PROEHL

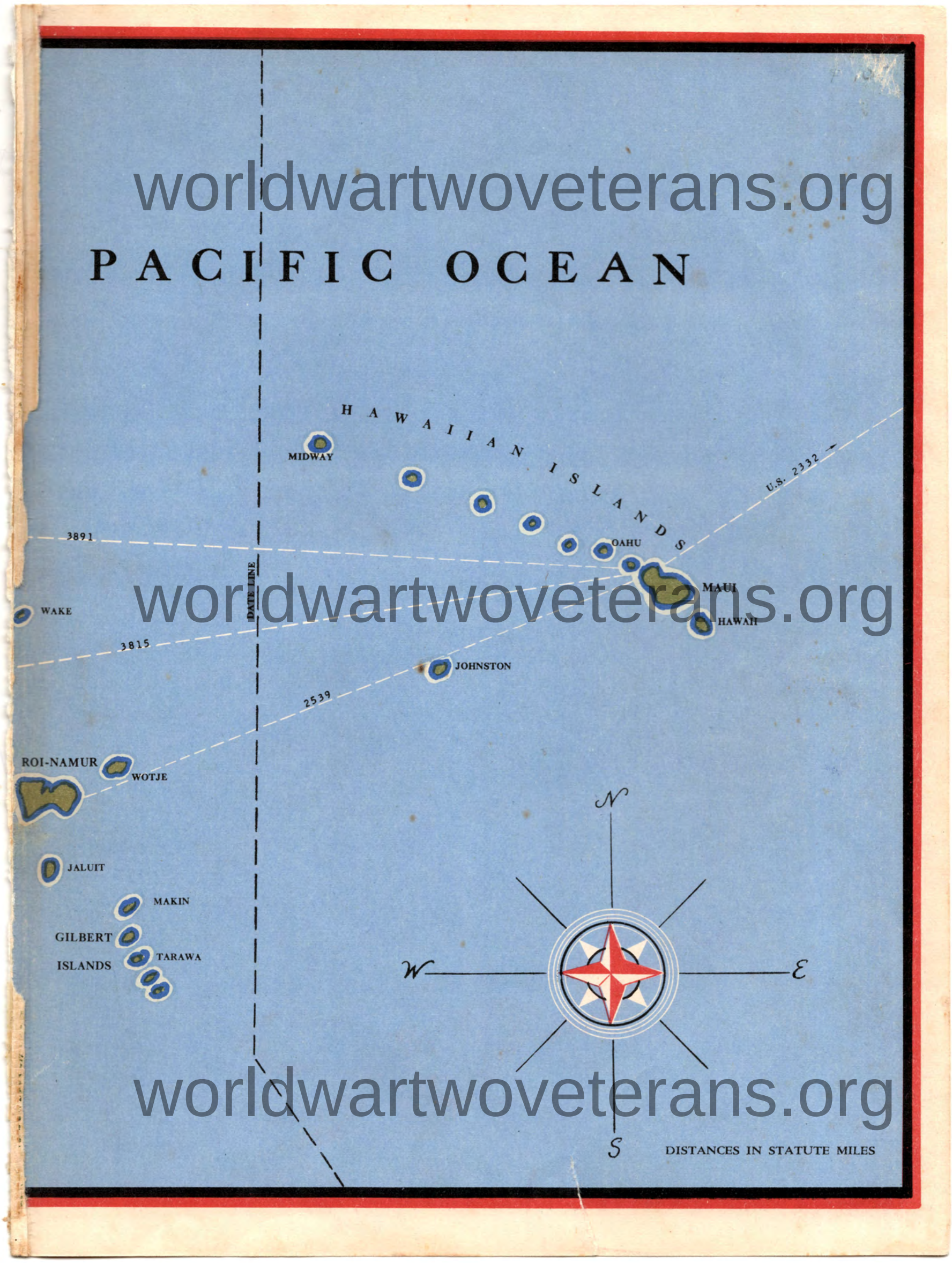
THE FOURTH MARINE DIVISION IN WORLD WAR II








INFANTRY JOURNAL PRESS



# THE
# FOURTH MARINE DIVISION
# IN WORLD WAR II

Massed colors are presented at the VJ-Day parade on August 16, 1945, at Camp Maui, following the presentation of battle streamers.

# The FOURTH MARINE DIVISION *In World War II*




*Edited by*

CARL W. PROEHL

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# PREFACE

THIS BOOK has been prepared with the thought of preserving, by word and picture, the story of the Fourth Marine Division for its members and their families. It is hoped that this historical record may serve as a perpetual memorial to every man who served and fought with the Division, for the story of the "Fourth" is the story of all its men.

Although this is not an *official* U. S. Marine Corps history of the Fourth Marine Division, it is nevertheless factual and accurate in the presentation of the role played by the Division in World War II. Prepared under the auspices of the Fourth Marine Division, 34,000 copies of this publication have been distributed gratuitously to former members of the Division and to the next of kin of those who gave their lives in action against the enemy.

The narrative was written by Master Technical Sergeant David Dempsey, former combat correspondent with the Fourth Division and one of the five authors of *The U. S. Marines on Iwo Jima.* Most of the pictures appearing in *The Fourth Marine Division in World War II* were taken by photographers of the Fourth Division; to them much credit is due for their outstanding photographic work, a large part of which was accomplished under extremely hazardous conditions.



In appreciation of their valued assistance, the editor wishes to thank those officers who aided in the preparation of this book by reviewing the manuscript and offering constructive criticism.

Lieutenant W. M. Thomas assisted in compiling material, reviewing the manuscript, and selecting photographs. First Sergeant F. J. Friel and Technical Sergeant T. H. Rocholl worked diligently in the preparation of the extensive address files for the distribution of the book.

Mr. Robert Sherrod, War Correspondent and author of *Tarawa* and *On To Westward,* observed the Division in action on Saipan and Iwo Jima. The editor appreciates his sincere interest which he so aptly expresses in the Foreword.

The editor wishes to acknowledge the assistance rendered by the Photographic Sub-Section, Division of Plans and Policies, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, which furnished prints of the majority of pictures appearing herein. The Photographic Library, Office of Public Information, Navy Department, also gave valuable assistance in supplying photographs.

Necessary information and vital statistics for the preparation of this book were provided by the following: Historical Division, Division of Public Information, Decorations and Medals Division, and Statistics Division, all of Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps; U. S. Marine Corps Publicity Bureau, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; Tabulated Records Section, Records Division, Bureau of Naval Personnel, Navy Department; and the U. S. Geological Survey, Department of the Interior.

CARL W. PROEHL
Captain, U. S. Marine Corps

# CONTENTS

# FOREWORD

THIS IS A RECORD of the Fourth Marine Division for the members of that Division. As such, it will mean something that it cannot possibly mean to anyone else. By that I mean that nobody ever quite understands a battle unless he was in it. There is a certain companionship in battle that cannot be comprehended by those who did not participate in the fighting. The memory of a battle may rest upon something that seemed minor at the time: the flash of a flame thrower at a critical moment, the mixed smell of gunpowder and sweat and decaying flesh, the dry taste of cheese in a K ration just before the jump-off. These are things that cannot be adequately described to someone who was not there.

Therefore, this proud history of the Fourth Marine Division will be something that, in all probability, can be shared only by the officers and men of the outfit. To anyone else a picture may be just a picture; a paragraph may be just a paragraph about the war. To somebody of the Fourth each picture or paragraph will recall something very near and very vital—something so meaningful that you cannot convey its meaning. To the Fourth Marine Division the word "Roi" means something else besides "king" in French; Hill 382 is not just a number; Charan-Kanoa is more than a hyphenated name—it's a place on your left.



There is no doubt in my mind that the historians will decide, when the final returns are in, that the Central Pacific was the main stroke against Japan. This was the campaign where the Fourth fought all its battles —at Roi–Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima—and fought them as magnificently as Americans ever fought.

Those Central Pacific battles were our toughest fights—but when the fighting was toughest they have always called on the Marines. The reason for that is quite simple: they always knew the Marines would deliver, regardless of the opposition. Some people thought before the war that small, heavily defended beachheads were impregnable to assault. It remained for the Marines to disprove that theory, and against the most fanatical enemy our country has ever fought.

Don't let anybody tell you—not ever—that it wasn't tough. According to my figures, the Fourth Marine Division was in combat a little over 60 days in World War II. But in those 60-odd days the Division saw more action than many divisions see in 600 days—action as fierce as any troops ever saw. The price the Division had to pay was heavy—as it must be on small, vital targets. It amounted to about seventy-five per-

cent of the original divisional strength. It takes *men* to stand such losses and come up as determined as ever. The Fourth had the men.

As a sideline observer I was privileged to be with the Fourth at Saipan and at Iwo, and to make many friends in the Division. Some of them are buried out there. They were men who believed in their Country, in their Corps, and in their Division. I think I know what their belief meant, and I think the readers of this record will know forever what it meant.

ROBERT SHERROD

GENERAL A. A. VANDEGRIFT

To the officers and men of the Fourth Division in appreciation for the outstanding work they have done for their Country and their Corps.



A. A. Vandegrift

General
Commandant, U. S. Marine Corps

LIEUTENANT GENERAL HARRY SCHMIDT

Lieutenant General Harry Schmidt, as Commanding General of the Fifth Amphibious Corps, commanded the expeditionary troops on Tinian during the invasion of the Marianas Islands in July of 1944, and also commanded all troops during the battle for Iwo Jima and in the occupation of the island of Kyushu, Japan. He previously had served as Commanding General of the Fourth Marine Division, and it was under his leadership that the Fourth Division was activated, trained, and in action on Roi–Namur and Saipan. He has been awarded the Distinguished Service Medal three times for meritorious service during the assault on Roi–Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima.

General Schmidt was promoted to his present rank on February 27, 1946, and is at present Commanding General of the Marine Training and Replacement Command, San Diego Area.

General Schmidt was born on September 25, 1886, in Holdrege, Nebraska. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps in August, 1909, and was stationed in Guam and also in China in 1911. He served in the Philippine Islands in 1912, and was on sea duty aboard the USS *Oklahoma* in 1916, the USS *Montana* in 1917 and 1918, and the USS *Tennessee* from 1920 to 1922. In 1928 and 1929, General Schmidt was Intelligence and Operations Officer for the Second Brigade in Nicaragua. He served at the Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, as instructor from 1923 to 1926; the Department of the Pacific, as assistant Chief of Staff of the Commanding General in 1927; and again at the same post as Paymaster for the Department in 1933; and at Headquarters, Washington, D. C., as executive officer in the Paymaster Department in 1932.

He was graduated from the Field Officers' course at the Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia, and the Army Command and General Staff School, Fort Leavenworth, Kansas.

General Schmidt became Secretary to the Commandant on April 1, 1942, and was appointed Assistant to the Commandant on October 1, 1942. He held this position until assigned to command the Fourth Division.

General Schmidt's wife, Mrs. Doris Louise Schmidt, lives in San Diego, California. A daughter, Mrs. W. R. Wendt, wife of Lieutenant Colonel W. R. Wendt, USMC, lives in La Jolla, California, and a son, Marine Lieutenant Colonel R. K. Schmidt, lives in Oceanside, California.

*DECORATIONS AND MEDALS: Navy Cross, Distinguished Service Medal with two gold stars, Bronze Star, Presidential Unit Citation with one star, Expeditionary Medal with two bronze stars, Mexican Service Medal, Victory Medal, Second Nicaraguan Campaign Medal, Yangtze Service Medal, China Service Medal, American Defense Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Area Medal with three stars, American Area Medal, World War II Victory Medal, Nicaraguan Medal of Distinction and Diploma, Nicaraguan Medal of Merit with silver star.*

HEADQUARTERS
FOURTH MARINE DIVISION, FLEET MARINE FORCE
CAMP JOSEPH H. PENDLETON
OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA

1 November 1943

To the Officers and Men of the Fourth Marine Division:

It is a great pleasure to greet the officers and men of this Division and to congratulate you on the fine work that has been done thus far in our training. I have noted with approval the excellent manner in which you have applied yourselves to the daily tasks at hand. I know that you will continue in the same spirit with the more intensive work ahead and that you will make of the Fourth Marine Division the finest American division.

We of this Division are very fortunate in being able to learn from the experience of others. We have many new and powerful weapons, the finest equipment, and have been fortunate in having ample time for training. I urge you all to continue working your hardest now. I urge you to learn all you can while it costs nothing. In that way we will face the realities of tomorrow's battles with calm assurance.

I am proud to command this fine Division. I have complete trust in my officers and men. With God's blessing we will do well in battle. I wish you all good luck in the days ahead.

H. Schmidt

Major General, U. S. Marine Corps
Commanding

MAJOR GENERAL CLIFTON B. CATES

Major General Clifton B. Cates, Commanding General of the Fourth Division from July, 1944, until its deactivation in November, 1945, first saw action in World War II as a Colonel in command of the First Marines, which was one of the two regiments which made the initial landing on Guadalcanal on August 7, 1942, and which captured the enemy-held airfield later famed as Henderson Field. For his leadership on Guadalcanal he was awarded the Legion of Merit. After the First Marine Division was relieved in December, 1942, and after a short tour of duty in Australia, he returned to become Commandant of the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico, Virginia, remaining in this post until he took command of the Fourth Division during the closing days of the Battle of Saipan. He led the Division throughout the brief but sharp Tinian campaign in August, 1944, for which he received the Distinguished Service Medal. As Commander of the Division on Iwo Jima in February and March, 1945, he was awarded a gold star in lieu of a second DSM. He is at present Commanding General, Marine Barracks, Quantico, Virginia.

A native of Tiptonville, Tennessee, where he was born on August 31, 1893, General Cates graduated from the University of Tennessee, and a year later, in 1917, was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. During World War I he served in Europe for twenty months with the famed Sixth Marines in all of the operations of the 2d (Army) Division, attaining the rank of captain. He was wounded in action twice and earned the Navy Cross and other medals for heroism at Belleau Wood. Following the Armistice he served in Germany with the Army of Occupation and later returned to Washington as aide to the Commandant of the Marine Corps and also as aide to President Wilson.

Other tours of duty include sea duty aboard the USS *California* and USS *Wyoming*. From 1929 to 1932, General Cates was with the Fourth Marines in Shanghai; and again, from 1937 to 1939, he served with the Fourth and Sixth Marines in Shanghai's International Settlement. From 1940 to 1942, he was Director of the Marine Corps Basic School at Philadelphia. He is a graduate of the Army War College, the Army Industrial College, and the Field Officers' Course, Marine Corps Schools.

General and Mrs. Cates, now residing in Quantico, Virginia, have a son, Clifton B. Cates, Jr., who is a lieutenant in the Navy and a daughter, Ann Willis Cates.

*DECORATIONS AND MEDALS: Navy Cross, Army Distinguished Service Cross with oak leaf cluster, Distinguished Service Medal with gold star, Silver Star with oak leaf cluster, Legion of Merit, Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster, Presidential Unit Citation with two stars, Expeditionary Medal, Victory Medal with five stars, Army of Occupation Medal, Yangtze Service Medal, China Service Medal, American Defense Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Area Medal with four stars, American Area Medal, World War II Victory Medal, French Legion of Honor (grade of Chevalier), three Croix de Guerres, and the French Fourragère.*

HEADQUARTERS
FOURTH MARINE DIVISION, FLEET MARINE FORCE
CAMP JOSEPH H. PENDLETON
OCEANSIDE, CALIFORNIA

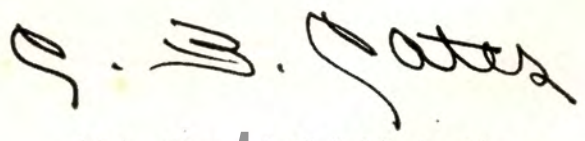
28 November 1945

To the Officers and Men of the Fourth Marine Division:

Although the Fourth Marine Division has been deactivated, it is hard to realize that such an outstanding fighting unit has ceased to exist. Certainly, the friends we made, the comradeships formed in battle, the pride in our organization and the satisfaction of a job well done are memories which will live forever. They form ties which will never be broken, and as years pass we will realize more fully their importance. The spirit of "The Fourth" will not die.

History will record your achievements—Roi–Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima—and we can all take pride in them. They were not gained easily. It was only by hard work, sweat, teamwork, and the greatest valor and courage that all of our operations resulted in glorious victories. The price in blood was high, and to those who died we owe the highest honor. As we are the fortunate ones, we have a sacred duty in keeping alive the spirit and love of Country and Corps for which they gave their lives. We must not forget.

To have commanded the Fourth Marine Division is the highest honor of my life. You made that Division and I am proud of you. My good wishes go with you in years to come and may God bless you with good health and happiness.



Major General, U. S. Marine Corps
Commanding



## MAJOR GENERAL JAMES L. UNDERHILL

As Assistant Division Commander of the Fourth Division from August, 1943, to April, 1944, Major General James L. Underhill participated in the Roi–Namur operation. In May, 1944, he attained his present rank and became Island Commander of Tinian, serving there until November, 1944, when he was made Deputy Commander, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. In March, 1945, he became Inspector General of the Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. He retired in July, 1946, after having served as President of the Post-War Reorganization Board.

General Underhill was born on June 12, 1891, at San Francisco, California. He graduated from the University of California with a B.S. degree and was appointed a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps in November, 1913. He served at sea aboard the USS *Arkansas* and USS *Minnesota,* and commanded the Marine detachment of the USS *Connecticut* in 1917 and 1918. In October, 1918, he went to France in command of the Eighth Separate Battalion of Marines, where he won the Victory Medal with France Clasp. Following the First World War he served in Nicaragua from 1919 to 1921, in the Philippines from 1924 to 1926, in China as Commander of the Third Battalion, Fourth Marines in 1927 and 1928, and again in China in 1937 and 1938, as executive officer of the Sixth Marines.

During 1938 and 1939, Major General Underhill commanded the Marine Barracks at Portsmouth, New Hampshire. Subsequently, he was made Executive Officer of the Adjutant and Inspector's Department at Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington, D. C. From April, 1942, to March, 1943, he was Commanding General of the Marine Corps Base at San Diego, California. He was Commanding General of Camp Lejeune, New River, North Carolina, from April, 1943, to June, 1943, when he became Commanding General, East Coast Echelon, Fourth Marine Division.

General and Mrs. Underhill have one daughter, Barbara Starkweather Underhill.

*DECORATIONS AND MEDALS: Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Presidential Unit Citation with one star, Marine Corps Expeditionary Medal with one bronze star, Victory Medal with France Clasp, Yangtze Service Medal, China Service Medal, American Defense Medal, American Area Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Area Medal with three stars, World War II Victory Medal.*



# BRIGADIER GENERAL SAMUEL C. CUMMING

Brigadier General Samuel C. Cumming joined the Fourth Division as a Colonel in July, 1943, assumed command of the Twenty-fifth Regiment, and in this capacity led his men in the Division's invasion of Roi–Namur. In April, 1944, at the time of promotion to his present rank, he was made Assistant Division Commander, a post he held throughout the Saipan and Tinian campaigns. On August 30, 1944, he returned to the States for duty at the Marine Base in Quantico, Virginia. He retired in July, 1946, after having served as Chief of Staff, Marine Barracks, Quantico, Virginia.

Born at Kobe, Japan, on October 14, 1895, the son of Dr. and Mrs. Calvin K. Cumming, missionaries, he spent most of his first eleven years in Japan. He was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps in May, 1917, directly after receiving a B.S. degree from the Virginia Military Institute. He served with the Fifth Marine Regiment in France from 1917 to 1920, where he attained the rank of captain. Twice wounded in World War I, he received two Purple Hearts and three Silver Star decorations from the U. S. Army, the French Fourragère and two Croix de Guerres from the French Army and decorations from both the Romanian and Montenegrin governments.

Following the war, Brigadier General Cumming served in Haiti from 1922 to 1926, in China from 1927 to 1928, in the Virgin Islands from 1929 to 1930, and at various posts in the United States. He attended the Marine Corps Schools, the Army Command and General Staff School, and the Army War College. From 1937 to 1939 he was Force Marine Officer for the United States Fleet Scouting Force aboard the USS *Indianapolis*. From 1940 to 1942 he was assigned to Marine Corps Headquarters in Washington.

General and Mrs. Cumming have two children, Samuel C., Jr., 18, and Allan G., 13.

*DECORATIONS AND MEDALS: Three Silver Stars, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Purple Heart with oak leaf cluster, Presidential Unit Citation with one star, American Defense Medal, American Area Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Area Medal with two stars, World War II Victory Medal, two French Croix de Guerres, and the French Fourragère, Silver Medal of Bravery (Montenegro), and Star for Bravery of Romania.*



## BRIGADIER GENERAL FRANKLIN A. HART

The career of Brigadier General Franklin A. Hart spans the military history of the United States for the past three decades, from the Mexican Border clash in 1916 to Iwo Jima in 1945. He joined the Fourth Division in 1943 as a Colonel in command of the Twenty-fourth Regiment, and in this post led his men in the battles of Roi–Namur, Saipan, and Tinian. For his action in the former campaign he was awarded the Navy Cross, and for the latter two operations, the Legion of Merit. He was promoted to his present rank immediately following the Tinian operation and assigned duty as Assistant Division Commander, in which capacity he participated in the capture of Iwo Jima. General Hart is at present Director of Personnel, Headquarters, Marine Corps.

Born in Cuthbert, Georgia, on September 16, 1894, General Hart graduated in 1915 from Alabama Polytechnic Institute. During the Mexican Border clash a year later, he saw action as a second lieutenant in the Alabama National Guard. Shortly before the United States entered World War I, he was commissioned a second lieutenant in the Marine Corps. As commanding officer of a machine-gun company of the Fifth Marine Brigade, he landed at Brest, France, two days before the signing of the Armistice. He remained for nearly a year with the forces in Europe.

His foreign duty between wars included command of a Marine Detachment in Nicaragua, where he negotiated surrender of the bandit General Cabulla Sequera; four years service with the Guarde d'Haiti; a year in London in 1941 as Assistant Naval Attaché at the Embassy. While in this post he saw duty as liaison officer with the British Chief of Combined Operations, Lord Louis Mountbatten, participated in the commando raid on Dieppe, and served on the staff of the Commander in Chief of the U. S. Fleet.

General and Mrs. Hart and their son, Franklin A., Jr., 13, are living in Washington, D. C.

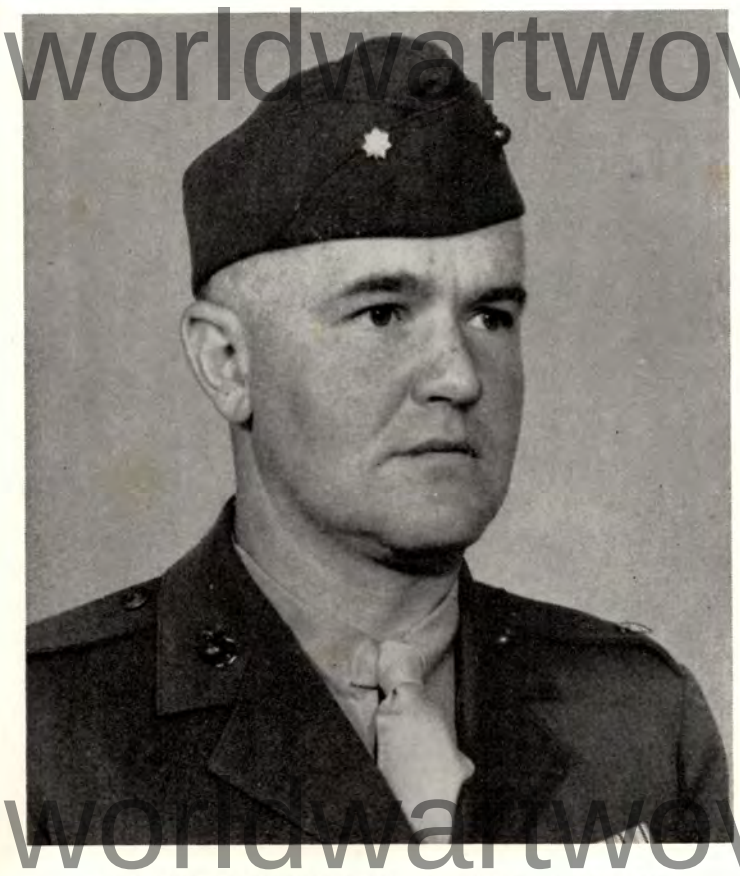
*DECORATIONS AND MEDALS: Navy Cross, Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, Presidential Unit Citation with one star, Expeditionary Medal, Mexican Border Medal, Victory Medal, Second Nicaraguan Campaign Medal, American Defense Medal, European Area Medal with one star, American Area Medal, Asiatic-Pacific Area Medal with three stars, World War II Victory Medal, and from the Republic of Haiti, the Distinguished Service Medal, the order of Honor and Merit, and the Military Medal of Merit.*

# The Medal of Honor

*The Medal of Honor, the Nation's highest award for military valor, is given only to those who have acted with supreme courage, with total disregard for their own safety in the face of the most hazardous conditions. It is an award that only a comparative handful of men in the world are entitled to wear. It is bestowed by Act of Congress and reflects Democracy's gratitude to those who, in moments of uncommon risk, offered everything they had in its defense, including life itself. The medal itself is but a humble token, a gesture of recognition for sacrifices which cannot be repaid in worldly goods.*

*Of the eight men who were awarded the Medal of Honor for "conspicuous gallantry" while serving with the Fourth Marine Division, five did not live to have the honor bestowed on them personally. These men died in the actions for which they are cited. To them, "above and beyond the call of duty" were not mere words but a challenge which involved their skill and determination and self-sacrifice in the face of almost certain death. Their reward was in the knowledge that they were acting in the tradition of the highest ideals of the Naval Service and of the Nation it represents.*

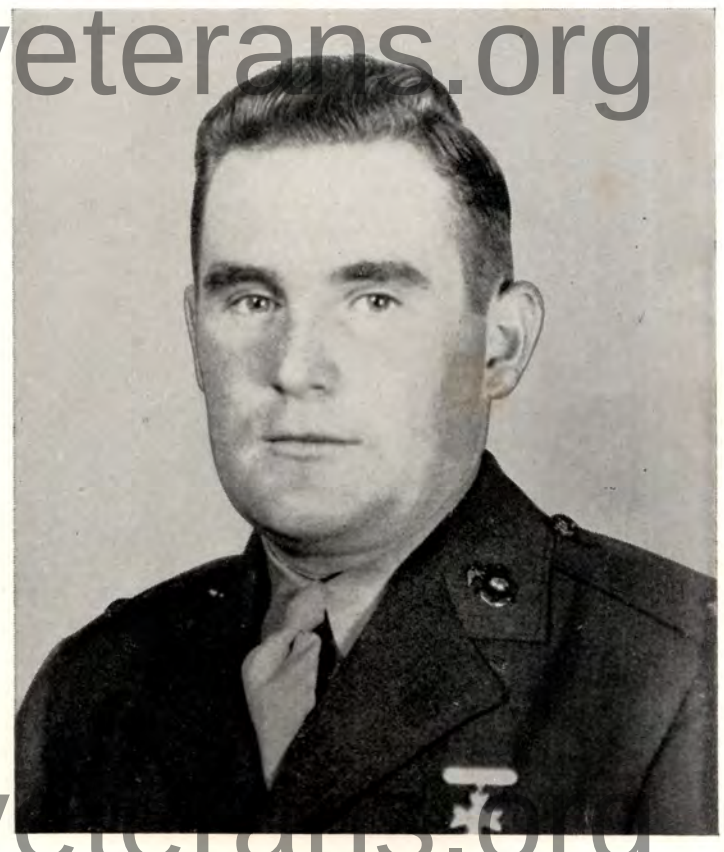
*Those who live to wear it do so proudly and yet with the spirit of humility befitting true heroes. They share the highest glory of which it is a symbol, yet hold it in solemn trust for comrades less fortunate. Whether they live or whether they died, our Nation is richer for their actions.*



LIEUTENANT COLONEL AQUILLA J. DYESS

*CITATION*

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Commanding Officer of the First Battalion, Twenty-fourth Marines, Reinforced, Fourth Marine Division, in action against enemy Japanese forces during the assault on Namur Island, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, February 1 and 2, 1944. Undaunted by severe fire from automatic weapons, Lieutenant Colonel Dyess launched a powerful final attack on the second day of the assault, unhesitatingly posting himself between the opposing lines to point out objectives and avenues of approach and personally leading the advancing troops. Alert, and determined to quicken the pace of the offensive against increased enemy fire, he was constantly at the head of advance units, inspiring his men to push forward until the Japanese had been driven back to a small center of resistance and victory assured. While standing on the parapet of an antitank trench directing a group of infantry in a flanking attack against the last enemy position, Lieutenant Colonel Dyess was killed by a burst of enemy machine-gun fire. His daring and forceful leadership and his valiant fighting spirit in the face of terrific opposition were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country."



