops, FMF, USMCR, Worcester, Massachusetts, was redesignated Headquarters Company, 25th Marines, 4th Marine Division, FMF, USMCR.

Headquarters Company and the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines joined regulars from the 1st Battalion, 2d Marines to be the maneuver element for a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) during the 1966 ATD at Camp Lejeune. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Donoghue, commanding officer of the 2d Staff Group, Boston, Massachusetts, was the commanding officer of the MEU. The operation, code named Fortnight, posed a political problem in that the country of Onslow (Camp Lejeune training area) had been invaded by aggressor forces from the neighboring country of Atlantis. Onslow requested assistance from the United States to expel the invader. The U.S. response was the activation of the 34th MEU to make a combined amphibious/heliborne attack against the Atlantis positions.

On D-day, one-half of the force simulated an amphibious landing while Company A, 25th Marines was landed by helicopter. The attack of the amphibious force, the vertical envelopment, and the

eventual linkup of the two forces being successful, it was only a matter of time until the battle was won. The capture of Combat Town and the winning of the confidence of the native chief were highlights of the operation.

The same year, 1966, the 2d Battalion also attended ATD at Camp Lejeune during the last 2 weeks of August. The high point of the 2d Battalion summer training period was the 3-day problem that emphasized counter guerrilla tactics. The 3d Battalion traveled to the Landing Force Training Unit (LFTU), Little Creek, Virginia. During this training period, Company L won the award as the best company. It was Company L all the way in 1966, as it also won the award for the best squad in the squad competition. Sergeant John W. Newlon received a Letter of Commendation for his superior performance while at LFTU.

Other happenings of note found the Marine reservists busy on many fronts. Colonel Irving Schechter, Commanding Officer, 1st Staff Group (Ground), as the commanding officer of a MEU, led 2,000 Marines including the 1st and 2d Battalions in Operation Blacknite at West Point, New York. The 2-day training exercise included Marine units from four states. Colonel Schechter, no stranger to the 4th Marine Division, won the Navy Cross while serving with the division on Tinian during World War II. Two 1st Battalion officers were honored for heroism in their gallant attempts to save other Marines from drowning in a river located at the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center, Bridgeport, California. The recipients of the New York State Medals of Valor were Captains John J. Gannon and Richard L. Straehl. Captain Straehl's award was made posthumously.

Marching to the tune of a different drummer, Company D of Manchester, New Hampshire, with a

Reservists from the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines pour out of helicopters during the assault phase of Reserve

rich history of community involvement, hosted an appearance of the famed U.S. Army Fife and Drum Corps from Fort Myer, Virginia. On 19 March, the tune was "McNamara's Band," as Company C Marines joined the banshees, leprechauns, and other Irishmen in the annual St. Patrick's Day Parade in Holyoke, Massachusetts.

Throughout the regiment, appropriate recognition was given to the 50th anniversary of the Marine Corps Reserve. The creation of mobilization packets for each Marine in the regiment was a cogent reminder of the regiment's continuing mission.

Reserve Year 1967

As of 31 January 1967, the regimental headquarters of the 25th Marines was activated at Worcester, Massachusetts. The members of the regimental staff, for the most part, came from the deactivated 2d Staff Group (Ground), Boston, Massachusetts. Lieutenant Colonel Thomas J. Donoghue, commanding officer of the 2d Staff Group, was assigned as executive officer of the regiment, but functioned as the commanding officer. Later in the year, Lieutenant Colonel Donoghue was promoted to colonel.

At summer ATD, Colonel Donoghue led a regimental landing team (RLT) in a brigade landing exercise (ResMEBLEX-67). The problem involved both an amphibious and a helicopter landing of assault troops. Casualties during this period were greater than anticipated since 50 Marines of Company G suffered food poisoning while on board the USS *Monrovia* (APA 131).

Headquarters Company made a clean sweep in collecting items for the Marine Civic Action Program in Vietnam by turning in 215 pounds of soap. Company H had a serious discipline problem, resulting in

Landing Exercise at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina in 1969.

