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By

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HEADQUARTERS
205TH GENERAL SUPPORT GROUP NYARNG
Glenmore Road
Troy, New York 12180

The 27th Infantry Division

In World War II



By

CAPTAIN EDMUND G. LOVE

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THE 27TH INFANTRY DIVISION IN WORLD WAR II

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Foreword

TO THE MAN who served in such a unit in wartime, the infantry division was home. Before he joined it, the designation, whether number or name, meant nothing. In the years that pass afterward the division's meaning in his life sometimes fades and is forgotten, but the months and years of actual membership provided the average man with the same ties that he experienced in his own family. For the division took the place of a man's home. His comrades in arms took the places of his family. In looking back from the vantage point of three years it is hard to realize that this deep family relationship once existed. Yet it did. Why did some of the men whose exploits are chronicled herein do the things they did? Love of country and personal pride may have been factors, but I talked with thousands of infantrymen and watched them die and suffer, and when I asked some of them the reason behind it all, most men seemed to feel that their motivation was fully and singly a desire not to let their comrades down. There seemed to me to be no more compelling force than this one thing: comradeship.

This intense loyalty, generating, as it did, close ties among the men of the division, caused each man to look upon an affront to his division as an affront to himself. After all, *he* was the 27th Division, and the 27th Division was himself. The aspersions cast upon the honor of the 27th Division by certain correspondents and high-ranking officers of the military service meant personal dishonor for each man of the 27th Division. It is not easy to march endless miles through heat and filth and constantly lay one's life on the line for one's country. But to do so, and then suffer the ignominy that each man of the 27th Division has had to undergo, is unbearable.

This is the story of the 27th Infantry Division in World War II. It is, as far as possible, the complete account of the trials of the men. Let the reader judge for himself whether the 27th bore its share of the battle for Saipan, for Okinawa. Read carefully the story of Nafutan Point, of Death Valley, of Purple Heart Ridge, and of Tanapag Plain. Consider, if you will, the life and death of Sergeants Adolph Auzis and John Stabile, and Lieutenant Arthur Klein and hundreds of others of the 27th Division.

This history is primarily the history of the infantrymen of the 27th Division. But it is also the story of the tankers of the 193d, 762d and 766th Tank Battalions. Even though their names do not appear so frequently as those of the riflemen, the engineers, the medics, the artillerymen, the ordnance company, the quartermasters and the signalmen were there. They were parts of the 27th Division. They sweated and

feared for their lives as truly as did the men whose efforts they were helping.

The 27th Division, to the man, is proud of the role it played in World War II. This is its record. It was drawn from battlefield interviews, from correspondence, from the official journals, and message files of the Division. It is each man's story, as told to me during and after the battles. Fortunately, I was present during most of the Division's actions and have been able to draw upon my own personal observation.

I should like to thank each member of the 27th Division, all of whom helped to make this volume possible. It is not my work. It is the work of every private and every officer of the Division. I should also like to thank the Historical Division, Department of the Army, whose help in making the records available to me was instrumental in the completion of the work.

EDMUND G. LOVE.

THE 27TH INFANTRY DIVISION IN WORLD WAR II

Chapter I: The 27th Division

DURING WORLD WAR II the United States Army put ninety divisions into the field. In most cases they had antecedents in World War I, but very few go further, and none go back to the Civil War. But while the divisions themselves are relatively new, many of their components date well back in American military history.

The 27th Division was a National Guard unit from the State of New York at the time it was called into federal service in October 1940. By the end of its wartime tour of duty it had lost its local character. Men from every state in the Union saw service in its ranks in the more than five years it was away from home. Since the Division's return to the United States it has again been activated as a unit of the New York National Guard. Many of the present-day Division's men left home in 1940 and fought with it across Pacific battlefields. This gives the Division a continuing history just as after World War I when many of the men who had fought in France remained to lead the way between wars. Some of the members who saw action against the Japanese had helped defeat the Germans at the Hindenburg Line in 1918 in the same units.

At the time of inactivation in 1946 the 27th Division's three infantry regiments were the 105th, 106th, and 165th. It had four field artillery battalions, the 104th, 105th, and 249th, all 105mm howitzers and the 106th, a 155mm battalion. Other major units were the 102d Engineer Battalion, the 102d Medical Battalion, the 27th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, the 27th Quartermaster Company, the 27th Signal Company, and the 727th Ordnance Company.

The 105th Infantry Regiment stemmed from the 2d New York Infantry, but has been known as the 105th since 1917. The first unit of this regiment to be organized, Company A, from Troy, had its ancestry in the old Troy Citizens' Corps, which held its first meeting in 1835. This unit had a continuous existence from that time on, being later incorporated into the National Guard. It served in the Spanish-American War and on the Mexican Border in 1916 as Company A, 2d New York Infantry, and in World War I as Company A, 105th Infantry.

The 106th Infantry was formerly known as the 10th New York Infantry. It, too, served in the Spanish-American War and was sent to the Hawaiian Islands as one of the first United States Army units to garrison that territory. It served in World War I as the 51st Pioneer Infantry. Its headquarters were located at Albany and its companies all came from upstate communities.

The third regiment of the 27th Division was the 165th Infantry. This was the famous old 69th New York Infantry. Known equally well as the "Fighting 69th" and the "Fighting Irish," the first unit of

this regiment was organized as early as 1775 and served throughout the Revolutionary War. It was later designated Company A, 69th New York Infantry. The whole regiment served in the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, on the Mexican Border, World War I, and throughout the last war. Always extremely proud of the Irish ancestry of its men, the regiment had an enviable record. In the Civil War it was noted for the length of its service and the number of engagements in which it participated. In World War I it had fought as a part of the 42d (Rainbow) Division in the brigade commanded at one time by Brigadier General Douglas MacArthur. Joyce Kilmer and Father Francis Duffy were both famous members of the unit in France. The 165th Infantry claims fifty-two battle rings on its colors, more than any other regiment in the United States Army.

One other regiment served with the 27th Division during World War II, but did not go into combat with it. This was the 108th Infantry, transferred to the 40th Division in 1942, when the 27th was triangularized. This regiment also contained one company which traced its history back to the Revolutionary War. As the 3d New York Infantry, the 108th saw action in the Civil War, served in the Spanish-American War and on the Mexican border. It served throughout World War I as the 108th Infantry, a part of the 27th Division.

The 102d Engineer Battalion was derived from the old 102d Engineer Regiment of the World War I division. This in turn was originally the 22d New York Engineers, which regiment had served in the Civil War, the Spanish-American War, and on the Mexican Border before going to France.

The various field artillery battalions were descendants of the old field artillery regiments. All of them had served as part of the 52d Field Artillery Brigade during World War I. Unlike the other parts of the 27th Division, however, the 52d FA Brigade had served through most of World War I in support of the 79th Division.

The New York National Guard was first organized as a division in 1912 shortly after Maj. Gen. John F. O'Ryan assumed command. In 1916, on the organization of the Punitive Expedition into Mexico by Brig. Gen. John J. Pershing, General O'Ryan mobilized the Guard on 19 June. The first unit of the Division left for the border on the 27th of the same month. During its period of service at McAllen, Pharr, and Mission, in Hidalgo County, Texas, the Division was first known as the "New York Division," then as the 6th Division. This service was particularly valuable experience for World War I. The last unit of the Division to leave the border returned to New York on 9 March 1917.

During the Mexican Border service the Division was organized into three brigades of three regiments each. The 1st Brigade consisted of the 2d, 14th, and 69th Infantry Regiments; the 2d Brigade was composed of the 7th, 12th, and 71st; and the 3d Brigade was made up of the 3d, 23d, and 74th. The Division Field Artillery Brigade consisted of the 1st, 2d, and 3d New York Artillery Regiments. Also parts of the Division were the 1st New York Signal Battalion, the 22d New York Engineers, and the 1st New York Cavalry Regiment as well as the Division supply trains and field hospital unit. For a short time during its stay in Texas the Division also had attached to it the 3d Tennessee Infantry.

Chapter 2: World War I

WHILE THE New York National Guard was still engaged in Mexican Border service, the relationships between the United States and the Central Powers in 1917 had been steadily worsening. A month before the return of the Division from Texas it had become necessary for the governor of the state to call out two additional regiments, the 1st and 10th, to guard public utilities in New York against sabotage. After the return of the troops from the Pershing expedition three more regiments, the 2d, 3d, and 71st, were added to this guard. Three days after war was declared the 23d Regiment was also called out.

With these elements of the Division already in service, President Wilson called out the entire National Guard of the United States on 12 July 1917. Under these orders General O'Ryan assembled the New York National Guard on 16 July. On 18 July the War Department ordered the Commanding General to be prepared to move the New York Division to Camp Wadsworth, Spartanburg, South Carolina, for training. Two days later, on 20 July, the 27th Division came into being. Orders issued on that date by the Eastern Department, United States Army, authorized the Commanding General of the New York National Guard to organize a tactical division to be known as the 27th Division. The 27th Division, activated by General Orders No. 1, 25 July 1917, was made up of the following units:

Division Headquarters

1st Infantry Brigade

7th Regiment, NY Infantry

12th Regiment, NY Infantry

69th Regiment, NY Infantry

2d Infantry Brigade

1st Regiment, NY Infantry

23d Regiment, NY Infantry

71st Regiment, NY Infantry

3d Infantry Brigade

2d Regiment, NY Infantry

3d Regiment, NY Infantry

74th Regiment, NY Infantry

1st Field Artillery Brigade

1st Regiment, NY Field Artillery

2d Regiment, NY Field Artillery

3d Regiment, NY Field Artillery

departed for France, although the 52d Field Artillery Brigade did not embark until early in June. The Division, less its artillery, fought along with the 30th Division, as part of II Corps throughout the war. From the time of its arrival in France until the Armistice it was always under over-all British command, being at one time or another under the British Second, Third, and Fourth Armies. Its first action was at Dickebusch early in June. Later in the same month it fought in the battle for the East Poperinghe Line. In August it was engaged at Vierstratt Ridge and in September fought its most important engagements. Beginning on 25 September it attacked in the Knoll-Guillemont Farm-Quennemont Farm area, preliminary to assaulting the vaunted German Hindenburg Line. On 29 September the Division broke the Hindenburg Line itself, one of the most important actions in World War I, as it sent the Germans into general retreat.

In October the 27th Division joined with the 30th Division in pursuing the retiring Germans and caught up with them at the Le Selle River which they crossed after several days of bitter fighting. This was the last combat for the 27th in World War I, the Armistice finding it in a rest camp.

The 52d Field Artillery Brigade, which landed in France late in June, first underwent a six-week training period with French 75s, then moved to the Verdun area. There they participated in the Meuse-Argonne and St. Mihiel offensives in support of the 33d and 79th Divisions. They finally rejoined the 27th Division in the Le Mans area on 15 December 1918.

The Division returned to the United States in February 1919, and was mustered out in April of the same year after having participated in one of the greatest parades in the history of New York City on 25 March 1919. Seven men of the Division were awarded the Medal of Honor, 15 the Distinguished Service Medal, and 195 the Distinguished Service Cross. Sixty-two hundred men of the Division had been killed, wounded, or gassed.

1st Regiment, NY Cavalry

1st Battalion, NY Signal Corps

22d Regiment, NY Engineers

NY Train Headquarters and Military Police

NY Ammunition Train

NY Supply Train

NY Engineer Train

NY Sanitary Train

1st NY Bakery Company

The 27th Division left New York City for Camp Wadsworth on 30 August 1917 after a gigantic farewell parade in New York City. Shortly before leaving, however, the 69th New York Infantry was transferred to the 42d Division. Its place was taken by the 14th Regiment.

A month after the Division arrived at Camp Wadsworth the United States Army reorganized its divisions into a square type of organization composed of four infantry regiments. Not only were five of the original regiments thus dropped, but the numerical designations of those retained were changed. The 2d New York Infantry became the 105th; the 23d Infantry, largely from Brooklyn, was numbered the 106th. The former was augmented by the transfer of 1,375 officers and men from the 71st Regiment, while the new 106th received 1,600 additions from the 14th Infantry. Both of these regiments were grouped together in the new 53d Infantry Brigade. The 107th Infantry, made up principally from the old 7th Regiment, was strengthened by transfers from the 1st New York Infantry. It was then brigaded with the 3d Infantry, which now became the 108th, in the 54th Infantry Brigade. The 108th was brought up to numerical strength by transfers from the old 74th Regiment.

Other units of the reorganized Division were the 105th and 106th Machine-Gun Battalions, made up from the 1st New York Cavalry; the 104th, 105th, and 106th Field Artillery Regiments which had formerly been the 1st, 2d, and 3d Field Artillery Regiments, respectively; the 102d Trench Mortar Battery, drawn from the 1st New York Cavalry; the 102d Engineer Regiment, formerly the 22d New York Engineers; the 102d Signal Battalion, which had been the 1st New York Signal Corps; and the old New York Trains Headquarters and Military Police, with its component parts, all of which were renumbered the 102d.

There were no further changes in the 27th Division during World War I. It trained at Camp Wadsworth until 28 April 1918 and then

Chapter 3: Between Wars

THERE WAS little change in the organization of the 27th Division for several years after 1918. Components continued to retain the designations assumed during the war. The period between mustering out and the summer of 1921 was largely spent in obtaining federal recognition. General O'Ryan continued to command the Division and the New York National Guard until 1922 when he retired to become Transportation Commissioner of New York City. He was succeeded by Maj. Gen. Charles W. Berry, who had served as an officer of the 105th Infantry during the war. General Berry continued in command until 1926 when he retired to become Comptroller of the City of New York. He was succeeded by Maj. Gen. William N. Haskell, a former Regular Army officer who had commanded the 69th New York Infantry on the Mexican Border in 1916. General Haskell continued to command the Division until 1941.

Between 1920 and 1940 the Division attended twenty summer camps. In all but four of these years the infantry went to Camp Smith at Peekskill while the artillery trained at Pine Camp, New York. In 1927 and 1935 the whole unit assembled at Pine Camp. In 1939 maneuvers were held at Plattsburg, and in 1940 the Division took part in the war games at DeKalb.

The first significant changes in the Division took place during the summer of 1940. At this time the 107th Infantry was transferred out and redesignated the 207th Coast Artillery (AA). The 165th Infantry, formerly the 69th, which had not been a part of the 27th Division since it left for Camp Wadsworth in 1917, replaced it, becoming part of the 54th Brigade. Further changes were to come.

The summer of 1940 was one of feverish preparation. War had already been going on in Europe for almost a year. The normal two-week training period had been lengthened to three weeks. At approximately the same time Congress passed the Selective Service Act. Under these conditions the 27th Division assembled at DeKalb on 4 August. On 23 August, the day before maneuvers ended, the whole Division was reviewed by President Roosevelt. The men returned to their homes with the knowledge that the National Guard would soon be federalized.

In accord with the terms of the Selective Service Act, the President issued orders on 31 August which called the 44th Division into service on 15 September. About half the strength of this division was New York National Guard troops. The 27th Division was scheduled for induction on 15 October. During the period between the issuance of this order and the actual induction an extensive reorganization of the Division took place. All men with dependents could request discharge. To replace

these trained men the Division was given authority to recruit men up to mobilization strength, but at the time of induction every company had a very high percentage of untrained men.

Another serious loss was suffered when the second old regiment was transferred out. In September, by War Department order, the 106th Infantry was redesignated the 186th Field Artillery Regiment and replaced by the 10th New York Infantry, which, as already pointed out, had served in World War I as the 51st Pioneer Infantry. In November the 10th New York assumed the numerical designation of the old 106th. It was part of the 53d Brigade. Thus the Division still had a 106th Infantry although it was not the same regiment in both wars. The first came from Brooklyn, the second from Albany, Utica, and other upstate cities.

Several major changes in command took place between the end of maneuvers and 15 October. Col. Ogden J. Ross, commanding the 105th Infantry, was placed in command of the 53d Brigade and promoted to brigadier general. General Ross had been a junior officer in the 105th Infantry in World War I, had suffered wounds in the battle for the Hindenburg Line, and had received the Belgian Croix de Guerre and the Silver Star. Col. Gardiner Conroy of the 14th New York Infantry assumed command of the 165th Infantry. Col. Charles N. Morgan of the 121st New York Cavalry became commander of the 108th Infantry Regiment. Col. Christopher B. Degenaar of the New York State Adjutant General's Office replaced General Ross as commander of the 105th Infantry and Col. James Andrews took over command of the 105th Field Artillery Regiment.

President Roosevelt signed the order for induction of the Division on 25 September 1940. On 9 October, Lt. Gen. Hugh A. Drum, commander of the Second Corps Area and First Army, directed concentration of the Division at Fort McClellan, Alabama, for training. The troops of the Division assembled in the New York armories at 1000 on 15 October, as ordered. The roster of units and localities from which they were drawn on the date of induction is as follows:

| | |
|----------------------------------|----------|
| Division Headquarters | New York |
| Division Headquarters Detachment | New York |
| Headquarters Special Troops | New York |
| Medical Detachment | New York |
| Headquarters Company | New York |
| 27th Military Police Company | Yonkers |

| | |
|---|------------------|
| 27th Signal Company | Yonkers |
| 102d Ordnance Company | New York |
| 53d Brigade Headquarters | Albany |
| 53d Brigade Headquarters Company | Albany |
| 105th Infantry Headquarters | Troy |
| Headquarters Company | Troy |
| Medical Detachment | Troy |
| Antitank Company | Whitehall |
| Service Company | Troy |
| 1st Battalion Headquarters | Troy |
| Headquarters Detachment, 1st Battalion | Hoosick Falls |
| Company A | Troy |
| Company B | Cohoes |
| Company C | Troy |
| Company D | Troy |
| 2d Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters | |
| Detachment | Schenectady |
| Company E | Schenectady |
| Company F | Schenectady |
| Company G | Amsterdam |
| Company H | Schenectady |
| 3d Battalion Headquarters | Schenectady |
| Headquarters Detachment, 3d Battalion | Saranac Lake |
| Company I | Malone |
| Company K | Glens Falls |
| Company L | Saratoga Springs |
| Company M | Gloversville |
| 106th Infantry Headquarters | Albany |
| Medical Detachment | Rome |
| Headquarters Company | Hudson |
| Antitank Company | Catskill |
| Service Company | Albany |
| All 1st Battalion | Albany |
| 2d Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters | |
| Detachment | Binghamton |
| Company E | Binghamton |
| Company F | Walton |
| Company G | Oneonta |
| Company H | Binghamton |
| 3d Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment | Utica |

| | |
|--|------------|
| Company I | Mohawk |
| Company K | Oneida |
| Company L | Utica |
| Company M | Utica |
| 54th Infantry Brigade Headquarters | New York |
| Headquarters Company | New York |
| 108th Infantry Headquarters | Syracuse |
| Medical Detachment | Syracuse |
| Headquarters Company | Syracuse |
| Antitank Company | Rochester |
| Service Company | Auburn |
| Band | Syracuse |
| 1st Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment | Syracuse |
| Company A | Watertown |
| Company B | Geneva |
| Company C | Syracuse |
| Company D | Oswego |
| 2d Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment | Rochester |
| Company E | Rochester |
| Company F | Medina |
| Company G | Rochester |
| Company H | Rochester |
| 3d Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Detachment | Auburn |
| Company I | Auburn |
| Company K | Hornell |
| Company L | Elmira |
| Company M | Ogdensburg |
| 165th Infantry complete | New York |
| 52d Field Artillery Brigade | |
| Headquarters Battery | New York |
| 104th Field Artillery Regiment | |
| Headquarters | New York |
| Medical Detachment | New York |
| Headquarters Battery | New York |
| Service Battery | New York |
| 1st Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Battery | Syracuse |
| Battery A | Syracuse |
| Battery B | Binghamton |
| Battery C | Binghamton |

| | |
|---|--------------|
| 2nd Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Battery | New York |
| Battery D | New York |
| Battery E | New York |
| Battery F | New York |
| 105th Field Artillery Regiment Headquarters | New York |
| Medical Detachment | New York |
| Headquarters Battery | New York |
| Service Battery | New York |
| 1st Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Battery | Brooklyn |
| Battery A | New York |
| Battery B | New York |
| Battery C | New York |
| 2d Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Battery | New York |
| Battery D | New York |
| Battery E | New York |
| 106th Field Artillery Regiment complete | Buffalo |
| 102d Engineer Regiment complete | New York |
| 102d Medical Regiment Headquarters | New York |
| Service Company | White Plains |
| 1st Battalion Headquarters | New York |
| Company A | Rochester |
| Company B | New York |
| 2d Battalion Headquarters | Albany |
| Company D | New York |
| Company E | White Plains |
| 3d Battalion Headquarters | Albany |
| Company G | Jamaica |
| Company H | White Plains |
| 102d Quartermaster Regiment complete | New York |
| 102d Observation Squadron | New Dorp |

The movement of the Division to Fort McClellan began on 17 October. All vehicles moved under their own power in several convoys. The main troop strength of the Division traveled by train, beginning on 23 October. The last unit closed on Fort McClellan on 26 October.

Training began immediately upon arrival. The first thirteen weeks from 4 November to 3 February 1941 found the command concerned with four primary problems. The first of these, naturally, was to build up a good, basically trained division. The second was to make of Fort

McClellan a camp better suited to the needs of the Division. During the first basic training period Division troops made many changes, one of the most notable of which was the construction of two ranges by the 102d Engineers. When completed these were capable of accommodating two complete infantry regiments at one time.

A third, and pressing, problem grew out of the many preinduction changes in the Division. The dependency discharges had removed so many key men that provision had to be made at once to replace them. Cooks, clerks, technicians, and mechanics were badly needed. To fill the gaps the Division set up a series of specialists schools which ran concurrently with the basic training period. By February most of the more serious shortages had been overcome.

The last of General Haskell's early problems had to do with bringing the Division up to strength. All National Guard divisions were given the choice of training recruits themselves or of accepting them after they had been trained at a replacement training center. General Haskell chose the former and the War Department further agreed that the first draft of new men to join the Division would come from New York State. Approximately seven thousand men were needed to bring the Division to mobilization strength. Early in January details were sent to Fort Dix in New Jersey, and Camp Upton and Fort Niagara in New York. Under their supervision, the 27th Division began receiving recruits on 21 January 1941.

The recruits were assigned to their new units immediately upon arrival at Fort McClellan. General Haskell ordered that each infantry regiment set up a training regiment to train its own new men. A recruit who was assigned to Company A, 105th Infantry, would thus be placed in Company A of the 105th Training Regiment, which was officered and manned by a cadre of men from the parent company. Upon the completion of the thirteen-week basic training period the training company simply returned to its parent organization and was assimilated.

The men of the Division who had arrived at Fort McClellan in October meanwhile completed their basic training. The Division was inspected by officers of VII Corps in February and now turned to another thirteen-week period of more advanced training that lasted into May. Officers were assigned to service schools throughout the country and selected enlisted men also were sent to other camps for specialized training. The Division at Fort McClellan assigned its units tactical maneuvers and had war games on a small scale. This thirteen-week period was also one in which the equipment tables were brought as nearly up to strength as possible. This was the day of make-believe tanks and stovepipe mortars. The Division had received only enough M1

rifles for one infantry regiment and these were passed from unit to unit so that everyone would have a chance to fire them and become generally familiar with them.

The first maneuvers of the new army were held by Second Army in Tennessee in May and June 1941. They were directed by Lt. Gen. Ben Lear. As a part of VII Corps the 27th Division was ordered to participate, along with the 30th Division, 5th Division, and an armored brigade under Brig. Gen. George S. Patton. Movement to the maneuver area began on 24 May and lasted three days. From then until 27 June the Division lived in the field and took part in all the action of the maneuvers. It was not finally reassembled at Fort McClellan until 10 July. Almost immediately preparations were begun for participation in the Louisiana-Arkansas Maneuvers to be held in August and September. The Division moved out from Fort McClellan on 29 July and bivouacked in El Dorado, Arkansas, on 10 August.

Through the next two months the 27th Division played a part in VII Corps, Second Army, and finally, GHQ maneuvers. These exercises have since been characterized as the best ever executed by the United States Army. They were extremely valuable to the men who took part, being realistic and intensive. No man who came through them belittled them later, even after going through combat. One soldier, in the midst of the battle for Saipan, said that "if it wasn't for the shootin' I'd say the Louisiana-Arkansas Maneuvers were as tough as this."

The reassembly of the Division at Fort McClellan on 8 October 1941 marked the end of an era for most of the men. Almost a year had passed since the majority of them had been called into federal service, and although Congress had extended the original period of service many of the troops had become eligible for discharge for one reason or another. The whole complexion of the Division would soon change. Another and more noticeable change also occurred during this period. General Haskell, who had commanded the Division since 1926, was ordered reassigned, effective 1 November, under regulations governing the age of division commanders. He was to take up a new post at First Army Headquarters, Governors Island, New York. The new division commander was to be Brig. Gen. Ralph McT. Pennell, who had commanded the 52d FA Brigade since the induction of the Division in 1940. He, in turn, was succeeded by Col. Redmond F. Kernan, Jr.

The first year was over. It had passed without unusual incident and now, the 27th Division, under new leadership, embarked on a new experience that began in December.

Chapter 4: POM

FIVE DAYS before the 27th returned from the Louisiana–Arkansas Maneuvers, the War Department authorized the discharge of all men over twenty-eight years of age, men whose continued service was causing undue hardships on their families, and members of the Army of the United States (AUS) who had more than one year's service. These soldiers, upon release from active duty, were to be transferred to the Enlisted Reserve Corps, or to the Inactive National Guard.

This order affected approximately three thousand men of the Division. Their discharge began 10 October 1941, and by 7 December, practically all eligible had been released. The Division's strength had dropped to 920 officers and 13,384 enlisted men compared to an authorized strength of 1,012 officers, 12 warrant officers, and 21,314 men.

Word of the Japanese attack arrived at approximately 1330. All leaves were immediately cancelled, men on pass were rounded up, and the Division prepared to move. By 1800 General Ross and the 53d Brigade had been assigned to guard duty in certain critical areas in Alabama. By early next morning the two regiments of the brigade were on duty all the way from Mobile to Huntsville. That same evening, 8 December, General Pennell was notified by the War Department that the 27th Division would be prepared to move to an undisclosed destination within forty-eight hours. The 53d Brigade was recalled from guard duty and all assignments of the 27th Division were taken over by the 33d Division. By 11 December the 27th was again assembled at Fort McClellan and on 13 December was formally alerted for movement.

The Division staff had been preparing for just such a move. Lt. Col. Charles G. Ferris, AC of S, G-4, had completed loading schedules. Seventy-two trains were needed to move the troops and equipment. The trains were each composed of from six to ten Pullman cars, twenty flat cars, two boxcars, and two kitchen cars. A typical loading problem was the need for some twenty thousand 8-inch 4x4 blocks for truck-wheel chocks. The Division engineers set up a sawmill right at the loading ramps, and ran it twenty-four hours a day.

The first train left Anniston, Alabama, on the morning of 14 December, with its destination unknown to the troops. California seemed a safe bet but until they actually saw the landscape they couldn't be sure. The 2,500-mile trip was made by every rail line to the coast, one of the Division trains arriving in Los Angeles by way of Seattle. Despite other heavy troop movements, schedules were maintained and there was only one accident. One train, carrying the 102d Medical Regiment, became involved in a head-on collision at Gallup, New Mexico. No one from the regiment was injured.

General Pennell had flown to the coast, arriving at Ontario, California, on 19 December. Only Division Headquarters settled in this pleasant little city, however. Other units were spread all over the California landscape, protecting the coast against possible Japanese nuisance raids. When General Pennell arrived at Ontario he was handed orders from the Western Defense Command directing him to attach one infantry regiment to the 40th Division in the Los Angeles area until after 1 January 1942.

The 165th Infantry, which was still en route, was ordered to Los Angeles and arrived there the next day. Regimental Headquarters opened at the Los Angeles Municipal Airport at Inglewood and troops patrolled all vital defense installations in that suburb, twenty-four hours a day, with orders to shoot in case of trouble.

The 108th Infantry and headquarters of the 54th Infantry Brigade moved to the Los Angeles County Fair Grounds at Pomona and General Anderson was charged with patrolling all installations in that general area. The 105th Infantry moved to Camp Haan, the great camp ten miles out of Riverside, California, on the edge of the desert country. The main responsibility of this unit was March Field, just across the road. The 106th Infantry set up twenty miles away in the midst of the dumps and orange groves of Corona. Both regiments were under the command of General Ross whose 53d Brigade Headquarters was established at Camp Haan. Near Corona, in Arlington, the 52d FA Brigade set up headquarters with the 106th FA Regiment nearby. The 104th and 105th Field were in Norco and Chino, respectively. The 102d Engineers and 102d Medics were in Riverside itself. Special Troops of the Division were stationed near Division Headquarters at Ontario.

The holiday season of 1941 was a business season for the 27th. Passes were restricted to ten per cent of the troops. The rest ate their Christmas dinner from field kitchens and walked post or worked at the task of keeping 14,000 men spread over 1,800 square miles supplied and in communication.

The shadow of overseas movement hung over the 27th. The California mission was meant merely to cover the holidays. On 26 December the Division was ordered to requisition immediately enough men to bring it up to war strength. The next day Lt. Col. Gerard W. Kelley, then G-1, requisitioned 5,693 infantry replacements, 1,067 for the field artillery, 346 for the engineers, 353 medics, 289 quartermaster troops, and 114 from miscellaneous branches. This was a grand total of 7,852 enlisted men. In addition, 196 officers were requested. On 2 January the War Department ordered 3,200 men from Camp Wolters, Texas, to make up part of this shortage. These were the first men from outside

the State of New York to join the Division. Meanwhile, all Enlisted Reserve and Inactive National Guardsmen formerly with the Division were instructed by telegram to report to the nearest induction station. Some of these men were en route to California by 28 December.

Before the Division left its holiday stations, Battery F, 105th Field Artillery, began a shooting war. Moved near Redondo Beach, adjacent to Fort MacArthur, on 23 December, they sighted a Jap submarine during the early morning hours. Hardly were the guns in position than Battery F fired nine rounds before the submarine disappeared. One hit was reported. The Air Corps later reported that the submarine was sunk by bombing.

On 2 January the 54th Brigade was assembled at Pomona, the 53d Brigade at Camp Haan, and the 52d FA Brigade at Arlington. On 17 January the whole Division began moving north and by 24 January had assembled at or near Fort Ord. The new station was only eight hours away from the San Francisco port of embarkation. No formal orders had yet been received alerting the Division for overseas shipment, but the indications were all there. Replacements had begun to arrive as early as 7 January. From that time until 23 February new men joined the Division every day. By the latter date 7,837 had been assigned, bringing the total strength to 21,719, just fifteen soldiers less than war strength. Furthermore, requisitions were flying thick and fast. The Division found 382 new jeeps waiting when it arrived at Fort Ord. Every man received a new M1 rifle or carbine. New clothing was issued. The artillery received new howitzers. Anything that was old was traded for new. Just to remove any doubts, all vehicles were pulled into the Fort Ord ordnance shops, where unit markings were obliterated and code numbers substituted. Since late in December the Division had been receiving its mail at "APO 27, c/o Postmaster, San Francisco, Calif." This was to be the address of the men for the next four years.

Between 26 December 1941 and 23 February 1942 several major changes were made in commands within the Division. Col. Russell G. Ayers was assigned to the 106th Infantry on 10 January, replacing Col. Thomas C. Dedell who was reassigned by the War Department. Lt. Col. Leonard A. Bishop assumed command of the 105th Infantry on 15 February, replacing Colonel Degenaar who had been left in the hospital at Fort McClellan. Col. Martin H. Meany, executive officer of the 165th Infantry, transferred to the 108th Infantry and assumed command of that regiment. Col. Redmond F. Kernan was promoted to brigadier general. There were also several shifts made on the General and Special Staffs.

Formal orders alerting the Division for overseas service were received

on 1 February. Physical screening of troops and inoculations began immediately. On 20 February General Pennell ordered all advance details to the port of embarkation. The 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, moved to the docks on 25 February to guard port installations

The first elements to go overseas in World War II boarded ship on 27 February 1942. The 27th was the first combat—and only square—infantry division to leave the States for the Pacific after Pearl Harbor. The 27th was not moving into an easy assignment that February afternoon. Bataan was under siege, the enemy had invaded the Netherlands East Indies, and on 19 February the bombing of Port Darwin seemed to presage the invasion of Australia itself. Midway was still three months away; all the United States fleet was virtually at the bottom of Pearl Harbor and the Japanese fleet was intact. Any single island in the Pacific could easily become a battlefield at any time. No one in the 27th Division knew his destination when he boarded ship, but wherever it was, it promised to be a hot spot. The advance party that boarded the *Republic* was under the command of Lt. Col. Alfred D. Reutershan, G-2 of the Division. Each unit was represented. Lt. Col. Dayton L. Robinson acted for Division Headquarters; Major Harry P. Jones, the 53d Brigade; Lt. Joseph Fallon, the 54th Brigade; Capt. Eugene Cleaver, the 102d Quartermaster Regiment; Capt. Earl D. Foster, the 102d Engineers; Major Dwight D. McCallum, the 104th Field Artillery; Major Charles A. Selby, the 105th Field Artillery; Major Edward B. O'Dea, the 106th Field Artillery; Capt. Howard J. Billings, the 108th Infantry. Three infantry platoons also went along. These were the 1st Platoon, Company K, 106th Infantry; 2d Platoon, Company E, 108th Infantry; and the 3d Platoon, Company C, 165th Infantry. Three and a half years later the remnants of these platoons from the 106th and 165th Infantry were the first men to go home from Okinawa for discharge under the point system. There were only two survivors of the K Company platoon, seven from C Company. The platoon from the 108th Infantry was far away in the Southern Philippines.

The *Republic* sailed from San Francisco on the morning of 28 February. Ten days later it arrived in Hilo Harbor, Hawaii, and the first troops of the 27th Division marched ashore to begin the longest wartime overseas service of any National Guard division in the United States Army.

Chapter 5: The Outer Islands

ALL OF THE Division's equipment was loaded by 1 March. On March 7, the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, commanded by Lt. Col. Joseph A. McDonough, and the 2d Battalion, 108th Infantry, commanded by Major Frank C. Smith, boarded the USS *Grant*. Each battalion traveled as a complete combat team. The two vessels sailed the same day.

On 8 March the two luxury liners, *Lurline* and *Aquitania*, began loading. The complement of the former included Division Headquarters; 53d Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company; and the 106th Infantry (the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry took over their guard duty). Those aboard the *Aquitania* included Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, 52d FA Brigade; two batteries of the 104th Field Artillery; the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry; the 102d Medical Regiment; and the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry. Both vessels sailed from San Francisco on 10 March. The *Lurline* went directly to Hilo, arriving 15 March. The troops aboard the *Aquitania* transshipped at Honolulu because the ship was too large to enter Hilo. Both vessels returned to San Francisco for the second half of the Division, but only the *Aquitania* loaded, beginning 29 March. The 54th Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Company boarded with the 165th Infantry, less the 3d Battalion; the 102d Quartermaster Regiment; the 102d Engineer Regiment; the 105th and 106th Field Artillery. Company F, 165th Infantry, was left at Fort Ord, quarantined with scarlet fever. The ship sailed the same day and arrived at Honolulu on 4 April. Only three small interisland steamers were available to transship the troops to the outer islands. Consequently 54th Brigade Headquarters, along with all elements of the 165th Infantry Regiment which were present, were loaded aboard. All other units went to Schofield Barracks to await further transportation. At Schofield these other troops were promptly quarantined for jaundice. They were eventually moved to Kauai and Hawaii on 8 April.

The remainder of the Division dribbled overseas in April. On 1 April the 2d and 3d Battalions, 105th Infantry, and on 7 April the 108th Infantry, plus the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, and F Company of that regiment, cleared the port.

The 27th Division was scattered throughout the islands to defend them. General Pennell set up Division Headquarters on Hawaii, defended by the 53d Brigade under General Ross. The 102d Quartermasters, 102d Engineers, 102d Medical Regiment and Division Special Troops, less detachments, were also part of the Hawaii garrison.

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E. Anderson, who maintained 54th Brigade Headquarters there. The garrison force was made up principally of the 165th Infantry Regimental Combat Team. The Maui District was originally defended by the 108th Infantry Regimental Combat Team under the command of Colonel Meany. However, Hawaiian Department Headquarters ordered that a general officer be placed in charge so General Kernan moved his 52d FA Brigade Headquarters there on 21 April. Also under General Kernan's command was the island of Molokai, garrisoned by the 2d Battalion, 108th Infantry. Company E of this battalion was later moved to the small island of Lanai, nearby.

Most of the excitement was centered in the first three months, starting on 26 April with an eruption by Mauna Loa. The excitement from this had hardly died down when word was received that a Japanese task force was headed east, probably for the Hawaiian Islands. The Division was alerted around the clock from the last week in May until 7 June, when we heard that the enemy force was intercepted west of Midway by the Navy and Air Forces and administered a whipping which had much to do with altering the course of the war.

After Midway the danger to the Hawaiian Islands lessened rapidly, but the 27th remained in the outer islands until late in October. During this period each battalion on Hawaii manned the beach defenses for six weeks and then spent three weeks in reserve. Much attention was given to tactical and physical conditioning to keep the troops from going soft in the static defenses. A military highway was built across the saddle formed by Mauna Loa and Mauna Kea.

In July, General Pennell received orders to triangularize the Division by 31 August. General Pennell was relieved of the task of choosing which infantry regiment to drop when the 108th Infantry was suddenly assigned to the 40th Division by the Hawaiian Department. There were many more changes to be made, however. The square-type division of 21,000 men had to be reduced to approximately 14,000.

The two brigades were the first units to disappear. General Anderson was ordered back to the mainland to take command of the 86th Infantry Division, but unfortunately died of a heart attack before taking command. General Ross was to become Assistant Division Commander.

The 54th Brigade Headquarters Company was inactivated and its men transferred to the 53d Brigade Headquarters Company. The latter unit was then redesignated the 27th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop.

The next unit to be reorganized was the 52d FA Brigade. Brigade Headquarters and Headquarters Battery were redesignated as Division Artillery Headquarters and Headquarters Battery. The 104th Field Artillery Regiment was split into two battalions, the 104th and the

249th. The former was to be ostensibly a part of the 106th Regimental Combat Team, the latter part of the 105th Combat Team. The 105th Field Artillery Regiment was divided into the 105th Field Artillery Battalion and the 225th. The former remained with the Division as part of the 165th Regimental Combat Team while the 225th was transferred to the Hawaiian Department. The 106th Field Artillery was also split. The 106th Battalion was retained by the Division for general support missions, and the 226th Field Artillery Battalion was transferred to the Hawaiian Department.

Special Troops also underwent a considerable reorganization. The 102d Medical Regiment was reduced to the 102d Medical Battalion, consisting of three collecting companies, one to each combat team, and one clearing company. The 102d Quartermaster Battalion emerged from the 102d Quartermaster Regiment. This unit later became the 102d Quartermaster Company and finally the 27th Quartermaster Company. Added to the Division at this time was the 727th Ordnance Company.

The 102d Engineer Regiment was divided into two combat engineer battalions. The 102d Engineer Battalion remained as part of the Division and the 152d was transferred to the Hawaiian Department. The 152d, however, never completely severed itself from the 27th. It accompanied the Division to Makin, Saipan, Espiritu Santo, and Okinawa, and its men still referred to themselves as members of the 27th until the end of the war.

Those units of the 27th which left at this time all saw action before the end of the war. The 108th Infantry fought in New Britain, New Guinea, and the Philippines as part of the 40th Division. The artillery battalions eventually became part of XXIV Corps Artillery and took part in the battles of Saipan, Leyte, and Okinawa.

The Division that emerged from this reorganization was the same as that which ended the war, with one exception. In 1943 three cannon companies were transferred into the three infantry regiments from the 33d Division. All of these units played important roles in later engagements.