FIRST LIEUTENANT JOHN V. POWER

*CITATION*

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as platoon leader attached to the Fourth Marine Division during the landing and the battle of Namur Island, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, February 1, 1944. Severely wounded in the stomach while setting a demolition charge on a Japanese pillbox, First Lieutenant Power was steadfast in his determination to remain in action. Protecting his wound with his left hand and firing with his right, he courageously advanced as another hostile position was taken under attack, fiercely charging the opening made by the explosion and emptying his carbine into the pillbox. While attempting to reload and continue the attack, First Lieutenant Power was shot again in the stomach and head and collapsed in the doorway. His exceptional valor, fortitude, and indomitable fighting spirit in the face of withering enemy fire were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country."

PRIVATE FIRST CLASS RICHARD B. ANDERSON

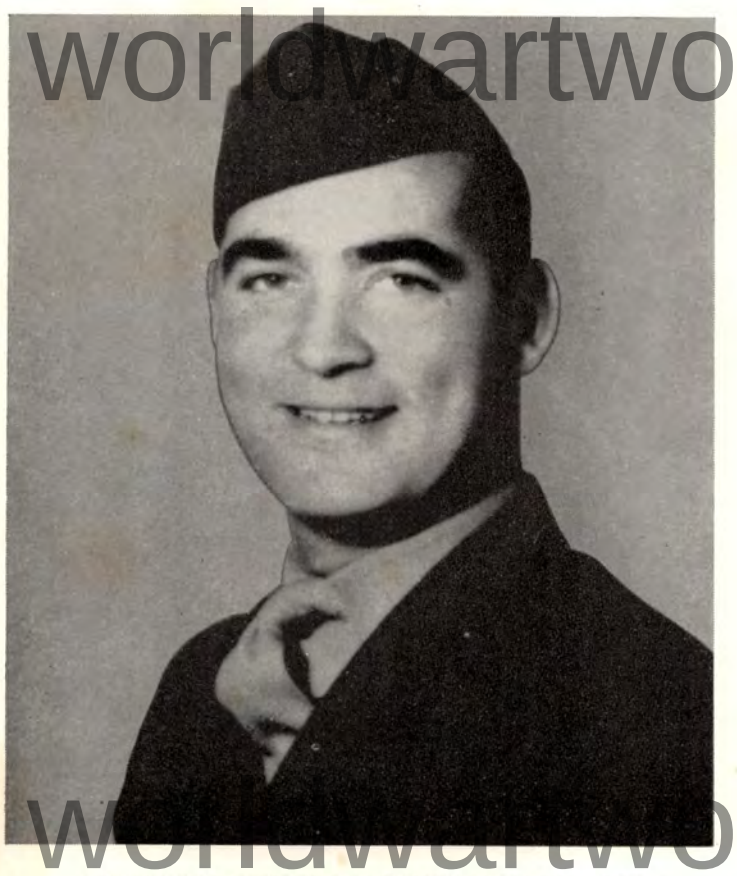
*CITATION*

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with the Fourth Marine Division during action against enemy Japanese forces on Roi Island, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, February 1, 1944. Entering a shell crater occupied by three other Marines, Private First Class Anderson was preparing to throw a grenade at an enemy position when it slipped from his hands and rolled toward the men at the bottom of the hole. With insufficient time to retrieve the armed weapon and throw it, Private First Class Anderson fearlessly chose to sacrifice himself and save his companions by hurling his body upon the grenade and taking the full impact of the explosion. His personal valor and exceptional spirit of loyalty in the face of almost certain death were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country."

PRIVATE RICHARD K. SORENSON

*CITATION*

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with an assault battalion attached to the Fourth Marine Division during the battle of Namur Island, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands, on February 1-2, 1944. Putting up a brave defense against a particularly violent counterattack by the enemy during invasion operations, Private Sorenson and five other Marines occupying a shellhole were endangered by a Japanese grenade thrown into their midst. Unhesitatingly, and with complete disregard for his own safety, Private Sorenson hurled himself upon the deadly weapon, heroically taking the full impact of the explosion. As a result of his gallant action he was severely wounded but the lives of his comrades were saved. His great personal valor and exceptional spirit of self-sacrifice in the face of almost certain death were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."



GUNNERY SERGEANT ROBERT H. McCARD

*CITATION*

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving as Platoon Sergeant of Company A, 4th Tank Battalion, Fourth Marine Division, during the battle for enemy Japanese-held Saipan, Marianas Islands, on 16 June 1944. Cut off from the other units of his platoon when his tank was put out of action by a battery of enemy 77-mm guns, Gunnery Sergeant McCard carried on resolutely, bringing all the tank's weapons to bear on the enemy, until the severity of hostile fire caused him to order his crew out the escape hatch while he courageously exposed himself to enemy guns by hurling hand grenades, in order to cover the evacuation of his men. Seriously wounded during this action and with his supply of grenades exhausted, Gunnery Sergeant McCard then dismantled one of the tank's machine guns and faced the Japanese for the second time to deliver vigorous fire into their positions, destroying sixteen of the enemy. His valiant fighting spirit and supreme loyalty in the face of almost certain death reflect the highest credit upon Gunnery Sergeant McCard and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country."

PRIVATE JOSEPH W. OZBOURN

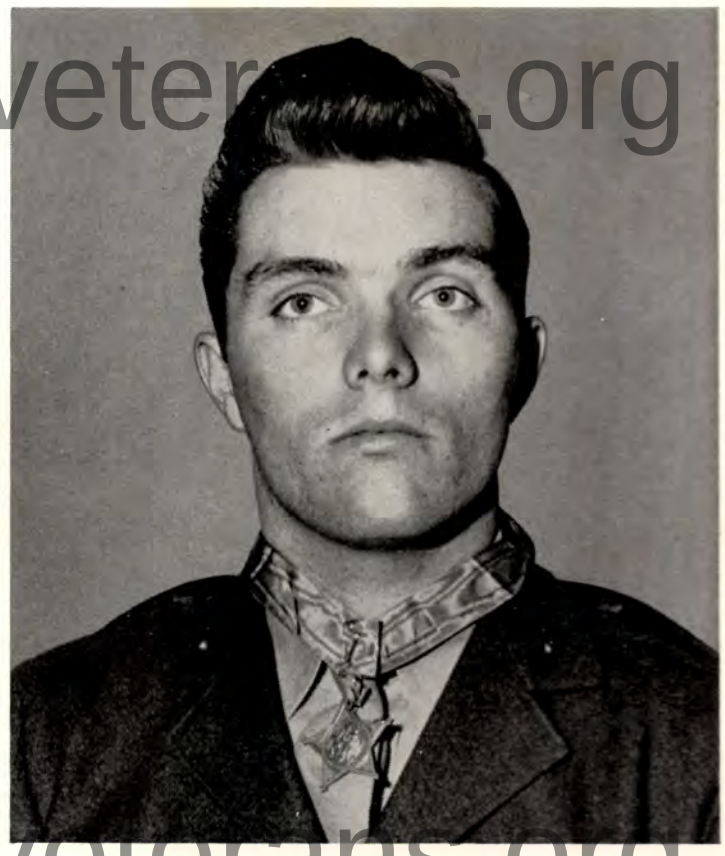
*CITATION*

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as a Browning Automatic Rifleman serving with the First Battalion, Twenty-third Marines, Fourth Marine Division, during the battle for enemy Japanese-held Tinian Island, Marianas Islands, 30 July 1944. As a member of a platoon assigned the mission of clearing the remaining Japanese troops from dugouts and pillboxes along a tree line, Private Ozbourn, flanked by two men on either side, was moving forward to throw an armed hand grenade into a dugout when a terrific blast from the entrance severely wounded the four men and himself. Unable to throw the grenade into the dugout and with no place to hurl it without endangering the other men, Private Ozbourn unhesitatingly grasped it close to his body and fell upon it, sacrificing his own life to absorb the full impact of the explosion but saving his comrades. His great personal valor and unwavering loyalty reflect the highest credit on Private Ozbourn and the United States Naval Service. He gallantly gave his life for his country."

CAPTAIN JOSEPH J. McCARTHY

*CITATION*

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty as Commanding Officer of Company G, Second Battalion, Twenty-fourth Marines, Fourth Marine Division, during the seizure of Iwo Jima, Volcano Islands, on 21 February 1945. Determined to break through the enemy's cross-island defenses, Captain McCarthy acted on his own initiative when his company advance was held up by uninterrupted Japanese rifle, machine-gun, and high velocity 47-mm fire during the approach to Motoyama Airfield Number Two. Quickly organizing a demolitions and flame-thrower team to accompany his picked rifle squad, he fearlessly led the way across seventy-five yards of fire-swept ground, charged a heavily fortified pillbox on the ridge to the front, and personally hurling hand grenades into the emplacement as he directed the combined operations of his small assault group, completely destroyed the hostile installation. Spotting two Japanese soldiers attempting an escape from the shattered pillbox, he boldy stood upright in full view of the enemy and dispatched both troops before advancing to a second emplacement under greatly intensified fire and blasted the strong fortifications with a well-planned demolitions attack. Subsequently entering the ruins, he found a Japanese taking aim at one of his men and with alert presence of mind jumped the enemy, disarmed and shot him with his own weapon. Then, intent on smashing through the narrow breach, he rallied the remainder of his company and pressed a full attack with furious aggressiveness until he had neutralized all resistance and captured the ridge. An inspiring leader and indomitable fighter, Captain McCarthy consistently disregarded all personal danger during the fierce conflict and by his brilliant professional skill, daring tactics, and tenacious perseverance in the face of overwhelming odds, contributed materially to the success of his division's operations against this savagely defended outpost of the Japanese Empire. His cool decision and outstanding valor reflect the highest credit upon Captain McCarthy and enhance the finest traditions of the United States Naval Service."



PRIVATE FIRST CLASS DOUGLAS T. JACOBSON

*CITATION*

"For conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of his life above and beyond the call of duty while serving with a battalion of a Marine division in combat against Japanese forces during the seizure of Iwo Jima, 26 February 1945. Promptly destroying a stubborn 20-mm antiaircraft gun and its crew after assuming the duties of a bazooka man who had been killed, Private First Class Jacobson waged a relentless battle as his unit fought desperately toward the summit of Hill 382 in an effort to penetrate the heart of Japanese cross-island defenses. Employing his weapon with ready accuracy when his platoon was halted by overwhelming enemy fire on 26 February, he first destroyed two hostile machine-gun positions, then attacked a large blockhouse, completely neutralizing the fortification before dispatching the five-man crew of a pillbox and exploding the installation with a terrific demolition blast. Moving steadily forward, he wiped out an earth-covered rifle emplacement and confronted a cluster of similar emplacements which constituted the perimeter of enemy defenses in his assigned sector, fearlessly advanced, quickly reduced all six positions to a shambles, killed ten of the enemy, and enabled our forces to occupy the strong point. Determined to widen the breach thus forced, he volunteered his services to an adjacent assault company, neutralized a pillbox holding up its advance, opened fire on a Japanese tank pouring a steady stream of bullets on one of our supporting tanks, and smashed the enemy tank's gun turret in a brief but furious action culminating in a single-handed assault against still another blockhouse and the subsequent neutralization of its firepower. By his skill and valor, Private First Class Jacobson destroyed a total of sixteen enemy positions and annihilated approximately seventy-five Japanese, thereby contributing essentially to the success of his division's operations against the fanatically defended outpost of the Japanese Empire. His gallant conduct in the face of tremendous odds enhanced and sustained the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

# II: OPERATION STATESIDE



EVERY MARINE DIVISION has its own personal history—its own kind of *esprit,* its unique combat experiences, its own section of the vast Pacific which, because so many of its men still lie there in vigilance under the white coral sand, can belong to no other. Guadalcanal, New Georgia, Bougainville, Tarawa, the Marshalls, Saipan, Iwo Jima, and Okinawa are all different, and the courage and suffering and glory that went into the taking of them are different, too. Thus the memories of the men in the other divisions will be different from those of the Fourth. This history is an attempt to make permanent the record of the men in the Fourth Marine Division who fought so valiantly on islands in the Pacific.

In many ways the Fourth was more fortunate than some of its sister divisions. It was overseas 21 months, whereas a tour of 26 to 30 months was not unusual for the divisions which preceded it. Its zone of action was exclusively in the Central Pacific; jungles, oppressive heat, and tropical disease were not part of its experience; casualties from malaria, filariasis, and jungle rot were practically unknown. It was in combat but a total of 63 days; it was based, between operations, in the next best place to the States—the Island of Maui. Long months of isolation in some rainy jungle or on a barren rock were never part of the Fourth's experience. It was also the first Marine division to return to the States and be deactivated after the war.

But in contrast to this, no division participated in more violent combat than did the Fourth. In 63 days it saw more action than did many units during months of jungle fighting, or in long campaigns in Italy and France. Every day was its own bloody battle, and every acre of Roi–Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima its own battlefield. The Fourth set something of a record in making four beachheads—all of them bitterly opposed—in less than 13 months.



And if men escaped the discomfort of steaming jungles and the plagues of insects and disease, they were not so fortunate where enemy bullets and shells were concerned. Sixty-three days of merciless but futile enemy opposition accounted for probably the highest casualty rate of any Marine division. During the four operations in which the Division was engaged, a total of 81,718 men saw action one or more times. (This is a combined figure of totals of all operations for the Reinforced Division, *i.e.,* some served in all four operations, and thus are included four times.) Out of this total of 81,718, there were 17,722 casualties (some being wounded more than once) in killed, wounded, and missing in action—a total of 21.6 per cent. The percentage of the original 17,086 men who left the States with the Fourth and later became casualties would be even higher than this. These figures are not stated boastfully but as solemn facts that testify as no words possibly can to the contribution which the Fourth made to victory in the Pacific.

A division is merely a name until its component parts are joined and integrated into a single fighting unit. This process, for the Fourth, took more than a year. It began at Camp Lejeune, New River, North Carolina, where nearly all of the lower echelons were formed, and ended at Camp Joseph H. Pendleton, Oceanside, California, with the activation of the Division as a whole. During this period, separate battalions were combined to form regiments and regiments split to form new regiments; specialized units were welded together to make Special and Service Troops; and a Division Staff was organized.

To the Twenty-third Marines goes the honor of being the oldest component unit of the Division. It was activated in July 1942, under Lieutenant Colonel (now Colonel) William B. Onley, as part of the Third Division. In September 1942, Colonel (now Brigadier General) Louis R. Jones took command. On February 15, 1943, it was detached from the Third and five days later designated part of the Fourth. Colonel Jones, a baseball enthusiast, determined to make the Twenty-third not only a first-class fighting outfit but a ball-playing outfit as well, and its regimental team won a long string of victories.



For 15 cold days in January 1943, the Twenty-third conducted amphibious maneuvers in Chesapeake Bay—a change, but hardly a relief from the long days of training in the North Carolina "boondocks" which all the units were undergoing during these formative months. On May 1 of the same year the Regiment

was divided into two cadres, one of which was the nucleus of the Twenty-fifth Marines formed under the late Colonel Richard H. Schubert. Later that month the Fourth Service Battalion, the Ordnance Company, Division Headquarters Company, and the Fourth Signal Company were activated. On June 15, 1943, the Twentieth Marines, consisting of engineers and pioneers, was activated under Lieutenant Colonel Nelson K. Brown. During the same month the Fourteenth Marines, the Division's artillery regiment, was activated under Lieutenant Colonel (now Colonel) Randall M. Victory.

All of these units were transferred, by ship and train, to Camp Joseph H. Pendleton during July and August 1943, and it was here that the Division was brought up to its full strength. Under the leadership of Colonel (now Brigadier General) Franklin A. Hart, the Twenty-fourth Marines, which had been formed in March at Camp Pendleton by combining three separate reinforced battalions, was added. Two of these battalions had been formed at Camp Lejeune and were transferred to the West Coast where unit training was carried out upon organization of the Regiment. On August 16, 1943, the Division was formally activated. The Fourth was now ready to undergo intensive training as a unit in preparation for combat. The Division Staff was as follows:

Major General (now Lieutenant General) Harry Schmidt—Commanding General
Brigadier General (now Major General) James L. Underhill—Assistant Division Commander
Colonel (now Brigadier General) William W. Rogers—Chief of Staff
Colonel Merton J. Batchelder—Assistant Chief of Staff, D-1
Major (now Lieutenant Colonel) Gooderham L. McCormick—Assistant Chief of Staff, D-2
Colonel Walter W. Wensinger—Assistant Chief of Staff, D-3
Colonel William F. Brown—Assistant Chief of Staff, D-4
Commander (now Captain) William C. Baty, Jr.—Division Surgeon
Lieutenant Commander Otis P. Maddox—Division Chaplain

The five regiments and other principal units of the Division at this time were commanded by the following officers:

Fourteenth Marines—Colonel Louis G. DeHaven
Twentieth Marines—Colonel Lucian W. Burnham
Twenty-third Marines—Colonel (now Brigadier General) Louis R. Jones
Twenty-fourth Marines—Colonel (now Brigadier General) Franklin A. Hart
Twenty-fifth Marines—Colonel (now Brigadier General) Samuel C. Cumming
Division Special Troops—Colonel Emmett W. Skinner
Division Service Troops—Colonel Richard H. Schubert

It was under this leadership that 17,831 men and officers (as of September 30, 1943) were welded into a hard-hitting fighting machine. In September 1943, training at Pendleton was begun on an intensive scale. The 132,000 acres of the former Santa Margarita Ranch with its hills, canyons, and semi-arid desert were ideal terrain for CPXs (command post exercises), field problems, hikes, and maneuvers. Aliso Beach and San Clemente Island served as proving grounds for amphibious landings. In November, the Fourteenth Regiment moved in a body with its 75mm and 105mm howitzers to Camp Dunlap, Niland, California, for extensive firing practice.

The three infantry regiments, reinforced with detachments of engineers, medical personnel, Joint Assault Signal men, and amphibian tractor units, boarded transports at San Diego and made a series of practice landings on Aliso Beach. Later the whole Division boarded ship and sailed to San Clemente Island

where, with Task Force 53 giving it live fire support, men stormed the beaches to "take" the island and then returned to their ships to do it again the following days. By now it was evident that the Fourth was getting ready to move out. The objective, of course, was top secret.

A brief recital of the facts conveys but an impersonal outline of these months of training. As real to the men were the personal experiences which these days and nights imprinted on their memories. . .

The experience, for instance, of trying to stay warm at night in Las Pulgas Canyon. No matter how many blankets a person used, it was always cold. No doubt about it, when the sun went down, California was the coldest place this side of the North Pole.

And for the men of the Twenty-fifth Marines and the Tank Battalion—inhabitants of tent camps—this sub-arctic temperature was a nightly experience. But during the day, with the famous California sun beaming down, Camp Pendleton was pleasant.

There are other things one will remember about Pendleton . . . the machine-gun range, bayonet practice, conditioning hikes, the moving-target range, pillbox assaults in Windmill Canyon, night attacks near the Santa Margarita River, rubber-boat landings at the boat basin, combat swimming with the brutal words of the instructor: "STEP OFF!"

Everyone will remember the Post Exchange when it opened at 1030 and the rush for milkshakes . . . and the slopchute at night, where beer stimulated many an argument and cemented many a friendship . . . and the movies . . . and card games in the barracks. . .

And, of course, there were the liberties in "Dago" and "L.A." and points in between . . . the mad scramble for a bus, or a seat on the train, or a ride with a passing motorist . . . the Victory Inn and the Biltmore and the Hollywood Canteen. Sometimes it seemed that Pendleton was simply a place to stay between weekends in Los Angeles.



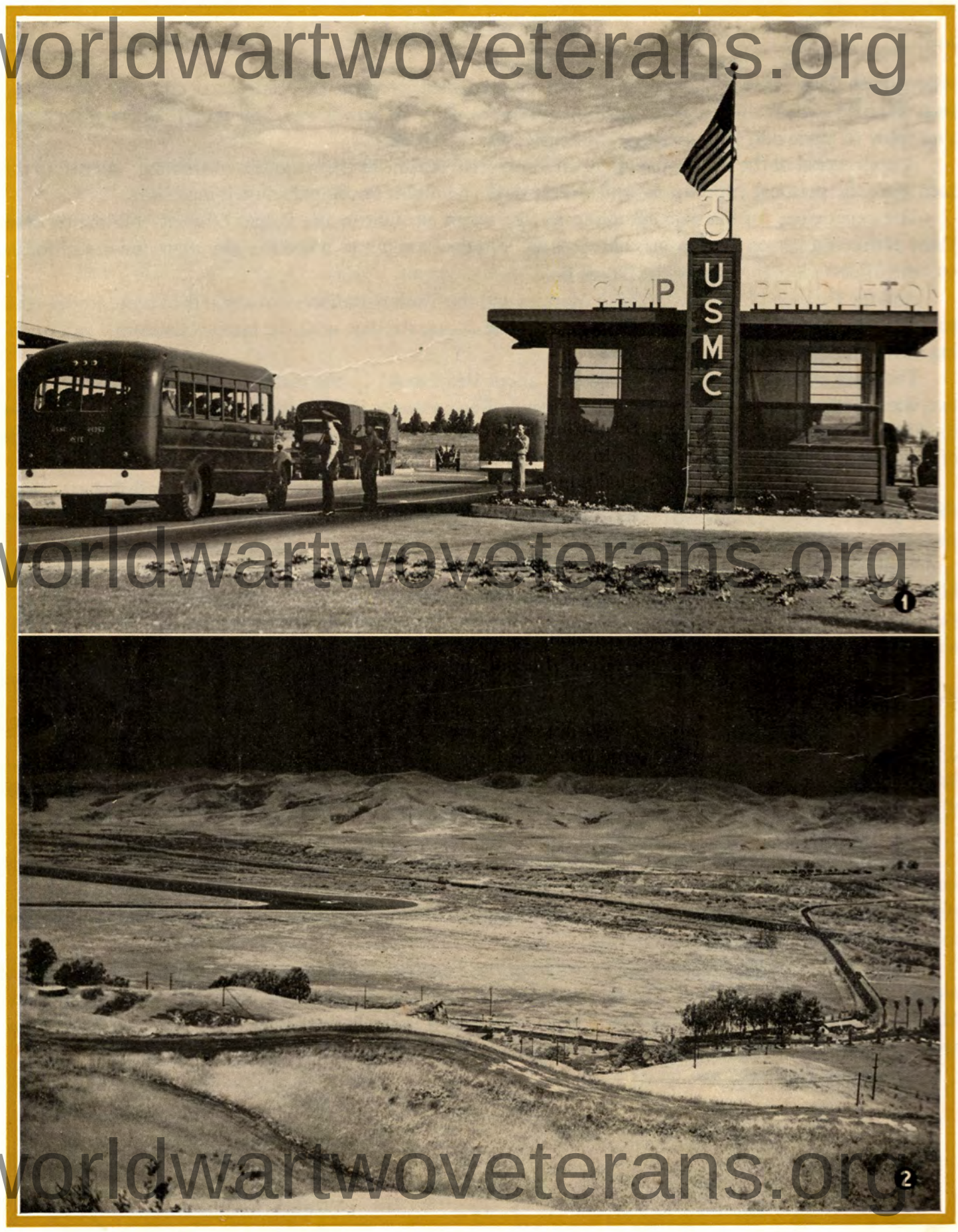
For you were living on borrowed time, for all you knew, and you wanted to live that time intensely. Every day was precious.

Out of these experiences—the good times as well as the bad—the Division grew to manhood. For a division is not just an aggregation of 17,000 men but an organic thing, with a personality and aspirations of its own. And all of the thousand and one details of training and recreation combine to make that quality to which men referred when they talked about the "Fourth."

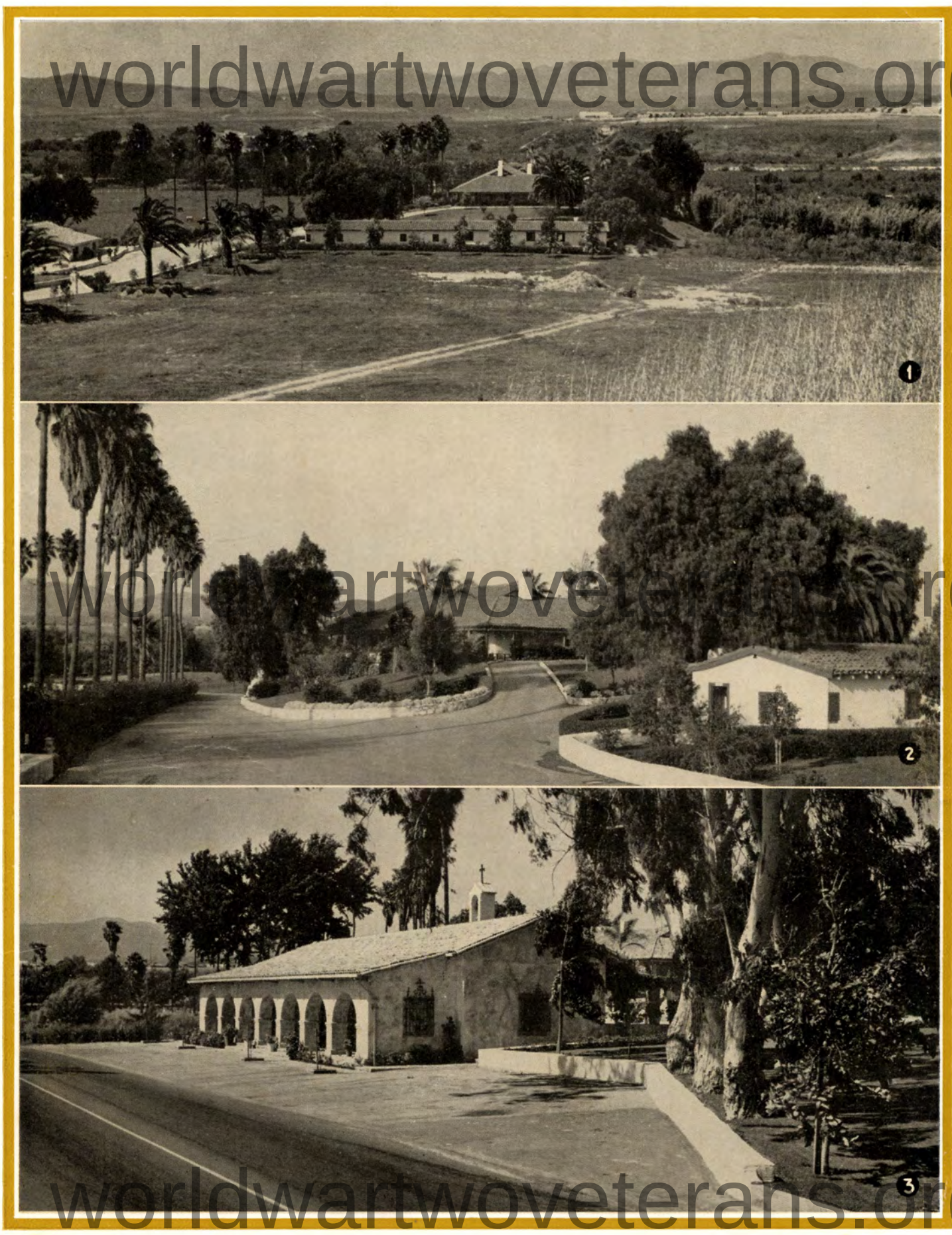
Early in January 1944, the Division boarded ship at San Diego. We were combat-loaded! Everyone knew that this was to be the real thing. For many days supplies had moved off the docks and into holds . . . then the troops. The Division began a new and strange kind of life that it was to know too well before many months—life on a troop transport.

On January 6 and 7, LSDs and LSTs, carrying the Fourteenth Marines and amphibian tractor detachments, sailed out of the harbor. The remainder of the Division departed just after daybreak on the 13th. Men stood on the decks and watched San Diego grow fainter in the hazy distance. And then they turned and saw an illimitable sweep of ocean beyond which lay the enemy stronghold.

