A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE 8TH MARINES

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

Cover Photograph: A patrol from the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, reconnoitering a suspected Lebanese rebel emplacement, pauses before cautiously proceeding through rocky terrain outside Beirut, Lebanon in July 1958. (Leatherneck Photo)

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by

James S. Santelli

HISTORY AND MUSEUMS DIVISION
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FOREWORD

This historical monograph is the ninth in a series of regimental histories. When completed this series will cover in similar fashion each of the infantry and artillery regiments in the Fleet Marine Force, active and reserve. The present narrative not only highlights the significant actions of the 8th Marines, but also furnishes a general history of Marine Corps activities in which it took part.

Mr. James S. Santelli was a member of the staff of the Division of History and Museums from June 1967 to November 1974 during which time he occupied positions in both the Reference Section and General Histories Unit of the division. He holds both a Bachelor of Arts degree and a Master of Arts degree in history from the University of San Francisco. Mr. Santelli has co-authored articles on Marine Corps topics that have appeared in various publications dealing with military subjects. Presently, he is a writer for the Department of Labor.

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

E. H. SIMMONS
Brigadier General, U. S. Marine Corps (Ret.)
Director of Marine Corps History and Museums

Reviewed and Approved:

1 April 1976

PREFACE

"A Brief History of the 8th Marines" is a concise narrative of the regiment from its initial activation in 1917 through its participation in the occupation of Haiti, World War II, and various postwar deployments including interventions in Lebanon and the Dominican Republic. Official records of the Marine Corps and appropriate historical works were utilized in compiling this chronicle. This monograph is published for the information of those interested in the 8th Marines and in the events in which it has participated.

The monograph was produced under the editorial direction of Mr. Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Chief Historian of the History and Museums Division. Final review and preparation of the manuscript was done by Miss Gabrielle M. Neufeld. Miss Cathy Stoll typed the final draft, and the maps were prepared by Staff Sergeant Paul A. Lloyd. Some photographs used in this monograph are official Department of Defense (Marine Corps) photographs from the files of the Audio Visual Branch, Training and Education Division of this Headquarters. The remaining photographs were provided by Mr. Louis R. Lowery of Leatherneck Magazine.

James S. Santelli

JAMES S. SANTELLI

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A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE 8TH MARINES

Origin and World War I Garrison Duty

The outbreak of hostilities between the United States and Germany in 1917 resulted in the original activation of the 8th Marines. American entry into World War I in April of that year led to an immediate expansion of the Marine Corps. A number of regiments were brought into existence for use not only in Europe but also in areas outside the war zone. A total of 14 Marine regiments were on active duty by late 1918. Most never served in Europe but were deployed either in the Caribbean or remained stationed in the United States. One such organization that did not see combat, bearing the designation 8th Regiment, was activated as an infantry unit at Quantico, Virginia on 9 October 1917. Its lineal descendant is the present 8th Marines. The new regiment initially consisted of four units--Headquarters, 105th, 106th, and 107th Companies. The last three companies had come from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania a few days earlier. On 13 October 1917, the 103d, 104th, 108th, 109th, and 110th Companies joined the regiment after arriving from Mare Island, California. The last two companies of the regiment--the 111th and 112th Companies--were organized at Quantico on 22 October. Major Ellis B. Miller, a 37-year-old Iowan, was placed in command of the regiment which numbered approximately 1,000 officers and enlisted men.(1)

The 8th Regiment was similar to most Marine regiments of the period insofar as it lacked a battalion structure. Unlike the Army, the Marine Corps did not have a firmly established battalion system in its regiments prior to 1917, but in that year the Corps adopted a deliberate policy of reshaping some of its regiments to conform to the Army's regimental concept. This departure from the accepted norm was occasioned by Major General Commandant George Barnett's* offer to send Marine units to fight on the Western Front in France. His proposal was accepted by the Army in May 1917 with one reservation. As a stipulation to the creation of a Marine contingent to its expeditionary force, the Army requested that all Marine regiments sent to France be organized along lines identical to an Army infantry regiment--a headquarters company and three battalions, each usually composed of a headquarters element and four companies, with an aggregate strength of 3,000 men. Originally, Marine regiments

(*) Barnett, a veteran of the Spanish-American War, was the 12th Commandant of the Marine Corps and the first Commandant to graduate from the Naval Academy.

when formed for expeditionary duty included just a headquarters unit with any number of individual companies. Those Marine regiments sent to France--the 5th, 6th, 11th, and 13th--all conformed to the Army's three battalion concept. The remaining 10 Marine regiments which did not deploy to Europe during World War I retained the old structure that excluded the formal grouping of companies into battalions. Following the war, the regiments remaining active gradually adopted the battalion system. The 8th Regiment, however, was deactivated before the formal battalion system could be introduced.(2)

The first orders that the 8th Regiment received after its creation in 1917 indicated that it would not be deployed to France but would be sent instead to Texas for a possible thrust into Mexico. Relations between the United States and Mexico had deteriorated to a low state. In the years preceding America's entry in World War I open hostilities had erupted between the two countries on two separate occasions. In 1914, United States military forces, including Marines, landed and seized the port city of Vera Cruz and in 1916 Major General John J. ("Black Jack") Pershing* led an Army expedition across the border to destroy the forces of Pancho Villa, the legendary Mexican bandit and revolutionary. Internal disorders within Mexico tended to militate against any improvement in Mexican-American relations. German intrigues in Mexico, actual or imagined, only heightened American anxiety over Mexico once the United States became a belligerent. Allied dependence on Mexican oil fields exaggerated fears that the Germans might take advantage of chaotic conditions in Mexico to disrupt the flow of oil from Tampico, the principal area of production. Thus, the 8th Regiment was ordered to Fort Crockett near Galveston, Texas. Should it be deemed necessary, the regiment was to move swiftly, make an amphibious landing on the Mexican Gulf coast, and seize the Tampico oil fields. It transferred from Quantico to Philadelphia on 9 November and boarded the transport USS Hancock. The ship sailed on the following day; and, a little over a week later the regiment's Marines were busily constructing their camp at Fort Crockett.(3)

The regiment's duties in Texas were primarily those of a typical garrison force. In addition, it embarked on a training program designed to insure its readiness to intervene in Mexico should the order be given. In August 1918, new Marine forces--the 9th Regiment and Headquarters, 3d

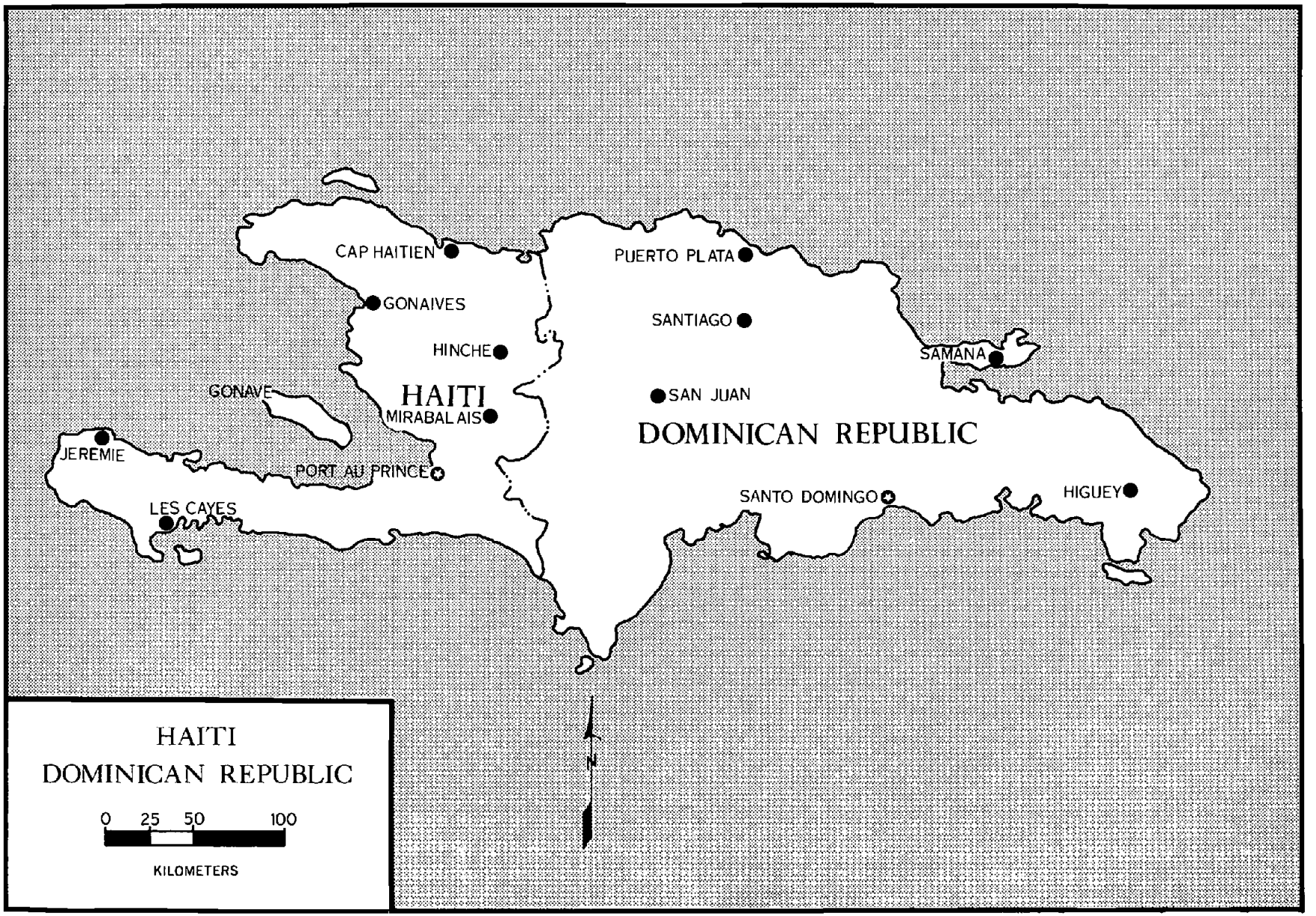
(*) The following year General Pershing was placed in command of the American Expeditionary Force (AEF) that was sent to France.

Provisional Brigade--arrived at Fort Crockett. Originally, these units had been stationed in Cuba and had been used in protecting the Cuban sugar mills and plantations from possible destruction by either domestic dissidents or by saboteurs in the employ of German agents. Internal disturbances within Cuba had threatened to disrupt the flow of sugar--an important commodity for the Allies. However, the improvement of the domestic scene in Cuba during the summer of 1918 resulted in the redeployment of the 9th Regiment and the brigade headquarters, leaving the 7th Regiment as the sole Marine regiment on the Caribbean island. When the 3d Provisional Brigade established itself at Fort Crockett, the 8th Regiment became one of the brigade's component units, replacing the 7th Regiment.(4)

The presence of a large force of Marines in Texas and not too distant from the Mexican border continued through the end of the war, but at no time was it necessary for the Marines to intervene in Mexico. There had been no real attempt to disguise the main purpose of the Marines in Texas. Mexican officials of all political persuasion were therefore fully aware of the American willingness to intervene militarily should the United States feel that its vital interests were threatened or in jeopardy. Since oil continued to flow uninterruptedly to the Allies, a good case can be made that the 8th Regiment and other Marine units in Texas made an important contribution to the war effort. With the end of the war in Europe the requirement for Marines in Texas disappeared. Orders for the 8th Regiment's redeployment from Texas eventually arrived from Washington in early spring 1919. The unit began preparations in April for a move to Philadelphia where it was slated to be deactivated. On the 10th, personnel and equipment were embarked on board the USS Hancock, the same vessel that brought the regiment to Fort Crockett a year and a half before. The ship immediately sailed and within two weeks reached Philadelphia where the regiment and its supplies were unloaded. The following day, 25 April, the 8th Regiment went out of existence.(5)

Peace-keeping in Haiti

The inactive status of the regiment did not long endure, for by the end of year the reconstitution of the 8th Regiment was under way in Haiti, a French speaking nation inhabited mainly by the descendants of African slaves. By this time the United States had occupied the Caribbean republic for well over four years. Originally, Marines and Navy personnel had been sent there in mid-1915 to protect American and other foreign interests. Sudre Dartiguenave, who had agreed to work for an improvement of relations with the United States, was installed as President of Haiti soon after the landing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of American military forces, but open revolt against the new government dashed all hopes for a quick end to internal disorders. The rebellion spread through the countryside fanned by the Cacos, a group of lawless Haitian guerrillas considered more bandits than revolutionaries. Withdrawal of United States military units was predicated on the destruction of the Cacos. This proved to be a difficult job, and thus the American occupation of Haiti dragged on with the Marines attempting to bring about some semblance of stability to the strife-torn country.(6)

A reoganization of Marine units in Haiti, brought on by the reduction in strength of the Marine Corps, began in December 1919. On the 17th, the 3d Battalion, 2d Regiment was redesignated as the 1st Battalion, 8th Regiment. Composition of this unit was: Field and Staff*, 36th, 57th, 63d, 65th, 100th, 148th, and 196th Companies. Regimental headquarters was not activated until the following month. It came back into existence on 5 January 1920 at Port-au-Prince, the capital and principal city of the country. Field and Staff, 1st Battalion, 8th Regiment was deactivated and its personnel were transferred to Headquarters, 8th Regiment. All companies of the 1st Battalion, 8th Regiment were assigned to the 8th Regiment.

During the next five and a half years of its tour in Haiti, the regiment continued to be organized on a company basis with no true battalion structure being created. Often it numbered less than 600 men, by later standards a relatively small organization to be considered a regiment. Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Louis McC. Little, was given command of the reactivated 8th Regiment. Little, who was destined to be appointed as Assistant to the Major General Commandant in 1935, was an officer with prior service in Latin America and with considerable experience in China. More importantly, from the standpoint of his assignment to Haiti, was his reputation as an "excellent French linguist." The regiment was assigned to the 1st Marine Brigade, the ancestor of the present 1st Marine Division. The 2d Regiment, an organization that had been long deployed in Haiti, was the other main component of the brigade. Supporting units, including Squadron E, its air arm, were also a part of the brigade's structure.(7)

In Port-au-Prince, where half of the regiment was located, reports had circulated for weeks in the latter half of 1919 that the Cacos under their new chief Benoit Batraville planned to attack the city. The assault finally came about 0400

(*) This designation was then the accepted title for a Headquarters and Service Company.

on 15 January 1920 when 300 bandits in three columns attempted to enter Port-au-Prince. They were promptly met by Marines from the 8th Regiment, other brigade units, and members of the native Gendarmerie d' Haiti.

In one of the first confrontations, Second Lieutenant Gerald C. Thomas' detail of 12 men from the 8th Regiment and a 50-man group of bandits surprised one another on one of the city's streets. Thomas ordered his men to hold their fire as the bandits marched up the street towards the Leathernecks. The Cacos fired en masse as they approached, but Thomas' men did not fire until the Haitians were directly in front of them. The concentrated rifle fire from the Marines routed the enemy. Only three Marines were wounded in the exchange while approximately 20 bandits were killed. The Cacos retreated and eventually left the city. The coolness and levelheadedness of Lieutenant Thomas was a harbinger of his future as a leader. Thomas, who had earned a Silver Star as an enlisted man in France during World War I, saw service in World War II and Korea, became Assistant Commandant of the Marine Corps, and attained the rank of full general upon retirement.

Although the bandits penetrated sections of Port-au-Prince, they were soon forced out and driven back into the neighboring hills with half their number being killed, wounded, or captured during the battle. One city block, however, was burned before the bandits were repulsed. The regiment in its first combat engagement sustained light casualties, although one man was killed. Marines and the Gendarmerie d' Haiti relentlessly pursued Benoit Batraville and the remainder of his band. Lieutenant Colonel Little, hoping to destroy the Cacos once and for all, constantly sent out Marine patrols into the countryside. This forced the rebels to be continually on the move. Ceaseless combing of rural areas paid off as numerous bandits surrendered. Little's efforts in this regard were praised by the brigade commander, Colonel John H. Russell--subsequently the 16th Commandant of the Marine Corps. What success was achieved in prompting a considerable number of Cacos to give up, declared Russell, was "in large measure due to the ability, skill, and enthusiasm" of Little.(8) Unfortunately, the bandit chieftain still remained free; Batraville for months skillfully eluded his potential captors.

The 8th Regiment persisted in searching for the desperado in its zone--the southern half of the country. The capture of Batraville became one of its primary preoccupations. Minor skirmishes occurred with bandit groups but no major clash with the main band took place until the spring. Two

significant encounters came on 4 April 1920. The first began at 0700 when a small patrol of Marines and Gendarmes led by Sergeant Laurence Muth* spotted a group of bandits on the summit of Mount Michel. Sergeant Muth instantly directed his men to open fire. Unexpectedly, heavy return fire came from another party of bandits that had taken up ambush positions on the patrol's right flank and in its rear. Muth fell mortally wounded in the first volley. In the ensuing fight 10 bandits were killed but the patrol, because of the overwhelming superiority of the enemy, had to withdraw without its dying leader. Reports of the incident reached Lieutenant Colonel Little at his headquarters in Mirebalais, a town about 30 miles northeast of Port-au-Prince. Twenty-one patrols were sent out to find the gang of bandits that attacked Muth's force. One led by Little himself was the first to arrive at the scene of the fight. Catching a large group of Cacos off guard, the patrol quickly sought concealment and then struck at the rebels. The brief fire fight that followed proved costly to the enemy as the Americans killed 25. A search of the thickly wooded area after the battle revealed a gruesome discovery--the mutilated remains of Sergeant Muth, minus the head and heart, the latter purportedly eaten by the Cacos.(9)

Efforts to bring Batraville to justice were increased following the engagements of 4 April. Captain Jesse L. Perkins, who was in charge of the search for him in the area around Marche Canard and also the commanding officer of the 100th Company, 8th Regiment, moved a force of 30 men into the surrounding countryside to hunt for the bandit. Perkins and 11 of his men finally found the main encampment early on the morning of 19 May. After obtaining information on the location of the camp, the Marines along with a native guides made a five-hour march to the site where supposedly a band of 200 rebels were billeted. Inital contact came at 0600 in Petite Bois Peine when the Americans discovered a five-man outpost guard a short distance from the main camp. The startled Haitian sentries fired a single round and then ran off into the thick undergrowth. Perkins ordered 2d Lieutenant Edgar G. Kirkpatrick to take seven Marines and to go after the retreating rebels to prevent them from alerting their compatriots.

In the meantime Captain Perkins, Sergeants William F. Passmore and Albert A. Taubert, and Private Emery L.

(*) He also held the rank of second lieutenant in the Gendarmerie d' Haiti. Marine Corps officers and non-commissioned officers acted as officers in this organization.

Entrekin headed for the camp. Although far outnumbered, Perkins gambled on rushing the camp site with his three compatriots to seize Batraville by surprise. Hoping not to arouse suspicion, the four men silently crept forward through the underbrush to get as close as possible to the camp before they made their rush. Some of the bandits, alerted by the shot that had been fired, caught sight of the Americans making their way towards them. Instantly, 12 bandit rifles opened fire on the approaching Marines. Having been found out, Perkins was undismayed by the new turn of events. He jumped up and ordered his three men to make a dash for the camp. Despite the enemy fusillade the four Marines ran forward, firing as they came. The fire from the rifles and automatic weapons of the charging Marines momentarily stunned the rebels. Benoit Batraville then appeared and took command of the Haitians in an effort to halt the chaos that was spreading through the encampment. It was too late, for the Americans burst into the cantonment and continued to pour fire into the disorganized defenders. Batraville, unlike some of his men, held his ground and fired at the Marines from 10 feet away. Sergeant Passmore wheeled around and recognized the bandit chieftain. Firing his Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) from the hip, Passmore cut him down with a burst of fire.

Seeing Batraville fall, the remaining rebels withdrew to some large boulders on the perimeter of the camp and from there resumed the fight. Lieutenant Kirkpatrick, hearing the gunfire, abandoned his chase of outpost guards and made his way to the scene of the battle. Kirkpatrick's group entered the camp and joined in the fight which lasted for another 15 minutes. The rebels having lost heart for further fighting scattered into the bush, leaving their wounded comrades to fend for themselves. As the Marines approached the prone body of Batraville, the still-alive bandit leader rose and attempted to reach for his revolver. Sergeant Taubert finished him off by a single shot from his rifle. The infamous career of one of the last major Caco chiefs was thus brought to a close. The weapon that Batraville had tried to draw was the Colt revolver that belonged to Sergeant Muth before he was killed. Besides Batraville the Marine patrol killed 10 other bandits. The number of wounded sustained by the Haitians could not be determined. (10) Captain Perkins, Sergeants Passmore and Taubert, and Private Entrekin received the Navy Cross for the gallantry and conspicuous bravery they displayed during attack on the bandit camp. (11)

Active patrolling continued after the death of Batraville to prevent those bandits that still remained at large from reorganizing and regrouping under a new leader. The 8th

Regiment at times sent out patrols mounted on horses and mules in order to increase its mobility, for these animals were excellent as a means of transportation over rough terrain. These detachments are not to be confused with the Army's cavalry units since the Marines at no time employed tactics associated with a true cavalry organization. The life of the individual Marine in his pursuit of bandits was far from pleasurable. His job was both tedious and difficult. General Gerald C. Thomas, in retirement, offered an apt description of his career as a bandit chaser in Haiti:

> I stayed on at Port-au-Prince until April 1920. I was ordered to the hills, and there I stayed for the next six months. I made one brief trip back into town. My life was like the others'. It was just a life of drudgery, chasing Cacos over the mountains,... Sometimes we would be gone two weeks. We'd corner the Cacos and have a fight with them. Sometimes we would be out two weeks and we wouldn't see anybody. They hid out in the daytime and traveled at night so we did the same thing. We would hide out in the jungle all day long; and then we would get on the trail at night, watching for fires where they might be gathered around. We'd try to find them. Sometimes we would and we'd have a fight and it would be all over and passing. But we gradually whittled them down and killed enough of them off.
>
> In the meantime, along with our patrolling and fighting against the bandits, there was a pacification program going on; trying to induce them to come in and pick up what they called bon habitant passes, good inhabitants passes, and go back to their gardens where they lived. . . They were natives who had lived in these areas; and, because of corvee [labor exacted in lieu of taxes by public authorities], a lot of them had taken to the mountains and joined the bandits. (12)

The death of Batraville put an end the Caco revolt although sporadic outbreaks of violence and lawlessness lasted for some time. Attacks, for instance, on women bringing their wares to village markets endured despite efforts to thwart the robbers. Lieutenant Colonel Little decided to eliminate this type of crime by dressing some of his men as women and then sending the disguised Marines shuffling along trails leading to various villages. When the bandits, sensing more easy prey, swooped down on the "women" the Leathernecks dropped their market baskets and grabbed their weapons to meet the astonished marauders. After a few such episodes,

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market women were no longer molested.(13)

A resurgence of bandit activity occurred in central Haiti in early 1921, but by October of that year out-and-out banditry had been suppressed. From 1922 onwards banditry was almost non-existent in Haiti. The country entered a unique and unusual period of tranquility. Members of the 8th Regiment at first remained engaged in police-type operations, but soon switched emphasis to duties related to civic action, such as mapping the country, helping to construct roads and sanitation facilities, and training the local constabulary.(14) The continuation of peaceful conditions in Haiti led eventually to the reduction of the Marine occupation force. The 8th Regiment as a result received orders for its deactivation. It went into effect on 1 July 1925. Personnel from the regiment's units, then located in and around Port-au-Prince, were transferred to the 2d Regiment.(15)

Nine years after the deactivation of the 8th Regiment the long Marine deployment in Haiti ended. The country had benefited from the American occupation insofar as it experienced an extended period of civil order and progress. Haiti's century-long insolation from the outside world was abruptly ended as it was drawn into a close political and economic relationship with the United States. Absence of constant turmoil encouraged the development of stable governments. The training of a national police organization by the Marines was a significant factor in fostering stability. It should be noted that domestic tranquility did not permanently endure in Haiti as the country years later reverted to its old ways of coups, counter-coups, and dictatorial rule. Probably the most important legacy of the American occupation was the considerable improvement in Haiti's neglected sanitation facilities and public works, the advancement of education, and the emancipation of women.

World War II Reactivation

The outbreak of general war in Europe during the fall of 1939 prompted the United States to undertake a program of rebuilding and strengthening its military forces. Accordingly, the Marine Corps in spring 1940 gradually began increasing the number of units on active duty. The first major organization to be brought into existence was the 8th Marines. Reactivation of the regiment, now with its

current designation*, took place on 1 April 1940 at San Diego, California. The organizational structure of the unit was as follows: a headquarters company and two battalions, each composed of a headquarters company and four lettered companies. Its strength at this time was slightly over 1,000 officers and men. Colonel Leo D. Hermle, a much-decorated veteran of World War I who eventually retired as a lieutenant general, took command of the regiment which was assigned to the 2d Marine Brigade. The newly reformed infantry regiment began a series of training exercises that lasted through the end of the year. Its structure was rounded out on 1 November 1940 when the 3d Battalion was activated. This battalion also was composed of five companies.(16)

Continual expansion of the Marine Corps resulted in the creation of two divisional size organizations on 1 February 1941. The 1st Marine Division was brought into existence in the Caribbean by the redesignation of the 1st Marine Brigade while the 2d Marine Division was formed at San Diego by the redesignation of the 2d Marine Brigade.(17) Now part of the 2d Marine Division under Major General Clayton B. Vogel, former Commandant of the Garde d'Haiti, the 8th Marines intensified its training and joined other division units in combat-simulated exercises on rugged San Clemente island, off the coast of Southern California. The routine of training lasted until 7 December 1941 when the Japanese struck at Pearl Harbor, Territory of Hawaii. Immediately, the 2d Marine Division, minus the 6th Marines which was garrisoning Iceland, was instructed to defend the California coast from Oceanside to the Mexican border against a possible Japanese attack.