Chapter 6: Oahu

WHILE THE 27th was still in the outer islands the United States had launched its first offensive move against the Japanese with the landing of the 1st Marine Division on Guadalcanal on 7 August 1942. This was to have a direct effect on the 27th. The Japanese, the heat, and tropical disease had taken a tremendous toll of the Marines by early September and the Joint Chiefs of Staff began to search for a division to relieve the Marines. One result of this was the formation of the Americal Division in New Caledonia. The other was the dispatch of the 27th.

On 16 October 1942 General Pennell was directed to move his Division to the South Pacific, to train and re-equip until ships were ready. The 106th Infantry was alerted before nightfall and moved out of its defensive positions. The 105th was to follow.

During the next four days the Division went ahead at full speed. Then, on 20 October, General Pennell was again called to Hawaiian Department headquarters and notified that the War Department had other plans. The 27th would not go to Guadalcanal, after all. The 25th, the other division on the islands, would go south and the 27th would be assembled on Oahu to defend it, replacing the 25th. The 40th Division, arriving from the mainland in October, would relieve the 27th in the outer islands. In addition, the 27th was to furnish 3,500 replacements to bring the 25th Division up to strength.

For the first time since it had left Fort McClellan in December the year before, the 27th Division, in early November, was assembled in one reasonably compact area, yet it was still far from a unified command. Each of the regimental combat teams was assigned to a sector in the southern defense area of the island. Division headquarters was set up at the little village of Aiea on the very shores of Pearl Harbor, with Special Troops nearby. The 105th Infantry was to be responsible for the defense of the Ewa Plain, adjacent to Pearl Harbor on the north. The 106th Infantry moved into the Honolulu area and defended that part of the island between Diamond Head and Pearl Harbor, including the city itself. This sector was the more vulnerable part of the defenses, facing good landing beaches for virtually its entire length. To the 165th Infantry fell the windward (east) side of the island. The principal point of defense was Kaneohe Naval Base. This disposition of the Division was to remain in effect for the next nine months.

The move to Oahu brought other significant changes in the Division. General Pennell, feeling that he was too old for extended field service, requested relief, and was placed in command of the Field Artillery Replacement Training Center at Fort Sill, Oklahoma. At the same time,

Col. John H. F. Haskell, son of the former Division Commander, who had been Chief of Staff from the time the Division arrived in California, was assigned to an important Military Government post.

The new Division Commander, Maj. Gen. Ralph C. Smith, who was to lead the 27th to Makin and Saipan, took over on November 20th. The new Chief of Staff who reported at the same time was Col. Albert K. Stebbins.

General Smith joined the Army in 1917. He was noted as an authority on tactics and was considered the outstanding expert on the French Army and language in the United States Army. For two years in the 1920s he had been a student and teacher at l'École de Guerre, the "war college" of France.

Colonel Stebbins was graduated from the United States Military Academy in 1925. During the battle for Saipan he was to assume command of the 106th Infantry and lead it through the remainder of that battle and on Okinawa.

The stay of the 27th Division on the island of Oahu was devoted largely to training.

On 1 June an old friend of the Division arrived on Oahu to assume command of the Hawaiian Department. He was Lt. Gen. Robert C. Richardson, Jr., who had commanded VII Corps during the Louisiana-Arkansas maneuvers. During 1942, while on an inspection tour of the Pacific for General Marshall he had gone out of his way to pay a visit to the Division on Hawaii.

These nine months spent in the defense of Oahu marked the last peaceful period in the 27th's World War II history. It had already been in federal service for two years and ten months. It had been reorganized, had undergone several changes, had furnished cadres for new divisions, sent men back to officers training school, and was now ready for combat.

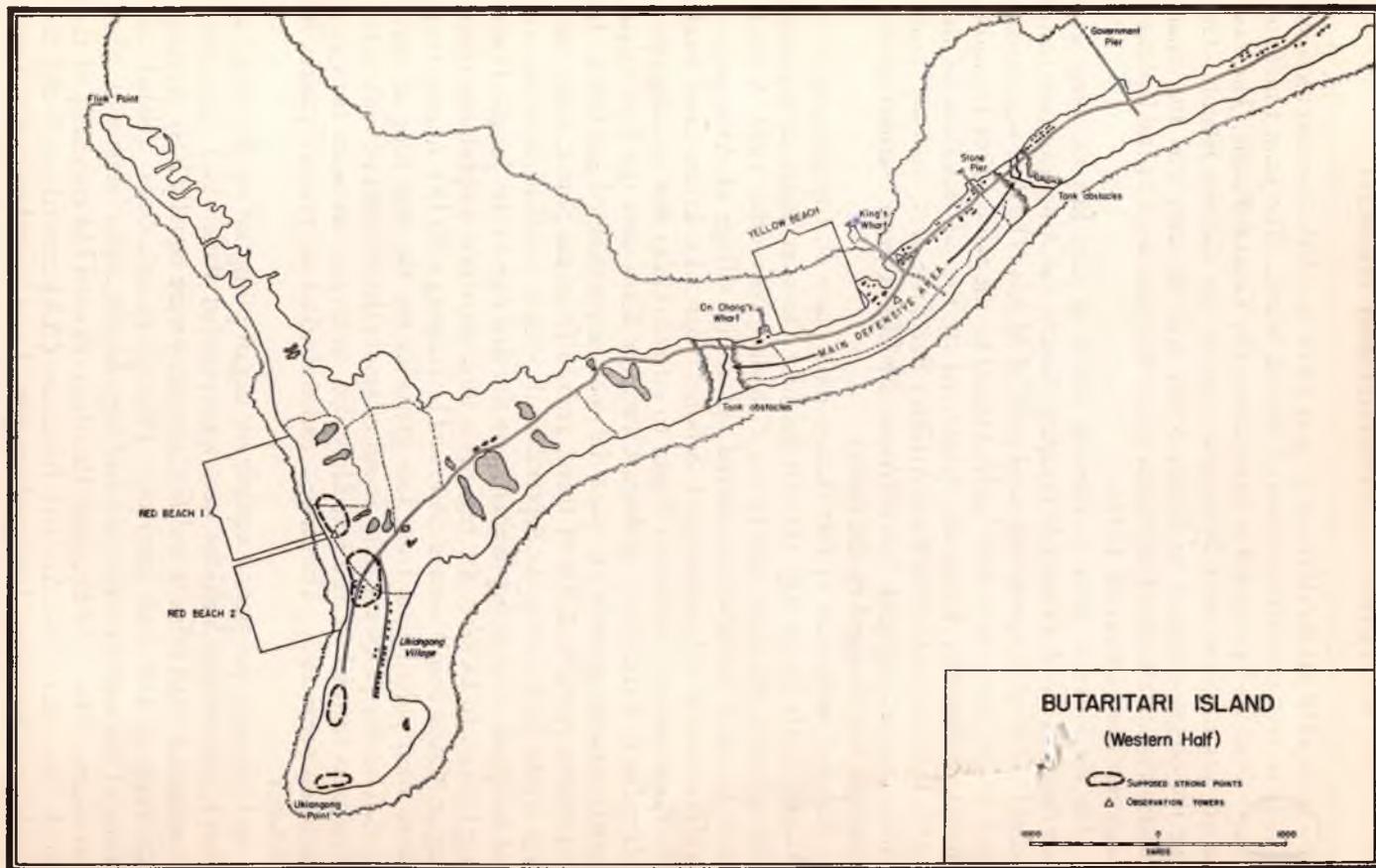
Chapter 7: Assault on Makin

ON THE MORNING of 27 July 1943 the 27th Division received its first offensive mission of World War II. The Joint Chiefs of Staff had projected a drive across the Central Pacific. The first move was to come on 1 November against the Gilbert Islands. The specific target assigned to Ralph Smith and his men was the small British phosphate island of Nauru which had been held by the Japanese since the late summer of 1942.

The information given to General Smith on that July morning was not the final word. Instead of invading Nauru, the American task force would eventually capture the coral atoll of Makin. The date was moved back to 20 November. And lastly, instead of the whole 27th Division, the 165th Infantry Regiment, reinforced by the 3d Battalion of the 105th Infantry and 105th Field Artillery Battalion, were the only major Division units engaged. Nevertheless, the life of every member of the Division was changed by the orders.

The first indication of this change took place on the morning of 1 August. Early in the day, the 6th Infantry Division began taking over the defensive positions held by the 27th since November 1942. A week later Division headquarters moved out of the village of Aiea and established itself at Quadrangle I, Schofield Barracks. In the same week the three infantry regiments began to retrain. Oahu was an admirable place for it. Particularly strenuous were the hikes over the Pali, calculated to sweat pounds off even the most accomplished goldbrick. In September recruits, 2,500 of them, arrived from the States, some only five weeks from home. In September also came familiarization fire of all weapons. And in September came the first trip to the Jungle Training Center. In October the regiments took their first amphibious training at Makua and Waianae, followed by training with live ammunition. Some men pulled pins from live grenades for the first time in their lives. Dummy pillboxes were assaulted under the muzzles of tank guns. Noncoms learned to direct artillery fire on targets no more than two hundred yards away. The troops also embarked on practice cruises in October.

All through this period equipment began piling up on the docks at Fort Kamehameha. Vehicles were waterproofed. Pallets and crates were constructed. Staff officers and first sergeants were equally busy drawing up shipping lists and manifests. Physical examinations weeded out many of the men with flat feet, bad legs, hernia, and a number of other handicaps. The 152d Engineer Battalion rejoined old comrades of the 102d. The 98th Coast Artillery Battalion (AA) moved in, as did the 193d Tank Battalion. It was a busy period and an arduous one. Every



Map 1: Butaritari, principal island in Makin Atoll

man in the 27th Division took his basic training all over again. And when it was done he went on to training that he'd never had in 1941 when everything was short. Mortars were no longer stovepipes and tanks were no longer trucks with signs on them. Combat veterans from the South and Southwest Pacific were brought in to explain to the men of the 27th how the Japanese fought and to show them a little of what to expect. When those months of August, September, and October were over, the 27th Division was a taut, well trained unit.

Makin is two thousand miles southwest of the island of Oahu. It was to be a steppingstone in an attack on the Marshall Islands which was to follow two months later. At the same time the 27th was landing on Makin, the 2d Marine Division was to invade Tarawa Atoll, 105 miles away to the southward. The 27th was to be, therefore, a part of a gigantic task force under the over-all command of Vice Adm. Raymond A. Spruance. In command of all landing forces on both islands was Maj. Gen. Holland M. Smith, USMC. For the term of the expedition, the Division was assigned to V Amphibious Corps, a Marine headquarters organized in the early fall of 1943.

Makin was not a new target for American forces. During August 1942, a Marine raider battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Evans F. Carlson, had landed on the atoll from two submarines. For two days this valiant little group of men had fought the enemy and had then withdrawn. Reports of Colonel Carlson's expedition were extremely valuable to members of the 27th Division staff, but the need for more information gave one member of the Division the honor of being the first to venture into enemy territory during the war. Late in September Capt. Donald M. Neuman, assistant Division G-2, boarded the submarine *Nautilus* at Pearl Harbor. For over a month this vessel cruised in the vicinity of Nauru, Tarawa and Makin, taking periscope pictures and observing enemy activity. Captain Neuman brought back complete photographic coverage of the landing beaches. For his work he was awarded the Bronze Star, the first combat decoration to be earned by a member of the 27th Division in World War II.

The search for information also introduced three members of the British armed forces to the Division. Two of them, Lt. Commander Heyen and Lieutenant Jacobson, both of the Royal Australian Navy, had been traders in the Gilbert Islands before the war and had long lived on Makin. The third became an adopted member of the Division. He was Pvt. Freddie Narruhn of the 1st Fiji Infantry. Freddie was a native of Makin. His family still live there. The information that Freddie imparted was the most important single source for planning purposes.

Only Freddie knew where the *bobai* pits were located and only Freddie could pick out which buildings on the island had been built by the British before the war and which by the Japanese since their occupation. He accompanied the expedition to the island and some individuals in the Division still claim that Makin Mary, or Mary from Butaritari, as she was sometimes known, was his sister. She wasn't, but Freddie was largely responsible for a good many of the fine pictures that adorn the walls of some members' houses, even at this late date. Freddie Narruhn came aboard the transports which bore the Division to Saipan in June 1944, while they were refueling at Kwajalein. He had to be restrained from stowing away aboard the ships at that time. Since the war several members of the Division have received long letters from him. He is now back on his native Makin and to show his gratitude for the liberation of his people has sent many mementos of the island to his friends in the United States.

Makin is a small coral atoll near the Equator. Its principal island is Butaritari, or Horse Island, as it became known to members of the expedition. Here the Japanese had installed their seaplane base, their fortifications, and their garrison. Off the eastern end of Butaritari lies Kuma Island, separated by a coral reef, which is dry at low tide, from the long ribbon of tropical vegetation that composed the Japanese base. The rest of the atoll was unimportant. Several small, uninhabited islands and a long reef surround a triangular-shaped lagoon.

The importance of Makin lay in the seaplane base which the enemy had early established there. From it the Japanese conducted long reconnaissance flights over American shipping lanes to the south and harassed the American bases in the Ellice Islands. Once captured, Makin would become an important airbase from which we could launch attacks on the Marshall Islands, the next scheduled stop on the route to Tokyo. The mission of the 27th Division was to step in, make a swift conquest of the atoll, and then withdraw while garrison forces moved in to construct the airfields and man them.

During the planning phase of the operation officers of the Division centered all of their attention on Butaritari Island. It is a long, crutch-shaped piece of land that stretches for thirteen miles from tip to tip. It is rarely more than five hundred yards wide at any point except the extreme western end, where the armrest of the crutch stretches out. One main highway served the entire island, running from Ukiangong Village in the southwest corner along the lagoon shore to the very eastern tip. Several small secondary roads branched out from this main artery to cross the island to the ocean shore and one trail paralleled the latter shore for a short distance. Over 1,700 natives lived in the three villages,

Ukiangong, Butaritari, and Tanimaiiki. The coconut palm flourished in every section. Tropical undergrowth, swamps, and small ponds covered the terrain beneath them.

Aerial photographs taken during the period of Japanese occupation, coupled with the information brought back by Carlson's raiders, indicated that the enemy had concentrated his defenses around three of the four piers that stretched out into the lagoon from the west center section of the island. From west to east, Private Narruhn identified these as On Chong's Wharf, King's Wharf, and Stone Pier, respectively. Study of the photos further revealed that the Japanese had constructed their seaplane ramps at the end of King's Wharf and had scattered most of their maintenance buildings and dumps between that structure and On Chong's Wharf.

Some four hundred yards west of On Chong's Wharf lay a large clearing, down the middle of which ran a zigzag trench. Photo-intelligence officers were able to mark several pillboxes and gun emplacements of this West Tank Barrier System.

About 250 yards east of Stone Pier were similar defensive positions. The whole area was so strong that it was named "The Citadel."

Intelligence estimates showed a total of approximately eight hundred enemy on the island. Three hundred were first-line troops of the Special Naval Landing Force; the remaining five hundred were civilian and military construction personnel and air force maintenance crews.

Makin is only a short distance from the Marshall Islands, the main forward bastion of Japanese air strength in the Central Pacific. Air attacks from the Marshalls would be determined and relatively strong. The main Japanese fleet was at Truk, 1,500 miles to the west, and there was a slight possibility that it might venture forth to meet the American thrust or to support the landing of reinforcements.

Final plans for the invasion were drawn after 28 September 1943. Gen. Ralph Smith designated the 165th Regimental Combat Team, reinforced, to make the assault. The landings were to be made over the Red (western) Beaches by the 1st and 3d Battalion Landing Teams, which were to be preceded by two Special Landing Groups in amtracs from the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry. If the Red Beach landings went well, they were to be followed, two hours later, by another over the Yellow (lagoon) Beaches, by the 2d Battalion Landing Team of the 165th. Like the first assault, this one would be spearheaded by a Special Landing Group of the 105th Infantry in amtracs. Light tanks of the 193d Tank Battalion would accompany the 1st and 3d Battalions ashore, while a whole company of mediums from the same unit would

move ashore on Yellow Beach. Shortly after the landings, the 3d Battalion would be withdrawn from the line and the 1st and 2d Battalions would advance upon the West Tank Barrier System from opposite directions, wiping out its defenders and breaching the Citadel from the supposedly more suitable Red Beaches.

In order to eliminate any interference with this double envelopment, Special Landing Group X was to move out along Red Beach 1 to the left extension of the island's crutch rest, known as Flink's Point. Special Landing Group Y, accompanied by L Company, 165th Infantry, was to perform the same mission on Ukiangong Point, the right extension of the island. The 105th Field Artillery Battalion was to set up near Ukiangong Village and begin normal support operations for all forces ashore.

As protection for the Yellow Beach landings, where parts of the 2d Battalion would be turning their backs on the Citadel, Company E, 165th Infantry, supported on their left flank by Special Landing Group Z, was to establish a line across the island, facing the East Tank Barrier System, near the base of King's Wharf. Before joining E Company, Special Landing Group Z was to clean out both On Chong's and King's Wharves.

For a week preceding the invasion, bombers of the Seventh Air Force from the Ellice Islands and other bases to the south bombed Makin. The climax to this steady pounding was to occur on the morning of the landings. Beginning at 0620, battleships, cruisers, and destroyers were to stand offshore and pour shells into the defenses.

On the afternoon of 10 November 1943, the convoy bearing 6,470 men of the 27th Division task force left Pearl Harbor for Makin Island. Five days earlier three LSTs, bearing the three Special Landing Groups, had preceded the main body, planning to arrive at Makin at the same time as the main force.

The transports bearing the Division included the *Leonard Wood*, the *Neville*, the *Calvert*, the *Pierce*, and the *Alcyone*. The *Leonard Wood* served as the command ship. Company A, 193d Tank Battalion, with its medium tanks, made the journey on a strange vessel that was able to flood its interior and then float out the LCMs on which tanks had been loaded prior to leaving Oahu. This vessel was the LSD 2, or *Belle Grove*.

The voyage to Makin consumed ten days, uneventful save for crossing the Equator on 15 November. For twenty-four hours life was pretty much an unmitigated hell for the landlubbers of the Division. By the next morning, however, all of them had emerged as crusty old shellbacks.

Late in the afternoon of 18 November the three LSTs of the advance group ran into trouble. A dive bomber sighted the American task force, dove on the slow-moving ships and then retired to report their presence. No damage was done to either side, but from that time on the invasion ceased to be a surprise. The next afternoon a force of eight Japanese fighters found American carriers and engaged in a dogfight with the Navy planes directly above the same three LSTs. Finally, just after dark on the 19th, two enemy dive bombers found the three ships and attacked. In the next ten minutes the Japanese planes strafed the vessels and one tried to make a suicide dive. Army men manned the guns on their amphibian tractors and helped blast one of the bombers. After two ineffectual strafing runs the other was driven off and disappeared into the night.

Daylight on the morning of 20 November found the entire convoy in place off Makin. At 0600 the *Leonard Wood* and *Calvert*, carrying the 1st and 3d Battalions, respectively, lowered their boats, and the troops of the 165th Infantry climbed over the side. By 0800 all men of the two assault battalions, together with their equipment, were safely boated. The great landing circles straightened out and headed for the beaches. Two destroyers moved into place on each flank of the long lines and took up a steady fire. Halfway to shore, two lines, of sixteen amtracs apiece, moved into position in the lead. These were the men of the Special Landing Groups from the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry.

The approach to the Red Beaches by the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 165th Infantry was anticlimactic. Guns of all calibers blazed away at the beaches from all angles. No enemy could be seen from the landing craft and in the din of the pre-landing barrage it seemed as if there were no fire coming from the beaches. One coxswain of a landing craft was killed in the 1st Battalion area, however, and farther to the right another was wounded. At 0829 the first amtrac touched bottom and lumbered up over the rocky, coral beach. There were no Japanese in sight. The clumsy vehicles stopped and the men of the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, dropped over the side and crouched behind boulders or sought shelter and cover in the tall tufted grass at the beach exits. Not a shot sounded from inland. First one man stood up, then another. The Landing Groups moved slowly to the flanks of the beaches as the first wave of LCVPs moved in to shore.

That first morning on Makin was unbelievable to the men of the two Red Beach battalions. The expected opposition failed to materialize. The carefully marked strongpoints were inspected one by one, and found to be dummies or misinterpreted equipment.

The absence of opposition was lucky. The Red Beaches at Makin were

the worst beaches encountered by a unit of the 27th Division for the remainder of the war. Landing waves that were scheduled to reach the beach at 0900 finally came ashore after 1100. Supplies that were supposed to land during the afternoon were still afloat at noon on D plus 1. When the tide went out during the afternoon of D-day, Red Beach 1 had to be abandoned completely and the landing of supplies was transferred to Red Beach 2.

Despite this difficulty the assault battalions kept closely to schedule in their advance from the beaches. While Colonel Conroy and the staffs of the two battalions were struggling with the problem of getting more men and supplies ashore, both battalions had reached the Beachhead Line, 1,600 yards inland, before 1000 and halted. The original plans called for the Red Beach forces to wait there until after the Yellow Beach landings had been accomplished. During the wait the line reorganized, the 1st Battalion extending to take over that portion held by the 3d Battalion, and the 3d went into reserve. Between 1000 and noon the Special Landing Groups finished their investigation of Ukiangong and Flink Points without opposition.

In the lull after the advance Colonel Conroy established his command post ashore. The two battalion CPs were already operating five hundred yards inland from the beaches. By the time the 1st Battalion advance resumed, shortly after 1100, communications lines were in and the Division had established an advance command post ashore.

Chapter 8: Landings on Yellow Beach

THE 2d Battalion was held in reserve to support the attack of the first two battalions on Red Beach. At 0850, however, reports from Lt. Col. Gerard W. Kelley and Lt. Col. Joseph T. Hart showed the landings of their battalions to be virtually unopposed and the *Neville* was ordered to move into position off Yellow Beach and to begin discharging the troops. Fifteen minutes later the 2d Battalion went over the side of the transport.

The first wave of landing craft crossed the line of departure outside the lagoon, heading for Yellow Beach, at 1012. The Citadel area of the island was by this time a shambles. Buildings were wrecked, dumps were afire, and the whole area was hidden under a dense cloud of smoke and dust. The naval guns of the supporting ships continued to pound the sector between the two barriers as the landing craft swept through the channel and into the lagoon. Two destroyers had moved inshore to rake On Chong's and King's Wharves, between which the two landing waves were to pass on their way to the beach. By 1015 these vessels had severed the base of On Chong's Wharf from the island.

The 2d Battalion advanced on Yellow Beach in the same storybook fashion as had the waves at Red Beach. Five hundred yards offshore, however, the Yellow Beach attackers were hit by a vicious cross fire from machine guns that indicated the honeymoon was over. The fire came from two abandoned, half-sunk freighters that lay in the lagoon, just off On Chong's Wharf, and from King's Wharf.

The first part of the story of the Yellow Beach landings belongs to the Special Landing Group. This detachment was made up of 11 officers and 122 enlisted men of the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, under command of Capt. William Ferns of M Company. Thirty-one of the men were from L Company, 12 from 3d Battalion Headquarters Company, and 79 from M Company, and their sixteen amtracs were operated by Headquarters Company, 193d Tank Battalion.

The vehicle on the extreme left flank was just opposite the end of King's Wharf when the machine gun there opened fire. With the first bullets the driver veered sharply to the left and headed straight for the seaplane ramps. Without any hesitation the big vehicle lumbered up the slope and onto the wharf, both .50-caliber machine guns blazing. As soon as it stopped in the middle of the big apron the infantrymen jumped out and within ten minutes the end of King's Wharf was clear. The men of this amtrac were chasing the enemy towards the beach in a grim game of tag that was carried on for the most part in the water underneath the wharf and among the girders that supported it.

The fire from the direction of the hulks was not so easily disposed of. The amtracs kept on a steady course for the beach, ignoring it as well as they could. Half of them headed for the base of On Chong's Wharf and half for the base of King's Wharf. One had trouble with its steering and landed west of On Chong's Wharf, nearly opposite the West Tank Barrier System. Its men dismounted and made their way rapidly down the beach to the east, joining the rest of the group safely. One other vehicle, for some unaccountable reason, kept plunging ahead. It did not bring up until it landed in a shell hole two-thirds of the way across the island. Lt. Charles Hough, of L Company, 105th Infantry, and his men were forced for two hours to seek cover under the vehicle by heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. Lieutenant Hough was wounded during this siege. Cpl. Steve Gabi was killed, and so was the driver of the amtrac.

The rest of the infantrymen in the amtracs dismounted as soon as the vehicles rolled to a stop on the dry sandy strip of beach, and were immediately subjected to heavy fire.

Captain Ferns, who was with the right half of his group near On Chong's Wharf, wasted no time in organizing his men into small teams to root the defenders out. The first task was to clean out the shelters and bunkers nearby. The men moved on. The area was alive with shelters and all of them were occupied by from one to five Japanese. Within thirty minutes ten of these shelters had been cleaned out with 20 Japanese dead and 35 captured, most of the latter being Korean laborers who came running out with their hands up before any grenades were thrown. In one of these groups a Japanese officer emerged from a dugout with a sword in hand. He appeared to want to surrender, but as he approached Lt. John Campbell of M Company, he lunged out, and before he was shot down he had severely wounded Lieutenant Campbell in the hand and foot.

By 1200 Captain Ferns and his detachment had completed their mission, having cleaned out On Chong's Wharf, the area around its base, and protected the landing of the main body of the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry. They had formed a defensive line stretching from the base of the wharf to the highway and then dug in to wait for F Company to tie in on their left flank, preparatory to moving on to the West Tank Barrier System.

Meanwhile the left half of Captain Ferns' detachment had been busy cleaning the last of the enemy out of the King's Wharf piling.

Lieutenant Colonel McDonough's battalion was much slower in getting ashore than were the Special Landing Groups. A miscalculation in

the depth of water over the shelving reef prevented the LCVPs from approaching any closer than 250 yards offshore, even at high tide. The infantrymen were forced to clamber over the sides of their boats and wade ashore in water that ranged from knee-deep to neck-deep, under heavy automatic fire from the right flank. All equipment was soaked before the troops emerged on the dry sand of Yellow Beach. Three men were killed and twelve wounded in E and F Companies as they waded ashore. Then, as the men struggled clear of the water, a Japanese gasoline dump near the water's edge exploded with a terrific roar.

In all his briefings Lt. Colonel McDonough had stressed the importance to his men of moving rapidly across the island. Both E and F Companies, therefore, hesitated only momentarily on the beaches. Reorganization was swift even though the dump explosion had shaken the whole line badly. Ten minutes after the smoke cleared away, both units were on their way toward the ocean shore.

The fire from King's Wharf had been easily ended, but attempts to get at that from the hulks were unsuccessful from the first. Ens. Andrew P. McConnell, Jr., a boat leader from the *Neville*, after unloading his troops at the shelving reef, made the first of many efforts. He changed all his machine guns to starboard and then headed his craft diagonally towards the derelicts, all guns firing. The Japanese immediately brought the full force of their fire to bear on his boat. Boatswain Joseph V. Kaspar was killed and the attack was beaten off.

McConnell's report to the Navy control boat brought an order to suspend, for the time being, all landing operations. This caught everything behind the fifth wave and cut off the flow of traffic to the beaches until carrier planes and naval guns could silence the two wrecked ships. For over two hours the small landing craft thus held up floated around outside the lagoon waiting for permission to move in to shore. Personnel aboard these boats included many badly needed aid men and Major Dennis D. Claire, 2d Battalion executive officer, who had been ordered to assume command of the operations to the east of Yellow Beach. Consequently most of the responsibility for establishing the block across the island fell to Capt. Bernard E. Ryan, commander of E Company.

The main objective of forces ashore during D-day had been to reduce the West Tank Barrier System. This, as already noted, was to be accomplished jointly by the 1st Battalion moving from the west and by elements of the 2d Battalion moving from the east. As soon as the 2d Battalion had safely made its landings on the Yellow Beaches, the 1st Battalion resumed its advance eastward from the Beachhead line, 1,600 yards inland from the Red Beaches. This was at approximately 1100.

The task of working on the barrier system from within the Citadel had fallen to F Company. The basic plan under which this unit worked was to push straight across the island with two platoons abreast and a third in reserve. Once the ocean shore was reached, the company would swing to the west, facing the barrier. This movement was not to be a pivoting movement, but a complete reorganization of the line which would see the reserve platoon inserted in the attack and the left-flank platoon during the cross-island push being relegated to a reserve status. When the reorganization had been completed, F Company would move out to meet the 1st Battalion. It was thought, correctly, that F Company, moving through the heart of the enemy's Citadel area, would meet the strongest resistance.

The action of Capt. Francis P. Leonard's men of F Company during the period from 1045 to 1200 on D-day was fast and vicious, despite the fact that the heavy preparatory bombardment had scattered the Japanese to deep, reinforced dugouts, or up into trees and behind bushes where they sniped and harassed the invaders. F Company was forced to deal with a series of individuals who seemed determined to do as much damage as they possibly could before being exterminated.

For two hundred yards as the men pushed inland the ground was relatively clear beneath the palm trees. No enemy could be seen, but many were in evidence. Bullets began raining down from the treetops and from the undergrowth ahead. The company slowed down and progress soon became a question of individual rushes. As the advance progressed the 1st Platoon on the right began to run into denser growth and eventually was held up altogether when it came upon a series of dugouts and shelters. The 2d Platoon kept on going. In its zone the ground was still quite clear and only the Japanese in the trees were causing trouble. This difference in the rate of advance soon widened a gap between the two sections of the company. For several minutes the two platoon leaders attempted to keep in touch with each other by radio, but the little sets would not work due to the soaking they had taken during the landings. Captain Leonard immediately moved his 3d Platoon into line to fill the gap. To replace this reserve Lt. Colonel McDonough ordered a platoon from G Company under 1st Sgt. Pasquale J. Fusco to take over the work of mopping up the hidden riflemen in the trees who had been by-passed by F Company in its move to the ocean shore. By the time Captain Leonard's two left platoons had reached the ocean shore at 1200, this reserve platoon had killed eight Japanese, four of them being sailors of the defense force and four construction workers who had taken up arms.

The burden of the advance to the south was borne by the 1st Platoon

of F Company. This unit encountered several dugouts, most of them occupied. In one of them the platoon killed fourteen enemy sailors. Two more were brought down out of the trees. One member of the platoon was killed and one wounded.

As soon as F Company reached the ocean shore Lt. Colonel McDonough and Captain Leonard began reorganizing for the turn to the west and the drive on the West Tank Barrier System. The change took thirty minutes. Instead of the original plan to use only two platoons of F Company, Lt. Colonel McDonough used all three. The 1st Platoon held down the extreme left flank, next to the ocean shore. Next to it on the right was the 2d Platoon, then the 3d. Inasmuch as this line reached only to the highway, the gap between the road and the lagoon beach was held by the right half of the Special Landing Group which had been dug in in that area since it cleaned out the base of On Chong's Wharf. Before moving off toward the tank-trap clearing, the battalion commander came over to the shore and relieved Captain Ferns' group. In its place he put the 3d Platoon of G Company, commanded by S/Sgt. Michael Thompson.

The reorganization following the drive to the ocean shore brought the tanks of Company A, 193d Tank Battalion, into action. They had landed on Yellow Beach in the second wave, but due to communications difficulties and a misunderstanding, none of the vehicles had accompanied the drive across the island. Shortly before 1230 the battalion commander, Lt. Col. Hugh L. Edmondson, had managed to get the drivers straightened out and five tanks lumbered across to the 1st Platoon on the ocean shore. The remainder of the company followed a few moments later, taking up positions along the whole line.

The attack which began at 1230 found the Japs strongly entrenched. Along the ocean shore, and for a distance of 150 yards inland, where the 1st and 2d Platoons were operating, the terrain was relatively free from obstruction. The tanks moved ahead of the infantry, pouring fire into anything that looked suspicious. For the first thirty minutes the Japanese fought back stubbornly with rifles and machine guns, but as the tanks moved in closer the superior fire power began to tell and the defenders were either killed or made their way down the system of interlocking trenches to the center of the position, leaving the flank wide open. At 1530, three hours after moving off in the attack, the two southernmost platoons reported to Lt. Colonel McDonough that they had reached the tank trap and were engaged in mopping it up.

The heart of the West Tank Barrier System lay in an enormous concrete pillbox in the center of the island. From this hub branched out a series of slit trenches, each ending in a dugout or shelter. Spaced at in-

ervals in this network were rifle pits and machine-gun positions. The core of the whole strongpoint lay almost wholly in front of the 3d Platoon of F Company, which received a blast of rifle and machine-gun fire that was duplicated nowhere else on the island. Within a few minutes eight men were killed and six wounded and the advance, which had gone no more than twenty yards, was pinned to the ground. This was the beginning of a struggle that lasted all afternoon.

The first move of the platoon, after the surprise fire hit it, was to find cover. Hiding behind trees and bushes, the men soon discovered that the center of the entire dugout system lay some twenty-five yards directly ahead. There was a large number of Japanese in it, expertly camouflaged, well armed, and protected by works that were impervious to infantry weapons. The bazookas and flame throwers were inoperative from the soaking undergone during the landing. The tanks were directed to fire point-blank into the dugouts, but communication with the crews failed. It was in this emergency that Capt. Wayne C. Sikes, operations officer of the 193d Tank Battalion, arrived on the scene. Captain Leonard gave him a brief résumé of the situation and then Captain Sikes went into action. Although the enemy rifle and machine-gun fire was still heavy he walked to the front of the tanks where the drivers could see him through the slits and then directed them while they maneuvered their vehicles into better position. He followed this by helping the gunners bring their weapons to bear on the dugouts and then retired while the big vehicles laid down a devastating barrage on the positions. But the armor-piercing 75mm shells had little effect on the shelters. At the slightest slackening of American fire, the Japanese started all over again.

With the situation rapidly approaching a stalemate, Lt. Colonel McDonough called on the engineers. One platoon of C Company, 102d Engineers, under Lt. Thomas C. Pallister, had just come ashore on Yellow Beach. They were immediately dispatched to F Company with several 25-pound TNT charges. Captain Leonard and Lieutenant Pallister made up a special engineer-infantry team of three infantrymen and four engineers, including Lieutenant Pallister himself. While the tanks pasted the general area, the three infantrymen covered the ports of the pillbox being attacked. Lieutenant Pallister crawled forward with his TNT charge and pulled the fuze, throwing it through one of the openings. The explosion sealed off the entrances and trapped the Japanese inside. Lieutenant Pallister's squad then moved in and placed another charge inside a port; this time the occupants, twelve enemy sailors, were killed. The tanks finished the job by running over the crumpled structure, completely crushing it. Methodically, pillbox by

pillbox, shelter by shelter, using the same careful procedure on each emplacement, F Company moved ahead. By 1700 Captain Leonard's men had destroyed between ten and fifteen positions, killed over fifty enemy soldiers, and cleaned out the entire area east of the West Tank Barrier System. They did not lose another man, killed or wounded.

Along the lagoon shore the 3d Platoon of G Company, which had relieved Captain Ferns' Special Landing Group, also ran into several active enemy positions. Sergeant Thompson and Lt. Edward J. Gallagher, of H Company, tried vainly to get tanks to take one position under fire. The tanks, misunderstanding the orders, moved on down the highway without firing a shot, and passed by the position. Sergeant Thompson then decided to make sure about the emplacement himself. He boldly walked over to the dugout and jumped in. A machine gun he found there was unmanned, but as he grabbed it to turn it away from the American lines he noticed three Japanese in the trench, a short distance away. They had evidently been stunned by the naval bombardment, but were just beginning to stir and move around. At this crucial moment another American soldier jumped into the trench behind Sergeant Thompson and shouted, "I've been looking all over this goddam island for one of those." The sergeant turned to see him pick up a Japanese officer's saber from the floor of the trench and disappear. "I never saw him again," Sergeant Thompson said later. He killed the three Japanese, walked down the trench for a short distance and found another enemy sailor under a palm frond. He shot this one also. By this time other G Company men had jumped into the trench and the line moved on forward. Working in teams, the platoon cleaned out several more shelters and emplacements, eventually meeting units of the 1st Battalion at the tank trap shortly after 1530.

While the 2d Battalion had been landing on Yellow Beach and the 1st Battalion had been held up at the beachhead line, there had been some patrol activity in the latter's area, but this had not evoked any more opposition from the enemy than the push inland from the beaches. When the battalion finally resumed the advance with C Company on the left and B Company on the right, it moved forward for five hundred yards more without running into any positions that were occupied. Twice C Company found abandoned machine guns. Now and then a lone Japanese would shoot from a tree or from behind a rock or bush, and as the skirmish line moved on inland these Japs become more troublesome. By 1200 their fire had become serious enough to impede the advance. Two of the enemy riflemen were shot out of trees by B

Company. One C Company man was killed and two from B Company were wounded. Within half an hour the toll of wounded had increased by eight.

The 1st Battalion had operated throughout the morning without tanks. There had been considerable trouble in getting the vehicles ashore over the poor beaches and then, after a platoon had managed to get ashore, the lead tank had run into a shell crater and become hopelessly bogged, forming a block around which the rest of the platoon could not get up to support the infantry. It was not until 1400 that the stalled tank was finally pulled free, and the hole filled in enough to let the tanks proceed east.

Shortly before 1500, B Company, on the right of the 1st Battalion line, came under fire from the guns of F Company on the east side of the barrier. Contact was established with the 2d Battalion and the fire coordinated.

Meanwhile, C Company, on the left of the 1st Battalion line, had found the enemy for the first time, and on very difficult terrain. For this reason, C Company had lagged a little behind the rest of the battalion line. At approximately 1415, just before B Company reached the tank trap, the 1st Platoon of C Company was working eastward along the lagoon shore, still almost 250 yards away from the juncture with the 2d Battalion.

To interdict the highway as it neared the barrier system, the enemy had a machine-gun position in a little depression in the midst of several *bobai* pits, coconut palms and pools. From trees around the emplacement, riflemen covered the approaches and protected the gunners. Lt. Daniel T. Nunnery ordered his platoon to take cover until he could locate the gun position. Just to the lagoon side of the road, Lieutenant Nunnery found a huge palm tree with what seemed to be a revetment built up around its base. He crawled up along the west side of this revetment and lay down in its cover. As he observed, Lt. Colonel Kelley, the battalion commander, joined him. While they were conferring, Colonel Conroy, the regimental commander, came up from the rear to see if he could speed the advance of C Company. When he came into the area, everything was quiet; a rifle shot now and then being the only evidence that any activity was taking place. Colonel Conroy was intercepted by Lt. Colonel Kelley, who finally prevailed upon his superior to accept the platoon leader's word for the fact that there were plenty of Japanese directly to the front. Colonel Conroy went back to bring up the light tanks. Lt. Colonel Kelley returned to the tree to resume his conversation with Lieutenant Nunnery, but when he lay down beside the platoon leader he found that a Japanese rifleman had found his mark.

Nunnery lay dead. Colonel Kelley's return seemed to stimulate the enemy. The whole area was full of fire and the machine gun traversed the area several times. Capt. Charles E. Coates, commander of C Company, had moved over to talk to Lt. Colonel Kelley and as he got behind the tree a man was hit nearby. Another rifleman who had sought cover a short distance ahead lay wounded in the shoulder. Chaplain Meany, on his way up to visit C Company, spied the man and before he could be stopped, rushed out into the clearing between palm trees and knelt down over the soldier. A Japanese rifle cracked and Father Meany slumped over, a bullet in his chest.

It was just as Father Meany was hit that Colonel Conroy moved back up the road and into the scene, leading four light tanks. Without any attempt to conceal himself, and despite warning signals, he walked out into the clearing near Father Meany and the wounded man. Picking out an infantryman here and there, he began waving his arms for them to get on forward, then turned to motion the tanks into position. In that moment another Japanese rifleman fired and Colonel Conroy dropped, a bullet through his head.