"Operation Flintlock" was under way!



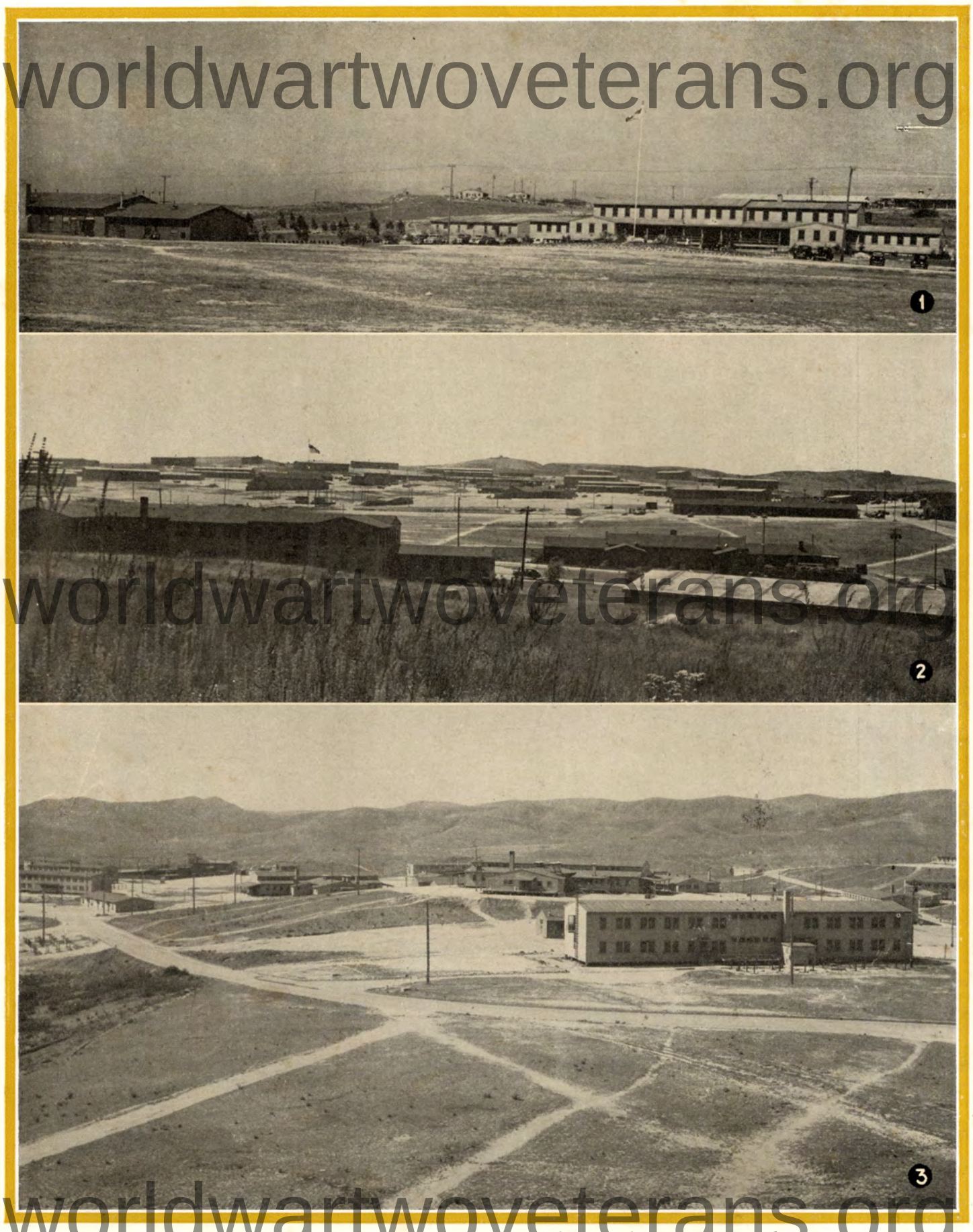

1–The main entrance to Camp Pendleton—starting point for weekends in Los Angeles. 2–In Chappo Flats, below the center of camp, lie the airfield and the Ranch House.





1–The Santa Margarita Ranch House. 2–The Ranch House stands as a symbol of the Old Rancho Santa Margarita of days gone by. 3–The Chapel at the Ranch House.


1—A section of Camp Pendleton in the vicinity of the large Naval Hospital. 2—The Naval Hospital in Camp Pendleton. 3—The Post Exchange gas station in the vicinity of the airfield at Chappo Flats.

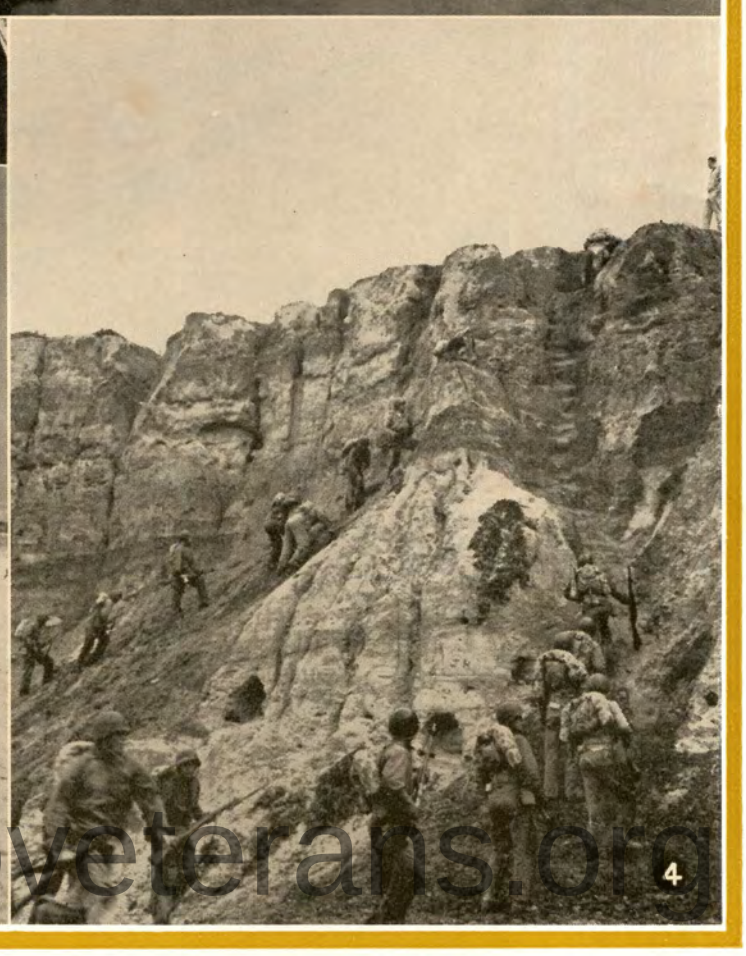






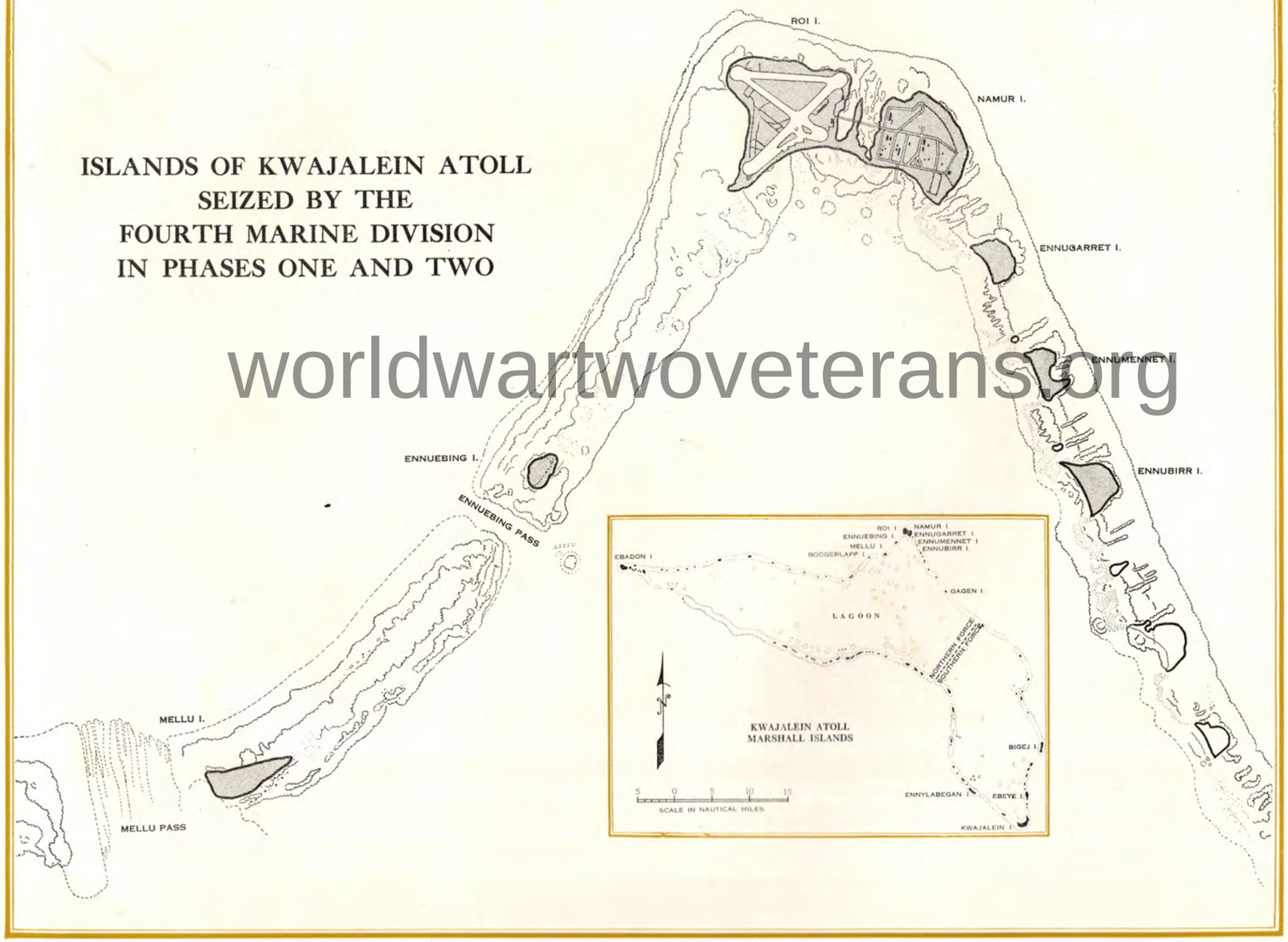
1–Headquarters of the Division during the period August 16, 1943, to January 13, 1944. 2–A part of the main camp as seen from the rear of Division Headquarters. 3–Area 17 was occupied by the Fourteenth Marines during the latter part of 1943 and became the deactivation center of the Division upon its return late in 1945.

1–One of the numerous Post Exchanges which served the camp. 2–The Post Chapel. Construction of the Chapel was begun in 1943, while the Division was still at Camp Pendleton. 3–A theater in one of the regimental areas. 4–Colors are raised at Headquarters of the Twenty-fifth Marines at Tent Camp No. 1.



1–Down the ladder for an assault landing on the California coast. 2–Into the surf and onto the beach. 3–An "enemy" plane makes an air strike, and assault troops disperse for defense against further attacks. 4–Moving inland, troops scale the cliffs that fringe the beach.

# ISLANDS OF KWAJALEIN ATOLL SEIZED BY THE FOURTH MARINE DIVISION IN PHASES ONE AND TWO



# III: ROI-NAMUR



THE FOURTH MARINE DIVISION set three new records on its first operation: it became the first division to go directly into combat from the United States; it was the first to capture Japanese mandated territory in the Pacific; and it secured its objective in a shorter time than that of any other important operation since the attack on Pearl Harbor. For weeks the coming battle had been known only by its code name, "Operation Flintlock." Not until the big convoy had passed the Hawaiian Islands was its destination revealed to all hands—the twin islands of Roi–Namur in the Kwajalein Atoll of the Marshall Islands. Simultaneously, the U. S. Army's Seventh Infantry Division was to invade the island of Kwajalein in the same atoll.

In many ways, Operation Flintlock would be the most important of the Pacific War to date; it would constitute the first offensive strike against the enemy to secure a base for operations. Heretofore, our strategy in the Pacific had been largely to keep the Japanese from expanding their gains, to keep them out of Australia, and to secure our own flank in the South Pacific in order that we might drive straight through the Central Pacific for the knockout blows that were eventually to bring Japan to her knees. The invasion of the Marshalls was to be the spearhead of this drive, and the Fourth Division shared the responsibility for its initial success.

Kwajalein Atoll was recognized as the pivotal point in the defense system of the Marshall Islands. The command of the whole area was exercised from here. It was also a distribution point on which reinforcements were gathered and sent out to other atolls. The atoll contained the world's largest landlocked lagoon and a naval base with fueling and repair facilities. Roi Island also constituted the principal airfield in the Marshalls. Altogether, the atoll consisted of 85 islands and extended 65 miles in length and was 18 miles across at the widest point. It was 2,439 miles west of Pearl Harbor.

During the long, 18-day voyage to the atoll, Marines had plenty of time to study their objective. With Tarawa fresh in their minds, the prospect of hitting a small, heavily defended beach was not too cheerful. Operation maps showed numerous installations—coast defense guns, heavy and medium antiaircraft guns, machine guns, blockhouses, a total of 52 pillboxes, numerous antitank trenches, rifle trenches, and barbed wire. Added to this, the two islands of Roi–Namur were hardly more than overgrown sand spits. Roi measured 1200 by 1250 yards at its widest points; Namur was 800 by 900 yards—neither island a square mile in size! An estimated 3,000 enemy troops were there to defend them. It was not a pleasant prospect!

Against this, however, was a preponderance of striking power. The Task Force which accompanied the Marine and Army divisions to the Marshalls was the largest assembled in the Pacific to that time. Our high command had decided that there would be no more Tarawas. The assemblage of carriers, battleships, cruisers, and destroyers which preceded and convoyed the transports was a reassuring sight to the Marines who lined the rails. Our infantry, furthermore, would out-number the defenders two to one. Perhaps the task wouldn't be too difficult after all.

The Fourth Division was part of the Northern Landing Force, under the command of Major General (now Lieutenant General) Harry Schmidt. Ground operations for the campaign as a whole, including Kwajalein Island, were under the Fifth Amphibious Corps, Major General (now Lieutenant General) Holland M. Smith commanding. The Joint Expeditionary Forces were commanded by Rear Admiral (now Admiral) Richmond K. Turner, USN, and the Northern Attack Force, of which the Fourth Division was the landing force, was under the command of Rear Admiral (now Vice Admiral) Richard L. Conolly, USN. This was the overwhelming force which would be thrown against the tiny but highly defended Japanese bastion.

Two days before D-day, ships of the naval task forces and aircraft of the Fast Carrier Force in support of the Fourth Division, systematically began to bomb and shell every square yard of Roi–Namur. Three battleships—the *Tennessee, Maryland,* and *Colorado*—5 cruisers, and 19 destroyers combined in a non-stop barrage which laid 2,655 tons of steel on the islands.


# ROI-NAMUR ISLANDS

Gun crews did their utmost to make certain that every Jap on the islands got at least one shell with his name on it. To add to the weight of our naval explosives, it was planned to land the Fourteenth Regiment, with its 75mm pack howitzers and 105mm howitzers on four small islands which flanked Roi–Namur. Two of these islands flanked the entrance to the lagoon. By seizing them we could secure passage that would allow us to assault Roi–Namur from *inside* the lagoon. From these flanking islands the artillery was to set up its guns, get the ranges, and give close fire support to the assault troops. This was Phase One of the operation, under the command of Brigadier General James L. Underhill, and took place on January 31, 1944.

The seizure of the small islands on either side of Roi–Namur fell to the Fourth Division's Scout Company and Regimental Combat Team Twenty-five. To the Scout Company and Lieutenant Colonel Clarence J. O'Donnell's First Battalion of the Twenty-fifth Marines, went the honor of being the first to land on an enemy-defended island in the Marshalls. They went ashore at 0958, landing on the seaward side of Ennuebing and Mellu Islands southwest of Roi–Namur. Operation maps had told of "submerged coral boulders." Actually, the islands were protected by an exceedingly dangerous coral reef. This, and a high sea, caused many of the LVTs to broach and swamp. Fortunately, resistance was slight. Ennuebing was declared secured at 1055 and the larger Mellu at 1209. Artillery came ashore within an hour.

Following this, the Second and Third Battalions of the Twenty-fifth, commanded by Lieutenant Colonels Lewis C. Hudson, Jr. and Justice M. Chambers, respectively, landed on three other islands to the southeast of Roi–Namur—Ennubirr, Ennumennet, and Ennugarret. These were secured by nightfall and artillery landed on the following morning. On Ennubirr, the Second Battalion raised the first American flag in the Marshalls—on a coconut tree. This battalion also seized an important communication center containing great quantities of American-made radio equipment.



The stage was now set for the main attack on Roi–Namur—Phase Two of the operation. This was to be made from the lagoon side by RCTs Twenty-three and Twenty-four, each landing two battalions abreast on the islands' four beaches. The First and Second Battalions of the Twenty-third, commanded by Lieutenant Colonels Hewin O. Hammond and Edward J. Dillon, were to strike on Beaches Red 2 and 3 on Roi Island, and the Second and Third Battalions of the Twenty-fourth under Lieutenant Colonel (now Colonel) Francis H. Brink and Lieutenant Colonel Austin R. Brunelli, respectively, were assigned Beaches Green 1 and 2 on Namur. The day was February 1, 1944. For most of the men in the Division this was the first time under fire.

Early in the morning the amphibian tractors rumbled down the ramps of the LSTs, and the LCVPs were swung over the sides of the transports. The ships were still far out in the lagoon, and the smoking island was but a streak of sand and haze in the distance. H-hour had been set for 1000, but shortly after the boats began rendezvousing word came to the wave commanders that the landing had been delayed. Men in the boats waited nervously.

Then, shortly after 1100, the assault units were waved over the line of departure, 4000 yards from the shore. Naval gunfire began to hurl its final salvos against the beach; dive-bombers plummeted down to drop 1,000-pound blockbusters on installations not yet completely demolished; fighter planes came over for strafing runs. It was the heaviest and most perfectly coordinated concentration of pre-landing bombardment yet seen in the Pacific.

And it paid dividends—big dividends. The first waves hit the beach at 1200. On Roi Island, the large, three-strip airfield was dotted with crippled Jap planes and wrecked defenses. All but a few hundred of the enemy here had fled to nearby Namur, which afforded better protection against the shelling. When assault companies of the Twenty-third landed, the situation seemed almost too good to believe. Opposition had been completely disorganized, and the beach was virtually undefended. By 1217 the Regiment had reached the Phase Line 0-1, and Colonel Jones instructed his communication officer to radio the good news to the

Commanding General. The enthusiastic officer did, in these words: "This is a pip. Give us the word and we'll take the island." The order came back to halt and reorganize, but in the meantime, the tanks and two supporting companies had pushed ahead. They were recalled to keep them from being shelled by naval guns that were bombarding the farther half of the island.

On nearby Namur the going was not so easy. Here the Japs had set up a stronger defense in the form of fire trenches and pillboxes. Thick vegetation gave them excellent concealment and served as camouflage for many of their installations. And although the naval shelling had killed and wounded many hundreds of Japanese, there was still a sizable, although dazed and disorganized, force remaining to oppose the Marines of the Twenty-fourth Regiment.

The Second Battalion, on the right, received only a little scattered small-arms fire from the beach and pushed inland some 200 yards against light opposition. The Third Battalion, on the left, however, ran into trouble immediately from several undamaged pillboxes. Many men were hit as they stepped from the landing boats. Rather than reduce the pillboxes, the assault companies were ordered to by-pass them where possible and leave them for demolition teams. The companies reached the Phase Line 0-1 by 1400, paused to reorganize, and waited for tanks and halftracks to come up.

Meanwhile the Second Battalion moved ahead rapidly. Suddenly a large enemy blockhouse, used as a storage place for aerial bombs and torpedo warheads, exploded without warning. An immense tower of smoke and rubble including many torpedo warheads shot into the sky, concussion felled men in every direction, and fragments of metal and cement caught dozens before they could jump into the safety of shellholes. An officer with the Battalion vividly described the scene that followed:



"An ink-black darkness spread over a large part of Namur such that the hand could not be seen in front of the face. Debris continued to fall for a considerable length of time which seemed unending to those in the area who were all unprotected from the huge chunks of concrete and steel thudding on the ground about them. Before the explosion, the large blockhouse was conspicuously silhouetted against the skyline. After the explosion, nothing remained but a huge water-filled crater. Men were killed and wounded in small boats a considerable distance from the beach by the flying debris. Two more violent explosions, but lesser in intensity than the first, occurred among the assault troops during the next half hour."

The Battalion suffered more than half of its total battle casualties in this swift moment, and its advance was held up temporarily.

By this time, the Japanese were recovering somewhat and beginning to offer fiercer resistance. The battle for Namur was not going to be easy. The Third Battalion, with tanks in support, pushed ahead at 1630. A platoon of men under Lieutenant John V. Power soon encountered a pillbox which was spraying death all along the Marine lines. They rushed it, tried to lob grenades through the gunport or to get a place-charge against it. But the fire was too hot. They decided to work around the pillbox and attack from the rear. Lieutenant Power led the way. As he approached the doorway a bullet caught him in the stomach, but he didn't stop. To the amazement of the Japs, he charged forward, emptying his carbine into the narrow slot of a door. No one knows how many of the enemy he killed, but from that moment the pillbox was doomed. Power fell, but one of his squads quickly finished off the last resistance. A Marine pulled the Lieutenant back into the safety of a bomb crater where he died a few minutes later. Lieutenant Power was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

There were many other acts of heroism on Roi–Namur that day; not all of them were recorded, and even if they were, this book would not be large enough to tell of them. Typical was the action of Private First Class Richard Scheidt. A bullet hit Scheidt in the arm a few minutes after he was ashore on Namur. A corpsman bandaged the wound and Scheidt stayed with his company. At one point his platoon inadvertently pushed too far forward and was ordered to withdraw. Upon reaching the new position, Scheidt saw a Marine,

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There were many other acts of heroism on Roi–Namur that day; not all of them were recorded, and even if they were, this book would not be large enough to tell of them. Typical was the action of Private First Class Richard Scheidt. A bullet hit Scheidt in the arm a few minutes after he was ashore on Namur. A corpsman bandaged the wound and Scheidt stayed with his company. At one point his platoon inadvertently pushed too far forward and was ordered to withdraw. Upon reaching the new position, Scheidt saw a Marine,

Edward Mann, about a hundred yards ahead of the lines, wounded in the eyes and unable to see to make his way back. Jap bullets were spraying the field. Despite his own wound, Scheidt went forward alone. There was no way to lead the blinded comrade back except to stand up; he unfastened the sling of his rifle, gave Mann one end of it, and holding the rifle, started back to his lines. The Marines stopped firing to avoid hitting them and although the Japs blazed away the two men made it. Scheidt was later awarded the Silver Star.

Another outstanding act of bravery that afternoon is credited to Corporal Howard E. Smith, an automatic rifleman in the Twenty-fourth Regiment. Smith was with an assault platoon covering the advance of a tank unit. The lead tank, commanded by Captain James L. Denig, son of Brigadier General Robert L. Denig, poked its nose out of a jungle thicket onto a road. Without warning, five Japs swarmed over it, one of them throwing a grenade into the turret opening. Smith, seeing the Japs jump onto the tank, emptied two magazines from his automatic rifle at them. Four of them rolled off dead and the fifth was killed by another Marine. But the grenade had set off the tank's fuel and the four men inside were apparently doomed as the tank became a steel-bound hell of blazing fuel and exploding ammunition. Smith handed his rifle to a man near him and ran toward the tank, disregarding the fire of snipers and a machine gun across the road. He opened the hatch, pulled Captain Denig free and dragged him off the road to some undergrowth. Then he went back for Corporal Bill Taylor, the assistant tank driver, whom he brought to the concealment of the thicket, and returned for Corporal Ben Smith, the gunner. The fourth man was trapped and couldn't get to the hatch. Captain Denig died, but the other two men owed their lives to Smith's courageous action which won him the Navy Cross.



One of the most fabulous characters on Namur that day was Sergeant Frank A. Tucker who used "Kentucky windage" exclusively. He probably accounted for more Japs personally than any man who fought in the battle. According to Marine Combat Correspondent Gil Bailey, Tucker and eleven other men from a machine-gun unit flushed about 75 Japs out of a blockhouse. The Japs ran into a trench 50 yards to the rear of the position. It was getting dark, and since the Japs greatly outnumbered them, the Marines decided not to make a direct attack. Tucker crawled on his stomach up to the shelter of a coconut palm, from which position he could look straight down the trench. In the bright moonlight he called his shots and in a few hours accounted for 38 Japs. Tucker himself got a bullet hole through the top of his helmet, another through his canteen, and a third through his field glasses. He, too, was awarded the Navy Cross.

The Twenty-fourth's Second Battalion, which had been held up by the three violent explosions in its midst, got under way again at 1700. The going was slow through stiffening resistance in the rubble of destroyed buildings. By 1930, when the order came to dig in for the night, the battalion had achieved a maximum advance of 300 yards. The Third Battalion's most advanced elements were within a few hundred yards of the island's northern shore. Its right flank, however, angled sharply back to tie in with the Second Battalion. The two battalions set up perimeter defense for the night.

Across the causeway on Roi Island the Twenty-third Regiment raced ahead after resuming the attack at 1600. The enemy, thoroughly disorganized from our shelling, put up no single, well planned defense. Instead, there were a hundred separate fights by individuals and small groups without unified command. Under such conditions the Japanese soldier is a brave and stubborn fighter. On Roi, the enemy took to the partially covered drainage ditches which surrounded the airstrips, popping up to fire into the rear of our troops. This caused some confusion and not a few casualties, but the position of the enemy was hopeless. Demolitions and flame throwers routed them out, and riflemen picked off those who did not choose to blow themselves up with their own grenades. By 1800, six hours after the landing and with less than three hours of actual offensive assault, Roi was declared secured.



When troops reached the northern shore of the island they met one of the ghastliest sights they were

to see in many days of combat—a trenchful of enemy soldiers who had committed *hara-kiri* by placing the muzzle of their rifles under their chins and pulling the triggers with their toes. Dozens lay sprawled in this grotesque posture of suicide, a means to an end, typifying the spirit of hopelessness which surrounded the Jap soldiers.

There was little opportunity for individual heroism on Roi, but one man, Private First Class Richard B. Anderson, found himself in a position to save several comrades from death or injury. He was about to throw an armed grenade when it slipped from his hands. With insufficient time to retrieve the weapon and throw it, Anderson hurled his body upon the grenade, absorbing the full charge of the blast. He was killed, but his comrades were unhurt, and for this self-sacrifice Anderson was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor.

By late afternoon men could pause for breath and look around them for the first time. The ruins through which they had fought were indescribably fascinating. There was hardly a recognizable trace of what had been the Japanese headquarters. On Roi, the gaunt skeletons of a hangar and an operations building were all that remained standing. On Namur only three buildings, all severely battered, had survived our shelling. These were a large administrative building, a concrete radio station, and an ammunition storage building.

Thousands of shells had exploded on the island, leaving the ground pitted with craters. Shattered breadfruit and coconut palms stood at fantastic angles. Japanese dead were sprawled over the island by the hundreds in shellholes, near ammunition dumps, in the ruins of buildings; most of them were horribly mutilated by the bombardment.

Sheets of corrugated iron were strewn everywhere, twisted, ripped, full of holes. Concrete pilings on which barracks had rested stuck out of the ground in rows like tombstones.

On Roi, many Japanese planes, caught when our shelling began, lay like giant birds pinned helplessly to the ground, their wings broken.

Yet, in the midst of this carnage, a few traces of normal life remained. A dovecote on top of the concrete radio station was untouched, and birds nested there oblivious to the noise of battle. A pig, several chickens, and a very large goose had somehow escaped death and wandered about unconcernedly.

But the battle was not over. The last few hundred Japs on Namur, pocketed against the northern shore, determined to die in traditional Japanese style. Under cover of rain and darkness made eerie by bursting star shells, they staged a *Banzai* attack against the Twenty-fourth Regiment's Third Battalion. Companies I and L received the brunt of the attack which lasted, on and off, for several hours. At one point it was necessary to pull back our lines to a more secure position. This led to one of the most remarkable series of incidents of the battle, an example of the spirit of comradeship between Marines and Navy corpsmen.