Once the fears of an imminent invasion had abated, the 8th Marines was directed to return to camp in San Diego and to prepare for deployment to the South Pacific. Its destination was American Samoa. The regiment along with the 1st Battalion, 10th Marines, an artillery unit, was detached from the division to form the nucleus of a new 2d Marine Brigade commanded by Brigadier General Henry L. Larsen, a former commanding officer of the 8th Marines. General Larsen's orders were explicit: Defend Samoa and prevent the enemy from cutting the vital lines of communication between the United States and the dominions of Australia and New Zealand. The brigade, the first Marine force to mount out for the Pacific from the United States

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(*) In the early 1930s the Marine Corps had substituted the term "Marines" for "Regiment" in its regimental designations making official a designation which had long been practiced informally.

after the outbreak of war, boarded the luxury liners, Lurline, Matsonia, and Monterey and sailed from California on 6 January 1942. Arrival at Pago Pago, the capital of American Samoa, came on 19 January—only a few days after a Japanese submarine had surfaced and shelled government installations. The attack brought home to the Marines on the island the seriousness of the enemy threat.

General Larsen ordered the 8th Marines, now under Lieutenant Colonel Richard H. Jeschke*, a former commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, to assume responsibility over beach defenses that had been formerly occupied by the Marine Corps' 7th Defense Battalion. During the next three months the Marines were involved in the back-breaking job of expanding and improving the island's defenses. Humid and oppressive heat, constant rain, and the ever-present mosquito made the work all the more arduous and demanding.(18) The taxing labors of shoring up Samoa's fortifications were followed by extensive jungle warfare training for the regiment and its attached units. By summer the 8th Marines started shifting from its static defensive role to one of preparing for offensive operations outside of the Samoan area.

Guadalcanal

Beginning on 7 August 1942, Marines forces, primarily those from the 1st Marine Division under Major General Alexander A. ("Sunny Jim") Vandegrift (later 18th commandant of the Marine Corps) conducted landing operations on the Japanese-held islands of Guadalcanal, Tulagi, Florida, Gavutu, and Tanambogo in the southern Solomons. The attacks were the first amphibious assaults by the Marine Corps against enemy forces during World War II and the initial Allied ground offensive to be launched in the Pacific. The major contest for control of the islands centered on Guadalcanal, the main island in the group. It is rugged and jungle-covered with an unhealthy climate that is characterized by heavy rainfall and heat that is tropical, humid, and oppressive. Malaria, dengue, and other fevers as well as various fungus infections were endemic to the island. The battle for Guadalcanal extended for weeks with each side increasing the number of troops there through periodic reinforcements. Soldiers from the United States Army's Americal Division started arriving in mid-October 1942 but the need for additional troops persisted. The 8th Marines was thus called upon to help meet this requirement. Members of the regiment, although not battle tested, had been

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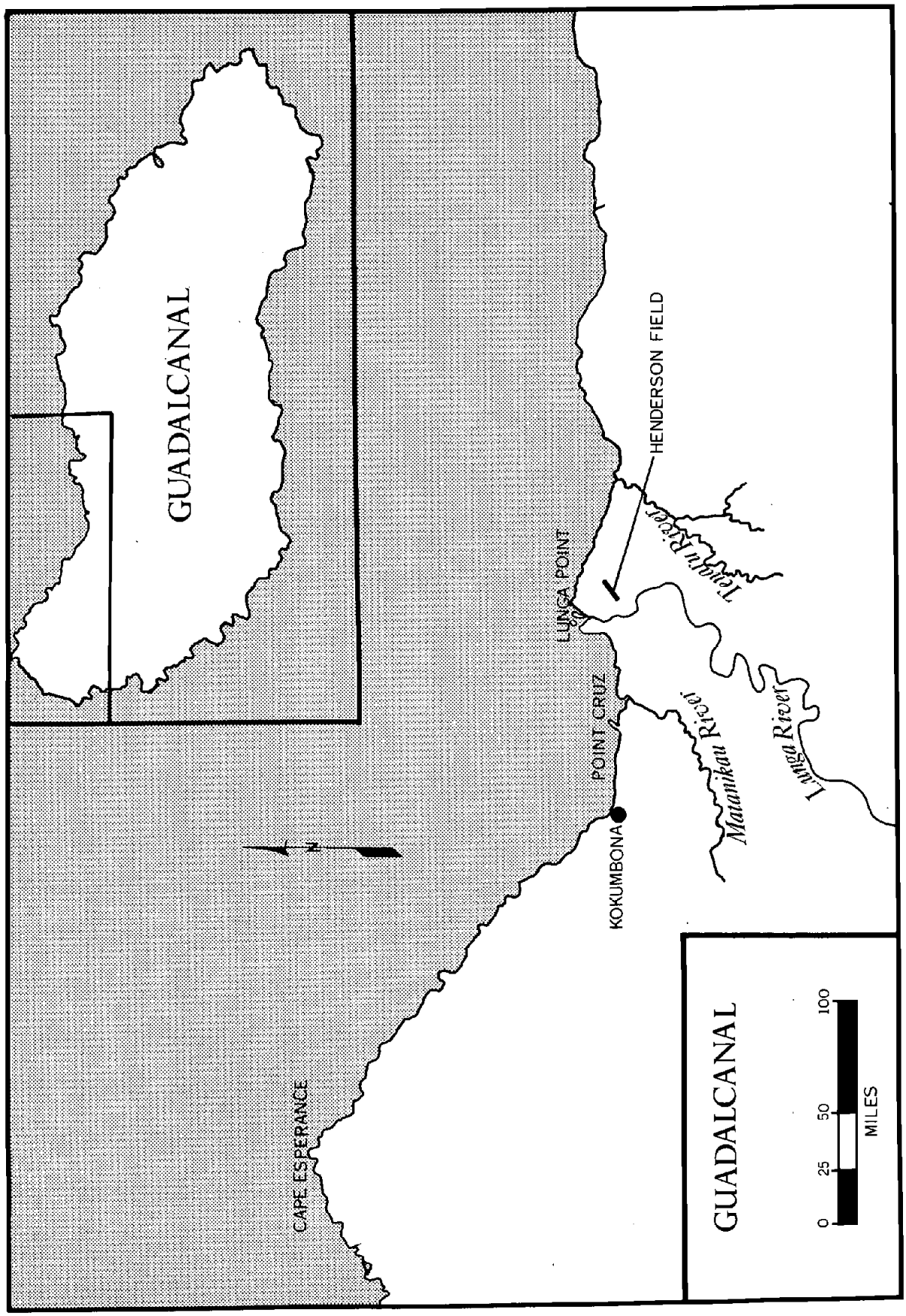
(*) Colonel Jeschke later played an instrumental role in planning the invasions of Sicily in 1943 and Normandy in 1944.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acclimatized to the rigors of the southwest Pacific by nine months in Samoa. In addition, a good proportions of their time had been spent in jungle training under conditions somewhat similar to those found on Guadalcanal.

Word of its imminent deployment reached the regiment in the latter part of October. Other units of the 2d Marine Division shortly thereafter also received orders to deploy to Guadalcanal. The 2d Marines was already there; in the opening days of the campaign it had made landings on Florida, Tulagi, Tanambogo, and Gavutu. All elements of this regiment eventually moved to Guadalcanal with the 3d Battalion arriving in September and the rest of the regiment landing during October. The 8th Marines loaded on board the transports USS Hunter Liggett (AP-27), President Hayes (AP-39), and Barnett (AP-11) and sailed on 25 October. After a trip of 10 days, the reinforced regiment reached the embattled island and came ashore near Lunga Point on the northern coast.(19) The 1st Battalion immediately received orders to assist in clearing the enemy from an area east of the Tenaru River. Relocation of the rest of the 8th Marines came a little later. Lieutenant Colonel Jeschke moved the entire regiment westward to the vicinity of Point Cruz on 10 November, the Marine Corps' birthday. Link up was made with Colonel John M. Arthur's 2d Marines and elements of the Army's 164th Infantry Regiment for a drive toward the village of Kokumbona. The combined force steadily advanced against sporadic opposition. Major General Vandegrift, however, halted the attack on the 11th and directed the men to pull back across the Matanikau River. Intelligence reports indicated the Japanese were about to launch a strong counteroffensive on American positions. Vandegrift therefore wanted the men back to strengthen the Lunga Point perimeter.(20)

The Japanese had in fact mounted out a large naval force that included thousands of fresh ground troops to deal the Americans a death blow in the southern Solomons. On the night of 12-13 November, a Japanese covering force for a troop convoy on its way to Guadalcanal collided with American escorts for a convoy transporting the 182d Infantry Regiment (Army). In the battle that ensued the United States lost two light cruisers and four destroyers while the Japanese lost one battleship and two destroyers. The naval engagement did not end but lasted for another day. Marine and Navy aircraft on the 14th hit the jackpot when they discovered 11 enemy transports steaming toward Guadalcanal. More than 10,000 troops were embarked on the vessels. The American planes pounded the helpless ships, leaving the convoy so battered that it could land only 4,000 soldiers. That night the Japanese lost another battleship and two heavy cruisers. Three days of naval engagements all but decided the final outcome of the Guadalcanal campaign.(21)

Elements of the 8th Marines prepare to move back to the front lines on Guadalcanal. In early December 1942 Marines participated in an aggressive patrolling effort. (USMC Photo #51400)

A Marine patrol searches for the enemy in a swampy area on Guadalcanal. The rugged terrain and unhealthy climate added to the Marines' difficulties during the campaign. (USMC Photo #5Z326)

In spite of the losses suffered by the Japanese Navy, fighting ashore lasted through the end of the year and into 1943. A new drive on Kokumbona began on 18 November with Army troops crossing the Matanikau with the 8th Marines providing security on the flanks of the attacking soldiers. The Marines moved forward a few days later and passed through Army lines. Strong opposition was encountered on the 23d. Although casualties in the new drive were light up to this point, General Vandegrift called off further attacks because of the possibility of heavy losses if the Marines pressed on with their advance. The regiment then took up a new task--participation in an aggressive patrolling effort that saw the 8th Marines employing such tactics as night ambushes and sudden forays into enemy-held areas.

Active patrolling by the regiment was not without costs as it sustained 111 casualties in its first week of such activity. Units of the 8th Marines moved back to forward positions on 12 December. They joined elements of the 2d Marines located west of the Matanikau River. Marine strategy at this stage of the fight for Guadalcanal was to keep the enemy off balance by applying continuous pressure on him through a series of small hit and run attacks that were limited in their objectives.

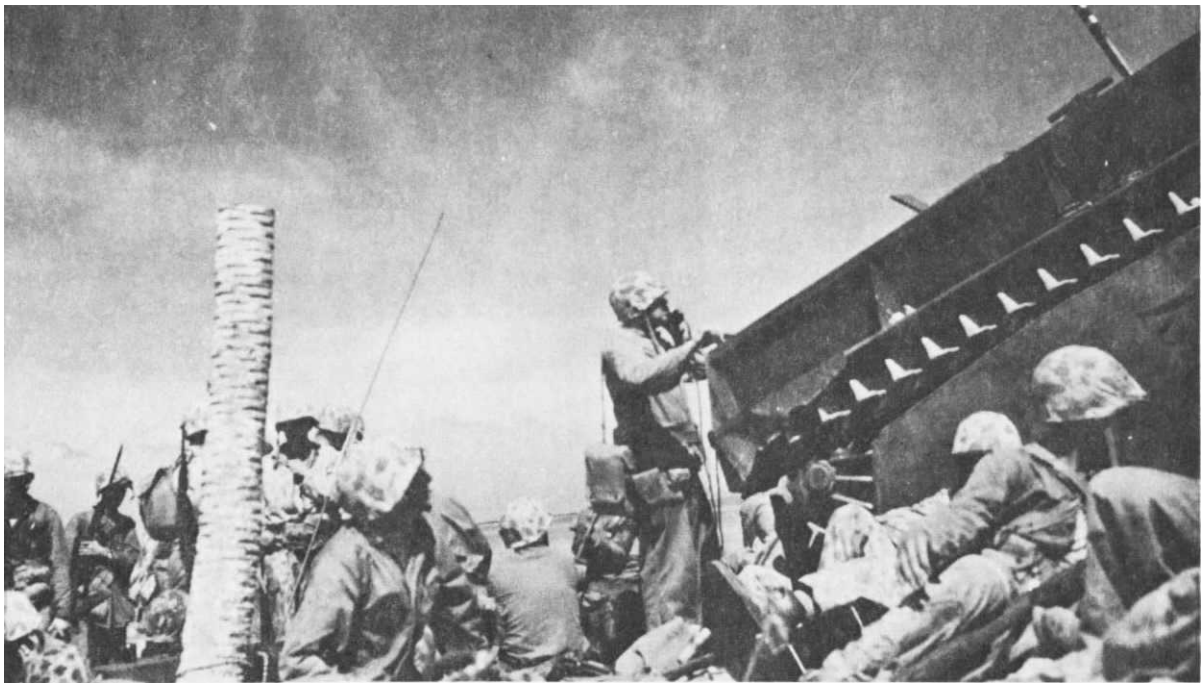
Three days prior to the regiment's return to the lines on the Matanikau, Major General Vandegrift turned over command of all troops ashore to Major General Alexander M. Patch, commanding general of the Americal Division and the senior Army officer present on Guadalcanal. The weary 1st Marine Division, with the change of command, began redeploying to Australia for rest and reorganization.(22) No major offensive took place until January with plans being drawn up for an all-out attack starting on the 10th. General Patch and his staff assigned three divisions to the new attack that was intended to drive out those Japanese that still remained on the island. The 2d Marine Division, including the recently arrived 6th Marines under Colonel Gilder D. Jackson, Jr., and units of the Americal Division had orders to seize Cape Esperance on the western tip of Guadalcanal by driving along the northern coast. The Army's recently arrived 25th Division was also directed to advance on the cape but to approach it by an inland route--in effect, the assault would be a pincers movement by the two forces. Soldiers of the 25th Division jumped off first while the 2d Division held, allowing Army units to maneuver into preassigned positions. The 2d Division finally began its phase of the attack on the morning of the 13th with the 2d Marines leading off, followed by the 8th Marines.

Overall, the Marines made substantial progress. During one temporary delay, however, elements of Lieutenant Colonel Augustus H. Fricke's 3d Battalion, 8th Marines came under withering fire from an enemy emplacement. The Japanese had effectively stopped forward movement. Captain Henry P. ("Jim") Crowe, who had enlisted service in the Dominican Republic, Nicaragua, and China, brought up his Regimental Weapons Company, 8th Marines to assist. Seeing that his fellow Marines appeared to be disorganized, Captain Crowe moved swiftly to rally the men for an assault on the Japanese entrenchment. Accordingly to various reports, he found in one spot a half dozen Marines crouching in a shellhole and yelled down: "Goddam it, you'll never get the Purple Heart hiding in a foxhole! Follow me!" Aroused by his command the Leathernecks scrambled to their feet and followed Crowe in a rifle and grenade charge that destroyed the Japanese fortification. The last phrase of Crowe's command became immortalized as the 2d Marine Division's motto. Captain Crowe subsequently received both the Silver and Bronze Stars for the Guadalcanal campaign.(23)

The American offensive succeeded in pushing the enemy back towards the west. The 8th Marines with the support of naval gunfire hammered at Japanese defenses along the coast. Operations there provided the Marines with their first real opportunity to test the application of naval gunfire in support of a continuing attack on an enemy. The regiment met some rather strong resistance on the 15th. Forward progress was resumed only after flame throwers were put into action against the Japanese. This weapon, as employed by the 8th Marines, made its inaugural appearance in the Pacific War during this battle. Between 16-18 January 1943, the regiment moved into division reserve. The American advance steadily rolled on with the long-sought-after prize of Kokumbona being taken on the 23d by the Army's 27th Infantry Regiment. Japanese commanders had long realized the futility of trying to stem the growing American strength on Guadalcanal and therefore resolved to withdraw their forces. Redeployment of 11,000 enemy soldiers began on 1 February and was completed on the night of 7-8 February. The protracted and drawn-out campaign for Guadalcanal officially ended on the 9th when the island was declared "secure" by General Patch.(24)

Departure of the 8th Marines from the Solomons started on 31 January when the Regimental Weapons Company and the 1st Battalion sailed for New Zealand on board the transport USS Crescent City (AP-40). The rest of the regiment sailed on 9 February on board the transports USS Hunter Liggett (AP-27) and American Legion (AP-35). The entire 8th Marines reassembled at Wellington, the capital, on 16 February. Those units on the Crescent City had arrived 10 days earlier.

Colonel Richard H. Jeschke, commanding officer of the 8th Marines, and Lieutenant Colonel Augustus Fricke, commanding the 3d Battalion, discuss plans for a new drive on Guadalcanal. (USMC Photo #51831)



Major "Jim" Crowe at his command post observes and directs the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines in fighting on Tarawa. Crowe was a member of the 8th Marines during three campaigns. (USMC Photo #63956)

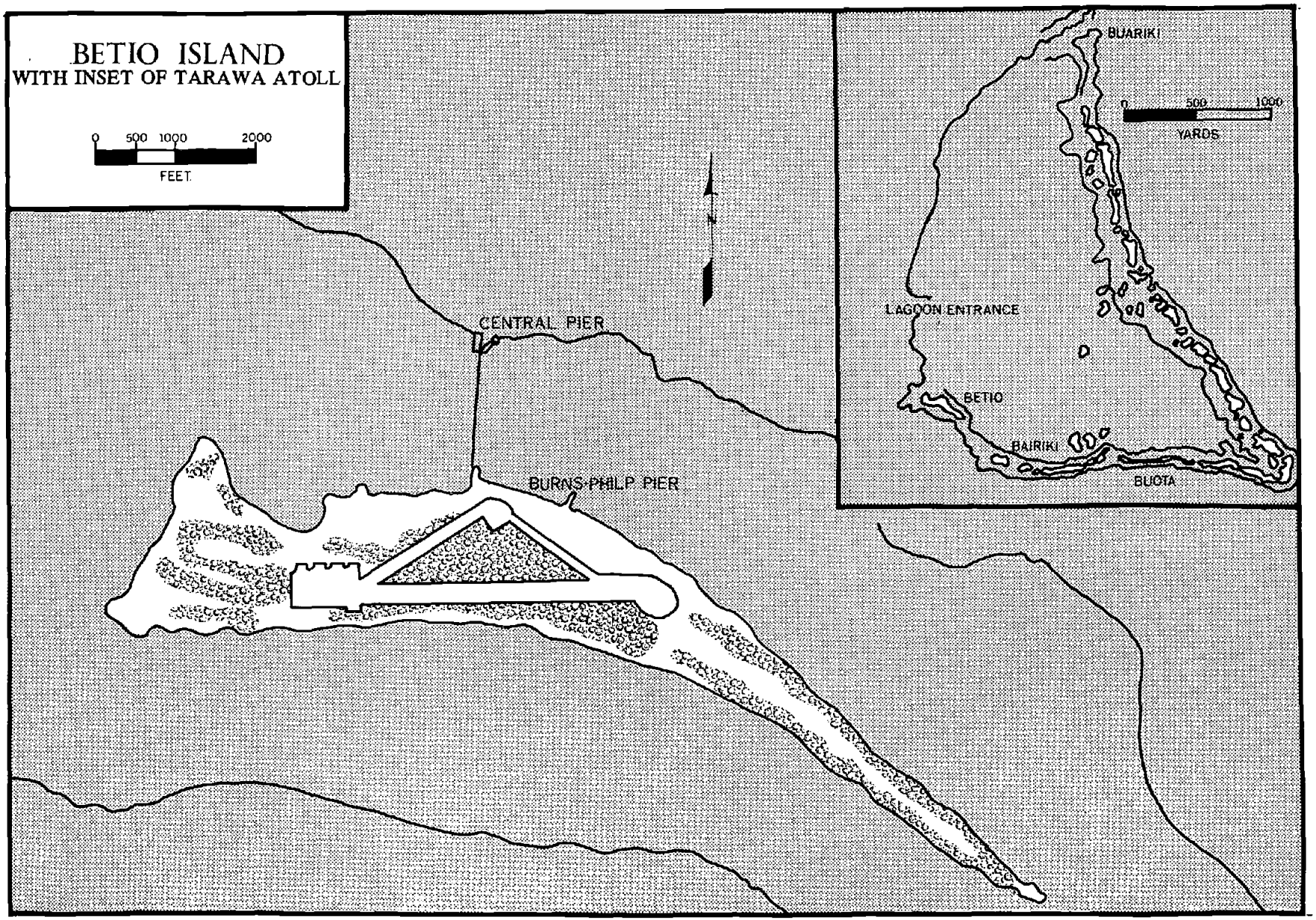
(25) A permanent base for the regiment was established near Paekakariki, some 35 miles north of Wellington. The men, enjoying a liberal leave policy, flocked to the city to satiate their appetite and thirst for the type of food and drink that they were accustomed to back home, but had not tasted since they left the United States. For over a year members of the 8th Marines had existed on food that at best was deemed not much better than field rations. To make up for the absence of good food on Guadalcanal the men ate up to five meals a day. The voraciousness of their appetite could be seen in the great quantities of eggs, steak, and mutton that were consumed. Often the meals were supplemented by such American-considered delicacies as venison. Hunting parties were periodically sent out to help reduce the burgeoning deer population that was turning out to be a real nuisance throughout the countryside.

One practically universal desire was for fresh milk. Wellington's supply almost dried up as result. Marines from the regiment and from other division units scoured the city for this much-prized commodity. Only after the Americans had drunk their fill did the city's milk supply return to normal. The New Zealand people provided the division not only with excellent food and drink but also gave its members the warmest and friendliest welcome that could be imagined. In Wellington, whose steep hills reminded many of San Francisco, the people graciously opened their homes to the Marines. There seemed to be a sincere wish that no American should be lonely or homesick. It's not too surprising therefore that many of the men met and courted New Zealand girls. During the deployment and through the war years hundreds from the division married their New Zealand sweethearts. (26)

Tarawa

The 2d Division gradually initiated a series of training exercises upon delivery of a sufficient quantity of new war materiel from the United States. A concentrated program of training, however, did not begin until September. Stress was placed on amphibious maneuvers. The men of the 8th Marines with months of jungle training and actual combat experience gave up their roles as jungle fighters and made the transition to amphibious assault troops. A decision by America's top military leaders to move into the Central Pacific had been reached in late summer 1943. The target for the projected campaign was the Gilbert Islands. Seizure of this group would provide the United States with a springboard for an advance into the Marshall Islands and with a base for attacks on the Caroline Islands.

GALVANIC was the code name given to the operation. The most vital part of the campaign was the capture of Tarawa


BETIO ISLAND
WITH INSET OF TARAWA ATOLL
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N
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BURNS-PHILP PIER
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YARDS
LAGOON ENTRANCE
BETIO
BAIRIKI
BUOTA

Atoll which contained a significant enemy garrison located primarily on Betio Island. The V Amphibious Corps was assigned overall responsibility for taking the islands. It was more than fitting that this amphibious operation should be commanded by Major General Holland M. ("Howlin' Mad") Smith, "the father of modern United States amphibious warfare." On the eve of the war Smith had directed extensive Army, Navy, and Marine amphibious training. After the outbreak of hostilities he helped prepare American Army and Canadian troops for the landings on Kiska and Attu in the Aleutian Islands. He also had the job of organizing and training Marine units for amphibious operations in the Pacific. In this task he and members of his staff developed the techniques, equipment, and training methods needed for amphibious warfare.

The 2d Marine Division in mid-September 1943 came under the operational control of the V Amphibious Corps and was tasked with supplying the assault forces for Tarawa. The division at this time was led by Major General Julian C. Smith, a much-experienced veteran of expeditionary service in Mexico, Haiti, the Dominican Republic, Cuba, and Nicaragua. During duty in the last-mentioned country he received the Navy Cross for extraordinary heroism. Reduction of the Japanese fortress on Betio had been anticipated as a difficult chore. Julian Smith recognized the problems inherent in taking the island, especially since the 6th Marines had been removed from his control and designated as corps reserve. Thus, the 2d Division, at least initially, only had two infantry regiments for the assault. General Smith was under no illusions that Betio would be an easy campaign, and as it turned out the actual taking of Betio proved to be just as tough as he had envisioned.