USMC Photo 7-189-69RC



the demotion of its English bulldog mascot, "Ches-ty," at a mock court-martial. "Ches-ty" was admonished both for unauthorized absence and for appearing in public without his dogtags. On a more serious note, the same company donated 131 pints of blood during the year. The year also saw the retirement of Sergeant Major Marco M. DeLuca, of Company E, who was afforded an appropriate ceremony. At Christmas time, the Marines of Company K collected for "Toys for Tots" with bouncing spirits: included in the impressive collection were 16,000 rubber balls.

On 1 September Colonel Ernest J. Graustein relieved Colonel Donoghue.

Reserve Year 1968

All elements of the regiment performed ATD at Camp Lejeune in 1968. During the ResMEBLEx-68, Colonel Graustein commanded an RLT which included Headquarters Company, and the 1st and 2d Battalions, 25th Marines; the 3d Battalion, 14th Marines a logistic support group, and a provisional Marine air group (ProvMAG). The Marines were landed to assist the country of Wolsno in reestablishing the local government. The attack on Combat Town by elements of the RLT was extremely costly, with Company D, alone, suffering 80 percent casualties. The 3d Battalion 2-week training period was culminated with a 3-day battalion field exercise.

During the year, the 1st Battalion changed its unofficial designation from "Boston's Own" to "New England's Own," in recognition of the member units located beyond the confines of Boston and Massachusetts. Mess nights were becoming popular annual affairs throughout the regiment. At the regimental mess night held at Westover Air Force Base in Chicopee Falls, Massachusetts, the roast beef was found fit for human consumption. The wine toasts and good fellowship ruled the evening.

The regimental headquarters hosted an open house at the training center in Worcester, Massachusetts, commemorating the service of Worcester-born First Lieutenant John V. Power, posthumous winner of the Medal of Honor. Lieutenant Power was killed at Namur while serving with the 24th Marines, 4th Marine Division. Brigadier General Arthur B. Hanson, a former member of the same regiment, was guest speaker. At another ceremony, the 3d Battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Robert H. Icke, presented the Navy Cross to

Corporal Timothy Russell. The award was made for Corporal Russell's heroic actions in Vietnam. It was a happy occasion for Gunnery Sergeants Herbert Carlson and Michael Marino, both of the 2d Battalion, when they were promoted to first sergeants on 22 March.

A two-day counter guerrilla exercise was held at West Point during the 2d Battalion's October drill weekend. Members of Headquarters and Service, F, G, and H Companies pursued the aggressors (from Company E) by truck, on foot, and by helicopter. Jet fighters flying overhead on 73 simulated missions added great realism to the exercise. The 2d Battalion was the maneuver element of a MEU. The MEU was commanded by Colonel John A. Iannone, Commanding Officer, 1st Staff Group.

In keeping with the times, all units of the regiment received training in tactics for civil disturbances during the year. The entire training program for these tactics involved 33 hours of lecture, training, and application. It was with great sadness that the 2d Battalion learned of the death in Vietnam of Staff Sergeant Alan S. Geld, former member of the battalion. Equally sad, just before Christmas, Lance Corporal George J. Heldt, II, another member of the 2d Battalion, was killed in a tragic auto accident.

Again this year, the 25th Marines performed admirably during the "Toys for Tots" campaign. The 1st Battalion reported the biggest collection of toys ever. The dedication of the 2d Battalion Marines was evident in their collection of over 75,000 toys. Not to be outdone, the 3d Battalion donated toys to over 3,800 children.

Reserve Year 1969

During the summer ATD at Camp Lejeune, the entire regiment was together for the first time since World War II. ResMEDLEx-69 was the largest air-ground exercise ever held by the Marine Corps Reserve. The Marine Expeditionary Brigade mission was to assist a friendly government with a counterinsurgency effort. Both helicopter and amphibious landings were featured during the exercise. The RLT maneuver element was under the command of Colonel Graustein. The regimental scout sniper platoon did not participate in the exercise, but instead performed its ATD at Camp Bullis in San Antonio, Texas.