Pharmacist's Mate Second Class James V. Kirby, a member of the Third Battalion's aid station on the beach, was sent up to the front during the late afternoon to assist company corpsmen. Arriving there, he worked with the wounded for some time and then collected a group of them a short distance behind the lines to await stretcher bearers. But darkness overtook them. Orders had been given to fire on anyone moving about at night, and the litter teams had to stay on the beach. Kirby settled down with his charges to sweat out the night.

He didn't know what was coming. When the Jap counterattack came, and the Third Battalion had to pull back, Kirby found himself—and the wounded—between the enemy and his own troops. He dared not go back for help without endangering the lives of the wounded. He got them into a large bomb crater, administered first aid, cheered them up, and gave them cigarettes which they smoked under the blackout of a poncho.

When the Marines charged forward to regain their old positions, Kirby found himself in the crossfire of battle. He could hear the cries and groans of newly wounded, and crawling out of his hole to find them,

led them to the safety of the crater, where he dressed their wounds before returning to new cries in the darkness.

One of the cries that split the night was that of Private First Class Richard K. Sorenson. He and six comrades had been among those who went forward to stop the Jap attack. They had jumped into a shellhole and had continued firing, but in the darkness a Jap crawled close enough to pop a hand grenade into their hole. Hearing it sputter, they scrambled frantically to throw it out. Sorenson saw the grenade come to a stop at his feet and knew that it was too late to get rid of it. He hurled himself upon the deadly weapon in order to absorb the full impact of the explosion. The grenade went off and Sorenson caught the full charge of it. No one else was hurt.

Kirby reached Sorenson in time to tie a severed artery and stop the bleeding which would surely have cost him his life. He took Sorenson to the hole where the other wounded lay and treated him throughout the night. When daybreak came, and the Jap *Banzai* had been completely broken, a crew of corpsmen advanced to search for Kirby. They found him—and a total of 15 wounded. He had won a twelve-hour tilt with death. For his meritorious service he was later awarded the Bronze Star. And Sorenson—whose action had saved his six companions—lived to receive the Medal of Honor.

There were other heroes that night, many of whom will have to remain nameless. One young private, whose lieutenant and noncom were wounded as they ran from their boat, took charge of the group and led it through a day and night of fighting. He was wounded three times. Twice a corpsman dressed the injury; the third time he was evacuated. Captain (now Major) Frank E. Garetson was wounded twice while leading his company into battle. Both times he refused evacuation. A young sergeant, William G. Byfield, alone covered the withdrawal of his unit after it had been surrounded by Japanese and then remained behind with the wounded. "The first thing we knew we had been cut off and surrounded," Byfield recalled. "The leader of the team was killed. As senior NCO, I took charge. The uninjured slipped away in little groups and I stayed with the wounded, doing just enough firing to make the Japs think all of us were there." A relief party got to Byfield and the wounded next morning.

Although the island was small, mortars were brought ashore. Many times they were emplaced so near to the front lines that their crews fought as infantrymen as well as mortarmen. One mortarman especially singled out for heroic action was Private First Class Leslie M. Chambers, Jr. On one occasion he picked up two live grenades which had been thrown into his gun position and tossed them back at the enemy. When the counterattack came, he stayed at his gun, firing it at perilously close range, until all those around him had withdrawn to new defensive positions. He was awarded the Silver Star.

Tragedy struck in many places that night, but no death was more tragic than that of Private First Class Jack Brown, a member of the Twenty-fourth Regiment's Third Battalion. Nineteen-year-old Jack had stowed away on the transport so he could be with his father, Corporal Earl Brown, 44. Father and son had been in the same company, but when it was time for the Division to ship out Jack was hospitalized with a minor illness and transferred to another outfit. "Pop" boarded the ship alone. Just before the Division sailed, Jack was found stowed away, and was taken off and placed under arrest.

Corporal Brown's wife, Madie, telephoned the Commandant's office in Washington and told the story of her husband's and son's efforts to be together. The charges against Jack were dropped, and he joined his old company. Father and son were together all during the trip to the Marshalls.

Jack hit the beach first and was killed during the night when the Japs counterattacked. Pop went on fighting—alone.

Another who was killed that night was Private First Class Stephen Hopkins, son of the late Harry Hopkins, Special Assistant to President Roosevelt. Three times he went back through heavy enemy fire to get ammunition. He was on the front with his platoon when killed by a Jap rifleman.

Only a few isolated bands of desperate Japs were left to oppose the last phase of the battle for Namur. When morning came, tanks and halftracks moved up to support the final push, blasting pillboxes, blockhouses, and other fortifications. Corporal Michael Giba told how his tank ran up to the edge of a bomb crater, stopped, and was soon swarming with Japs.

"I looked out the periscope," Giba said. "A Jap lay down on the turret and looked me right in the eye. He seemed kind of puzzled about just what to do. Then he rose to a squatting position, removed a grenade from his pocket, held it against the periscope, pulled the pin, and lay down on top of it. The periscope was broken but none of us was hurt. The Jap was killed. Then another tank opened up with its machine gun and cleared the turret of the remaining Japs."

Thus the battle drew to an end. The Third Battalion had jumped off at 0900; the Second and First moved up at 1000. The island was declared secured at 1215—just 24 hours and 15 minutes after the first waves had landed.

But there was to be one last-minute tragedy before the flag went up officially on Namur. Lieutenant Colonel Aquilla J. Dyess, commander of the First Battalion, Twenty-fourth Marines, was leading his men against the last pocket of Japs when he was caught in a burst of enemy machine-gun fire. He was killed instantly—the highest-ranking officer to lose his life in the operation. Lieutenant Colonel Dyess was posthumously awarded the Medal of Honor, the fourth for the Division during the engagement and probably an all-time record for 24 hours of fighting.



Phase Two of the operation was now over, and Phase Three—the first step in mopping up all the islets in the northern two-thirds of the atoll—began. The battle for Kwajalein Island, which lasted four days, was still in progress when the Twenty-fifth Regiment began its sweep down the atoll. The Second Battalion followed the arm which extended southeast from Roi–Namur, while the First moved to the southwest. During the next seven days they reconnoitered the string of islets, finding an occasional stray band of Japs, a few friendly natives, or nothing at all. At a point where the reef curves to run almost due west, the Third Battalion relieved the First and continued to drive toward Ebadon, extreme westernmost isle of the atoll, rounded this and followed the reef in a general southeasterly direction to complete the circuit. Altogether, the Twenty-fifth Regiment secured 53 islands, with names like Boggerlapp, Marsugalt, Gegibu, Oniotto, and Eru. Most of them were harder to pronounce than to capture.

It was on this junket that the men of the Twenty-fifth got to know the Marshall Island natives, for it was these Marines who freed them from Japanese domination. On many islets, bivouacking overnight, the natives and Marines got together and sang hymns; the Marshall Islanders had been Christianized many years before, and missionaries had taught them such songs as "Onward, Christian Soldiers." K rations and cigarettes also made a big hit with them. And more than one Marine sentry, walking post in front of a native camp, took up the islander's dress and wore only a loin cloth—usually a towel from a Los Angeles hotel.

Meanwhile, the Fifteenth Defense Battalion came ashore to garrison Roi–Namur. Natives who had lived on the islands were helped back to their homes and paid in U. S. currency to help clear the wreckage and bury the Japanese dead. On Roi, tractors, bulldozers, trucks, and jeeps ground endlessly across the shambles of the airfield, bringing in supplies, ammunition, material for installations, and clearing away the debris of Jap planes. Men of the Twenty-third called Roi a "three-quarter-mile-square junk pile." In the 50 or more craters left by our bombs, antiaircraft guns were set up. Over the blasted Jap operations building flew a huge American flag.



On both Roi and Namur, much of the reconstruction of the islands was done by Seabees. For the first time in the Pacific, they had been trained and equipped as part of a regular Marine Corps landing force. With the Twentieth (Engineer) Regiment, they unloaded ammunition, brought in supplies, laid a portable

plank road on the beach, recovered unexploded shells, cleared the airfield, and set up a water-distillation plant.

On February 12, the Japs hit the jackpot. A small group of planes, flying high, dropped a few incendiary bombs on Roi Island. One of them struck our ammunition dump and a moment later the whole island was an exploding inferno. To elements of the Twentieth Engineers and Seabees, who were still on Roi, the holocaust was more terrible than anything they had gone through in capturing the island. Combat Correspondent Bernard Redmond, attached to the Engineers, described "solid sheets of flame" that resulted from the explosions of our own ammunition and TNT. The raid lasted only five minutes, but the bombardment from the ammunition dump continued for four hours.

"Tracer ammunition lit up the sky as far as we could see," Redmond wrote, "and for a full half hour red-hot fragments rained from the sky like so many hailstones, burning and piercing the flesh when they hit. . . . A jeep exploded in our faces a few yards away. Yet half an hour after the first bomb hit, several hospitals and first aid stations were functioning with all the efficiency of urban medical centers."

Casualties were numerous, and it was later estimated that damage to our supplies and equipment amounted to one million dollars. Many of the troops had previously embarked on the transports that were to take them back to the Fourth's base on Maui. Some of the ships were still in the lagoon, and the men came topside to watch the grim spectacle.



On February 13, the Division, less the Twenty-fifth Regiment and the Division Scout Company, left Kwajalein for Maui. The Twenty-fifth remained in the atoll until March 1, as garrison troops. The Scout Company moved on to Eniwetok Atoll, also in the Marshalls, to join the Twenty-second Marines (an independent regiment) and the U. S. Army's 106th Infantry. The assault against Eniwetok began on February 17, with the Scout Company landing from rubber boats on the unoccupied island of Bogon, just west of Engebi Island, and island-hopping down the western side of the atoll. The Fifth Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Company moved down the eastern side. With the completion of this mission, both units reverted to control of the Twenty-second Marines and acted as line troops in the invasion of Parry Island.

Fourteen islands were secured by the Scout Company, under Captain Edward L. Katzenbach, Jr., in 48 hours. One of the Division's most notable Marines, Gunnery Sergeant (now First Lieutenant) Victor "Transport" Maghakian was a member of the Scout Company. Transport had been with Carlson's Raiders before joining the Fourth and later, when he returned to the States after the Marianas operation, he had earned twelve decorations, including the Navy Cross, the Silver Star, and the Purple Heart with cluster.

It was during the long voyage back to Maui that the apocryphal stories began to find their way into circulation. There was one, for instance, about the wounded Marine who had captured a new Jap rifle. When stretcher bearers refused to carry both him and the weapon, the Marine got off the litter, placed the rifle on it, and walked. The corpsmen carried it back.

On one of the smaller islets a mopping-up party from the Twenty-fifth was clearing a few dugouts. As the demolition charge was set and the fuze lighted, a Jap came running out with his hands held high.

"Don't shoot," he said. "I have a brother in Brooklyn." He had, too!

Another tall tale which became a legend of the battle was reported by Combat Correspondent Ed Ruder, concerning Private Harold "Dusty" Crowder, a member of the Twenty-fourth Regiment. Dusty stuck his neck out of a shellhole to see if the enemy were in sight. All was quiet—until a lonely shot rang out from a Jap sniper's rifle. The bullet went through the front of Dusty's helmet, parted his hair at dead center, glanced off the back of his helmet, ricocheted down his neck, and neatly clipped off his dog tags. To prove it all, Dusty exhibited a set of new dog tags as shiny as a silver dollar. There was a hole through his helmet, too.

"There's more to the story, though," confessed Dusty. "But then if I told that I'd be accused of building the whole thing up. It's that part where the bullet bounces back and kills the sniper!"

With the capture of Kwajalein Atoll, the United States now had strategic control of all the Marshall Islands. Japanese garrisons on Mille, Wotje, Maloelap, and Jaluit were by-passed and isolated. The Japanese line of communication south from Wake Island had been severed. We had acquired another stepping stone on our march across the Pacific. The 60-mile-long lagoon would furnish an excellent staging base for future operations. The airfields brought our air power within range of Truk and other islands in the Carolines. For a small price we had won a great victory.

The Division reached Maui during the period from February 21 to 25, but there were some who would not come back. One hundred ninety Marines had been killed and 547 wounded during the brief engagement. Overnight the "green" Fourth had become veterans; the Japanese could testify to that. We had captured 264 prisoners, while another 3,472 enemy troops lay buried on tiny Roi–Namur. Operation Flintlock was now history!




Roi and Namur Islands, Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands.





1–The invasion of Roi–Namur as seen from the air. Landing craft are streaking toward Namur *(left)* and Roi *(right)*.
2–Marines leap from their amphibian tractor and head for the beach on Namur.





1–Assault troops of the Twenty-fourth Regiment hit the deck before moving inland to secure their objective. 2–A light tank, supported by infantry, moves past a command post into the assault.


1–Tanks lead as riflemen follow in the drive across the shell-torn Roi Island. 2–Two Marines cautiously scan the approach before advancing on a sniper's position.

Utilizing a captured Jap trench, a squad tensely prepares to continue the attack.



1–Marines reorganize after driving inland before rushing the building in the background. 2–A machine-gun crew moves forward to a new position during the battle for Namur. 3–Three sharpshooters pick off Jap snipers from a position in a blasted foundation.



A terrific, death-dealing explosion, in the sector of the Second Battalion, Twenty-fourth Marines, was always remembered as the most devastating ever witnessed by the Division.




1–After the explosion of the torpedo-storage building only this water-filled crater remained. 2–Marines with fixed bayonets advance across an open area in the final phase of the battle on Namur. 3–Marines of the Twenty-third Regiment halt briefly in a shell crater during the advance across Roi Island.

Beyond the barren, shell-pitted expanse that was once an airfield on Roi Island, rises the smoke and rubble from another explosion on Namur.




1–Two prisoners are questioned by a regimental interpreter. 2–The Jap pillbox, overlooking this command post, yielded two Jap prisoners the day after the taking of this picture. 3–Finally discovered, the wounded Japs are flushed from their hideout.



Two survivors of the heavy preliminary bombardment are taken prisoner outside a large ammunition-storage building in which they had taken refuge.




1–The small beaches of Roi and Namur were crowded with men and supplies at the end of the battle. 2–An MP guards a food dump from furtive raids by holed-up Japs. 3–The crowded beachhead on Namur as the island is declared secured.

1–The Division cemetery on Roi Island. 2—Colors are officially raised at the Division Command Post after the islands are secured.

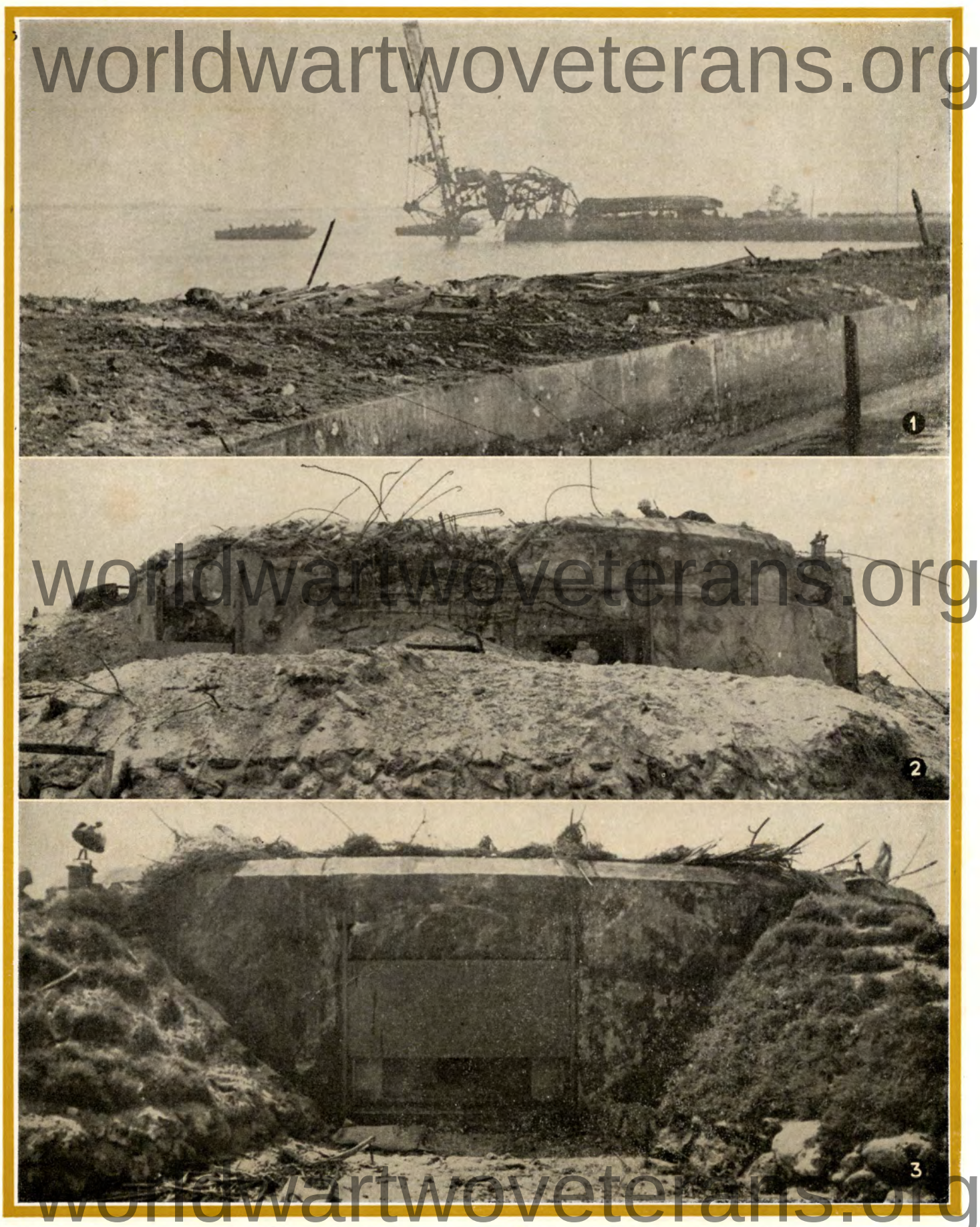



1–The Division Staff on Roi–Namur *(seated, left to right):* Colonel M. J. Batchelder, Colonel W. W. Rogers, Major General H. Schmidt, Brigadier General J. L. Underhill, Colonel W. F. Brown; *(standing)* Colonel W. W. Wensinger, Commander W. C. Baty, Lieutenant Colonel M. C. Horner, Colonel L. G. DeHaven, Lieutenant Colonel E. F. Carlson, and Major G. L. McCormick. 2–Across the small body of water which partially separated Roi and Namur, stands the former Japanese administration headquarters, one of the few buildings which remained standing.


1–The Japanese radio station, located on Ennubirr Island, was captured by elements of the Twenty-fifth Marines and used by that Regiment as its headquarters. 2–On Ennubirr Island, southeast of Namur, Marines of the Twenty-fifth Regiment raise the colors over the first Japanese mandated territory seized in World War II. 3–Supplies come ashore on Ennubirr Island. This picture was taken from atop the radio station in the picture above.

1–The mission accomplished, weary Marines anxiously compare notes and rest. 2–Marines relax in a trench on Roi Island after the conquest of that Jap stronghold. 3–Time out for a shampoo—steel helmets served more than one purpose in the field.

1–The Stars and Stripes fly over the former Japanese operations building on Roi Island. 2–Marine tanks are seen from the battered remains of the Japanese administration building as additional troops and supplies land on Roi Island.



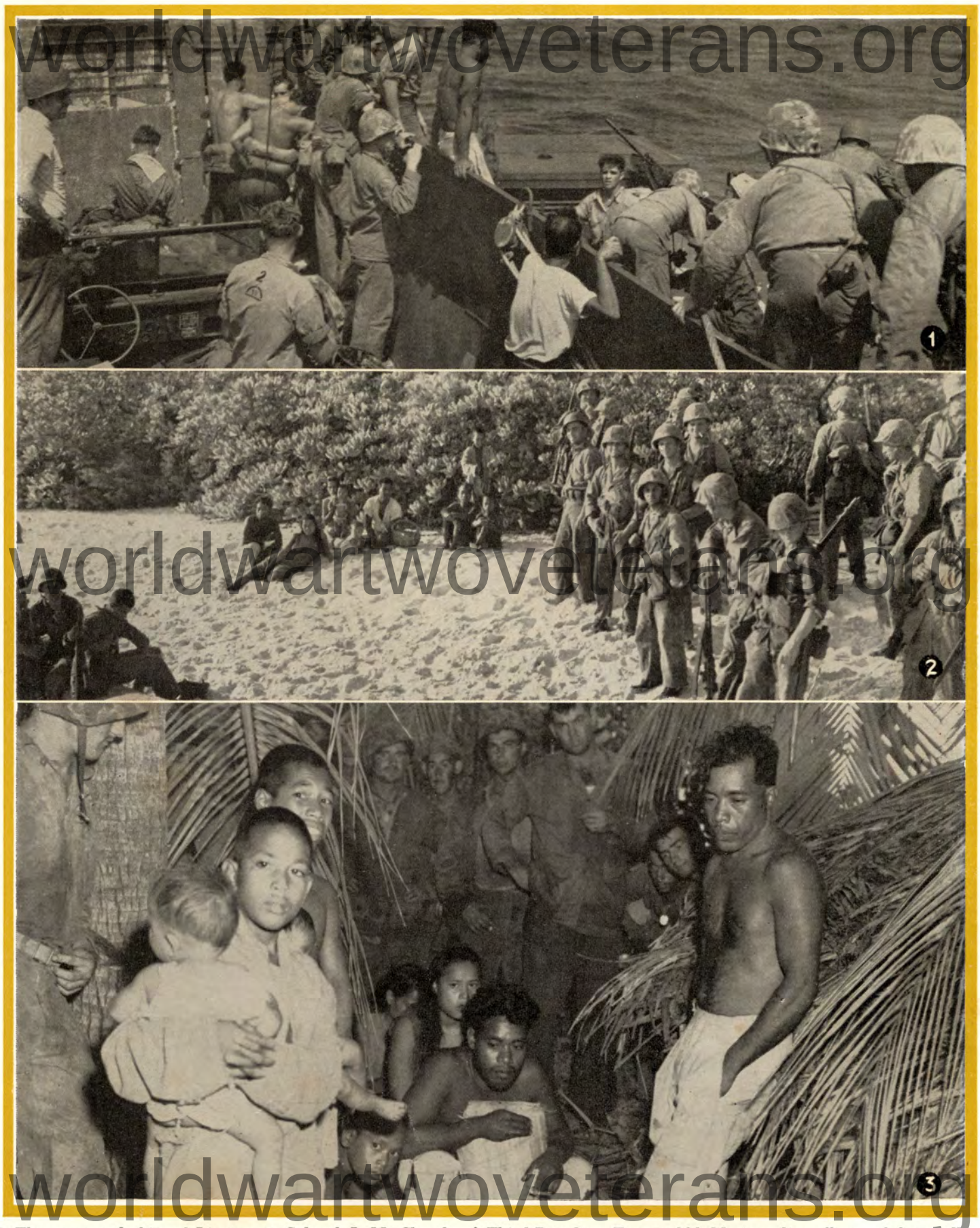



1–Twisted wreckage was all that remained of the pier on Namur after the naval bombardment. 2–This massive, German-type blockhouse, guarding the beaches, was destroyed by our naval gun fire. 3–Another blockhouse, with walls four feet thick and gun apertures covered by sliding steel panels, was captured in the attack.

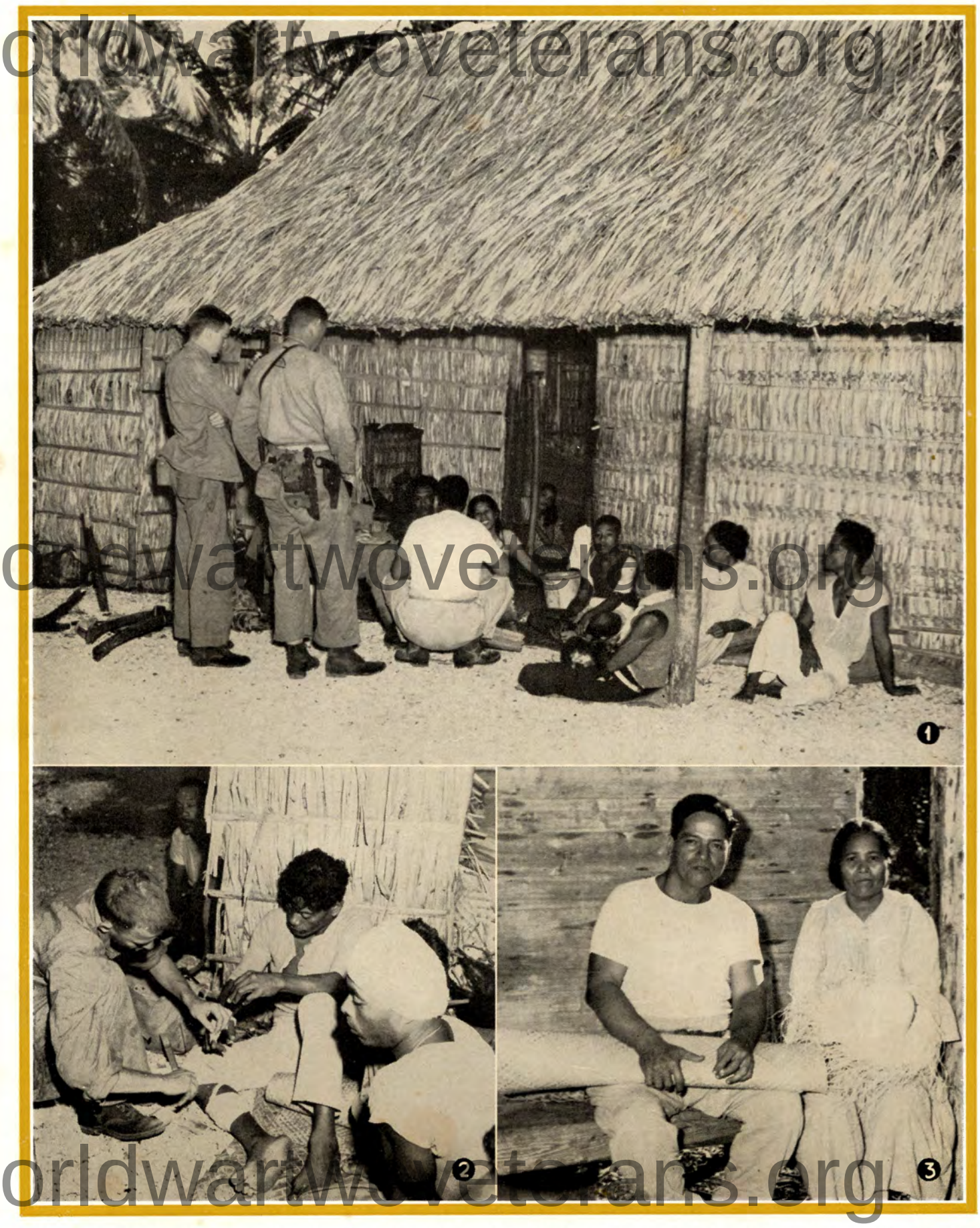





1–A few water-storage tanks withstood the bombardment, as is evidenced by these two which remained intact on Namur. 2–The communication building on Namur, with its partially destroyed radar screen, is surrounded by wreckage from other buildings. 3–The ground, devastated by our bombardment, was dangerously strewn with live torpedo warheads, shells, and bombs.