Use of the term "fortress" in describing the island was no overstatement. Betio, which is between two and three miles long and not more than a half mile wide, had a garrison force of nearly 5,000 Japanese and Korean soldiers. Over half of these were elite Special Naval Landing Force troops. Defenses were formidable; the island was considered impregnable by the enemy. Hundreds of heavy caliber weapons including 8-inch coastal defense guns, field guns, and antiaircraft guns dotted the landscape. Tanks supplemented these weapons. Over 100 pillboxes--many built of reinforced concrete and thus virtually bombproof--were scattered throughout the island. Anti-personnel mines had been emplaced on the beaches while anti-vehicle mines had been positioned on the reef that ringed Betio. In addition, a barbed wire fence had been erected in the ocean surf between the reef and the beach. Log barriers and concrete tetrahedrons were other obstacles in the beach areas.(27)

On 7 November 1943, the men of the 8th Marines and the rest of the division found themselves riding at anchor in the harbor at Efate in the New Hebrides Islands. The regiment, on board the transports USS Heywood (AP-12), Sheridan (APA-51), La Salle (AP-102), and Monrovia (APA-31), was scheduled to undergo final rehearsals for the assault on Betio. A few days earlier, the convoy bearing the troops had steamed out of Wellington shrouded in secrecy. By now the men were aware of their final destination. Rehearsals were completed on the 13th; the convoy reassembled and sailed once again, this time for Tarawa.(28) Before dawn on 20 November, the transports carrying the invasion force arrived off Betio. Japanese shore batteries "welcomed" the Americans by opening fire on the task force shortly after 0500. Reply came from the battleships USS Colorado (BB-45) and Maryland (BB-46). The battle for Tarawa had begun.

Naval bombardment lasted for nearly four hours. While Japanese guns dueled with Americans warships, the assault troops clambered on board their landing craft. The initial wave to go ashore consisted of "Jim" Crowe's (he was now a major) 2d Battalion, 8th Marines and the 2d and 3d Battalions, 2d Marines. All three infantry battalions were a part of Combat Team 2 commanded by Colonel David M. Shoup, the commanding officer of the 2d Marines. Colonel Shoup subsequently received the Medal of Honor for his heroic actions during the campaign; in 1960, he became the 22d Commandant of the Marine Corps.

The initial assault battalions, including the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines, employed new amphibian tractors (LVTs) to cross the reef and get them to the beach. The LVTs, however, were in short supply and most of the troops in the following waves would have to utilize LVCPs (Landing Craft, Vehicle and Personnel), which drew three and a half feet of water. Getting the men on board these boats safely over the reef was a major concern, but insufficient information existed on the tides. Some planners felt that there would be enough of a tide to float the LVCPs over the reef, which was located from 600 to 1,100 yards out from shore. General Julian Smith, on the other hand, learned that the tides on Betio were not always dependable and that instead of the estimated five feet of water, which would be enough to get the boats over, there might be as little as three feet of water at high tide on 20 November. Julian Smith decided to prepare for the worst. He expected only a 50-50 chance that the LVCPs would clear the reef. Those troops embarked on these vessels were briefed to be ready to disembark and wade ashore.

When the time came for the LVCPs, carrying the later waves of the assault force, to begin their run there was not enough of a tide to get the boats across. The possibility of having to face the dreaded ordeal of being forced to travel on foot from the reef to the beach had come true. These Marines would make their way to shore as best they could through waist-deep water (in some spots the water was much deeper). Many would become easy victims of Japanese gunners as murderous fire rained unmercifully down upon them.

At approximately 0900 the first wave was ordered to the beaches. Landing sites had been designated on the lagoon side of the island because of two important factors: (1) Shore defenses were more concentrated on the ocean side. (2) Heavy swells rolled in from the open sea on the beaches on the ocean side, a factor that could lead to serious complications in any landing. The 2d Battalion, 8th Marines' landing site was east of a long pier that jutted out into the Tarawa lagoon. The battalion's zone was near the tail of the island. The other two battalions of the regiment had been placed in reserve. Both assault battalions of the 2d Marines were scheduled to land on beaches west of the pier. Amphibious tractors (amtracs) carrying the 3d Battalion, 2d Marines were the first to crawl up on the coral sands of Betio. The 2d Battalion, 8th Marines hit the beach at 0917. Japanese defenders had "warmly" greeted and challenged the 2d Battalion even before it landed by shelling the approaching landing craft. As the tractors neared the shore the air filled with the smoke and fragments of shells fired from 3-inch guns. Fortunately, casualties had been light on the way to the beach, but once the men dismounted and struggled to get beyond the beach battle losses increased dramatically. Company E, for example, lost five of its six officers soon after it came ashore. Crowe's men who had orders to seize the nearby airstrip were prevented from taking the objective because of devastating enemy fire. The men were forced to dig in and hold their positions.(29)

Intense enemy resistance from reinforced blockhouses and pillboxes and row after row of protected machine gun nests stopped the Marines from advancing much beyond the shore line. Two LVTs did however find a gap in the beach fortifications and were able to churn as far inland as the island's airstrip before unloading their men. The enemy's defenses, as the Americans learned to their dismay, had for the most part withstood the Navy's bombardment. Rifle fire and grenades from the infantry units on the beach were of no avail in reducing these fortifications. Destruction of the emplacements could only be accomplished through the use of explosive charges and flame throwers. Before under taking this extremely dangerous task the 2d Battalion, 8th

Marines turned to face a new and more pronounced peril. Two enemy tanks came lumbering towards the unit, firing as they advanced. Major Crowe, quickly responding to the menace, braved cannon fire by directing his men to manhandle into firing position two 37mm guns that had been dragged across the reef to the beach after the boats ferrying the weapons had been sunk. As the tanks neared, the Americans fired the guns at point-blank range. The engagement was brief; one tank was quickly knocked out of the fight while the other retired.(30)

General Smith, being apprised of the difficulties ashore and the seriousness of the situation, started commiting his reserve units. Major Robert H. Ruud's 3d Battalion, 8th Marines received its order to head for the beach at 1018. Unfortunately for the men, the entire battalion was embarked on LVCPs which could not climb over the reef. The troops had to dismount at the barrier, but as they attempted to move from the reef by foot through the surf to the beach they were cut to pieces by enemy machine gun fire and shell fragments from the defenders' big guns. The battalion's ranks were also thinned by men who were drowned as they stepped into holes and were dragged under by the weight of their heavy packs. Those who did reach the shore were disorganized and exhausted, sometimes weaponless. Many of the unit's officers and non-commissioned officers had been killed or wounded in the struggle to get to the beach. Movement ashore was not completed for over seven hours; on shore the men of the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines found that any advance would be slow and bloody. The murderous fire they experienced in landing continued unabated on the the beachhead.(31)

Holding the American beachhead on Betio rested in good measure with Major Crowe's battalion because it had been lucky enough to land in organized formations without sustaining heavy losses. In contrast the 2d and 3d Battalions, 2d Marines, the other initial assault units, had both sustained a considerable number of killed and wounded in the movement ashore. Among those killed was Lieutenant Colonel Herbert R. Amey, commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines. Colonel Shoup, commanding the troops ashore, therefore relied heavily on the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines to defend the beach area and then to expand the perimeter. Repeated attempts to move inland were thrown back by the Japanese. A strong concentration of enemy defense structures was located close to the base of the Burns-Philp Pier, about 400 yards east of the long pier which separated the 2d Marines' beaches from those of the 8th Marines. In one effort to go past these fortifications a platoon from Company F was virtually wiped out by machine gun fire from a steel pill box. Later in the day, those men from the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines who had

A Marine starts to throw a grenade at a Japanese pillbox on Tarawa. Over 100 pillboxes were found on Betio, many of them built of reinforced concrete. (USMC Photo #63455)

A squad leader on Tarawa points out an enemy position to his men. During the brief, but bloody, campaign Marines battled an enemy force of nearly 5,000 Japanese. (USMC Photo #63575)

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made it to the beach were attached to Crowe's unit. The reinforced battalion, nonetheless, was still not able to push past the pier. Four medium tanks from Company C, I Marine Amphibious Corps Tank Battalion came up to throw their weight into the attack. Again the assault faltered with three of the tanks being destroyed and one damaged. For most of D-Day, the 2d and 3d Battalions, 8th Marines had been confined to small, crowded areas along the beach. Forward progress had been painfully slow and costly. By nightfall the men of these units had only been able to penetrate to the edge of the airfield. An expected Japanese counterattack that evening failed to materialize--a rather puzzling fact since the American position was so precarious. In all likelihood, the still sizable enemy garrison did not attack because its wire communications were destroyed in the preliminary bombardment.

Earlier, Major General Julian C. Smith decided to commit the rest of the 8th Marines. Colonel (later Brigadier General) Elmer E. Hall, the regiment's commanding officer, the regimental headquarters, and the 1st Battalion under Major (later Colonel) Lawrence C. Hays, Jr., were still on board the transports. Shortly before 1400 on 20 November, Colonel Hall received orders from General Smith for the remaining elements of the 8th Marines to board landing craft and proceed to the line of departure. There the two units were to wait for further instructions. Division headquarters originally had intended the men to land on the eastern tip of Betio that afternoon, but something went amiss. The division message to land failed to reach Colonel Hall. All day the Marines waited. They were cramped, wet, hungry, and tired with a large number seasick. After several hours Hall received a radio communique requesting information concerning his whereabouts. Colonel Hall radioed back shortly after 0200 and surprised the whole division staff by indicating that he was still waiting for landing instructions.

Division headquarters in the confusion of battle had mistaken the landing of the 1st Battalion, 10th Marines as that of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines and the headquarters group. It had long been assumed the men of the latter two units were ashore. Instead these Marines had spent the last 12 hours bobbing in the rolling sea. Relief from this particular ordeal came two and a half hours later; but a new and hazardous trial would befall them next. Colonel Hall finally received his long awaited landing orders. He was directed to land to the west of the pier and then attack in a westward direction towards the 2d Marines' sector. The first wave reached the reef at 0615 on the 21st. The enemy, as during the previous day, raked the incoming Americans with machine gun and artillery fire. Both the

battalion and the regimental headquarters were thrown into disarray. Casualties again were high; nevertheless, by 1400 the majority of the men had made it to the island and were in the thick of the fighting. Some members of the two organizations had spent over 20 hours in landing craft before getting a chance to take part in the battle that raged ashore.(32)

Major Hays' unit tried to push forward but was stalled by a strong concentration of Japanese. The battalion gained little ground and was forced to dig in as night approached. Nonetheless, Hays, who received a Silver Star for the campaign, was able to report to Colonel Hall that the 1st Battalion had succeeded in destroying a number of Japanese positions. The unit, because of its unremitting pressure on the Japanese, had also managed to isolate several groups of enemy soldiers.

Meanwhile, the 2d Battalion continued its slugfest with the Japanese at the base of the Burns-Philp Pier. Colonel Shoup had ordered Major Crowe to mount another effort to reduce the enemy's fortifications there. Company F advanced against two positions--a steel pillbox to its front and a large reinforced bunker to its right front. Mutually reinforcing fires from both stymied the Marines. Support from Company G and a lone tank proved to no avail. On Company F's right flank elements of the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines ran into trouble and could not advance. The uncertainty of the battle that existed during the first day persisted into the next. Indications that a turning point had been reached in the battle came late in the afternoon of the 21st. The great pressure that had been put on the enemy seemed to be paying off. Colonel Shoup had analyzed the progress of the battle and at 1706 sent his new evaluation to division headquarters on the Maryland. In his terse radio message he declared: "Casualties many. Percentage dead not known. Combat efficiency--we are winning."

For added muscle the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines under Major (later Lieutenant General and commander of Fleet Marine Force, Pacific) William K. Jones was ordered to land on the east side of Betio along a beach that had been cleared by the 3d Battalion, 2d Marines. It completed its movement to the island at 1855 but found little opposition from enemy defenders.(33) The 1st Battalion, 6th Marines did not advance; instead it waited until morning so that it could participate in a general attack. At 0700 on 22 November, the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines struck westward against strong enemy fortifications. Support came from three light tanks which were able by skillful maneuvering to deliver almost point-blank fire on Japanese pillboxes. But the steel and concrete structures withstood the barrage

and were not badly damaged. The tanks were withdrawn later that morning after one was put out of action. Additional support came from Weapons Company, 2d Marines. This company brought up two self-propelled 75mm guns in an effort to eliminate the enemy's pillboxes, but one of the weapons and its crew were forced to retire before it could contribute its firepower to Major Hays' assault. The battalion remained thwarted by the fortified positions; frontal attacks had proved fruitless. Hays directed Companies A and C to outflank the Japanese while Company B maintained pressure on the enemy's front. The first two units succeeded by late afternoon in completing their mission. Japanese soldiers weakly counter-attacked. It proved to be no more than a vain gesture since the Marines easily repelled the enemy. When nightfall came Hays' unit was deployed in a semi-circle around the Japanese strongpoint, thus cutting off practically all avenues of escape for the defenders.

In the meantime, the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines had swept eastward along the ocean shore and had made contact with elements of the 2d Marines which had crossed the island the day before. Colonel Hall that morning ordered his 2d Battalion and elements of its sister unit, the 3d, to execute one more attempt at reducing Japanese defensive structures in their sector. Colonel Shoup agreed that after the attack the tired men would be relieved by elements of the 6th Marines. Three strongholds stood in the way of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 8th Marines: a steel pillbox, a coconut log emplacement, and a large bombproof shelter.

While preparations were underway for the renewal of the assault, supporting mortars lobbed shells at the entrenched enemy. At 0930, one shell made a direct hit on the log emplacement and luckily detonated a supply of ammunition which blew the bunker apart. A lone Marine tank at approximately the same time had taken the pillbox under fire and repeatedly slammed 75mm shells into the reinforced structure. Marines from Companies F and K immediately began their advance with the explosion of the bunker. The enemy, however, was not through and persisted in his resistence from the large bombproof shelter. Bitter fighting ensued with the Americans using flame throwers and explosives on the structure. Once the outside wall had been scaled the Japanese launched a counterattack. The charge was stopped and beaten back primarily through the efforts of First Lieutenant Alexander Bonnyman, Jr., of the 2d Battalion, 18th Marines, an attached pioneer unit. Bonnyman met the enemy head on by spraying the attackers with liquid fire from his flame thrower. He eventually was cut down by enemy riflemen, but not before he had ordered his men to place demolitions in the bunker's entrances and explode them. Those Japanese inside who sur-

vived the explosion ran into a hail of small arms fire and grenades as they scampered through the wreckage in a futile try at escape. In just a few minutes over 100 enemy soldiers had been killed. Lieutenant Bonnyman posthumously received the Medal of Honor. The entire 2d Battalion along with its supporting units forged ahead with the attack until it reached the enemy airfield. There it stopped for fear of coming under fire from the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines which was attacking along the coast. Crowe's men then dug in and prepared to meet any enemy units that might have been bypassed.(34)

Japanese troops counterattacked that evening. The assault hit mainly along the lines of the 6th Marines, but artillery and naval gunfire smashed the attackers. The American advance resumed on the morning of the 23d, the fourth day of the battle. However, the 8th Marines, less the 1st Battalion, stood down and moved to the nearby island of Bairiki which had previously been secured by elements of the 6th Marines. A Navy Cross was subsequently awarded to Major Crowe for his leadership of the 2d Battalion. Major Hays' unit continued in the fight on the northern shore. Colonel Wallace released flame throwers from the 2d Battalion to the 1st Battalion for its last drive against the Japanese. After the arrival of the weapons the battalion's Marines made good progress and established contact with the 3d Battalion, 2d Marines at 1000. The two battalions easily encircled the battered concrete pillboxes that had long thwarted the advance of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. The trapped Japanese were overrun and the area was firmly in American hands by 1300. A half an hour later, Major General Julian C. Smith declared the entire island was in American hands with the enemy offering no further organized resistance.(35)

Four days of bitter fighting found the Japanese, although willing to fight to the death, too tired, thirsty, and disorganized to put up a coordinated defense. Courage and determination proved no substitute for cohesive action; the Japanese were overwhelmed by Marines who displayed teamwork as well as personal bravery. A few isolated pockets of enemy soldiers tried to hold out but they were soon eliminated in mopping up operations that lasted through 24 November.

The ferocity of the battle was indicated by the twisted and torn wreckage of Japanese installations and military equipment from both sides. Betio was in shambles with American and enemy dead littering the landscape. The stench was almost unbearable. Enemy losses totalled nearly 4,700 Japanese and Korean soldiers killed. Many of the dead had refused to surrender and instead fought to the death or committed suicide. Only 146 enemy soldiers allowed themselves to be captured. The Americans also paid a shockingly

heavy price--over 3,000 casualties, including nearly 1,100 Marines killed. The battle was the bloodiest of the Pacific War up to that time, a fact that upset many back in the United States. Nonetheless, its uniqueness could not be dispelled even by the severe American losses and the consequent criticism that followed. Tarawa was unlike any previous campaign, because for the first time in history a seaborne assault had been launched against a strongly defended coral atoll. It had effectively demonstrated the soundness and feasibility of the Marine Corps doctrine of amphibious warfare. The operation, on the other hand, focused attention on those areas in the amphibious doctrine that required refinement and improvement. What had been learned on Tarawa was utilized in the planning of future amphibious operations, and this is where its significance lies.(36)

Saipan

The 8th Marines upon completion of the conquest of Betio Island left Tarawa Atoll for the Territory of Hawaii. It stopped first at Pearl Harbor where the wounded were placed in hospitals. Marines not needing hospitalization left Oahu and travelled by ship to the main island of Hawaii for billeting. The bivouac site was located 65 miles from the city of Hilo and was in mountainous area between the great volcanoes of Mauna Kea and Mauna Loa. There the men assisted in the construction of the camp which eventually bore the name Tarawa, an appropriate designation since the battle was so fresh and vivid in the minds of 2d Division personnel. Cold, high winds descended upon Camp Tarawa almost daily. Cool weather was certainly not what the men expected to find in the Hawaiian Islands. However, the climate did aid those men who still suffered from malaria incurred on Guadalcanal.(37)

In January 1944, General Smith initiated a training program designed to prepare the 2d Marine Division for its next combat mission. The first order of business was to replace the division's losses by integrating new men into the various component organizations. The invasion of the Mariana Islands was scheduled for mid-1944 with Saipan as the initial target. The 2d Division had been given a leading role in the forthcoming campaign. Major General Thomas E. Watson, a veteran of the interventions in Latin America, replaced General Smith in April 1944 as commander of the division. Watson, who had led the Marine expeditionary force during the Eniwetok operation, remained as commanding general of the 2d Marine Division through both the Saipan and Tinian campaigns.

The Mariana Islands were considered by American strategists as a vital link in Japan's string of defenses while

Double-timing Marine sidesteps a dead enemy soldier as he moves across an open area on Saipan in late June 1944. The 8th Marines moved across the relatively flat terrain of southwestern Saipan.

A .50 caliber machine gun crew fires at Japanese positions on Saipan in June 1944. (USMC Photo #88309)

also being the key to control of the Central Pacific, because they dominated Japan's lines of communications in the area. Capture of these important islands would not only sever the enemy's lines of communications and breach his defenses, but would also provide air and sea bases from which the United States could effectively strike at Japanese installations in the Philippines, Formosa, China, and even in the home islands of Japan itself.

Saipan was selected as the first objective because the island, some 1,250 miles from Tokyo, was an important supply base. D-Day was slated for 15 June 1944. Holland M. Smith, now a lieutenant general, was appointed commander of all expeditionary troops for the entire Marianas campaign as well as commanding general of the V Amphibious Corps which was to attack Saipan. In this operation the landing force consisted of the 2d Marine Division and Major General Harry Schmidt's 4th Marine Division. Schmidt, "an old China hand," had won the Navy Cross in Nicaragua. His division had been combat tested in the recent campaign for the Marshall Islands. The Army's 27th Infantry Division under Major General Ralph C. Smith was the reserve unit for the operation.

Saipan is approximately 14 miles long and six and a half miles wide, roughly 72 square miles. The land in much of eastern and northern Saipan is hilly with rolling plateaus that tilt down to narrow coastal flats or end abruptly in high cliffs that drop sheer to the sea. On the other hand the southern and western sections of the island are relatively flat.(38) Saipan's defenses had not been completed at the time of the landing. Nor had the Japanese exploited fully the island's natural features because the defensive potential of Saipan had not completely been appreciated by the enemy. His scheme of defense was predicated primarily on destroying the American assault force on the beach. Even so, the Japanese defenses were still formidable. The enemy had emplaced a number of fixed guns including some as large as 8-inch. He also had constructed numerous concrete blockhouses, pillboxes, and bunkers. American intelligence in an erroneous judgement miscalculated the strength of the garrison and placed the number of enemy troops on the island at 19,000. In reality the figure should have been more like 25,000. The one vital characteristic that stood out in the analysis of the enemy's defenses was the determination of the individual defender to hold the island and to give his life, if necessary, to fulfill this goal. This factor presented the Americans with the most difficulty during the operation.(39)

The expeditionary force began leaving Hawaii in late May 1944. A total of 110 transports carrying the ground troops steamed toward the Marianas. Starting on 11 June, the United

States subjected Saipan to an air and naval bombardment; however, this softening up proved to be inadequate in neutralizing the enemy. The 2d Marine Division had orders to assault beaches just north of the town of Charan Kanoa in the southwestern part of the island. Landing sites for the 4th Marine Division were located along beaches to the south of the town. The 8th Marines now commanded by Colonel Clarence R. Wallace, a veteran of the battle for Kwajalein, furnished two battalions--the 2d and 3d--for the initial assault. Other assault units came from the 6th Marines whose commanding officer, Colonel James P. Riseley, had been a member of the 8th Marines while it was in Haiti and had also been the executive officer of the regiment in the early phases of World War II.(40)

As the Navy bombarded the coast shortly before dawn on 15 June, the assault units assembled and boarded their LVTs. The landing craft then moved into position to make the dash to the designated landing areas. The first wave headed for shore at 0812. As the LVTs neared the beach they were met by intense fire from automatic cannons, antiboat guns, artillery weapons, and mortars. Many of the tractors were hit and were either sunk or disabled, causing a number of casualties. Nonetheless, 8,000 Americans were able to land in the first 20 minutes. Devastating fire from the defenders unfortunately resulted in a good deal of confusion in the beach area as drivers of the LVTs came ashore in the wrong zones. The entire 2d Division assault force landed hundreds of yards north of its assigned sector. Contact with the 4th Division was temporarily lost. Severe losses were sustained by the two battalions of the 8th Marines because of this error. Both units were put ashore on the same beach and this accidental massing of troops provided enemy gunners with excellent targets.(41)

Shortly after reaching the beach, both battalions moved forward against enemy strongholds with the 2d Battalion's advance toward Afetna Point being bitterly contested. At 0950, the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines under Lawrence C. Hays, Jr., now holding the rank of lieutenant colonel, received a directive ordering it ashore to assist the rest of the regiment in expanding its perimeter. Lieutenant Colonel Guy E. Tannyhill's 1st Battalion, 29th Marines was attached to the 8th Marines for this purpose. By noon, other Marine units had moved 1,000 yards inland. The Charan Kanoa airstrip near the beach was seized and the enemy also lost his main radio station. By mid-day, the Japanese were battling to stop the Americans from driving towards the swampy shores of Lake Susupe.

Heavy fighting in the Afetna Point sector persisted through the day. By evening Company G, 2d Battalion, 8th Marines after repeated tries finally overran and captured seven antiboat guns that had continued to fire on successive waves of incoming Marines. The company in its assault on Afetna Point had been supplied with shotguns, unusual weapons for an infantry organization during combat operations. One out of two Marines was so equipped because Company G was attacking straight towards the 4th Marine Division's left flank, thus making a short range weapon and one with a wide dispersion pattern more desirable in this instance than the standard M-1 rifle.

Although the northern half of Afetna Point had been taken by nightfall, seizure of all the regiment's D-Day objectives had fallen behind schedule because of the confusion in the initial landings. Progress had been made but at a substantial cost to the Marines. The 8th Marines sustained heavy losses amongst the ranks of its senior officers, particularly its battalion commanders. Lieutenant Colonel Hays was wounded shortly after reaching the beachhead. Lieutenant Colonel John C. Miller, commanding the 3d Battalion, was badly wounded by mortar fragments on the way to the beach and had to be evacuated. His successor, Major Stanley E. Larsen, was also wounded but continued to command the battalion. Henry P. Crowe, now a lieutenant colonel and still in charge of the 2d Battalion, also was hit. Crowe's complete assurance and confidence in his own capabilities of surviving anything in combat was demonstrated in his preinvasion vow that no matter what occurred on Saipan he would remain on his feet; and, this is exactly what he did despite a gunshot wound in the left lung. Later at an aid station the grizzled veteran again was seriously wounded when the Japanese attacked with mortars. Crowe's chest, left arm and shoulder, and right leg were pierced by shell fragments. He was evacuated on D-Day and was succeeded by Major William C. Chamberlin who in turn was also wounded but was able to continue in command of the 2d Battalion. This was not Chamberlin's first wound of the war as he received a Purple Heart on Tarawa where he also won the Navy Cross.(42)

Casualties for the division were extremely high during the first day of the battle for Saipan. Nearly 1,300 men had either been killed or wounded and over 300 listed as missing. That evening a number of units that had attacked eastward toward Lake Susupe were pulled back to strengthen the 2d Division's perimeter. Along the lines of the 8th Marines the enemy launched a series of minor counterattacks that had little force behind them. These probing attacks were not serious but were mainly irritants that caused the

Marines on Saipan carry an injured comrade to an aid station in early June 1944. Casualties were extremely high among the senior officers in the 8th Marines. (USMC Photo #86530)

Marines on Saipan crouch low as Japanese shells land nearby. (USMC Photo #90356).

men to remain awake and alert, thus depriving them of much needed rest.(43) The 2d Battalion, 8th Marines renewed its attack at 0700 the following morning. The rest of the regiment meanwhile stayed in those positions that were taken on the previous day. By noon, the 2d Battalion secured the entire Afetna Point zone and made contact with elements of the 4th Division at the Charan Kanoa pier. Other 2d Division units attempted to force their way inland in the general direction of Mount Tapotchau, a peak that is approximately 1,500 feet above sea level and the highest point on the island.