Lieutenant Colonel Kelley now took command of the regiment. He quickly held a conference with Captain Coates. The latest news from B Company and from the 2d Battalion indicated that this was an isolated pocket and that it could be by-passed. He called the regimental CP and ordered up Lt. Warren T. Lindquist with the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon. When they arrived Captain Coates was instructed to sideslip C Company to the right around the pocket and move on to the Tank Barrier System while the I&R Platoon dealt with the machine guns and riflemen. As a covering force for Lieutenant Lindquist, Captain Coates was to leave his 1st Platoon.

Quieting the "Pocket" involved the rest of the afternoon. Lieutenant Lindquist attempted to work his men forward by crawling, while the C Company platoon, now under the command of Staff Sgt. Emmanuel F. DeFabees, covered the advance by firing into the trees. In an hour, the I&R Platoon had worked patrols to the very edge of the position and had begun to pepper it with grenades. When they rose to charge it with bayonets, however, another, and hitherto silent, machine gun opened fire and cut down the assaulting force. It was now nearly dark and the new gun was in an unknown position. For half an hour both Lieutenant Lindquist and Sergeant DeFabees worked patrols around the position in an effort to locate the second gun, but by dark had not succeeded in finding it. In the gathering darkness, the men drew back, bringing out Father Meany and the other wounded man with them, and dug in for the night at a point where they could cover the whole area

with fire. Their work had been further complicated by fire from an American machine gun from the H Company platoon which was working on the tank trap. Just before the withdrawal, bullets from this gun had begun to carry over into the area where the patrol was working.

While the small task force had been engaged in trying to clean up the Pocket, Captain Coates had moved the remainder of his company to the right and around the trouble zone. Moving through a dense tangle of undergrowth the men had finally reached the tank trap at approximately 1700, almost at the same time as the last of F Company. Together the two companies formed a skirmish line and swept out the barrier system as far as the lagoon before nightfall. Both the 1st and 2d Battalions dug in for the night on each side of the ditch. Save for stragglers and the pocket in front of Lieutenant Lindquist, there were no enemy between the E Company line on the east and the Red Beaches.

Although the main effort on D-day had been to reduce the West Tank Barrier System, the 165th Infantry ran into stubborn resistance on one other front. It will be remembered that E Company, 165th Infantry, had landed on Yellow Beach under orders to build a defensive line facing the East Tank Barrier System in order to prevent an attack upon the rear of elements swinging to the west on the main objective. To assist E Company, the left half of the Special Landing Group under Captain Ferns was ordered to hold down the lagoon flank of the line. It was E Company, more than any other part of the 2d Battalion, that suffered from the Navy's order suspending landings on Yellow Beach until the hulks were cleared out. Not only did they lose the services of Major Claire, but until 1500, when the order was relaxed, many E Company men and some of the supporting elements, particularly aid men, did not get ashore.

By nightfall E Company was expected to have established its line along a cross-island road that ran out from the base of King's Wharf. This represented an advance of approximately five hundred yards from the landing point on Yellow Beach, and was to follow a rapid drive across the island, to be accomplished with two platoons, the 1st and 2d. When the ocean shore was reached the line was to be reorganized facing east. The 3d Platoon was to hold down the left flank of the company line after this reorganization with the 2d Platoon on the right. While the two leading platoons were pushing across the island, the 3d Platoon was to pivot into position so that it would be ready to move to the east with a minimum of time for reorganization.

From the moment that E Company landed it became apparent that opposition in its zone was going to be strong. When E Company struck

out for the ocean shore it found that many of the Japanese who had abandoned the western positions had drifted to the east and that many of the positions, particularly on the extreme left flank of the landing area, were still manned. Right off the beach, directly in front of the 1st Platoon, Captain Ryan's men disposed of a concrete pillbox by direct infantry assault with an assist from a medium tank. Moving from tree to tree and bush to bush, in the same manner as F Company, the two right-flank platoons reached the ocean beaches with three men having been killed and four wounded.

The 3d Platoon of E Company, however, ran into trouble as soon as it set foot on dry land. Just to the left of the landing beach, approximately even with the sand spit which jutted out into the lagoon west of King's Wharf, the Japanese had constructed a formidable position. Manned by almost fifty men, it had in no way been damaged and was extremely active as the men waded ashore. Near the road on the lagoon shore, the Japanese had dug a revetment and placed one of their two light tanks in it. About ten yards east of this immobilized vehicle lay a concealed machine gun which had been swung to cover the road as it approached the East Tank Barrier System from Yellow Beach. Adjoining the dugout in which the machine gun was placed was a large *bobai* pit, just to the south, or toward the ocean. The earth excavated from the dugout and pit had been piled in what appeared to be a long circular mound about eight feet high and about thirty-five yards long, extending toward the center of the island. Although the troops did not know it at the time, this mound housed a tunnel which connected the machine-gun position with a large concrete pillbox and machine-gun position at the opposite end.

As the 3d Platoon of E Company climbed the slope from the water after wading ashore, the machine gun on the lagoon end of the tunnel opened fire. It enfiladed the beach perfectly and the platoon was immediately pinned down. Captain Ryan ordered a patrol to circle to the right, move inland, and get atop the mound, then move down it and drop grenades on the gunners from above. The leading scout of the patrol and two riflemen crawled out toward the mound under heavy rifle fire and eventually managed to get on top of it. There they found a trench about fifteen feet long and two feet deep. They crawled in for protection from the rifle fire. The eastern side of the mound, which was not visible to them, contained a series of openings large enough for a man to crawl through. As the E Company riflemen crouched in their improvised foxhole, trying to get their bearings, a group of about ten Japanese slipped through the openings from the tunnel and crept up the eastern side of the mound. Then, so suddenly that the Americans cover-

ing the patrol could do nothing to prevent it, they leaped over the crest of the hill and into the trench with bayonets fixed. In the ensuing meleé one of the Americans was killed and another seriously wounded. After a moment's delayed reaction, most of the 3d Platoon took the Japanese party under fire and killed all of them. The E Company fire, however, gave away most of the American positions and the enemy machine guns at both ends of the tunnel traversed the whole line, pinning Captain Ryan's men to the ground again. While this was going on, a second large group of enemy emerged from the holes at the rear of the mound and again attacked the remaining two men in the ditch. The wounded man was killed and the other was wounded. American fire from the beach concentrated on the machine gun nearest the lagoon and forced it to stop firing, thereby releasing some of the 3d Platoon who took up fire on the Japanese party atop the mound. Two of the enemy were killed and the rest forced to withdraw before they could kill the last man atop the mound. Captain Ryan now tried to envelop the machine gun by working a patrol along the lagoon shore, but each time the members of this party attempted to cut inland they met fire from one or more concealed supporting positions. A grenade launcher was brought up but the grenades merely bounced off the logs in front of the position without doing any harm. In spite of the fact that the position was dangerously near Yellow Beach, and although the men from the Special Landing Group were near King's Wharf, Captain Ryan now decided to use artillery to attempt to knock out some of the supporting positions to the east of the main trouble spot. Notifying the men of the 105th Infantry of his intentions he waited until they had drawn back to the sand spit area west of the Wharf, then blanketed the whole area east of the position with an intermittent barrage. While this was falling he instructed Sgt. Hoyl Merserau to take a six-man patrol and attempt to circle the position.

By using a covered route that carried him well inland, Sergeant Merserau was able to crawl around the southern flank of the line and eventually get to the east of the mound. Almost an hour after he started he placed his men in position in the cover of another little bank of earth approximately forty yards beyond the Japanese. From here the patrol could cover the openings of the tunnel. Every time a Jap stuck his head out, he drew fire. With the openings interdicted, flamethrowers were now worked up on the mound from the west. When they were tried, however, it was found that the soaking had made them useless.

Captain Ryan now turned to an engineer squad with demolitions. These men, with riflemen covering them, finally managed to seal both ends of the tunnel with TNT charges. Captain Ryan now brought for-

ward a tank, and used the 37mm gun of this vehicle to fire into the passageway itself. Almost immediately the trapped Japanese began rushing for the tunnel exits in the reverse side of the mound. Sergeant Merserau and his men cut them down as fast as they came out. Over thirty enemy sailors were killed in this way. A few remained inside the position and Captain Ryan left one squad with a tank to finish mopping up the last resistance. Company E had lost eight men in reducing the emplacement, including the three who were caught atop the mound.

The "Battle of the Bunker" had taken four hours and now the 3d Platoon of E Company was free to move forward with the 2d Platoon, which had meanwhile taken up its position on the ocean flank of the line without too much difficulty. A hundred and fifty yards beyond the bunker they came upon the main Japanese headquarters on the island. It included a concrete dugout which served as a CP and had a reinforced bomb shelter connected to it by a tunnel. It was equipped with electric lights, a telephone switchboard, and a radio. The enemy had left it unmanned. Testimony of prisoners later indicated that the island commander had been killed during the preliminary bombardment of the morning.

The E Company platoon searched the area thoroughly and then moved on. They were still far short of the King's Wharf road, the objective for the day. At 1720, shortly after they had pushed beyond the headquarters area, the company received orders to dig in for the night. Captain Ryan pulled back to the headquarters area to establish his perimeter.

The failure of E Company to reach the line marked out in the original plan made it necessary to pull back the Special Landing Group to tie in on the left flank of the cross-island line. As already recounted, half of the group had veered to the left during the landings with the mission of cleaning out King's Wharf, and the area surrounding its base. This half had encountered no resistance as it worked through the wreckage of emplacements, several large barracks, two radio buildings, an administrative headquarters, several small warehouses, and the main telephone exchange for the island. The artillery concentration in front of E Company made them withdraw to the sand spit area west of the wharf. There they remained the rest of the afternoon, while waiting for the cross-island line to come even with them. When this line stopped short, Captain Ferns withdrew approximately fifty yards and the group dug in for the night as the lagoon extension of the defensive position.

Although the E Company efforts had not resulted in capture of the King's Wharf line, they had reduced a strong Japanese position just off Yellow Beach, and Captain Ryan's use of artillery had definitely pre-

vented any reinforcement of the enemy at the West Tank Barrier System. To prevent such reinforcement during the night and to bolster Captain Ryan's position against a counterattack, Lt. Colonel McDonough sent forward a platoon of G Company just before dark. The tanks, however, withdrew to the center of Yellow Beach where they formed a perimeter with the amtrac detachment.

Elsewhere on Butaritari the action on D-day had gone according to plan. Opposition had been exceedingly light due to the complete disorganization and demoralization of the enemy.

In view of the apparent disintegration of the Japanese force General Smith had surmised that those enemy who were left might try to retreat to the eastern tip of the island, or even across to Kuma Island. Accordingly, even before the end of the fighting on 20 November he had begun to prepare a move to block this flight. He ordered Lt. Colonel Hart to move his 3d Battalion, then in reserve, via the Yellow Beaches and landing craft to Kuma Island. As the enemy fell back, Lt. Colonel Hart's command was to intercept them. This plan was dropped before it was put into execution, however, on orders from Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, the Corps commander. The cancellation was brought about by the critical situation at Tarawa where the 2d Marine Division was engaged. It was Gen. Holland Smith's intention to use the 3d Battalion there and if it were committed at Kuma Island it might interfere with the prompt movement to the critical area.

The end of D-day had seen the virtual elimination of the West Tank Barrier System as a Japanese stronghold. Only a small pocket of undetermined size remained active west of Yellow Beach, and this was surrounded by C Company. The remainder of the 1st Battalion was perched along the edge of the West Tank Barrier System, as was F Company of the 2d Battalion, reinforced by one platoon of G Company. The 3d Battalion was bivouacked near Rita Lake, one of the small ponds in the western part of the island, while the 105th Field Artillery Battalion was dug in near Ukiangong Village, ready to fire on call during the hours of darkness. The elements of the 105th Infantry that had composed the Special Landing Groups on Red Beach had set up for the night near the points of landing there. E Company, facing the main enemy positions left on the island, spent the night approximately 450 yards short of King's Wharf. It was expected that this unit would bear the burden of the attack on D-day plus 1.

Even though the picture was good as night fell, the supply situation promised to give some trouble the next day. Conditions had grown progressively worse on the Red Beaches. Red Beach 1 had been unusable since shortly after noon and at 1700 the receding tide had left

Red Beach 2 high and dry. All unloading ceased and all landing craft moved around to the lagoon for the night. Gasoline levels on vehicles were uniformly low, particularly on the tanks. Lt. Colonel Edmondson of the tank battalion warned Gen. Ralph Smith that unless fuel was forthcoming early in the morning, the big vehicles might not be able to operate. Several of the Division's trucks had been unable to get ashore, leaving the artillery short of ammunition. Most of that which had been landed still remained stacked on the beaches for lack of transportation to haul it away. Rations were missed for the first time. Most of the troops had been too excited to eat during the day, but they began to get hungry as they settled down for the night. Resupply had not been landed in any quantity and the small amount that did come ashore was still on the beaches along with the ammunition.

Yellow Beach, although it was smoother and could have accommodated a fairly heavy volume of traffic, was still largely unusable because of fire from the hidden Japanese machine guns supposedly in the hulks.

American casualties had been relatively light. Twenty-five men had been killed and sixty-two wounded, but the men who faced their first night ashore in hostile territory were still inexperienced. Despite the capture of all objectives, many Japanese lurked in destroyed shelters and in the trees. The combination made the first night on Makin a nightmarish one. As soon as darkness descended, the by-passed Japanese emerged to try and escape through American lines, to harass the positions of the invaders, or to reorganize. Whatever their purpose, they soon found that the Americans were not entirely green. By midnight they were using every trick they had ever discovered to find the perimeter lines and inflict casualties. One Japanese soldier moved in close to the American lines and whispered, "Psst! Hey, Sarge!" Another in a trench kept yelling "Medic, Medic! Send a medic out here!" The sergeant didn't answer, nor did the medic venture forth. However, the Japs did draw fire, which invariably gave away a position and brought down a hail of return fire or a shower of grenades. The enemy dropped firecrackers all night long, also to attract fire. At dawn one Japanese ran the whole length of Yellow Beach yelling at the top of his voice, "Reveille, fellows! Get up! Reveille." The weary infantrymen shot him instead.

Much of the Japanese activity during the night was organized, more so as the hours progressed. Toward morning patrols began to wander around the American-held area. Around A, B, C and E Companies, 38 patrolling Japs were killed.

East of E Company the Japanese were more successful. Leaders

seemed to have been able to gather the remnants of the defending force after American activity ceased for the day. Eighteen enemy waded out to the wrecked seaplane which had been inspected by the Special Landing Group during the landings and there set up a machine-gun position which swept the whole area of advance for the next morning. Several squads reoccupied King's Wharf, setting up two or three machine guns there. Still another old position was reoccupied in one of the buildings at the base of the wharf. On the ocean side of the island, crews for two 3-inch dual-purpose guns and one twin-barreled 13mm antiaircraft gun were rounded up and put into place. Dugouts and trench networks were manned. Two enemy groups also managed to move through the network of American defensive positions and set up machine guns just off the beach of the lagoon west of the West Tank Barrier System. Fire from these guns pinned down most of C Company and all of F Company's right flank as soon as it became light. Elsewhere in the area east of the American-held territory riflemen were placed in strategic positions from which they could harass the next morning's advance.

Chapter 9: Makin Taken

WITH THESE hasty preparations on the part of the Japanese, the first task of the 27th Division on the morning of the second day on Makin was to clean up the various pockets revealed by the night's activities. Captain Coates of C Company ordered the patrol under the command of Staff Sergeant DeFabees to probe the pocket and to determine whether the Japanese were still manning it in the strength of the previous afternoon. After two unsuccessful attempts to attack the emplacement from the west and the lagoon shore, Sergeant DeFabees led his men around to the tank trap side and from there reduced the position with no trouble at all. This was at 0840.

By mid-forenoon the intermittent sniping from the West Barrier System had become so serious that Lt. Colonel McDonough ordered F Company to comb the tank trap area from the ocean shore to the lagoon. Captain Leonard placed three tanks at the north end of the ditch to place enfilade fire up the trench as the skirmish line chased the enemy into the open. These vehicles were under the direction of Lieutenant Gallagher of H Company. As they stood on the highway a Navy dive bomber running a mission for the assault troops farther east opened its bomb-bay door too soon and a fragmentation bomb dropped in the midst of the little tank team. Lieutenant Gallagher, Pfc. John E. Costello, and Cpl. Elmer F. Conway were all killed and two others were wounded. Everyone nearby was badly shaken up. The Japanese were evidently killed or badly stunned. They gave no further trouble. Fire from the hulks still continued to enfilade the route to Yellow Beach. An hour's bombardment from four medium tanks was halted at 1030 because overs were menacing ships standing off the lagoon entrance. Eventually, at 1400, Major James H. Mahoney, commanding the 1st Battalion, instructed Lt. Everett W. McGinley of C Company to take a sixteen-man patrol and board the vessels to end the fire once and for all. Just before dark Lieutenant McGinley returned to shore to report that there were no Japanese aboard the freighters, and that ended the fire that had covered the Yellow Beach approaches for two days.

The supply situation had been given much attention on the morning of D plus 1. An attack to the east scheduled for 0700 was to have the help of all the tanks on the island, but it was delayed until well after 1000 because the vehicles were short of fuel.

While waiting for the attack the 105th Field Artillery blanketed the area to the east of the line with concentrations.

Major Jacob H. Herzog, Division assistant G-2, had landed at dawn

on Kuma Island with a small reconnaissance party from the Special Landing Group. They found nothing. The Special Landing Group under Captain Ferns still held down the extreme left flank of the advancing line, with the 3d Platoon of G Company between it and E Company. Company E, under Captain Ryan, continued to carry the brunt of the attack on the second morning. One platoon of G Company and a platoon of Marines from the V Amphibious Corps' Reconnaissance Battalion took up a position behind E Company.

The opposition on the second day at Butaritari came from three principal positions. The first of these was the general area around the base of King's Wharf. Here the most aggravating was the machine gun in the wreck of the seaplane. This gun could easily rake the long stretch of beach and interdict the road. Half an hour after four medium tanks dispatched by Captain Ferns had fired at point-blank range into the fuselage, it exploded. Eighteen Japanese bodies were found in the wreckage.

With this strongpoint demolished the Special Landing Group again moved into the wharf area, mopping up.

The second major point of resistance was a reoccupied position along the ocean shore containing three 3-inch dual-purpose guns and a twin-barreled 13mm antiaircraft machine gun. For several hours, beginning at dawn, shells and bullets from the Japanese blasted the American line, pinning the infantrymen in their foxholes. The moment artillery fire lifted, the positions resumed activity. Patrols worked forward and around the flanks of the defenders, and they pulled out, leaving the guns intact.

The enemy had also reorganized another of the interlocking positions in the center of the island. Company E used the same tank-infantry-engineer tactics employed by the Special Landing Group on its left. The men had no sooner reduced the position and emerged from the woods when they encountered a second position exactly like the first which straddled the cross-island road running out from King's Wharf.

By 1400 the advancing line had worked clear of all the prepared positions which had been hastily organized during the night. King's Wharf was now entirely within the American lines and virtually all of the main Japanese positions and installations had been captured. Headquarters, barracks, fuel dumps, ration dumps, maintenance shops, that might still be encountered in the East Tank Barrier System, and the seaplane ramps, hospitals, all of the heavy weapons, except those the powerful short-wave radio transmitter were denied to the enemy.

Another even clearer indication that the conquest of Makin was

nearly complete came midway in the afternoon. As the Special Landing Group passed through the headquarters of the island air command, they came upon a little circle of six Japanese officers in a foxhole. As the Americans approached, the enemy proceeded methodically to shoot each other in turn, the last one committing suicide. Although his defenses had been largely ineffective the enemy had fought tenaciously until this time. Now his numbers seemed to melt away and the Americans pushed forward almost unhindered. At 1730 the advance stopped and the men begin to dig in for the night. Twenty-six had been wounded during the day and eighteen killed. The line had reached a point a thousand yards east of Yellow Beach, two hundred yards short of Stone Pier. The East Tank Barrier System was still 450 yards away. It was expected that this fortification would be reached early the next day and that its reduction would end the Battle for Makin. Aircraft flying over the island, both on D-day and on 21 November, had seen no enemy withdrawals beyond that point, and photographs and information obtained from captured natives indicated that no strong positions had been constructed in the eastern tongue of the island.

Yellow Beach was now open for supply traffic. Furthermore, bulldozers had been able to clear away many of the obstacles which had hampered operations at Red Beach 2. The third day on Butaritari gave promise of seeing much of the precarious supply situation relieved.

Preparations for the second night reflected the lessons learned on the first night ashore. With the main strength facing the eastern line, Lt. Colonel Kelley, at 1630, ordered Capt. Lawrence J. O'Brien to move his A Company into the middle of the line, between E Company and the G Company platoon on its left. The Special Landing Group remained for the night on the flank nearest the lagoon. Captain Berger established positions along the West Tank Barrier System to complete the mopping up of that area. The remainder of the 1st Battalion, C and D Companies, moved into a perimeter on Yellow Beach with F and H Companies of the 2d Battalion. The 105th Field Artillery Battalion remained at Ukiangong while the 3d Battalion was at Rita Lake.

During the day the men had analyzed their experiences of their first night in combat and, in most companies, the order had gone out to withhold rifle fire except in case of a major counterattack. Infiltration attempts on the pattern of the previous night would be met by grenades. B Company, for example, strung a low trip wire around its positions and some thirty yards out from them. Empty tin cans were tied to it. When Japanese hit the wire they sounded an alarm that brought down a shower of grenades. One of a party of three infiltrators was killed

in this manner, and the rest driven toward the ocean shore where they ran into another wire and were killed. Four other Japanese were also killed by B Company in the same way during the night.

The major enemy activity during the second night occurred in front of A Company, 165th Infantry, and the M Company portion of the Special Landing Group.

Plans for the third day at Makin called for the substitution of the fresh 3d Battalion on the eastward advancing line. The situation at Tarawa had cleared enough during the day to permit the release of the reserve to Gen. Ralph Smith. Lt. Colonel Hart was to march his men from the reserve area, commencing at 0600. The attack was to begin two hours later with the main objective for the day the reduction of the East Tank Barrier System. Major Herzog, who had made the reconnaissance of Kuma Island on the previous day, was to lead the combined Special Landing Groups, under Major Bradt, back to the eastern island and there set up a block for Japanese who might try to escape from Butaritari by way of Kuma. General Smith's plan also called for a blocking force at the narrowest point on Butaritari, the Bight. Lt. Colonel Kelley, therefore, ordered Captain O'Brien, as soon as he had been relieved by the 3d Battalion companies, to reorganize, replenish his supplies, and execute a shore-to-shore movement in LVTs. Company A moved out from the lagoon shore shortly before 1100 and by noon had arrived at the Bight and was in process of establishing this cross-island line.

The 3d Battalion had moved out from Rita Lake for the front line promptly at 0600. K Company led the column into position, swinging toward the ocean shore at King's Wharf, while I Company took up the left of the line. Under cover of artillery fire, the relief of units facing the enemy was accomplished by 0700. The attack was delayed until 0820, at which time tanks and infantry moved out across the cleared area toward Stone Pier. The first hour passed without incident. In the face of light and uncoordinated rifle fire the assault approached the cross-island road that ran out from Stone Pier. Only in front of K Company did the Japanese offer anything more than token resistance. Here the infantry quickly overran several riflemen, one or two machine guns, and two 70mm howitzer positions.

By 1100, as Captain O'Brien and A Company embarked for the Bight, the East Tank Barrier System was reached. It had already been reduced before the first soldier entered the network of defensive positions. Two hours and a half later, at 1300, Captain O'Brien reported that his men had killed or captured forty-five Japanese and that according to native

reports, more than twice that many had already retreated beyond the Bight before he ever got there. These Japanese had simply pulled out of the East Tank Barrier System, abandoning the guns and dugouts, the machine guns and pillboxes that made it formidable. With Lt. Colonel Hart pushing his company commanders, the 3d Battalion pushed on to the east. At 1330, after a rapid march in the stifling tropical heat the line reached the Bight and passed through Captain O'Brien's outposts. There the battalion commander authorized a 45-minute rest for his weary, hot infantrymen. When the push resumed at 1415, both companies ran into sizable groups of natives that held up progress. Soldiers were forced to stop and round up the islanders. Three hundred were sent to the rear before the advance was resumed. At 1645, the 3d Battalion had reached a point 2,100 yards beyond the Bight and there received orders from the Division Commander to halt for the day. There were still no Japanese in opposition and reports indicated only a few stragglers to the front.

When Americans, all over the island, began to dig in for the night, it was with the feeling that the battle was already over. The 1st and 2d Battalions had already received orders to begin reembarkation the next day. Since early morning no one had been killed or wounded; the total for the day on the entire island was 6 dead and 17 wounded.

The night of 22 November 1943 will always be known as "Sake Night" to members of the 27th Division. It was the first experience with the fanatical side of the Japanese nature. The enemy, at the close of the day, was trapped between two forces. Major Bradt was waiting for him on Kuma Island while Lt. Colonel Hart had pushed him back into the narrow eastern end of Butaritari. No one knew just how large his numbers ran, but the lack of opposition during the day and the information gathered from the natives indicated that his force was small, scattered, leaderless, and possessed of only a few weapons.

The perimeter drawn up for the night was well laid out, but the men were tired. This weariness, together with the optimism engendered by the approaching end of the battle contributed to a certain casualness, almost carelessness, in digging in for the night. Company I covered a frontage of almost three hundred yards. Its left flank was anchored on the lagoon shore and its right flank was hinged on a little pond, almost in the center of the island. The main island highway ran through the line, about one-third of the way from the lagoon beach.

Company K had arranged a perimeter defense which extended from the pond to the ocean shore.

Company L had dug in along a sweeping line that extended from la-

goon to ocean shore. One end of it was hooked to I Company's beach positions on the north while the other tied in with K Company on the south. Unlike the other two companies, L Company faced west.

Just to the east of this battalion position there lay a dense tropical undergrowth. Overhead, palm trees sheltered the whole area. Had the 3d Battalion advanced another hundred yards it would have come to a large clearing and probably would have overrun the Japanese rallying point. As night fell and the 3d Battalion dug in, the Japanese prepared for their last effort. Such food as was left was passed out. Ammunition was divided. Several containers of *sake* were divided. Scouts, hiding in the trees and undergrowth, watched American preparations for the night. As darkness settled over the island, Lt. Colonel Hart's men began to hear snatches of song and shouting, as though a gigantic party was under way in the jungle ahead.

Night fell shortly before 1900. Just as the light failed completely, I Company heard the startling sound of babies crying and women's voices to the front. Out of the shadows, down the road from the east, came a group of twenty or thirty natives, carrying their belongings. Sentries held their fire and the islanders were herded into the perimeter and made to lie down on the ground. Ten minutes later, a second group of figures came walking down the highway. They were jabbering and, here and there, a wail went up, as if a baby were crying. The ruse fooled no one and the infantrymen challenged. The Japanese ducked toward the brush that ran along the road on the lagoon side, but they were not quick enough. A machine gun belonging to the engineer detachment opened fire and the Japanese went down. Ten bodies were counted there the next morning. This was the opening move of Sake Night.

At first all of the action was concentrated along the road where the first enemy party had been killed. The point at which the highway intersected the I Company perimeter seemed to be the focal point. There two antitank guns commanded the approaches. On the ocean side of the road the gun was commanded by Cpl. Louis Lula. Altogether nine men occupied the three foxholes necessary for the gun crew and supporting machine gunners. Across the road the same arrangement prevailed under the command of Sgt. Edward Pasdertz.

The first party of ten Japanese had no sooner been killed by the engineer machine gun than the antitank gunners became aware of a vast amount of activity to their front. The enemy was moving back and forth in the bushes and jumping across the road, yelling such phrases as "Heil Hitler!" and "Blood for the Emperor!" Suddenly three Japanese loomed out of the darkness, heading straight down the road. They be-

came entangled in a close grenade and hand-to-hand fight with George Graham, one of the crew of the left gun.

Throughout this opening action, Corporal Lula and his men on the right side of the road had remained quiet. None of the enemy seemed to notice his gun. When the last grenade exploded, the light revealed a column of Japanese marching toward the position. Corporal Lula, who had his eyes glued on the terrain to the front, saw them plainly. There were approximately twenty of them, in double file, in perfect step, and at right shoulder arms. Lula wasted no time. He pulled out a grenade and threw it, then scrambled for the antitank gun. The canister tore through the enemy. The next morning seventeen bodies were found where the blast had caught them. Lula continued to load and fire the gun all by himself during the next few minutes. A moment later Sergeant Pasdertz, across the road, managed to get his gun into action in support.

This sustained fire ended, for the rest of the night, the concerted charges on the part of the enemy, but it did not end the activity around the two positions. The Japanese rifle fire pinned most of both Pasdertz's and Lula's crews to their positions. Twice during the night small enemy groups probed for openings in the American line between the road and the lagoon shore. Both times they were killed by the engineer machine gunners, aided by Private Slatner and his BAR.

By daylight both antitank guns were almost out of ammunition and the crews were reduced to defending themselves with grenades. In Corporal Lula's squad, one Springfield rifle and two carbines were left in action. The night before, the nine men had been armed with two Springfield rifles, one BAR, and six carbines. For the antitank gun only two rounds of armor-piercing ammunition were left. Virtually the same situation existed across the road in Sergeant Pasdertz's crew.

The two antitank positions along the highway had been the first to be hit in the night's action. As the night wore on the whole 3d Battalion perimeter became involved in a wild nightmare.

The enemy managed to infiltrate through the perimeter. Twenty more bodies were counted inside the night position before the battalion moved off next morning.

All along the front the Japanese continued alternately to shout and sing and shoot. One of them was still standing beside a tree at dawn, quite drunk. First he would sing a song, then fire a few rounds, then take a drink out of his canteen. Sgt. Fred T. Proctor finally took a rifle and ended the party.

Action on the right flank did not begin until almost four hours after darkness. It began with the usual rush against the key positions.

The Japanese made several attempts to force their way through the K Company defenses before morning, but on the right flank they were all repulsed before they got too close. In the center of the line, however, almost at the juncture of I and K Companies, they were more successful. One of the M Company machine guns had been set up just to the north of the little pond. The crew had dug in well before sunset and after preparing their position had gone off to the front in search of souvenirs. All the men passed within a few yards of a fully manned Japanese machine-gun position which guarded the main rallying point. None of the Americans discovered it. After dark, when the activity reached its height, the enemy gun was discovered to bear directly on the M Company position. A grim fight took place all night with this machine-gun crew, and not until morning, with the help of three light tanks, were the enemy routed.

By dawn all surviving Japanese had melted away into the jungle to the east. The rifle platoon which now pushed out ahead of the M Company gun found twenty bodies in the area and there were evidences of at least fifteen or twenty more having been wounded and dragged away.

Sake Night cost the 3d Battalion three dead and twenty-five wounded against 103 counted Japanese dead in front of the perimeter position. Another one hundred enemy were found later in various parts of the eastern end of the island. Most of these latter bodies were those of wounded who had dragged themselves off into the jungle or who had been dragged there by their comrades to die, after the night's action.

The only other part of the 27th Division force which saw action on this night was the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, on Kuma Island. Shortly before midnight the section of the perimeter facing the reef that ran from Butaritari was alerted by loud talking. A few minutes later ten Japanese tried to push across to Kuma, using natives as a screen. American machine guns opened fire and killed all ten, as well as the natives who accompanied them.

The whole action in front of Lt. Colonel Hart's battalion had been fought without notification having been sent to Division headquarters. Telephone lines had gone out early in the evening and radios were ineffective. Orders, issued the night before, were not changed and the division commander expected that the battalion would push on to the end of the island as soon as it was light enough to move. Lt. Colonel Hart felt that the engagement of the night had been the last resistance the Japanese would offer and that it stemmed from Tanimaiki village. The advance found nothing in the village, but in the dense growth,

small Japanese parties were flushed twice during the morning. One of these skirmishes cost L Company three men killed and two wounded, and one man was wounded in the later skirmish.

The last Japanese killed during the battle for Makin were disposed of shortly after noon at the very tip of the island. Company K there came upon two air-raid shelters. Capt. John J. Walsh, the company commander, called up two light tanks and fire from their 37mm guns killed two enemy in the first one. The captain then moved on to the other and threw in a grenade. After the explosion, Lt. Lloyd Welsh and Sgt. Robert L. McCoy removed the top logs and discovered nine enemy inside. They were all disposed of by rifle fire. At almost the same time a K Company patrol under Sgt. Theodore Kvilhaugh killed three enemy hiding in a dugout near Tanimaiki village.

At 1430 Lt. Colonel Hart turned his battalion around and started back down the island. The battle for Makin was over. Already Air Forces engineers had reached the Bight and were beginning to clear the island for the airfield. The 2d Battalion under Lt. Colonel McDonough had started reembarkation over Red Beach 2.

Early on the morning of 24 November the carrier *Liscombe Bay* was torpedoed by an enemy submarine in plain view of the entire Makin force and reembarkation was speeded up. By noon of that day the 1st Battalion was aboard ships and the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, was loading. At 1400 the convoy sailed for Oahu. The men arrived in Honolulu on 2 December.

The 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, remained behind on Makin until after Christmas of 1943. With them were Battery C, 105th Field Artillery; one platoon of Company C, 193d Tank Battalion; Headquarters Company, 193d Tank Battalion; Collecting Platoon of Clearing Company and Surgical Team, 102d Medical Battalion; Company C, 102d Engineer Battalion; 152d Engineer Battalion; and the I&R Platoon, 165th Infantry. On 24 November this force dispatched detachments to investigate Little Makin and other islands in the atoll. Japanese resistance consisted of small groups of stragglers. Five enemy were killed during the next few days trying to cross the reef to Kuma Island. On 13 December nine more Japanese were killed in the eastern end of the island in a pitched battle with an American patrol of thirteen men. Among those killed was the Japanese executive officer of Makin.

Casualties in the 27th Division included 58 killed in action, 8 died of wounds, and 185 wounded. This was small cost for over seven hundred enemy soldiers killed and the capture of a vital base from which to carry the war to the Marshalls.

Chapter 10: Majuro

APPROXIMATELY six weeks after the seizure of Makin and Tarawa, American forces were to invade Japan's mystery islands which screened the naval base at Truk. The principal units assigned to this mission had been the 7th Infantry Division, veterans of Attu, the 4th Marine Division, newly formed on the West Coast of the United States, and the 22d Marine Regiment, made up of the famous Marine Raider battalions which had taken part in the South Pacific campaigns for so long. Five days after the cancellation of the Nauru invasion, therefore, in September 1943, the 106th Regimental Combat Team of the 27th was assigned to the Marshalls expedition as a reserve.

Training, which had begun in August, continued through October and November. On 16 December the regiment embarked from Oahu on a five-day training cruise to the island of Maui. Practice landings under simulated combat conditions were made during this period. When the men returned to Schofield Barracks, however, it was to find that on 17 December they had been given a new mission. Seventh Air Force bombers and Navy reconnaissance planes, in the preceding two weeks had flown over Majuro Atoll on several occasions. No anti-aircraft fire had been received and activity on the islands had been negligible as far as the plane crews could ascertain. Majuro, according to Admiral Nimitz, possessed the "finest lagoon in the Pacific," and in American hands it could be transformed into a valuable forward naval base. Intelligence officers were convinced that the garrison there had been reduced to a mere token force.

Colonel Russell G. Ayers was called upon to furnish one battalion landing team of the 106th Infantry to capture this prize. The battalion designated was the 2d, under Lt. Col. Frederic H. Sheldon. It was to be assisted by the V Amphibious Corps' Reconnaissance Company, a Marine unit. The landings at Majuro were to be made at the same time as those at Kwajalein, but as part of the operations of a separate force known as the Majuro Attack Group. The 2d Battalion was detached from the rest of the regiment and trained as a separate unit. The 1st and 3d Battalion Landing Teams also prepared for the operation as separate forces, but coordinated much of their planning with V Amphibious Corps and 7th Division.

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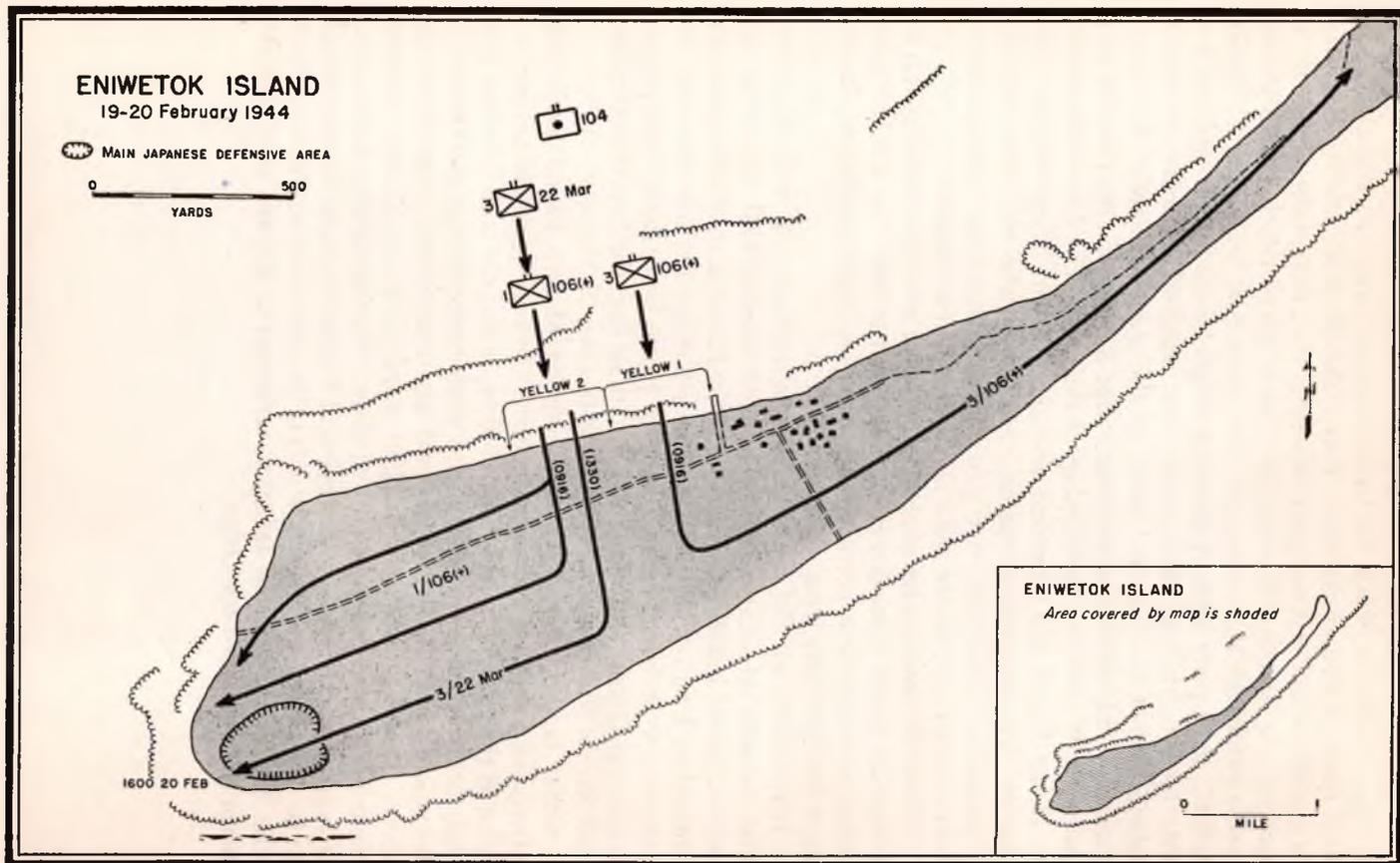
The Majuro Force remained with the Kwajalein Group until 0300 on 30 January. The 2d Battalion Landing Team was embarked on the

transport *Cambria*, while the Reconnaissance Company was aboard the high-speed destroyer transport *Kane*. Shortly after leaving the main Marshalls force the *Kane* sped on ahead. At 2145 on the same day, 30 January, the destroyer hove to off Calalin Island which guards the entrance pass to the Majuro lagoon. Two hours later Lt. Harvey C. Weeks, USMC, led a party of forty-one men ashore on the little island, and was told by a native that there were four hundred Japanese on Darritt Island, one of the principal points in the atoll. Lieutenant Weeks immediately radioed this information to the *Kane* which relayed it to Rear Adm. H. W. Hill on the flagship of the force. The *Kane* then circled to Dalap Island and debarked another platoon. These Marines took another English-speaking native into custody who told them that the Japanese had withdrawn their garrison more than a year before, leaving four enemy in the whole atoll, all four on Majuro Island.