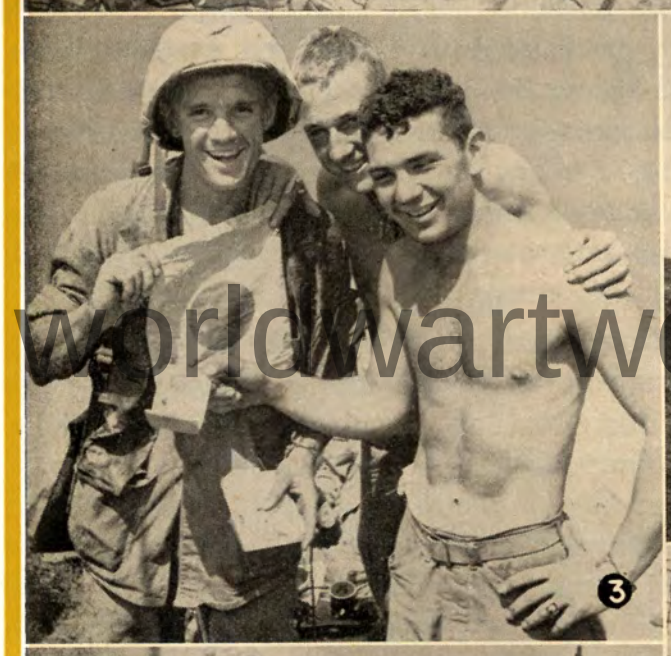


1–The command ship of Lieutenant Colonel J. M. Chambers' Third Battalion, Twenty-fifth Marines, lies off one of the smaller islands of Kwajalein Atoll. Two natives *(center)* were taken aboard from their outrigger and assisted the Marines in contacting other natives. 2–Finding no Japs on the island, Marines return to the beach to reembark, while the natives, whose fear has been overcome, accompany them to say farewell. 3–Two native families, sole inhabitants of a small island in the atoll, seemed bewildered by the landing of the Third Battalion, but eagerly accepted some K rations and cigarettes.



1–Natives on Ebadon Island, at the extreme western point of Kwajalein Atoll, eagerly listen to the interpreter's explanation of the reason for the landing made on their island. 2–This native on Ebadon Island willingly accepts first-aid treatment for cuts suffered on the sharp coral reef fringing the island. 3–Seated beside the interpreter who accompanied the Third Battalion on its landings, is the native woman who "ruled" the island.











1–Souvenir center. Here captured Japanese equipment was turned in for inspection, and if not required for military purposes, was returned to the finders as souvenirs. 2–Samurai swords, rifles, and beer received top billing on the souvenir-hunting list. 3–Japanese flags and small amounts of currency, uncovered in the debris, satisfied many who wanted only a small souvenir. 4–After a short time, little of souvenir value remained on this wrecked Jap bomber. 5–New York to Namur. Two New Yorkers momentarily forget the battle while they discuss old times. 6–Correspondents write copy and survey souvenirs in the "press club."

# IV: SAIPAN



ON MAY 29, 1944, slightly more than three months after returning from the Marshall Islands, the Fourth Division sailed for Saipan, capital and stronghold of the Marianas Islands. The importance of the operation was keenly appreciated by all hands. Saipan lay 3,715 miles from Pearl Harbor and was only 1,485 miles from Tokyo—within B-29 range of all points in the Japanese home islands. American possession of Saipan would also cut the enemy's supply and communication lines from Japan to her armed forces in the Southwest Pacific.

The over-all plan of attack for the Marianas operation called for Saipan to be invaded first, with the Fourth and Second Marine Divisions making the initial assault and the U. S. Army's Twenty-seventh Division landing in reserve. These three divisions constituted the striking force of the Fifth Amphibious Corps (designated Northern Troops and Landing Force for the operation), under the command of Major General Holland M. Smith, who also commanded the next higher echelon—Expeditionary Troops. A few days after the invasion of Saipan, Guam was to be invaded by the Third Amphibious Corps which was composed of the Third Marine Division, the First Provisional Marine Brigade and the U. S. Army's Seventy-seventh Division. Tinian was last and would be taken by the Second and Fourth Marine Divisions when they had completed the capture of Saipan. A grand total of 165,672 troops (attack forces plus garrison forces) was assembled for the combined operation—the largest body of American troops to be engaged in the Pacific up to that time and the greatest number of troops ever to fight under Marine command. Of the total, the Fourth Division, with reinforcing units, accounted for 21,618 troops.



Not only would there be more men engaged in the Marianas operation, but the United States Fifth Fleet, which furnished the naval forces to transport, land, and support the assault troops, constituted the largest assemblage of warships ever known in the Pacific. No less than 800 ships—from giant battleships and carriers to minesweepers—were under control of this fleet, commanded by Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, USN. In addition, Army and Marine air forces, flying from bases in the Marshalls and the South Pacific, conducted softening-up raids against the Marianas and neutralization raids against the Caroline Islands. To the west, submarines of Task Force 17 formed a screen for defense and observation, and a portion of the Fifth Fleet, under Vice Admiral (now Admiral) Marc A. Mitscher, USN, made air strikes against the Bonin and Volcano Islands to the northwest to neutralize Japanese airfields.

Thus the stage was set for the blow at Japan's inner empire. Saipan was the headquarters for the Japanese Central Pacific Fleet, its Thirty-first Army and Northern Marianas Defense Force. The town of Garapan was the administrative capital of the whole Marianas. An estimated 22,702 Army troops and about 7,000 "Imperial Marines" were stationed on the island as a defense force. Shipboard briefings, with the aid of relief maps, revealed that Saipan was 13 miles long by five and a half miles wide, that its terrain was rugged, with sharp ridges, fissure-like valleys, and many caves. The highest elevation was Mount Tapotchau, 1,554 feet high, in the center of the island. Sugar cane constituted the island's main crop; 20,000 civilians, three-fourths of them Japanese and the remainder Chamorro or Korean laborers, farmed the land and worked in the sugar mills. From a military standpoint, Aslito Airfield and the Tanapag Naval Base were Saipan's most important objectives.

To this general knowledge, briefing officers added information concerning various perils to the health of Marines. A battalion of the Fourteenth Regiment, according to Combat Correspondent John Campbell, heard its medical officer aboard ship describe these hazards.



"In the surf," he said, "beware of sharks, barracuda, sea snakes, anemones, razor sharp coral, polluted waters, poison fish, and giant clams that shut on a man like a bear trap. Ashore, there is leprosy, typhus, filariasis, yaws, typhoid, dengue fever, dysentery, saber grass, insects, snakes, and giant lizards. Eat nothing growing on the island, don't drink its waters, and don't approach the inhabitants."

At the conclusion of the lecture, the officer asked if there were any questions. A PFC raised his hand. "Sir," he asked, "why don't we let the Japs keep the island?"

There were times, during the first few days of the invasion, when this question must have run through the minds of nearly all Marines. For Saipan proved to be the most bitterly defended of the three islands, contained the greatest number of enemy troops, and boasted the most highly developed system of defensive positions.

Saipan, seen from the decks of transports, appeared deceptively unprotected. Even late photographic coverage of the beaches failed to uncover any formidable defenses; the pillboxes, blockhouses, and trenches which had confronted troops on Roi–Namur, seemed mystifyingly absent. The towns of Garapan and Charan-Kanoa lay in smoking ruins, and the big sugar mill north of Charan-Kanoa loomed like a gaunt blackened skeleton against the pink summer sky. For four days warships had raked the entire beachhead and shelled Aslito Airfield. Carrier planes had blasted fuel and ammunition dumps, from which thick black smoke rose in towering columns.

D-day was June 15, 1944. The plan of attack called for the Second and Fourth Divisions to land abreast on a 4000-yard stretch of beach, with the northern edge of Charan-Kanoa as the dividing line between the two divisions. The Fourth, still under the command of Major General Harry Schmidt, but with Brigadier General Samuel C. Cumming now Assistant Division Commander, would seize the town and the beaches to the south of it; the Second would land to the north. The Third and Second Battalions of Colonel Louis R. Jones's Twenty-third Regiment and the Second and First Battalions of Colonel Merton J. Batchelder's Twenty-fifth Regiment would constitute the assault forces, the Twenty-third landing on Beaches Blue 1 and 2 and the Twenty-fifth on Yellow 1 and 2. Meanwhile, the Twenty-fourth Regiment, under Colonel Franklin A. Hart, would stage a diversionary demonstration north of Garapan and then revert to Division reserve.

H-hour, originally set for 0800, was delayed until 0840. The landing beaches of the two divisions lay on the western shore of the island, extending from Agingan Point, the southwest tip, northward to a short distance below Garapan. A protective reef, some distance offshore, necessitated the use of amphibian tractors exclusively for the assault troops. The U.S. Army 534th and 773d Amphibian Tractor Battalions, in addition to the Marine amphtracs (350 vehicles altogether) put 4,000 Fourth Division Marines ashore in the first twenty minutes. Armored amphtracs of the U.S. Army 708th Armored Amphtrac Battalion, mounting 75mm howitzers, spearheaded the landing and blasted a path to the initial objective—a ridge line running parallel to the shore about a mile inland. The Marines achieved tactical surprise; there was no serious interference with this amphibious blitzkrieg.

There was opposition, of course, but not so much from the beaches, which were virtually undefended. It was artillery, mortars, and antiboat guns that caused trouble for incoming waves. Shells spouted in the surf and many tractors never made it; their crews were trapped or thrown clear and picked up by other boats, if they were lucky. The enemy's guns were ranged in on the beaches too. The harmless looking island *had* proved deceptive.

However, most of the assault troops were ashore and dispersed before the Japs could concentrate their fire. The plan to drive inland to Mount Fina Susu and its adjoining ridge succeeded only in part. The enemy, conducting an artillery defense, had withdrawn his infantry behind the ridge, and when our tanks and amphtracs drove over the marshy fields, heavy mortar and antitank fire met them. Through this fire, leading elements reached the slopes of the ridge. A mortar platoon of the Third Battalion, Twenty-third Marines, dug in near Mount Fina Susu, and with good observation of the enemy lines, poured a concentrated fire on artillery and mortar positions. When the infantry was ordered to withdraw late on the afternoon of D-day, the mortarmen stayed behind to cover the operation. When it came their turn to leave, the tubes were too

hot to handle, and most of the amphtracs had been knocked out. The mortarmen left their guns behind. (When the Third Battalion fought its way back to Mount Fina Susu sometime later, the platoon found its guns still in position. Hardly changing the range, they resumed firing in support of the new advance!)

All down the line from Charan-Kanoa and Lake Susupe to Agingan Point, Japanese artillery and mortar fire increased in intensity. The town of Charan-Kanoa had been passed through by the Third Battalion, Twenty-third Marines under Lieutenant Colonel John J. Cosgrove, Jr., and was occupied by the First Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Haas, who was later killed on Iwo Jima. Shells crashed into it with terrifying accuracy; casualties began to mount. The pier at Charan-Kanoa burned steadily under Jap bombardment, and its use for unloading supplies was denied to us.

On the southernmost beaches, Regimental Combat Team Twenty-five, in addition to the artillery barrage, encountered somewhat heavier small-arms fire. The experience of a platoon commanded by Second Lieutenant Fred B. Harvey, a former Harvard athlete, was typical of many in the confusion of the landing. A few minutes after he hit the beach, a Jap officer rushed at Harvey swinging a sword. The Marine officer parried the blow with his carbine and shot the Jap. Later he picked up an M1. Advancing inland with three of his men, he spotted three Japs in a shellhole. They rushed the Japs, but Harvey's M1 jammed. It was too late to change his mind, so he charged them with his bayonet and got in a couple of good slashes before a Jap threw a grenade at him. Harvey hit the deck as it exploded, knocking off his helmet. His own men by this time had opened fire, and their Lieutenant was spared the further indignity of ducking another grenade. When the platoon—or what was left of it—reached its objective at the end of the day, 31 men remained. The others had been killed, wounded, or lost in the action.



And so it was all down the line. The enemy had an unusual proportion of heavy weapons, and the terrain was all in his favor. On the Division's right flank, the First Battalion of the Twenty-fifth had penetrated only 700 yards. Accurate mortar fire against our front slowed the advance considerably. Tanks had been scheduled to come in by LCM through a channel in the reef, but the channel was under such heavy and accurate artillery fire that they had to be unloaded at points along the reef and had to make their way ashore under their own power. By noon, most of the Fourth Tank Battalion had landed and was supporting the infantry assault.

Everywhere the severity of the battle grew. Shells rained down with deadly effect. On the left, the Third Battalion of the Twenty-third, which had made the greatest advance, was met with point-blank fire. The First Battalion, Twenty-fifth, on the extreme right, continued to receive withering enfilade fire from Agingan Point. The enemy was making a determined effort to smash the invasion on the beaches. Wrecked tanks, burning amphtracs, dead Marines, and aid stations filled with casualties, were mute evidence that the Division had a tough fight on its hands.

Describing the appearance of the island after our terrific bombardment, Combat Correspondent Jack Vincent wrote at the time:

"Nearly every house on the island had been smashed into a pile of rubbish. Factories had been shelled and destroyed. Sugar cane fields were burned over and palm groves denuded. Hidden foxholes, dugouts, and ammunition caves labyrinthed every hill. Oxen, goats, cows, and chickens roamed over the island and native civilians cowered in caves, waiting for a chance to give themselves up to the mercy of the Americans."

The rubble and dug-in defenses slowed down the front line troops considerably, and to make matters worse, fire on the beaches and in the surf became so heavy that reserves and supplies could not be brought up to support the assault units. The order was given for these advance elements to draw back to a more tenable position for the night. By dark our beachhead had a maximum depth of 1500 yards, although at many points it was much narrower.



In spite of the heavy fire on the beaches, the Fourteenth Regiment was ashore by 1700, and two of the

battalions were firing as darkness set in. Needless to say, this boosted the morale of the troops, who had begun to wonder where their own "big stuff" was. The Twenty-fourth Regiment also landed and proceeded to set up a secondary line of defense. General Schmidt and advance elements of the Division command post came in at 1930.

The situation was not good. The enemy still held the commanding ground forward of the Marine positions. Our lines were broken in places, and a serious gap existed between the Division left flank and the Second Division. Expecting a counterattack during the night, virtually everyone stayed awake.

A counterattack *was* launched, but as it happened, the Second Division bore the brunt of the attack. Aerial observers had reported during the afternoon that Japanese troops had been holding ceremonies in Garapan, with parades, patriotic speeches, and flag waving. At about 2000, enemy infantry, in platoon columns paced by tanks, moved down the shore road. Naval gunfire dispersed most of these troops, and Second Division tanks and halftracks took care of the rest; but an attack against the Twenty-fifth Regiment did force our lines back nearly 400 yards. This ground was retaken when daylight came. Infiltration attempts were especially successful in the Lake Susupe swamp area between the flanks of the two divisions, and a sizeable force of enemy got through to Charan-Kanoa before they were finally killed. Enemy artillery fire continued all night and casualties mounted.

Our own attack was not resumed until 1230 the next day. All divisional artillery was ashore and despite heavy counterbattery fire, was gradually locating and knocking out Japanese field pieces. One howitzer, named *Belching Beauty*, caught a direct hit in her gunpit which killed or wounded every member of the crew except one, but the gun was repaired and put back in action. Out of 15 batteries ashore, four were knocked out during the day; all were later repaired and put back into the fight. In one case, the Division Ordnance Company actually made one howitzer from the parts of two artillery pieces that had been knocked out of action by enemy fire.

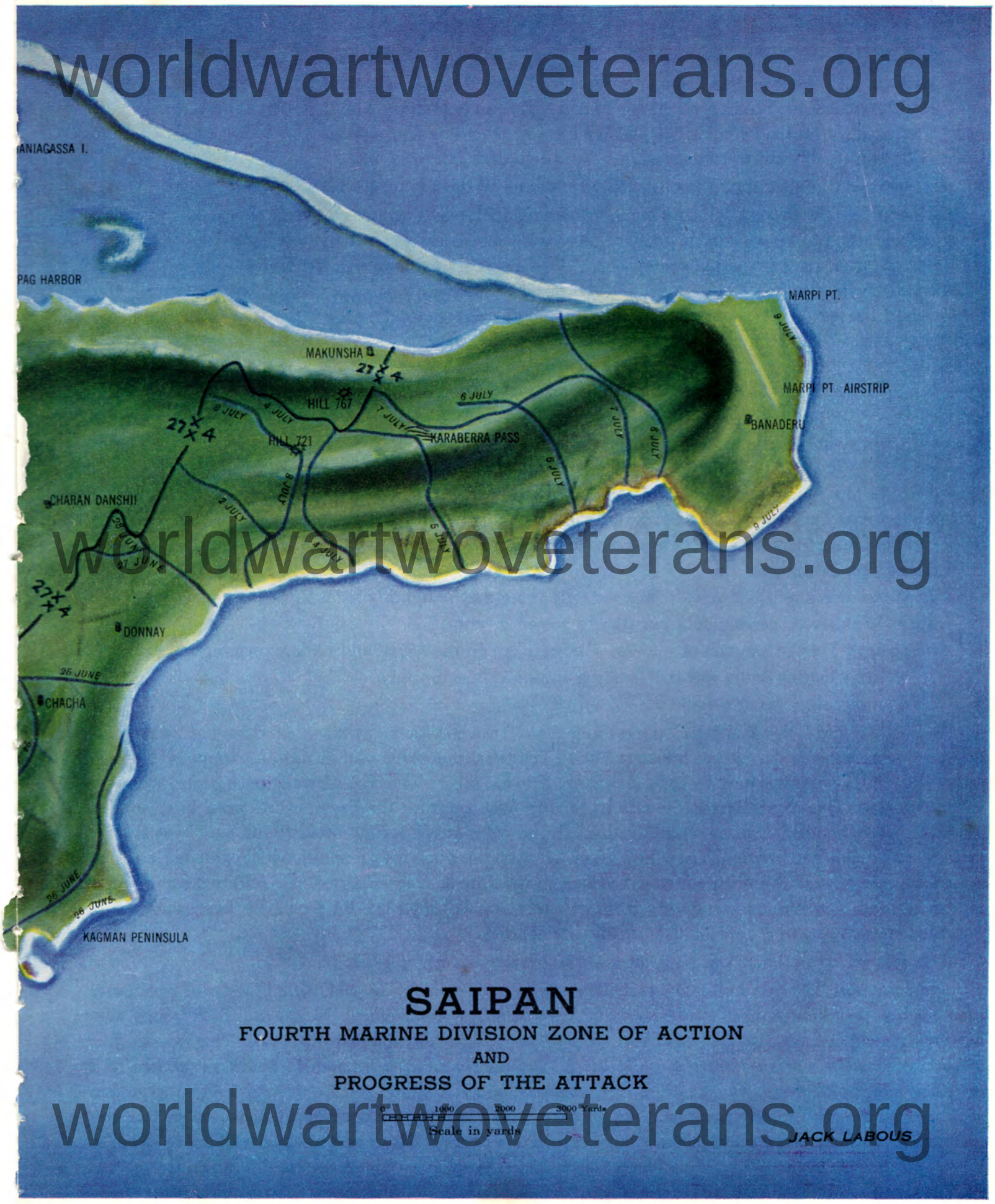
The Japanese had again mustered all their strength to stem the attack, and by 1730 we had advanced but a few hundred yards at the most. The battle had now settled down to a slugging match. Except for the left flank, the Phase Line 0-1 had been secured, and we were gaining the advantage of terrain. During the night of June 16-17, elements of the U.S. Army's Twenty-seventh Division were landed, and the 165th Infantry moved into the line to support the drive on Aslito Airfield. The severity of battle was indicated by an announcement that the Division had suffered 2,000 casualties in the first two days.

The second big enemy counterattack, during the night of D plus 1, also stemmed from the Garapan region and was again met by the Second Division. In all, 36 Jap tanks were destroyed—virtually the entire enemy mechanized strength on Saipan.

On D plus 3 it was apparent that the core of enemy resistance was badly shattered. Our gains were costly, but they were significant. By the evening of D plus 3 the Twenty-fifth Regiment could see the eastern shore of lower Magicienne Bay; the Third Battalion of the Twenty-fifth had secured a portion of Aslito Airfield. (Since Aslito Airfield came into the U. S. Army 165th Infantry's zone of action shortly thereafter, that portion taken by the Third Battalion was turned over to that regiment.) Thus, the southeastern segment of the island was almost cut off, and the Fourth Division was in position to sweep northward up the eastern half of the island.

The character of the fighting had been different from that in any other Pacific invasion. As Combat Correspondent Gilbert Bailey wrote at the time:

"The Japanese fell back gradually, by night, to the natural caves and prepared bunkers in the interior of the island, burying their dead as they went and dragging their equipment with them. A series of rocky ridges running down from Mount Tapotchau stretched in both directions along the length of the island; they were honeycombed with caves, each of which was a personal fortress. Between the ridges were open



fields studded with bunkers and dugouts camouflaged with top soil. Other fields were filled with sugar cane which provided good hiding places for snipers. The last quarter mile on the eastern side was a strip of viny, tangled underbrush dotted with huge boulders which formed a plateau overlooking the sea. Cliffs descended abruptly, but there were no paths down their sides."

This was the type of terrain the Division encountered all the way up the island.

Although the enemy maintained a stubborn defense for 25 sweltering days, yielding ground only under the combined weight of our infantry, artillery, and air power, it was the first three or four days of fighting that will always be remembered as the toughest. On Roi–Namur, Marines of the Fourth Division had not experienced enemy artillery or anything like the savage resistance which the Saipan Japanese put up on the ground. The men of the Fourth were still, in a sense, green. They did a lot of praying—and then joked about the danger. "Three times in the past four days," one man said, "my wife has almost been a rich woman. I could see them counting out my insurance bills ten dollars at a time and the wife riding down town in a new Packard roadster with a spotlight on each side."

"That guy talking, he's our morale," the section leader said. Morale was needed on Saipan. In the Twenty-third Regiment, the biggest morale builder those first terrible days, was the First Battalion's Gunnery Sergeant Norvell Mills. Gunny Mills had spent five months on Guadalcanal and wasn't going to be bluffed by the Japs. He moved incessantly among his company, standing up while most of the men were reluctant to lift an eyebrow out of their foxholes. He laughed when his men felt like crying. He shook his fist at the Jap lines and swore at them in a voice like a pack howitzer when his men could hardly summon a croak out of their dry throats.

"They're only recruits," he yelled, "and the only thing they're fighting for is a drink of our water."

Later: "We may be getting hell, but they're gettin' it worse."

And again: "They're a bunch of ——'s. I've seen 'em on the 'Canal and I know they can't fight."

For five days Gunny Mills was the cheering section of his company.

"He's our morale," the men said.

Despite the initial shock of heavy opposition, the offensive spirit never wavered. Hand-to-hand fighting was not infrequent. To call the honor roll of all heroes is impossible within the limitations of this history. They will be remembered by their comrades, if by no others. . . . The Marine, for instance, who saw a Jap officer dart from behind a tank to attack a buddy, and wresting the Jap's sword from him, slit his throat. . . . And another, who, in an attack through the palm grove beyond Mount Fina Susu, was shot in the arm, suffered grenade wounds, saw his clothes catch on fire when his ammunition belt exploded, charged a machine gun nest with grenades, and killed five Japs before he was evacuated. . . . And two communication men, who were sole survivors of a team of ten after a Jap shell had hit their post, kept communication lines open by rigging up captured Japanese telephones. . . .

This was the spirit, and these were the men who made victory possible.

Homage must be paid too, to countless others who gave their sweat and their blood and sometimes their lives so that the invasion would not fail. They were not all riflemen. Negro ordnance troops who went ashore with assault units unloaded 5,600 tons of ammunition in the first 33 hours. The Pioneer Battalion shore parties worked ceaselessly to set up dumps and evacuate the wounded. Tanks, in the forefront of the fighting, suffered heavy casualties; one, commanded by Sergeant Wayne R. Fish, caught seven Jap shells before the crew could get out and reach safety. VMO-4 made its operational debut on Saipan and maintained constant observation of the enemy for the use of our artillery and naval gunfire; each plane in the squadron made 20 three-hour hops the first ten days and at least one a day thereafter. Corpsmen took all the punishment the Marines took without a chance to fight back. One corpsman, Pharmacist's Mate Third

Class Ernest Dobronte twice rescued the crews of burning tanks. The hazardous actions took place only three days apart; Dobronte was awarded the Silver Star for each action.

Assault Engineers and Pioneers, attached to infantry battalions, found themselves fighting as line troops. To them fell much of the "dirty work" of blowing up caves and fortifications and removing minefields and roadblocks, often under fire. Because many caves were inaccessible, Engineers had to lob their satchel charges from cliffs overhead. Once a team of three men formed a human chain and lowered themselves down the face of the cliff. The man at the bottom, Sergeant Charles C. Bucek, threw several grenades into the cave and finished it off with a heavy charge of explosives.

The Fourteenth Regiment gradually eliminated all enemy artillery pieces in its sector, hurling a total of 40,003 shells into Jap positions during the first week. From data furnished by Intelligence, the artillery systematically destroyed the Japanese water points, fuel and ammunition dumps, broke up their troop concentrations, and harassed their supply routes. But it was not only the cannoneers who deserved credit; the Regiment's forward observers and wire teams lived, fought, and took all the risks of front-line troops so that our shelling would be accurate. (Over 200 miles of telephone wire between FO posts and artillery batteries had been laid by the time the battle ended; 45 men were killed and wounded putting in these lines.)

Amphtracs were an incalculable boon, as every Marine who watched them operate could testify. Day and night they snorted back and forth across the lagoon under Jap shellfire, bringing supplies from the transports right up to the front lines. They plowed through swamps and over fields that no truck could negotiate. On return trips they brought wounded to the hospital ships. At night they patrolled the lagoon against the possibility of a sneak landing by the enemy. When such a landing was attempted early one morning, they alerted for action, but the Jap boats turned in along the Second Division beaches south of Garapan and were disposed of by the craft in those waters.

"Don't let them tell you any *one* outfit won this battle," a Marine said when it was all over.

Slowly the Division, with three regimental combat teams abreast, hacked its way up the island. On June 17, word came that the Japanese fleet was heading for Saipan. For the next six days, fleet units departed to intercept this threat, and all transports pulled out for safer waters. This left the Division without the customary naval gunfire support or the steady flow of supplies. Ammunition stockpiles were reduced to a "bare minimum." Then the news was received that our ships had completely shattered the Jap sortie, destroying five vessels and 402 planes. Morale was high.

During this time Marines encountered another new and somewhat bewildering problem—civilians. Japanese, Chamorros, and Korean laborers had fled their homes at the outset of the invasion and had taken refuge in the hills. As troops advanced, whole families, from aged grandfathers to tiny infants, were flushed out of hiding. Terrified and fully expecting to be killed, they threw themselves on our mercy, frequently choosing the hours of darkness to come out. This created a ticklish problem for our men, for it was difficult to distinguish Jap soldiers from Saipan farmers who wore much the same type of clothing. Nevertheless, thousands of them were safely escorted to the beach, where civil affairs personnel placed them in compounds, provided them with food, and gave them medical care. The intermingling of civilians with enemy troops continued to be one of the most bizarre aspects of the battle and reached its climax in the closing days, when hundreds chose to kill themselves rather than surrender.

Although much of the fighting was against an unseen enemy who concealed himself in scores of coral-limestone caves, a crucial pitched battle occurred on June 19-20 when the Fourth Division attacked Hill 500, near Magicienne Bay. Seizure of this dominating height was essential for our drive against the heights surrounding Mount Tapotchau. A company of the Twenty-fifth Regiment, commanded by Captain James G. Headley, made the first assault, which met with murderous Japanese fire. Headley and 100 men charged the hill and found themselves suddenly pinned down by six machine guns grouped around a cave. It was a

tight spot, and the Marines hugged the deck for half an hour while a fusillade of bullets split the air above them in every direction. Headley received orders to withdraw. One man had been killed and 30 wounded. Headley himself had been wounded twice, although not seriously.

Slowly, inching their way back down the hill and dragging the wounded with them, the remaining men crawled to a safer position. Then as they neared their own lines, the very ground seemed to blow up in their faces. A hidden ammunition dump had exploded, possibly set off by remote control. When the smoke cleared, 20 more had been wounded. In less than an hour, the 100 men who had made their way up Hill 500 had suffered 51 casualties. It had been a disastrous morning.

Throughout the day mortar and artillery fire were poured on this strongpoint. The next morning Headley led a new attack, with Lieutenant Colonel Justice "Jumping Joe" Chambers personally directing. The men went up the hill in an old fashioned hell-bent-for-leather charge. Enemy machine guns were silenced with grenades and flame throwers; Japs, dashing from caves and bunkers, were cut down with rifles and bayonets. Grenade duels and hand-to-hand fighting went on simultaneously at a dozen places. The dazed Japs fell back, were killed. An hour and a half after the start of the attack, Hill 500 was ours.

"We lost 90 men but we came across a-hellin' and took our objective," Colonel Chambers said later. He himself had been wounded by concussion when a Jap land mine exploded and was taken, unconscious, to a field hospital.