The severe losses incurred by the Marines on D-Day and the continuation of heavy fighting compelled General Smith to order the 27th Infantry Division ashore. All reserve Marine units had already been committed. Soldiers began landing that night; however, the Army division did not complete its movement until 20 June.(44) The tempo of fighting for the 8th Marines increased on 17 June when the 1st and 3d Battalions moved out of their positions and struck inland. Rapid advances occurred with all objectives taken. The attached 1st Battalion, 29th Marines was an exception as it ran into strong resistence in the marshy land surrounding Lake Susupe. On the 18th, elements of the 4th Division reached the east coast of Saipan, thus cutting the island in two. The 2d Marine Division, now with Saipan bisected, prepared to swing north. The 27th Division was assigned the tasks of reducing those Japanese-held areas by-passed by the two Marine divisions and of destroying the remnants of enemy units trapped on Nafutan Point, the island's southeasternmost peninsula.

While preparations were underway for a strike northwards, the American Navy secured a great victory far out to sea. A powerful enemy armada, including aircraft carriers, had been dispatched to the Marianas to destroy the American invasion force. On 19 June 1944, the United States Navy's Task Force 58 met the Japanese off Guam. In the ensuing engagement, known as the Battle of the Philippine Sea, the Japanese lost three carriers and hundreds of aircraft with the remainder of the enemy fleet retiring to more friendly waters. No further outside threat to the assault troops took place after the victory. The battle resulted in the United States having uncontested control of the seas around Saipan. The potential for a counterlanding ended.(45)

General Smith ordered a major offensive for 22 June with both Marine divisions participating in the attack. Most of the 27th Division was scheduled to be brought up for added muscle. Both Marine divisions jumped off at 0600 with the

2d Division on the left flank and the 4th Division on the right flank. The 8th Marines in marching north made excellent progress until reaching the lower slopes of Mount Tapotchau. Rugged terrain impeded any further advance and the regiment had to bivouac for the night along the base of the mountain. The offensive resumed the next morning with Army units committed to the center of the American drive. Only light resistance was encountered at first but the attack did not gain momentum because of rough ground. Additionally, the new advance could not proceed as quickly as desired since the right flank of the 8th Marines was left exposed after Army units lost contact with the regiment. Contact was reestablished at dusk when elements of the 106th Infantry Regiment had been located. The Army's main attack in the center had been halted in an area known as "Death Valley." There the enemy had emplaced strong fortifications. The 8th Marines, nevertheless, pressed on with its own attack on Mount Tapotchau. The jagged, craggy landscape, that was choked with heavy foliage, time and again prevented the Marines from achieving their goal; in fact, Japanese defenders proved to be less of a hindrance than the terrain.(46)

On 25 June, Colonel Wallace ordered one more attack with all three battalions along with the 1st Battalion, 29th Marines being assigned to the final push for the summit. After fighting all morning, the 1st Battalion, 29th Marines now under Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Rathvon McC. Tompkins* was able to scale the heights and reach the top. The prized pinnacle presented the Americans with the finest observation post in central Saipan. Enemy counterattacks failed to dislodge the battalion as the Marines had firmly entrenched themselves on the summit. Below, little progress had been achieved by the other three battalions for they could only move at a crawl over the tortuous ground. The numerous crevasses and narrow ravines provided enemy riflemen and machine gunners with excellent concealment from which to harass and ambush the Marines.(47)

No new major advance took place until the 28th when the regiment began a drive on four small hills, dubbed the "Four Pimples." As the Marines drew near the hills, enemy resistance stiffened and the initial momentum of the assault was lost. The men halted at 1600 without trying to make another attempt on the hills. The attack resumed the next morning but the assault was primarily in the form of various probes against Japanese defenses. For the next two days, the Americans were involved in a search for a practical route over which tanks could traverse the rocky terrain. It had

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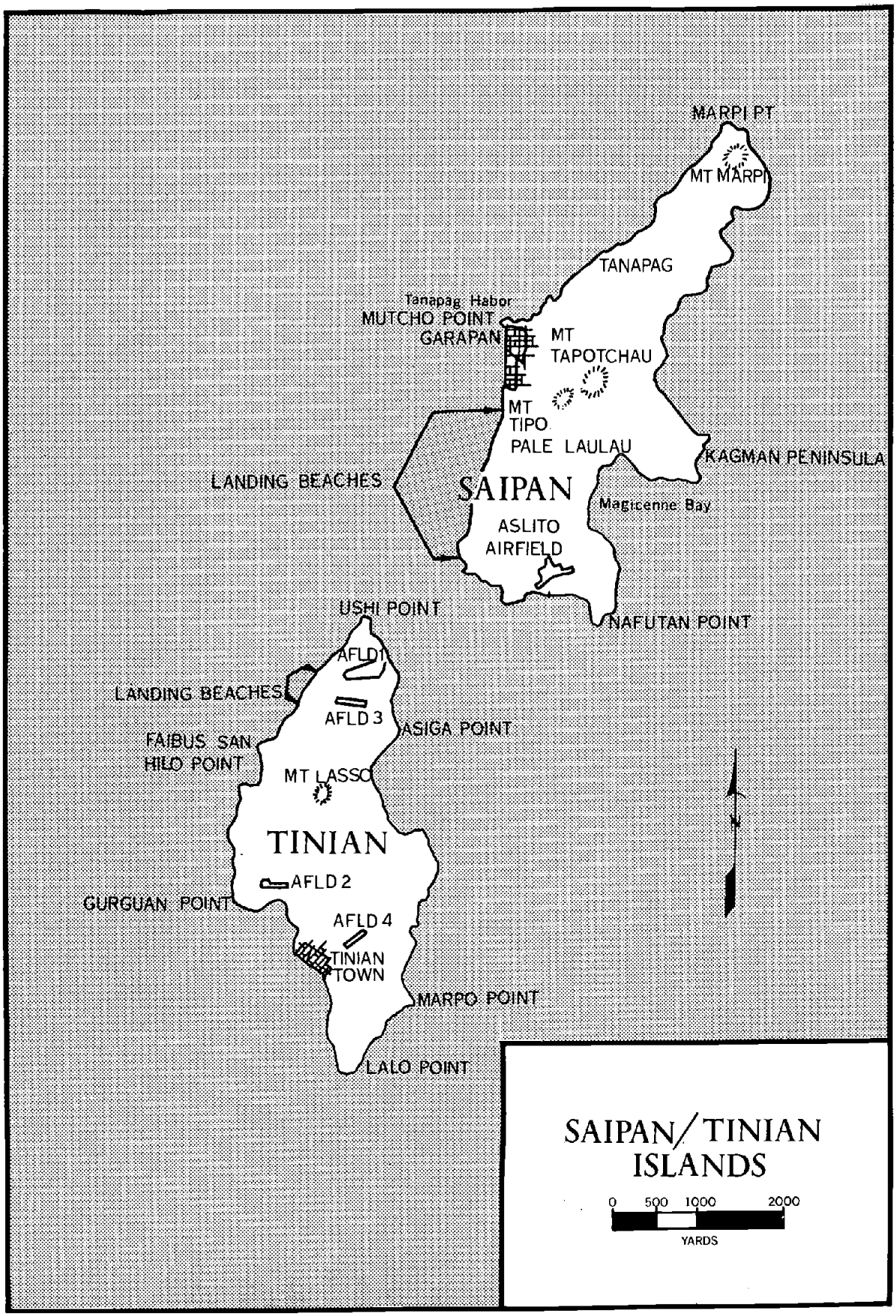
(*) Lieutenant Colonel Guy E. Tannyhill, the previous commanding officer, had been wounded on 17 June.

been intended to use the armor for support in a frontal attack on the "Four Pimples." On the 30th, two of the hills fell to the Marines after a path for tanks had been found. The other two knolls were blasted with artillery and rockets in order to destroy Japanese fortifications. The 2d Marine Division on 1 July smashed through enemy defenses and rapidly advanced along its entire sector of the front. Opposition in the "Four Pimples" region was eliminated and enemy units there, that is those who escaped, retreated northward. That afternoon the 2d Marines in an infantry thrust entered the devastated city of Garapan, the largest on the island.

The 8th Marines, less the 2d Battalion which was a reserve force for the 2d Marines, had moved past the hilly territory in the "Four Pimples" area and made a stab at Tanapag Harbor, north of Garapan. The terrain although wooded was not as rugged as had previously been encountered. Coordinated tank-infantry attacks were more effectively utilized in this region. Progress continued at a fairly good pace until 2 July when machine gun fire from a coral-limestone hill raked the entire front of the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines and most of that of the 1st Battalion, 29th Marines. Lieutenant Colonel Tompkins fell wounded and was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier General) Jack P. Juhan, the 8th Marines' executive officer. Intense fire stopped any attempt to overrun the hill. Tanks and flame throwers were employed against the enemy's fortified emplacement. Neutralization of the strongpoint did not however happen and it was therefore decided to bypass the entrenched enemy and resume the advance. Company F, 2d Battalion, 8th Marines remained behind to contain the Japanese. The regiment succeeded in reaching the sea in the vicinity of Tanapag Harbor at 1300 on the Fourth of July. Most of the 2d Division including the tired 8th Marines subsequently went into reserve on that day. (48)

The 27th Infantry Division had for days during late June been unable to budge the enemy roadblocks in "Death Valley." Realizing the futility of frontal assaults, the Army troops redeployed to occupy the hills above the valley. On 29 and 30 June, the soldiers began a sweep through the hills back to the valley floor where they finally crashed through enemy fortifications and then drew alongside the 8th Marines. The battle for "Death Valley" cost the Army division over 1,000 casualties. On the night of 6-7 July, the Japanese launched a 5,000-man counterthrust in a fanatical, banzai charge which overran almost the entire 105th Infantry Regiment and then spilled over into the lines of the 10th Marines, the 2d Division's artillery regiment. The bloody, desperate fight ended only when Army and Marine units were rushed to reinforce the beleaguered men, but not before the Americans, especially the Army, suffered over 1,000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LANDING BEACHES
SAIPAN
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AIRFIELD
USHI POINT
NAFUTAN POINT
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ASIGA POINT
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casualties. Heavy losses sustained by the Americans did not, however, compare to the massive casualties inflicted on the attacking Japanese--over 4,000 killed.(49)

The 2d Marine Division came back to the front lines on 8 July, replaced the exhausted 27th Infantry Division, and entered the final drive against the shattered Japanese. The 8th Marines pushed north up the beach and then wheeled inland through the hills in a wide arc bringing it back to the sea three miles south of Marpi Point on Saipan's northern shore. The maneuver was completed on the 9th, the day the 2d, 24th, and 25th Marines reached Marpi Point. There the Americans witnessed the grisly sight of hundreds of enemy soldiers and civilians leaping to their death from the rocky ridges rather than surrendering. These unfortunate people, believeing Japanese propaganda, feared that they would be terribly and cruelly mistreated if they fell into American hands. Organized resistance had come to an end and the island was declared secure. Japanese holdouts, however, continued to be mopped up for months.(50)

The known death toll for the enemy was placed at approximately 23,800. The United States had 16,500 casualties with the 2d Marine Division suffering 5,700 of these. The 8th Marines itself lost 300 killed and over 1,100 wounded.(51) Although the United States paid an extremely high price in blood, its seizure of Saipan was a notable and significant step in the advance on the Japanese home islands. The victory gave the United States its first base in the Marianas and here on Saipan the first B-29 base in the Pacific was established. Many Americans, and even some highly placed Japanese Government officials, felt the capture of Saipan signalled the beginning of the end for the Japanese Empire.(52)

Tinian

Three miles off the southern coast of Saipan lies the neighboring island of Tinian. It is approximately 12 miles long, is no more than six miles wide, and has a total area of slightly over 50 square miles. Not as rugged as Saipan, the island is almost encircled by cliffs rising directly from the sea, varying in height from six to 100 feet. The cliffs are broken near the northwestern end of the island by two small indentations.(53) Nearness to Saipan made Tinian's capture essential. Its relatively flat terrain was ideally suited for air bases for the B-29, America's newest long-range bomber. Nine thousand Japanese soldiers and sailors defended the island. Major General Harry Schmidt, former commanding general of the 4th Marine Division, was now in command of the V Amphibious Corps, the organization tasked

with capturing Tinian. His assault forces for the operation were the 2d and 4th Marine Divisions. Major General Clifton B. Cates, later the 19th Commandant of the Marine Corps, had assumed command of the 4th Division.(54)

As early as 11 June 1944, Tinian received preparatory bombardment from Navy ships and planes. This continued for 43 days. Army and Marine artillery batteries firing from southern Saipan joined in the attack beginning 20 June. Long-range 155mm guns, 155mm howitzers, and 105mm howitzers methodically pounded northern Tinian. Over 24,500 rounds from these weapons came crashing down on the island prior to the actual invasion.(55) "Jig-Day," the day the assault was to begin, was set for 24 July 1944. Units from the 4th Division were slated to attack two narrow beaches on the northwestern side of the island. The 2d Division was to make a feint off Tinian Town on the southwest coast to distract Japanese troops in the area and prevent them from reinforcing units at the actual landing site.

At dawn on the 24th, a Navy convoy with seven transports carrying veterans of the 2d and 8th Marines appeared on the horizon off Tinian Town. The LVCPs were lowered into the water and Marines of the two regiments clambered down cargo nets into them. The boats then made for a rendezvous point about four miles from the shore. Simultaneously, the Navy's big warships appeared to move in to render support for the "invasion." Approximately at 0730, the troop-laden landing craft headed at full speed toward Tinian Town. As the LVCPs approached the beaches the enemy opened up with large-caliber mortars. The boats came within 2,000 yards of the shore and then turned around and headed back for the transports. The sham landing did not however come off without casualties. Soon after the landing craft began their feint, an enemy 6-inch shore battery took the battleship USS Colorado (BB-45) under fire; it received 22 hits in 15 minutes. Additionally, the Japanese guns pumped six shells into the destroyer USS Norman Scott (DD-690). Total casualties were 62 killed and 245 wounded. All on board the LVCPs returned safely to their transports. The Navy's losses notwithstanding, the ruse was deemed a success, since Japanese commanders maintained their positions around Tinian Town and did not deploy any men to the north where the 4th Division was landing.(56)

By 1100, all transports had reloaded and were steaming north to join the 4th Division, the bulk of which was now mostly ashore. That afternoon the 2d Division began landing. Lieutenant Colonel Hays' 1st Battalion, 8th Marines was the first to come ashore. Once the LVCPs completed transferring

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the battalion to the beachhead that evening, further landing operations were cancelled until the following day. Hays' unit upon landing acted as a reserve force for the 4th Division. During the night the enemy struck three times at the American perimeter. On each occasion the Japanese were thrown back by elements of the 4th Division. By daybreak the enemy counterattack had been smashed.(57) The 2d Division resumed its ship-to-shore movement in the morning. Colonel Wallace and the 8th Marines headquarters group landed initially at 0630 while the rest of the regiment came ashore later that morning. The enemy attempted to counter the new landings by sporadic and ineffective artillery fire on the incoming LVCPs, but little or no difficulty was experienced in putting the men on the beach.

The entire 8th Marines with the 1st Battalion now back with the regiment moved out of the perimeter as part of the effort to expand the beachhead. Ushi Point, the northernmost peninsula on Tinian, was its objective. The regiment at first encountered no opposition as it carefully inched its way over the gnarled, rocky terrain and through the thick undergrowth, but as the Marines pressed northward groups of Japanese holed up in the craggy coral outcroppings challenged the Americans with bursts of small arms and machine gun fire. Late that morning the advance came to a standstill. The 1st Battalion which was in the lead had engaged a particularly troublesome detachment of enemy riflemen. Frontal attacks by the infantry proved fruitless while the use of tanks was precluded because of rough ground. Colonel Wallace thereupon ordered his men to attempt a flanking maneuver. Once this was accomplished the enemy pocket was overcome and the general advance began anew. Satisfactory gains were made with all elements of the regiment advancing against only scattered opposition. The momentum of the drive carried the 2d Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel Lane C. Kendall to the airfield at Ushi Point where contact was made with the 4th Division's 1st Battalion, 24th Marines commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier General) Otto Lessing.(58)

The 8th Marines on the morning of 26 July seized the entire field but found it abandoned and cluttered with the wreckage of enemy aircraft destroyed in the American bombardment. At 1140, the 1st and 2d Battalions reached the east coast after making a lightning thrust from the airfield. The regiment subsequently went into reserve and initiated a search for enemy stragglers who might have been bypassed, but it saw little fighting during the next few days. The men battled the elements far more than the enemy, for on the 28th a typhoon slammed into Tinian. An unremitting deluge plagued the troops for two days, causing some real and unexpected hardships for the regiment's personnel.

Troops advance on Tinian with a Marine medium tank in support during late July 1944 (USMC Photo #152074)

A detachment from the 10th Marines on 25 August 1944 fires a 75mm pack howitzer in support of the 8th Marines during mopping-up operations on Tinian. (USMC Photo #94660).

By the end of the month all of the north had been cleared of enemy units who were withdrawing to the southern end of the island. Troops from the 2d Division swung south to join their comrades from the 4th Division in their pursuit of the enemy. The 8th Marines on 30 July received orders directing it to move up and assume positions on the extreme right of the 2d Division's front. The regiment completed its movement by 1830 on that day. No further operations or movements were conducted as the men dug in for the night. Morning found the Japanese forces compressed into a relatively small area in southern Tinian. At dawn the American Navy unleashed a tremendous bombardment on the enemy. The Navy in little less than two hours lobbed 615 tons of shells into enemy emplacements. Moreover, 69 tons of explosives were dropped by American bombers. After cessation of the bombardment the Marines moved out from their lines and headed toward the entrenched but trapped Japanese.(59)

Opposite the 2d Division was a cliff in which a number of Japanese were holding out. Colonel Wallace directed the 1st and 3d Battalions to make a stab at the cliff. Lieutenant Colonel Kendall's unit, the 2d Battalion, followed the other two, mopping up isolated enemy soldiers. The drive made good headway with the 3d Battalion arriving at the base of the massif at 1200. The 1st Battalion reached it three hours later. To the right of the two units were elements of the 4th Division. Lieutenant Colonel Gavin C. Humphrey ordered his 3d Battalion to scale the heights. In the cliff were several caves and crevices masked by dense vegetation. As the men attempted to climb the rocky incline, they were met by concentrated fire from hidden enemy riflemen. It was obvious that the Navy's terrific bombardment had failed to destroy significant numbers of Japanese defenders. Their fire halted the assault of the 3d Battalion and forced its commander to pull the battalion back.

Lieutenant Colonel Hays' 1st Battalion had in the meantime begun a separate ascent. Enemy soldiers firing rifles and machine guns and throwing hand grenades tried to stop the Marines, but the assault in this instance continued. At approximately 1630 two platoons from the battalion were able to scramble to the top. Learning of this success, Colonel Wallace ordered Hays to press forward with his attack. The 2d Battalion, which had been in the rear, deployed at about 1700 to render support. By then three companies from the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines had pushed their way onto the top of the cliff. Kendall's men, however, were subjected to a heavy mortar barrage as they began their climb. Suddenly, the enemy launched a strong infantry assault on Company E. The Americans reluctantly fell back. That evening, persistent probing attacks along the regiment's front helped to prevent

the establishment of contact between the 2d and 3d Battalions. Not long after midnight the Japanese, hoping to take advantage of the situation, infiltrated a large group of soldiers behind Marine positions. The enemy attacked the rear of the 2d Battalion and captured a number of vehicles. Kendall's troops drove the attackers back and launched their own counterthrust in which most of the enemy were killed and the vehicles retaken.

Colonel Wallace requested reinforcements from the 2d Division, hoping that the deployment of additional troops on the cliff and at its base would forestall further attacks. Division headquarters directed the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines at 0320 to move into the 8th Marines' zone while artillery batteries from the 10th Marines were emplaced to strike at possible enemy troop concentrations. Despite these steps the Japanese at 0515 threw 600 soldiers and sailors at the 8th Marines. The 2d Battalion was hardest hit with Company E being subjected to especially severe pressure. Although the enemy failed to achieve a breakthrough, this company was nearly overrun in a fanatical banzai charge. Two 37mm guns saved the unit by continuing to pump canister fire into the onrushing enemy even though the crews of these weapons were repeatedly hit by Japanese fire. The enemy finally withdrew leaving behind 200 dead. In comparison, the regiment sustained 74 casualties in the fight.(60)

The 2d Battalion having borne the brunt of the two predawn attacks went into reserve following the last battle. Daybreak found the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines making its way to the top of the cliff. There it linked up with the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines and the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines. The 2d Battalion, 6th Marines got to the top a short while later. The Marines fanned out and advanced against little or no organized opposition. They did however find a large body of japanese and Korean civilians hiding in caves. The entire island was in American hands by late afternoon on 1 August and at 1855 it was declared secure. Nineteen-hundred casualties had been inflicted on American forces while almost 5,000 enemy troops were killed. Losses sustained by the 8th Marines amounted to 66 killed and 249 wounded. Immediately after the conclusion of the campaign the United States began construction of large bomber bases on Tinian. The atomic bombs dropped on Hiroshima and Nagasaki in August 1945 came from B-29s that had taken off from Tinian. Japan, as a result of the devastation caused by the bombs, accepted American surrender terms and World War II ended.

Although the battle for Tinian was officially over, surviving groups of enemy soldiers persisted in holding out. On 6 August 1944, the 8th Marines assumed sole responsibility

for routing out the Japanese. Mopping up operations were conducted for many months by regimental units. On 25 October, all elements except the 1st Battalion redeployed to neighboring Saipan for more such operations. The 1st Battalion stayed on Tinian until the end of the year and continued in the difficult job of destroying the remnants of the Japanese garrison. Over 500 enemy were killed from August to January 1945 while the 8th Marines lost 38 killed and 125 wounded, approximately half the total casualties it suffered during the actual campaign.(61)

Okinawa

Late winter 1945 witnessed intensive preparations for another major campaign--the invasion and seizure of Okinawa. This strategic island, only 350 miles from southern Japan, was to be taken in a joint Army-Marine operation. The Tenth Army, commanded by Army Lieutenant General Simon B. Buckner, Jr., was the military organization responsible for the capture of Okinawa. The 2d Marine Division's role in the upcoming struggle was to be similar to its initial mission in the Tinian campaign. It had instructions to carry out a pretended landing on the southeast coast near the city of Minatoga while the main landings were taking place on the western coast. L-Day, the day of the initial landings, was scheduled for 1 April 1945, Easter Sunday. Following the feint the 2d Division would act as a reserve for the III Amphibious Corps, commanded by Major General Roy S. Geiger.* Depending on the progress of the campaign, the division might then be committed to the battle or might act as a scource of reinforcements for the III Amphibious Corps.