Having music wherever they went, both the 1st and 2d Battalions were continually pleased with the



USMC Photo 7-222-69R

The first waves of I Company, 3d Battalion, 25th Marines, hit Onslow Beach during ResMEBLEX-69.

reception given to their respective drum and bugle corps by appreciative audiences. Members of these units contributed much of their personal time for parades and ceremonies.

Captains Joseph F. Ashe and Thomas H. Honan, both of Company C, were promoted to major during the year. Another Company C promotion saw Gunnery Sergeant Joseph C. Knapik advanced to warrant officer. Long-time member of Company B, Gunnery Sergeant Frank V. Treybal, Jr., retired after 20 years. Another retiree was the 2d Battalion's chaplain, Commander Philip P. Shannon. Company D let it be known, loud and clear, that its members' rifle qualification record for the year was 100 percent. The Marines of Company C were justifiably proud when it was awarded the General Clifton B. Cates Trophy for having been selected as the best rifle company in the 4th Marine Division. Company F, always a fine performer, was awarded the Josephthal Trophy for being the most outstanding unit of the New York naval militia.

The 1st Battalion had an extremely successful field exercise at the Leominster State Park in Leominster, Massachusetts. All of the companies of the battalion, as well as elements of the 4th Marine Aircraft Wing from South Weymouth, Massachusetts, took part in the exercise. The tactical air and helicopter support given by the wing element was outstanding. On two occasions during the year the 2d Battalion Marines had weekend problems at West Point. The first was a 2-day air-ground exercise, while the second consisted

of counter guerrilla warfare and sessions on tank/infantry tactics.

The 3d Battalion rifle team, always noted for its skill and competitive spirit, won 1st place in both the 4th District Rifle Competition and in the National Rifle Gallery Matches. Honors for the individual winner also went to the 3d Battalion, as Gunnery Sergeant James A. Vargo walked off with the high score.

The 1st Battalion headquarters saw many changes during 1969. Lieutenant Colonel Ralph R. Bagley relieved Lieutenant Colonel Howard N. Feist, Jr., and in addition, the battalion had four different personnel officers (S-1), three intelligence officers (S-2), three operations officers (S-3), three logistics officers (S-4), two motor transport officers, three supply officers, two communications officers, and even two different medical officers.

Continuing during the year to contribute to the high morale of the 2d Battalion was the battalion's bimonthly newspaper, *The Diary*. The editor, Sergeant Arthur A. Beltrone, Jr., and associate editors, Sergeants William O. Kiefer and Ralph K. Riemensperger, put in long hours to make the publications a success.

At the regimental mess night, again at Westover Air Force Base, the regimental executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Paul W. Glover, Jr., was promoted to colonel. Honored guests at the affair were Colonels Roy J. Sously, Jr., USAF, and Robert O. Carlock, the 1st Marine Corps District Director.

Reserve Year 1970

On 16 May 1970, Colonel Nicholas A. Canzona relieved Colonel Graustein as commanding officer of the regiment. Colonel Canzona, a reservist on continuous active duty, was the ninth commanding officer of the regiment. Now, for the first time since 1945, the 25th Marines had a full-time commanding officer. Colonel Canzona was widely known throughout the Marine Corps as a military historian and coauthor with Lynn Montross of volumes 1, 2, and 3 of *U.S. Marine Operations in Korea*. The outgoing commanding officer, Colonel Graustein, was awarded the Legion of Merit for his "extraordinary professional competence, resoucefulness, and leadership ability." The presentation was made by Major General Leo J. Dulacki, commanding general, 4th Marine Division.

During the first week of ATD in 1970, Headquarters company and the regimental staff took part in the 4th Division exercise Beagle Danger. The second week was spent on increasing amphibious landing skills at LFTU, Coronado, California. The 2d Battalion traveled to Little Creek, Virginia for its annual 2-week training period. A battalion-size amphibious landing was made during the second week. The 1st and 3d Battalions both went to Camp Lejeune for their ATD. The emphasis of the training at Camp Lejeune was on small unit field problems.