When the commander of the Dalap Force attempted to relay this information to the *Kane* his radio failed and at 0600 the whole Majuro Force hove into view, prepared to execute an assault landing on Darritt, unaware that there were no enemy there.

It was not until the preinvasion bombardment was well under way that the new information finally reached Admiral Hill. All action was ordered halted immediately and the entire Reconnaissance Company was ordered to land on Darritt Island to determine the true situation. No Japanese were found and at 0955 a party from Force headquarters landed on Darritt and raised the American flag, the first time the Stars and Stripes had flown over Japanese territory in the war.

Other landing parties came ashore on Majuro Island during the afternoon and almost at once captured the only Japanese military official in the atoll, a naval warrant officer. It was not until two days later that the other three enemy civilians were captured by patrols of the 2d Battalion. Small quantities of arms and ammunition were taken and several usable installations in good repair were found. Base development at Majuro began almost at once. The battleships *Indiana* and *Washington*, damaged in a collision at Kwajalein, were the first vessels to be repaired at the new base during the first week in February 1944. The 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, remained at Majuro until 5 March when it reembarked for Oahu.



Map 2: Eniwetok, most westerly of Japanese bases in the Marshall Islands

Chapter II: Preparing for Eniwetok

THE 1st and 3d Battalions had, meanwhile, proceeded to Kwajalein. The landings of the 7th Division began on 31 January 1944. The next day the major part of the 7th invaded Kwajalein Island itself and progressed rapidly inland. On 2 February the ships bearing the reserve force moved into the Kwajalein lagoon and dropped anchor. By nightfall of that day it had become apparent that no part of the reserve would be committed in the battle.

Therefore Admiral Spruance radioed Admiral Nimitz on the evening of the 2d, seeking permission to go ahead with the capture of Eniwetok, 350 miles to the northwest. This was a vital position to the Japanese. As long as it was in their hands planes could be staged through it to the by-passed atolls to the east. It was also a haven for supply ships moving into the Marshalls. Once United States forces captured it the strongholds over which the Marshalls force had jumped would wither on the vine. Furthermore, Eniwetok in American hands would be a threat to the main enemy base at Truk. Land-based bombers were within easy range from there and once air superiority was established in the area, the Japanese Fleet would have to retire to its next line of bases or risk annihilation. At the time the 7th Division sailed from Oahu Admiral Nimitz had already scheduled the seizure of Eniwetok for 1 May. On 13 January the 27th Division had been alerted to perform the task.

The request of Admiral Spruance for permission to use the uncommitted reserve at Eniwetok brought ready approval. On 3 February Rear Adm. H. W. Hill was flown from Majuro and given command. D-day for Eniwetok was set for 12 February, and later set back to 17 February.

From 3 February to 15 February, planes from several carrier groups raided the atoll. Adm. Marc Mitscher, in command of the fast carrier force, Task Force 58, made ready to strike at Truk, in what was perhaps the boldest blow yet attempted by an American fleet, then move on during the next few days to neutralize enemy bases in the Marianas. On the outcome of this blow, although it was not known at the time plans were laid, was to depend the entire course of American strategy in the Pacific during the next year.

Little was known about Eniwetok prior to the invasion. It was the most westerly of the Japanese Marshalls bases. Reconnaissance planes had not been able to fly over it during the general Marshalls preparatory phase because of its extreme distance from the Gilberts. Such intelligence as was available during the fall of 1943 showed that a garrison of approximately seven hundred troops would probably be found on

the various islands of the atoll. As the preparations for the Kwajalein invasion were pushed, submarines of the scouting fleet reported that early in January a convoy of reinforcements had left Truk for the Marshalls.

The invasion of Kwajalein revealed the presence there of approximately 1,200 soldiers of the 1st Amphibious Brigade, a Japanese Army unit which had been shipped from Manchuria in mid-December. Testimony of prisoners indicated that another 2,500-3,000 members of this brigade were somewhere in the Marshalls and, inasmuch as no large convoys had been reported anywhere in the eastern atolls, it was thought probable that the force might have been dropped at Eniwetok. This was a good guess. On 4 January 2,800 members of the brigade had landed at the atoll. During the air strikes pre-landing photos showed that there was much new activity on Engebi Island. This led to the conclusion that the reinforcements had been landed on this one island which contained the only airfield in the atoll. Here intelligence officers jumped to a false conclusion. The bulk of the enemy troops had been landed on Eniwetok and Parry Islands.

The expedition which sailed to Eniwetok was a hodgepodge of units. The two battalions of the 106th Infantry were complete landing teams and included artillerymen of the 104th Field Artillery Battalion, engineers from B Company of the 102d Engineer Battalion, light tanks from the 766th Provisional Tank Battalion, and miscellaneous service troops of the 27th Division. The 22d Marines had not come to Kwajalein as a complete combat team, although they did have attached to them the 2d Separate Artillery Battalion, armed with 75mm pack howitzers. Neither of the two principal units was equipped to make assault landings. To make up the deficiencies it became necessary to draw on much of the Kwajalein force, which was readily available. The landings were to be made with amphibian tractors. The tractors and the men to man them were drawn from the 7th Division. Personnel carriers were driven by men from Antitank Companies of the 32d and 184th Infantry Regiments, as well as A Company, 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion. The 708th also furnished the crews and amphibian tanks which were used on the island. The 22d Marines drew on the 4th Marine Division for tanks of the 4th Separate Tank Battalion. They also drew many of their other supporting troops from this source. During the planning stage it was agreed that certain elements of the 106th Infantry would be made available to the Marines during their share of the operations and that when supporting elements of the Marines were called upon by the 106th they would be attached. Under the terms of this agreement the 104th

Field Artillery and the 106th's Cannon Company supported the 22d Marines on Engebi and medium tanks of the 4th Separate Tank Battalion took part in operations on Eniwetok.

The field order for the operation was issued by Admiral Hill's headquarters on 10 February, after the entire force had been assembled in the Kwajalein lagoon. There were to be four phases, patterned after the Kwajalein operation. The first of these was to be the seizure on D-day, 17 February, of the two small islands, Canna and Camelia, south of Engebi. Once these two points were taken the 104th Field Artillery Battalion and the 2d Separate Marine Artillery were to land to furnish preparatory and supporting fire for the Engebi invasion the next day. This second phase was to be executed by the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 22d Marines. Phase III was to see the two battalions of the 106th Infantry make simultaneous landings on Eniwetok and Parry Islands as soon as the capture of Engebi was completed. Until the first island was announced secure, the 106th would be held in reserve for possible use there. After the capture of Eniwetok and Parry, elements of both the Marines and Army were to investigate and clean off all the rest of the islands in the atoll. This constituted the fourth phase.

The whole Eniwetok plan was based on the assumption that the main Japanese force would be on Engebi. There were, supposedly, only 150-200 enemy troops each on Eniwetok and Parry.

The 106th Infantry's field order, based on the Task Force order, was issued on 12 February. Besides instructing the 104th Field Artillery to support the Engebi landing, it called upon the 1st Battalion Landing Team to make the assault on Eniwetok and the 3d Battalion to land on Parry.

The Eniwetok force sailed from the Kwajalein lagoon at 1430 on 15 February. There had been no opportunity for practice landings so that the various components were forced to go into the operation with little chance to perfect their coordination. Throughout the journey north, a carrier force subjected the objective to constant bombardment and strafing. Photo reconnaissance was intensified and the results hurried to the Eniwetok lagoon as soon as the ships dropped anchor there.

The main convoy arrived off the target shortly after daylight on the morning of 17 February. Preceded by minesweepers the whole task force sailed boldly into the lagoon at approximately 0930 by way of the Deep Passage, adjacent to Eniwetok Island. Shortly before noon the transports dropped anchor off Engebi Island and the V Amphibious Corps' Reconnaissance Company debarked. This unit proceeded to land on Canna and Camelia Islands and by 1500 were in possession of both. Only one or two Japanese and several natives were encountered. The

two artillery battalions had been boated during the early afternoon and went ashore as soon as the islands were secured. Registration on Engebi had been completed at 1700. Preparatory and harassing fire were placed on the target island throughout the night. At 0845 on 18 February, the two Marine battalions landed over the lagoon beaches of Engebi. The self-propelled guns of Cannon Company, 106th Infantry, landed before noon and proceeded at once to the front lines. The action of the Marines was exceedingly fast. At 1600, not quite eight hours after the original landings, the commander reported back that the island was secured and that all organized resistance had ended. During this brief engagement no members of the 106th Infantry were listed as casualties and no damage had been done to equipment.

The capture of Engebi and the two subsidiary islands had considerable influence on the conduct of the rest of the Eniwetok campaign. The Marines had not had an easy time. A thousand Japanese had fought to the bitter end and the struggle for Engebi was one of the briefest and bloodiest of the Pacific War. The strength on the island, however, was nowhere near the three thousand Japanese that had been expected. Natives captured on Canna Island confirmed the information that the garrison had been reinforced early in January. One islander insisted that there were 1,000 enemy soldiers each on Eniwetok and Parry. Acceptance of this figure by intelligence officers was somewhat tempered by the fact that the native who was questioned could neither read nor write, and seemed to have no conception of just how many men a thousand were. When documents captured on Engebi were studied they showed a total of 556 enemy on Eniwetok and 326 on Parry. It was finally decided to accept this figure although officers of the task force were still inclined to believe that there were another thousand men somewhere in the atoll. It is significant to note that 1,094 Japanese dead were buried on Eniwetok and 1,024 on Parry.

The acceptance of the official figure, low as it was, necessitated a change in the original plans for the capture of the two remaining principal islands. While the Engebi battle was still raging, at 1310 Colonel Ayers was informed that there would be some change in plan and that the new line of attack would be decided at a conference to be held aboard the flagship at 1500. Meanwhile, Admiral Hill had decided to go ahead with the conquest of the rest of the atoll on the next day, 19 February. Troops of the 106th Infantry were ordered to transfer from the transports *Wharton* and *Calvert* to LSTs and by the time the new planning conference convened the men had already begun to climb down to landing craft. Colonel Ayers ordered his battalion commanders to remain aboard the transports until he returned with the new orders.

The plan adopted on the afternoon of 18 February was based entirely on the assumption that five hundred Japanese would be found on Eniwetok and three hundred on Parry. Instead of landing one battalion on each island, Colonel Ayers was to send both battalions to Eniwetok. Landing abreast, the 3d Battalion would go ashore on Yellow Beach 1, on the left, while the 1st Battalion would utilize Yellow Beach 2. These two beaches were approximately one-third of the length of the island from the south tip, facing the lagoon. The southern third of the island was its widest part while the northern narrowed to a thin strip for most of its length.

The Japanese on Eniwetok Island showed a typical regard for lessons learned from other battles. Word had been passed down after Tarawa that the American landing there had been made through the lagoon. All through the Marshalls, particularly at Kwajalein, the old ocean-shore defenses were scrapped in favor of new, more formidable ones facing the lagoons. But at Kwajalein the 7th Division had come ashore on the very end of the island. The Eniwetok Japanese acted accordingly. They built the main positions of the defense on the end of the island! Photographs plainly showed the network of trenches and dugouts on the south tip. Only a few isolated strongpoints showed in the vicinity of the Yellow Beaches. It was hoped that by landing there and taking the prepared position from the rear that the work of the assault elements would be made much easier.

The plan called for landing elements to cut off the principal defenses from reinforcement, either from the north end of the island, or from Parry. To accomplish this the 3d Battalion was ordered to push straight across from the landing beaches to the ocean shore, cutting the island in two. Once this had been done, Lt. Col. H. I. Mizony, in command of this battalion, was to swing one company to the north, establish a cross-island blocking line, and hold. The other two rifle companies were to be withdrawn to the central part of the island behind Yellow Beach 1. There they were temporarily to constitute a regimental reserve, but were to be prepared to reembark on short notice to undertake the Parry landings.

The brunt of the Eniwetok assault was to be borne by the 1st Battalion Landing Team. Landing with two companies abreast, this unit was to anchor its right flank immediately and execute a pivoting movement to the south. Once a firm assault line had been built up from shore to shore the battalion was to jump off toward the strongpoint on the tip of the island. The reserve company was not to take part in this move, but was to mop up in the center of the island, assemble opposite Yellow Beach 2, and act as battalion reserve. As soon as the two assault com-

panies had cleaned up the south end of the island, the reserve was to form a line, pass through the 3d Battalion's holding position and mop up the north end of the island. One of the two southern assault companies was to follow it as a reserve while the other combed the south end again for isolated pockets of resistance that might have been by-passed in the initial fighting. When the 3d Battalion was passed through it was to reembark on LSTs for the Parry assault.

The regimental field order was flashed to the battalion commanders prior to 1800 on 18 February and later issued to them ashore. No battalion orders were ever issued. Most of the battalions were scattered about on several LSTs when the orders were received. The battalion commanders and their S-3s visited these vessels prior to 2100 and sketched out the plan briefly. From there it was necessary for the company commanders to work out the details as best they could with little to go on but maps and photographs. There was no opportunity for coordination between the companies, landing-craft commanders, supporting arms, or naval elements.

The troops of RCT 106 arose at 0430 on the morning of 19 February to a breakfast of steak! Before 0600 loading of LVTs had begun. The amphibians left their mother ships at 0730 and a few minutes later were circling in their respective rendezvous areas while naval vessels and carrier planes began a preparation on the beaches. There was to be no land-based artillery fire to precede the landing. Yoke-hour had originally been scheduled for 0900, but after the boats were in the water it was learned that the LCMs with tanks and cannon company vehicles aboard were being brought the seventeen miles from Engebi under their own power and would be late in arriving. The landings were re-scheduled for 0945. When the tanks arrived earlier than expected the landing time was advanced to 0915. In spite of this jockeying the landings were eventually made without the vehicles in the first waves because the coxswains were unable to find the right landing circles. When the tankers and cannon company men did land most of them were put ashore on Yellow Beach 1 and were of little use to the 1st Battalion Landing Team during the early stages of the battle.

Chapter 12: The 1st Battalion, 106th

THE 1st Battalion commander, Lt. Col. Winslow Cornett, had chosen A and B Companies to make the original landings. Company B was to land on the left, A on the right. Company C was to constitute the original reserve which would execute the drive to the north end of the island. Company A was instructed to pivot to the right and take up a line roughly even with the south edge of Yellow Beach 2. When this line had been established, it was to hold until B Company had come abreast. Company B had been instructed to strike straight inland as far as the road and then begin a turning movement to the right with its left flank along the sea side of the island. It was then to advance as far as A's line, establish contact, and then move down the island abreast of A. The boundary between the two was to be the road that ran north and south. Company C, the reserve, was to land and push straight inland to the area just beyond the road. Here it was to mop up and establish a perimeter around the area in what was to be the battalion CP. When A and B had completed operations at the south end of the island, C was to reorganize and pass through the 3d Battalion line. B was to follow C, while A was to remain at the tip of the island mopping up. B was to constitute the reserve in the attack north.

Captain John J. Schuyler of A Company had placed his 1st Platoon on the right and his 3d on the left. His 2d was in support and was instructed to follow close behind the 3d as it progressed inland. Schuyler had his own Weapons Platoon in support and also one HMG platoon from D Company under Lt. Max W. Renner. Company A landed in good order on the beach and the men debarked from the LVTs without casualties. A steep sea wall which ran along the beach made it impossible to move the vehicles beyond that point. Very little fire was received from any enemy position, although three separate Japanese emerged from the undergrowth and peered toward the water. They were fired on, but all three got away.

In the B Company zone there was a different picture. Capt. Clarence W. Law had disposed his company with the 1st Platoon on the right, the 3d on the left, and the 2d in reserve, with the Weapons Platoon and a HMG platoon under Lt. Charles A. Wells of D Company in support. In the landing, B had become badly disorganized. The 3d Platoon, under Lt. Joe K. Pickering, was practically the only element of the entire company to land in the right place.

Completely disorganized as it was, B also found itself directly in front of an extremely strong Japanese position. Lt. Ralph W. Hills, on the extreme left, with a portion of the 1st Platoon when he found that the LVTs could not get farther inland, immediately disembarked and ran

from one to the other, ordering them to cease fire. He then ordered his men out and began looking for the rest of his company. Finding Pickering's 3d Platoon on his immediate right and the beach in an extremely congested condition, he decided to rejoin the rest of his platoon by leading his men diagonally through the 3d to the right, thus getting his men into the position where they belonged, and at the same time not holding up the advance inland. He therefore climbed up over the rise, shouting for his men to follow, and led off to tangle with the enemy in the scattered undergrowth.

In the 3d Platoon area, to Hills' right, Pickering and his platoon sergeant, Tech. Sgt. Edward T. Fabiszewski, had quickly organized their men and got them over against the bank from which they could launch their assault. They immediately found themselves almost in the middle of an enemy strongpoint. This position consisted of a central dugout with trenches radiating in all directions. Like all enemy positions on Eniwetok it was below the earth's surface. The central portion itself was well camouflaged with palm fronds. At each end of the four trenches there was another network of trenches and more holes. Most of them were connected, but a few were not. Usually, the main trench systems were uncovered, but the mazes at the ends were always camouflaged and Japanese could move around in them without being detected. If a man dropped a grenade in a hole, the occupant simply had to duck along the concealed trench and could come up behind the soldiers working on the first hole and kill them. It was in the midst of just such a network that Hills found himself, and the whole 3d Platoon now stumbled into the center of the position.

Captain Law took stock of the situation and now ordered the 2d Platoon, which was just coming over the rise, to hold up until the resistance could be neutralized. Hills and Pfc. William Hollowiak, of the 1st Platoon, working as a team on the left, had by this time devised a system to reduce the enemy works. At first they lay on the ground shooting enemy soldiers as they popped up in the holes, but Hollowiak, feeling this was not fast enough, got Hills to cover him while he crawled forward and fired into a hole. After he finished this, he carefully lifted up the corner of the frond which covered the place and threw in a grenade. Then he covered Hills while the platoon leader repeated the process. Scrambling forward in this fashion, and working on the holes, these two men had killed in the neighborhood of twenty Japanese and knocked out seven or eight positions by the time Law halted the 2d Platoon's advance. This had neutralized practically the whole left side of the area and permitted K Company's right flank to advance. Hollowiak, incidentally, had somewhere in this fight picked up an enemy rifle, and as he moved along,

he now acquired ammunition for it from every Jap body he came to and used it almost as much as he did his own piece. He also begged every grenade he could from American soldiers he saw wounded, or if he came to a body, he just took the grenades. He had come ashore that morning with an extra 175 rounds of ammunition which he had managed to talk the supply sergeant out of, and later on he traded a Jap light machine gun with the driver of a Buffalo in exchange for all the grenades the crew could collect from bodies. All in all this netted Hollowiak and Hills around fifty grenades, but by the time Hollowiak reached the opposite side of the island he was out of all kinds of ammunition and had to go around begging more from his comrades.

When Law ordered the 2d Platoon held up, most of Hills' and Pickering's men, except for casualties, had managed to get by the strongpoint so that they were not affected by Law's order. Scrambling ahead from hole to hole and working in teams, with Hills and Hollowiak in the lead, this part of the 1st Platoon managed to reach the road before 1030. Hills then ordered the advance stopped until he could reconnoiter the area. While the men took cover, he and Hollowiak moved off to the left down the road in search of K Company's right flank. They had moved about thirty-five yards before they located the 3d Battalion line and had just motioned the rest of their men over when they received fire from what seemed to be a series of Japanese positions across the road. The whole platoon, therefore, had to take cover on the lagoon side of the road. They remained pinned down here for some ten minutes firing on the enemy positions with small arms, having almost exhausted their supply of grenades.

Meanwhile, on the extreme right flank of the battalion zone, Lt. Arthur Klein had landed with the machine-gun section of his Weapons Platoon. He had started inland at once, not realizing that he had landed in the wrong place, and thinking that the rest of B Company had moved on off the beach ahead of him. Followed by his radio operator, Pfc. Anthony J. Fasino, and Staff Sgt. Albert C. Koran, he got about forty yards inland before he discovered his mistake. He then backtracked to the beach and led his men along to the left, trying to find his own company. Company A was still on the beach at this time and the congestion made progress difficult. When he finally came to A's left flank he ran into Sergeant Dudey and his detachment, and feeling that further progress through the beach congestion would be too slow, he decided to move inland and then try to find Captain Law. Taking Dudey's men under his wing, he moved straight east, meeting no opposition until he reached the road, although his advance was accomplished in much the same manner as Hills' on the left, a rapid scramble from hole to hole.

When Klein reached the road, Company A had just started to move off the beach. Feeling that he was in an isolated position, Company A not yet having come up, and having nothing on his left that he could see, Klein now ordered his men to take cover until the Company came up even. He slung his carbine over his left shoulder, lit a cigarette, and then sauntered off down the road to the left looking for the rest of B Company.

Klein walked along the far side of the road from the beach, and had almost reached the 3d Battalion flank when someone shouted, "For Christ's sake, look out, Artie!" He glanced to the left and saw Hills lying in the underbrush, working on the position which has already been mentioned. According to Hills, Klein just stood there on the edge of the road and asked, "What's going on here?" Hills pointed at the enemy position and explained the situation. Klein then very nonchalantly pulled out a grenade and threw it from where he was, trying to get it in the little hole at the top. It hit the opening and bounced off, causing everyone to scramble out of the vicinity. After it had exploded there was a good deal of cursing done at Klein's expense. He then got back to his feet, pulled another grenade out of his pocket, and calmly walked over to the position. "This son of a bitch will go in," he is reported to have said, and then reached over and *put* the grenade in the hole. As it exploded, a light machine gun was ripped up through the palm fronds and Klein reached over and pulled it out of the hole, handing it to Hollowiak who now came up. Klein then covered Hollowiak and Hills while they moved forward and fired into three other positions. While this was going on, a Buffalo came up through the 3d Battalion zone and Klein got in into position with its 37mm gun. While the Buffalo went to work, Klein asked Hills where Captain Law was. Neither Hills nor Pickering knew, although at the time Law was still back on the beach trying to get the 2d Platoon through the strongpoint. When attempts to get in touch with the company commander by radio failed, Klein said to Hills, "I'm taking charge here." Klein said that at the time he presumed the captain had been killed.

Klein immediately set up a CP in the area behind the road. From there he instructed his radio man to continue to try to contact either Captain Law or the battalion CP. He also sent a runner back to the beach with instructions to report his position and the fact that he had taken charge. After finishing this task, he took stock of the situation, and then reorganized. Company B had entered this operation thirty-five men under-strength, and now, with the 2d Platoon still on the beach and Hills' platoon split, the advance line had a total strength of about thirty riflemen. These Klein placed with Hills' remnants on the left, and Picker-

ing's platoon on the right. He then sent for Dudey's squad and for his own Weapons Platoon. Dudey, who had been specifically ordered to maintain contact with Company A, now asked permission to be allowed to perform that mission and Klein agreed, expecting to swing his line around to the right and make contact. He placed the machine guns from his own platoon in protection of his CP and sent the Mortar Section after ammunition.

During the reorganization, Lieutenant Wells of D Company arrived on the scene with his Machine-Gun Platoon. This platoon had landed on the beach in the area left vacant by the mix-up in boats in B Company, and had advanced inland as far as the road with no one on either flank and, as they thought, with no one in front of them. They knew there were other troops near them, and every once in a while they could catch a glimpse of these others, but both Wells and his men had reached the position in the firm belief that they had acted as the assault wave. Klein now took charge of the platoon and placed the guns in position on the right flank, ordering them to cover the gap between him and Dudey, and to displace forward with the advance.

Klein then returned to the Buffalo and instructed the crew to advance ahead of the assault wave. Its commander, however, was low on ammunition, and had been instructed to return to the beach after reaching the road, so the advance had to be made without it. Before the vehicle turned back, however, Hollowiak and Hills made the deal whereby they traded the captured gun for ammunition.

The terrain to the company's front was uphill for almost 150 yards. It was covered by heavy undergrowth and visibility was especially poor. Klein instructed his men to work in pairs and cautioned them particularly to keep contact. Hills was especially careful to warn his right flank to keep in touch with Staff Sgt. Charles G. Schaefer, the left-flank man of the 3d Platoon. However, as the company moved off on Klein's signal, Sgt. William Allander, in the middle of the 3d Platoon, was seriously wounded, and the men on his right and left immediately lost contact with one another and never regained it. Thus, almost from the start, the action of the reorganized company became two separate engagements.

Hills, with ten men from his own platoon, and about ten from the 3d, drove straight across the island, and by 1145 had established themselves on the ocean side. This advance was fairly rapid until fifty yards from the beach when Hills and Hollowiak, still in the lead, ran into a Japanese triangular position which included about seven dugouts or holes. With the help of K Company, they cleaned this out, taking some prisoners, three little native girls, their mother, and an old man.

It was during this short lull that Hills discovered he no longer had contact with the rest of his company. He was isolated with a total strength of around twenty men and insufficient ammunition. He immediately explained the situation to Capt. William T. Heminway of K Company. Heminway sent part of his 3d Platoon to support Hills. Hills left the group in command of Tech. Sgt. Joseph E. Pero while he took Hollowiak and started off through the undergrowth in search of Klein and more ammunition. They were never able to find him, eventually ending up back on the beach three-quarters of an hour later.

Both men struck off into the thick bush where they came under extremely heavy mortar and small-arms fire and were pinned down for almost twenty minutes. When they were finally able to move again they had to veer sharply to the right to get out of the fire. In doing this, they ran into a squad of K Company's 2d Platoon and learned that they had been wandering around in the midst of a Japanese counterattack. Hills decided he had better try to get back to the beach rather than find Klein. When he arrived there he found Lt. Colonel Cornett and asked for at least a platoon to fill in between himself and Klein. He was informed by Captain Law, however, that the 3d Battalion of the 22d Marines was to relieve B Company shortly and that for the time being his detachment could hold out. Hills obtained some ammunition, had it loaded onto an LVT, and returned to his men. This was some time near 1300.

While Hills and his men had been driving straight through to the beach on the ocean side, Klein had been having considerable trouble. His total strength, after losing contact with Hills, was about ten riflemen and Wells' HMG platoon, a unit that totaled in the neighborhood of twenty men armed with carbines and their machine guns. The terrain was so heavily overgrown that the advance had become a series of group operations, the men working in pairs, scrambling from hole to hole, the HMG Platoon displacing forward in the wake of the riflemen. By the time they had advanced forty to fifty yards there had ceased to be any line at all and one group was far ahead of the rest. It was when this group, led by Sergeant Scott, came across a Japanese that Klein stopped the forward movement. Scott had almost stepped on the enemy before seeing him and had immediately killed him. Klein, hearing the shot, came up to see what Scott was yelling about, and taking in the situation, ordered this forward element to halt. He then ordered up his heavy machine guns and had Wells set up a perimeter around the position while he went in search of Pickering in an effort to have the platoon leader reorganize his line. Although Pickering was not more than ten yards away from him, Klein was unable to find him, but in his search

discovered that Hills was gone. He then tried to contact Hills by radio, but failed, so he moved two of Wells' guns to his left flank to protect the gap there. Pickering now appeared and Klein explained to him what he wanted and then left to go back to the road and move up his CP. As he neared the road he saw three Marine medium tanks coming south along it from Yellow Beach 1. By yelling and hollering and banging on the tanks with his carbine he finally got them to stop. He then explained his position and asked the tank leader to help him out. The tanks agreed, but insisted that Klein put riflemen in front as guides. Klein placed himself and Fasino out in front and started to lead the way, but before they had gone far the tanks opened up with their guns and both Klein and Fasino had to jump to one side to keep from being shot and run over. The vehicles kept right on going, spraying fire in all directions. No amount of work on Fasino's part succeeded in bringing them into contact on his radio. They soon disappeared into the brush about seventy-five yards up the road. "I didn't see them again for four days," Klein said later.

While B Company had been having trouble getting organized, A had moved off the beach in an orderly fashion. Schuyler had discovered that inland from his landing beach, the ground sloped upward for a matter of thirty-five or forty yards, the rise culminating in a small knoll. He therefore ordered his whole company to advance straight in to this point and told Lt. Paul W. Barnett to anchor his right flank on this knoll and execute the turn from that position. Barnett could, after the pivot had been completed, then extend the 1st Platoon's line back to the beach and the advance could then be taken up southward. In order to protect this flank during the turn, and in order to fill in the gap between the knoll and the beach, Barnett detailed a patrol of four men under Staff Sgt. Joseph A. Jasinski to explore the area.

As A Company moved inland they found themselves in a dense tangle of barbed brush and bushes. Everyone had to stop in order to disentangle himself. It took some little time to advance as far as the knoll and begin the turn. The patrol, however, had not advanced ten yards south after they hit the rise before they ran straight into a Japanese position. They immediately went to ground and began disposing of it.

Barnett's whole platoon, after reaching the knoll and beginning its turn, now ran into another arm of this position. Moving ahead foot by foot with Barnett crawling up and down the line urging and pushing them forward, the platoon finally got their line straightened out, losing two men in the process. With this line, the platoon now moved forward about a hundred yards and then halted to wait for the 3d Platoon to come up on the left and the patrol to work forward on the right.

This patrol had run into hole after hole as they progressed along the top of the rise, and, at the time the platoon stopped, were 150 yards behind. Barnett had tried to extend his line as was planned, but found it impossible as his right flank would have been directly in the patrol's line of fire. He therefore used one squad to form a contact with the patrol and sent Lieutenant Renner with his HMG Platoon to help the four men. All engineers eventually were sent over, and Barnett finally got hold of two Buffaloes which turned their 37mm guns into the positions, but it was not until light tanks came ashore, shortly after 1300, that any rapid progress was made. Up until that time it was a matter of advancing foot by foot, from hole to hole, flat on the ground. The patrol came up even with the rest of the 1st Platoon line at 1330 and advanced a little beyond, cleaning out holes all the way, but at 1340 the company was informed there was to be an air strike at the end of the island and were ordered to display panels, so the patrol was withdrawn to the line.

The 3d Platoon had advanced slowly inland, fighting against the brush and investigating everything that looked suspicious, but had run into no trouble until shortly after they began their turn. At that time the tanks, which Lieutenant Klein of B Company had lost, came rolling up the road, spraying everything with fire. The whole platoon took cover until the tanks veered off to the left of the road. When it resumed its advance it moved forward another seventy-five yards and then came under heavy fire from the left front and flank. Lt. Cleo B. Kuhl ordered the forward movement stopped until the enemy fire was stopped. It was then that he discovered he had made contact with B Company on his left flank, but when he went over to what he supposed was a whole company he discovered it to be a squad and a half.

Sergeant Dudey, after Klein had left him, remained where he was for about ten minutes, and then, seeing A Company coming up from the beach in his rear, decided to move around to his right on the east side of the road and take up a position on what he knew to be the proposed A Company line. After moving cautiously across the road and swinging to the right, he lined his squad up in skirmishers and began picking his way south, his men poking around in the brush and investigating anything that looked like it might contain enemy. After being pinned down by fire from the Marine tanks moving south along the road, and losing Pfc. Paul Putnam, Dudey continued his advance. While investigating some buildings that had been an old rice dump, he was shot through the head and killed. S/Sgt. James A. Cahill, who now took command, ordered his men to dig in at once. His position at that time was along the line from which A Company was supposedly to

move south. Shortly after Cahill took up this position, he was found by Lieutenant Kuhl of A Company.

Company A's 2d Platoon, in command of T/Sgt. Ralph DeVito, had been placed in reserve, and had been instructed to follow Kuhl's platoon inland. At the same time the company moved from the beach these instructions were carried out, but when it became apparent to Schuyler that his right flank was badly depressed, he got hold of DeVito and ordered the platoon to take up position in the rear of Barnett's platoon, in order to furnish contact between them and the lagging patrol. DeVito was also ordered to work on positions in the area from the inland side as well as he could, without endangering his men in Jasinski's line of fire. At the time DeVito received these orders he was out of touch with one squad, so he made the move without it, and for almost an hour gave support on the right flank with only two squads.

It was about 1145 when Kuhl discovered that he only had contact with a squad and a half of B Company, and he notified Captain Schuyler immediately. Schuyler had drawn his CP up behind Kuhl's left flank along the road and after trying to ascertain where the rest of B Company was, without success, he decided to move DeVito's platoon up to the road to fill the gap from Kuhl's line back to where he knew C Company had a platoon. This move protected his own CP, and plugged what he considered to be a hole through which the Japanese could drive all the way through to the beach in the rear of his company. He got hold of DeVito and ordered him up, but DeVito felt that he did not have enough men to fill the gap adequately without his third squad, and lost a little time locating it and organizing his line. While DeVito was doing this, Schuyler went back to the C Company CP and asked to have their one platoon committed behind the left flank of DeVito's line as a reserve until B Company was located and brought into line.

Company C had been having a good deal of difficulty. Lt. Colonel Cornett had placed it in reserve and had ordered it to advance straight across the road and clear out the area in the rear of B Company's turning movement, where the battalion CP was to be established. Lt. Robert T. Bates, in command of C, had organized his company on one long line, stretching clear across Yellow Beach 2. He had ordered his platoon leaders to move straight inland, mopping up the area, and to establish a perimeter around the proposed CP about 75 yards beyond the road. In the landing plan the company was lined up from left to right in order: 1st Platoon, Lt. Stanley A. Pitchford; Company Headquarters; 2d Platoon, Lt. Harry A. Poe; 3d Platoon, Lt. Arthur J. Gumbrell. This company, landing in the fifth and sixth waves, found the beach badly congested, with the result that only the 1st Platoon landed exactly as

planned. In three boats, 20 were killed and 15 were wounded out of a total of 53. Poe landed within fifty yards of the A Company right and other boats of the 3d Platoon a hundred yards farther down the beach. The men in these boats had received heavy small-arms fire all the way to shore from 150 yards out in the water, and had been forced by it to land more or less blind. Unable to see what was happening, they all believed that A and B Companies had landed ahead of them and pushed inland. For that reason they all moved out of their boats rapidly and started up over the rise without hesitation.

Lieutenant Poe was the first man out of his LVT, followed closely by Staff Sgt. Charles Goldberg and Pfc. Edward J. Fleming. This craft had landed directly in front of a small swale in the wall and Poe ran across the sand up to this low spot, intending to run through it and get inland before reorganizing. He had not taken twenty-five steps, however, before he was shot through the head and killed. Both Fleming and Goldberg now took cover and crawled toward the lieutenant's body to find out if he was dead. Goldberg spoke to him, and receiving no answer, withdrew to bring up the rest of his squad. As he backed down to the sand, he heard Fleming cry out: "Charley, I'm hit. Help me." Pfc. John P. Gorman, who had come up with Staff Sgt. Vernon G. Papacosta, now tried to get up to Fleming and he was killed. Papacosta and Goldberg now restrained anyone else from entering the area and moved their squads to the left down the beach, arriving at the company CP without further casualties.

Gumbrell's and Tech. Sgt. Antonio Amato's boats had landed about fifty yards apart, almost a hundred yards farther to the right of Poe's. The shore here was marked by two small points that jutted out into the water. Amato and his men landed between these two points, and Gumbrell landed exactly on the right point. Gumbrell was wounded in the head as he crossed the sand to the sea wall and alternately conscious and unconscious, tried to get his men around the point to the right and out of the fire of the Japanese guns at his left. One by one, however, his men were either wounded or killed as they moved up to the sea wall. Some of the men in this boat were hit seven or eight times, and all lay exposed for over three hours, trying to edge around to the right. Out of sixteen men in this boat, only one man, Sgt. Leon Aliano, got out without being hit. When they were finally rescued, there were seven men killed and eight wounded, most of them seriously.

In Amato's boat, virtually the same situation existed, perhaps a little worse because his men received fire from three Japanese positions instead of two. The men just lay on the beach being shot, one by one. Gumbrell, whenever he was able to think clearly, tried to get up to the

ridge line to knock out the position just over his head with grenades. Staff Sgt. Owen H. Johnston had crawled up to the top of the rise shortly after he came ashore, but had been shot in the leg and his equipment riddled with bullets. He managed to locate an enemy position before he was knocked back down the slope again. He told his comrades where it was and also told them that the Japanese were trying to creep up on them. With the knowledge gained by Johnston, the men in both boats were able to keep up a fairly steady rain of grenades on the area behind the sea wall, thereby keeping the enemy well back where they could not close on the men in the boats.

Amato, Staff Sgt. John P. LaRussa, and Pfc. Gustar Davis managed, by inching forward, to get two or three grenades into one Japanese position and silence it for a time. When the group began running out of grenades, Amato and Pfc. W. H. Salvidge improvised grenades from Salvidge's demolition kit and used those. All men who were able kept up a steady fire on another Japanese position, trying to keep the machine gun there from operating efficiently.

The Japanese not only used small-arms fire, but also threw grenades and directed knee-mortar fire on the beach. One of these shells landed directly between Amato and Salvidge, killing them both. Other grenades landed near the rest of the men, but their main effect was to throw so much sand and dust about that it clogged weapons, putting them out of action. Johnston, though wounded painfully, and under constant danger because his movements attracted enemy fire, crawled about the beach all morning, retrieving usable rifles from the dead and seriously wounded and bringing them to the men who were still able to fight. He also stripped numerous weapons there on the beach, cleaned them thoroughly, and restored them to use.

While Company C was pinned down in this fashion, A was moving slowly up through the Japanese position from the landing beach. As A advanced and knocked out foxholes and dugouts, the position of the men pinned on the beach became a little more tenable. A machine gun manned by the engineers assigned to C Company had been set up on the beach and fire from this, after about 1130, kept the Japanese to their holes so that they could not throw grenades into the beach area.

Shortly after 1200 two men, Sergeant LaRussa of Amato's boat, and Sergeant Aliano from Gumbrell's boat, acting independently of each other, managed by crawling, creeping, and running, to get back to the battalion CP, where they reported their predicament to Lt. Colonel Cornett. They then returned along the beach, and by shouting and hand signals, relayed instructions. Four more men were hit as they tried to

run for safety, but the remnants of these two boats were now able to report to Lieutenant Bates at the company CP and were immediately assigned for duty with Bates' 3d Platoon.

While the three boats of C Company had landed too far to the right, the rest had got ashore in their assigned places. The 1st Platoon, under Lieutenant Pitchford, was all intact, and it pushed straight inland to a point just short of the road. Having been assigned the mission of mopping up in the CP area, and under the impression that B was in front of him, he had simply gone ahead, losing no time. Not being certain of the exact area in which he was to operate, he had stopped and made contact with Lieutenant Bates to get further instructions. Bates ordered him to move on in another seventy-five to a hundred yards, and after a ten-minute reorganization he moved out again.