The convoy with division units on board APAs (Transport, Attack) and LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank) arrived in waters off Minatoga early on 1 April. At about 0520, Japanese Kamikaze pilots, flying suicide missions, attacked the task force and hit ships carrying the 3d Battalion, 2d Marines. Ironically, the landings of the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions, main elements of the III Amphibious Corps, had been unopposed. Without putting a man ashore the 2d Division had sustained the only significant casualties on L-Day.(62) The convoy with the 2d Division embarked on board steamed back and forth off the coast of Okinawa for several days. But concern over its vulnerability to air attacks resulted in the redeployment of the division back to Saipan. In mid-May, General Buckner specifically requested that the 8th Marines be returned to Okinawa. The general had originally inspected the 2d Marine

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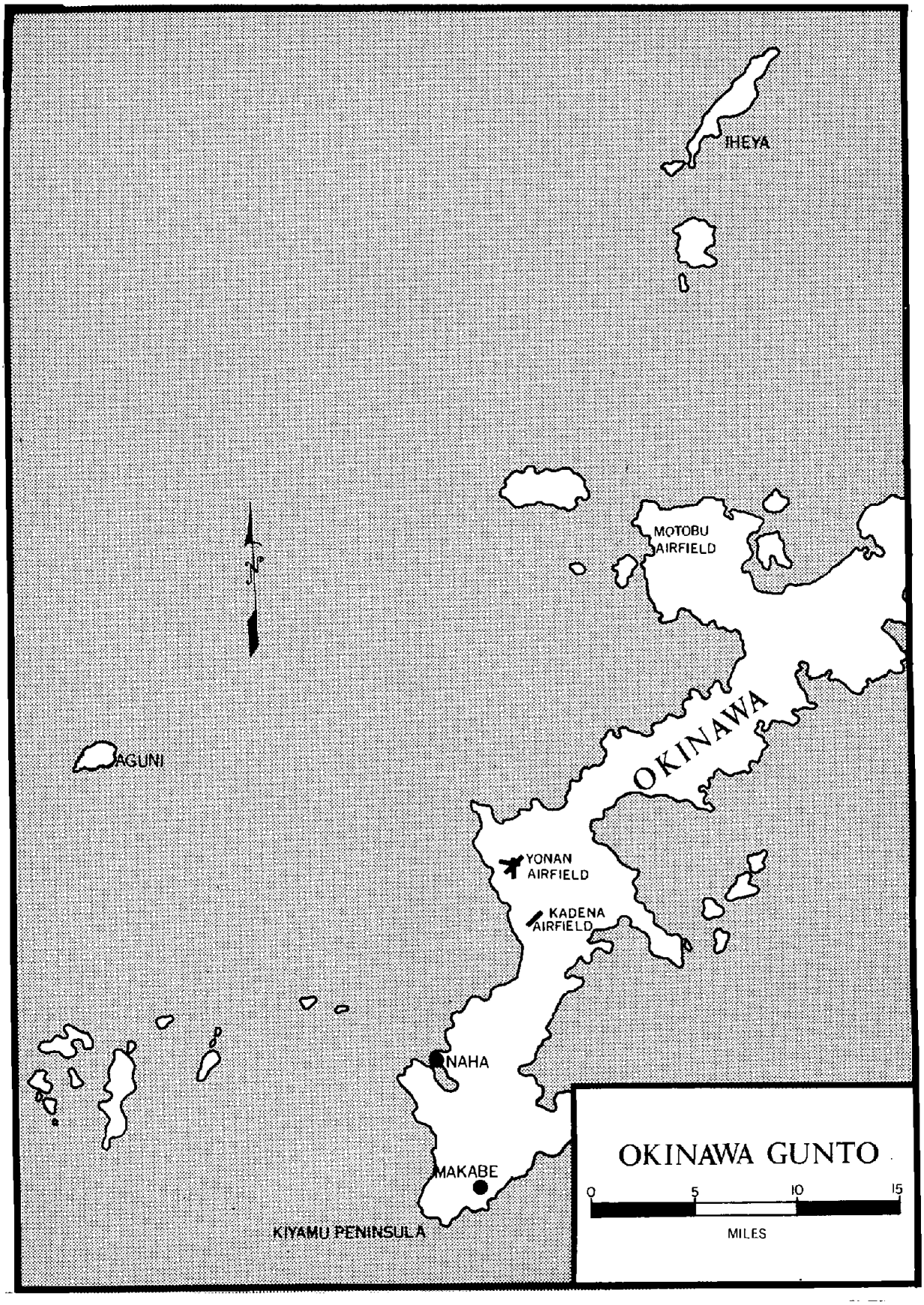
(*) Geiger, a pioneer in Marine Corps aviation, won a Navy Cross while commanding a Marine squadron in France during World War I. Immediately after the war he commanded another squadron in Haiti.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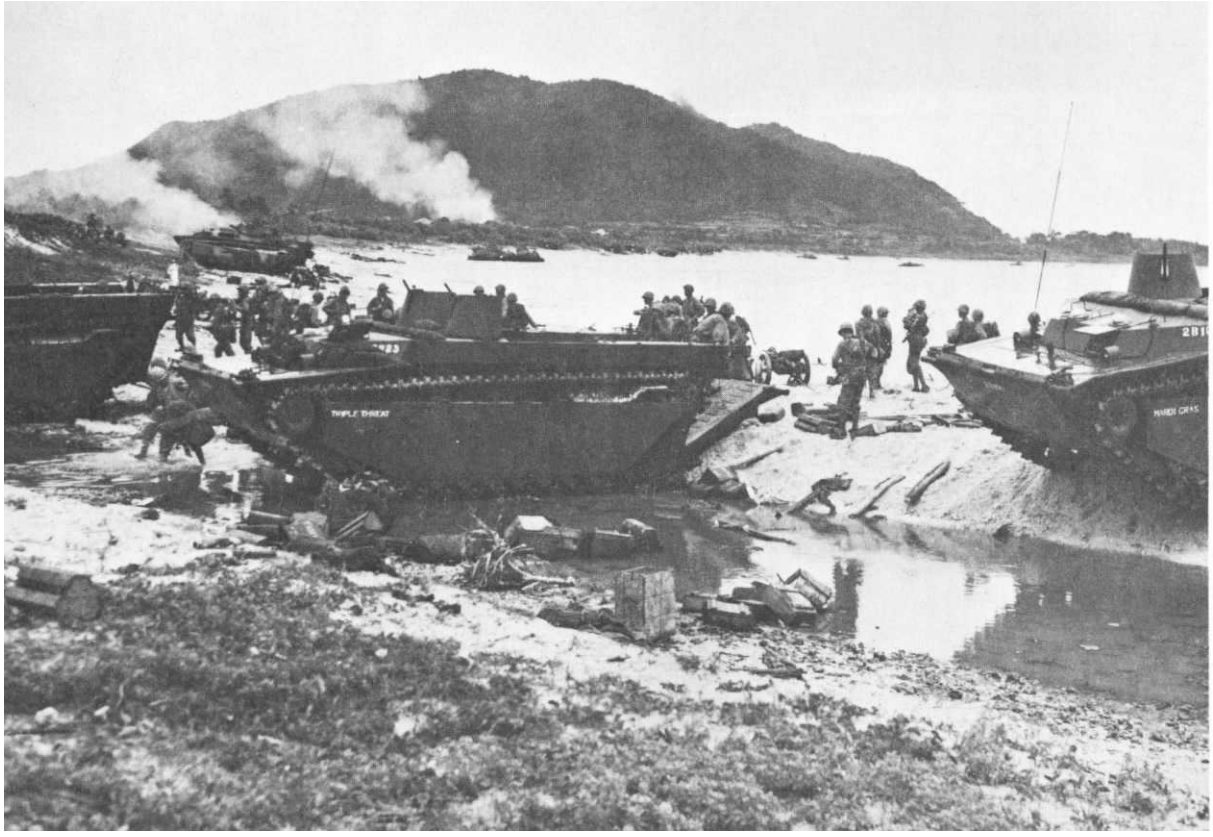
Division in the preceding February and had been favorably impressed with the combat-tested 8th Marines. He gave particular praise to its battalion commanders. General Buckner was later quoted as saying "he had never before had the privilege of meeting such an alert group... ."(63)

The regiment with the 2d Battalion, 10th Marines and other supporting units attached departed Saipan on 24 May. It had orders to seize outlying islands near Okinawa in order that long-range radar and fighter direction facilities be installed to offset the Kamikaze threat. The initial objective was Iheya Shima, 15 miles northwest of northern Okinawa. Shortly after 1100 on 3 June, the 2d and 3d Battalions, 8th Marines made an unopposed landing on the small island. The rest of the regiment came ashore soon thereafter. No enemy soldiers were discovered--only bewildered civilians. Iheya Shima was officially declared secure on the following day. The 1st Battalion on 9 June made a similar landing on Aguni Shima, 30 miles due west of Okinawa. Again the Marines encountered no opposition, but on this occasion they did capture two Japanese Navy pilots.(64)

Army units relieved the 8th Marines a few days later and the regiment redeployed to Okinawa to reinforce American forces in their final offensive. The Tenth Army had by this time pushed the enemy into southern Okinawa. It had already punched through the vaunted Shuri Line, a string of strong Japanese fortifications, and fought its way through Naha, the capital. Fresh troops, however, were needed for the thrust against entrenched enemy forces on the Kiyamu Peninsula. The 8th Marines being readily available were thereupon attached to the 1st Marine Division. On 18 June, Colonel Wallace brought his regiment up to the front where it relieved Colonel (subsequently Lieutenant General) Edward W. Snedeker's exhausted 7th Marines. The 8th Marines that morning led off the 1st Marine Division's attack. Lieutenant Colonel Harry A. Waldorf and the 2d Battalion moved out from Mezado Ridge while the 3d Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) Paul E. Wallace jumped off from Kunishi Ridge. The regiment's objective was the coast; its mission was to head for the sea in a lightning thrust. Rapid advances occurred with the 2d Battalion taking the Kuwanga-Makabe Road. The unit advanced 1,400 yards in the face of moderate machine gun and rifle fire and mortar and light artillery shelling. That evening Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines came up to assist in night defense.

At mid-day on the 18th, General Buckner and his staff visited Colonel Wallace, regimental commander of the 8th Marines, at his observation post on a ridge overlooking the 3d Battalion's sector. There he observed the progress



Amtracs unload elements of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 8th Marines on Iheya Shima. The 8th Marines made an unopposed Landing here during the Okinawa campaign. (USMC Photo #12688)

Men of the 8th Marines march across Naha Airfield on their way to the front on Okinawa. (USMC Photo #125070).

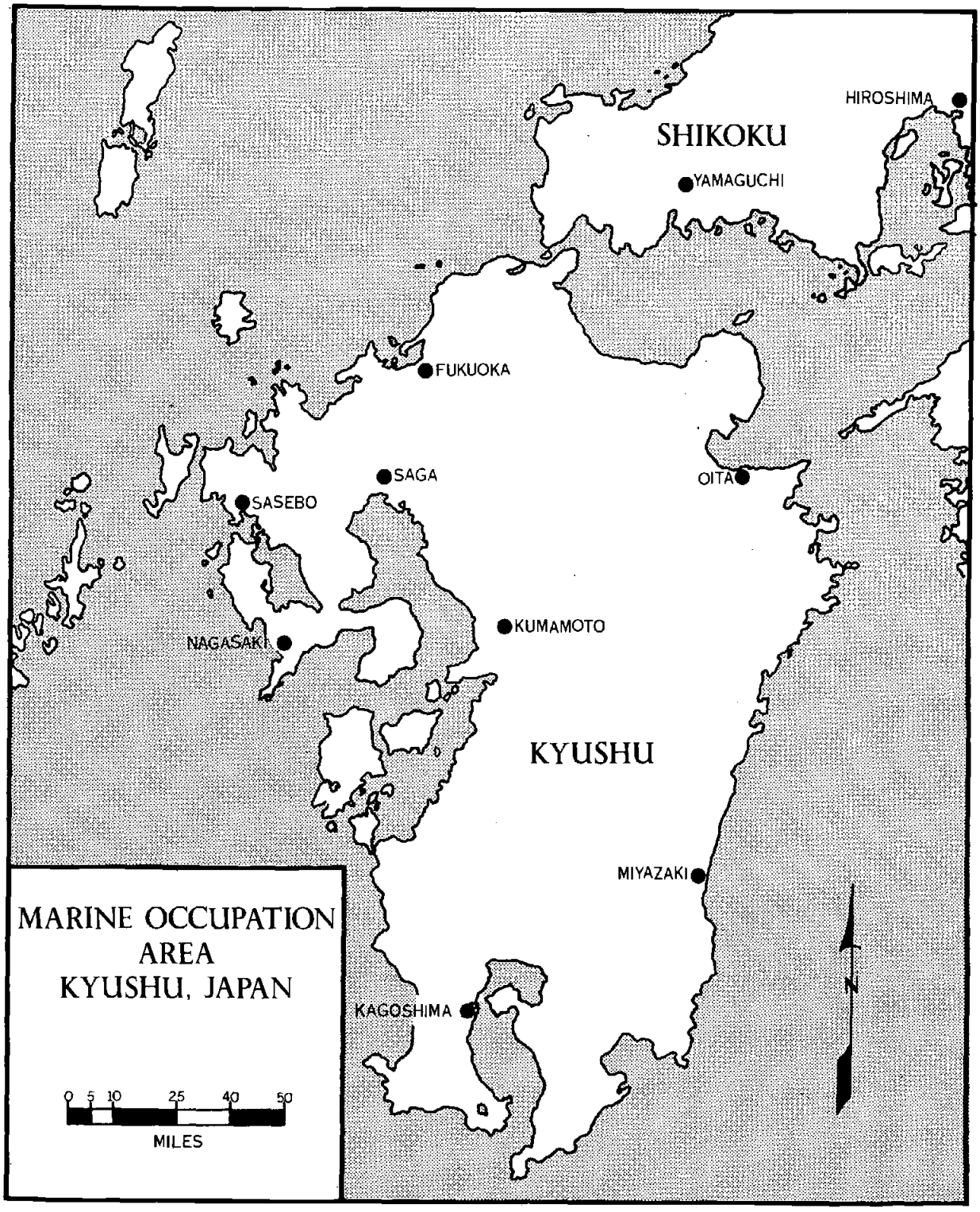
of the battalion. Approximately an hour after he arrived and shortly before he was scheduled to leave, six shells from an enemy 47mm antitank gun slammed into the position. Buckner standing behind two large boulders was mortally wounded in the chest by jagged pieces of coral that were thrown up by the explosions. Roy S. Geiger replaced the fallen General Buckner and took command of the Tenth Army on the following day after he had been promoted to lieutenant general.(65)

The 3d Battalion, 8th Marines, meanwhile on the 19th, came up through the lines of the 2d Battalion to storm the heights of Ibaru Ridge. The battalion, on the heels of an American artillery barrage moved out under the cover of dense, white phosphorous smoke and rushed the defenders on top of the ridge. The enemy was thrown off balance by the charge and the Marines pushed the Japanese down the other side of the ridge to the sea, some 500 yards away. All elements of the battalion by 1700 had broken through Japanese lines and were on the beach. The break-through had severed the enemy's defense structure on the peninsula. The battle for Okinawa was all but over. For the next three days, the 8th Marines assisted units from the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions in clearing out pockets of resistance. Relatively heavy losses were incurred by Company I, 3d Battalion, 8th Marines in one such engagement on the 20th. The town of Makabe was completely overrun by elements of the regiment on 21 June 1945. The following morning the regiment reassembled all its units and joined other Marine regiments for a final swing north to Naha. General Geiger announced at 1305 that afternoon that the island had been secured. Eighty-two day of bitter and bloody fighting ended in an important American victory.(66)

The brief participation by the 8th Marines in the battle for Okinawa had cost the regiment 43 killed and 308 wounded. Its supporting units had casualties of 5 killed and 49 wounded. The regiment stayed on the island until 1 July and engaged in mopping up operations. All three infantry battalions scoured the ridges south of Naha for Japanese holdouts. The regiment and its attached units then redeployed to Saipan where they rejoined the 2d Division which was training for what was expected to be the invasion of Japan.(67)

The Occupation of Japan and the Immediate Postwar Period

The division at the conclusion of hostilities in August 1945 was directed to forego preparations for the assault on Japan and make ready for a move to the island of Kyushu where it would be used as an occuption force. Kyushu, Japan's southernmost home island, was to be occupied also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by the 5th Marine Division and the Army's 32d Infantry Division. The 8th Marines left Saipan between 11-18 September 1945 and arrived at the devastated city of Nagasaki between 23-27 September. The regiment moved to the nearby Isahaya Naval Air Base where it assumed its role as an occupier in a defeated enemy's homeland.(68) The troops speculated and were concerned about their reception; some, fearing treachery, expected hostilities to break out anew. Initial apprehension proved to be unfounded since Japanese authorities cooperated fully with the Americans upon their arrival. One high American official characterized the Japanese compliance "as nearly correct as could be humanly expected."

The duties of the 8th Marines in its new assignment were: (1) to disarm and demobilize Japanese military forces; (2) to insure that the terms of surrender were being carried out; (3) to take over military installations; (4) to dispose of ordnance, both explosives and weapons; (5) to apprehend war criminals; and (6) to process hundreds of thousands of military and civilian personnel returning from various regions of the Japanese Empire. In addition to this last task thousands of Koreans, Formosans, Okinawans, and Chinese were rounded up, processed, and returned to their native lands.(69) In early October, the 8th Marines began deploying to the industrial city of Kumamoto which lies west of Nagasaki. All elements of the unit by the 18th were established in various camps located in and around the city. Eventually, the 8th Marines was also assigned the responsibility for the southern city of Kagoshima and took up occupation duties in the Osumi and Koshiki Island groups which are to the south and southwest of Kyushu respectively. The zone of occupation for the 2d Division again expanded in November when it assumed, along with the 32d Division, the mission of policing the sector which had been assigned to the 5th Division. At this time the 5th Marine Division was occupied in making arrangements for its relocation to the United States. When the division completed its withdrawal on 19 December 1945, the 2d Marine Division was notified that it would also take over the Army's sector in the immediate future. On 31 January 1946, the 32d Division stood down and all of Kyushu now became the sole burden of the 2d Division.(70)

Departure of American military units from Japan and the postwar demobilization of United States Armed Forces which was well underway in early 1946 had its effect on the 8th Marines. On 25 February, the 3d Battalion was detached from the regiment. Two days later, it sailed from Sasebo on board the transport USS Carroll (APA-28); arrival in San Diego, California came on 14 March. It promptly transferred to nearby Camp Pendleton where it was deactivated on 26 March

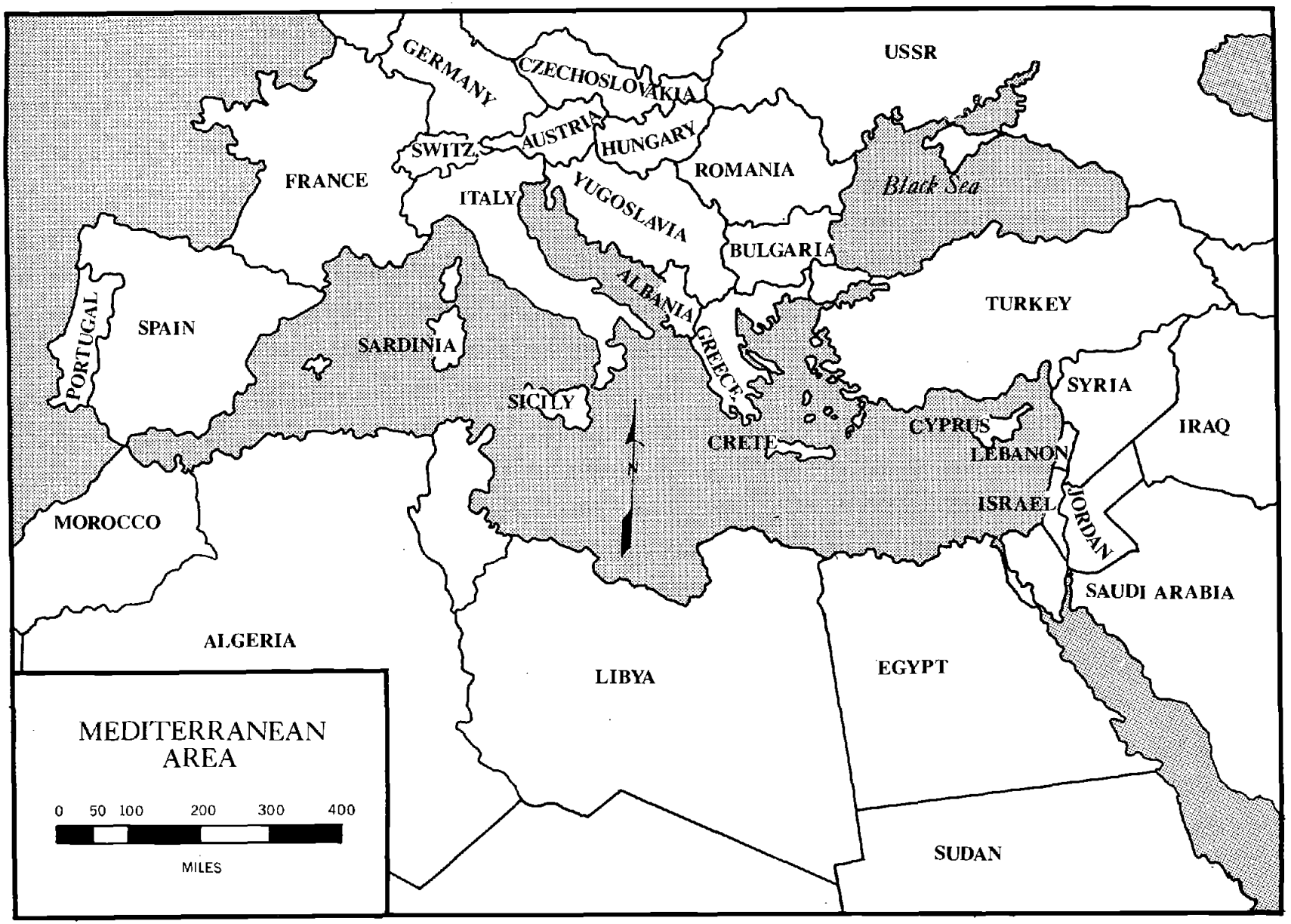
Marines from the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines come ashore in an amphibious exercise on Culebra during 1947. This was the regiment's first amphibious maneuvers since the end of the war. (Leatherneck Photo).

A detachment from the 8th Marines disembark from landing craft during amphibious exercises on Culebra. (Leatherneck Photo).

1946.(71) During the month of June 1946, the 2d Marine Division received orders for redeployment to the United States. It subsequently turned over its duties and responsibilities as an occupation force to the Army's 24th Infantry Division. The 8th Marines with its two battalions assembled in Sasebo during the middle of the month and then boarded the transport USS Grimes (APA-172) for its journey to the East Coast of the United States. The regiment arrived a month later at Norfolk, Virginia; thus bringing to a close four and a half years of deployment in the Pacific and in the Far East. Colonel (later Brigadier General) Thomas G. McFarland and his regiment boarded a troop train and proceeded to Camp Lejeune, North Carolina where the new home of the 2d Marine Division had been established.(72)

The entire regiment--Headquarters, the 1st and 2d Battalions--returned in January 1947 to the Norfolk area to participate in a training exercise at Little Creek. The unit then moved to Ponce, Puerto Rico in late February; this was the regiment's initial postwar overseas deployment. Another move soon followed with the regiment embarking on the transports USS Noble (APA-218), New Kent (APA-217), Cambria (APA-36), and the LST-664. The ships sailed to nearby Culebra where the regiment took part in its first amphibious maneuvers since the end of the Second World War. Training was concluded in March with the 8th Marines relocating to Camp Lejeune on the 20th.(73)

Its next major exercise occurred in fall 1947. Most of the unit left North Carolina on 21 October for Argentia, Newfoundland for cold weather exercises. On the way back to the United States the 1st and 2d Battalions stopped at the Canadian port of Halifax, Nova Scotia. The regiment, while its two battalions were there, underwent a major reorganization which saw both battalions being deactivated on 18 November. Thereupon the regiment was compressed into an organization that approximated the size of an average infantry battalion. The 8th Marines now consisted solely of the following organizations: Headquarters Company and Companies A, B, and C. This was not unique as other Marine regiments were also being similarly reshaped at the time. The postwar policy of demobilization had by late 1947 produced an alteration in the structure of all those Marine regiments still on active duty. Under the revised tables of organization infantry regiments were reduced to the size of a single battalion. This new system perpetuated some of the Marine Corps' oldest regiments since the traditional numerical designation was retained--but scarcely anything else. The lineage and honors of the these regiments were preserved, although there was no resemblance to the regimental structure that existed during World War II. The continuity of regiments, such as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the 8th Marines, had thus been maintained despite drastic cuts in the authorized strength of the Marine Corps.(74)

Unstable conditions in central and eastern Europe plus developing tensions between the United States and the Soviet Union during 1947 and 1948 produced the "Cold War." In late 1947, the Navy requested that a battalion-size Marine Corps unit be deployed with the Sixth Fleet to bolster its striking power in the Mediterranean Sea. The first unit to reinforce the Sixth Fleet, the 2d Marines, left North Carolina for the Mediterranean on 5 January 1948. The 8th Marines deployed not long after. Except for only two periods, August 1950-March 1951 and March 1955-May 1956, Marine infantry battalions from the 2d Marine Division have been assigned continuously to the Sixth Fleet on a rotational basis since January 1948. These afloat battalions eventually acquired the designation: Landing Force, Mediterranean. Their mission has been one of being ready (1) to seize and hold a beachhead or airfield; (2) to assist in evacuation of American nationals when called upon; (3) to reinforce other American forces in the Mediterranean; (4) to provide landing forces for special operations; (5) to protect United States embassies, legations, and consulates; and (6) to conduct exercises and operations as directed by the commander of the Sixth Fleet. The Marine battalion has to be prepared to execute these missions in an independent operation, jointly with other American forces, or in combined operations with allied nations at any point along the 10,000-mile coastline of the Mediterranean Sea.(75)

On 2 February 1948, the 8th Marines left Norfolk on board the carrier USS Philippine Sea (CV-47) and participated in Atlantic Fleet maneuvers. After a stopover in Vieques, a small island a few miles off the eastern end of Puerto Rico, the carrier with the Marines still embarked on board departed for the Mediterranean on 20 February. Nineteen forty-eight was a tense and crucial year in the Cold War. The Soviets had succeeded in solidifying their hold on all of central and eastern Europe through the presence of their military forces and through the imposition of Communist governments in countries of this region. Entrenchment of the Soviets in eastern Europe was not the sole cause of concern for the United States. In fact, little could be done to reverse Soviet dominance in that region for the Russians had presented the Americans with a fait accompli. The United States took a pragmatic approach and turned its attention to other areas of crisis where there existed more possibilities of thwarting Soviet imperialism. In 1948, a Communist-backed civil war raged in Greece while neighboring Turkey was experiencing tremendous Soviet pressure for territorial concessions. The United States responded to

the Communist threats to both countries by promulgating the Truman Doctrine, the first post World War II military assistance program. Adoption of this program led inexorably to the strengthening of the American military presence in the Mediterranean Sea. Outbreak of war in Palestine between Jews and Arabs only contributed to the heightening of tension in the eastern Mediterranean and aggravated American concern for the region.

The 8th Marines moved into this uncertain area in late winter 1948. It made stops in Gibraltar, Algeria, Tunisia, Libya, France, Italy, Malta, and Greece. The Marines, however, spent most of their time on the tour in the eastern Mediterranean. Because of the growth of political and military instability in that region, the Sixth Fleet continued to make an obvious show of force by steaming back and forth through Greek waters which are also adjacent to Turkey and not far from troubled Palestine. The 8th Marines remained deployed with the fleet until the summer when it then headed for home. It arrived at Camp Lejeune on 29 June 1948 after initially disembarking at Quonset Point, Rhode Island. A similar deployment to the Mediterranean took place during the following year between May-September 1949. The 8th Marines on this tour carried out several practice landings on beaches of friendly nations; but, as in the previous year, the unit spent a considerable portion of its time in Greek waters.