From now on it was a long rugged fight up the island. The enemy knew he was licked. His fleet had been turned back in disgrace, and his air force at most could send but a few "Washing Machine Charlies" over the island at night. Nevertheless, he determined to make the invaders pay the highest price for the conquest. With the terrain still in his favor, he fought obstinately from every cave, gully, and hill. Every foot of advance was paid for in lives. It was during this part of the battle that Lieutenant Colonel (now Colonel) Evans F. Carlson, Division Staff Officer and famed leader of a Raider battalion in the South Pacific, was wounded while helping to evacuate an injured radioman.

And it seemed at times as if Saipan were all hills: Marines captured one only to be confronted with another. These, and other typical terrain features, acquired such names as Radar Hill, Dead Man's Gulch, Poison Ridge, Impostor's Hill, Death Valley, Nameless Crag, and Back-Break Hill. Each was a bitter reminder of the thing for which it was named.

During the next six days the Division surged forward in a relentless sweep. On one day alone, June 22, it made a gain of 2500 yards and extended the front to the base of Kagman Peninsula. The U. S. Army's Twenty-seventh Division now held the center sector of the line, tying in with the Twenty-third Marine Regiment on its right and the Second Division on the left. However, the Army Division failed to keep pace with the Marine advance, and the interior flank of the Fourth Division was stretched to such an extent that three battalions were required to fill the gap. On the night of June 25-26 some 500 of the enemy broke out of Nafutan Point, attacking our rear and necessitating a delay in our advance while Marines turned their attention to this "front" that had suddenly been created at their rear. On June 27, however, the attack was resumed with a gain of 3000 yards. The Fourth then halted to allow the Army Division to catch up. This required four days.

Meanwhile, Mount Tapotchau, highest point on the island, was taken by the Sixth Regiment of the Second Division. Yet it was a reconnaissance patrol from the Twenty-fifth Regiment, led by Sergeant Major (now First Lieutenant) Gilbert L. Morton, that first scaled this formidable elevation. The men had no sooner reached the top when they found themselves surrounded by the enemy. Digging in among boulders and natural revetments, they held the ground against a series of counterattacks, first from one side, then from the other. Slowly the little band was whittled down. Permission came for them to withdraw. It was then that Morton had to make the hardest decision of his life. Should the remaining men go back,

leaving their dead and wounded comrades to the harsh mercies of the Japanese, or should they stick it out at the risk of everyone being killed? Night was coming on and escape from the trap would not have been too difficult.

The Sergeant Major polled his men. There were no dissenting votes. Every man agreed to stay and they settled down to fight it out. For 12 hours the Japs hammered at the tiny bastion atop Mount Tapotchau. The black night favored the Marines. Jap after Jap went down trying to dislodge them. Morton strangled two of the enemy with his bare hands. Marines were hit too. Ammunition ran low. Water was gone. There was hardly a man in the patrol who had not been wounded, but those who could, went on fighting. In the morning another patrol rescued them and carried the dead and wounded down the mountain to safety. Only five of the original band were still alive. Sergeant Major Morton was one of them and was awarded the Navy Cross for his bravery.

By July 2 (D plus 17) all three divisions were nearly abreast and ready to launch a drive to seize the northern part of the island. With the Twenty-third and Twenty-fourth Regiments in the assault, good progress was made. The following day the Twenty-fifth was put on the line, and the attack continued with all three regiments abreast. Stiff resistance at Hill 721 stopped the advance, and it was not until the following day (July 4) that this and another strongpoint, Hill 767, were stormed and taken. It was in honor of the date that Hill 721 was named "Fourth of July Hill" by the men who took it.

Garapan and Tanapag Harbor had already fallen to the Second Division. It was now decided to swing the Division's right flank around until the line roughly paralleled the island's axis and to attack downward from the high ground toward the western shore. This pivot took the next two days. With the enemy now contained on Marpi Point and a narrow corridor running southward to a point just above Tanapag, the stage was set for the final squeeze.

We now had more than three-fourths of Saipan, but the conquest had not been cheap. Our casualties had been heavy, and combat efficiency was down to "75 per cent, with troops approaching physical exhaustion." (Commanding officers, however, set the figure for combat units nearer to 50 per cent.) But the end of the battle was in sight, and the men fought with undiminished ardor.

For the Japanese, too, the end of the battle was in sight. Choked off in a small neck of the island, hopelessly outnumbered, their artillery destroyed, and their troops disorganized, they had no choice but to surrender or perish in a last *Banzai* for the Emperor.

General Saito, in keeping with tradition, chose the *Banzai* method for his men to join their ancestors, exhorting them, through a written message, copies of which were discovered during the occupation of Marpi Point Airfield on July 9:

MESSAGE TO OFFICERS AND MEN DEFENDING SAIPAN

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

["Seven lives to repay our country" was the password designated by the Japanese in a battalion order setting the attack that resulted in a breakthrough from Nafutan Point on the night of June 25-26.]

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 *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 the welfare of the country and I advance to seek out the enemy.

Follow me!

July 1944

C. O. NORTHERN MARIANAS DEFENSE FORCE

C. O. DISTRICT FLEET



The *Banzai* attack was directed against the U. S. Army's Twenty-seventh Division and was eventually stopped by the Second Marine Division's Third Battalion, Tenth Marines (artillery). An estimated 3,000 enemy troops, including walking wounded mustered in field hospitals, many armed with nothing more than pointed sticks and bayonets, followed General Saito's last instructions and converged, under cover of darkness, along the western shore above Tanapag. The attack was a surprise. During the bloody hours that followed, elements of this tatterdemalion army penetrated up to 3000 yards behind the lines of the Twenty-seventh Division and engaged the Marine artillerymen at point-blank range before they were finally stopped. Entire companies were cut off; the battle continued throughout the following day. By evening, almost every Jap in the attacking force had been killed. Casualties on our own side were also heavy—an estimated 1,500. And General Saito, after launching the *Banzai* assault, retired to his command post where he committed *hara-kiri.* "We must utilize this opportunity to exalt true Japanese manhood," he had written. But Japanese manhood lay dead and scattered along 2000 yards of beaches above the once powerful Tanapag Naval Base.

American manhood wrote the final chapter of Saipan. With the failure of the Japanese attack, resistance in the northern neck of the island crumbled. The Twenty-third, sweeping westward from the high ground, cleaned out a few last pockets of stubborn Japs. The Twenty-fourth and Twenty-fifth drove northward against negligible opposition. It was here that, "the crowning horror of the whole campaign was enacted. Some hundreds of fleeing civilians had taken refuge on the northern shore and in caves in the cliffs which faced it. Now, believing themselves to have reached the last extremity, they set about a veritable orgy of self-destruction. Mothers and fathers stabbed, strangled, or shot their screaming children, hurled them into the sea and leaped in after them, all in plain view of Marines atop the cliffs. . . . Surrender pleas were largely in vain. Many who wished to do so were prevented by Japanese soldiers." (Major Frank O. Hough, USMC.)



At 1220, July 9, after 25 days of continuous fighting, Old Glory went up on Marpi Point. Combat Correspondent Bill Dvorak described the ceremony (or rather lack of it, for troops were still mopping up resistance on the Marpi Point airstrip) which was held by Regimental Combat Teams Twenty-four and Twenty-five. The flag had been brought ashore by the Twenty-fifth's commander, Colonel Merton J. Batchelder, and turned over to Lieutenant Colonel Hollis U. Mustain, who was later killed on Iwo Jima.

It was run up on a Jap telephone pole. A few hours later an official flag-raising was held at Corps Headquarters which marked the securing of the island.

To the men who saw it flutter, our flag marked the end of 25 gruelling, bitter, heartbreaking days. Heartbreaking because of incidents like this, which happened to Sergeant Mike Plasha. Mike had won the Silver Star on Roi–Namur and was something of a hero to the boys in the Twenty-fifth Regiment. On Saipan, he risked his life to rescue a wounded buddy under enemy fire. From a hospital ship, the wounded Marine sent Mike a note. It read: "Thanks, Mike, for saving my life." The message was never delivered. On the last day of the battle, Mike Plasha was killed—trying to save another wounded Marine.

The battle to persuade helpless civilians to surrender went on. Public-address systems were brought to Marpi Point and the Japanese informed that the battle was over. A battalion of the Twenty-fourth utilized a public-address system in conjunction with armored amphtracs which approached the shores of Marpi Point and successfully evacuated civilians from caves and rocks. But in general our efforts were complicated by the intermingling of civilians with fanatical Japanese soldiers who were using them as shields. Many caves in which they hid, furthermore, were almost inaccessible. Add to this their stubbornness and it was not surprising that the process was slow and arduous. Hundreds hid out for months, surrendering at last to garrison troops who scoured every nook and cranny of the island.

Altogether, the Fourth sustained 5,981 casualties in killed, wounded, and missing—27.6 per cent of the Division's strength. But 23,811 Japanese soldiers were known to be dead and 1,810 had been taken prisoner. We had won the most important Pacific base to date. Saipan was more than a mere stepping stone to Tokyo. It was an intersection on the main highway.

There was a satisfaction in victory that assuaged the unutterable and humbling weariness which resulted from the battle. Now a new challenge faced the men of the Fourth: it was announced that the Division would make the beachhead on nearby Tinian two weeks later.


1–Marpi Point as it appeared from a reconnaissance plane prior to the arrival of the American forces. Construction of the airstrip had not yet begun. 2–Aslito Airfield and southern Saipan as seen during a reconnaissance mission prior to D-day.

Supporting the assault forces, a destroyer opens up on the beach with her five-inch guns.

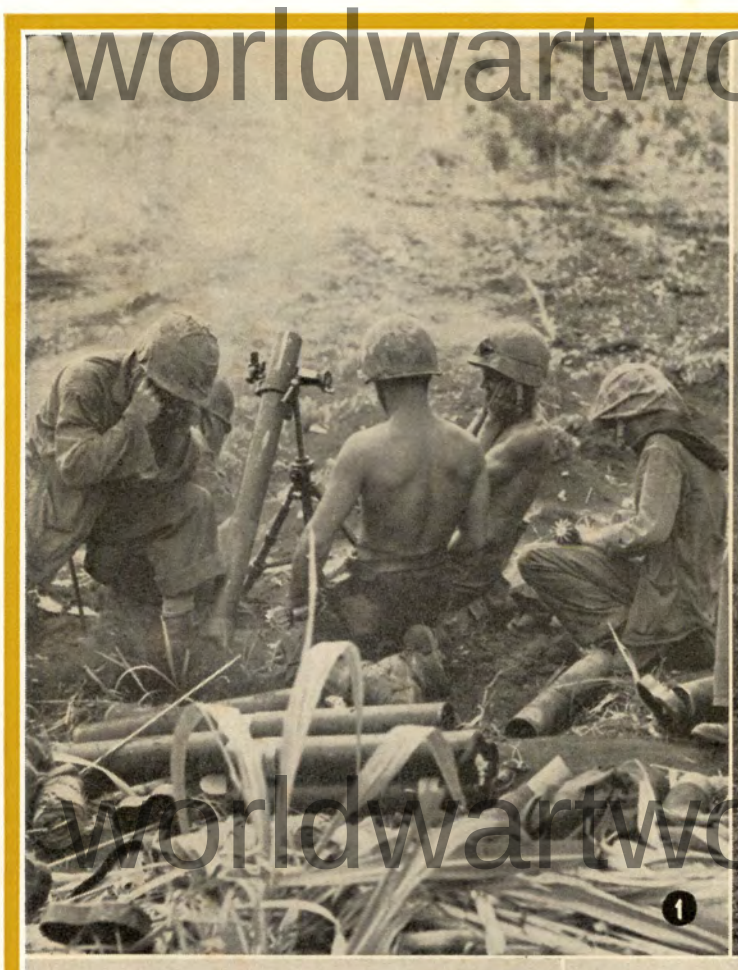


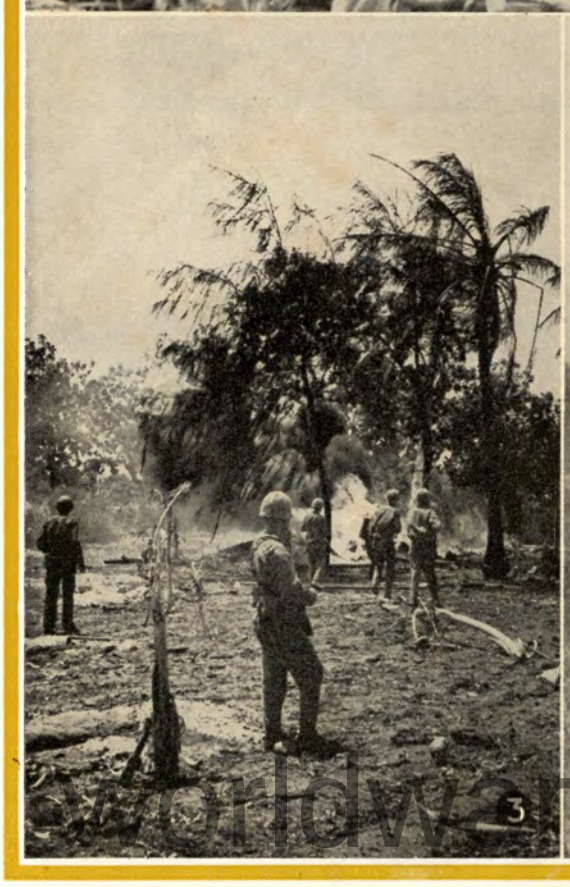
1–The Island of Saipan looms in the distance, her beaches smouldering after the heavy air and naval bombardment. 2–Through the smoke and haze surrounding the island, assault troops head for the beach in their LVTs.



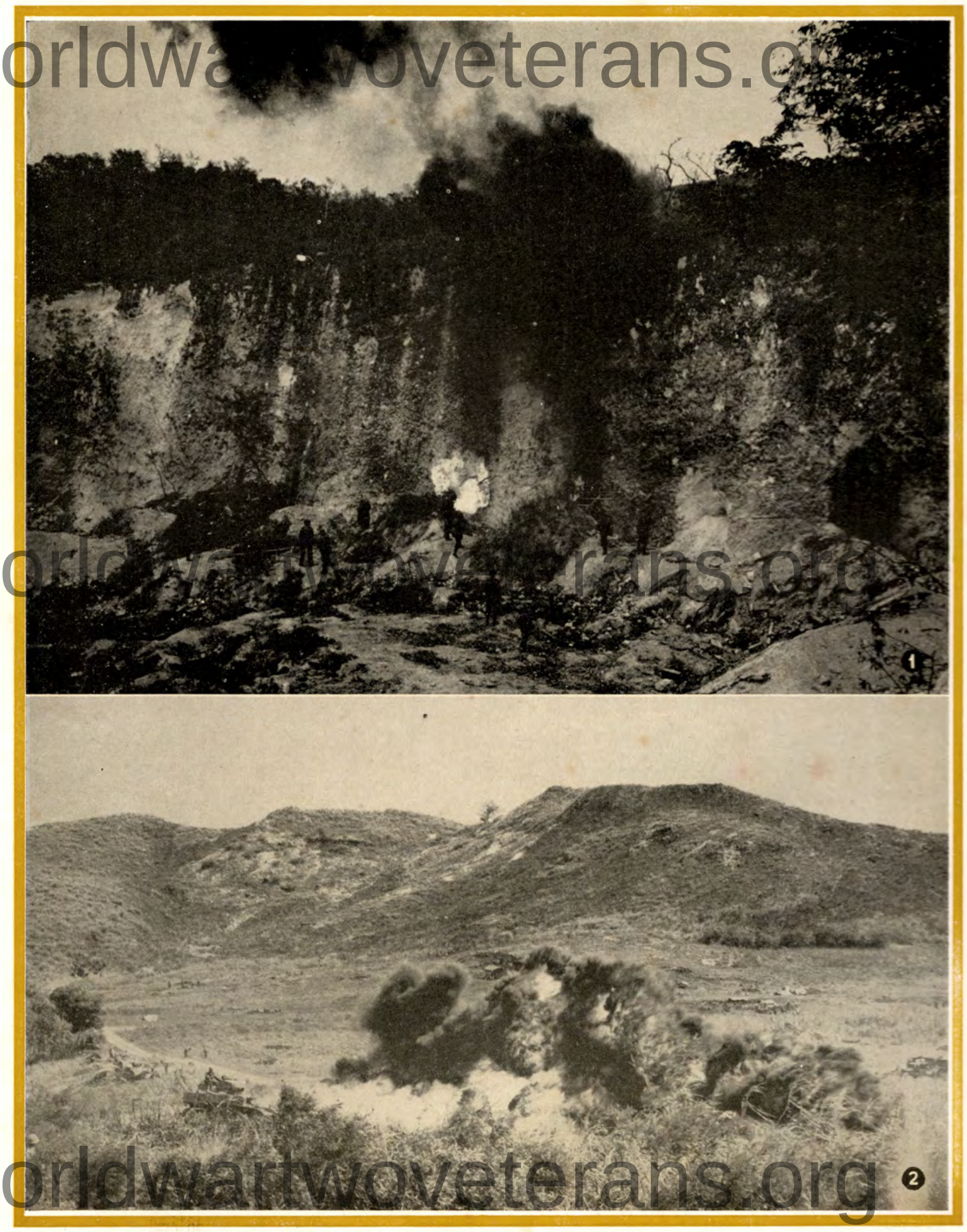

1–After securing a beachhead, infantrymen move inland and wait while our artillery neutralizes Jap batteries to the front.
2–A platoon leader gives the order for the advance. Burning buildings of Aslito Airfield are visible in the distance.


1–The wounded receive emergency treatment at a first-aid station on the beach before being transferred to transports anchored off shore. 2–The Division Hospital, set up in a grove of coconut palm trees.





1–An 81mm mortar crew supports riflemen in the drive inland. 2–A 37mm gun crew goes into action against a Jap installation. 3–A flame thrower is used to clear the enemy out of a low-lying bunker camouflaged by a clump of coconut palms. 4–Supported by tanks and artillery, infantrymen advance on Hill 500.



1–In a fortified quarry, flame throwers are used to assault the deep caves. 2–Jungle brush had to be worked over by a flame-thrower tank to flush the concealed Japs.

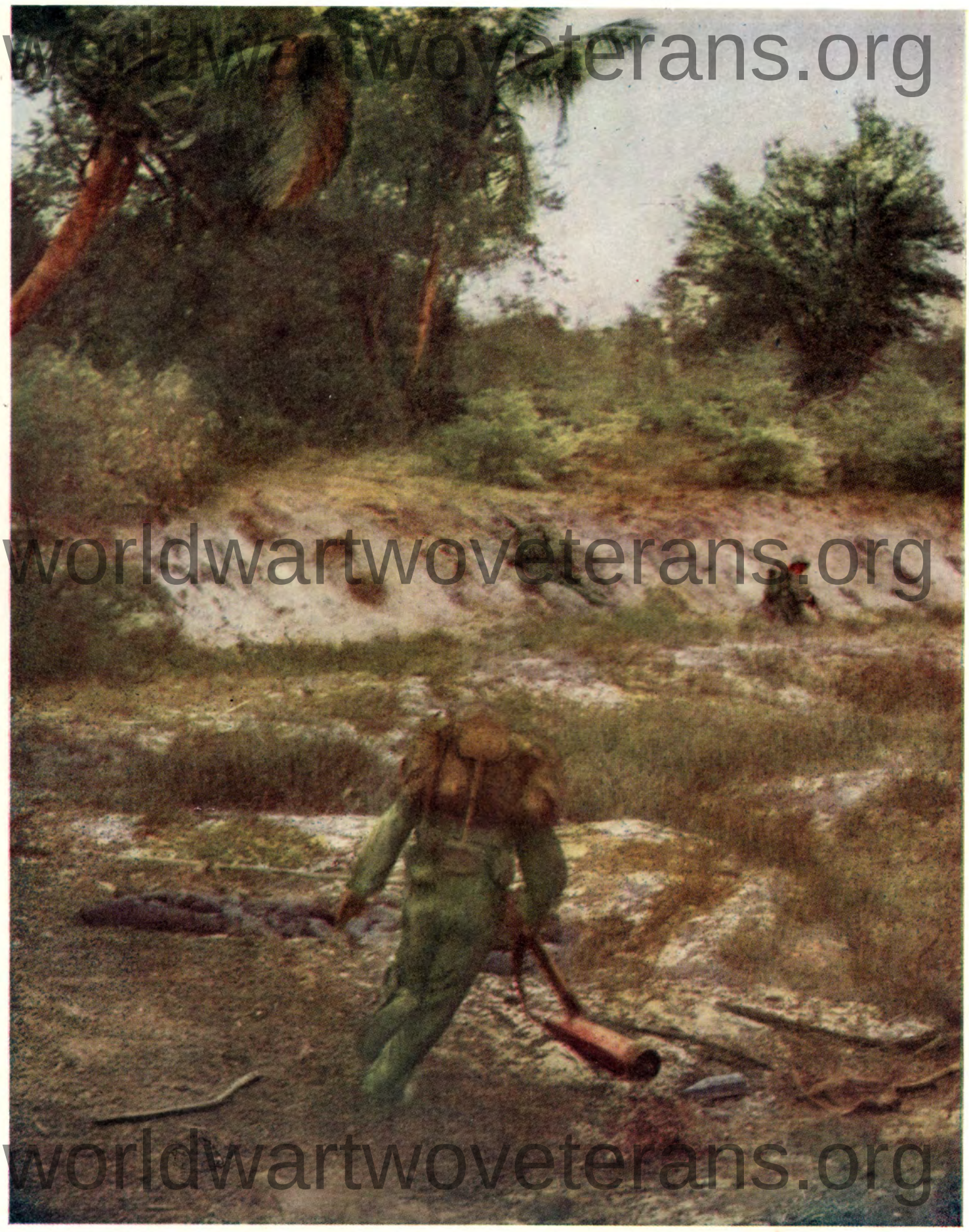



1–Infantrymen move up to the front near Magicienne Bay. 2–Marines take advantage of this unique spot to rest before moving up to the front lines again.

1–Infantrymen search a native farm hut for enemy troops before continuing the advance. 2–Tired Marines, returning from the front, are relieved by fresh troops waiting to move into the line.

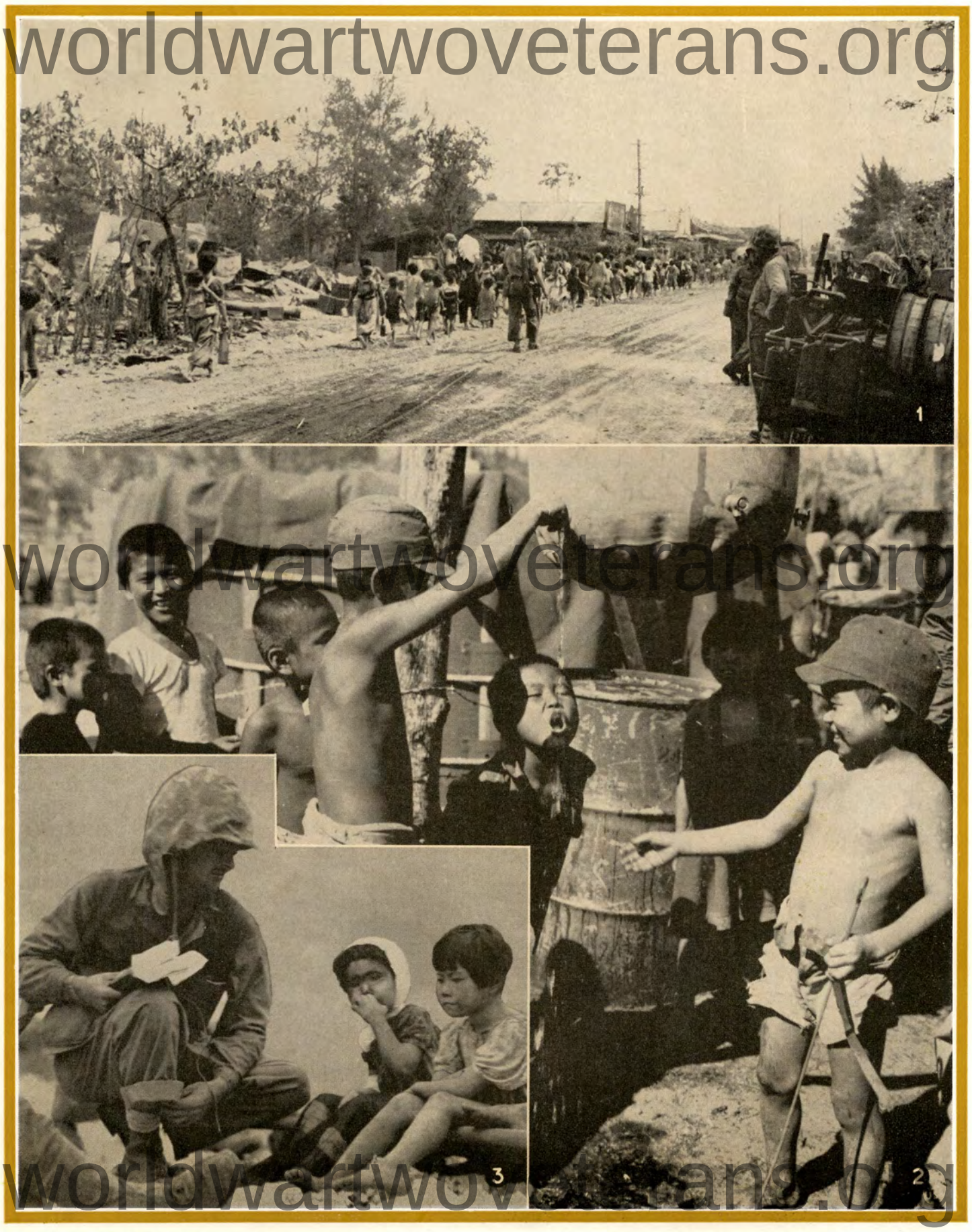



1–At a water-distillation point along the beach, Engineers fill five-gallon containers with fresh water for thirsty Marines.
2–Water-distillation points such as this one were frequently attacked by enemy troops in search of water.

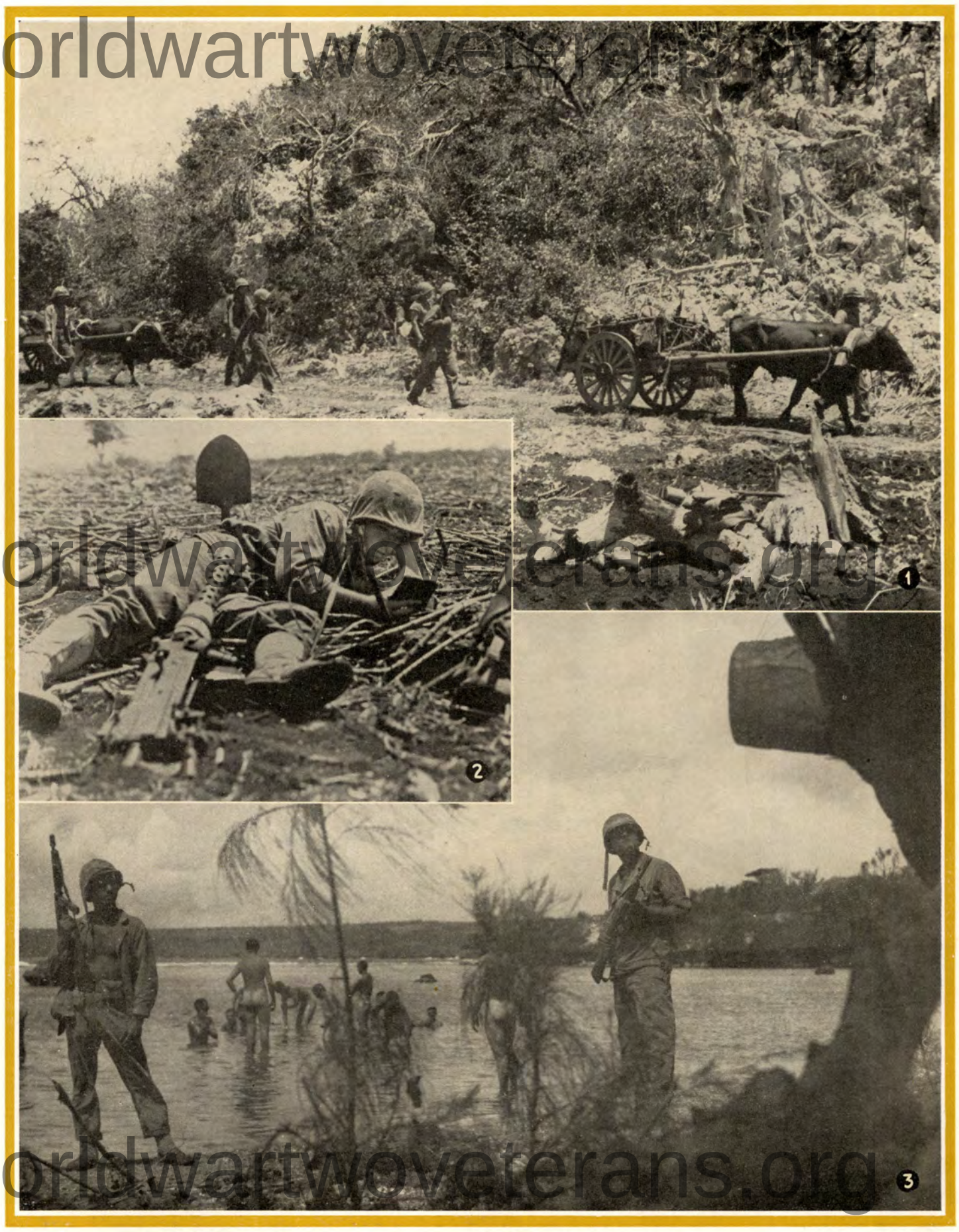


Moving on the double to avoid enemy fire, a Marine heads for the protection of a sandy ridge before advancing on another enemy position.