It was while Pitchford was engaged in this task that Klein came along the road, looking for the rest of his company. He did not notice the C Company platoon and Pitchford was not at all certain of B Company's position due to the dense tangle of underbrush. At the time, however, he was almost abreast of B's front line and was ahead of their 2d Platoon. When he finally moved out across the road, he was still under the impression that B was on ahead of him and had been through the area. When he got almost to his objective, his right flank, under Staff Sgt. Thomas W. Mihalopoulos, preceded by two scouts, suddenly ran into a strong Japanese position. While the scouts were working on the position, they came under heavy small-arms fire and Pitchford ordered the advance stopped. The whole right side of his line now became engaged in a stiff fire fight with enemy positions just to the front. As the reserve squad crawled into position, the fire became even heavier and before any of the platoon could move back to better cover, it had lost two men killed and five wounded. All attempts on the part of Sergeant Mihalopoulos to knock out the main strongpoints or rescue the wounded men failed.

While this fight was going on, Lieutenant Johnson of B Company finally came up across the road with his 2d Platoon and swung to the right. Johnson was also under the impression that the first two platoons of his unit were on ahead. He and Captain Law had spent some time on the beach trying to neutralize the big position which had caused Pickering so many casualties. They had finally brought up engineers with pole charges and worked them forward along the trench leading up to the position. The blast from the pole charges had silenced fire from inside for the time being and the remainder of B had pushed forward. Neither Johnson nor Law, however, had been able to make con-

tact with the forward elements by radio. They did know where B was supposed to go, and took off in that direction. This brought them up on the right of Pitchford's platoon, and as Johnson's left flank turned, it ran right into the same position that was causing Pitchford so much trouble. Johnson, therefore, had to hold up his advance at that point. While his men were engaged on their front, Captain Law was informed of the location of Klein's CP by radio from battalion (Klein's runner had just found battalion), and so moved back to the road to walk over and find it.

Meanwhile, Klein had just lost his three tanks. As he came back up to his front line, he discovered that both Pitchford and Johnson had moved in on his right. He, therefore, started across Pitchford's front to talk with Johnson. On the way he came to where Mihalopoulos had just finished knocking out a position. He stopped and asked Mihalopoulos the situation, threw a grenade in the hole, and then moved on over to where Johnson was, all this right through an area swept by enemy fire. Klein now asked Johnson to withdraw his platoon and bring it over to his own position, both to fill the gap between himself and Hills and to give him strength enough for a renewal of his advance. Johnson agreed, but wanted to get Captain Law's approval and also wait until he had neutralized the position in his front, feeling that any attempt to move his men out under the heavy enemy fire would cause a great many casualties. Klein asked where the position was and Johnson pointed it out to him. At the time Sgt. Harold Dorn and Staff Sgt. William L. Slingerland were trying to crawl up on the dugout from two sides, but had been unable to get much closer than fifteen yards. Klein now walked boldly over to Dorn and Slingerland, asked them to cover him, and then marched straight up to it and dropped a grenade into one entrance. After this had exploded, he stood near the shelter and covered both Dorn and Slingerland while they came up and threw grenades into two other holes. Klein then walked back to Johnson and told him to go ahead and move the platoon while he himself went to find Law and explain the situation. Johnson again demurred, however, saying that the position had not been completely neutralized. Klein then called Dorn to him and ordered him to run back to the beach and bring up some engineers with pole charges and a flamethrower. He then left to find Law, telling Johnson that as soon as the position was definitely knocked out he was to withdraw back to the road, re-form his platoon and bring them up to help his own detachment in their advance.

When Klein found Law, the captain was at Klein's own CP which had by this time been moved up just across the road. Klein explained

his situation, and asked if the captain could not get Lt. Colonel Cornett to commit C Company in the gaps to his right and left, also to see if he could not get more ammunition as Klein felt he was running low. (At this time, of course, Klein did not know exactly what had happened to C Company. He did know that Pitchford was on his right, but presumed that the rest of C was in his rear.) Law agreed to Klein's suggestions and decided to go back to battalion personally to see Cornett. He had no sooner disappeared than he was out of touch with the whole action again, no one seeming to be able to reach him by radio.

Chapter 13: The Japanese Counterattack

THE SITUATION of the two BLTs at approximately 1200 on 19 February 1944 found a makeshift line extending from the lagoon beach to the ocean. Company A had completed its swing to the south and had taken up a line with two platoons, waiting for the right flank of this line to work its way through a strong enemy position and straighten out. Schuyler's 2d Platoon was reorganizing preparatory to moving up into position along the road in an effort to close the gap which existed there. Lieutenant Bates, of C Company, had reorganized the remnants of his 2d and 3d Platoons into a full platoon which he called the 23d Platoon. This unit included all the elements of the two platoons that had landed safely, minus thirty-five still trying to get off the beach, and most of the men in Lieutenant Poe's boat, who reported to Bates at about 1045. Having lost both Lieutenants Gumbrell and Poe, Bates had pressed into service as a platoon leader, Lt James E. Cowlshaw, Jr., of C Company, 105th Infantry, who had come along on the operation as an observer. Cowlshaw had moved his command up near the road and formed a ring around the company and battalion CPs. At Captain Schuyler's request the 23d Platoon had moved to the right to partially cover Sergeant DeVito's left flank and close the gap between it and Lieutenant Johnson's right flank which was now anchored on the road.

Johnson's platoon was facing south and was still engaged with the dugout which Klein and his two men had been unable to reduce. Dorn had just returned from the beach with four engineers from the 102d Engineer Battalion. Pvt. George Russo had a flamethrower, and Pfc. George Lorenz, Pvt. John W. Smith, and Pvt. Jerome Buresk all carried pole charges. (Lorenz, together with Cpl. Oliver Ellis had earlier knocked out the Japanese dugout on B Company's front just off the beach.) Johnson asked Russo if he thought he could flame the dugout, so Russo crawled up to the position, fifteen yards away, and let go a quick burst of his rifle into the opening, then scrambled forward and stuck the nozzle inside. When he fired another burst a Japanese came running out of the opening on the other side and headed toward the landing beach. Practically every rifle in the area opened up on this man and he fell just across the road on the lagoon side. Russo now retired and Buresk moved forward with a pole charge, covered by an infantryman. Buresk's rifleman took up a position under the tree. As he squatted there on his hands and knees an enemy dropped out of the tree right on his back and the two men rolled over and over on the ground. The rifleman finally managed to get hold of his knife and began stabbing his adversary with it. Buresk had already pulled the fuze when the fight started and the pole charge went off outside the dugout. The infantry-

man was bowled over by the explosion, but got up and started stabbing again. Then he looked around and got up and ran back toward the beach as fast as he could go. No one professes to know who he was. After this happened, Johnson ordered Lorenz to go up and put in another charge. He was in the act of doing this when the counterattack hit and he had to remain ten yards out in front while the Japanese and the 2d Platoon fired at one another over his head. He did not realize until after it was all over that he had lain there using the charge to protect his head from stray bullets.

Pitchford's platoon was tied onto Johnson's left flank, but was facing the ocean on the east. This platoon was engaged only on its extreme right where Sergeant Mihalopoulos and his men were still trying to knock out the Japanese positions to their front and get the wounded back into their lines.

Klein's detachment was still where it had stopped twenty or thirty minutes earlier. Klein himself was back at his CP, having just finished talking with Captain Law and had been over into the 3d Battalion area trying to get two self-propelled guns to come to his aid. Lt. Arthur J. Rueckert, Jr., who had command of these vehicles, however, was under definite orders to help K Company, working on positions along the ocean beach. In Klein's front line, Wells and Pickering were having a difficult time. In moving one of D Company's guns over to the left flank, the two gunners, Pfc. Clifford Peterson and Pfc. Lucien Pressley, had been wounded and put out of action. Pvt. Paul J. Lyngard, an ammunition carrier, manned the gun under direction of Tech. Sgt. Daniel McNichols. Pfc. Clifford P. Rayder had set up his gun a little to Lyngard's left and was also traversing in an effort to locate the enemy. The other two guns were set up more toward the right flank of Klein's position and gradually became engaged in the fire fight which was getting heavier and heavier.

The riflemen were arranged along the line, and Wells had brought up as many ammunition men as he could spare to bring in the weight of their carbines, trying to protect his machine gunners. Staff Sgt. Burton H. Mainard, trying to pick out targets for his rifles, had suddenly spotted a Jap in a tree straight to his front, about twenty-five yards. All the riflemen put fire into the tree. No one fell out. Mainard now became curious, and suspecting an entirely new type of position, determined to investigate. With this in mind he sent Staff Sgt. Christian F. Breron, Sergeant Scott, Pvt. Edward J. Spencer, and Pfc. Michael F. Duncan on a straight line to the tree. He, himself, took Pfc. Richard D. Mangene and Pvt. Robert F. Medley and circled to the right around a little knob of earth and into a draw, intending to come up to the spot

from the rear. The group under Sergeant Breron were soon pinned down in a shell hole by the fire of Lyngard's and Rayder's guns. At almost the same time this whole sector suddenly began to receive an extremely heavy concentration of mortar fire, and Wells lost nine men of his platoon.

While this situation was developing in the 1st Battalion sector, Hills' men had been digging into the enemy positions they had just destroyed. Hills had just left to find Klein, and Captain Heminway of K Company had just instructed Lt. Edmond C. Strimel to move part of his platoon over to support Hills' men. Another squad of K Company, the reserve squad of the 2d Platoon, had got lost in the brush and had veered off to the right. When they emerged from the thick tangle, the men found that the rest of the company was tied up by enemy positions along the beach. The squad leader, Sgt. James D. Reilly, had halted to await further instructions from his platoon leader. The squad at this time was approximately seventy-five to a hundred yards from the ocean beach, with two self-propelled guns from Cannon Company under Lieutenant Rueckert between it and Lieutenant Strimel.

This was the situation on the various parts of the 1st and 3d Battalion front at the time the enemy launched a counterattack, shortly after 1200 hours. As they moved north the Japanese had kept well out of sight in the brush at the east side of the road. When they came opposite Company A a detachment broke off and tried to assault and overrun the extreme left flank of Kuhl's line. They were met by a tremendous volume of fire that killed ten or twelve enemy in two minutes.

At almost the same time, another Japanese assault group tried to circle in behind Kuhl's line. Here they met DeVito's platoon, disorganized as it was moving up to take the position along the road. The Japanese raked DeVito's lines with at least one machine gun, then charged, throwing grenades, yelling, and firing. This engagement was almost as brief as that which engaged Kuhl's front, but because of the disorganization, the 2d Platoon suffered considerably more. Five men were killed and two wounded, including Captain Schuyler, who was shot through the chest while trying to steady DeVito's men. Between twenty and twenty-five Japanese were killed.

Johnson's platoon received an assault next. While Lorenz was moving up to put his pole charge into the position, the whole of Johnson's line suddenly came under heavy small-arms fire, then mortar fire. Japanese began crawling on their hands and knees through the deep undergrowth and Johnson's men lay there firing as fast as they could. Here about fifteen enemy were killed.

The heaviest part of the whole assault came on Klein's detachment, however. Here the attack was preceded by increasingly heavy small-arms fire and then a mortar barrage. Wells estimated that the Japanese threw about three hundred mortar shells into the area in fifteen minutes. The attack came just as Mainard rounded the little knoll and started toward the tree. To his right, as he made the turn, was a clearing, about twenty-five yards across. In this clearing lay the men Pitchford had lost earlier, and Pitchford's whole platoon lay along its west edge, but in the cover of the bushes. Mainard happened to glance to his right just before moving along the base of the knoll and as he looked he saw the bushes across the clearing part and a Jap step out. Mainard hit the ground and fired and the enemy fell. Both Medley and Mangene now came up behind the sergeant and took up positions. As they watched to see whether the Japanese was alive, two more enemy came through the bushes and began to pick up the one that had been hit. All three Americans fired at once and both enemy dropped. Another head immediately popped out and this time Mainard began yelling for a machine gun, then took up firing as more and more Japanese came out of the bushes. Company C now took up the fire, also.

Staff Sergeant Reginald F. Hill of D Company had heard Mainard's shout, and he and his assistant gunner, Pfc. Howard G. Enides, came running up with their HMG. Mainard pointed to the enemy who were now streaming out of the bushes and crawling and creeping across the clearing. Hill immediately scrambled up onto the knoll, set up his gun and began firing at the enemy. He fired one whole belt and had just started on a second when he was hit in the head and killed. Enides now jumped up behind the gun and took up the fire. After a few moments he ran out of ammunition. By this time Hill and Enides had killed around twenty-five Japs between them and C Company had killed as many more.

After Enides ran out of ammunition he sat behind his gun yelling at the top of his voice for more, at the same time firing his carbine as fast as he could. Mainard, hearing him yell, began looking for an ammunition carrier. By now, however, the situation throughout the entire area was almost indescribable. The whole sector was swept by small-arms fire of every description, and mortar fire was blanketing everything with fragments and dense black smoke and dust. Most of Wells' ammunition carriers had been hit by these fragments and were out of action. Mainard, seeing the situation, decided that he'd better go back and get Enides his ammunition, and so crawled back around the knoll toward the rear. As he disappeared, Medley and Mangene saw him going and not having been informed as to his mission, figured that he

was moving back to better cover. So they crawled after him. When Enides saw the others going, he picked up his gun and followed.

Meanwhile, Lyngard and Rayder picked up enemy to their left and began firing into them. At least thirty-five dead were counted within a radius of twenty yards of Rayder's position. In spite of all Lyngard and Rayder could do, however, Japs did manage to get by them and infiltrate through the area.

In this whole area, meanwhile, another phase of the action was developing. Scott, Breron, and their men had remained pinned down together in their shell hole. In the hole with them was a dead Jap. "We were damned crowded," Scott said afterward. When the mortar fire began dropping into the area, they all decided it was too dangerous. Two things then happened almost at the same time. Lyngard and Rayder switched the fire of their guns, thus releasing the men from the position, and Mainard and his men began moving backward. Seeing these men running, and sensing the cessation of machine-gun fire over their heads, everyone in the hole jumped at once to the conclusion that the position was disintegrating, and they all decided to get back out of there. They all jumped up at once, running in a crouched position with their heads down, to the rear. In a few seconds everyone was moving toward the rear, except Wells and the men who were still left in his machine-gun crew. They stayed in position, coolly firing into the enemy who by this time were creeping all over the area on their hands and knees.

When the heavy fire had started in front, Klein had been back at the CP. It was just after his talk with Law and Rueckert. When he heard the commotion on his front line he now started running up there through the midst of the heavy fire. When he had almost got up to the position he ran headlong into the men running back. Without a moment's hesitation Klein jumped up on a little hill, disregarding the heavy fire. Brandishing his carbine in the faces of his own men he shouted in a voice which could be heard all over the area, even in the midst of the heavy fire. "I'll shoot the first son of a bitch that takes another step backward. You bastards are supposed to be All-American soldiers. Now let's see you show a little guts!" (These were Klein's exact words. There were a lot of men who heard them that day and they all repeat them exactly like that.)

By the time Klein had reestablished his positions the machine guns seemed to have broken up the attack pretty well. The Japanese, however, had withdrawn into the brush and set up their own machine guns with which they continued to put heavy fire on Klein's line.

The counterattack had also hit Hills' men in their position along the ocean beach. On this front, the men had seen large numbers of the enemy

come up on their right. The Japanese appeared to be moving in squad column and, at first, Pero's men thought they were our own troops, part of Klein's platoon. The Americans began whistling at the figures and waving their arms before they discovered their mistake. As more and more of the enemy began to appear, the men took cover in the positions which they were remodeling. The Japanese apparently did not expect to find our men in these positions and thought they were their own troops, or else they tried to beguile our men out. They stood out in the open, at any rate, and waved and motioned at great length. Eventually, however, their leader began using hand-and-arm signals that looked very much like our own extended-order signals, and then, very quickly, they launched a furious charge into the positions. Much of the fighting that ensued was hand-to-hand. Grenades were thrown from all directions and knives were used freely. Within five minutes it had ended and the Japanese withdrew. But in that five minutes, six of Hills' detachment were killed and one wounded.

This wounded man had been shot through the foot and now limped back out of the line and over to where Sergeant Reilly was awaiting instructions. He informed Reilly of what had happened and then limped on off in search of an aid man. He had hardly gone when Reilly's men saw Japanese moving in the brush on their right. Reilly had already turned his men to face the brush when he heard from the wounded B Company man of their fight, so that this squad was now facing south. Shortly after the movement in the undergrowth ten or twelve enemy, led by two officers waving sabers, came charging out of the tangle. Sgt. Thomas E. Toppin, BAR man with I Company, had just been sent forward to K to find out their situation, and as he came up the Japanese came straight at him. He turned his gun at them and emptied the magazine, killing seven of them. Reilly's own BAR men killed the remainder.

Meanwhile, Strimel had gotten his men up behind the B Company position and had placed them carefully in cover. The enemy seemed at this time to have drawn back about thirty yards from where they began to pour a merciless fire at the position they had just charged. Both the B Company and K Company men returned the fire as fast as they could. Strimel, shortly after he arrived at the position, had spotted Rueckert's self-propelled guns and now came over to get Rueckert to help. He had just finished talking to the Cannon Company officer and turned around to go back to his men when he was shot through the head and killed. Rueckert now brought up his vehicles and put fire into the enemy positions, but for upward of half an hour the fire continued on the area and then gradually died out. This marked the end of the counterattack. The whole 1st Battalion was now free to resume the offensive.

Chapter 14: The 1st Battalion, 106th, Resumes

AT THE FAILURE of their attack, whatever remnants of the Japanese assault force were left pulled back a distance of thirty to fifty yards and from there continued to pour heavy small-arms fire into the 106th's lines for better than an hour.

Coincident with this Japanese withdrawal, Klein had decided to push his attack in an effort to swing his line up to the point where A was still waiting. After surveying the situation, he decided to withdraw his men to a safe distance, reorganize them with the elements of Johnson's platoon, and then renew his advance. He therefore went to each man on his own line and arranged a set of whistle signals by which each of them was to pull back to the road, one or two at a time, concealing their movements from the enemy. He then went back to his CP and arranged with the light machine guns of the Weapons Platoon to move up and cover the withdrawal with their guns. He also visited Johnson and had him arrange the same thing with his platoon, telling Johnson to re-form his men on the left of Pitchford's platoon. He next went to Pitchford to tell him of his intentions. While he was talking, a runner arrived from Sergeant Cahill informing him of Dudey's death and of the position of the squad and a half of men on the left of Company A's line. (The Japanese attack had passed completely around this squad, but Cahill, after seeing the 2d Platoon of Company A move up along the road in his rear, decided that he stuck out like a sore thumb on the end of the line. Later, when B still failed to put in an appearance, he withdrew his men inside of the square formed by Company A.) This message made Klein realize how serious was the gap that existed between himself and Company A and so he sought to have Pitchford use his platoon on Johnson's right flank during the new attack. Pitchford informed Klein that his orders were to remain where he was and protect the proposed battalion CP area. Klein was adamant. He insisted that Pitchford use his platoon and so together the two officers called Lieutenant Bates on Pitchford's radio, and Bates went to Lt. Colonel Cornett, receiving immediate permission for Klein to use the platoon. Klein now had these men moved back to the road in the same manner as Johnson's men. He himself stood back on the road blowing his whistle and directing the men to where he wanted them as they moved back to him. While he was occupied with this task, three self-propelled guns from Cannon Company came rolling up the road. These vehicles had landed earlier on Yellow Beach 1 and had gone into action with the 3d Battalion. Lt. Colonel Cornett, however, at about 1145 had become worried because he had received no adequate tank support and had tried desperately to get some sort of aid for his battalion. He walked over to the regimental

CP at that time and discovered that all the vehicles had been landing on Yellow Beach 1 and were either in use by the 3d Battalion or had been corralled into a large tank pool just off the beach. The tankers, and Cannon Company, incidentally, had gone to bed the night before and even boarded their LCMs the next morning believing that the old plan of attack was still in force. The Cannon Company platoon leaders had been instructed to support the 3d Battalion on Parry Island and it was not until they actually headed for shore that they realized they were going in on Eniwetok. When they came ashore, it was without any clear orders at all. They landed in the fourth wave, instead of the eighth as originally planned, and reported immediately to the 3d Battalion and were put to work. When Lt. Colonel Cornett finally found out what had happened, he informed Colonel Ayers, who immediately ordered one platoon, under Lt. Milton J. Baack, to proceed at once to the 1st Battalion CP and report to Lt. Colonel Cornett.

It was at this juncture that Klein intercepted Baack and his vehicles. He stopped them and asked Baack to help him in the advance. Baack had been ordered to proceed to the battalion CP and report to Lt. Colonel Cornett in person, however, and felt that he had better comply with these orders. Once more Klein insisted, and talked Baack into going to Cornett and getting the battalion commander's permission to use his vehicles in B Company's advance. (Just to make sure Baack would come back, Klein kept two of the three vehicles with him so that he could keep an eye on them.)

By the time Baack returned from the battalion CP with permission to go ahead, Klein had completed his reorganization. He now had Pickering's remnants on the extreme left, with instructions to try and contact Hills (this was never accomplished), and next to these men he placed Johnson's platoon, which he designated as the base platoon for the advance. On his right he had Pitchford's 1st Platoon of C Company. His three Cannon Company vehicles he had placed about ten yards in front of the whole line, about equally spaced, from one flank to the other.

With this organization the whole line advanced by bounds, with Klein, and the Cannon Company vehicles firing with their heavy guns into the brush as they moved forward, in the lead. After an advance which brought them to the top of the rise, approximately twenty yards beyond the spot at which the counterattack had hit, one of Pitchford's men, Sergeant Walker, was hit by rifle fire and the rest of the line came into more of it. Klein, therefore, ordered a halt and had the self-propelled guns fire into the brush across the draw. At this point, Baack's gun suf-

ferred a broken recoil mechanism and had to withdraw until it was repaired. One of the other vehicles also ran out of ammunition.

While his men were probing for enemy positions across the clearing, Klein knelt beside Walker and dressed his wound, then had him carried back out of the line of fire. It was at this point that he discovered the presence of Pitchford's wounded, lying about fifteen yards to the front, in the bottom of the draw. One of them, Pfc. Clifford L. Bohling, was lying in plain view of the enemy, and had been in this position for over an hour, but by playing dead he had managed to escape further harm. However, when Bohling discovered that our own men had come up to him and were trying to discover the Japanese positions, he immediately began to point out the sources of enemy fire, although each movement on his part called down heavy fire upon himself.

Bohling's movements having attracted the attention of Klein, the platoon leader now moved alone down into the area and came up to the wounded man. He shielded him with his own body while he dressed the wound, and then carried him back to his own front line. After finishing this task, Klein then moved out into the area again and covered aid men while they came up and brought out the rest of Pitchford's men.

While engaged in this task, Klein was notified that his men would be relieved by the 3d Battalion of the 22d Marines. This was around 1315. The decision to commit the reserve battalion had come about from a combination of circumstances. At 1st Battalion CP, Lt. Colonel Cornett had received, in rapid order, the news of all that was happening on the various parts of the battalion front. LaRussa had arrived with the report of what had happened to the 2d and 3d Platoons of C Company, he had discovered that he was without tank support; Law had come back with the word that a platoon was needed on Klein's right; Schuyler had asked for the commitment of a platoon from C to cover his left, and a few minutes later Schuyler himself had been wounded. Reports from Pitchford indicated the withdrawal of Klein's men during the counterattack, and shortly after that, Hills came back to battalion with the word that his detachment was isolated. Most of this information was passed on to regiment, and Colonel Ayers received it in conjunction with more bad news from the 3d Battalion. In that area, K Company had become heavily engaged, Lieutenant Strimel had been killed, and the whole company was so busily involved with a strong Japanese position that it was unavailable for use anywhere else. At 1230, therefore, Colonel Ayers ordered the reserve battalion to land on Yellow Beach 2.

From shortly after 1300, therefore, the whole 1st Battalion line remained relatively stationary, with the exception of the extreme right flank which continued to work slowly forward through the strong

Japanese position in that area. The Marine battalion landed at 1420, and after reorganizing, was committed on the left flank of the 1st Battalion. Klein notified the commanding officer of his exact position, and of the enemy positions to his front. He had been using his Cannon Company vehicles, while he was waiting, to pour a steady stream of fire into these positions and had succeeded in reducing most of them before he was relieved.

The Marines passed through the left flank of the line of the 1st Battalion, 106th, about 1515 and advanced south, their right flank contacting Kuhl's left at 1605. From this point, the line moved off immediately, with the 3d Battalion of the 22d Marines occupying all the territory to the left of the road, and Company A on the right, extending to the lagoon beach. Company A was now commanded by Lt. Robert C. McCoy.

Companies B and C were withdrawn to the vicinity of the battalion CP and reorganized. Bates' platoons were nearly intact and so Lt. Colonel Cornett ordered him to advance behind A with his two platoons in column and to have his leading platoon pinch off Kuhl's platoon as soon as they overtook the front line. Bates immediately placed Colishaw's 23d Platoon in the lead and set out in an attempt to overtake the advance, which was now moving rapidly toward the south end of the island.

Company B, meanwhile, which had been badly mauled and disorganized, was ordered to become battalion reserve until Captain Law could reassemble all the various elements of his command. Most of the men had retired to a point near the beach and were getting their first chance to rest and eat since they landed. Shortly after 1630, however, the same pillbox which had held up the 2d Platoon in the morning, now flared up again. This position had been alternately quiet and active all day, so much so that the dead and wounded who had been hit near it, still lay where they fell. All attempts to either remove them or blow up the position had failed, the latter because of the wounded. The new flare-up came just as Captain Law was trying to reorganize for the advance down the island in reserve. Three men of the 104th Engineers had been hit in rapid succession as they worked in the shore party.

With reorganization impossible in this area, Klein again took a hand. He ordered Pfc. Jacob G. Morotti, Pvt. George Dunn, and Pfc. Elly Hallers, a BAR man, to cover all entrances and holes to the main shelter. He then pulled out a grenade, walked straight up to the position and dropped it in. Following this, he picked up one of the wounded men and dragged him back down over the bank where he turned him over to an aid man. He then returned and covered Pfc. Floyd Wooten of the

102d Engineers while he advanced and turned a flamethrower into the place. (Pvt. Mike Giano and Private Stone of the 102d Medics had meanwhile gone up and brought out the rest of the wounded.) Pvt. Gilbert Glasier and Lt. Howard V. Brennan of the engineers then went up and put shape charges into all the holes and entrances.

The advance of Company A and the Marines, meanwhile, had been moving toward the end of the island. The whole area in the A Company zone was covered with holes, but most of them seemed to be unoccupied. Their presence, however, necessitated that each one be fired into and grenaded. The only real opposition met by McCoy was on the right flank, where a few Japanese were found in holes at about 1800.

Company C, with Lieutenant Colishaw's platoon in the lead, did not overtake A until after this time. Colishaw caught up with Kuhl and notified him of his orders, but in the advance that followed, only one squad of A's left platoon was pinched off, the picture eventually being one of confusion. At just about the time that Colishaw made contact with Kuhl, the whole line of the Marines suddenly ran up against the main Japanese position on the island and their advance was stopped. The enemy poured a heavy fire into the whole area and laid down a mortar barrage, some of which landed in the 1st Battalion area, directly behind the front line. This pinned down Pitchford's whole platoon and cut it off from Colishaw. It also cut off the right squad of the Marine line from the rest of their unit and this squad kept right on moving. Kuhl and Colishaw, thinking that they were in contact with the main body of the Marines, strove to keep that contact. The Marines moved so rapidly, however, that it was impossible for Colishaw's whole platoon to ever pinch off all of Kuhl's men. The line that moved on to the end of the island, therefore, had one squad of C Company on the extreme left, and the two platoons of Kuhl and Colishaw, all mixed together, next to it. Barnett's platoon was still on the right.

Lieutenant McCoy, meanwhile, at about 1815, had called the battalion CP and asked Lt. Colonel Cornett where he wanted the line dug in for the night. Cornett, upon reaching regiment by radio, was told to wait, and then, at 1850 he was instructed by Colonel Ayers to fight all night. (Ayers had felt that the standard practice in the Army, of digging in for the night, was faulty. He felt that by continuing the attack through the night, the Japanese would not have an opportunity to prepare strong positions, nor organize, and that by keeping them off balance, their night infiltration tactics would be frustrated.)

Upon receipt of these orders from regiment, Lt. Colonel Cornett decided to replace Company A on the line with B which had had some chance to rest and eat. At 1900, therefore, he ordered Law to advance

and pass through Company A's line and continue the fight until daylight. Law, however, had a good deal of trouble getting his company together, so that it was 1920, barely twenty minutes till darkness, before he ever moved off from the Battalion assembly area, where his troops had been mopping up since Klein had knocked out the pillbox. B Company's advance in its attempt to overtake A, was with Hills and the 1st Platoon on the right, Johnson and the 2d Platoon on the left, and Pickering and the 3d platoon in reserve. Klein, with his Weapons Platoon, brought up the rear, as support. At 1935, the leading elements arrived at Company A's CP, about 150 yards from the end of the island, and Hills and Johnson immediately talked to McCoy, found out the exact location of his front lines, and then moved out to relieve Company A.

In the meantime, McCoy had already radioed both Barnett and Kuhl and informed them that they were being relieved. Both platoon leaders felt, however, that because of the approaching darkness, any stop would be liable to result in heavy casualties, both for themselves and for the relieving company. Contact with the Marines had been unsatisfactory all afternoon, and about the only knowledge Kuhl had of their position was by physical contact. He felt now that if his line stopped, this contact would be lost and he knew that movement at night was particularly dangerous. So both Kuhl and Barnett decided to keep on moving forward and to allow B to overtake them as they advanced. With this in mind they moved on out, and at about ten minutes after darkness fell they suddenly found themselves on the end of the island.

Meanwhile, Pitchford's platoon, with Bates, had run into trouble. The mortar barrage had pinned them down and they had lost contact with everyone on their front. Seeing the main body of the Marines on their left front they were even more confused as to the situation. While Bates was still trying to reach Colishaw by radio, one of his men, Pfc. Kenneth H. Brown, was shot in the leg by a sniper. Almost at the same time, B Company's two leading platoons came up, having just left McCoy. When they were told that C Company had just received sniper fire, their advance immediately slowed down. Until that time the men had been moving forward rather rapidly, attempting to overtake Kuhl and Barnett before darkness fell, but both Hills and Johnson felt that, with enemy near, the forward movement should be more careful. This decision resulted in B Company's not reaching A until after the latter had arrived at the end of the island.

Another complication had entered the picture by this time. Klein, with his platoon, had been moving up steadily behind Pickering. Shortly after leaving McCoy, Law, who was with Klein, suddenly remembered something he had forgotten to talk to McCoy about. He told Klein

that he was going back to the CP and that he would catch up. Klein, however, demurred. He did not feel it was safe for the captain to be wandering around in the darkness all alone. At first he tried to get him to take two riflemen back with him, but when the captain refused this, Klein told him that he would wait on the spot until he returned. Law assented, so Klein waited. When Law got back to McCoy he found that Company A had reached the end of the island. He then tried to get in touch with Klein, but Klein's radio had picked this precise time to go out again. Then, while Law worked, he got word from both Hills and Johnson, and later Pickering, that they had also reached the end of the island.

Klein, meanwhile, was waiting for Law to return. When fifteen minutes had elapsed without the captain's putting in an appearance, he decided to advance on the rest of the company. It was pitch dark by this time, however, so Klein called up two of his riflemen and told them to cover him. He then placed himself about twenty-five yards out in front of the platoon and started down the island, yelling at the top of his voice, "Oh Hills, Johnson, Pickering!" over and over. He thought that by proceeding in this manner he would protect his men from friendly fire and that if any enemy fire were attracted, it would fall on him, and not on the platoon. Men all over the island seem to have heard him yelling except the men he wanted to hear him. Pitchford and Bates with their platoon were still waiting for some indication from Colishaw as to his position and for the Marines to move forward. They heard Klein coming up through the battalion zone, yelling at the top of his voice, and Bates immediately went over to talk to him. After a short discussion, Bates ordered his men to fall in behind Klein's men and the procession moved off as before, with Klein continuing to use his voice in an effort to reach the others. Perhaps fifty yards beyond the point where the two forces had joined, they met a patrol of Marines on their way back from the end of the island. This was evidently the same squad that had tied on to Colishaw's left. They informed Klein and Bates that they had been to the end of the island and that there were Army troops there also. They reported that some of the Army troops had been grenaded and badly hurt.

As a result of this meeting, Klein thought that he had veered too far to the left and was now in the Marine zone, so he changed his course in more or less of a half-right and started out again. A few minutes later the whole group emerged on the beach. The place at which Klein came out was deserted, and because he had veered off to the right, he was under the impression that he had landed somewhere along the lagoon shore. He therefore turned left and proceeded about fifty yards without

seeing any sign of any other troops. It was just at this point that his radio suddenly began working again and he regained contact with Hills.

The situation on the front lines had eventually straightened itself out, although Lt. Colonel Cornett at battalion and Colonel Ayers at regiment were still not clear about the situation until next morning. The shape of the island was such that elements on the right would reach the southwest tip before the rest would emerge on the beach, and this is precisely what happened. Barnett had reached the end of the island at about ten minutes after dark, and Kuhl a few minutes later. Kuhl immediately got in touch with the 1st Platoon leader by radio and the two men decided to get together personally to decide their next move. While Barnett waited for Kuhl to come down the beach, Hills emerged from the brush and called to him. After Hills had informed Barnett that he was supposed to relieve him, it became apparent to Hills that Company A had already reached its objective. When Kuhl came up they held a discussion at which they decided to put both companies into a perimeter for the rest of the night. Kuhl then went back up the beach and was just getting his platoon ready to move out, when from somewhere inland, two or three grenades landed in the middle of his men. In the resulting explosion, five of Kuhl's men were seriously wounded, and Kuhl himself received some fragments in his back, but was able to continue. For some reason, whether in the darkness Kuhl was unaware that the men were injured, or whether he was unable to find them, the platoon now moved off without them. As they came up to Hills and Barnett, it was discovered that Johnson had hitched his platoon onto the tail of Kuhl's and that Pickering had followed suit with Johnson's. With five platoons, therefore, a perimeter defense was now set up for the night. (Barnett and Kuhl had both decided that any attempt to move backward down the island would be likely to draw friendly fire.) It was while this perimeter was being set up that Klein finally got hold of Hills by radio.

Neither Klein nor Hills, as stated before, had any exact idea as to the other's position. Klein told Hills that he thought he was on the lagoon beach. He then told Hills that the latter should fire a tracer bullet into the air, after which Klein would do the same. By this method they would have some idea as to the relative position. Klein ordered his men not to fire, under any circumstances, in the direction of Hills' tracer, and told Hills to be absolutely sure that none of the men in the perimeter fired in the direction of his tracer.

It was only when these tracers were exchanged that Klein realized he had been moving in the wrong direction and that Hills knew where Klein was. As a matter of fact, Hills himself completely missed Klein's

signal, having set himself to looking north along the lagoon shore. Only the alertness of one of his men who happened to be looking along the end of the island was responsible for picking it up at all. Hills then told Klein that he wanted to recheck, and another exchange took place. After this tracers were fired about every two minutes.

All this occurred shortly after 2100, and as Klein moved down the beach toward Hills it was completely dark. At 2133 hours, however, the destroyers which were standing offshore received a request from regiment to illuminate the beach, and they immediately began a systematic sweeping of the whole area with their searchlights. These lights caught Klein in their full glare as he moved west. All of the men were immediately pinned down by small-arms fire from Hills' direction. When the searchlight moved off, the firing ceased, and Klein proceeded. Every ten or twenty yards now, however, the searchlight came back, and each time it returned, the whole group received extremely heavy fire and had to take shelter as best they could against or behind the bank. (Hills afterward emphatically denied that any of the men in the perimeter were doing any firing. Klein said: "Maybe so, but there weren't any airplanes around and these things weren't rocks.") As they moved forward between these bursts of fire, Klein, still in the lead, suddenly stumbled over the men of Kuhl's platoon who had been wounded earlier. Two of these men were in serious condition, one of them, Pfc. Bruno C. Bernard, having lost a leg in the explosion of the grenade. All of the men were lying right on the edge of the water, either in great pain or unconscious. None of them seemed able to move and the incoming tide had nearly drowned Bernard as he lay in the water moaning and still conscious.

In spite of the fact that the men were lying in an exposed position and that the searchlight, returning, would silhouette anyone working on the men, Klein now asked for one volunteer to go out into the edge of the water with him to administer aid. One aid man from C Company volunteered and Klein then ordered the rest of the men to retire behind the bank and construct litters from their rifles. He and the aid man then advanced to the edge of the water and proceeded to bandage and help the wounded as best they could. They then carried them back to the bank and placed them on litters. (During this whole time, the searchlight had not once come to bear on the area. Klein's vehement protests, which he had been voicing continuously after the light first hit him, had reached regiment and use of the light had ceased temporarily, although Klein did not know it at the time.) With the men ready to be transported, Klein then called Hills by radio and told him to notify

Barnett that he was bringing in the men and for Barnett to arrange for litter bearers to carry them back to the battalion aid station.

When he finally arrived in the perimeter a few minutes later, Klein discovered that this had not been done and immediately asked for volunteers to take the men back from his own group. Barnett had gotten hold of McCoy at the Company A CP, meanwhile, and now McCoy called him back to notify him that battalion was sending forward litter bearers to bring the men back. Klein, therefore, abandoned the project and gave his attention to digging his own men into the perimeter.

The remainder of the night was marred by three incidents. The first of these was an attack on the Company A CP shortly before 2300. This CP had been located about 150 yards back from the end of the island and McCoy had utilized Sergeant DeVito's 2d Platoon and the Weapons Platoon for protection. At some time between 2230 and 2300 the CP perimeter was attacked by three Japanese who managed to infiltrate through the outer lines. One man, Pfc. Ben Bernis, Jr., was killed in this attack, but the three enemy were killed by Pfc. Joaquin Faber, Pfc. Leonard Smith, and Sgt. Rocco P. Caputo. It had important bearing on the action, because shortly afterward the eight litter bearers sent forward by battalion arrived at the CP, and McCoy, believing that the whole area was filled with Japanese, refused to allow these men to move farther forward, with the result that the casualties discovered by Klein were not evacuated until next morning. Bernard died during the night.

The perimeter formed by the greater part of the battalion also saw some activity, although it is not certain whether this came from the enemy or from our own troops. Around 2330, just after he had finished digging in, Klein was aroused by a call from Pvt. Emil Dunfee, one of his light machine gunners. Dunfee had suddenly shouted, "Hey, Lieutenant Klein! Look at here!" When Klein got over to Dunfee, he discovered that Dunfee's gun had been set up squarely on top of a Japanese shelter. Klein immediately brought up a bangalore torpedo, after clearing the men away, and put it in one of the openings. It did not go off immediately, however, so another was brought up and put in. Both torpedoes now went off together and the explosion shook up everyone in the perimeter. Next morning the bodies of eight enemy were found inside, but it is not certain whether they were killed by the charge or by earlier shell fire.

At around 0300 in the morning, Staff Sgt. Thomas B. Carroll of Company A was killed by a rifle shot. Carroll had been near Bernard all night, trying to ease the wounded man's pain, and next morning both were found dead together.

At dawn, Lt. Colonel Cornett pulled B and C Companies back two hundred yards. With B on the right and C on the left, these two companies now retraced their steps to the end of the island. The whole area was honeycombed with Japanese positions and each one had to be investigated and destroyed. No live Japanese was encountered, however. At 1000, after completing the mopping up of the area through which they had moved the night before, both companies again drew back and executed a turning movement, which brought them up onto a line along the road, facing east. From this line, they were in a position to prevent any Japanese from escaping westward into the holed area as the Marines advanced through the sector left of the road. While B and C were completing the mop-up of their side of the island, A was drawn back to the extreme north boundary of the 1st Battalion area, next to the 3d Battalion (106th Infantry) and on the left side of the road. At about 1200 they began to move down the island to the south, mopping up in the area covered by the Marines on the first day. At 1320, Colonel Ayers received a message from the commanding officer of the 3d Battalion, 22d Marines, that his position was grave, due to Japanese counterattacks and infiltration and that he urgently needed the support of a rifle company from the Army troops on the island. Company A was, therefore, alerted and advanced up behind the Marine front line, approximately a hundred yards short of the end of the island.