On 1 November 1948, the 8th Marines was detached from the 2d Marine Division and reassigned to another higher echelon organization--the 2d Provisional Marine Regiment. One more postwar reorganization began a year later. The steady drop in strength of the Marine Corps resulted in a new restructuring of those units on active duty. Implementation of this program necessitated the disbandment of the 8th Marines. Deactivation therefore took place at Camp Lejeune on 17 October 1949, a short time after the regiment's return from its second tour in the Mediterranean.(76)

Rebirth and Deployments of the 1950s

The outbreak of the Korean War in late June 1950 produced a reversal of the well-established trend of annual reductions in strength of the Marine Corps. An immediate build up was ordered. This led to the reactivation of a number of previously disbanded units including the 8th Marines. Approximately a month and a half after hostilities started, the gradual ractivation of the regiment began. The first element to come into existence was Headquarters and Service Company. The post World War II concept of a battalion-size organization bearing a regimental designation

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had been abandoned in favor of a regimental structure similar to that which existed during World War II. Activation of the headquarters unit occurred on 9 August 1950 at Camp Lejeune with Major (later Colonel) Anthony Walker temporarily taking command. He was succeeded in September by Colonel James M. Masters, Jr., who had won a Navy Cross on Okinawa as the executive officer of the 7th Marines. (He eventually would reach the rank of lieutenant general and would command the Marine Corps Schools at Quantico, Virginia.) The 1st Battalion and the 2d Battalion were reactivated on 1 November and on 1 December 1950 respectively. An antitank company and a 4.2-inch mortar company were added on 4 December. Reactivation of the 3d Battalion on 15 January 1951 completed the structure of the regiment. (Later a 4th Battalion would exist temporarily as an integral part of the 8th Marines between 6 January - 30 November 1953.)(77)

The initial overseas deployment after reactivation came in mid-June 1951 when the 1st Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Thomas C. Kerrigan, sailed to the Mediterranean. There it participated in amphibious maneuvers in Sardinia, Malta, and Crete before returning to Camp Lejeune on 30 September.(78) While deployed with the Sixth Fleet, Marine battalions often took part in North Atlantic Treaty Organization (NATO) exercises. RENDEZVOUS was the first major NATO exercise for an element of the regiment--in this case the 2d Battalion. It was held in March 1953 in conjunction with Operation NEW MOON. RENDEZVOUS, the naval phase of the two combined exercises, was directed by British Admiral Earl Louis Mountbatten in his capacity as Allied Commander in Chief in the Mediterranean. Its purpose was to test the ability of NATO forces (elements of the American, British, Italian, Turkish, and Greek fleets were the participants) to keep the sea lanes open for convoys through the Mediterranean in the face of possible air and submarine attacks. As part of the exercise the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines conducted amphibious landings on Sardinia and along the Gulf of Argos, about 50 miles southwest of Athens, Greece. In the latter maneuver a French commando unit initially hit the beach; the main landing, a combined operation then followed. A Greek battalion came ashore on the left of the beachhead; the 2d Battalion landed in the center; and a Turkish battalion assaulted the beaches on the right. This meshing of four separate national military forces in a complicated landing exercise proved to be a highlight of Operation RENDEZVOUS. The coordination and cooperation of the four groups involved were considered unusual for the time.(79)

The battalion completed its deployment with the Sixth Fleet in May and subsequently returned home. Its sister unit, the 1st Battalion, deployed to the Mediterranean

eight months later. Initial port of call was made in the French colony of Algeria. Until its relocation to Camp Lejeune in late spring 1954, the battalion participated in numerous landing exercises. The first came in February when battalion personnel played a leading role in TURKISH SKY I at Iskenderun, Turkey. HELLENIC SKY I in Greece followed. Further maneuvers were held at Porto Scudo, Sardinia and at Lavorno, Italy. In the latter location the 1st Battalion in early May 1954 entered operation ITALIC SKY I.(80)

Upon the arrival of the 1st Battalion back at Camp Lejeune, Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) Maurice L. Appleton and the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines received orders for a Caribbean deployment. Members of this organization transferred to Morehead City, North Carolina on 5 June 1954 and embarked on the transport USS Mellette (APA-156) which then sailed for Vieques. Once the battalion reached its destination the scheduled maneuvers were suddenly postponed and the Marines promptly were ordered back to sea. Lieutenant Colonel Appleton's battalion on board vessels of a Navy task force headed for waters off Guatemala and Honduras. Growing turmoil in the former nation was the reason for the 2d Battalion's speedy departure from Puerto Rico. Guatemalan rebels and political exiles led by Colonel Carlos Castillo Armas had earlier invaded Guatemala from neighboring Honduras. On 27 June, Colonel Armas succeeded in overthrowing the allegedly pro-Communist Government of President Jacobo Arbenz Guzman. The Marines had been alerted for a possible landing to evacuate American nationals and to protect American-owed property. Installation of a pro-American government nullified the threat to American lives and property; therefore, no landing was necessary. The 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, consequently, resumed its normal routine duties. It eventually returned to the United States on 25 August 1954.(81)

The entire regiment, under 41-year-old Colonel Marlowe C. Williams, departed for the Caribbean in late February 1955. The 8th Marines formed the main element in Exercise TRAEX 3-55. Altogether 8,000 Marines including Marine Aircraft Group 32 (MAG-32) took part. (TRAEX 3-55's scenario bore an uncanny resemblance to actual circumstances that were to exist nearly eight years in the future. It called for Vieques to be an enemy island having launching sites for guided missiles. The "missiles" were to be employed against the United States. In 1962, a similar but real situation prevailed on Fidel Castro's Communist-dominated island of Cuba.) The 8th Marines' role in the exercise was to make an amphibious raid on "enemy-held" Vieques and

"destroy" the simulated missile sites. It then would "fight" its way back to the beaches and reembark on board Navy shipping. Once the ground assault, which came on 21 April, had rolled inland reinforcements would then be supplied by helicopters from MAG-32. The 8th Marines successfully completed its phase of the exercise in late April and all elements returned home by 5 May.(82)

TRAEX 1-57 was another significant exercise for the regiment. Beginning in late February 1957, several Marine units deployed to Vieques for the operation. Colonel Thomas J. Colley's 8th Marines was the primary participant in the ground phase of the maneuver. Colonel Colley, who had assumed command during the previous August, was a veteran of all major 2d Marine Division campaigns in World War II and had been the division's assistant chief of staff, G-2 for most of the war. Other Marine organizations taking part in TRAEX 1-57 were the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines and the 2d Force Service Regiment. Air squadrons came from both the 2d and 3d Marine Aircraft Wings. The whole operation was overseen by Brigadier General Austin R. Brunelli, the assistant commander of the 2d Division and holder of the Silver Star for Saipan and Navy Cross for Iwo Jima. The exercise emphasized training in the Marine doctrine of vertical envelopment. Helicopters transported inland several detachments from the 8th Marines who then "seized" forward strategic areas while other Marines from the regiment and supporting units landed over the beaches via traditional assault vehicles. The regiment also drilled in such tactics as night reconnaissance patrols, night movements, and ambushes. Stress was placed on firing exercises and on the development of an efficient coordination of communications within the regiment's component organizations during this combat-like situation. Company F, in addition, conducted extensive field tests of new body armor in TRAEX 1-57. It compared the standard vest in use with an experimental one with respect to comfort, ventilation, compatibility, maneuverability, reduction in load, and other factors pertaining to increasing the combat efficiency of the individual Marine.

Weeks of training in the Caribbean followed the conclusion of TRAEX 1-57. The 8th Marines in early spring had transferred to the Panama Canal Zone for participation in CARIBEX 1-57--a test of the effectiveness of what the Marines learned on Vieques. The operation was a joint Marine-Army, air-sea-ground assault. Its purpose was to prepare American troops for possible joint amphibious-airborne operations in jungle terrain. This was the largest exercise ever staged in Panama and was viewed by a number of notables including President Eugene de LaGuardia of Panama and General Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., former Commandant of the Marine Corps and

then chairman of the Inter-American Defense Board. A sizable portion of the 8th Marines took part in the initial assault on the jungle-shrouded beaches. Simultaneously, other elements, ferried by helicopters from MAG-26, landed behind "aggressor" forces. Benefits derived from CARIBEX 1-57, as hoped, proved to be an adjunct to the experience gained in TRAEX 1-57. The regiment departed Panama once the exercise was over and headed back to the United States. It arrived at Camp Lejeune on 12 May, ending nearly three months of intensive training in the Caribbean.(83)

Expeditionary Duty in Lebanon

Interminable and deep-routed tensions that had long characterized the politics of the Middle East appreciably increased during spring 1958 with unrest in Lebanon approaching a dangerous level. The small, half Christian-half Moslem country was in serious straits by late May. A state of rebellion existed. Rumors persisted that leftist infiltrators from neighboring Syria had entered the country to assist anti-government forces. The situation deteriorated further on 14 July when the world learned of the bloody overthrow of the monarchy* in Iraq by pro-Nasser** and pro-Communist groups. Fearing a similar take over by leftists in his nation, Lebanese President Camille Chamoun sent an urgent appeal for help to the American Government. President Dwight D. Eisenhower complied with the request and decided to intervene with military forces because of President Chamoun's pro-Western stance and because of the belief that Lebanese rebels were backed by leftist President Gamal Abdel Nasser of Egypt. The United States subsequently entered Lebanon with the announced purpose of both protecting American nationals and preserving the integrity and independence of the country.

Lieutenant Colonel John H. Brickley's 1st Battalion, 8th Marines had on 9-10 January 1958 left the United States for the Mediterranean on the transports USS Freemont (APA-44), Olmsted (APA-188), and Mount McKinley (AGC-7). After stopping in Gibraltar, Spain, France, Sardinia, and Italy, the battalion took up positions in the eastern Mediterranean because of the steadily worsening conditions in the Middle

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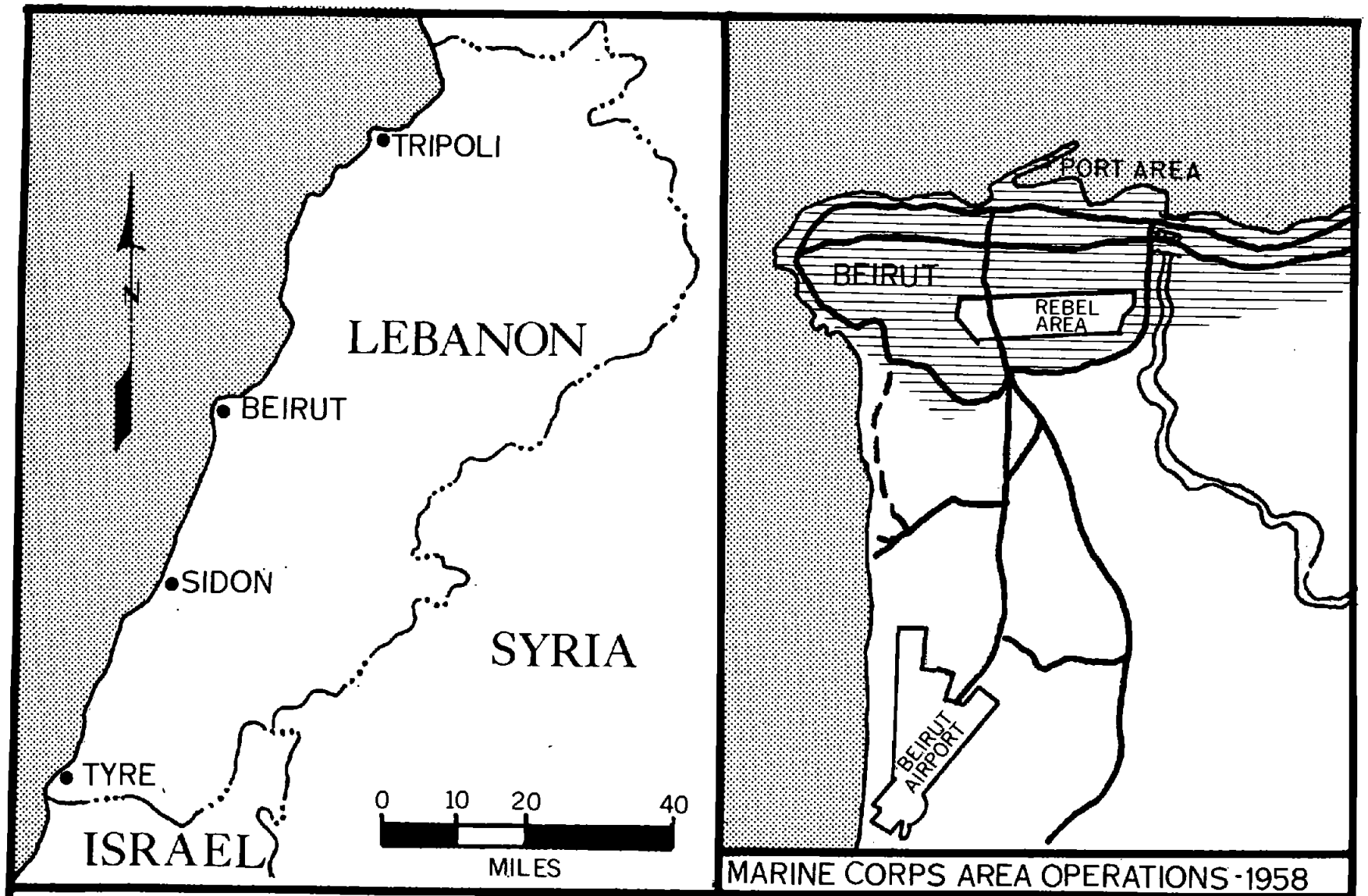
(*) Both young King Faisal and Premier Nuri Said were killed.

(**) Gamel Abdel Nasser, a staunch nationlist, helped overthrow the decadent Egyptian monarchy in 1952 and was elected President of Egypt in 1956. After coming to power he increasingly allied himself with the Soviet Union while supporting socialistic and nationalistic causes in neighboring Middle Eastern nations.



LEBANON AND THE CITY OF BEIRUT

East. The 2d Battalion, 2d Marines had originally been scheduled to relieve the unit in the summer; the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, nonetheless, remained in the Mediterranean after the arrival of the new unit.(84) Also deployed there was the recently arrived 3d Battalion, 6th Marines. Three reinforced infantry battalions were then stationed in the Mediterranean--a rather unusual occurrence. Earlier that year, Lieutenant Colonel Brickley, anticipating trouble in Lebanon, sent Major Victor Stoyanow, the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines' operations officer, to the country. Major Stoyanow travelled incognito to Beirut, the capital, where he made a survey of possible landing sites. As a result of his covert reconnaissance a contingency plan had been formulated for an amphibious operation, should that be deemed necessary in the future.(85)

Following the go-ahead from Washington, the initial landing of troops in Lebanon came on 15 July 1958 with the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines coming ashore south of Beirut near the Beirut International Airport. No opposition was encountered by the Marines. The 3d Battalion, 6th Marines came ashore on the 16th and experienced a similar lack of armed resistance. Two days later, the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines moved into the country. The unit began landing four miles north of the city at 0900 with Companies A and B coming in first via landing craft. The only difficulties the battalion had during the operation were those posed by curious Lebanese bathers and vendors. The obvious absence of hostile forces plus the not unfriendly welcome did not deter the wary Marines from taking precautions. True to their long hours of combat training they fanned out from the beach and formed a crescent-shaped perimeter with Company B on the right flank, Company C in the center, and Company A on the left flank. The primary mission of the battalion was surveillance of all routes into its sector, including the important Damascus and Tripoli Roads. The surrounding terrain was hilly and wooded and offered excellent concealment for snipers. However, the only casualties came from heat exhaustion.(86)

The build-up of troops in Lebanon continued after the arrival of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines. U. S. Army troops first arrived on 19-20 July. In nearby Jordan in a parallel operation, crack British parachute units began arriving to protect young, pro-Western King Hussein, a cousin of slain King Faisal.

While the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines was securing its beachhead, its sister unit, the 2d Battalion with Company K of the 3d Battalion attached, began arriving in increments by air at Beirut International Airport. The battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) Alfred A.

Tillmann, had been put on standby alert on 14 July. Company K had been assigned because of personnel shortages within Tillmann's unit. The men moved to Cherry Point, North Carolina on 15 July, the day of initial entry of American forces. At 2127 the order was given to the battalion to begin the airlift to Lebanon. The first plane was airborne in less than 45 minutes. A total of 25 R4Q and 12 R5D Marine aircraft departed at regularly spaced intervals. The transports flew by way of Argentia, Newfoundland; Lajes in the Azores; and then to Port Lyautey, Morocco. From there the R4Qs flew to Malta; Suda Bay, Crete; and into Beirut while the R5Ds flew slightly northward to Naples, Italy then next to Suda Bay and finally into Beirut.

The first plane landed at 0930 on the 18th and last at 1215 on 21 July 1958. The operation went smoothly and was conducted with only a few minor difficulties. Just one plane experienced engine trouble, forcing it to return to the Azores. Personnel transferred from the crippled R4Q to another plane for completion of the journey.(87)

Marine units in Lebanon were organized into the 2d Provisional Marine Force under Brigadier General (later Major General) Sidney S. Wade, commanding general of Force Troops, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic. On 23 July, the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines received instructions from General Wade's headquarters to initiate immediately motorized patrols as far as 20 miles inland. Personnel from the Lebanese Army accompanied the patrols which consisted usually of a reinforced rifle platoon mounted in three trucks and three jeeps. Marine helicopters flew surveillance for the patrols. With the expansion of the battalion's zone, the men experienced some minor noise harassment along the perimeter during the evenings. Nothing serious, however, came from this annoyance except that it forced the men to have a few sleepless nights. While the 1st Battalion deployed into the countryside, the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines entered Beirut. On the 24th, it assumed the responsibility for defending the harbor, port facilities, and other key installations in the city.(88)

An outbreak of dysentery was the biggest medical problem facing the Marines. The 1st Battalion, 8th Marines alone recorded 48 cases between 18-31 July.(89) In August, the 1st Battalion consolidated its position and constructed fortifications in its sector. Lack of rebel activity during the month led to a reduction of motorized patrols from daily to every other day and eventually to once weekly. Nightly harassment persisted, however. To counter such activity the battalion during the first week of the month fired each night a few rounds of mortar illumination shells--81mm, 4.5-inch, and 60mm illuminating ammunition. The regular evening

Two men with a Browning automatic rifle (BAR) from the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines watch for snipers in Beirut during July 1958. (Leatherneck Photo)

Weary .30 caliber machine gun crew from the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines returns from a patrol in the Lebanese countruside. (Leatherneck Photo)

nuisance diminished greatly as a result, and then ceased altogether. The 2d Battalion, 8th Marines in its zone witnessed in comparison to the 1st Battalion considerably more fighting between the various native factions. Pro-Government supporters and Communist-backed rebels repeatedly clashed, but these skirmishes were broken up by Lebanese Army units. The battalion was not a participant--just an observer of the fighting. Incidents of small arms fire and scattered time bomb explosions were often reported. However, none were directed at the battalion's personnel and no casualties were sustained.(90)

Overall, the presence of American military forces in Lebanon tended to have a calming effect on the country. Conditions gradually improved. The 31 July scheduled national election for the presidency did occur on time with General Fuad Chehab, the Army commander, being elected. Stabilization of the situation allowed the United States to begin preparations for withdrawal of its armed forces. A month after it landed, the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines reembarked on board vessels of the Sixth Fleet to become a floating reserve. The two battalions of the 8th Marines received instructions for redeployment in mid-September. All companies of the 1st Battalion were alerted on the 10th and on the 12th the men withdrew into a tighter perimeter to facilitate movement to the staging and embarkation areas. The 1st Battalion on the 14th loaded on board the Fremont and subsequently departed Beirut on 16 September. The 2d Battalion also had readied itself for redeployment. It boarded the Olmsted on 15 September and sailed shortly thereafter. All elements of the regiment within three weeks were back from expeditionary service. The men, following the granting of liberal leave, resumed their former routine soon thereafter.(91)

The United States completed its withdrawal that fall. American military forces, primarily Marines and Army personnel, by their presence calmed and soothed Lebanon's tumultous political scene and ended, at least temporarily, potential interference from leftists in nearby countries. Lebanese citizens thus had been given the opportunity to settle in a more amicable way the differences that existed between the various political factions. The intervention was an unrefutable example of the ability of the United States to respond quickly to an emergency. At the time of the landing no one was quite certain as to the type, or amount, of opposition that might be encountered. The Americans, on the other hand, soon found a willingness from government officials and Lebanese Army units to cooperate. As a result, internal strife was brought more easily under control. Despite the activities of rebel bands, fifth columnists, and the existence of military threats from neighboring countries

Marines from the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines with a .30 caliber air cooled machine gun stand guard in Beirut's port area. (Leatherneck Photo)

A detachment from the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines begins a motorized patrol on the outskirts of Beirut. Marines conducted a number of these patrols with personnel from the Lebanese Army. (Leatherneck Photo)

few American casualties occurred. Use of military force in this instance by the United States had succeeded in thwarting the goals of both Lebanese and foreign leftists. The United States did not have to resort to combat, yet its short, military intervention had helped to preserve the integrity of Lebanon.(92)

The Marine Corps underwent a reduction in strength in the late 1950s, making it difficult to maintain three full-size divisions. A reorganization of the 8th Marines was a consequence of the decrease in size of the Corps. On 29 May 1959, Companies E, F, G, and H of the 2d Battalion went to zero strength. Headquarters and Service Company maintained its authorized personnel, but it was finally reduced to zero strength on 31 August 1960. The entire 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, although never deactivated, now existed solely on paper. In case of an emergency or crisis troops from Marine Barracks, Washington, D. C. and from Marine Corps Schools, Quantico, Virginia would, according to a new arrangement, assemble and form an infantry battalion. This unit would bear the designation "2d Battalion, 8th Marines" and would be ready to mount out on eight-days notice and serve as a reserve for the 2d Marine Division. In effect, the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines, which continued on the rolls of the Marine Corps but with the absence of personnel, would be reconstituted and assigned a full complement of trained men only when deemed necessary.

This particular status of the 2d Battalion lasted until the latter half of 1961. A slow growth in strength of the Marine Corps beginning in that year provided more men for tactical organizations. The 2d Battalion, 8th Marines was gradually brought back to authorized strength from 18 July-5 October 1961. Headquarters and Service Company with Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier General) Charles S. Robertson* assigned as commanding officer was the original unit to be reconstituted while Company H was the last.(93) The temporary hiatus of the battalion had no effect on its lineage as its reduction to zero strength is considered only an interruption in its history rather than an actual break. No deactivation had happened; therefore, no reactivation was necessary.

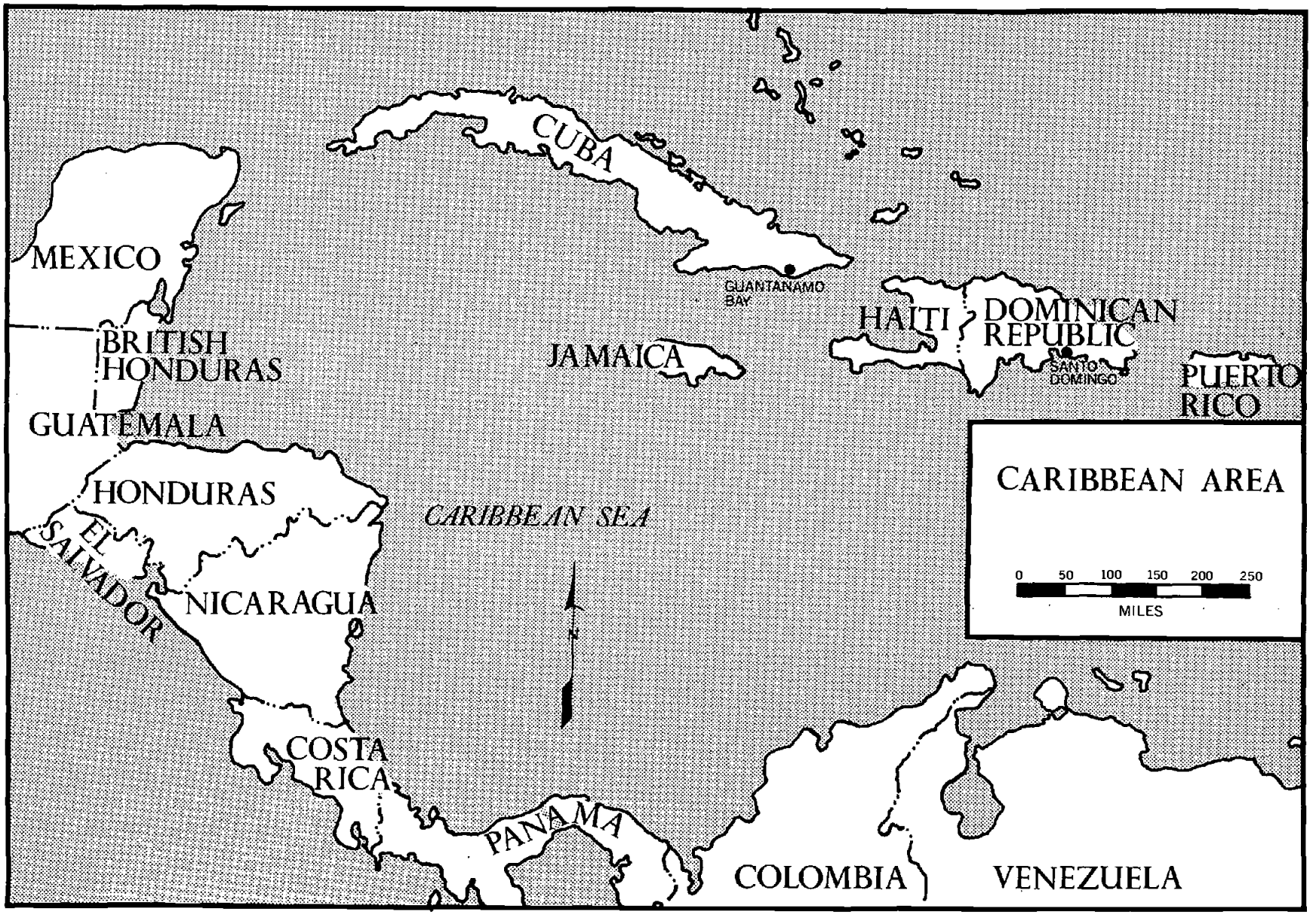
(*) This was not his first tour with the 8th Marines, nor his last. Robertson, an enlisted man prior to World War II, had been the executive officer of the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines in the early 1950s. In July 1962, he became the executive officer of the 8th Marines. General Robertson was subsequently appointed Fiscal Director of the Marine Corps in July 1973.