1–An automatic-rifle man pauses behind the front lines to make a cup of hot chocolate. 2–A water drum proves to be a fair desk for the typewriter of this combat correspondent. 3–From a hill overlooking the front lines, the effect of artillery fire from our batteries is observed by Colonel J. R. Lanigan, Lieutenant General H. M. Smith, Major General H. Schmidt, and Colonel L. R. Jones. 4–Observing the progress of the attack from an observation post of the Twenty-fifth Marines are Brigadier General S. C. Cumming *(left)* and Colonel M. J. Batchelder. 5–In the Division Command Post, General Schmidt *(right)* discusses the enemy situation with Lieutenant Colonel McCormick.



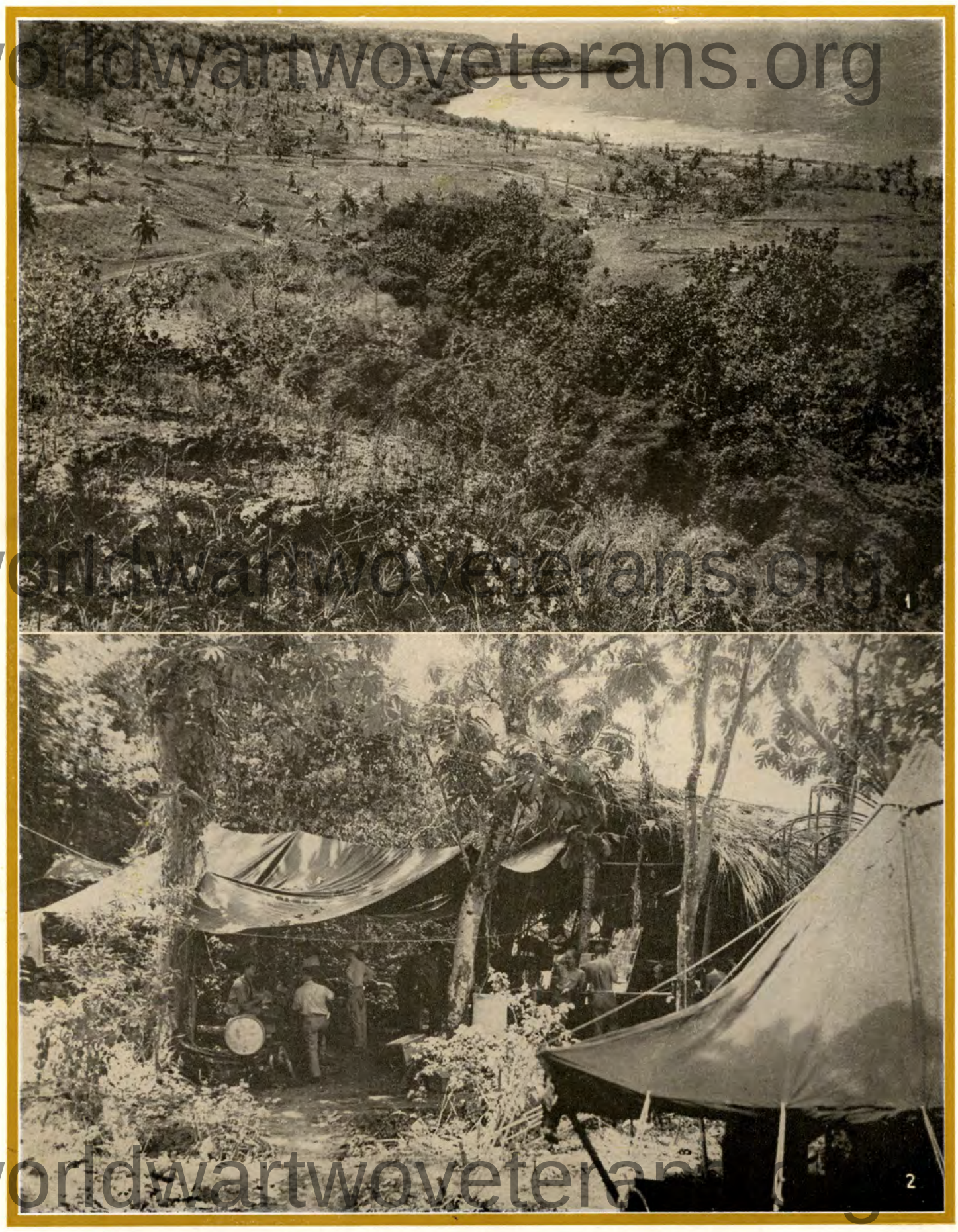

1–While the battle for Saipan still rages in the north, native women and children are taken through the wreckage of Charan-Kanoa to an internment camp. 2–Saipan children get a drink—and a bath too—from a Lyster bag at the internment camp set up by Marine Civil Affairs. 3–An interpreter tries to comfort two native children who were found in a cave.



1–The transportation problem is partially solved as ammunition is moved to the front by native oxcarts. 2–During a lull in the battle, a Marine machine gunner turns to his prayer book as he rests in a cane field. 3–As a Marine and a soldier stand guard, troops get a chance to wash and swim in the ocean.




1—Rocket trucks go into action . . . 2—. . . rockets on the way . . . 3—. . . prepare to move out . . . 4—Rockets were effective!



1–The Division Command Post was located in this tree-covered ravine near Magicienne Bay during the final phase of the battle.
2–A part of the command post in the ravine near Magicienne Bay.

1–In contrast to the rocky crags and caves were these rolling hills and fields of sugar cane. 2–With tanks leading the assault, riflemen move slowly across an open cane field.





Sniper! These Marines halt near Saipan's "Natural Bridge" to locate a Jap sniper.

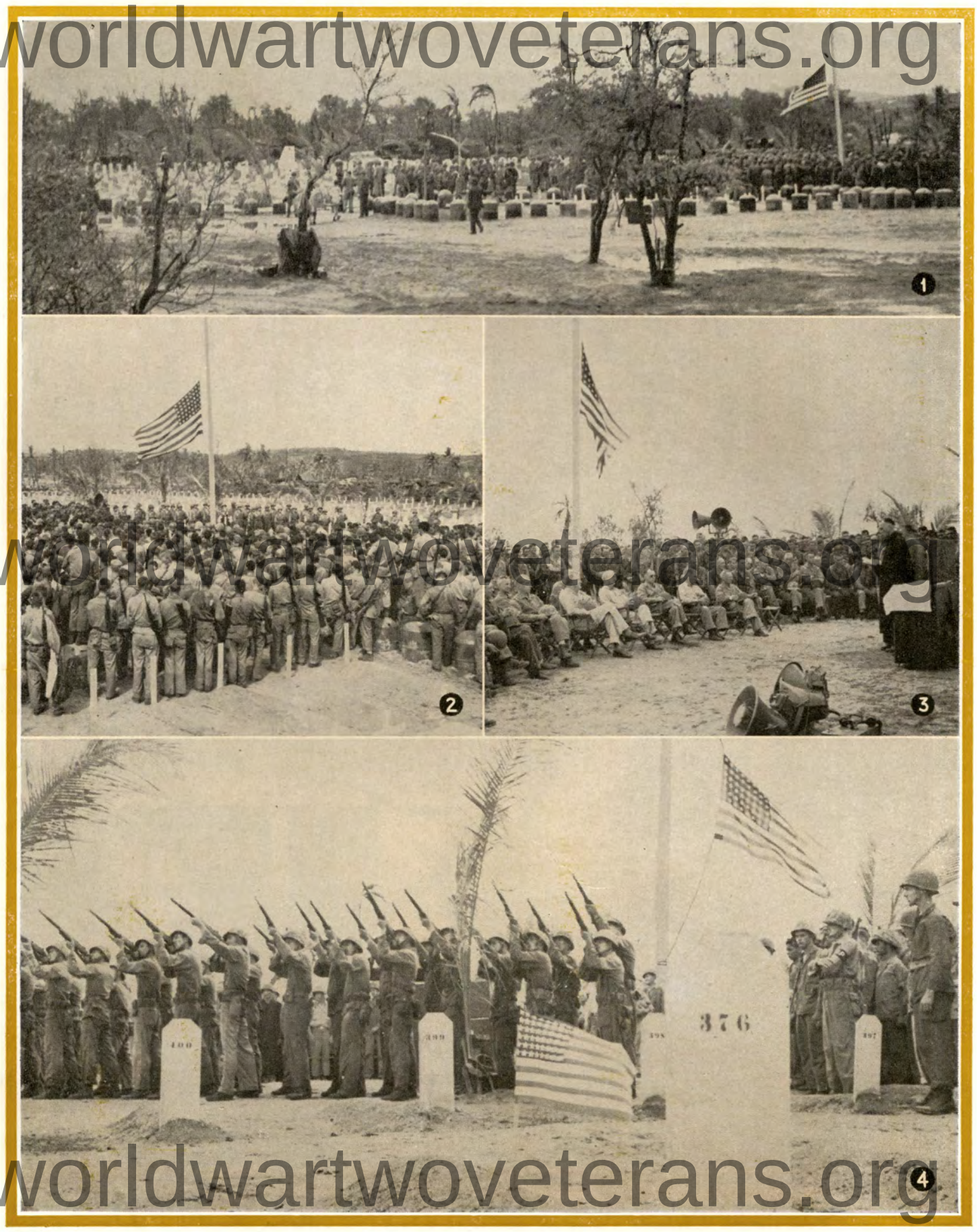




1–Marine tanks assist in the final phase of the battle on Marpi Point while observers atop the cliff look on. 2–A 75mm howitzer crew laying down preparatory fire as the infantry prepares to advance on Marpi Point. 3–An oil dump goes up in flames on Marpi Point as our tanks wait to move in. The coral rock in the foreground was to have been used by the Japs in the completion of the airstrip.

With the cliffs of Marpi Point towering above them, these Marines cautiously move in to clean out Jap snipers from their last redoubt on Saipan.

1–The Division Staff on Saipan *(seated, left to right)*: Colonel W. W. Wensinger, Colonel W. F. Brown, Brigadier General S. C. Cumming, Major General H. Schmidt, Colonel W. W. Rogers, Colonel L. G. DeHaven, Colonel W. I. Jordan; *(standing)* Lieutenant Colonel W. R. Wendt, Colonel M. C. Horner, Lieutenant Colonel G. L. McCormick, Commander W. C. Baty, and Lieutenant Colonel W. W. Buchanan. 2–Colors are raised at Corps Headquarters on July 9, the day on which the island was declared secured. 3–Colonel W. I. Jordan reads the order by which Major General C. B. Cates succeeds Major General H. Schmidt as Commanding General of the Division on July 12, 1944. 4–General Cates *(left)* takes over command of the Fourth Marine Division from General Schmidt as the latter assumes command of the Fifth Amphibious Corps.




To honor their comrades who gave their lives in battle, officers and men of the Army, Navy, and Marine Corps attend the dedication ceremonies at the Division Cemetery. 1–Colors flew at half mast . . . 2–"May choirs of angels receive thee . . ." 3–"Lord, Thou hast been our dwelling place for generations . . ." 4–The rifles of thirty men sounded three volleys. . . .






1–Charan-Kanoa from the air. The ruined sugar mill and the railroad yard lie in the foreground with Lake Susupe visible farther inland. 2–Charan-Kanoa as seen from the ridge overlooking the western shore of Saipan. 3–Before the assault on Saipan this was a part of the sugar mill. 4–The sugar mill left little doubt that the pre-invasion bombardment had been effective. 5–Flatcars, loaded with sugar cane, stand on railroad sidings as curious Marines inspect the small locomotives.

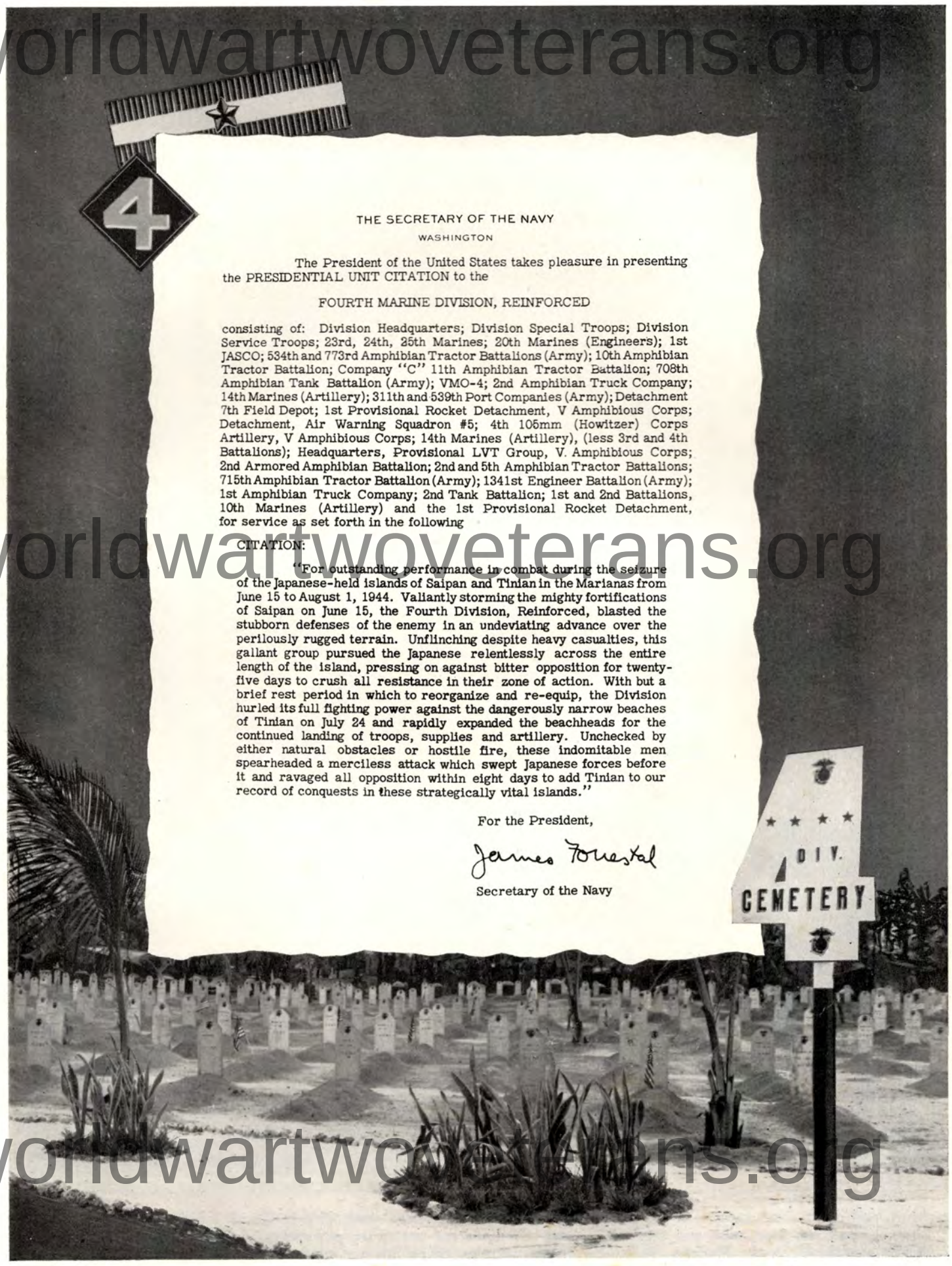
1–The cliffs and hills of Saipan were ideal for caves and were so used to the fullest extent. Here, a small shrine, untouched by war, stands protected by the towering cliffs. 2—After the battle—a swim in the ocean near the bivouac area.


1–One of several ruined hangars on Aslito (now Isley) Airfield. 2–Aslito Airfield was not long in waiting for American planes to land. Mount Tapotchau lies in the distance. 3–Following the Iwo Jima operation, this Superfortress was dedicated in honor of the Fourth Marine Division at the B-29 base on Saipan.




1–One of the two Japanese naval howitzers covering Magicienne Bay. 2–Marines warily examine an enemy field gun and its shattered emplacement. 3–This emplacement, as well as others, had not yet been completed when overrun by our troops. 4–These two Jap positions never reached completion. At the extreme left is the framework for the second position.

1–Heavy steel doors—and Japs—guarded the entrance of this subterranean vault in the side of a hill. 2 and 3–In gigantic caves, ammunition, food, *sake*, and beer were stored. Civilians and enemy troops captured on Saipan benefited by the food after it was seized by the Marines. 4–Typical of the countless caves, this one, too, was stocked with food and ammunition against the day of invasion by the "American devils."




THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY

WASHINGTON

The President of the United States takes pleasure in presenting the PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION to the

FOURTH MARINE DIVISION, REINFORCED

consisting of: Division Headquarters; Division Special Troops; Division Service Troops; 23rd, 24th, 25th Marines; 20th Marines (Engineers); 1st JASCO; 534th and 773rd Amphibian Tractor Battalions (Army); 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion; Company "C" 11th Amphibian Tractor Battalion; 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion (Army); VMO-4; 2nd Amphibian Truck Company; 14th Marines (Artillery); 311th and 539th Port Companies (Army); Detachment 7th Field Depot; 1st Provisional Rocket Detachment, V Amphibious Corps; Detachment, Air Warning Squadron #5; 4th 105mm (Howitzer) Corps Artillery, V Amphibious Corps; 14th Marines (Artillery), (less 3rd and 4th Battalions); Headquarters, Provisional LVT Group, V. Amphibious Corps; 2nd Armored Amphibian Battalion; 2nd and 5th Amphibian Tractor Battalions; 715th Amphibian Tractor Battalion (Army); 1341st Engineer Battalion (Army); 1st Amphibian Truck Company; 2nd Tank Battalion; 1st and 2nd Battalions, 10th Marines (Artillery) and the 1st Provisional Rocket Detachment, for service as set forth in the following

CITATION:

"For outstanding performance in combat during the seizure of the Japanese-held islands of Saipan and Tinian in the Marianas from June 15 to August 1, 1944. Valiantly storming the mighty fortifications of Saipan on June 15, the Fourth Division, Reinforced, blasted the stubborn defenses of the enemy in an undeviating advance over the perilously rugged terrain. Unflinching despite heavy casualties, this gallant group pursued the Japanese relentlessly across the entire length of the island, pressing on against bitter opposition for twenty-five days to crush all resistance in their zone of action. With but a brief rest period in which to reorganize and re-equip, the Division hurled its full fighting power against the dangerously narrow beaches of Tinian on July 24 and rapidly expanded the beachheads for the continued landing of troops, supplies and artillery. Unchecked by either natural obstacles or hostile fire, these indomitable men spearheaded a merciless attack which swept Japanese forces before it and ravaged all opposition within eight days to add Tinian to our record of conquests in these strategically vital islands."

For the President,

James Forrestal

Secretary of the Navy

# V: TINIAN



SINCE OUR LANDING ON SAIPAN, it had been apparent to the Japs that Tinian would be the next objective. Our warships and planes had bombed it daily and aerial reconnaissance had been conducted over all parts of the island. It was no secret that we were getting ready to add Tinian to our list of Marianas bases. The enemy, therefore, had more than a month to strengthen and add to his defensive positions.

Following Saipan, the Division was assigned a new commanding general. On July 12, 1944, Major General Clifton B. Cates replaced Major General Harry Schmidt, who became the Commanding General of the Fifth Amphibious Corps. Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith continued as Commanding General, Expeditionary Troops, and assumed command of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific. This command worked out and executed the brilliant plan that made the invasion of Tinian a model of its kind, called by many "the perfect amphibious operation."

Jig-day was set for July 24, 1944. To the Fourth Division went the task of making the assault landing. The Second Division was to land on J plus 1, and the U. S. Army's Twenty-seventh Division was to be held on Saipan in reserve. Marines will remember their surprise when the operation maps were first unfolded. The two beaches selected for the landing were but 65 and 130 yards wide. It seemed impossible that an entire division could be put ashore, against opposition, on these two tiny stretches of sand. Never in the course of the Pacific war had a unit of division strength tried to land on any beach smaller than twice the size of these two combined.

It was precisely this fact, that the landing *seemed impossible*, upon which the generals counted to fool the enemy. For if it seemed impossible to us, it certainly would also seem impossible to the Japs. Assuming this, we expected them to devote their main effort to defending the larger and more accessible beach at Tinian Town, on the southern half of the island. We would, so to speak, sneak in the back door while the Japs waited at the front. Added to this was the advantage of covering and supporting the landing by Corps Artillery based on Saipan.

Our theory was substantiated by reconnaissance carried on before the landing. Aerial reconnaissance was made by virtually the entire General Staff, including General Cates himself, regimental, and battalion commanders. This was another "first" for the Division—the first time in the Pacific that a planning phase included such complete reconnaissance of an enemy-held base by the key officers of an assault force. Documents captured on Saipan further supported the theory. Everything indicated that the Japanese believed the White Beaches on the northwestern side of the island to be too small to accommodate our heavy equipment—tanks, artillery, bulldozers, and trucks. With an estimated 9,000 troops to defend the island, which was approximately 25 square miles smaller than Saipan, the enemy would be forced to commit the main body of his troops at one or the other end of the island.

Aerial reconnaissance showed that the enemy was devoting most of his defensive preparations to the beaches at Tinian Town, working at night to construct numerous bunkers, pillboxes, and trenches. There was evidence that the beach was heavily mined. The streets of Tinian Town were fortified by an intricate system of bunkers which commanded all streets and intersections.

In a sense this was gratifying, for it indicated that our estimate of the situation was correct. We encouraged the defenders in their belief by concentrating most of our day-to-day bombardment on the town and on its beaches. The theory was further substantiated by the results of several reconnaissance missions performed by the Fifth Amphibious Corps Reconnaissance Battalion. Landing undetected from rubber boats on the nights of July 10 and 11, the scouts found that Beaches White 1 and 2 were very lightly defended and that the rough coral ledges on each side of the sandy portion of the beaches could be surmounted by foot troops, thus extending the width of the landing areas one or two hundred yards.

From these various sources we achieved a good picture of the enemy defensive setup on Tinian. This

was more remarkable considering that to the naked eye, Tinian was truly an "island of mystery." Lying just south of Saipan and separated from it by only three miles of water, it was under continuous aerial observation. Yet it might as well have been unpopulated, for our planes flew at treetop level without observing a single living thing. Even the thousands of civilians, joining in the enemy's game of "hide and seek," had literally moved underground. Photographs revealed continuous work on installations, but soldiers and civilians alike were not to be seen. The island's broad lowlands planted in sugar cane, its single peak, 540-foot Mount Lasso, and the sweeping ridge that formed its southern end, all lay peacefully in the summer sun. The enemy was maintaining the strictest kind of discipline to keep us guessing to the last minute.

Although our own plans were destined to turn the tables and beat the Japs at their own game, no effort was spared to destroy all known defenses. Beginning with the strike by Task Force 58 on June 11, the destruction rained on Tinian increased steadily. Jap shore batteries replied on occasion and several of our warships were damaged.

At the end of the battle of Saipan, as many as thirteen battalions of 105mm and 155mm howitzers and guns were set up on the southern shores of the island, and massed fire was brought to bear against targets on Tinian. Our planes, flying from Aslito Airfield, and warships of Task Force 58 systematically demolished Tinian's two completed airfields and left its town a mass of smoking rubble. Napalm incendiary bombs were used for the first time with good effect. An official statement from G-3 of the Expeditionary Troops Report later declared: "The preparatory bombardment delivered on Tinian prior to the landings exceeded in duration and deliberate destructiveness any previous preparation of the Pacific War."

The plan of the landing called for Regimental Combat Team Twenty-four to go ashore in a column of battalions on Beach White 1—the northernmost and smallest of the two beaches—while Regimental Combat Team Twenty-five was to land on White 2 some few hundred yards to the south. Regimental Combat Team Twenty-three, held in immediate reserve, was to come in on Jig-day after the assault troops had established the beachhead. The Fourteenth Marines would also land on Jig-day, four battalions of 75mm howitzers having been preloaded in DUKWs (amphibian trucks) in order to be readily available. (Two of these battalions, from the Tenth Marines, Second Division, were attached to the Fourth Division.) The Second Division was to conduct a diversionary demonstration off Tinian Town. To enable tanks and trucks to negotiate the rocky, steep beaches, pontoon causeways and special ramps built by Seabees during the battle of Saipan, were to be brought over in LVTs and LCVPs.

H-hour was at 0740. Long before, waves of LVTs had assembled behind the line of departure. The day promised to be bright and sunny after a night of rain in which troops, sleeping on the decks of LSTs, had been soaked. Smoke from the bombardment completely obscured the beaches, and when the boats were waved over the line of departure, guide planes overhead led the way. Thirty LCI gunboats laid down a wall of rocket and automatic-weapon fire.

Never, perhaps, had there been more apprehension in the minds of the men making an assault landing. They remembered the heavy mortar and artillery fire which had greeted them on Saipan. They knew, too, that if the Japs *had not* been fooled, if the enemy *had* anticipated our ruse and had zeroed-in artillery and mortars on the narrow beaches, the landing would be very difficult. Well directed artillery and small-arms fire could be disastrous to our troops. It would be like walking into a trap, and the landing might conceivably end in a fiasco.

Such, however, was not to be the case. Our strategy worked even better than we had dared hope. Opposition was officially "light" on White 1 and "moderate" on White 2. Occasional rifle and machine-gun fire and desultory mortar fire was the only opposition the two assault regiments encountered. The bulk of Colonel Ogata's troops—excellently trained and well equipped veterans of the Manchurian fighting

—waited behind their defenses at Tinian Town while we walked ashore on the two "impossible" beaches far to the north. The "razzle-dazzle" play was an unqualified success.

Against such light opposition, our troops moved in rapidly. Regimental Combat Team Twenty-four advanced toward Airfield No. 1; Regimental Combat Team Twenty-five went south along the coast and inland toward Mount Lasso. At 1630, Regimental Combat Team Twenty-three came ashore, and its Second Battalion took over the Division's right flank. All three regiments then drove ahead toward the Phase Line 0-1.

Everywhere the landing went smoothly. Supplies, preloaded in amphtracs and DUKWs, were brought directly to inland dumps. Tanks, routed to White 1 because of mines on White 2, negotiated the sharp ledge by means of the cleverly constructed ramps and were soon supporting the infantry. Four battalions of 75mm howitzers were ashore and were firing by 1635. The whole Division had landed within nine hours.

At 1730 the order came to consolidate positions for the night and to prepare for the counterattack which was expected. A beachhead 4000 yards wide and 2000 yards deep had been seized. And the cost? Fifteen were killed and 150 wounded—an unbelievably small price to pay for the achievement.

But what followed that night will probably live in the memory of Fourth Division Marines as a tougher fight than any single battle on Saipan. Indeed, the Japanese counterattack, for all practical purposes, *was* the battle of Tinian. For when it ended, all the heavy fighting was over. Japan's best troops had been decimated.



This was no wild, unorganized attack, made in desperation, but a well planned and carefully executed counterattack which had for its purpose the total destruction of our beachhead. That it failed completely was due to our well integrated and stalwart defense. Greener troops might have given way, but Marines of the Fourth Division were real veterans now and took in their stride the best the Japs could offer.