[The activity in the Marine sector throughout the first twenty-four hours they were on the island is shrouded in mystery. Lieutenant McCoy had direct physical contact with them from 1605 on the 19th until their advance was stopped around 1800, but reports that after that time, events in that area are not known to him except by hearsay. Up until 1800, however, BLT 22-3 seems to have experienced little or no difficulty. Neither battalion nor regimental CP received any satisfactory communications from the Marines throughout the time they were under regimental control and events in that area were a mystery to Colonel Ayers until he received the message on the afternoon of the 20th. From the stories of observers, it appears that when the Marine line was stopped on the evening of the 19th, there was no further advance until next afternoon. During the night the whole Marine front was counterattacked and suffered extremely heavy casualties. Infiltrating Japanese got into the battalion CP area and killed several of the officers, including the battalion executive. K Company, on the left flank, suffered the heaviest casualties. During the morning of the 20th, Marine medium tanks were brought into the area, along with a platoon of lights from Company C of the 766th Tank Battalion, and all five vehicles of the 106th's Cannon Com-

pany. Drivers of these vehicles state that the Japanese had dug in four tanks on the south tip of the island and were using them for pillboxes. The guns from these emplaced tanks were still active up until 1300 on the afternoon of the 20th, one of them scoring a direct hit on a light tank from the 766th. Officers of the 106th Infantry all say that the Marines received a heavy counterattack at around 2300 on the 19th, and that next morning, the whole area was piled thick with both Japanese and Marine dead. There seems little doubt that the area which BLT 22-3 ran into was the main Jap position on the island. Due to the fact that the 22d Marine Regiment was returned to Guadalcanal at the close of the action, no investigation could be conducted into the events that took place in its area.]

When Lieutenant McCoy had moved up and made contact with the battalion commander of BLT 22-3, he was told that, contrary to Colonel Ayers' conception, there was no immediate danger of the Marines' position disintegrating. He was asked, however, to support K Company on the left flank, and so A was drawn up in a line along the ocean side of the island to prevent any Japanese from running along the beach and then cutting in behind the K Company position. Shortly after 1500 the Marine commander again came to McCoy and asked him if he would cover K, while it reorganized. Company A was then interposed on the Marine line, but took no part in the battle. At 1700, the Marine commander notified McCoy that he had been ordered to withdraw to the CP area of the 1st Battalion, 106th, and asked if Company A could cover the withdrawal and finish mopping up to the end of the island. McCoy did this and discovered one live Japanese on the beach at the extreme tip of the island. Sergeant DeVito managed to capture this man alive; he proved to be the only prisoner taken on the island by the 106th Infantry, although the Marines had captured one earlier, who turned out to be a Korean. DeVito merely pointed his rifle at the man and motioned for him to put his hands over his head. He came over to DeVito very meekly, scraping, bowing, and grinning. With this task finished Company A now returned to the battalion CP area for the night.

During the night of 20 February several Japanese proved to be active on the island near the battalion area. Two or three men were killed in the perimeter, and the sleepless soldiers saw, on several different occasions, enemy prowling around the machinery on the beach. Those Japanese who were not engaged in trying to break into the CP area seemed to be very naively trying to find out how the bulldozers worked. On two different occasions during the night groups were seen around

them unarmed, poking into this and that, some with their hands behind their back!

Because of the fact that there were Japanese at hand, Lt. Colonel Cornett decided, on the morning of 21 February, to go through the area once more. At 0830 he lined the entire battalion across the island, A on the right, B in the center, and C on the left, and at 0900 they jumped off down the island again. Company A reached the southwest tip before 1400 and immediately returned to the battalion area. Company B also reached its objective shortly afterward, neither unit having come across a live Japanese. Captain Law, after coming out on the beach, even allowed his men to take off their clothes and go for a swim.

It was about 1500 before C reached the old Japanese strongpoint on the southeast tip of the island. When he was about halfway through it Sergeant Mihalopoulos, on the extreme left flank, ran into an enemy soldier lying behind a log along the edge of the water. This Japanese now opened fire, and others followed suit. Mihalopoulos called several men to him and put them to work covering the position. He crawled around through the brush to the right and got behind the log and began to put enfilade fire on the enemy. Meanwhile, B Company, in swimming when the shooting started, found itself in the line of fire. Captain Law went over to Mihalopoulos to tell him to cease firing, not realizing there were any Japanese in the vicinity. Shortly after talking to the sergeant, Law was pinned down in a shell hole and couldn't get back to his company. Klein and Hills, however, with Johnson's help, got the rest of the men dressed, and re-formed the company in a line running perpendicular to Bates' line, thus cutting off any Japanese escape to the west side of the area.

By 1630 all opposition had ceased and C Company returned to the battalion area. They had killed twenty-two enemy in the melee. On 22 February, after the 3d Battalion had moved off the island, the area was once more mopped up. Company A swept through the area on the south, C in the center of the island, near the beaches and battalion CP area, and B at the north end. On 24 February the 1st Platoon of Company A landed on Lantana Island, south of Eniwetok, but encountered no resistance. This completed BLT 106-1 action on Eniwetok Atoll.

Chapter 15. The 3d Battalion, 106th

THE 3d Battalion of the 106th Infantry landed on Eniwetok Island, it will be remembered, due to a last-minute change in plans. The mission of the battalion was simply to establish a line and hold until the 1st Battalion had completed its mission southward. When relieved by BLT 106-1 at the completion of this mission, BLT 106-3 was to reload on LSTs and prepare for the attack on Parry Island.

In order to accomplish the mission allotted to his battalion, Lt. Col. Harold I. Mizony had placed L Company on the left, K on the right and I in reserve. Company L was to turn left and extend clear across the island, taking up a line along the small road that ran east and west. From this position it was to stop any Japanese infiltration south, protecting the 1st Battalion rear. Company K was to advance straight across the island to the ocean side, knocking out all Japanese opposition. When it had finished this it was to turn left and mop up in L Company's rear, in the area east of the road which ran the length of the island. Company I was to move inland in the wake of L and K and establish itself in the vicinity of the battalion CP area, just across the road from the lagoon beach, as a reserve.

Because these orders were late coming through, Capt. Charles H. Hallden of L Company and Capt. William T. Heminway of K got together with the commanding officer of Antitank Company, 32d Infantry (7th Division), which was operating the LVTs in the landing, and made certain that everyone understood exactly what was to be done. As a result of this, the whole 3d Battalion landed exactly as planned in good order, except for one boat containing K Company men. This boat broke down and one squad and a half of K Company's 3d Platoon under Lt. Edmond C. Strimel landed late.

Captain Hallden of L landed with his 1st Platoon on the left, his 3d on the right, and his 2d in reserve. His original plan was to form his line facing north with the 1st on the left, the 3d on the right, and the reserve platoon in the center. The beach upon which L landed was relatively quiet, and after a preliminary reconnaissance by Captain Hallden, the whole company moved off in good order. When it reached the road, the extreme right squad ran into two Japanese pillboxes which sat up on top of two adjoining knobs. As the platoon advanced in short rushes, Staff Sgt. Joseph Maziarz, 3d Platoon guide, killed a Japanese near one of these pillboxes and moved on ahead. He had no sooner gone by, however, when Pfc. Dean A. Johnson, a BAR man, was shot dead. Heavy fire now pinned down this whole side of the line. Pfc. Fred Marshall, who had evidently spotted the position and tried to crawl forward to get at it, was killed. The whole advance stopped.

Pfc. James F. Henderson, who was between Johnson and Marshall and now knew exactly where each position was, managed to crawl back to Staff Sgt. Leonard A. Dziekowicz, the squad leader, and point them out. Dziekowicz went back to the beach, where he found Lieutenant Rueckert of Cannon Company. Rueckert brought up his vehicles to work on the position.

While most of this platoon had been held up here, the rest of the company had moved on ahead, and Captain Hallden, seeing that his right flank was engaged, now ordered the 2d Platoon to take the right flank of the line on the ocean beach. Then, when Rueckert had come up with his vehicles, Lt. William A. Aue, in command of the 3d Platoon, ordered his men to disengage from the position while he turned over its reduction to K Company which had come up on the right. The 3d Platoon now turned and took up a position in the middle of the L Company line, which was already forming.

The 2d Platoon, which had been reassigned the job of taking over the ocean flank, arrived at the sea side of the island by 1010, and swung to the left to take up the line. As they moved up, Sgt. Frank H. Riordon, Pfc. Rodney G. Wilson, and Pvt. Joseph G. Artessa found themselves in thick brush. They came to a large hole covered with a palm frond and one of them lifted up the frond and threw in a grenade. The explosion, strangely enough, seemed to be followed by hymn singing. Riordon said later that he couldn't believe his ears, nor could the other men. They now crawled back up through the brush with grenades ready and Riordon lifted up the edge of the frond and looked into the hole. He was surprised to find an old man and six other natives inside. The old man was leading the others in hymns. (The men all swear that it was a familiar hymn, although they can't get together as to just what it was. One says it was "Nearer, My God, To Thee," and another says it was "Onward, Christian Soldiers," but whatever it was the men all recognized it.) Riordon now attracted the attention of the man inside and the natives all came climbing out. The first thing they did was to kneel in prayer. By the time this was finished, Staff Sgt. Michael T. Gracioc, acting platoon sergeant, had come up. The natives, upon completion of the prayer, all gathered around him and the old man grabbed Gracioc by the arm and tried to lead him away. Gracioc said: "I told him, 'Now wait a minute, bud.' I wasn't going off up in those bushes all alone with this guy." (Gracioc is still amused by the fact that he called a king, "bud.")

Staff Sergeant Cyrus E. Shelhammer, leader of the 3d Squad, however, now took Riordon, Wilson, and Artessa with him and followed the old man forward to another hole. Here they found twenty-six more natives

and brought them back to the company line. (Later in the afternoon, I Company ran into a strong Japanese machine-gun position not twenty yards away from where Shelhammer took out the natives.) There were now thirty-three natives gathered on L Company's right flank and they were creating quite a diversion. Captain Hallden, in order to remove what was rapidly becoming a threat to his position, now ordered them taken back to the company CP, from where First Sgt. Lewis W. Pawlinga conducted them to the beach. The picture of Pawlinga and the natives on the beach is the now famous photograph cited as Sgt. John Bushemi's last picture, which appeared in *Yank* and newspapers all over the country. The King told the regimental S-2 section that there were eight hundred Japanese on the island, considerably more than were supposed to be there.

While the right flank of L was engaged with the natives, the left flank had swung into line facing north, and had advanced into an area marked on the maps as a village. This had been destroyed, however, by naval bombardment, and only a few concrete revetments remained. The 1st Platoon had moved in among these revetments and investigated them without seeing any sign of enemy. When it became apparent to Hallden that his right flank was held up while the natives were being evacuated, he pulled his 1st Platoon back about a hundred yards on a line with the right flank. When the 2d Platoon moved forward again, the whole line moved up close to the revetments and stopped and dug in. While digging in Pfc. Elton H. Oltman and Pfc. Willis W. Noe, near the center of the line, happened to notice Japanese moving from the north of the island into the revetments. Both Noe and Oltman opened up on these men and succeeded in killing at least four of them. With no further movement discernible, both soldiers then returned to the task of getting their foxholes dug.

The whole L Company line remained stationary for over an hour. During most of this time there was little activity in the sector, but shortly after the men dug in they received a heavy mortar barrage. No casualties were caused, but the men did improve their slit trenches by digging them deeper. At around 1200, several observers were brought ashore in an LCVP and landed on the extreme left edge of Yellow Beach 1. These observers turned out to be reporters and cameramen, who for a time busied themselves with taking pictures of Sergeant Pawlinga and the natives who had by this time been brought back to the beach. These men, including Bushemi and a *Yank* correspondent, then wandered up over the bank to where L Company was dug in. Despite the fact that they were repeatedly warned by the infantrymen, they persisted in moving up and down the line from foxhole to foxhole,

usually asking the occupants if they had "seen any action yet." After some time they moved back to the left flank of the line and sat down not ten feet away from the men in the holes. Repeated warnings given these correspondents could not convince them they should move to a safer area. Very soon their exposed positions began to draw mortar fire and Bushemi was mortally wounded. Despite the fact that a fairly heavy barrage fell throughout the area, no L Company man was hit, although one shell landed less than five yards away from dug-in positions.

While L Company had been occupied with establishing its line across the island, K had also moved inland. K Company's right flank touched B Company's left, so that this part of the line became involved in the same position that held up B. Japanese began popping out of holes on all sides, and while Hollowiak and Hills were involved on the right, Staff Sgt. Earl T. Bodiford of K became personally responsible for getting his company through. Bodiford was on K Company's extreme right flank, and as he came up over the bank on his move inland, he found himself staring straight down the barrel of a Japanese rifle. The American pulled the trigger on his rifle but the gun jammed. At the same time, the Japanese fired, but missed at almost point-blank range, so Bodiford reached over and grabbed the muzzle of the enemy's piece. Bodiford banged the gun against a tree, shattering the stock, then hit the Jap over the head with the barrel. He then cleared the jam in his gun and crawled along from hole to hole, firing and throwing grenades. Altogether he killed seven Japanese in this position.

The rest of K Company moved rapidly across the island after the position had been reduced, keeping contact with B on the right until they reached the road, and then moving on alone. Heminway had placed his 2d Platoon on the left and his 1st on the right, with his 3d in reserve. The 3d Platoon followed close behind the leading platoons until it reached the position on the left flank that had held up L. Here it dropped behind. (The 3d Platoon, it will be remembered, was shy one and a half squads at this time.)

Beyond the road K ran into the same thick tangle of underbrush that confronted Klein, and although this slowed the company it did not stop it. The 2d Squad of the 2d Platoon, in reserve, got lost, wandering far over to the right and ending up in rear of the 1st Platoon. It was this squad, under Sergeant Reilly, that later became involved in the Japanese counterattack. Upon reaching the extreme sea side of the island, K ran into a series of enemy holes, and as the right of Heminway's line began to swing to the north, all forward movement stopped. Reilly's squad, which was behind the 1st Platoon, coming up at this time, also

stopped until the line began moving again. It was during the halt that it was hit by the counterattack.

The beginning of K Company's turning movement brought it into probably the strongest single terrain feature of the whole island. This was a fringe of heavy brush from six to twelve feet high that bordered the ocean along the entire length of the east shore. This heavy belt was anywhere from ten to thirty-five yards wide and was so dense that movement in it was difficult. Throughout the next two or three days the men had to fight this brush inch by inch. To make matters worse, the enemy had placed positions in this brush and fired from it continuously so that practically every foot of it had to be beaten. Tanks went in ahead of the infantry and ran up and down through it, but as soon as the vehicles had passed the brush always sprang up into place just as dense as before. K had managed to make its way across the island by approximately 1130, almost fifteen minutes ahead of B on the right, and almost an hour and a half after L on the left. This discrepancy can be accounted for by the fact that L merely advanced, being interested primarily in getting across the island. Also, L had none of the thick underbrush that confronted K and B. However, due to the brush and the natives, it was almost 1145 before Captain Hallden did finally get his line established, and still another fifteen or twenty minutes before he got it dug in.

While the 2d Platoon of K was trying vainly to break through the brush, Lieutenant Strimel arrived from the beach with his half of the 3d Platoon, and at almost the same time, Hills came over to Heminway to ask for help. Strimel, therefore, was sent with a squad and a half to help B Company. It took him almost fifteen minutes to get his men together, and by that time the counterattack had hit. In the ensuing fire fight, Strimel himself was killed. K was now involved in its rear, and in its front. As the 1st Platoon struggled through the brush it came upon hole after hole and had to fire into them and grenade them. In spite of their vigilance the troops missed some of the positions and Japanese popped out behind them. Lt. Cleveland Davis, Heminway's executive, was lost in this manner, having stepped over a hole, only to be shot in the back by a hidden enemy soldier. Pfc. James C. Lett, who was with Davis, was also shot in the shoulder. Pfc. Edward A. Keuck, who happened to be near Davis, jumped over both the wounded men and killed the Japanese with his bayonet. Keuck was later killed by a Japanese in almost the same manner.

At 1230, Colonel Ayers visited the 3d Battalion CP and ordered the 3d Battalion to advance to the north end of the island. Ayers had by this time been convinced that the 1st Battalion had run into more than it could handle. He had also just received the report of the captured

natives that there were some eight hundred or more Japanese on the island. Lt. Colonel Mizony immediately ordered his battalion to advance with L on the left and K on the right. It was just at this time, however, that K was busy with the counterattack. Heminway notified Mizony that his whole company was heavily involved and would be unable to carry out the order for some little time. Upon receipt of this word, the battalion commander told Heminway to continue demolishing the Japanese positions along the ocean shore. He then ordered Lt. George T. Johnson of I Company to take over the zone of L Company's right. He notified Captain Hallden that as soon as I Company came up, he was to allow Johnson to pass through his front line, then withdraw his right platoon into company reserve, and establish contact with the rest of his line so that the island was equally divided between the two companies. K was ordered to form battalion reserve and follow the advance as soon as it had completed mopping-up operations along the beach.

The relief of L Company's right flank was accomplished at 1330 and as Company I came into line, the battalion was notified that there would be an air strike toward the north end of the island. Both assault companies, therefore, had to display panels before making any movement whatsoever. The strafing mission lasted for about thirty minutes and the companies then moved forward. Pfc. John L. Bales, on I Company's extreme right flank, next to the brush (Company I had not tried to beat through the brush, but had anchored its right flank on the inside rim and put a three-man patrol along the water's edge on the other side), went forward to pick up his panel. As he bent over to pick it up, he heard a rustle in the bushes and looked around just in time to see a hand grenade come flying at him. He managed to get out of the way of it, but its explosion killed Pfc. Efriem S. Halverson, and wounded Pfc. William F. Muscenti, who had come up beside Bales. The whole company now stopped and for almost half an hour poured rifle fire into the undergrowth. After fairly saturating the place, the men went into the bushes and found five dead Japanese and innumerable holes. They also learned at this time that the patrol on the beach had killed an enemy officer as he ran along the road. It might be added here that earlier, while the planes were strafing, the Japanese had tried to fire their machine guns on our lines, thus making our men believe they were being strafed by their own planes. Johnson now had to send his men into the brush and beat through it. He called over part of the 2d Platoon, his left platoon, and put it to work helping the 1st. The 2d had little or no difficulty in advancing.

Meanwhile, after the strafing, L had moved off and had advanced from seventy-five to a hundred yards before it came under another

heavy mortar barrage which held it up. This rapid movement had carried Hallden's right flank well ahead of Company I and a gap developed between the two companies. In an effort to close this gap Johnson had to commit his reserve squad of the 2d Platoon. This situation continued to exist for the remainder of the day's advance and caused I a great deal of difficulty. When night fell, L was finally drawn back by Lt. Colonel Mizony and the right company, I, was thereafter designated as the base unit. This has a great deal of importance to the whole action, because L ran into little or no opposition throughout its whole operation, and its slowness in reaching the end of the island can be laid to the fact that Hallden never let his line get ahead of, first I, and later K. The right company's speed, of course, was determined by the operations of the platoon on the right flank which was forced to beat through the thick brush, an exceedingly slow and tedious process.

With the reduction of the first Japanese position by gunfire, I Company again pressed forward about seventy-five yards. Pfc. Ernest Simon happened to look up and saw three enemy run into the bushes just ahead. Simon at once warned his comrades and forward movement stopped. Three tanks were brought up and fired several rounds into the bush at this point. Pfc. Raymond Cunningham then moved forward to poke among the bushes, which almost immediately spouted machine-gun fire. For almost an hour I Company engaged in a fire fight with the hidden Japanese position. The procedure was usually to fire into the area with small arms, then have the tanks run up and down through it and then send men up to investigate. When all fire had finally ceased from the position, the whole platoon waded into the area, and found the bodies of twenty-one dead Japanese. The next morning this platoon had to retrace its steps two hundred yards and again attack the same position, this time with Lieutenant Rueckert's Cannon Company vehicles, and the engineers with pole charges.

When the platoon had searched the area completely, a new difficulty arose. The light tanks, which had been running up and down through the brush, had suddenly gotten too far out in front. One of them had run on ahead some distance and was now stalled about a hundred yards ahead of the infantry. Major Ernest C. Delear, executive officer of the 3d Battalion, who was with I Company at the time, halted the advance and sent Pfc. Charles E. Isaacson with a six-man patrol to the stalled vehicle, which seemed to have caught on fire. All efforts to communicate with the tankers failed, and so Isaacson returned to I Company's front line. Major Delear was insistent that the tank be brought back, however, and so Isaacson went back with his patrol. By this time the fire was out, but in spite of Isaacson's banging he could get no response. (The men

in the tank had no idea that anyone was outside. They had dismounted from the vehicle during Isaacson's absence, put out the fire, which was minor, and having been fired at, got back in and buttoned up, waiting for the infantry to come up with them.) Isaacson stayed up with the tank until after 1800, and then decided that it was useless and went back to the company line.

By this time Johnson had instructed his men to dig in for the night and had relayed this word along to battalion. Battalion had, therefore, notified Colonel Ayers that they would not reach the end of the island that night. At 1850, however, Ayers ordered the advance to continue. Johnson, however, did not feel he was in any condition to continue the fight and so asked battalion CP to give him time to replenish his ammunition and water supply. Lt. Colonel Mizony granted him the time and Johnson immediately put his Weapons Platoon to work hauling up these supplies. He also made arrangements with the Cannon Company vehicles through Lieutenant Rueckert, to resupply them, thus keeping them up on his lines. He tried to do the same thing with the light tanks (two were still with him, but one was on ahead), but they both returned to the beach, getting back before Lieutenant Johnson eventually moved off.

While this resupply was going on, I had continued to dig in. When darkness fell, they had a well established line. L, on the left, had by this time dropped back and also dug in, and now, in view of Lt. Colonel Mizony's order issued at the time the night advance was decided upon, were waiting for I, the base company, to move out.

Johnson's line had been built up with a section of HMGs from M Company on the right flank. While the resupply was still going on, shortly after dark, this gun section received orders from Major Delear to displace to the left, to the center of the battalion line, and from there, when the advance started, to fire into the bushes and trees along the beach. The leader of the section immediately notified Staff Sgt. Benjamin Yelle, in charge of Johnson's right squad, that he was leaving. Shortly after this section pulled out, however, Yelle heard three enemy coming up through the brush. They stopped not more than five or ten yards from the right flank and Yelle motioned to the others near him to watch the bush. He then raised up and threw a grenade at the spot where he could hear the Japanese jabbering. As this grenade hit behind the bush, a figure darted out from behind it, waving a sword. In two or three steps he was on top of Yelle and had brought his sword down on Yelle's head, killing him instantly. The sword almost cut Yelle's head in two. Technician Fourth Grade Tagliafari, an aid man who was occupying Yelle's foxhole with him, raised up and tried to shoot the Japanese, but was

killed by a rifle bullet from the bush. At almost the same time the grenade went off and evidently killed the two enemy behind the bush and also the one that had killed Yelle. This action was all simultaneous, nearly everything happening at once.

Only a few minutes after Yelle's death, Pfc. Lyle Williams, who had gone back to try and find some ammunition, returned. Finding Yelle dead and the machine-gun section gone, he realized that a bad gap existed on the right flank through which the enemy could infiltrate with ease. Williams immediately went back to Lieutenant Johnson and informed him of the situation. Johnson, in turn, got hold of battalion and Lt. Colonel Mizony ordered one platoon of K Company to take its place on the Company I right flank. This was accomplished before 2200 and at that time Company I was again ready to resume its advance.

As Johnson moved up from his CP to the front line to direct the forward movement, he was met by Sgt. Joe L. Crump, who was commander of the tank which had earlier gone astray. Crump told Johnson that his tank had been badly crippled and that he needed help. The company commander, therefore, ordered his men to take the crippled tank.

The advance along the whole battalion front was about ten yards at a time. There were fires burning in the thick grass all over the island and this furnished some light, but the ground itself was in shadow and the men could not see a thing there, where most of the Japanese were. (Mizony had earlier experimented with flares from both his 60mm mortars and from the ships in the lagoon, but the wind blew them back over our lines and silhouetted the men, making them perfect targets, so this had to be abandoned.) The line was accompanied by tanks and the M Company machine guns. After ten yards, the line stopped and every available weapon poured fire into the area to the front, particularly the bushes along the ocean beach. After about ten minutes of this the line again advanced another ten yards and repeated the process.

At approximately 0200 in the morning the advance finally reached the tank. When attempts were made to go up to the vehicle, it was found that Japanese had taken cover behind it and were in position to put heavy small-arms fire onto any one coming up. Grenades were then thrown over the tank, and after a short time most of these enemy were either killed or forced to retire to the shelter of the bushes. Over forty dead enemy bodies were found under or near the tank the next morning. The task of trying to rescue the tankers inside was now taken over by Sgt. James J. Luts. With Isaacson and three others, Luts crawled up on the tank and began banging on the steel. He received a faint response but could not get the tankers to come out.

This tank had been through a very harrowing experience. After Isaacson had left it, before dark, the tankers had sat there on the beach, wondering where the others were. Sergeant Crump had finally decided to go back and find the front line, but rather than go down the beach he turned and moved inland through the bushes, intending to go down on the inside of the fringe. Just before the tank turned south, however, it ran over a land mine, which blew off a track and disabled the vehicle. Crump crawled out of the turret to inspect the damage, leaving the cover open, because he expected to return in a few moments. After he had finished his inspection he began to climb back into the tank and was greeted by a hail of small-arms fire. To keep from being hit he had to crawl under the tank, and remain there until after dark. Meanwhile, Japanese were swarming all over the outside. Crump's three companions, who remained inside, had left the turret open waiting for the commander's return. After some time, Cpl. David Butler decided he had better get out and see where Crump was. As he climbed up into the turret and stuck his head out, he found himself confronted by a Japanese soldier. Before Butler could do anything, the enemy aimed a kick that caught him full between the eyes. As Butler lay there in the turret, stunned by the kick, the Jap bayoneted him just above the stomach, and he slipped back to the floor unconscious. Meanwhile, T/5 Nathan Madnich, the driver, jumped to his feet and ran over to the turret, grabbed the enemy's bayonet, and pulled. The Japanese pulled the trigger on his piece. The bullet caught Madnich in the hip, but the driver kept right on struggling. The enemy seems to have been able to get another shell into his chamber because he fired again. This bullet missed Madnich, but hit the unconscious Butler on the floor. After that, Madnich managed to get the rifle away from the enemy soldier. He turned it around and tried to fire, but his man had gotten away. By this time the third member of the crew had got out of his seat. This was Cpl. Albert Hart. Hart, seeing that both Madnich and Butler were hurt, told Madnich that he was going to try and get out and get help. He started to crawl up out of the turret and as he got his head and shoulders out of the tank he was hit by several bullets and fell to the ground outside, dead. Shortly after this, Madnich noticed that another Japanese had managed to get up on the tank outside. This one dropped a grenade down through the turret opening. Madnich tried to hide from it, but received some pieces of fragments in his legs. He was able to get most of his torso up above the shelf of the turret, but never was quite able to get his legs out of range. Fragments also hit Butler, lying on the floor. The tank immediately caught fire in several places inside, and Madnich had to run around from place to place on his wounded legs to put out the fires. He had no sooner done this than

the Japanese dropped another grenade into the tank and Madnich had to run and hide again. After the explosion the same fire-fighting had to be repeated, but this time the enemy went away. An hour later he returned again and threw more grenades. This type of attack continued for the next six hours. When they were finally removed from the tank Madnich had been wounded seventeen times, mostly in the legs and lower back, despite which he continued to crawl around the tank putting out the fires that were started with each detonation. Butler, who lay unconscious through most of this, suffered, in addition to his bullet and bayonet wounds, a brain concussion and a multitude of grenade fragment wounds, doctors later removing these pieces even from his eyes. He somehow survived.

It took almost an hour to get these two men out of the tank. Luts finally had to crawl up on the vehicle behind the turret and lift Madnich out because the latter was no longer able to stand. Aid men then came up and crawled down inside to get Butler. Both men then had to wait until daylight came before being evacuated.

While Luts had been trying to get the tankers out, other men had moved up, and, using the tank for cover, poured a steady stream of small-arms fire into the area beyond. When Butler had been brought out, Johnson pulled his company back a few yards and reorganized. At this time, Major Delear, who had been with the Company I front line all evening, moved around the tank cautiously to make a short reconnaissance of the other side. Both he and his runner were found seriously wounded a few moments later, although no one actually saw them shot.

Johnson now ordered his men forward again, and after a heavy preliminary fire, the whole line moved out. About twenty-five yards beyond the tank, Pfc. Paul Marechek was killed by fire from the brush and the advance stopped. Johnson ordered his company to dig in around 0430 to 0500. It remained here until full daylight, around 0700.

Before moving out again that morning, Lieutenant Johnson brought up his Weapons Platoon and all of M Company's heavy machine guns, and sprayed the area thoroughly. Then Tech. Sgt. Benjamin R. Morra, in command of the 1st Platoon, was ordered to withdraw his men and go back to the area which had been attacked the previous afternoon and mop it up. The 3d Platoon now took over the job of mopping up the bushes during the advance.

As Company I moved off, behind a heavy covering fire, and behind tanks, it was still plagued by fire from the brush ahead. Tech. Sgt. Michael Speracino, 3d Platoon commander, remembering that Marechek had been killed here the night before, took steps to try and knock out

the position from which the fire was coming, a point about twenty-five yards ahead of where they had dug in. Instead of using his platoon in a skirmishers' line, Speracino had his squads advance in squad column. Two of these he held in reserve at the line of departure while he took the 1st Squad forward. Creeping and crouching, these men reached a point opposite the fire, and then at a signal from Speracino, the whole column faced right and moved toward the bushes. At almost the same time, a Japanese machine gun opened up from the cover and Speracino and Pfc. Peter Stremeyer were killed instantly. Staff Sgt. James B. Grant, Jr., the squad leader, was wounded so badly that he died later. Grant had thrown a grenade just as he was hit, and this explosion seemed to have silenced part of the position, but heavy fire still continued, keeping the remainder of the squad pinned down. Pfc. Donald B. Thess, a member of the 3d Squad, which had now moved up about thirty yards to the left of the position, was caught in this fire and killed also. With all forward movement thus stopped, Johnson now ordered Staff Sgt. George Schmidt to take his 2d Squad up and try to get around the position in some way. Schmidt, in a well executed maneuver, picked out a small rise in ground between where the 1st and 3d Squads were pinned down, and crawled up behind this to beyond the Japanese position. His whole squad could now pour fire into the enemy. After nearly fifteen minutes the position was reduced.

Company I again reorganized here, and at about 0840, moved ahead again, still trying to find some suitable way to get through the brush. Twenty-five yards beyond the point where the first Japanese fire was met, Pfc. Stanley Lukowski was shot through the stomach and killed. The advance again stopped and the right platoon had to reduce another position. This spot, incidentally, had already been covered by the tanks, but the Japanese were holed up and the vehicles did not harm them.

Lieutenant Colonel Mizony now realized that I Company was so tired it could no longer keep up with the tanks, and ordered K Company to relieve I. This relief was accomplished by 1030.

Throughout this time, L Company had been advancing steadily on the left, guiding on the base company, I, and meeting little opposition. It had suffered several casualties the previous afternoon from Japanese mortar fire, and during the night advance had two or three men wounded by accidents, but on the whole nothing serious had appeared.

From the time that K took over on the right, the forward movement progressed with little, if any, opposition. The position in front of which Lukowski had been killed appears to have been the last enemy strong-point. All the rest of that day, and all through the next, only a stray Japanese was seen here and there. The job of beating through the brush

continued with the Cannon Company vehicles in the lead. During the afternoon of the 20th, both L and K came to a tank ditch that stretched clear across the island. This ditch had been mined, but the enemy had left rather clearly marked channels across it so that our troops were not held up. Engineers were brought up after the front lines had passed through and took care of the field. (The Japanese had rigged mines by using hand grenades and mortar shells. They were not regular land mines.) At about 1500, the first troops to cross the ditch thought they saw an enemy tank coming down the road from the north end of the island, but when it came close it proved to be a Cannon Company M8 vehicle which had gone clear through to the end of the island, without seeing a single enemy.

Throughout the second and third days, the whole center part of the island was afire and dense clouds of smoke hung over everything, making visibility poor. The fire also exploded many dud artillery and naval shells thrown into the area, and Jap ammunition dumps. Company L had been badly shaken up by a tremendous explosion as it moved off on the morning of the 20th and K suffered the same kind of a jolting late in the afternoon of the same day. Luckily none was hurt in either explosion, but the danger still existed.

Lieutenant Colonel Mizony therefore ordered I Company, which had been moving along all afternoon mopping up, to move forward behind L and K and put out the fires. At 2100 Company I moved back to the battalion CP area and prepared to dig in for the night. Johnson had already drawn up a definite design for the perimeter, but as the 1st Platoon came back, an officer from battalion headquarters ordered Sergeant Morra to dispose his platoon in a manner that did not fit into the original plan. In the darkness, therefore, no one was exactly sure where anyone else was, nor were the personnel of the CP informed as to the exact location of I Company, which was supposed to protect it. Had the troops been able to dig in earlier, there would have been accurate knowledge of where the different units were. As it was, these men, spending their first night in an organized defense, were "trigger-happy." Shots were fired at anything and grenades were thrown promiscuously with the result that I Company, the next morning, counted over eight of its men killed and several seriously wounded. Company K, on the right of the front line, also suffered six killed and several wounded, but how much of this was caused by Japanese and how much by our own troops, is still a matter for conjecture.

The 3d Battalion reached the north end of the island at 1630 on the 21st after an advance that was held up all the way by the slowness of the

task of mopping up in the brush along the right shore. With the completion of the 3d Battalion's advance, the island was secure and the work of the Army was done in the Eniwetok battle. The 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, was moved back aboard ships on 22 February as a reserve for the Parry Island battle. They landed on Parry about 1000 on the 23d, but were not used. The I&R Platoon of regimental Headquarters Company landed on Lady Slipper on the 24th and met no opposition, but did capture one wounded Japanese prisoner who came floating by in the water from Parry Island.

RCT 106 minus BLT 106-2 garrisoned the Eniwetok Atoll until late in March, when the 111th Infantry Regiment arrived to relieve it. The 106th Infantry then returned to Oahu, arriving there on 13 April, almost two months after the battle.

Chapter 14: The 1st Battalion, 106th, Resumes

AT THE FAILURE of their attack, whatever remnants of the Japanese assault force were left pulled back a distance of thirty to fifty yards and from there continued to pour heavy small-arms fire into the 106th's lines for better than an hour.

Coincident with this Japanese withdrawal, Klein had decided to push his attack in an effort to swing his line up to the point where A was still waiting. After surveying the situation, he decided to withdraw his men to a safe distance, reorganize them with the elements of Johnson's platoon, and then renew his advance. He therefore went to each man on his own line and arranged a set of whistle signals by which each of them was to pull back to the road, one or two at a time, concealing their movements from the enemy. He then went back to his CP and arranged with the light machine guns of the Weapons Platoon to move up and cover the withdrawal with their guns. He also visited Johnson and had him arrange the same thing with his platoon, telling Johnson to re-form his men on the left of Pitchford's platoon. He next went to Pitchford to tell him of his intentions. While he was talking, a runner arrived from Sergeant Cahill informing him of Dudey's death and of the position of the squad and a half of men on the left of Company A's line. (The Japanese attack had passed completely around this squad, but Cahill, after seeing the 2d Platoon of Company A move up along the road in his rear, decided that he stuck out like a sore thumb on the end of the line. Later, when B still failed to put in an appearance, he withdrew his men inside of the square formed by Company A.) This message made Klein realize how serious was the gap that existed between himself and Company A and so he sought to have Pitchford use his platoon on Johnson's right flank during the new attack. Pitchford informed Klein that his orders were to remain where he was and protect the proposed battalion CP area. Klein was adamant. He insisted that Pitchford use his platoon and so together the two officers called Lieutenant Bates on Pitchford's radio, and Bates went to Lt. Colonel Cornett, receiving immediate permission for Klein to use the platoon. Klein now had these men moved back to the road in the same manner as Johnson's men. He himself stood back on the road blowing his whistle and directing the men to where he wanted them as they moved back to him. While he was occupied with this task, three self-propelled guns from Cannon Company came rolling up the road. These vehicles had landed earlier on Yellow Beach 1 and had gone into action with the 3d Battalion. Lt. Colonel Cornett, however, at about 1145 had become worried because he had received no adequate tank support and had tried desperately to get some sort of aid for his battalion. He walked over to the regimental

CP at that time and discovered that all the vehicles had been landing on Yellow Beach 1 and were either in use by the 3d Battalion or had been corralled into a large tank pool just off the beach. The tankers, and Cannon Company, incidentally, had gone to bed the night before and even boarded their LCMs the next morning believing that the old plan of attack was still in force. The Cannon Company platoon leaders had been instructed to support the 3d Battalion on Parry Island and it was not until they actually headed for shore that they realized they were going in on Eniwetok. When they came ashore, it was without any clear orders at all. They landed in the fourth wave, instead of the eighth as originally planned, and reported immediately to the 3d Battalion and were put to work. When Lt. Colonel Cornett finally found out what had happened, he informed Colonel Ayers, who immediately ordered one platoon, under Lt. Milton J. Baack, to proceed at once to the 1st Battalion CP and report to Lt. Colonel Cornett.

It was at this juncture that Klein intercepted Baack and his vehicles. He stopped them and asked Baack to help him in the advance. Baack had been ordered to proceed to the battalion CP and report to Lt. Colonel Cornett in person, however, and felt that he had better comply with these orders. Once more Klein insisted, and talked Baack into going to Cornett and getting the battalion commander's permission to use his vehicles in B Company's advance. (Just to make sure Baack would come back, Klein kept two of the three vehicles with him so that he could keep an eye on them.)

By the time Baack returned from the battalion CP with permission to go ahead, Klein had completed his reorganization. He now had Pickering's remnants on the extreme left, with instructions to try and contact Hills (this was never accomplished), and next to these men he placed Johnson's platoon, which he designated as the base platoon for the advance. On his right he had Pitchford's 1st Platoon of C Company. His three Cannon Company vehicles he had placed about ten yards in front of the whole line, about equally spaced, from one flank to the other.

With this organization the whole line advanced by bounds, with Klein, and the Cannon Company vehicles firing with their heavy guns into the brush as they moved forward, in the lead. After an advance which brought them to the top of the rise, approximately twenty yards beyond the spot at which the counterattack had hit, one of Pitchford's men, Sergeant Walker, was hit by rifle fire and the rest of the line came into more of it. Klein, therefore, ordered a halt and had the self-propelled guns fire into the brush across the draw. At this point, Baack's gun suf-

ferred a broken recoil mechanism and had to withdraw until it was repaired. One of the other vehicles also ran out of ammunition.

While his men were probing for enemy positions across the clearing, Klein knelt beside Walker and dressed his wound, then had him carried back out of the line of fire. It was at this point that he discovered the presence of Pitchford's wounded, lying about fifteen yards to the front, in the bottom of the draw. One of them, Pfc. Clifford L. Bohling, was lying in plain view of the enemy, and had been in this position for over an hour, but by playing dead he had managed to escape further harm. However, when Bohling discovered that our own men had come up to him and were trying to discover the Japanese positions, he immediately began to point out the sources of enemy fire, although each movement on his part called down heavy fire upon himself.

Bohling's movements having attracted the attention of Klein, the platoon leader now moved alone down into the area and came up to the wounded man. He shielded him with his own body while he dressed the wound, and then carried him back to his own front line. After finishing this task, Klein then moved out into the area again and covered aid men while they came up and brought out the rest of Pitchford's men.