The regiment was active on many fronts during the year. The 2d Battalion was mobilized by order of the President to assist in a postal emergency 24-26 March. Marines of Companies K, L, and M, 3d Battalion, were placed on a standby status in May because of local civil disturbances. Happily, the problems subsided so that it did not become necessary to activate the Marines. The 1st Battalion had a problem also, but it was not concerned with mobilization. The entire battalion was suffering from a shortage of experienced staff noncommissioned officers.

It was a big jump in rank in 1970 for Gunnery Sergeant Richard L. Barrett, James P. Doherty, and Frank W. Schlee who were all promoted to warrant officer. Keen-eyed Gunnery Sergeant Bernice L. Hartman proudly brought the Marine Corps Reserve National Rifle Championship home to the 3d Battalion. A patriotic chore was handled by Staff Sergeants D.H. Hudson and R. R. Pierce in lecturing on the American Flag to an audience of 250.

The year 1970 was also the 25th anniversary of the Iwo Jima landing. Fittingly, on 19 February Com-



USMC Photo 12270

Major General Leo J. Dulacki, Commanding General, 4th Marine Division, presents the Legion of Merit to Colonel Ernest J. Graustein, USMCR, for superior performance as the commanding officer of the 25th Marines.

pany C held memorial exercises. Company D gave appropriate recognition to the anniversary by having as guest of honor at its birthday ball Mr. Rene A. Gagnon. Former Marine Gagnon was one of the surviving men who raised the flag on Iwo Jima.

Reserve Year 1971

Under the watchful eye of Colonel Canzona, 2,000 Marine reservists, including 800 men of the 25th Marines, hit Onslow Beach at 0930, 27 July 1971. The 1st Battalion, 25th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ralph R. Bagley, acted as the maneuver element of a Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU) in exercise Hickory Woods. Observing the operation was Dr. Theodore C. Marrs, deputy assistant secretary of defense for manpower and reserve affairs, and Major General Leo J. Dulacki.

Marines of Company E got a chance to use their amphibious skills in assisting in flood relief operations in Chester, Pennsylvania. Company D Marines found a way to get greater enjoyment out of a high

school football game by hosting 45 youngsters from St. Peters Orphanage. Amazing quantities of soft drink and hot dogs were consumed by the enthusiastic group. Also during the year great emphasis was placed on recruiting. The 2d Battalion alone contacted over 10,000 former Marines.

Reserve Year 1972

The entire regiment participated in operation High Boot during the 1972 ATD. The battalion commanders for the exercise were, respectively. Lieutenant Colonel George S. Ames, James L. Fowler, and Anthony J. Dowd, Jr. RLT-25 was the maneuver element of the 82d Marine Amphibious Brigade (MAB), commanded by Brigadier General Richard Mulberry, Jr. The operation spurred a "highly commendatory" message from the commanding general, 4th Marine Division.

The year also found the 25th Marines involved in countless individual and collective projects in the role of good citizens. Company C Marines volunteered their services as big brother. These same Marines hosted a party for retarded children at the Belchertown State Hospital. The huge portions of ice cream and other treats furnished by the Marines were greatly appreciated by the youngsters. At Christmas time the Marines delivered over 1,000 toys to the

Beach-bound reservists from the 25th Marines move down nets into a "Mike Boat" ready to land them on Onslow Beach during their 1971 annual training exercise.

USMC Photo A343325



hospital. Again this year all battalions put great stress on the importance of recruiting.

Reserve Year 1973

Operation Deep Freeze-73 brought home to the Marines their responsibilities as a part of an international force under NATO. In October, Companies B and C, 25th Marines joined 5,000 NATO troops, a force that also included 3,000 regular Marines, in an amphibious and helicopterborne assault on the Aegean Coast of Turkey. Other participants included British Royal Marine Commandos, and troops from Italy, Greece, and Turkey.