At about the time its sister unit was being reduced to a paper organization, the 3d Battalion was beginning an extensive cruise of six months in the Mediterranean. This unit remained the amphibious striking force of the Sixth Fleet from July 1959 until the following February. The most notable feature of the deployment was that for the first time an infantry battalion had been accompanied throughout its entire tour of the Mediterranean by Marine troop-carrying helicopters. Aircraft used in five 3d Battalion landing exercises came from Sub Unit #1 of Marine Helicopter Transport Squadron (Light) 262, an organization that had taken part in the intervention in Lebanon during the preceding year. (94) The 3d Battalion, 8th Marines, a year after its return, was again deployed, but this time to Vieques where in late February 1961 it took part in LANTPHIBEX-61, the largest amphibious exercise of the year for the 2d Marine Division. With Secretary of the Navy John Connolly looking on, the battalion, less Company I which acted as an aggressor unit, and the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines landed in a surface assault. The 3d Battalion, 2d Marines, in contrast, came ashore in a combined surface/helicopter operation. The four-day exercise concluded on 28 February with the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines returning to its home base in March. (95)

The Cuban Missile Crisis

A year and a half after the 3d Battalion's participation in LANTPHIBEX-61, all elements of the regiment were hurriedly preparing for a deployment to the Caribbean. This time it was not an exercise that beckoned members of the 8th Marines, but the real possibility of actual warfare. The United States in mid-October 1962 had positive evidence of a build up of Soviet arms in Fidel Castro's Cuba. American anxiety centered on the presence of strategic medium range missiles and bombers. Cuba and its ally, the Soviet Union, were rapidly establishing an offensive strike force almost on the very shores of the United States. President John F. Kennedy, on 22 October, announced to the American public that the two Communist countries would soon have a nuclear capability that could jeopardize the security of not only the United States but also other Western Hemisphere nations. The President ordered the implementation of a number of stringent measures specifically designed to prevent the employment of the missiles and to insure their removal. Included was a quarantine on further imports of offensive weapons and the deployment of sizable military forces to Florida and the Caribbean in anticipation of a possible invasion of Cuba.

Marine Corps ground and air units were in the forefront of this marshalling of American armed forces. Units of the 2d Marine Division and 2d Marine Aircraft Wing be-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HAITI
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cause of their proximity to the Caribbean immediately moved into standby positions. Marine ground and air organizations in California were in the meantime placed on alert for a possible deployment. The 8th Marines' commanding officer, Colonel Anthony Caputo, a veteran of fighting on Okinawa and in Korea, was first advised of the situation in Cuba on 19 October. Colonel Caputo two days later issued orders for the 1st Battalion to transfer to Cherry Point where it then was airlifted to Guantanamo Naval Base to reinforce the garrison there. The battalion, under Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) James E. Wilson, Jr., arrived in increments on 21-22 October. Also deploying to Guantanamo was the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines which came by air from California. Both infantry battalions were deployed along the perimeter of the base. Their mission was to repel any incursion attempted by the Cuban Army.

Back in the United States the rest of the regiment along with other division units received their embarkment orders. Colonel Caputo, his staff, and the 2d and 3d Battalions boarded Navy shipping between 25-29 October at Norfolk, Virginia and at Morehead City and Onslow Beach in North Carolina. Colonel Caputo and headquarters were initially on the amphibious assault ship USS Boxer (LPH-4) and then subsequently on the attack transport USS Chilton (APA-38). The esprit de corps of the men was typified by the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines. In one instance, the battalion recorded the voluntary return of three deserters to their units so that they could leave with their comrades. Eight prisoners, released from the brig for the operation, performed their duties in a exemplary manner during the deployment. Moreover, several men who were in the hospital obtained early releases to make the departure.

While 2d Marine Division units deployed to various locations along the Atlantic coast of the United States and in the Caribbean, additional Marine forces were being readied for departure to the quarantine area. Units from the 1st Marine Division--the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 1st Marines and the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 7th Marines--were formed into the 5th Marine Expeditionary Brigade under Brigadier General William T. Fairbourn, a veteran of six World War II campaigns. All four infantry battalions along with Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 361 left San Diego on 27 October by ship for the Caribbean via the Panama Canal.

Embarked Marine units including those from the 8th Marines helped to maintain and enforce the quarantine of Cuba through the fall. The show of American force and the

obvious willingness of the United States to protect its vital interests led within a short time to the removal of Soviet missiles from the island. The Marine Corps had the additional satisfaction of proving once again the value of the force-in-readiness concept. With the abatement of the emergency the 8th Marines redeployed to Camp Lejeune in increments between 16 November and 15 December 1962. Colonel Caputo, his headquarters staff, and the 2d Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) Norman R. Stanford, a 42-year-old Naval Academy graduate, arrived first. The 3d Battalion commanded by Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) John A. MacNeil returned in early December. Last to get back was the 1st Battalion which had been stationed at Guantanamo Bay for nearly two months.(96)

After the missile crisis the 8th Marines resumed its interrupted training schedule. The 3d Battalion, although recently returned from the Caribbean, was directed to re-embark for the area for participation in PHIBULEX 1-63. It traveled to Norfolk in early January 1963 where it loaded on board the Boxer, as it had done a few weeks before. The amphibious assault ship sailed on the 7th with Vieques as its destination. Colonel MacNeil's unit stayed in the Caribbean for almost two months and then relocated home on 4 March 1963.

The battalion, a year after it entered PHIBULEX 1-63, deployed to the Panama Canal Zone for jungle training at Fort Sherman. The unit, now led by Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) David E. Lownds*, arrived on 9 Janaury 1964 just as violent anti-American demonstrations were sweeping through Panama. United States Army soldiers deployed along the borders of the Canal Zone to prevent incursions by rioters who were opposed to continued American ownership of the canal. The 3d Battalion was placed on alert and remained in the Canal Zone and on board Navy shipping in the waters off Panama until 18 February. It was then relieved by the 8th Marine Expeditionary Unit (8th MEU) under the 8th Marines' commanding officer Colonel James O. Bell, a pioneer in the development of Navy and Marine Corps guided missiles. This force primarily consisted of Lieutenant Colonel Harlan E. Troy's 2d Battalion, 8th Marines; Headquarters, 8th Marines; and Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 264.

(*) Lownds, a combat veteran of World War II and Korea, subsequently participated in the intervention in the Dominican Republic and in the war in Vietnam. He was eventually awarded a Navy Cross for his actions while commanding the 26th Marines during the siege of Khe Sanh in 1968.

Two Marines from Company B, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines at Guantanamo Naval Base perform guard duty along the Main Line of Resistance during the Cuban Missile Crisis. (USMC Photo ##A19198)

Members of the 8th Marines move out to "seize" their objectives during Operation STEEL PIKE I, the biggest joint Navy-Marine Corps operation since the end of World War II. (Leatherneck Photo)

While the 3d Battalion left for North Carolina, Colonel Bell's Marines remained on board the USS Guadalcanal (LPH-7) off Panama except for periodic training ashore in the Canal Zone. Regimental units formed a backup force that would be used in quelling disturbances if Army troops requested reinforments. At no time, however, was it necessary to deploy the Marines in defensive positions in the zone or use them in suppressing civil disorders. Tensions had eased sufficiently by early April to warrant the return of the 8th Marine Expeditionary Unit to the United States. It sailed for home on 11 April, arriving there 10 days later.(97)

STEEL PIKE I

The regiment's most significant amphibious exercise since its reactivation took place in fall 1964. STEEL PIKE I was the biggest joint Navy-Marine operation since the end of World War II. Marine units came from the 2d Marine Division; Force Troops, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic; 2d Marine Aircraft Wing; and Headquarters, Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic. They were grouped into the II Marine Expeditionary Force commanded by Lieutenant General James P. Berkeley, commanding general of Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic. A large number of men was involved--more than 20,000 Marines; thousands of U.S. sailors; 2,000 Spanish Marines; and 500 American merchant seamen. Southern Spain was the site of the exercise. The scenario for STEEL PIKE I went as follows: The mythical country of Luchado (northern Spain) had invaded the make-believe nation of Proxima (southern Spain) and was pushing toward the sea on either side of Gibraltar. An appeal for help from Proxima had been sent to the United States who in turn responded by dispatching the Atlantic Fleet with a Marine expeditionary force (MEF) embarked on board. The beach southeast of Huelva was chosen as the site for a counterinvasion by American and Spanish Marines.

There were many reasons for undertaking a large-scale and complicated operation such as STEEL PIKE I, which was described as being "the largest single amphibious maneuver over long distance in peace-time." The exercise had been planned to test and to demonstrate the strategic mobility of the Navy-Marine Corps team in mounting out a very sizable expeditionary force and then having it land thousands of miles away from bases in the United States. For one thing, Marine and Navy officers had little experience in anything of such magnitude. Secondly, the exercise was utilized as a proving ground for Navy and Marine units in the installation and operation of a short airfield for tactical support (SATS). It also was designed as a test for the effectiveness of command and control of air and ground units while in simulated combat. Finally, it was a measure of the logistics

capability of both the fleet and the expeditionary force under warlike conditions.(98)

Loading of Marines began on 4 October 1964. Colonel Richard S. Johnson's 8th Marines with the 1st Battalion, 10th Marines attached started embarking on 9 October at Onslow Beach. The whole regiment plus Marine Aircraft Group 26 moved on board vessels of Task Force 186. The main ships in this element of the fleet were the amphibious assault ships USS Okinawa (LPH-3), Boxer (LPH-4), Guadalcanal (LPH-7), and the amphibious transport dock Raleigh (LPD-1). All ships were underway by 12 October. Two days later, the 2d Battalion, 6th Marines which was already deployed off Spain "seized" Almeria, the SATS site. The main landings took place on 26 October with the 8th Marines going ashore in designated zones on Yellow Beach. It is significant to note that the 8th Marines landed entirely by helicopter, thus becoming the first regiment in the history of the Marine Corps to have all its personnel, equipment, and supplies ferried ashore solely by helicopter during an amphibious maneuver. Once on the beach the 8th Marines linked up with other Marine units who landed by surface craft over Green Beach.

Watching the "invasion" were such high government officials as Under Secretary of the Navy Paul Fay; General Wallace M. Greene, Jr., Commandant of the Marine Corps; Vice Admiral John S. McCain, Commander of Amphibious Force, Atlantic; Senator Richard B. Russell, Chairman of the Senate Armed Services Committee; and Congressman L. Mendel Rivers, the second highest ranking Democrat on the House Armed Services Committee. The 8th Marines secured all its objectives by the 30th, the day STEEL PIKE I officially ended. The regiment was then extracted from the exercise area by helicopter. Three days later, the ships with the reembarked 8th Marines were steaming to various liberty ports.(99) Forty-three assault ships and 17 vessels from the Military Sea Transport Service (MSTS) had taken part in the exercise. The Marine Corps alone furnished over 100 attack and fighter aircraft and 100 helicopters. These two statistics along with the great numbers of men involved bear witness to the enormity of STEEL PIKE I.

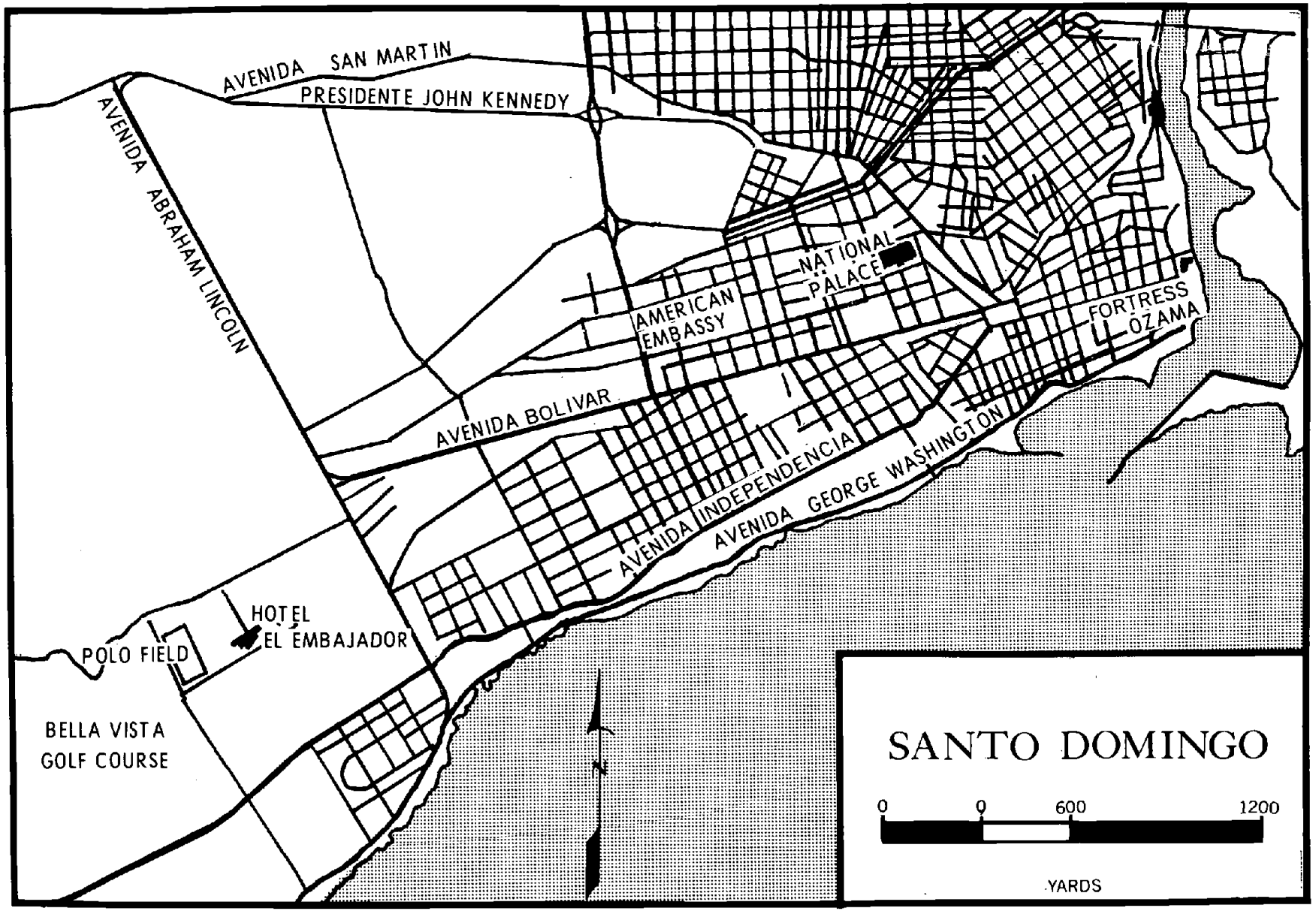
Unfortunately, the exercise was not without blemish. It was marred by a tragic mid-air collision on D-Day between two helicopters from the Marine Medium Helicopter Squadron 262. The aircraft with 22 Marines on board collided while ferrying elements of the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines during the ship-to-shore movement. Both aircraft plunged onto the beach, killing eight members of the battalion and a crew chief of one of the aircraft. All the dead were riding in the same aircraft. The remaining crew and passengers sustained injuries with one pilot being badly hurt.

Despite the accident on D-Day and some difficulties in logistics, the exercise which was termed a success, verifying, as it did, the ability of the United States to deploy a sizable assault force over great distances without reliance on forward bases, supplies, and equipment. Lessons learned were valuable since they made military planners aware that (1) naval gunfire and air support were not sufficient for an operation of this dimension; (2) because of limited shipping Marine ground forces could not embark all their supplies and equipment; (3) MSTS vessels may not always be suited for amphibious operations; and (4) problems in communications still needed to be solved. In the overall view of STEEL PIKE I, the exercise had helped to refine and enhance America's concept of strategic mobility.(100)

Intervention in the Dominican Republic and Further Deployments

Persistent instability in several different Caribbean countries in the mid-1960s led to the establishment of the Ready Amphibious Task Group by the Commander in Chief, Atlantic Fleet. It was composed of units drawn from the Atlantic Fleet and Fleet Marine Force, Atlantic. This new organization was intended for continuous deployment in the Caribbean Sea. Its mission was one of being ready to conduct military operations as required to support American policy in that region. The Marine contribution mainly consisted of one embarked reinforced infantry battalion; one embarked helicopter squadron; one fixed-wing squadron based at Guantanamo Bay or Roosevelt Roads, Puerto Rico; and one fixed-wing squadron based in the United States on 24-hours alert. The battalion and helicopter squadron were formed into a Marine expeditionary unit (MEU), having a projected normal tour of three months. The 6th MEU was created in early 1965 with the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines as the original ground component of the organization.(101) Not long before, the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines had deployed to Vieques where it played a role in Operation QUICK KICK VII, a joint United States Army, Navy, Air Force, and Marine Corps exercise that was designed to test coordination and control procedures. As it turned out the operation proved to be a dress rehearsal for the American intervention in the troubled nation of the Dominican Republic. The situation there was practically the exact type of emergency that had been anticipated in the justification for the establishment of the Caribbean Ready Amphibious Task Group.

The 3d Battalion, 8th Marines returned to Camp Lejeune on 19 April 1965 just at the time when a long-simmering political crisis in the Dominican Republic was coming to a boil.(102) A continual state of political turmoil had existed in the country since the assassination of the ruth-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AVENIDA ABRAHAM LINCOLN
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AMERICAN EMBASSY
FORTRESS OZAMA
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less dictator Rafael Leonidas Trujillo Molinas on 30 May 1961 and the subsequent ouster of the Trujillo family from power during the following November. Various factions vied for power in an effort to pick up the reins from the fallen Trujillos. In late April 1965, the then ruling junta under Donald J. Reid Cabral was toppled. Leftists supporting former President Juan Bosch attempted to gain control of the country, but the Boschists were violently opposed by Army Brigadier General Elias Wessin y Wessin and most of the Dominican military. The leftist rebels in their stronghold in Santo Domingo, the largest city and capital of the nation, were attacked on 25 April by Dominican Air Force planes and Navy vessels located in the harbor. The bombardment brought the crisis to a head. Arms seized by the dissidents were then distributed to the civilian population, whereupon street fighting erupted in the city.

On 27 April, Wessin ordered Army tanks to make a drive on Santo Domingo. The assault, much to the consternation of military leaders, stalled on the city's outskirts. Reports subsequently circulated that extremists appeared to be taking over the leadership of the rebel forces. Violence and confusion reigned supreme in the uncertainity of the situation.(103) Navy Task Group 44.9 which was already in the Caribbean was directed on 25 April to proceed to the Dominican Republic and take up positions several miles off Santo Domingo. The 6th Marine Expeditionary Unit which was embarked with the task group had orders to be ready to help in the removal of American nationals, if that proved necessary. In the United States the Army's crack 82d Airborne Division was placed on alert for a possible deployment. As lawlessness increased in Santo Domingo, the Navy and Marines arrived on station early on the morning of the 26th. The United States Embassy in the meantime was busily making arrangements for the evacuation of those Americans who wished to leave. A day later small detachments from the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines came ashore by helicopter to assist in the evacuation. The landing took place at Haina, a small port 13.5 miles southwest of the city.

Dominican military leaders finding it difficult to control the spreading turmoil and resulting bloodshed asked on 28 April that 1,200 Marines be put ashore to help restore order. To make matters worse, the Dominican police had informed embassy officials that they could no longer guarantee the safety of those Americans who were assembling to be evacuated. With the American Embassy coming under increasing sniper fire Ambassador William T. Bennett, Jr., relayed the Dominican military's request to Washington. President Lyndon B. Johnson gave his approval and permission was granted for placing the battalion on shore. By 1900 on

The 1st Battalion, 8th Marines moves up on 9 May 1965 to relieve the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines on the line dividing Marine and rebel areas in Santo Domingo. (USMC Photo #A19555)

A rifle squad from Company D, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines tries to locate a sniper firing on American positions in Santo Domingo. (USMC Photo #A450302)

28 April, more than 500 Marines in full battle dress from the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines had arrived in Santo Domingo. Most of the Marines were located at or near the Embajador Hotel where American civilians were assembling for departure from the country. Marine helicopters continued to bring in more men on the 29th. A polo field next to the hotel was the primary landing zone. The hotel and the immediate area around it were included in the Marine perimeter that was being established.

Reinforcements from the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines were sent on both 28 and 29 April to the American Embassy because of an increase in the activity of rebel snipers near the compound. On the 30th, Company I, 3d Battalion, 6th Marines with supporting armor made an unopposed landing by LVTs at Haina. The men then formed into an armored column and moved north towards the city to link up with other elements of the battalion. In the meantime, the rest of the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines was preparing to move eastward from the hotel to positions beyond the American Embassy. The advance began as a three-pronged drive preceded by Marine armor. As the men moved into more hostile areas of the city, they encountered opposition from Dominican rebels. The resistance was primarily in the form of sniper fire, although on two separate occasions Company I which had just rejoined the battalion engaged the rebels in brief but sharp fire fights. All objectives were occupied by the end of the day, except for one. Before moving on to the remaining objective the battalion decided to wait for further reinforcements. In expanding the Marine perimeter on 30 April the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines suffered one killed and 16 wounded. Most of the casualties were from Company I. Between 40 and 50 casualties were inflicted on the rebels.

The first reinforcements from the United States began arriving about 0230 on the 30th. These were Army units from the 82d Airborne Division which had been brought in by Air Force transports. The aircraft landed and unloaded the troops at the airport at San Isidro, a short distance east of Santo Domingo. Later in the day the soldiers moved out and headed for the city, sustaining light casualties as they proceeded to their assigned objectives.(104)

Back in the United States, Marine Corps air and ground units on the East Coast were alerted for deployment to the Dominican Republic. The first to be ordered to the Caribbean was the 1st Battalion, 6th Marines. Initial departure of this unit came at 0949 on 29 April when three Marine C-130 transports left Cherry Point for Guantanamo Bay, Cuba with members of of Company C on board. The rest of the battalion was airlifted directly to San Isidro on 1 May.

All elements of the battalion were in country by early the next day, including Company C. This unit originally arrived at Haina on 30 April after travelling from Guantanamo Bay on board two U. S. Navy destroyers.

The 1st Battalion, 2d Marines also had orders for the Dominican Republic. On 1 May, it sailed from Onslow Beach, North Carolina on the amphibious assault ship USS Okinawa. The ship arrived three days later, but the battalion did not land and instead was placed on reserve. Throughout the entire intervention the battalion continued to be deployed off Santo Domingo, except for a few small units which were detached to render support to Marine operations on shore. Artillery support came from the 2d Battalion, 10th Marines which arrived by air in increments between 2 and 9 May.(105)

The last remaining major Marine unit to enter the Dominican Republic was the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Edward F. Danowitz, a combat veteran of World War II who had the distinction of acquiring five academic degrees including a Ph.D. Danowitz received notification on 30 April that his unit had been placed on alert for a possible transfer to the Caribbean. The battalion was then moved by truck to Cherry Point on 2 May. It promptly boarded C-130 transports of VMGR-252 and five planes from VMGR-352 for its journey to the strife-torn Caribbean city. Aircraft from the latter squadron had recently flown in from California specifically to assist in the airlift. By 0120 on 3 May, all elements of the battalion had departed and were flying south. Initial arrival at San Isidro came at the same hour that the last contingent left Cherry Point. The whole 1st Battalion, 8th Marines, numbering slightly less than 1,200 officers and men, was in country by 2100. It relocated on the 4th from the airfield to the Embajador Hotel in the city. After all personnel had been brought in safely by helicopter, a command post was established on the adjacent Bella Vista Golf Course once the area had been secured. That evening the battalion initiated motorized patrols in the immediate vicinity. The men received their first sniper fire the following day. Sniper activity was sporadic and not considered serious; in fact, for the next few days the Marines from the battalion experienced little hostile fire in the unit's sector. Colonel Danowitz on the 9th moved his battalion to downtown Santo Domingo where it relieved the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines. In its new zone of responsibility stood the one-time beleaguered American Embassy. The Marines continued to experience sniper fire but it was only of a harassing nature.