While engaged in this task, Klein was notified that his men would be relieved by the 3d Battalion of the 22d Marines. This was around 1315. The decision to commit the reserve battalion had come about from a combination of circumstances. At 1st Battalion CP, Lt. Colonel Cornett had received, in rapid order, the news of all that was happening on the various parts of the battalion front. LaRussa had arrived with the report of what had happened to the 2d and 3d Platoons of C Company, he had discovered that he was without tank support; Law had come back with the word that a platoon was needed on Klein's right; Schuyler had asked for the commitment of a platoon from C to cover his left, and a few minutes later Schuyler himself had been wounded. Reports from Pitchford indicated the withdrawal of Klein's men during the counterattack, and shortly after that, Hills came back to battalion with the word that his detachment was isolated. Most of this information was passed on to regiment, and Colonel Ayers received it in conjunction with more bad news from the 3d Battalion. In that area, K Company had become heavily engaged, Lieutenant Strimel had been killed, and the whole company was so busily involved with a strong Japanese position that it was unavailable for use anywhere else. At 1230, therefore, Colonel Ayers ordered the reserve battalion to land on Yellow Beach 2.

From shortly after 1300, therefore, the whole 1st Battalion line remained relatively stationary, with the exception of the extreme right flank which continued to work slowly forward through the strong

Japanese position in that area. The Marine battalion landed at 1420, and after reorganizing, was committed on the left flank of the 1st Battalion. Klein notified the commanding officer of his exact position, and of the enemy positions to his front. He had been using his Cannon Company vehicles, while he was waiting, to pour a steady stream of fire into these positions and had succeeded in reducing most of them before he was relieved.

The Marines passed through the left flank of the line of the 1st Battalion, 106th, about 1515 and advanced south, their right flank contacting Kuhl's left at 1605. From this point, the line moved off immediately, with the 3d Battalion of the 22d Marines occupying all the territory to the left of the road, and Company A on the right, extending to the lagoon beach. Company A was now commanded by Lt. Robert C. McCoy.

Companies B and C were withdrawn to the vicinity of the battalion CP and reorganized. Bates' platoons were nearly intact and so Lt. Colonel Cornett ordered him to advance behind A with his two platoons in column and to have his leading platoon pinch off Kuhl's platoon as soon as they overtook the front line. Bates immediately placed Colishaw's 23d Platoon in the lead and set out in an attempt to overtake the advance, which was now moving rapidly toward the south end of the island.

Company B, meanwhile, which had been badly mauled and disorganized, was ordered to become battalion reserve until Captain Law could reassemble all the various elements of his command. Most of the men had retired to a point near the beach and were getting their first chance to rest and eat since they landed. Shortly after 1630, however, the same pillbox which had held up the 2d Platoon in the morning, now flared up again. This position had been alternately quiet and active all day, so much so that the dead and wounded who had been hit near it, still lay where they fell. All attempts to either remove them or blow up the position had failed, the latter because of the wounded. The new flare-up came just as Captain Law was trying to reorganize for the advance down the island in reserve. Three men of the 104th Engineers had been hit in rapid succession as they worked in the shore party.

With reorganization impossible in this area, Klein again took a hand. He ordered Pfc. Jacob G. Morotti, Pvt. George Dunn, and Pfc. Elly Hallers, a BAR man, to cover all entrances and holes to the main shelter. He then pulled out a grenade, walked straight up to the position and dropped it in. Following this, he picked up one of the wounded men and dragged him back down over the bank where he turned him over to an aid man. He then returned and covered Pfc. Floyd Wooten of the

102d Engineers while he advanced and turned a flamethrower into the place. (Pvt. Mike Giano and Private Stone of the 102d Medics had meanwhile gone up and brought out the rest of the wounded.) Pvt. Gilbert Glasier and Lt. Howard V. Brennan of the engineers then went up and put shape charges into all the holes and entrances.

The advance of Company A and the Marines, meanwhile, had been moving toward the end of the island. The whole area in the A Company zone was covered with holes, but most of them seemed to be unoccupied. Their presence, however, necessitated that each one be fired into and grenaded. The only real opposition met by McCoy was on the right flank, where a few Japanese were found in holes at about 1800.

Company C, with Lieutenant Colishaw's platoon in the lead, did not overtake A until after this time. Colishaw caught up with Kuhl and notified him of his orders, but in the advance that followed, only one squad of A's left platoon was pinched off, the picture eventually being one of confusion. At just about the time that Colishaw made contact with Kuhl, the whole line of the Marines suddenly ran up against the main Japanese position on the island and their advance was stopped. The enemy poured a heavy fire into the whole area and laid down a mortar barrage, some of which landed in the 1st Battalion area, directly behind the front line. This pinned down Pitchford's whole platoon and cut it off from Colishaw. It also cut off the right squad of the Marine line from the rest of their unit and this squad kept right on moving. Kuhl and Colishaw, thinking that they were in contact with the main body of the Marines, strove to keep that contact. The Marines moved so rapidly, however, that it was impossible for Colishaw's whole platoon to ever pinch off all of Kuhl's men. The line that moved on to the end of the island, therefore, had one squad of C Company on the extreme left, and the two platoons of Kuhl and Colishaw, all mixed together, next to it. Barnett's platoon was still on the right.

Lieutenant McCoy, meanwhile, at about 1815, had called the battalion CP and asked Lt. Colonel Cornett where he wanted the line dug in for the night. Cornett, upon reaching regiment by radio, was told to wait, and then, at 1850 he was instructed by Colonel Ayers to fight all night. (Ayers had felt that the standard practice in the Army, of digging in for the night, was faulty. He felt that by continuing the attack through the night, the Japanese would not have an opportunity to prepare strong positions, nor organize, and that by keeping them off balance, their night infiltration tactics would be frustrated.)

Upon receipt of these orders from regiment, Lt. Colonel Cornett decided to replace Company A on the line with B which had had some chance to rest and eat. At 1900, therefore, he ordered Law to advance

and pass through Company A's line and continue the fight until daylight. Law, however, had a good deal of trouble getting his company together, so that it was 1920, barely twenty minutes till darkness, before he ever moved off from the Battalion assembly area, where his troops had been mopping up since Klein had knocked out the pillbox. B Company's advance in its attempt to overtake A, was with Hills and the 1st Platoon on the right, Johnson and the 2d Platoon on the left, and Pickering and the 3d platoon in reserve. Klein, with his Weapons Platoon, brought up the rear, as support. At 1935, the leading elements arrived at Company A's CP, about 150 yards from the end of the island, and Hills and Johnson immediately talked to McCoy, found out the exact location of his front lines, and then moved out to relieve Company A.

In the meantime, McCoy had already radioed both Barnett and Kuhl and informed them that they were being relieved. Both platoon leaders felt, however, that because of the approaching darkness, any stop would be liable to result in heavy casualties, both for themselves and for the relieving company. Contact with the Marines had been unsatisfactory all afternoon, and about the only knowledge Kuhl had of their position was by physical contact. He felt now that if his line stopped, this contact would be lost and he knew that movement at night was particularly dangerous. So both Kuhl and Barnett decided to keep on moving forward and to allow B to overtake them as they advanced. With this in mind they moved on out, and at about ten minutes after darkness fell they suddenly found themselves on the end of the island.

Meanwhile, Pitchford's platoon, with Bates, had run into trouble. The mortar barrage had pinned them down and they had lost contact with everyone on their front. Seeing the main body of the Marines on their left front they were even more confused as to the situation. While Bates was still trying to reach Colishaw by radio, one of his men, Pfc. Kenneth H. Brown, was shot in the leg by a sniper. Almost at the same time, B Company's two leading platoons came up, having just left McCoy. When they were told that C Company had just received sniper fire, their advance immediately slowed down. Until that time the men had been moving forward rather rapidly, attempting to overtake Kuhl and Barnett before darkness fell, but both Hills and Johnson felt that, with enemy near, the forward movement should be more careful. This decision resulted in B Company's not reaching A until after the latter had arrived at the end of the island.

Another complication had entered the picture by this time. Klein, with his platoon, had been moving up steadily behind Pickering. Shortly after leaving McCoy, Law, who was with Klein, suddenly remembered something he had forgotten to talk to McCoy about. He told Klein

that he was going back to the CP and that he would catch up. Klein, however, demurred. He did not feel it was safe for the captain to be wandering around in the darkness all alone. At first he tried to get him to take two riflemen back with him, but when the captain refused this, Klein told him that he would wait on the spot until he returned. Law assented, so Klein waited. When Law got back to McCoy he found that Company A had reached the end of the island. He then tried to get in touch with Klein, but Klein's radio had picked this precise time to go out again. Then, while Law worked, he got word from both Hills and Johnson, and later Pickering, that they had also reached the end of the island.

Klein, meanwhile, was waiting for Law to return. When fifteen minutes had elapsed without the captain's putting in an appearance, he decided to advance on the rest of the company. It was pitch dark by this time, however, so Klein called up two of his riflemen and told them to cover him. He then placed himself about twenty-five yards out in front of the platoon and started down the island, yelling at the top of his voice, "Oh Hills, Johnson, Pickering!" over and over. He thought that by proceeding in this manner he would protect his men from friendly fire and that if any enemy fire were attracted, it would fall on him, and not on the platoon. Men all over the island seem to have heard him yelling except the men he wanted to hear him. Pitchford and Bates with their platoon were still waiting for some indication from Colishaw as to his position and for the Marines to move forward. They heard Klein coming up through the battalion zone, yelling at the top of his voice, and Bates immediately went over to talk to him. After a short discussion, Bates ordered his men to fall in behind Klein's men and the procession moved off as before, with Klein continuing to use his voice in an effort to reach the others. Perhaps fifty yards beyond the point where the two forces had joined, they met a patrol of Marines on their way back from the end of the island. This was evidently the same squad that had tied on to Colishaw's left. They informed Klein and Bates that they had been to the end of the island and that there were Army troops there also. They reported that some of the Army troops had been grenaded and badly hurt.

As a result of this meeting, Klein thought that he had veered too far to the left and was now in the Marine zone, so he changed his course in more or less of a half-right and started out again. A few minutes later the whole group emerged on the beach. The place at which Klein came out was deserted, and because he had veered off to the right, he was under the impression that he had landed somewhere along the lagoon shore. He therefore turned left and proceeded about fifty yards without

seeing any sign of any other troops. It was just at this point that his radio suddenly began working again and he regained contact with Hills.

The situation on the front lines had eventually straightened itself out, although Lt. Colonel Cornett at battalion and Colonel Ayers at regiment were still not clear about the situation until next morning. The shape of the island was such that elements on the right would reach the southwest tip before the rest would emerge on the beach, and this is precisely what happened. Barnett had reached the end of the island at about ten minutes after dark, and Kuhl a few minutes later. Kuhl immediately got in touch with the 1st Platoon leader by radio and the two men decided to get together personally to decide their next move. While Barnett waited for Kuhl to come down the beach, Hills emerged from the brush and called to him. After Hills had informed Barnett that he was supposed to relieve him, it became apparent to Hills that Company A had already reached its objective. When Kuhl came up they held a discussion at which they decided to put both companies into a perimeter for the rest of the night. Kuhl then went back up the beach and was just getting his platoon ready to move out, when from somewhere inland, two or three grenades landed in the middle of his men. In the resulting explosion, five of Kuhl's men were seriously wounded, and Kuhl himself received some fragments in his back, but was able to continue. For some reason, whether in the darkness Kuhl was unaware that the men were injured, or whether he was unable to find them, the platoon now moved off without them. As they came up to Hills and Barnett, it was discovered that Johnson had hitched his platoon onto the tail of Kuhl's and that Pickering had followed suit with Johnson's. With five platoons, therefore, a perimeter defense was now set up for the night. (Barnett and Kuhl had both decided that any attempt to move backward down the island would be likely to draw friendly fire.) It was while this perimeter was being set up that Klein finally got hold of Hills by radio.

Neither Klein nor Hills, as stated before, had any exact idea as to the other's position. Klein told Hills that he thought he was on the lagoon beach. He then told Hills that the latter should fire a tracer bullet into the air, after which Klein would do the same. By this method they would have some idea as to the relative position. Klein ordered his men not to fire, under any circumstances, in the direction of Hills' tracer, and told Hills to be absolutely sure that none of the men in the perimeter fired in the direction of his tracer.

It was only when these tracers were exchanged that Klein realized he had been moving in the wrong direction and that Hills knew where Klein was. As a matter of fact, Hills himself completely missed Klein's

signal, having set himself to looking north along the lagoon shore. Only the alertness of one of his men who happened to be looking along the end of the island was responsible for picking it up at all. Hills then told Klein that he wanted to recheck, and another exchange took place. After this tracers were fired about every two minutes.

All this occurred shortly after 2100, and as Klein moved down the beach toward Hills it was completely dark. At 2133 hours, however, the destroyers which were standing offshore received a request from regiment to illuminate the beach, and they immediately began a systematic sweeping of the whole area with their searchlights. These lights caught Klein in their full glare as he moved west. All of the men were immediately pinned down by small-arms fire from Hills' direction. When the searchlight moved off, the firing ceased, and Klein proceeded. Every ten or twenty yards now, however, the searchlight came back, and each time it returned, the whole group received extremely heavy fire and had to take shelter as best they could against or behind the bank. (Hills afterward emphatically denied that any of the men in the perimeter were doing any firing. Klein said: "Maybe so, but there weren't any airplanes around and these things weren't rocks.") As they moved forward between these bursts of fire, Klein, still in the lead, suddenly stumbled over the men of Kuhl's platoon who had been wounded earlier. Two of these men were in serious condition, one of them, Pfc. Bruno C. Bernard, having lost a leg in the explosion of the grenade. All of the men were lying right on the edge of the water, either in great pain or unconscious. None of them seemed able to move and the incoming tide had nearly drowned Bernard as he lay in the water moaning and still conscious.

In spite of the fact that the men were lying in an exposed position and that the searchlight, returning, would silhouette anyone working on the men, Klein now asked for one volunteer to go out into the edge of the water with him to administer aid. One aid man from C Company volunteered and Klein then ordered the rest of the men to retire behind the bank and construct litters from their rifles. He and the aid man then advanced to the edge of the water and proceeded to bandage and help the wounded as best they could. They then carried them back to the bank and placed them on litters. (During this whole time, the searchlight had not once come to bear on the area. Klein's vehement protests, which he had been voicing continuously after the light first hit him, had reached regiment and use of the light had ceased temporarily, although Klein did not know it at the time.) With the men ready to be transported, Klein then called Hills by radio and told him to notify

Barnett that he was bringing in the men and for Barnett to arrange for litter bearers to carry them back to the battalion aid station.

When he finally arrived in the perimeter a few minutes later, Klein discovered that this had not been done and immediately asked for volunteers to take the men back from his own group. Barnett had gotten hold of McCoy at the Company A CP, meanwhile, and now McCoy called him back to notify him that battalion was sending forward litter bearers to bring the men back. Klein, therefore, abandoned the project and gave his attention to digging his own men into the perimeter.

The remainder of the night was marred by three incidents. The first of these was an attack on the Company A CP shortly before 2300. This CP had been located about 150 yards back from the end of the island and McCoy had utilized Sergeant DeVito's 2d Platoon and the Weapons Platoon for protection. At some time between 2230 and 2300 the CP perimeter was attacked by three Japanese who managed to infiltrate through the outer lines. One man, Pfc. Ben Bernis, Jr., was killed in this attack, but the three enemy were killed by Pfc. Joaquin Faber, Pfc. Leonard Smith, and Sgt. Rocco P. Caputo. It had important bearing on the action, because shortly afterward the eight litter bearers sent forward by battalion arrived at the CP, and McCoy, believing that the whole area was filled with Japanese, refused to allow these men to move farther forward, with the result that the casualties discovered by Klein were not evacuated until next morning. Bernard died during the night.

The perimeter formed by the greater part of the battalion also saw some activity, although it is not certain whether this came from the enemy or from our own troops. Around 2330, just after he had finished digging in, Klein was aroused by a call from Pvt. Emil Dunfee, one of his light machine gunners. Dunfee had suddenly shouted, "Hey, Lieutenant Klein! Look at here!" When Klein got over to Dunfee, he discovered that Dunfee's gun had been set up squarely on top of a Japanese shelter. Klein immediately brought up a bangalore torpedo, after clearing the men away, and put it in one of the openings. It did not go off immediately, however, so another was brought up and put in. Both torpedoes now went off together and the explosion shook up everyone in the perimeter. Next morning the bodies of eight enemy were found inside, but it is not certain whether they were killed by the charge or by earlier shell fire.

At around 0300 in the morning, Staff Sgt. Thomas B. Carroll of Company A was killed by a rifle shot. Carroll had been near Bernard all night, trying to ease the wounded man's pain, and next morning both were found dead together.

At dawn, Lt. Colonel Cornett pulled B and C Companies back two hundred yards. With B on the right and C on the left, these two companies now retraced their steps to the end of the island. The whole area was honeycombed with Japanese positions and each one had to be investigated and destroyed. No live Japanese was encountered, however. At 1000, after completing the mopping up of the area through which they had moved the night before, both companies again drew back and executed a turning movement, which brought them up onto a line along the road, facing east. From this line, they were in a position to prevent any Japanese from escaping westward into the holed area as the Marines advanced through the sector left of the road. While B and C were completing the mop-up of their side of the island, A was drawn back to the extreme north boundary of the 1st Battalion area, next to the 3d Battalion (106th Infantry) and on the left side of the road. At about 1200 they began to move down the island to the south, mopping up in the area covered by the Marines on the first day. At 1320, Colonel Ayers received a message from the commanding officer of the 3d Battalion, 22d Marines, that his position was grave, due to Japanese counterattacks and infiltration and that he urgently needed the support of a rifle company from the Army troops on the island. Company A was, therefore, alerted and advanced up behind the Marine front line, approximately a hundred yards short of the end of the island.

[The activity in the Marine sector throughout the first twenty-four hours they were on the island is shrouded in mystery. Lieutenant McCoy had direct physical contact with them from 1605 on the 19th until their advance was stopped around 1800, but reports that after that time, events in that area are not known to him except by hearsay. Up until 1800, however, BLT 22-3 seems to have experienced little or no difficulty. Neither battalion nor regimental CP received any satisfactory communications from the Marines throughout the time they were under regimental control and events in that area were a mystery to Colonel Ayers until he received the message on the afternoon of the 20th. From the stories of observers, it appears that when the Marine line was stopped on the evening of the 19th, there was no further advance until next afternoon. During the night the whole Marine front was counterattacked and suffered extremely heavy casualties. Infiltrating Japanese got into the battalion CP area and killed several of the officers, including the battalion executive. K Company, on the left flank, suffered the heaviest casualties. During the morning of the 20th, Marine medium tanks were brought into the area, along with a platoon of lights from Company C of the 766th Tank Battalion, and all five vehicles of the 106th's Cannon Com-

pany. Drivers of these vehicles state that the Japanese had dug in four tanks on the south tip of the island and were using them for pillboxes. The guns from these emplaced tanks were still active up until 1300 on the afternoon of the 20th, one of them scoring a direct hit on a light tank from the 766th. Officers of the 106th Infantry all say that the Marines received a heavy counterattack at around 2300 on the 19th, and that next morning, the whole area was piled thick with both Japanese and Marine dead. There seems little doubt that the area which BLT 22-3 ran into was the main Jap position on the island. Due to the fact that the 22d Marine Regiment was returned to Guadalcanal at the close of the action, no investigation could be conducted into the events that took place in its area.]

When Lieutenant McCoy had moved up and made contact with the battalion commander of BLT 22-3, he was told that, contrary to Colonel Ayers' conception, there was no immediate danger of the Marines' position disintegrating. He was asked, however, to support K Company on the left flank, and so A was drawn up in a line along the ocean side of the island to prevent any Japanese from running along the beach and then cutting in behind the K Company position. Shortly after 1500 the Marine commander again came to McCoy and asked him if he would cover K, while it reorganized. Company A was then interposed on the Marine line, but took no part in the battle. At 1700, the Marine commander notified McCoy that he had been ordered to withdraw to the CP area of the 1st Battalion, 106th, and asked if Company A could cover the withdrawal and finish mopping up to the end of the island. McCoy did this and discovered one live Japanese on the beach at the extreme tip of the island. Sergeant DeVito managed to capture this man alive; he proved to be the only prisoner taken on the island by the 106th Infantry, although the Marines had captured one earlier, who turned out to be a Korean. DeVito merely pointed his rifle at the man and motioned for him to put his hands over his head. He came over to DeVito very meekly, scraping, bowing, and grinning. With this task finished Company A now returned to the battalion CP area for the night.

During the night of 20 February several Japanese proved to be active on the island near the battalion area. Two or three men were killed in the perimeter, and the sleepless soldiers saw, on several different occasions, enemy prowling around the machinery on the beach. Those Japanese who were not engaged in trying to break into the CP area seemed to be very naively trying to find out how the bulldozers worked. On two different occasions during the night groups were seen around

them unarmed, poking into this and that, some with their hands behind their back!

Because of the fact that there were Japanese at hand, Lt. Colonel Cornett decided, on the morning of 21 February, to go through the area once more. At 0830 he lined the entire battalion across the island, A on the right, B in the center, and C on the left, and at 0900 they jumped off down the island again. Company A reached the southwest tip before 1400 and immediately returned to the battalion area. Company B also reached its objective shortly afterward, neither unit having come across a live Japanese. Captain Law, after coming out on the beach, even allowed his men to take off their clothes and go for a swim.

It was about 1500 before C reached the old Japanese strongpoint on the southeast tip of the island. When he was about halfway through it Sergeant Mihalopoulos, on the extreme left flank, ran into an enemy soldier lying behind a log along the edge of the water. This Japanese now opened fire, and others followed suit. Mihalopoulos called several men to him and put them to work covering the position. He crawled around through the brush to the right and got behind the log and began to put enfilade fire on the enemy. Meanwhile, B Company, in swimming when the shooting started, found itself in the line of fire. Captain Law went over to Mihalopoulos to tell him to cease firing, not realizing there were any Japanese in the vicinity. Shortly after talking to the sergeant, Law was pinned down in a shell hole and couldn't get back to his company. Klein and Hills, however, with Johnson's help, got the rest of the men dressed, and re-formed the company in a line running perpendicular to Bates' line, thus cutting off any Japanese escape to the west side of the area.

By 1630 all opposition had ceased and C Company returned to the battalion area. They had killed twenty-two enemy in the melee. On 22 February, after the 3d Battalion had moved off the island, the area was once more mopped up. Company A swept through the area on the south, C in the center of the island, near the beaches and battalion CP area, and B at the north end. On 24 February the 1st Platoon of Company A landed on Lantana Island, south of Eniwetok, but encountered no resistance. This completed BLT 106-1 action on Eniwetok Atoll.

Chapter 15. The 3d Battalion, 106th

THE 3d Battalion of the 106th Infantry landed on Eniwetok Island, it will be remembered, due to a last-minute change in plans. The mission of the battalion was simply to establish a line and hold until the 1st Battalion had completed its mission southward. When relieved by BLT 106-1 at the completion of this mission, BLT 106-3 was to reload on LSTs and prepare for the attack on Parry Island.

In order to accomplish the mission allotted to his battalion, Lt. Col. Harold I. Mizony had placed L Company on the left, K on the right and I in reserve. Company L was to turn left and extend clear across the island, taking up a line along the small road that ran east and west. From this position it was to stop any Japanese infiltration south, protecting the 1st Battalion rear. Company K was to advance straight across the island to the ocean side, knocking out all Japanese opposition. When it had finished this it was to turn left and mop up in L Company's rear, in the area east of the road which ran the length of the island. Company I was to move inland in the wake of L and K and establish itself in the vicinity of the battalion CP area, just across the road from the lagoon beach, as a reserve.

Because these orders were late coming through, Capt. Charles H. Hallden of L Company and Capt. William T. Heminway of K got together with the commanding officer of Antitank Company, 32d Infantry (7th Division), which was operating the LVTs in the landing, and made certain that everyone understood exactly what was to be done. As a result of this, the whole 3d Battalion landed exactly as planned in good order, except for one boat containing K Company men. This boat broke down and one squad and a half of K Company's 3d Platoon under Lt. Edmond C. Strimel landed late.

Captain Hallden of L landed with his 1st Platoon on the left, his 3d on the right, and his 2d in reserve. His original plan was to form his line facing north with the 1st on the left, the 3d on the right, and the reserve platoon in the center. The beach upon which L landed was relatively quiet, and after a preliminary reconnaissance by Captain Hallden, the whole company moved off in good order. When it reached the road, the extreme right squad ran into two Japanese pillboxes which sat up on top of two adjoining knobs. As the platoon advanced in short rushes, Staff Sgt. Joseph Maziarz, 3d Platoon guide, killed a Japanese near one of these pillboxes and moved on ahead. He had no sooner gone by, however, when Pfc. Dean A. Johnson, a BAR man, was shot dead. Heavy fire now pinned down this whole side of the line. Pfc. Fred Marshall, who had evidently spotted the position and tried to crawl forward to get at it, was killed. The whole advance stopped.

Pfc. James F. Henderson, who was between Johnson and Marshall and now knew exactly where each position was, managed to crawl back to Staff Sgt. Leonard A. Dziekowicz, the squad leader, and point them out. Dziekowicz went back to the beach, where he found Lieutenant Rueckert of Cannon Company. Rueckert brought up his vehicles to work on the position.

While most of this platoon had been held up here, the rest of the company had moved on ahead, and Captain Hallden, seeing that his right flank was engaged, now ordered the 2d Platoon to take the right flank of the line on the ocean beach. Then, when Rueckert had come up with his vehicles, Lt. William A. Aue, in command of the 3d Platoon, ordered his men to disengage from the position while he turned over its reduction to K Company which had come up on the right. The 3d Platoon now turned and took up a position in the middle of the L Company line, which was already forming.

The 2d Platoon, which had been reassigned the job of taking over the ocean flank, arrived at the sea side of the island by 1010, and swung to the left to take up the line. As they moved up, Sgt. Frank H. Riordon, Pfc. Rodney G. Wilson, and Pvt. Joseph G. Artessa found themselves in thick brush. They came to a large hole covered with a palm frond and one of them lifted up the frond and threw in a grenade. The explosion, strangely enough, seemed to be followed by hymn singing. Riordon said later that he couldn't believe his ears, nor could the other men. They now crawled back up through the brush with grenades ready and Riordon lifted up the edge of the frond and looked into the hole. He was surprised to find an old man and six other natives inside. The old man was leading the others in hymns. (The men all swear that it was a familiar hymn, although they can't get together as to just what it was. One says it was "Nearer, My God, To Thee," and another says it was "Onward, Christian Soldiers," but whatever it was the men all recognized it.) Riordon now attracted the attention of the man inside and the natives all came climbing out. The first thing they did was to kneel in prayer. By the time this was finished, Staff Sgt. Michael T. Gracioc, acting platoon sergeant, had come up. The natives, upon completion of the prayer, all gathered around him and the old man grabbed Gracioc by the arm and tried to lead him away. Gracioc said: "I told him, 'Now wait a minute, bud.' I wasn't going off up in those bushes all alone with this guy." (Gracioc is still amused by the fact that he called a king, "bud.")

Staff Sergeant Cyrus E. Shelhammer, leader of the 3d Squad, however, now took Riordon, Wilson, and Artessa with him and followed the old man forward to another hole. Here they found twenty-six more natives

and brought them back to the company line. (Later in the afternoon, I Company ran into a strong Japanese machine-gun position not twenty yards away from where Shelhammer took out the natives.) There were now thirty-three natives gathered on L Company's right flank and they were creating quite a diversion. Captain Hallden, in order to remove what was rapidly becoming a threat to his position, now ordered them taken back to the company CP, from where First Sgt. Lewis W. Pawlinga conducted them to the beach. The picture of Pawlinga and the natives on the beach is the now famous photograph cited as Sgt. John Bushemi's last picture, which appeared in *Yank* and newspapers all over the country. The King told the regimental S-2 section that there were eight hundred Japanese on the island, considerably more than were supposed to be there.

While the right flank of L was engaged with the natives, the left flank had swung into line facing north, and had advanced into an area marked on the maps as a village. This had been destroyed, however, by naval bombardment, and only a few concrete revetments remained. The 1st Platoon had moved in among these revetments and investigated them without seeing any sign of enemy. When it became apparent to Hallden that his right flank was held up while the natives were being evacuated, he pulled his 1st Platoon back about a hundred yards on a line with the right flank. When the 2d Platoon moved forward again, the whole line moved up close to the revetments and stopped and dug in. While digging in Pfc. Elton H. Oltman and Pfc. Willis W. Noe, near the center of the line, happened to notice Japanese moving from the north of the island into the revetments. Both Noe and Oltman opened up on these men and succeeded in killing at least four of them. With no further movement discernible, both soldiers then returned to the task of getting their foxholes dug.

The whole L Company line remained stationary for over an hour. During most of this time there was little activity in the sector, but shortly after the men dug in they received a heavy mortar barrage. No casualties were caused, but the men did improve their slit trenches by digging them deeper. At around 1200, several observers were brought ashore in an LCVP and landed on the extreme left edge of Yellow Beach 1. These observers turned out to be reporters and cameramen, who for a time busied themselves with taking pictures of Sergeant Pawlinga and the natives who had by this time been brought back to the beach. These men, including Bushemi and a *Yank* correspondent, then wandered up over the bank to where L Company was dug in. Despite the fact that they were repeatedly warned by the infantrymen, they persisted in moving up and down the line from foxhole to foxhole,

usually asking the occupants if they had "seen any action yet." After some time they moved back to the left flank of the line and sat down not ten feet away from the men in the holes. Repeated warnings given these correspondents could not convince them they should move to a safer area. Very soon their exposed positions began to draw mortar fire and Bushemi was mortally wounded. Despite the fact that a fairly heavy barrage fell throughout the area, no L Company man was hit, although one shell landed less than five yards away from dug-in positions.

While L Company had been occupied with establishing its line across the island, K had also moved inland. K Company's right flank touched B Company's left, so that this part of the line became involved in the same position that held up B. Japanese began popping out of holes on all sides, and while Hollowiak and Hills were involved on the right, Staff Sgt. Earl T. Bodiford of K became personally responsible for getting his company through. Bodiford was on K Company's extreme right flank, and as he came up over the bank on his move inland, he found himself staring straight down the barrel of a Japanese rifle. The American pulled the trigger on his rifle but the gun jammed. At the same time, the Japanese fired, but missed at almost point-blank range, so Bodiford reached over and grabbed the muzzle of the enemy's piece. Bodiford banged the gun against a tree, shattering the stock, then hit the Jap over the head with the barrel. He then cleared the jam in his gun and crawled along from hole to hole, firing and throwing grenades. Altogether he killed seven Japanese in this position.

The rest of K Company moved rapidly across the island after the position had been reduced, keeping contact with B on the right until they reached the road, and then moving on alone. Heminway had placed his 2d Platoon on the left and his 1st on the right, with his 3d in reserve. The 3d Platoon followed close behind the leading platoons until it reached the position on the left flank that had held up L. Here it dropped behind. (The 3d Platoon, it will be remembered, was shy one and a half squads at this time.)

Beyond the road K ran into the same thick tangle of underbrush that confronted Klein, and although this slowed the company it did not stop it. The 2d Squad of the 2d Platoon, in reserve, got lost, wandering far over to the right and ending up in rear of the 1st Platoon. It was this squad, under Sergeant Reilly, that later became involved in the Japanese counterattack. Upon reaching the extreme sea side of the island, K ran into a series of enemy holes, and as the right of Heminway's line began to swing to the north, all forward movement stopped. Reilly's squad, which was behind the 1st Platoon, coming up at this time, also

stopped until the line began moving again. It was during the halt that it was hit by the counterattack.

The beginning of K Company's turning movement brought it into probably the strongest single terrain feature of the whole island. This was a fringe of heavy brush from six to twelve feet high that bordered the ocean along the entire length of the east shore. This heavy belt was anywhere from ten to thirty-five yards wide and was so dense that movement in it was difficult. Throughout the next two or three days the men had to fight this brush inch by inch. To make matters worse, the enemy had placed positions in this brush and fired from it continuously so that practically every foot of it had to be beaten. Tanks went in ahead of the infantry and ran up and down through it, but as soon as the vehicles had passed the brush always sprang up into place just as dense as before. K had managed to make its way across the island by approximately 1130, almost fifteen minutes ahead of B on the right, and almost an hour and a half after L on the left. This discrepancy can be accounted for by the fact that L merely advanced, being interested primarily in getting across the island. Also, L had none of the thick underbrush that confronted K and B. However, due to the brush and the natives, it was almost 1145 before Captain Hallden did finally get his line established, and still another fifteen or twenty minutes before he got it dug in.

While the 2d Platoon of K was trying vainly to break through the brush, Lieutenant Strimel arrived from the beach with his half of the 3d Platoon, and at almost the same time, Hills came over to Heminway to ask for help. Strimel, therefore, was sent with a squad and a half to help B Company. It took him almost fifteen minutes to get his men together, and by that time the counterattack had hit. In the ensuing fire fight, Strimel himself was killed. K was now involved in its rear, and in its front. As the 1st Platoon struggled through the brush it came upon hole after hole and had to fire into them and grenade them. In spite of their vigilance the troops missed some of the positions and Japanese popped out behind them. Lt. Cleveland Davis, Heminway's executive, was lost in this manner, having stepped over a hole, only to be shot in the back by a hidden enemy soldier. Pfc. James C. Lett, who was with Davis, was also shot in the shoulder. Pfc. Edward A. Keuck, who happened to be near Davis, jumped over both the wounded men and killed the Japanese with his bayonet. Keuck was later killed by a Japanese in almost the same manner.

At 1230, Colonel Ayers visited the 3d Battalion CP and ordered the 3d Battalion to advance to the north end of the island. Ayers had by this time been convinced that the 1st Battalion had run into more than it could handle. He had also just received the report of the captured

natives that there were some eight hundred or more Japanese on the island. Lt. Colonel Mizony immediately ordered his battalion to advance with L on the left and K on the right. It was just at this time, however, that K was busy with the counterattack. Heminway notified Mizony that his whole company was heavily involved and would be unable to carry out the order for some little time. Upon receipt of this word, the battalion commander told Heminway to continue demolishing the Japanese positions along the ocean shore. He then ordered Lt. George T. Johnson of I Company to take over the zone of L Company's right. He notified Captain Hallden that as soon as I Company came up, he was to allow Johnson to pass through his front line, then withdraw his right platoon into company reserve, and establish contact with the rest of his line so that the island was equally divided between the two companies. K was ordered to form battalion reserve and follow the advance as soon as it had completed mopping-up operations along the beach.

The relief of L Company's right flank was accomplished at 1330 and as Company I came into line, the battalion was notified that there would be an air strike toward the north end of the island. Both assault companies, therefore, had to display panels before making any movement whatsoever. The strafing mission lasted for about thirty minutes and the companies then moved forward. Pfc. John L. Bales, on I Company's extreme right flank, next to the brush (Company I had not tried to beat through the brush, but had anchored its right flank on the inside rim and put a three-man patrol along the water's edge on the other side), went forward to pick up his panel. As he bent over to pick it up, he heard a rustle in the bushes and looked around just in time to see a hand grenade come flying at him. He managed to get out of the way of it, but its explosion killed Pfc. Efriem S. Halverson, and wounded Pfc. William F. Muscenti, who had come up beside Bales. The whole company now stopped and for almost half an hour poured rifle fire into the undergrowth. After fairly saturating the place, the men went into the bushes and found five dead Japanese and innumerable holes. They also learned at this time that the patrol on the beach had killed an enemy officer as he ran along the road. It might be added here that earlier, while the planes were strafing, the Japanese had tried to fire their machine guns on our lines, thus making our men believe they were being strafed by their own planes. Johnson now had to send his men into the brush and beat through it. He called over part of the 2d Platoon, his left platoon, and put it to work helping the 1st. The 2d had little or no difficulty in advancing.

Meanwhile, after the strafing, L had moved off and had advanced from seventy-five to a hundred yards before it came under another

heavy mortar barrage which held it up. This rapid movement had carried Hallden's right flank well ahead of Company I and a gap developed between the two companies. In an effort to close this gap Johnson had to commit his reserve squad of the 2d Platoon. This situation continued to exist for the remainder of the day's advance and caused I a great deal of difficulty. When night fell, L was finally drawn back by Lt. Colonel Mizony and the right company, I, was thereafter designated as the base unit. This has a great deal of importance to the whole action, because L ran into little or no opposition throughout its whole operation, and its slowness in reaching the end of the island can be laid to the fact that Hallden never let his line get ahead of, first I, and later K. The right company's speed, of course, was determined by the operations of the platoon on the right flank which was forced to beat through the thick brush, an exceedingly slow and tedious process.

With the reduction of the first Japanese position by gunfire, I Company again pressed forward about seventy-five yards. Pfc. Ernest Simon happened to look up and saw three enemy run into the bushes just ahead. Simon at once warned his comrades and forward movement stopped. Three tanks were brought up and fired several rounds into the bush at this point. Pfc. Raymond Cunningham then moved forward to poke among the bushes, which almost immediately spouted machine-gun fire. For almost an hour I Company engaged in a fire fight with the hidden Japanese position. The procedure was usually to fire into the area with small arms, then have the tanks run up and down through it and then send men up to investigate. When all fire had finally ceased from the position, the whole platoon waded into the area, and found the bodies of twenty-one dead Japanese. The next morning this platoon had to retrace its steps two hundred yards and again attack the same position, this time with Lieutenant Rueckert's Cannon Company vehicles, and the engineers with pole charges.

When the platoon had searched the area completely, a new difficulty arose. The light tanks, which had been running up and down through the brush, had suddenly gotten too far out in front. One of them had run on ahead some distance and was now stalled about a hundred yards ahead of the infantry. Major Ernest C. Delear, executive officer of the 3d Battalion, who was with I Company at the time, halted the advance and sent Pfc. Charles E. Isaacson with a six-man patrol to the stalled vehicle, which seemed to have caught on fire. All efforts to communicate with the tankers failed, and so Isaacson returned to I Company's front line. Major Delear was insistent that the tank be brought back, however, and so Isaacson went back with his patrol. By this time the fire was out, but in spite of Isaacson's banging he could get no response. (The men

in the tank had no idea that anyone was outside. They had dismounted from the vehicle during Isaacson's absence, put out the fire, which was minor, and having been fired at, got back in and buttoned up, waiting for the infantry to come up with them.) Isaacson stayed up with the tank until after 1800, and then decided that it was useless and went back to the company line.

By this time Johnson had instructed his men to dig in for the night and had relayed this word along to battalion. Battalion had, therefore, notified Colonel Ayers that they would not reach the end of the island that night. At 1850, however, Ayers ordered the advance to continue. Johnson, however, did not feel he was in any condition to continue the fight and so asked battalion CP to give him time to replenish his ammunition and water supply. Lt. Colonel Mizony granted him the time and Johnson immediately put his Weapons Platoon to work hauling up these supplies. He also made arrangements with the Cannon Company vehicles through Lieutenant Rueckert, to resupply them, thus keeping them up on his lines. He tried to do the same thing with the light tanks (two were still with him, but one was on ahead), but they both returned to the beach, getting back before Lieutenant Johnson eventually moved off.

While this resupply was going on, I had continued to dig in. When darkness fell, they had a well established line. L, on the left, had by this time dropped back and also dug in, and now, in view of Lt. Colonel Mizony's order issued at the time the night advance was decided upon, were waiting for I, the base company, to move out.