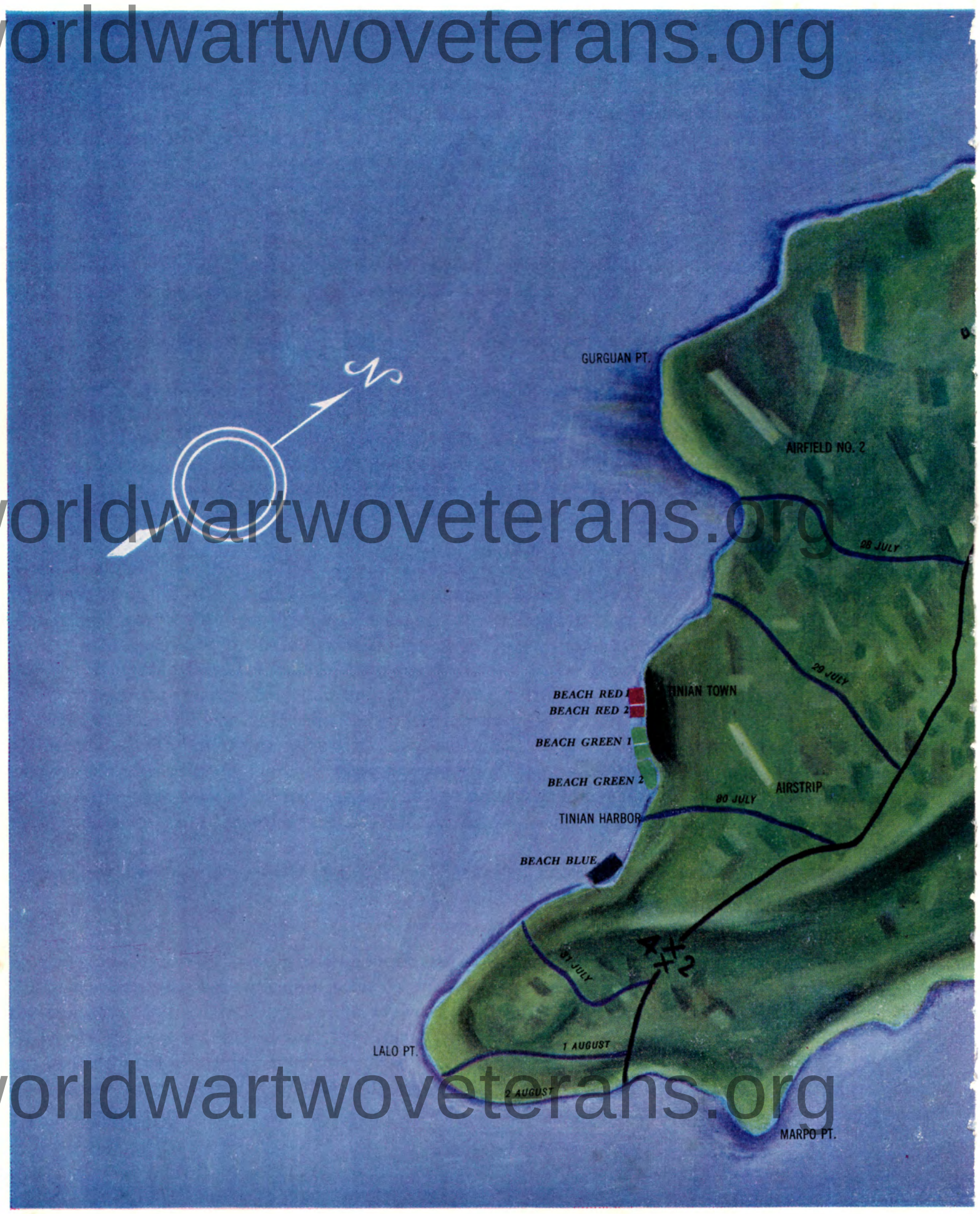
The attack was directed at several points of our perimeter defense simultaneously. At 0330, moving north along the main road leading from Tinian Town, clattered six tanks with infantry clustered on them, and more Japs following on foot. Previously, Japanese artillery had opened up on our beachhead. Marines had been alerted for the attack; all along the line 37mm gun crews, with canister and AP shells ready, lay in wait. Bazookamen were stationed at every likely tank approach. Suddenly, listening posts ahead of the Twenty-third's lines heard the rumble of tanks and relayed their approximate location to our artillery. The tanks were 400 yards away when the artillery opened up. Still the tanks came on. Then our antitank guns went into action.

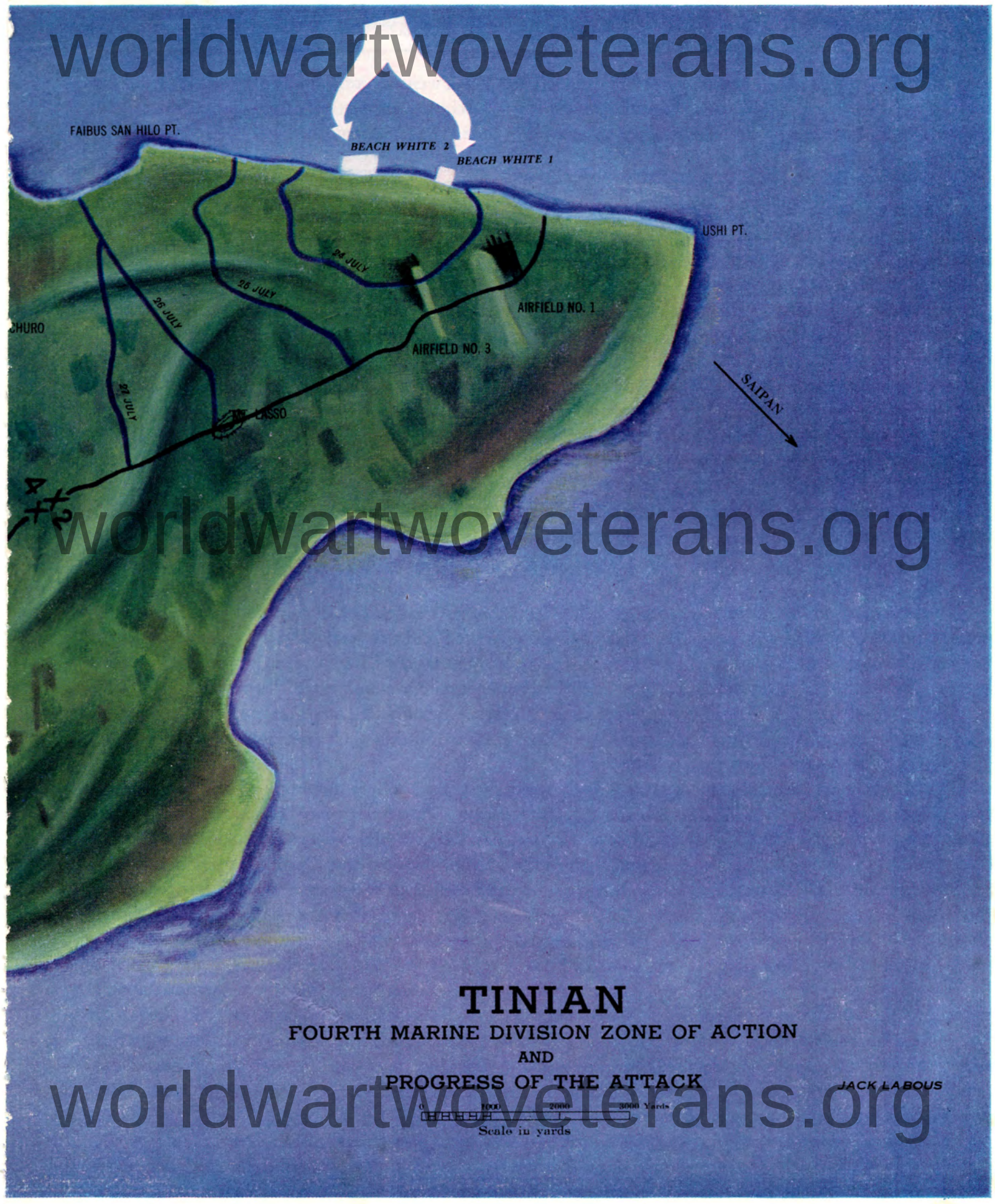
Lieutenant Jim G. Lucas, the Division's Assistant Public Relations Officer, who was with the Twenty-third that night, vividly described what followed:

"The three lead tanks broke through our wall of fire. One began to glow blood-red, turned crazily on its tracks, and careened into a ditch. A second, mortally wounded, turned its machine guns on its tormentors, firing into the ditches in a last desperate effort to fight its way free. One hundred yards more and it stopped dead in its tracks. The third tried frantically to turn and then retreat, but our men closed in, literally blasting it apart. . . . Bazookas knocked out the fourth tank with a direct hit which killed the driver. The rest of the crew piled out the turret, screaming. The fifth tank, completely surrounded, attempted to flee. Bazookas made short work of it. Another hit set it afire, and its crew was cremated."



The sixth tank, far to the rear, made its escape, running south along a railroad track and was found the next day, knocked out. Despite the shattering of their spearhead, Japanese infantry kept coming and





were soon fighting at close quarters with the Second Battalion, Twenty-third. Thirty-seven millimeter guns sprayed canister shot point-blank at the incoming waves. Machine guns rattled incessantly at the wildly charging Japs; bodies piled up by the dozen in every fire lane. The next morning 267 Jap dead were counted in this sector.

But Marines took their share of punishment, too. A 37mm gun crew, commanded by Gunnery Sergeant (now Second Lieutenant) John G. Benkovich, winner of the Silver Star and two Purple Hearts, suffered six casualties in the attack, including Benkovich himself. Realizing that the position would have to be abandoned, Benkovich directed evacuation of the wounded and then returned, alone, to dismantle the gun and render it useless to the enemy.

Gradually the attack in this sector was broken up. However, the Twenty-fifth, holding the center sector, was having its own fight. As early as 2230 this Regiment was experiencing pressure on its left flank and could hear the enemy forward of its Third Battalion front line elements. The first attack, at that time, was delivered by 500 to 600 Japs and was repulsed by close-range mortar and small-arms fire. The Japs retreated to the high ground ahead of the Battalion and there reorganized. At 0100 they struck again, this time at the juncture of the Twenty-fifth and the Twenty-fourth Regiments; and although hard fighting ensued, and many of the enemy were killed, about 200 broke through. Reorganizing in a swamp, they speared out in two directions, one group attacking a "breakthrough" platoon behind the Third Battalion lines, and the other group hitting to the northwest, deep within our lines, at our artillery positions. The attack was effectively checked by the "breakthrough" platoon which killed 91 of the enemy and by howitzer crews of D Battery, Second Battalion, Fourteenth Marines, who lowered their muzzles and let the Japs have it at point-blank range, killing 99.

The breakthrough had been bitterly contested. When the first indications of an attack were felt, two machine guns, manned by Private First Class Orville H. Showers and Corporal Alfred J. Daigle, were out in front and on the flank of their company. They saw a great number of Japs moving toward them across a field. Showers and Daigle held their fire until the enemy was 100 yards away, then opened up with everything they had. The Japs charged, screaming *"Banzai!,"* firing light machine guns, and throwing hand grenades. It seemed impossible that the two Marines—far ahead of their own lines—could hold on. Yet they killed most of the Japs.

The second wave came in—more than 200 charging Japs. Back on the main line of defense, Marines could hear the machine guns, their barrels red-hot, blazing away. They knew that Showers and Daigle were taking the brunt of the attack. They could have withdrawn to their own lines—no one would have blamed them—but they chose to stick by their guns. Then the guns of Showers and Daigle stopped firing.

The next morning Marines found the two men slumped over their weapons, dead. No less than 251 Jap bodies were piled in front of them. And altogether, on this company front, 350 Japs were killed during the night. For heroic action against the enemy, the Navy Cross was awarded posthumously to Corporal Daigle, and the Silver Star was awarded posthumously to Private First Class Showers.

Stories like this, with variations, happened all along the line. In the Second Battalion, Twenty-fourth's sector, one Jap attack was repulsed largely because of the good judgment of Sergeant John F. Fritts, Jr. Combat Correspondent Dick Tenelly described how Fritts, who had taken command of his platoon after the death of the platoon leader, deployed his men across a road that constituted part of the perimeter defense. The first warning of trouble came when a Jap patrol was sighted just before midnight. One of the platoon's machine guns dispersed the patrol but in so doing gave away its position.

Fritts did some quick thinking. He shifted his gun positions, putting automatic rifles in place of the machine gun, temporarily giving the impression that it was still there. The machine gun was moved to another spot. When the major enemy attack came at about 0200, the Japs directed their attention to the

automatic rifles, which were withdrawn in the nick of time. But by this time the enemy had revealed his own positions. The machine gun and a 37mm gun opened up; the surprised Japs became confused and disorganized. They fought bitterly, but by daylight 150 had been killed. All but one of Fritts' main gun crew were wounded.

Meanwhile, on the left flank, in the sector adjacent to the ocean, hard fighting was taking place in the zone of action of the First Battalion, Twenty-fourth Marines. At 0200, about 600 screaming Japs came down a road leading into the lines. The Battalion put up flares and opened up with 37mm guns, mortars, automatic rifles, machine guns, and rifles. Artillery registered on the area to the rear of the Japs, preventing a retreat, and our mortars fell in front of and among them, neatly confining the enemy to an area about 100 yards square. Fire continued for four hours, and when dawn broke, the enemy in this sector broke with it and began committing suicide with grenades. Four hundred and seventy-six bodies were counted here when the attack moved forward.

Daylight revealed the extent of the Jap carnage along the Division front; 1,241 bodies were counted, and an estimated 700 or 800 others had been retrieved by their comrades.

The loss of at least one-fifth of the Japs' effective strength in one night broke the back of the defense of Tinian. From then on the remaining troops were capable of only the most dazed and weak resistance. Three airfields, a dozen prepared strongpoints, Tinian Town itself, fell with no more than token resistance.

The First Battalion, Eighth Marines, had landed in the afternoon of Jig-day and had been attached as the Fourth Division reserve. On Jig plus 1, the remaining elements of the Eighth Regiment landed, and four regimental combat teams advanced down the island abreast. Supplies began to flow in, and the Division CP landed. By the following day, July 26, the remainder of the Second Division had landed and had taken over the eastern half of the drive down the island. Airfield No. 1 and Mount Lasso both fell. The airfield was quickly repaired and used for landing ammunition and medical supplies from Saipan and evacuating wounded from Tinian. Planes based on Aslito Airfield continued to give close tactical support to the ground troops. The weather, however, turned bad and the supply situation was made difficult by the heavy swells on the beaches. DUKWs were invaluable in helping to meet this and even air transport was 40mm antiaircraft guns.

The value of tanks was especially evident on Tinian, where flat fields and a good road system permitted them freedom to maneuver. Spearheading the infantry advance, they poured murderous machine-gun and cannon fire into cane fields, thickets, and all buildings. One partially destroyed, innocent-looking farmhouse, blasted by our tanks, replied with machine-gun fire. The tanks put round after round into the structure, and when troops finally closed in they found more than 40 dead Japanese soldiers. The "farmhouse" proved to be a carefully camouflaged blockhouse mounting 40mm anticraft guns.

On July 27 (Jig plus 3), an 1800-yard advance was scored; and on the following day Airfield No. 2, on Gurguan Point, was overrun after an advance of 6000 yards on a 5000-yard front! Two days later Tinian Town was taken against negligible opposition. It was evident that the enemy had retreated to the formidable cliff south of the town for a last-ditch stand.

During the early morning hours of July 31, a tank-led counterattack of company strength hit the Twenty-fourth Regiment. It was quickly repulsed, but mortar fire continued all along the front. In a determined effort to seize the ridge, the Marine command decided to launch an all-out attack that morning. The ridge was submitted to "the most intense . . . and the most effectively controlled of any bombardment of amphibious operations thus far in the Pacific," according to a Division report on the Tinian Operation. Two battleships, a heavy cruiser, 2 light cruisers, 14 destroyers, 112 planes, and 11 battalions of artillery unloaded everything they had on the ridge from dawn until 0830.

The infantry jumped off against progressively stronger resistance. Caves, antitank guns, and mine-

fields were encountered in greater numbers than at any time since the landing. The cliff itself constituted a formidable obstacle, and the terrain was the most rugged on the island. Tanks could give little support. Added to this difficulty was the fact that nearly all of Tinian's several thousand civilians had fled to this section.

Despite the opposition, troops succeeded, with flame throwers, demolitions, and a liberal use of automatic rifles, in wiping out all pockets of resistance and by August 1, had reached the plateau on the other side of the ridge. At 1855 on that same day, Tinian was declared secured. Officially, the battle had lasted nine days.

Actually, the last and most dramatic battle was yet to be fought—without the firing of a shot. It was fought against Japanese military fanaticism, to save civilians from a ghastly suicide "ceremony" planned by their own troops. Our weapon was a public-address system mounted on a jeep. From the plateau, it was directed toward the 200-foot cliff, where scores of caves held thousands of civilians. Lieutenant Colonel Ralph Haas, Commanding Officer of the First Battalion, Twenty-third Marines, ordered the jeep, a protective screen of tanks, halftracks, and infantry to advance to the edge of the plain. An interpreter told the unseen thousands that the battle was over, that American troops would give them food, water, and medical care.

A handful of civilians straggled out of the caves. They came out cautiously, saw our tanks and troops, wondered if it were a ruse. Most of them remained huddled together on the plain a few hundred yards away. A few broke off and wandered toward us. When they came in, we fed them and gave them water.



One of them, who had been superintendent of the sugar refinery on Tinian, volunteered to address his fellow citizens. After he had spoken, his wife also made an appeal, telling them they would not be harmed. At this, many more streamed out of the caves and over to us.

Then it was noticed that several soldiers had joined the civilian group, attempting to dissuade it from surrendering. As Marines watched in awe-struck amazement, one of the soldiers leaped off the plain into the sea—a sheer drop of more than 100 feet. In a few minutes another jumped. For half an hour the suicide leaps of the soldiers continued. In the caves overhead, the intermittent "poff" and gray smoke of hand grenades told of other Japs who preferred that form of suicide.

The drama was coming to its bizarre conclusion. Seven soldiers had succeeded in gathering a group of 35 to 40 civilians about them. Marines looked on in helplessness as two of the soldiers tied the group together with a long rope. Suddenly, a puff of smoke from a grenade went up from among the tightly packed group. But this was only the beginning; the grenade had been used to detonate a larger charge of high explosives. A terrific blast shook the ground. The bodies of the victims were blown 25 feet in the air. Arms, legs, and hands were scattered across the plain. The remaining soldiers committed suicide with hand grenades. This, seemingly, broke the spell. Hundreds of civilians now made for our lines.

The battle was ended. Japanese fanaticism had lured a few score to their deaths, but American persuasiveness had saved thousands of others. By August 12, 13,262 civilians were safely in the stockades. We had literally saved these people from their own protectors!

On August 14, the last units of the Division boarded ship and began the long trip back to Maui. The blitzkrieg on Tinian had cost the Division 290 men killed, 1,515 wounded, and 24 missing. About 9,000 Japanese Army and Navy personnel were dead, and another 250 were prisoners. The daring strategy of capturing the island through the back door had paid handsome dividends. Guam had been secured on August 10 by the Third Marine Division, the First Provisional Marine Brigade and the U. S. Army's Seventy-seventh Division. The most important Marianas bases were now in our hands.



In recognition of its work on Saipan and Tinian, the Fourth Division was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation. The Division was making history.

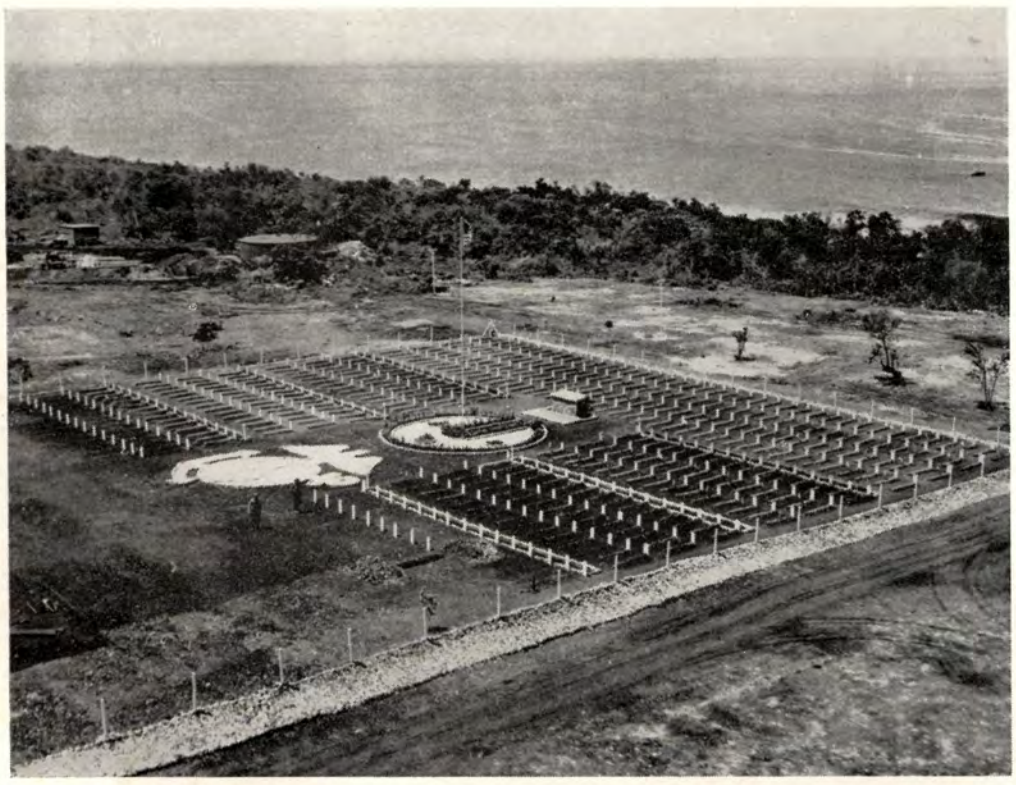
The Division, Reinforced, was cited "for service as set forth in the following"

CITATION:

For outstanding performance in combat during the seizure of the Japanese-held islands of Saipan and Tinian in the Marianas from June 15 to August 1, 1944. Valiantly storming the mighty fortifications of Saipan on June 15, the Fourth Division, Reinforced, blasted the stubborn defenses of the enemy in an undeviating advance over the perilously rugged terrain. Unflinching despite heavy casualties, this gallant group pursued the Japanese relentlessly across the entire length of the island, pressing on against bitter opposition for twenty-five days to crush all resistance in their zone of action. With but a brief rest period in which to reorganize and re-equip, the Division hurled its full fighting power against the dangerously narrow beaches of Tinian on July 24 and rapidly expanded the beachheads for the continued landing of troops, supplies and artillery. Unchecked by either natural obstacles or hostile fire, these indomitable men spearheaded a merciless attack which swept Japanese forces before it and ravaged all opposition within eight days to add Tinian to our record of conquests in these strategically vital islands.

For the President,
JAMES FORRESTAL
*Secretary of the Navy*





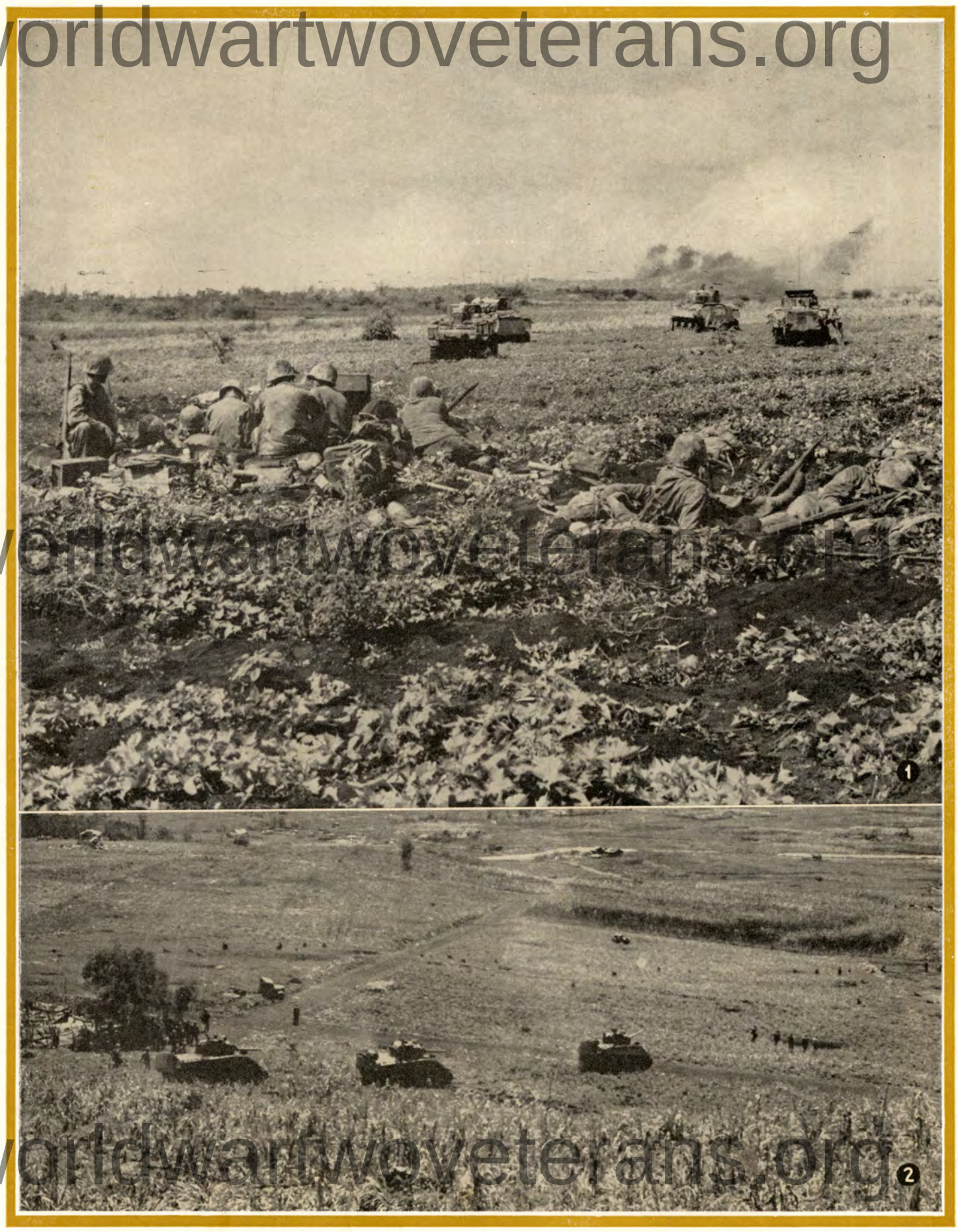

1–Beach White *1*. 2–Beach White *2*. Over these two narrow beaches, on the northern shores of Tinian, the Division made the assault on July 24, 1944.

1–The first waves of amphibian tractors move toward the White Beaches on D-day. 2–Amphibian tractors and landing craft shuttle back and forth, hauling Marines and supplies from the assault vessels to the beachhead.





1–Additional LVTs funnel into the narrow Tinian beachhead, landing Marines and supplies. 2–Troops disembark on the coral reef at Beach White 1.



1–The beachhead secured, tanks rumble past a 37mm gun crew to lead the way in the fast-moving assault on the enemy.
2–Tanks move out to join the infantry in the push across the rolling terrain.

A large Jap oil dump explodes in a column of heavy black smoke.

Marines sit tight, watching the explosion of a Jap ammunition dump.

1–The destruction of Tinian Town is evidence of the heavy preliminary naval, air, and artillery bombardment. 2–A column of infantrymen and vehicles push through Tinian Town.

1–Japanese civilians and military personnel, hidden in caves and hills, are told of the futility of continued resistance and are asked to surrender, by means of a mobile public-address system. 2–General Cates observes as volunteers from a group of captured civilians urge their compatriots to surrender. A prominent Japanese woman is at the microphone. 3–The prisoners line up for a preliminary search for weapons.



These Jap soldiers are among the first to leave their caves following the surrender appeal.





Search elements mop up by-passed Japs along the western shore of Tinian.