Perhaps the "coolest" Marines in 1973 were those regulars and reserves who, as members of the 22d MAU, participated in operation Alpine Warrior at Camp Drum, New York, during a 2-week winter exercise. The operation, designed for cold weather environmental training, also involved active patrolling and a helicopter assault by Marines of Companies H and F of the 25th Marines. Regular Marines were from the 2d Marines, 2d Marine Division at Camp Lejeune. Special items of winter clothing were issued to all Marines to aid them in weathering the severe cold. At times the thermometer dropped as low as 30 degrees below zero. The most painful "wounds" occurred during the period the Marines were receiving skiing lessons.

Approximately 165 degrees difference in temperature and 3,000 miles separated the sites of Alpine Warrior and Alkali Canyon, the latter operation taking place in the Mojave Desert during the 1973 summer ATD period. Units of the 25th Marines as part of a force of 4,000 reserves and 5,000 regulars, united as the 8th MAB to defeat the aggressor forces of the mythical country of Yermo. This was the first desert exercise of such scale to be held by the Marine Corps in 40 years. While the aggressor was an imagined enemy, the scorching 135-degree temperature, the sabotaging effect of the sand on all equipment, and the uncomfortable variety of poisonous snakes and other desert life, were all very real. A common statement made by observers was, "I couldn't tell the reserves from the regulars." The joining together of regulars and reserves into an effective fighting force was envisioned by the total force concept. This concept is now policy and, in essence, states that the National Guard and Reserve forces will be used as the initial and primary augmentation of the active forces. The concept in-

Appendix B

CHRONOLOGY

- 1 May 1943 Activated as the 25th Marines at Marine Corps Base, Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.
- 20 August 1943 Departed from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.
- 24 August 1943 Arrived at Camp Pendleton, California.
- 11 September 1943 Assigned to 4th Marine Division, Fleet Marine Force, at Camp Pendleton.
- 13 January 1944 Sailed from San Diego, California, enroute to Kwajalein Atoll.
- 31 January 1944 Arrived and disembarked at Kwajalein Atoll.
- 31 January-7 February 1944 Participated in the Kwajalein Campaign.
- 7-28 February 1944 On garrison duty, Kwajalein Atoll
- 28 February 1944 Embarked on board USS *Leonard Wood*, *Middleton*, and *Heywood* for return to Maui, Hawaiian Islands.
- 8-10 March 1944 Arrived and disembarked at Maui, Hawaiian Islands.
- 12-13 May 1944 Embarked on board USS *Leonard Wood*, *Pierce*, *James O'Hara*, and other ships at Maui, Hawaiian Islands.
- 29 May 1944 Sailed from Pearl Harbor for Saipan.
- 8 June 1944 1st Battalion disembarked at Eniwetok and reembarked on board LST-267.
- 15 June 1944 Arrived and disembarked at Saipan.
- 15 June-9 July 1944 Participated in the Saipan Campaign.
- 23 July 1944 Embarked on landing craft and sailed for Tinian.
- 24 July-1 August 1944 Participated in the Tinian campaign.
- 5 August 1944 Embarked on board USS *Cape Johnson* and USAT *Anabelle Lykes*.
- 7 August 1944 Sailed from Tinian for Hawaii.
- 18-22 August 1944 Arrived and disembarked at Maui, Hawaiian Islands.
- 23 August 1944-15 January 1945 Stationed at Camp Maui, Hawaiian Islands.
- 16 January 1945 Embarked on board USS *Hinsdale*, *Napa*, *Pickens*, and *Sanborn* at Maui, Hawaiian Islands.
- 27 January 1945 Sailed from Hawaiian Islands.
- 19 February-16 March 1945 Participated in the Iwo Jima Campaign.
- 17 March 1945 Embarked on board the USS *Grimes* and *Lander*.
- 20 March 1945 Sailed from Iwo Jima.
- 5 April 1945 Arrived and disembarked at Maui, Hawaiian Islands.
- 9-12 October 1945 Units of the regiment embarked aboard *Admiralty Islands* (CVE-99) and *Kasashan Bay* (CVE-76) at Maui for San Diego, California.
- 15-18 October 1945 Proceeded to Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, California.