A Marine from the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines takes cover behind a car as a sniper fires at him. Most resistance took the form of sniper fire in Santo Domingo. (USMC Photo #A450316)

Check Point Charlie on Santo Domingo's Maximo Somas Avenue is manned by troops of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines on 13 May 1965. (USMC Photo #A450204)

Brigadier General (subsequently Major General) John L. Bouker, commanding general of all Marines ashore*, issued orders for the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines to move its lines forward to straighten out the previously irregular defense lines. Some increase in rebel fire occurred on the 12th when the battalion's mission was completed. Once the new front-line had been secured, the battalion set up check points and made a thorough search of all vehicles in the sector. Its primary objective in this task was to look for weapons and known rebels. Detachments from the battalion made a special effort to keep the American Embassy under constant surveillance because of rumors of planned attacks on the compound. Fortunately none took place. The battalion had a brief scare on the 13th when a loyalist plane attempting to attack rebel emplacements made strafing runs over the 1st Battalion's positions. For the remainder of the month the unit maintained its positions and kept order within its sector. In brief exchanges with leftist Dominicans it sustained four wounded, all from sniper fire, while killing 13 snipers and wounding 10 others.

By 1 June, tensions had eased sufficiently to justify the relief of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines by the Army's 1st Battalion, 325th Infantry. The Marines moved back to the golf course and then loaded on board the attack transport USS Monrovia (APA-31). A slackening of internal upheavals had moreover warranted a withdrawal of all Marine forces from the Dominican Republic. Their responsibilties were assumed by United States Army personnel and small contingents from Latin American countries. These military units under the auspices of the Organization of American States (OAS) continued the job of the Marines and worked to bring about a full restoration of peace. Foremost among the objectives of the OAS was the establishment of a viable government.

All Marines departed the Dominican Republic by 5 June. Troops of the 1st Battalion, 8th Marines had sailed for home two days before. They disembarked at Morehead City on 6 June and then proceeded to Camp Lejeune on the following day.(106) Over the years, the 8th Marines or its various elements had on numerous occasions been deployed to the Caribbean and had often been placed on alert for possible contingency operations in the area; but, this brief sojourn in the Dominican Republic was the first time in 40 years, since Haiti, that a unit of the regiment actually participated in a peace-keeping effort in Latin America.

(*) General Bouker took command on 1 May 1965. All Marine units in the Dominican Republic were grouped into the 4th Marine Expeditionary Brigade which he commanded.

While the 1st Battalion was in the Dominican Republic, the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines under Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) James B. Ord, Jr., had deployed to the Mediterranean with the Sixth Fleet. Landing exercises, as in previous years, were conducted in such locations as Spain, Corsica, Sardinia, and Turkey. Considerable stress was put on counterinsurgency tactics. During the battalion's final exercise prior to completion of its six month tour, the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines which was then in Spain had the honor of being inspected by the Commandant, General Wallace M. Greene, Jr. The unit subsequently redeployed to Camp Lejeune in July 1965.(107)

The year 1966 witnessed two significant deployments of regimental units to the Caribbean. Although internal disorders had subsided greatly in the Dominican Republic, the confusing political situation at times heated up to a point where it threatened to undo the work of the OAS peacekeeping effort. The United States not wishing to see a reversion to the previous state of anarchy maintained a watchful eye on Dominican affairs. A potentially serious political crisis broke out in February 1966 and the United States reacted by dispatching the Caribbean Ready Group to Dominican waters. The 3d Battalion, 8th Marines under Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) Robert M. Lucy was its landing force. It had originally been deployed to Vieques in December 1965. Normal routine training had been conducted not only on the island but also on Puerto Rico and at Guantanamo Bay.

In mid-February 1966, plans for an impending departure to Panama were abruptly terminated. The battalion and the entire Caribbean Ready Group were placed on a 24-hour alert and scheduled jungle training in the Canal Zone was cancelled. The group with the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines on board the amphibious assault ship USS Guam (LPH-9) had orders to steam at full speed to the Dominican Republic. The ships arrived off the still-troubled nation on the 17th. For the next 10 days the 3d Battalion maintained a posture of immediate readiness. No landing, however, was necessary. The battalion ended its Caribbean tour a short while later. Back at its home base, it received notification that 569 battalion personnel of the rank of corporal and below would be transferred to Vietnam in April 1966. Retention of sufficiently trained personnel to maintain normal high standards of combat readiness endured as a problem not only for the battalion but for the whole regiment. Rapid turnover of officers and men abated only at the conclusion of the Marine ground role in the war in Vietnam.(108)

Lieutenant Colonel Russell L. Silverthorn, a World War II and Korean War Veteran and the son of retired Lieutenant General Mervin H. Silverthorn, was instructed in December 1965 to deploy his 2d Battalion, 8th Marines to Guantanamo Bay. The unit, minus Company H, arrived there on board the attack transport USS Rockbridge (APA-28) on 10 January 1966 and began a four month tour which called for it to maintain base security and defense. The troops returned to the United States in May upon relief by the 2d Battalion, 2d Marines. A unique event occurred in the history of the 8th Marines at the end of the year when its commanding officer, Colonel George D. Webster (a veteran of fighting in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam) was promoted to the rank of brigadier general on 19 December 1966. General Webster continued to command the regiment for another 10 days, thus making this brief period the only time when the 8th Marines was commanded by a general officer.(109)

The 1st Battalion under Lieutenant Colonel (later Colonel) Floyd H. Waldrop, a Naval Academy graduate, left Camp Lejeune in early January 1967 to assume responsibility for the defense of Guantanamo Bay. In the meantime, another regimental unit, the 2d Battalion minus Company E, was stationed in the Caribbean and was employed as the ground element of the Caribbean Ready Group. Both organizations completed their tours in May 1967 and thereupon relocated to Camp Lejeune. The 2d Battalion's stay in North Carolina did not last long, for within six months Lieutenant Colonel Benjamin B. Selvitelle, the commanding officer, received instructions for a new deployment to Guantanamo Bay. The battalion minus Company E began this tour in January 1968. Its stationing in Cuba was now made permanent. Periodic rotation of infantry battalions from the 2d Marine Division ended with the 2d Battalion's arrival. This unit's main responsibility from then on became one of providing protection for the naval base, since it continued until summer 1973 to form the nucleus of the Guantanamo Ground Defense Force. (110)

The remainder of the regiment forged ahead with its regular training schedule while embarking its various units with the Fleet for temporary duty in the Mediterranean and in the Caribbean. Elements of the 8th Marines trained in 29 Palms, California; Camp Drum, New York; Puerto Rico; and Panama. Amphibious exercises were carried out in both the Caribbean and the Mediterranean. Units of the 8th Marines joined such foreign military organizations as the French Foreign Legion, the Dutch Marines, the Brazilian Marines, the Columbian Cartagena Battalion, the Hellenic Marines, and elements from all the British Armed Forces as participants in many of these exercises.(111)

Throughout the Vietnam War the 8th Marines suffered great shortages in manpower, since its members were continually drained off by the fighting in Southeast Asia. The 3d Battalion, for example, numbered less than 500 officers and men in both April and May 1969--a period when the Marine Corps reached its peak strength in Vietnam.(112) Consequently, the 8th Marines had difficulties in maintaining itself as an adequately trained force. The readiness of previous years was not fully attained until the Marine ground role in the war ended. Only then did a sufficient number of men become available to bring all the regiment's component organizations up to authorized strength.

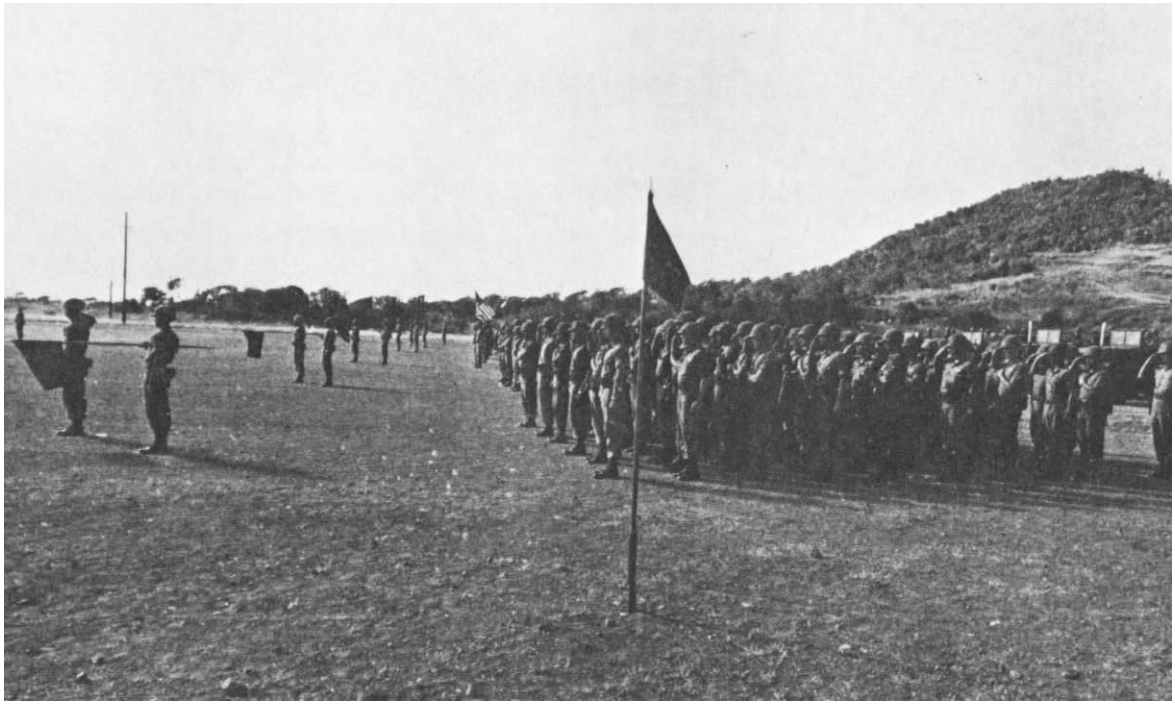
The United States, beginning in the mid-1960s, endured riots and agitation of various kinds on a scale not seen in the country for many years. The intensification of the anti-war mood among a sizable percentage of the American people in the late 1960s and early 1970s led to an upsurge in civil unrest across the nation. This resulted in units of the 2d Marine Division, including the 8th Marines, receiving increased training in the area of riot control. Two deployments of units of the 8th Marines in connection with civil disturbances did in fact occur.

The first came on 30 April 1970 when Lieutenant Colonel Joseph Nastasi's 3d Battalion and 1st and 3d Battalions, 6th Marines were airlifted to Quonset Point, Rhode Island. The Marines were placed on standby for a possible commitment to Yale University at nearby New Haven, Connecticut to quell expected violent civil disturbances. The three Marine Battalions plus other Federal troops had been deployed to New England to augment local authorities in dealing with a planned demonstration in support of several Black Panthers* who were awaiting trial in New Haven on charges ranging from kidnapping to first degree murder. Thirteen thousand students subsequently took part in the demonstration which fortunately was peaceful. Federal troops therefore were not needed by the local police in maintaining order. The Leathernecks eventually left Quonset Point by air on Sunday, 3 May.

Another potential emergency deployment surfaced the following weekend. The 3d Battalion, 8th Marines was placed on alert and readied for a possible quick transfer to Washington, D. C. to assist in restraining antiwar agitators. The situation there, however, did not warrant the employment of the battalion.(113)

(*) The Black Panther organization had been described at the time by many law enforement officials as a black militant and extremist group that was not above advocating violence to accomplish its goals.

A Marine guard from the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines talks With his NCO in spring 1972 While patrolling the Guantanamo Base perimeter. (Leatherneck Photo)



Elements of the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines stand at attention during ceremonies at Guantanamo in spring 1972. The 2d Battalion was deployed to Cuba for five years. (Leatherneck Photo)

Just a year later, a massive antiwar May Day demonstration broke out in the nation's capital. Unlike the previous year, an actual deployment to Washington took place. Colonel Lemuel C. Shepherd, III, the son of the 20th Commandant and then commanding officer of the 8th Marines, had been directed to send his 1st Battalion to the District of Columbia. It arrived on 1 May along with other units from the 2d Division and Force Troops, Atlantic. For a week the 1st Battalion was used in controlling huge crowds of demonstrators who unsuccessfully tried to close down government offices and stop all traffic to and from the city. Numerous troublemakers were taken into custody while other participants in the demonstration were forced to leave the city. When Federal troops were no longer needed by civil authorities the 1st Battalion reassembled and flew back to North Carolina.(114)

A change in the composition of the Guantanamo Ground Defense Force was ordered for 31 July 1973. On that date most of the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines was relieved of the primary defense responsibility for the base. The nucleus of the defense force had been reduced to Company H, 2d Battalion, 8th Marines reinforced by a detachment from Headquarters and Service Company, 2d Battalion, 8th Marines; Battery B, 1st Battalion, 10th Marines; and a platoon from the 2d Tank Battalion. All other members of the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines left Cuba on the 31st and arrived at Camp Lejeune on 3 August. The five and a half years of service at Guantanamo Bay equalled in length the previous longest overseas deployment for any unit of the 8th Marines since the regiment was stationed in Haiti.

Two months after the 2d Battalion's return the 3d Battalion was placed on alert for a possible move to the eastern Mediterranean because of the outbreak of the fourth Arab-Israeli War. Although no deployment was necessary, the men remained on alert throughout most of the October 1973 conflict and prepared to meet any contingency that might arise because of the fighting.(115)

Conclusion

Throughout its history the 8th Marines or its integral units have seen service in the Caribbean, Pacific, Far East, Mediterranean, Middle East, and on both coasts of the United States. The regiment has admirably performed whatever task it has been assigned whether it was keeping the peace in Haiti or gaining a toehold on the heavily defended beaches of Betio. In actual combat the 8th Marines participated in some of the hardest fought battles of World War II. Its readiness in peacetime to respond to emergency situations has been demonstrated by its deployments with the fleet

in the Mediterreanean and Caribbean Seas. Various Cold War crises in Lebanon, Cuba, and the Dominican Republic exemplify the regiment's capability of fulfilling assigned missions in a speedy and effective manner. Members of the regiment have over the years responded to combat situations and war-like emergencies with a high degree of professionalism. Their conduct even in circumstances that were exacting in nature is deserving of praise. The commendable performance of duty by the individual Marine in the regiment has brought honor to the 8th Marines and ultimately contributed to the prestige of the Marine Corps.

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Footnotes

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41. Central Pacific, pp. 263-270; Seizure of Saipan, pp. 1-2.

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Commanding Officers, 8th Marines

Maj	Ellis B. Miller	11 Oct 1917 - 12 Oct 1917
LtCol	George C. Reid	13 Oct 1917 - 24 Oct 1917
Maj	Ellis B. Miller	25 Oct 1917 - 2 Nov 1917
Col	Laurence H. Moses	3 Nov 1917 - 8 Mar 1919
LtCol	Theodore E. Backstrom	9 Mar 1919 - 10 Apr 1919
LtCol	Louis McC. Little	5 Jan 1920 - 30 Apr 1921
Col	Dickinson P. Hall	1 May 1921 - 31 Oct 1921
LtCol	Harry R. Hall	1 Nov 1921 - 7 Apr 1923
Col	James T. Bootes	8 Apr 1923 - 29 Apr 1923
LtCol	Harry R. Lay	30 Apr 1923 - 30 May 1923
Col	James T. Bootes	31 May 1923 - 20 Jul 1924
LtCol	William L. Redles	21 Jul 1924 - 23 Jul 1924
Col	Harold C. Snyder	24 Jul 1924 - 1 Jul 1925
Col	Leo D. Hermle	1 Apr 1940 - 23 Jul 1940
Col	Henry L. Larsen	24 Jul 1940 - 31 Oct 1941
LtCol	Victor F. Bleasdale	1 Nov 1941 - 11 Dec 1941
Col	Henry L. Larsen	12 Dec 1941 - 22 Dec 1941
LtCol	Richard H. Jeschke	23 Dec 1941 - 3 May 1943
Col	Elmer E. Hall	4 May 1943 - 14 Dec 1943
LtCol	Paul D. Sherman	15 Dec 1943 - 1 Jan 1944
LtCol	John H. Griebel	2 Jan 1944 - 9 Apr 1944
Col	Clarence R. Wallace	10 Apr 1944 - 28 Jun 1945
Col	James F. Shaw	29 Jun 1945 - 14 Jul 1945
Col	Thomas G. McFarland	15 Jul 1945 - 1 Apr 1947
Col	Reginald H. Ridgely	2 Apr 1947 - 28 Sep 1948
LtCol	Richard C. Nutting	29 Sep 1948 - 31 Oct 1948
LtCol	Arthur W. B. Robertson	1 Nov 1948 - 16 Oct 1949
Maj	Anthony Walker	10 Aug 1950 - 5 Sep 1950
LtCol	Norman E. Sparling	6 Sep 1950 - 21 Sep 1950
Col	James M. Masters, Jr.	22 Sep 1950 - 16 Mar 1952
Col	John H. Masters	17 Mar 1952 - 1 Feb 1953
Col	DeWolf Schatzel	2 Feb 1953 - 13 May 1954
Col	Alexander A. Vandegrift, Jr.	14 May 1954 - 6 Feb 1955
Col	Marlowe C. Williams	7 Feb 1955 - 12 Dec 1955
Col	Glen C. Funk	13 Dec 1955 - 4 May 1956
Col	Kenyth A. Damke	5 May 1956 - 29 Aug 1956
Col	Thomas J. Colley	30 Aug 1956 - 31 Aug 1957
Col	Robert C. Burns	1 Sep 1957 - 28 Jul 1958
Col	George W. Killen	29 Jul 1958 - 2 Jul 1959
Col	Ronald A. Vanstockum	3 Jul 1959 - 10 Jun 1960
Col	Victor R. Bisceglia	11 Jun 1960 - 17 Mar 1961
Col	Roland E. Carey	18 Mar 1961 - 6 Mar 1962
Col	Anthony Caputo	7 Mar 1962 - 1 Jun 1963
Col	James O. Bell	2 Jun 1963 - 1 Jun 1964
Col	Richard S. Johnson	2 Jun 1964 - 28 Jun 1965
Col	Gerald F. Russell	29 Jun 1965 - 15 Jul 1966
Col	George D. Webster	16 Jul 1966 - 28 Dec 1966

LtCol	Curtis A. James, Jr.	29 Dec 1966 - 9 Jan 1967
Col	William H. Mulvey	10 Jan 1967 - 9 Oct 1968
Col	William M. VanZuyen	10 Oct 1968 - 19 Mar 1969
LtCol	John R. Greenstone	20 Mar 1969 - 6 Feb 1970
Col	Harold A. Hatch	7 Feb 1970 - 19 Jun 1970
LtCol	Charles M. C. Jones, Jr.	20 Jun 1970 - 17 Sep 1970
Col	Lemuel C. Shepherd, III	18 Sep 1970 - 8 Jun 1971
Col	Edwin M. Young	9 Jun 1971 - 2 Jun 1972
LtCol	Oswald P. Paredes	3 Jun 1972 - 6 Sep 1972
Col	Stanley Davis	7 Sep 1972 - 27 Jun 1973
LtCol	Daniel C. Daly	28 Jun 1973 - 13 Jul 1973
Col	William D. Kent	14 Jul 1973 - 24 Jul 1974
Col	Gerald C. Thomas, Jr.	25 Jul 1974 -

Chronology, 8th Marines

9 Oct 1917	Activated as the 8th Regiment at Quantico, Virginia.
10 Nov 1917	Sailed to Fort Crockett, Texas where unit performed garrison duty during World War I.
1 Aug 1918	Assigned to the 3d Provisional Brigade.
10 Apr 1919	Sailed to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania.
25 Apr 1919	Deactivated at Philadelphia.
17 Dec 1919	1st Battalion, 8th Regiment activated at Port-au-Prince, Haiti.
5 Jan 1920	1st Battalion deactivated and personnel used to reactivate 8th Regiment at Port-au-Prince. Regiment assigned to the 1st Provisional Brigade.
5 Jan 1920-1 Jul 1925	8th Regiment participated in anti-bandit activities while taking part in the American occupation of Haiti.
1 Jul 1925	Deactivated at Port-au-Prince.
1 Apr 1940	Reactivated as the 8th Marines at San Diego, California and assigned to the 2d Marine Brigade. Organized as a two-battalion-size regiment.
1 Nov 1940	3d Battalion activated.
1 Feb 1941	8th Marines reassigned to the 2d Marine Division.
6 Jan 1942	Sailed to Pago Pago, American Samoa. 8th Marines utilized as a defense force for the territory.
4 Nov 1942-8 Feb 1943	Participated in Guadalcanal Campaign.
20-24 Nov 1943	Participated in Tarawa Campaign.
15 Jun-24 Jul 1944	Participated in Saipan Campaign.
24 Jul-1 Aug 1944	Participated in Tinian Campaign.

1-10 Apr; 29 May-30 Jun 1945	Participated in Okinawa Campaign.
23 Sep 1945-14 Jun 1946	Participated in the occupation of Japan.
27 Feb 1946	3d Battalion sailed for San Diego.
26 Mar 1946	3d Battalion deactivated at Camp Pendleton, California.
15 Jul 1946	8th Marines arrived at Camp Lejeune, North Carolina, its new home base.
18 Nov 1947	8th Marines reorganized into a four-company-size unit.
2 Feb 1948	Sailed to Vieques and subsequently to the Mediterranean Sea for the 8th Marines' first deployment with the Sixth Fleet.
17 Oct 1949	Deactivated at Camp Lejeune.
9 Aug 1950-15 Apr 1951	8th Marines reactivated at Camp Lejeune, organized as a three-battalion-size regiment.
6 Jan-30 Nov 1953	4th Battalion, 8th Marines in existence.
15-24 Mar 1953	2d Battalion participated in Operation RENDEZVOUS, the first major NATO exercise for a unit of the 8th Marines.
10 Jun-5 Jul 1954	2d Battalion alerted for a possible landing in Guatemala.
18 Jul-16 Sep 1958	1st and 2d Battalions participated in the American intervention in Lebanon.
29 May 1959-31 Aug 1960	2d Battalion reduced to zero strength.
18 Jul-5 Oct 1961	2d Battalion brought back to authorized strength.
22 Oct-6 Dec 1962	8th Marines participated in the Cuban Missile Crisis.
9 Jan-11 Apr 1964	Units of the 8th Marines deployed to Panananian waters and to the Canal Zone in connection with anti-American rioting.

4-30 Oct 1964	8th Marines participated in Exercise STEEL PIKE I.
3 May-3 Jun 1965	1st Battalion participated in the Dominican intervention.
17-27 Feb 1966	3d Battalion alerted for a possible landing in the Dominican Republic.
19-28 Dec 1966	8th Marines, for the only time in its history, commanded by a brigadier general.
20 Jan 1968	2d Battalion arrived at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. Unit permanently located there, where it formed the nucleus of the defense force for the base.
30 Apr-3 May 1970	3d Battalion deployed at Quonset Point, Rhode Island in connection with a civil disturbance.
1-7 May 1971	1st Battalion deployed in Washington, D. C. in connection with a civil disturbance.
3 Aug 1973	2d Battalion returned to Camp Lejeune from Guantanamo Bay. Only a detachment of the battalion remained in Cuba to help protect the base.

Streamer Entitlement, 8th Marines

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION STREAMER WITH TWO BRONZE STARS

(Guadalcanal, 4 Nov-9 Dec 1942)
(Tarawa, 20-24 Nov 1943)
(Okinawa, 18-21 Jun 1945)

WORLD WAR I VICTORY STREAMER

(9 Oct 1917-11 Nov 1918)

HAITIAN CAMPAIGN STREAMER

(17 Dec 1919-15 Jun 1920)

MARINE CORPS EXPEDITIONARY STREAMER WITH ONE BRONZE STAR

(Haiti, 15 Jun 1920-25 Nov 1924)
(Cuba, 22-23 Oct 1962)

AMERICAN DEFENSE SERVICE STREAMER

(1 Apr 1940-7 Dec 1941)

ASIATIC-PACIFIC CAMPAIGN STREAMER WITH ONE SILVER STAR

(Capture and Defense of Guadalcanal, 4 Nov 1942-8 Feb 1943)
(Gilbert Islands Operation, 20-24 Nov 1943)
(Capture and Occupation of Saipan, 15 Jun-24 Jul 1944)
(Capture and Occupation of Tinian, 24 Jul-1 Aug 1944)
(Assault and Occupation of Okinawa Gunto, 1-10 Apr and 29 May-30 Jun 1945)

WORLD WAR II VICTORY STREAMER

(7 Dec 1941-31 Dec 1946)

NAVY OCCUPATION SERVICE STREAMER WITH ASIA AND EUROPE CLASPS

(Asia, 23 Sep 1945-14 June 1946)
(Europe, 1 Mar-26 May 1948; and various dates through Mar 1955)

NATIONAL DEFENSE SERVICE STREAMER WITH ONE BRONZE STAR

(27 Jun 1950-27 Jul 1954)
(1 Jan 1961-15 Aug 1974)

ARMED FORCES EXPEDITIONARY STREAMER WITH TWO BRONZE STARS

(Lebanon, 18 Jul-16 Sep 1958)
(Cuba, 24 Oct-6 Dec 1962)
(Dominican Republic, 3 May-3 June 1965; and 17-27 Feb 1966)

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