- 10 November 1945-1 July 1962 Regimental headquarters disbanded and Reserve elements from Boston; Garden City, New York; and Cleveland redesignated as the three battalions of the 25th Marines.
- 1 February 1966 Headquarters Company, 25th Marines, redesignated from 1st Communication Company, Force Troops, FMF, USMCR, Worcester, Massachusetts.
- 16-29 July 1967 Annual Training Duty held at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina. Ten officers and 129 enlisted men took part in a brigade landing exercise, ResMEBLEx-67.
- 28 July-10 August 1968 Thirteen officers and 117 enlisted men participated in ResMEBLEx-68 as part of Annual Training Duty at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.
- 5-10 July 1969 The regiment participated during Annual Training Duty in ResMEBLEx-69, the largest air-ground exercise ever held by the Marine Corps Reserve.
- 11-26 July 1970 Annual training held at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.
- 25-27 September 1970 Air-ground exercise (Minuteman-70) held at training areas of Fort Devens, Massachusetts and West Point, New York.
- 24 July-8 August 1971 Annual Training Duty held at Camp Lejeune.
- 23 July-5 August 1972 Annual training exercise held at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.
- 7-27 July 1973 Training held in Amphibious tactics at Camp Pendleton and Coronado, California.
- 27 July-11 August 1974 Annual training exercise, Pistol Packer, held at Camp Lejeune.
- 26 July-10 August 1975 Regimental training exercise, Phoenix Light, held at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina.
- 20 March-4 April 1976 Participated in exercise Palm Tree-3 at Marine Corps Base, Twentynine Palms, California.

Appendix C

HONORS

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION STREAMER WITH ONE BRONZE STAR

(Saipan and Tinian, 15 June-1 August 1944)

(Iwo Jima, 19-28 February 1945)

ASIATIC— PACIFIC CAMPAIGN STREAMER WITH FOUR BRONZE STARS

(Occupation of Kwajalein and Majuro Atolls, 29 January - 8 February 1944)

(Capture and Occupation of Saipan, 15 June-24 July 1944)

(Capture and Occupation of Tinian, 24 July-1 August 1944)

(Iwo Jima Operation, 15 February-16 March 1945)

WORLD WAR II VICTORY STREAMER

(7 December 1941 - 31 December 1947)

Appendix D

MEDALS OF HONOR

The President of the United States in the name of the Congress takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR posthumously to

SERGEANT ROSS FRANKLIN GRAY
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE

for service as set forth in the following
CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a Platoon Sergeant attached to Company A, First Battalion, Twenty-fifth Marines, Fourth Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, 21 February 1945. Shrewdly gaging the tactical situation when his platoon was held up by a sudden barrage of hostile grenades while advancing toward the high ground northeast of Airfield No. 1, Sergeant Gray pro-



USMC Photo 310612

Sergeant Ross Franklin Gray, Medal of Honor Recipient. Sergeant Gray was killed in action, 27 February 1945.

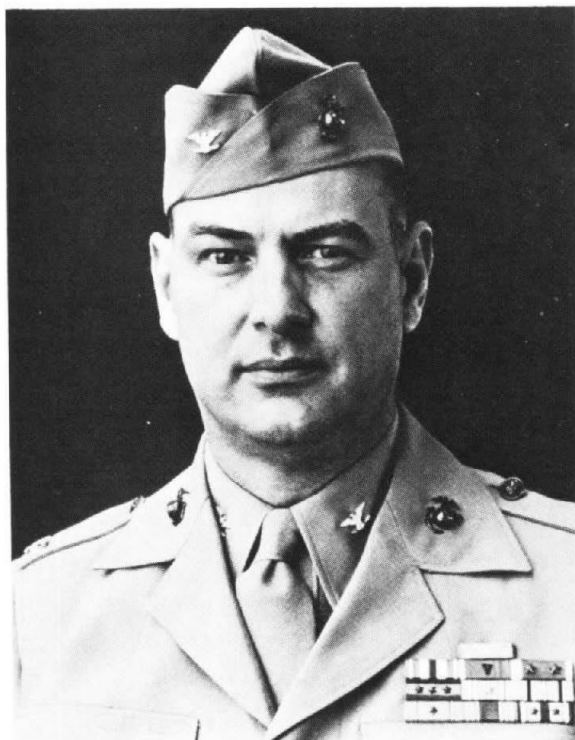
mptly organized the withdrawal of his men from enemy grenade range, quickly moved forward alone to reconnoiter and discovered a heavily mined area extending along the front of a strong network of emplacements joined by covered trenches. Although assailed by furious gunfire, he cleared a path leading through the minefield to one of the fortifications, then returned to the platoon position and, informing his leader of the serious situation, volunteered to initiate an attack under cover of three fellow Marines. Alone and unarmed but carrying a huge satchel charge, he crept up on the Japanese emplacement, boldly hurled the short-fused explosive and sealed the entrance. Instantly taken under machinegun fire from a second entrance to the same position, he unhesitatingly braved the increasingly vicious fusillades to crawl back for another charge, returned to his objective and blasted the second opening, thereby demolishing the position. Repeatedly covering the ground between the savagely defended enemy fortifications and his platoon area, he systematically approached, attached and withdrew under blacketing fire to destroy a total of six Japanese positions, more than 25 troops and a quantity of vital ordnance gear and ammunition. Stouthearted and indomitable, Sergeant Gray had singlehandedly overcome a strong enemy garrison and had completely disarmed a large minefield before finally rejoining his unit. By his great personal valor, daring tactics and tenacious perseverance in the face of extreme peril, he had contributed materially to the fulfillment of his company mission. His gallant conduct throughout enhanced and sustained the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

The President of the United States in the name of Congress takes pride in presenting the MEDAL OF HONOR to

COLONEL JUSTICE MARION CHAMBERS
UNITED STATES MARINE CORPS RESERVE

for service as set forth in the following
CITATION:

For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Commanding Officer of the Third Assault Battalion Landing Team, Twenty-fifth Marines, Fourth Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces on Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, from 19 to 22 February 1945. Under a furious barrage of enemy machine-gun and small-arms fire from the commanding cliffs on the right, Colonel Chambers, then Lieutenant Colonel, landed immediately after the initial assault waves of his Battalion on D-Day to find the momentum of the assault threatened by heavy casualties from withering Japanese artillery, mortar, rocket, machine-gun and rifle fire. Exposed to relentless hostile fire, he coolly reorganized his battleweary men, inspiring them to heroic efforts by his own valor and leading them in an attack on the critical, impregnable high ground from which the enemy was pouring an increasing volume of fire directly onto troops ashore as well as amphibious craft in succeeding waves. Constantly in the front lines encouraging his men to push forward against the enemy's savage resistance, Colonel Chambers led the 8-hour battle to carry the flanking ridge top and reduce the enemy's fields of aimed fire, thus protecting the vital foothold gained. In constant defiance of hostile fire while reconnoitering the entire



USMC Photo A47729
Colonel Justice Marion Chambers, Medal of Honor Recipient.

Regimental Combat Team zone of action, he maintained contact with adjacent units and forwarded vital information to the Regimental Commander. His zealous fighting spirit undiminished despite terrific casualties and the loss of most of his key officers, he again reorganized his troops for renewed attack against the enemy's main line of resistance and was directing the fire of the rocket platoon when he fell critically wounded. Evacuated under heavy Japanese fire, Colonel Chambers, by forceful leadership, courage and fortitude in the face of staggering odds, was directly instrumental in insuring the success of subsequent operations of the Fifth Amphibious Corps on Iwo Jima, thereby sustaining and enhancing the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service.

The device reproduced on the back cover is the oldest military insignia in continuous use in the United States. It first appeared, as shown here, on Marine Corps buttons adopted in 1804. With the stars changed to five points, this device had continued on Marine Corps buttons to the present day.