Johnson's line had been built up with a section of HMGs from M Company on the right flank. While the resupply was still going on, shortly after dark, this gun section received orders from Major Delear to displace to the left, to the center of the battalion line, and from there, when the advance started, to fire into the bushes and trees along the beach. The leader of the section immediately notified Staff Sgt. Benjamin Yelle, in charge of Johnson's right squad, that he was leaving. Shortly after this section pulled out, however, Yelle heard three enemy coming up through the brush. They stopped not more than five or ten yards from the right flank and Yelle motioned to the others near him to watch the bush. He then raised up and threw a grenade at the spot where he could hear the Japanese jabbering. As this grenade hit behind the bush, a figure darted out from behind it, waving a sword. In two or three steps he was on top of Yelle and had brought his sword down on Yelle's head, killing him instantly. The sword almost cut Yelle's head in two. Technician Fourth Grade Tagliafari, an aid man who was occupying Yelle's foxhole with him, raised up and tried to shoot the Japanese, but was

killed by a rifle bullet from the bush. At almost the same time the grenade went off and evidently killed the two enemy behind the bush and also the one that had killed Yelle. This action was all simultaneous, nearly everything happening at once.

Only a few minutes after Yelle's death, Pfc. Lyle Williams, who had gone back to try and find some ammunition, returned. Finding Yelle dead and the machine-gun section gone, he realized that a bad gap existed on the right flank through which the enemy could infiltrate with ease. Williams immediately went back to Lieutenant Johnson and informed him of the situation. Johnson, in turn, got hold of battalion and Lt. Colonel Mizony ordered one platoon of K Company to take its place on the Company I right flank. This was accomplished before 2200 and at that time Company I was again ready to resume its advance.

As Johnson moved up from his CP to the front line to direct the forward movement, he was met by Sgt. Joe L. Crump, who was commander of the tank which had earlier gone astray. Crump told Johnson that his tank had been badly crippled and that he needed help. The company commander, therefore, ordered his men to take the crippled tank.

The advance along the whole battalion front was about ten yards at a time. There were fires burning in the thick grass all over the island and this furnished some light, but the ground itself was in shadow and the men could not see a thing there, where most of the Japanese were. (Mizony had earlier experimented with flares from both his 60mm mortars and from the ships in the lagoon, but the wind blew them back over our lines and silhouetted the men, making them perfect targets, so this had to be abandoned.) The line was accompanied by tanks and the M Company machine guns. After ten yards, the line stopped and every available weapon poured fire into the area to the front, particularly the bushes along the ocean beach. After about ten minutes of this the line again advanced another ten yards and repeated the process.

At approximately 0200 in the morning the advance finally reached the tank. When attempts were made to go up to the vehicle, it was found that Japanese had taken cover behind it and were in position to put heavy small-arms fire onto any one coming up. Grenades were then thrown over the tank, and after a short time most of these enemy were either killed or forced to retire to the shelter of the bushes. Over forty dead enemy bodies were found under or near the tank the next morning. The task of trying to rescue the tankers inside was now taken over by Sgt. James J. Luts. With Isaacson and three others, Luts crawled up on the tank and began banging on the steel. He received a faint response but could not get the tankers to come out.

This tank had been through a very harrowing experience. After Isaacson had left it, before dark, the tankers had sat there on the beach, wondering where the others were. Sergeant Crump had finally decided to go back and find the front line, but rather than go down the beach he turned and moved inland through the bushes, intending to go down on the inside of the fringe. Just before the tank turned south, however, it ran over a land mine, which blew off a track and disabled the vehicle. Crump crawled out of the turret to inspect the damage, leaving the cover open, because he expected to return in a few moments. After he had finished his inspection he began to climb back into the tank and was greeted by a hail of small-arms fire. To keep from being hit he had to crawl under the tank, and remain there until after dark. Meanwhile, Japanese were swarming all over the outside. Crump's three companions, who remained inside, had left the turret open waiting for the commander's return. After some time, Cpl. David Butler decided he had better get out and see where Crump was. As he climbed up into the turret and stuck his head out, he found himself confronted by a Japanese soldier. Before Butler could do anything, the enemy aimed a kick that caught him full between the eyes. As Butler lay there in the turret, stunned by the kick, the Jap bayoneted him just above the stomach, and he slipped back to the floor unconscious. Meanwhile, T/5 Nathan Madnich, the driver, jumped to his feet and ran over to the turret, grabbed the enemy's bayonet, and pulled. The Japanese pulled the trigger on his piece. The bullet caught Madnich in the hip, but the driver kept right on struggling. The enemy seems to have been able to get another shell into his chamber because he fired again. This bullet missed Madnich, but hit the unconscious Butler on the floor. After that, Madnich managed to get the rifle away from the enemy soldier. He turned it around and tried to fire, but his man had gotten away. By this time the third member of the crew had got out of his seat. This was Cpl. Albert Hart. Hart, seeing that both Madnich and Butler were hurt, told Madnich that he was going to try and get out and get help. He started to crawl up out of the turret and as he got his head and shoulders out of the tank he was hit by several bullets and fell to the ground outside, dead. Shortly after this, Madnich noticed that another Japanese had managed to get up on the tank outside. This one dropped a grenade down through the turret opening. Madnich tried to hide from it, but received some pieces of fragments in his legs. He was able to get most of his torso up above the shelf of the turret, but never was quite able to get his legs out of range. Fragments also hit Butler, lying on the floor. The tank immediately caught fire in several places inside, and Madnich had to run around from place to place on his wounded legs to put out the fires. He had no sooner done this than

the Japanese dropped another grenade into the tank and Madnich had to run and hide again. After the explosion the same fire-fighting had to be repeated, but this time the enemy went away. An hour later he returned again and threw more grenades. This type of attack continued for the next six hours. When they were finally removed from the tank Madnich had been wounded seventeen times, mostly in the legs and lower back, despite which he continued to crawl around the tank putting out the fires that were started with each detonation. Butler, who lay unconscious through most of this, suffered, in addition to his bullet and bayonet wounds, a brain concussion and a multitude of grenade fragment wounds, doctors later removing these pieces even from his eyes. He somehow survived.

It took almost an hour to get these two men out of the tank. Luts finally had to crawl up on the vehicle behind the turret and lift Madnich out because the latter was no longer able to stand. Aid men then came up and crawled down inside to get Butler. Both men then had to wait until daylight came before being evacuated.

While Luts had been trying to get the tankers out, other men had moved up, and, using the tank for cover, poured a steady stream of small-arms fire into the area beyond. When Butler had been brought out, Johnson pulled his company back a few yards and reorganized. At this time, Major Delear, who had been with the Company I front line all evening, moved around the tank cautiously to make a short reconnaissance of the other side. Both he and his runner were found seriously wounded a few moments later, although no one actually saw them shot.

Johnson now ordered his men forward again, and after a heavy preliminary fire, the whole line moved out. About twenty-five yards beyond the tank, Pfc. Paul Marechek was killed by fire from the brush and the advance stopped. Johnson ordered his company to dig in around 0430 to 0500. It remained here until full daylight, around 0700.

Before moving out again that morning, Lieutenant Johnson brought up his Weapons Platoon and all of M Company's heavy machine guns, and sprayed the area thoroughly. Then Tech. Sgt. Benjamin R. Morra, in command of the 1st Platoon, was ordered to withdraw his men and go back to the area which had been attacked the previous afternoon and mop it up. The 3d Platoon now took over the job of mopping up the bushes during the advance.

As Company I moved off, behind a heavy covering fire, and behind tanks, it was still plagued by fire from the brush ahead. Tech. Sgt. Michael Speracino, 3d Platoon commander, remembering that Marechek had been killed here the night before, took steps to try and knock out

the position from which the fire was coming, a point about twenty-five yards ahead of where they had dug in. Instead of using his platoon in a skirmishers' line, Speracino had his squads advance in squad column. Two of these he held in reserve at the line of departure while he took the 1st Squad forward. Creeping and crouching, these men reached a point opposite the fire, and then at a signal from Speracino, the whole column faced right and moved toward the bushes. At almost the same time, a Japanese machine gun opened up from the cover and Speracino and Pfc. Peter Stremeyer were killed instantly. Staff Sgt. James B. Grant, Jr., the squad leader, was wounded so badly that he died later. Grant had thrown a grenade just as he was hit, and this explosion seemed to have silenced part of the position, but heavy fire still continued, keeping the remainder of the squad pinned down. Pfc. Donald B. Thess, a member of the 3d Squad, which had now moved up about thirty yards to the left of the position, was caught in this fire and killed also. With all forward movement thus stopped, Johnson now ordered Staff Sgt. George Schmidt to take his 2d Squad up and try to get around the position in some way. Schmidt, in a well executed maneuver, picked out a small rise in ground between where the 1st and 3d Squads were pinned down, and crawled up behind this to beyond the Japanese position. His whole squad could now pour fire into the enemy. After nearly fifteen minutes the position was reduced.

Company I again reorganized here, and at about 0840, moved ahead again, still trying to find some suitable way to get through the brush. Twenty-five yards beyond the point where the first Japanese fire was met, Pfc. Stanley Lukowski was shot through the stomach and killed. The advance again stopped and the right platoon had to reduce another position. This spot, incidentally, had already been covered by the tanks, but the Japanese were holed up and the vehicles did not harm them.

Lieutenant Colonel Mizony now realized that I Company was so tired it could no longer keep up with the tanks, and ordered K Company to relieve I. This relief was accomplished by 1030.

Throughout this time, L Company had been advancing steadily on the left, guiding on the base company, I, and meeting little opposition. It had suffered several casualties the previous afternoon from Japanese mortar fire, and during the night advance had two or three men wounded by accidents, but on the whole nothing serious had appeared.

From the time that K took over on the right, the forward movement progressed with little, if any, opposition. The position in front of which Lukowski had been killed appears to have been the last enemy strong-point. All the rest of that day, and all through the next, only a stray Japanese was seen here and there. The job of beating through the brush

continued with the Cannon Company vehicles in the lead. During the afternoon of the 20th, both L and K came to a tank ditch that stretched clear across the island. This ditch had been mined, but the enemy had left rather clearly marked channels across it so that our troops were not held up. Engineers were brought up after the front lines had passed through and took care of the field. (The Japanese had rigged mines by using hand grenades and mortar shells. They were not regular land mines.) At about 1500, the first troops to cross the ditch thought they saw an enemy tank coming down the road from the north end of the island, but when it came close it proved to be a Cannon Company M8 vehicle which had gone clear through to the end of the island, without seeing a single enemy.

Throughout the second and third days, the whole center part of the island was afire and dense clouds of smoke hung over everything, making visibility poor. The fire also exploded many dud artillery and naval shells thrown into the area, and Jap ammunition dumps. Company L had been badly shaken up by a tremendous explosion as it moved off on the morning of the 20th and K suffered the same kind of a jolting late in the afternoon of the same day. Luckily none was hurt in either explosion, but the danger still existed.

Lieutenant Colonel Mizony therefore ordered I Company, which had been moving along all afternoon mopping up, to move forward behind L and K and put out the fires. At 2100 Company I moved back to the battalion CP area and prepared to dig in for the night. Johnson had already drawn up a definite design for the perimeter, but as the 1st Platoon came back, an officer from battalion headquarters ordered Sergeant Morra to dispose his platoon in a manner that did not fit into the original plan. In the darkness, therefore, no one was exactly sure where anyone else was, nor were the personnel of the CP informed as to the exact location of I Company, which was supposed to protect it. Had the troops been able to dig in earlier, there would have been accurate knowledge of where the different units were. As it was, these men, spending their first night in an organized defense, were "trigger-happy." Shots were fired at anything and grenades were thrown promiscuously with the result that I Company, the next morning, counted over eight of its men killed and several seriously wounded. Company K, on the right of the front line, also suffered six killed and several wounded, but how much of this was caused by Japanese and how much by our own troops, is still a matter for conjecture.

The 3d Battalion reached the north end of the island at 1630 on the 21st after an advance that was held up all the way by the slowness of the

task of mopping up in the brush along the right shore. With the completion of the 3d Battalion's advance, the island was secure and the work of the Army was done in the Eniwetok battle. The 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, was moved back aboard ships on 22 February as a reserve for the Parry Island battle. They landed on Parry about 1000 on the 23d, but were not used. The I&R Platoon of regimental Headquarters Company landed on Lady Slipper on the 24th and met no opposition, but did capture one wounded Japanese prisoner who came floating by in the water from Parry Island.

RCT 106 minus BLT 106-2 garrisoned the Eniwetok Atoll until late in March, when the 111th Infantry Regiment arrived to relieve it. The 106th Infantry then returned to Oahu, arriving there on 13 April, almost two months after the battle.

Chapter 16: Planning for Forager

THE capture of the Southern Marianas Islands and the development of these bases enabled us to bring the war home to the Japanese people in determined strength as early as November 1944. The devastating fire raids and the atomic bomb itself were flown by planes based on Saipan, Tinian, and Guam. Without these islands American bombers would have had to wait until the capture of Okinawa, almost a year later, to bring pressure to bear on the enemy's home islands, for during the summer and fall of 1944 the Japanese had conducted a vigorous offensive in China which rendered the newly established B-29 bases all but useless.

The capture of Guam and the Southern Marianas had been decided upon at the Quebec Conference in August 1943. At that time it was included in the over-all plan for Pacific War strategy. In the ensuing months the planners of the Joint Chiefs of Staff in Washington drew up a memorandum titled *Specific Operations for the Defeat of Japan, 1944*. In it they scheduled an assault on the islands for 1 October 1944 and, at the insistence of Gen. Henry H. Arnold, decided to begin bombing operations from the new bases by 31 December 1944. This memorandum was discussed at the Cairo Conference in November 1943, and was released on 23 December 1943 as a directive of the Joint Chiefs of Staff.

Using this directive as a basis, Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief of the Pacific Ocean Areas, presented on 15 January 1944, his plan for the year's campaign, which was to close with the capture of the so-called Marianas-Palau line. This plan was discussed and approved by the Joint Chiefs on 22 January 1944, although some reservations were made as to the time schedule presented. An essential point of both the Joint Planners' and Admiral Nimitz's papers was the provision which called for the capture of various other intermediate island bases, notably Truk.

On 1 February 1944, less than two weeks after the presentation and approval of Admiral Nimitz's plan, United States forces invaded the Marshall Islands at Kwajalein and Majuro. The rapid success of this operation had several results. Acting swiftly, with the unused Kwajalein reserve forces, Eniwetok Atoll was assaulted and captured by 24 February, an action that was not scheduled until 1 May. At almost the same time, 17-18 February, a strong naval task force made a devastating attack upon Truk which all but ended the importance of that great enemy bastion.

The possibility of by-passing the Japanese base at Truk had been considered as early as November 1943. The Joint Chiefs wanted to, but at that time it did not seem possible. The naval strike of 17-18 February,

coupled with the discovery that Majuro was an ideal fleet base, again brought up the question of by-passing. Consequently plans were drawn up which provided for another movement on 15 June 1944, this new attack to be directed at either the Marianas or Carolines (Truk). The decision as to which of these two plans were to be used waited until 13 March, during which time Admiral Nimitz and his staff surveyed minutely the photographs of the great enemy base and estimated the damage done there in February. Subsequent photographic missions and bombing attacks proved that the powerful Japanese bastion was no longer a major flanking threat to American lines of communication and that aggressive action could effectively neutralize it. Capture of the Marianas and Palaus would, moreover, completely cut off the route by which the enemy resupplied the garrison. Accordingly, on 13 March, Admiral Nimitz notified the Joint Chiefs that he intended to drop the Truk venture and that he would assault the Marianas. This movement now assumed the first place of importance in the Central Pacific Campaign.

A week after the decision was made to go into the Marianas, on 20 March 1944, Admiral Nimitz released his first staff study on the forthcoming operation. Target day was designated as 15 June 1944 and the units which were to participate were earmarked and alerted. As of 20 March the major units designated for the operation were as follows:

Fifth United States Fleet

V Marine Amphibious Corps

2d Marine Division

4th Marine Division

27th Infantry Division

III Marine Amphibious Corps

3d Marine Division

1st Provisional Marine Brigade

77th Infantry Division (area reserve)

Subsequent additions to this list included the Army XXIV Corps Artillery and four Army amphibian tank and tractor battalions—the 534th, 708th, 715th, and 773d. These battalions were later combined to form the 19th Armored Group. The above units were all part of the assault echelon. A second large group of troops was to take over the islands upon completion of the initial assault phase. These troops con-

sisted, for the greater part, of service and construction units as well as antiaircraft artillery and two infantry regiments, the 111th and 24th.

Most of these units were already in the Pacific. The 2d and 4th Marine Divisions, the 27th Infantry Division, and the Amphibian Tank Group were in the Hawaiian Islands, while the III Marine Amphibious Corps, together with its component elements, the 3d Marine Division and the 1st Provisional Brigade, were in the South Pacific, either at Guadalcanal or New Caledonia. The XXIV Corps was not organized until April 1944, but most of its artillery units were already in the Hawaiian Islands. The 77th Infantry Division was in the United States, but was assembled on the island of Oahu during April and May 1944. The garrison groups were assembled in widely separated locations, from the Marshall Islands to the east coast of the United States, during the same period.

With the exception of the 77th Infantry Division, virtually all of the combat troops were experienced in Pacific warfare against the Japanese. The 2d Marine Division had fought at Tarawa and parts of it at Guadalcanal. The 4th Marine Division had captured Roi-Namur at Kwajalein Atoll and the 3d Division had been used extensively in the Solomons. The 1st Marine Brigade was composed of units that had fought in both the Solomons and Marshalls.

On 23 April Admiral Nimitz issued CINCPAC and CINCPHA Operations Order No. 3-44 which laid down the basic plan for the campaign. Additions and changes were made by subsequent orders, dated 6 May and 12 May.

Actual command of the operations in the Marianas was assumed by Vice Adm. Richmond Kelly Turner. In this capacity he had complete control over all naval and ground forces. His command of the latter elements was delegated to Headquarters, Expeditionary Troops, Task Force 56, which was activated on 1 May 1944 for this purpose. This headquarters was commanded by Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, USMC.

Headquarters, Expeditionary Troops, was composed of two lower echelons. The first of these was Northern Troops and Landing Force (NTLF). Lt. General Smith assumed a dual role and took personal command of this headquarters along with his other duties. The second command, Southern Troops and Landing Force (STLF), was given to Maj. Gen. Roy S. Geiger, USMC. NTLF was composed principally of troops of V Amphibious Corps. It was to capture Saipan and Tinian Islands, the two northernmost of the Marianas. STLF primarily consisted of III Amphibious Corps; its mission was to seize the island of Guam.

Below the two Troops and Landing Forces, organization was relatively flexible. The 27th Infantry Division was assigned to VMAC, but the

plans provided that it was to be a floating reserve for Headquarters, Expeditionary Troops. As such it could be thrown into the battle either in the north or in the south. The 77th Infantry Division was to be held in the Hawaiian Islands, as strategic reserve, to be called in after D plus 20, if needed.

Saipan was to be attacked first, on 15 June. At a later date, tentatively set at D plus 3, STLF was to land on Guam. Tinian was to be assaulted by NTLF, either at the completion of the Saipan phase, or during it, depending entirely on the progress made on the larger island.

The first objective, Saipan, is a large pistol-shaped island, approximately five miles wide and eighteen miles long. It can be divided into three definite sections. The southern third of the island is relatively flat, with a series of terrace-like ridges that serve as gradual steps leading up from the flat beaches at Charan Kanoa on the west to the high cliffs and hills of Magicienne Bay and Nafutan Ridge on the east. The middle third of the island is a high, mountainous sector, dominated in the very center by Mt. Tapotchau, a 1,554-foot peak. This section also contains Garapan, the principal city and capital of the Marianas. It is nestled under Mt. Tapotchau and borders on the west shore approximately in the middle of the island. The northern third, the barrel of the pistol, might be described as a hogback, some seven hundred to a thousand feet in height, with a long coastal plain on the west. This coastal plain averages seven hundred yards in width.

All of the prospective landing beaches were dominated by reefs. Map studies, made during the planning phase, indicated that the most favorable of these beaches were the Purple Beaches, located on the north shore of Magicienne Bay. Subsequent information, gleaned from Japanese prisoners of war, proved that this surmise was correct. Enemy commanders suspected that American landings would be made there and prepared their main defensive positions with this thought in mind. The Scarlet Beaches, at Tanapag Harbor, and the Brown Beaches, near Chatcha Village, were also considered, but this consideration was abandoned because of heavy fortifications known to be nearby or because of poor beach exits.

The site eventually chosen for the landing was in the vicinity of the small mill town of Charan Kanoa. Because a two-division front was to be used, Blue, Red, Yellow, and Green Beaches were all utilized. A reef in this area posed some difficulty in getting heavier equipment ashore, but it was thought that the passage through this reef on Blue Beach 1 would allow most of the larger landing craft to proceed right up to the beach once the assault waves had established themselves ashore. Land-

ings in this area seemed to provide the only point at which two full divisions could land abreast. Furthermore, this sector was admirably suited to a swift assault on and the early seizure of Aslito Airfield, which was directly opposite the beaches.

The two-division landing front was to be composed of the 2d Marine Division on the left and the 4th Marine Division on the right. Upon landing, the 2d Marine Division was to pivot on its left, swing to the north, and seize Mt. Tapotchau. The 4th Marine Division was to drive straight across the island to the east, capture Aslito Airfield, clean up Nafutan Point, and swing to the north, taking up a position on the right of the 2d Division, if needed.

The employment of the 27th Infantry Division, the reserve, presented many problems. Altogether, the planners contrived a total of nineteen different plans for the employment of this unit. These called for landings on all the different beaches, either as a division, or as separate regimental combat teams. The most favored of the various plans called for the Division to land on the Purple Beaches, with two regiments abreast. This landing was to be followed by a rapid drive across the island from east to west, the seizure of Mt. Tapotchau, and the occupation of Gapan and the naval base at Tanapag Harbor. This move would cut the defending forces into two parts, each of which could be disposed of separately. In addition to all other considerations it had the added advantage that it would prevent any mixing of Army and Marine supplies and eliminate an overload on the original landing beaches.

To these original nineteen plans were added three more on 10 June, while the Division was at Kwajalein, en route to the target. These latter plans all provided for the capture of Tinian by the Division, should the Saipan battle go well.

Within the 27th Division, practically all planning centered around two regiments, the 105th Infantry, and the 165th Infantry, which in November 1943, had assaulted and captured Makin in the Gilberts. The 105th Infantry Regiment had not seen previous combat as a unit in World War II although the 3d Battalion had accompanied the 165th Infantry to Makin and had taken part in the fighting there. The third regiment of the 27th Division, the 106th Infantry, had fought the bitter, bloody battle for Eniwetok in February and had sent one battalion, the 2d, to capture Majuro shortly before. The regiment had been left to garrison these atolls and the last elements did not return to Oahu and Division control until 13 April 1944. This late return, coming after the planning had already begun, and the fact that the regiment had been most recently in battle, led to its being counted upon as the Division

reserve in all planning for the Marianas operation. However, upon arriving at the Kwajalein lagoon, en route to Saipan on 9 June, the 106th Infantry was detached from the 27th Division at the express request of Brig. Gen. Thomas Watson of the 1st Marine Brigade and attached to STLF with the mission of seizing Orote Peninsula on Guam. By the time the 27th Division arrived off Saipan word had also been received that the regiment was being considered as a possibility for the capture of Tinian. The whole 27th Division also had to study plans for landing on Guam. Several of the nineteen plans covered this contingency.

The planning at Expeditionary Troops, Corps, and Division levels continued throughout April and May. Practice landings for all units of NTLF were held at the islands of Maui and Kahoolawe during April and May and STLF held similar exercises at Guadalcanal and New Caledonia.

The actual plans for the operation together with the maps necessary for study were not actually released to the men as a whole until the various task forces were two hours out of embarkation points, en route to the target. Between this time and H-hour all men of all commands were thoroughly briefed on the various plans.

Post-battle estimates indicate that between twenty-five and thirty thousand Japanese troops were killed on Saipan. This figure is approximately double the number estimated to be there by the staff planners during the preparatory phase. Intelligence officers estimated a total of twelve to fifteen thousand enemy troops on the island as of embarkation day, 31 May 1944. These troops were supposedly members of the Japanese 13th and 29th Divisions.

The discrepancies in figures and identification were almost entirely due to events of the month of May and the first week of June 1944. It was during this period that Imperial Army Headquarters in Tokyo undertook a general reshuffling of troops in the west. The 43d Division had been moved from Manchuria to the home islands at an earlier date, there reorganized and sent to Saipan. Elements of the 29th Division did appear on the island, but this division was chiefly concentrated at Guam. Early in June large shipments of troops destined for Palau put in at the Saipan ports of call. On 7 June, shortly after leaving, virtually the entire convoy was sunk by American submarines. Survivors, numbering between seven and ten thousand men, were picked up from the sea and returned to Saipan. Here they were trapped in the growing offensive. Shortly before the American landings this large force was equipped rather poorly, and organized into provisional defensive units. Further additions to the Saipan garrison had been made more or less continu-

ously between February and May by labor units and construction battalions—several thousand men. Saipan was like some American bases, being manned by both Army and Navy personnel. One of the confusing factors of the situation, as far as enemy strength is concerned, is that the military forces never knew what the naval strength was, and vice versa.

Very little information was available about Saipan. Only a handful of Americans had ever visited the island and none of these were available to help the planners. Almost all the staffs had to work with were the photographs taken during the February reconnaissance. Each echelon of command made its own photo interpretations, the main one being provided by the Joint Intelligence Center of Pacific Ocean Areas (JICPOA). From these interpretations a basic 1:20,000 map was constructed and printed by the 64th Engineer Topographic Battalion. These maps were distributed to all commands and were used in the planning phase and during the operation itself. They soon became the principal tool of the whole chain of command.

In view of the stress placed upon this map and the photos from which it was derived, some evaluation of it must be made. Despite the fact that the Japanese made extensive use of camouflage and dummy installations, interpreters were amazingly successful in locating and showing enemy strongpoints. Much of the Japanese equipment was rendered useless before American troops were landed on the island, principally because of the excellent work done in the photo laboratories.

However, the photos and the map had one failing that was not adequately appreciated until after the landings. For some reason neither showed accurately the extreme ruggedness of the Saipan terrain. The whole Purple Beach landing plan was predicated on steep uphill slopes from the landing areas. When American soldiers first entered the north Magicienne Bay area they were amazed to see that the supposed slopes were, in reality, precipitous bluffs and cliffs that would have caused enormous casualties. All through the battle officers and men were constantly confused by this failure of the maps and photos to show the essential features with clarity and accuracy. This was particularly true in the Mt. Tapotchau area and in the approaches to Mt. Marpi in the north.

Defensive installations were not complete. The Japanese made no attempt to fortify Saipan before February 1944. From that time preparations were pushed feverishly. This accounts for the large number of labor troops found on the island during the battle. It also accounts for the fact that whole trainloads of new and crated guns were found in the Garapan and Charan Kanoa yards. On Nafutan Point several large-

caliber guns were captured that had been hauled up and put in place, but could not be used because their installation was not complete. Bunkers, dugouts, and blockhouses were still building. One prisoner of war later said that, had the American assault come three months later, the island would have been impregnable.

One important consideration caused the planners more than an ordinary amount of worry. Saipan was the first island upon which attacking American troops would find hostile civilians in large numbers. Some officers were of the opinion that the entire population might bear arms, others believed that these civilians might commit suicide *en masse*. A small group even believed that we might be welcomed as liberators. In June the invasion forces found a residue of Chamorros and Okinawan natives with only a few male Japanese, the majority having been evacuated early in 1944. These people, laborers and small farmers, were remarkably docile and caused little trouble except for getting in the way. Many of them were killed in caves or in the northern part of the island; in a few instances they bore arms, but on the whole the civilian population acted no differently than that of any other invaded area. Civil affairs custodians were appointed from each assault division and these officers functioned in cooperation with the Military Government people who came ashore with the garrison forces. Over ten thousand Saipan civilians were interned and cared for by Military Government during and after the battle.

The battle for Saipan came at a time when shipping was scarce. The Normandy invasion took place on 6 June 1944, while almost all troops designated for the attack on the Marianas were afloat. Allied shipping space had increased by 1944 to a point where two such large-scale operations could be carried on simultaneously, but it was only by strictest economy that the eight hundred ships necessary for this Pacific assault were made available. The task force which carried the troops and their equipment westward had to transport them for distances that ranged from 1,500 to 7,000 miles. Any resupply and any reinforcement had to be carried by the same ships that carried the assault echelons. This accounts for the fact that the 77th Division was not made available to the operation until D plus 20. Ships which were to carry it to the forward area would take that long to make the round trip from Saipan to Oahu and return. In order to minimize any shortage of vital supplies a resupply base was set up at Eniwetok, in the Marshalls, the nearest American base. During the actual operation only one item of supply became critical. By 1 July all ammunition stocks were rationed. Mortar ammunition, especially, had reached a low point. Where possible, captured Japanese

81mm mortar ammunition was used in our tubes. Chemical 4.2-inch mortar stocks had suffered two blows even before the expedition sailed when one LCT carrying 7,500 rounds capsized during the practice cruises late in May and an LST carrying more of these shells blew up at Pearl Harbor on 21 May. By 4 July the chemical mortar companies were completely out of action due to the shortage, but other critical items were brought up to safe levels by the arrival of resupply ships from the Eniwetok base.

The 27th Division supply problem was unique. Division staff officers had to provide for a total of nineteen different operational plans. This meant that the various units of the Division might be used on widely separated fronts. Each regimental combat team, therefore, had to be entirely self-sufficient. This split the majority of the Division's allotment of supplies in many directions. It was considered inevitable that some regimental combat teams might see much more action than others and reach a low level first. Nevertheless, it was necessary to make the split, and plans were laid accordingly.

The 27th Division had pioneered the use of "palletized" supplies in the Pacific at Makin. Supplies were loaded on small 3x4 foot rafts, or skids, and lashed to them. During unloading this minimized handling. The pallets were buoyant and could be dumped in the water and towed ashore, if necessary. Construction of the skids was begun at Fort Kamehameha as early as 1 April and by the time of embarkation eighty-five per cent of the Division supplies were palletized.

The practice of loading artillery in DUKWs, inaugurated by the 7th Division at Kwajalein, was also adopted for Saipan. Fifty of these vehicles were received by the 27th Division and forty-five of them were turned over to Division Artillery. The guns and ammunition were loaded into them and placed aboard ship. All that had to be done, upon arriving in the target area, was to lift the vehicles over the side of the ship. From there they went ashore and directly to where they were to be used, and there unloaded by an A-frame attached to one of the DUKWs. This procedure was instrumental in bringing supporting artillery into play with a minimum of effort and time. In order to make the maximum use of the DUKWs they were ordered to revert to control of the Division Quartermaster Company immediately upon conclusion of the artillery unloading phase. The Quartermaster was to use them to speed the unloading of essential supplies which could be delivered direct from the ship to front-line units without any double handling.

One other feature of the supply planning should be mentioned. Like all other amphibious divisions the 27th was "combat loaded." This means that supplies like water, rations, and ammunition, the first things

that the troops ashore would need, were loaded on the top of the cargo holds where they could be unloaded first.

The Division carried thirty days of rations into battle. Four days were K rations; two days were D, or emergency, rations; one week was C rations; and the remainder (seventeen days) were B rations. Every soldier in the Division had ten gallons of water. Attached engineer units carried with them complete water-distillation units, capable of supplying the entire Division with converted sea water.

Each RCT carried enough clothing to equip 1,500 men for thirty days. Other Class II supplies were carried at the same rate. The Division also provided valuable cargo space for one barracks bag of personal equipment. This was kept with the men aboard ship until they went ashore. Ships' parties later unloaded these bags into dumps until the battle was over. Two problems arose from this practice. Many of the ships which carried the 27th Division to Saipan were immediately turned around for a return to Oahu with hospital cases and to be ready to load the 77th Division. This necessitated prompt unloading of these personal belongings, which helped to congest the already overloaded beaches. The second problem, and one which was never solved during the remainder of the Pacific War, was the practice of looting the dumps. Although this did not originate at Saipan, it reached a serious point here for the first time. Guards had to be kept posted constantly, despite which fact many personal belongings were lost to marauding parties of Americans, wandering behind the front lines.

Twenty days' supply of Class III supplies (fuel) was carried. Of this, one week's quota was allotted to each battalion landing team, to be carried on their ships for their own vehicles. This, in five-gallon cans, was either stored aboard the vehicles themselves or palletized. The balance, enough fuel for thirteen days, was in 55-gallon drums under control of the regimental supply officers, to be dispatched where needed within the regiments. Division Headquarters and Special Troops, of course, carried and controlled their own twenty-day supply.

Each unit in the Division carried seven units of fire into battle. Seventy-five rounds of small-arms ammunition were issued to each man prior to going ashore and the remainder was distributed to regimental supply dumps for later issue. Some estimate of requirements for the battle can be had from the fact that for 105mm howitzers a unit of fire was 200 rounds. This means that Division artillery carried 1,400 rounds of ammunition for each gun, a grand total of 50,400 shells for the three 105mm field artillery battalions alone. This level had been reduced to less than five thousand rounds by the time of receipt of the first resupply on 1 July.

Many of the problems of preparing for a large-scale amphibious operation had already been solved before the invasion of the Marianas. This was the third such assault in the Central Pacific and the experiences gained in the Gilberts and Marshalls proved invaluable. Furthermore, in the summer of 1944, American sea and air power had reached its peak strength thus far in the war. Piecemeal attacks and experimentation were no longer the order of the day. A comparison of the Marianas operation with earlier assaults brings out one startling fact. Planning and preparations for the Marshalls operation had taken four months, from 1 October 1943 to 1 February 1944. The Marianas, a much larger invasion, involving almost three times as many troops and ships and bringing together forces from distances three times as widely scattered, had taken only three months. Shortages which had been critical during the earlier invasions had been made up by this time. LVTs for initial assault waves, which had become standing operating procedure, were easily provided for at Saipan. Four complete Army amphibian battalions and one Marine battalion were available. DUKWs, hitherto obtainable only at a premium, were used extensively.

Preliminary bombardment by shore-based artillery, however, was impossible at Saipan, due to the absence of any small islands nearby on which to land the guns. Softening the beaches, therefore, begun as early as 11 June, was done by naval gunfire or carrier-based aircraft.

Enemy air power was a problem from the start. The strongest air opposition would be met from Saipan itself, but the whole area was dotted with Japanese airbases. Most important of these were Guam, the Pagan Islands, Palau, and Chichi Jima and Iwo Jima in the Volcanos. Enemy airfields were also known to exist on Rota and Tinian; some interference was also feared from Truk. The first task, therefore, was to eliminate the threats which these airfields presented. This was primarily the mission of the fast carriers of the famous Task Force 58. During the first attacks, planes from these carriers were to attempt to knock out the bases on Saipan, Guam, Tinian, Rota, and in the Pagans. Upon completion of this task they were to move on to the north and engage the Japanese air forces at Chichi Jima and Iwo Jima. Land-based bombers from the Seventh Air Force stations in the Marshalls were to conduct air offensives at Truk and other near-by enemy strongholds during this period while planes from Lt. Gen. George C. Kenney's Fifth Air Force, based in the Southwest Pacific, were to neutralize the Palaus. This was envisioned as a strike on a grand scale. The enemy air at Saipan and in the Marianas generally was the primary target, but a hard-hitting offensive at the surrounding islands had its value in cutting off any help to the beleaguered enemy bases from nearby points.

One of the objectives of all our action in the Pacific was to draw the Japanese fleet into the open where it could be destroyed by our superior forces. It was considered improbable that the enemy would risk his fleet at Saipan. However, to be absolutely safe, the Pacific submarine scouting forces were alerted and ordered to maintain a constant vigilance in Philippine waters for any signs of Japanese naval concentrations. On 12 June, while American surface vessels were engaged in the preliminary bombardment, this vigilance was rewarded by the location of two sizable enemy naval task forces in the China Sea, south of the Philippines. On that day these two task forces gave every indication that they were making a run toward the Marianas. Submarines watched them closely. By 15 June, our submarines had located and were checking on virtually all Japanese naval strength in the Western Pacific. As a result of their work the great naval battle, now known as the First Battle of the Philippine Sea, was joined on 18 June between the U. S. Navy and the enemy force steaming to the aid of Saipan. The results were disastrous to the Japanese.

It is apparent, from prisoner interrogations, that the enemy was surprised by our landings on Saipan. They surmised correctly that the invasion would not hit Truk, but their guess as to its objective was Palau. This accounts for their frantic attempts to reinforce their Palau base during May and early June.

Chapter 17: The Landings on Saipan

THE FIRST TROOPS left Pearl Harbor for Saipan on the morning of 26 May 1944. These were the amphibian battalions loaded aboard slow-moving LSTs. The departure was almost delayed when an explosion and fire, on 21 May, destroyed one LST and damaged five others. Replacements and repairs were at hand, however, and the advance echelon sailed on schedule.

On 28 May, the second echelon began its long journey, and the next day the transport divisions carrying the 2d and 4th Marine Divisions, the main assault units, followed. The last section of the assault troops, the 27th Infantry Division, loaded on 31 May and departed early on the morning of 1 June. The force from the South Pacific, with a shorter distance to go, did not leave Guadalcanal until 5, 6, and 7 June. The entire NTLF rendezvoused at either Kwajalein or Eniwetok beginning on 7 June. Here the ships were refueled, last-minute intelligence was assembled and a few minor changes and additions to plans were made.

Neutralization of Japanese bases south and west of the Marshalls had begun on 3 June 1944, with a land-based air strike on Palau by planes from the Southwest Pacific. Beginning again on 9 June, daily bombing missions on Palau and other Japanese bases in the Western Carolines, continued in mounting intensity. Bombers from U.S. bases in the Marshalls also carried out heavy raids against Truk, Kusaie, and Ponape. There were no untoward incidents in carrying out the original plan. By 14 April virtually all Japanese air power had been driven from the skies or destroyed on the ground. Only one threat from the flanks remained. That was evidenced in the flow of radio messages from the submarines. The Japanese fleet appeared ready to fight!

While the ground forces were moving toward the objective from Kwajalein, Task Force 58 was already busy in the waters and air near Saipan. On the afternoon of 11 June this force, a large fleet of very fast carriers under the command of Vice Adm. Marc A. Mitscher, began eliminating the enemy air power on Saipan, Guam, Rota, Tinian and the Pagan Islands. The next day and the next they continued incessant heavy strikes against the target island. By 14 June, 141 Japanese planes—the total strength in the area—had been destroyed in the air or on the ground, and airfields were inoperative. The carrier planes also attacked anything that looked like it might contain Japanese defensive positions. Attempts were made to burn the extensive canefields on Saipan with incendiary bombs and later by phosphorus shells fired from the battleships. These attempts were unsuccessful. During the air strikes, extensive photographs were taken of the landing beaches and these photos were turned over to the assault elements.

On 14 June, Task Force 58 departed from Saipan as scheduled and moved north toward the Volcano Islands and the Bonins. Its place was taken by Bombardment Group 1, heavy battleships, cruisers, and destroyers. For the rest of the day these ships sat offshore, pounding the enemy defenses unmercifully. Under cover of this fire, underwater demolition teams and minesweeping units began a careful search of the approaches to the landing beaches.

The transport divisions bearing the assault divisions arrived off Saipan during the night of 14-15 June. The rendezvous area was opposite the western beaches where the landings were to be made. How-hour had been set at 0830, but debarkation from the transports had begun an hour before dawn. The Japanese discovered, with the coming of daylight, that many of the assault troops were already afloat in landing craft. Two regiments of each Marine division—the 2d Division on the left, the 4th Division on the right—were to make the initial landings. The reserve regiments were also boated from ships lying offshore to the north of Tanapag Harbor. An hour after the original landings had been made these regiments feinted against the beaches in Tanapag Harbor itself. These feints were successful in tying up at least one Japanese infantry regiment in the northern part of the island so that it could not be used in repulsing the main American effort in the south.

The first landing wave was a line of amphibian tanks, armed with either 37mm guns or 75mm howitzers. In the 2d Marine Division zone of action, on the left of the line, these tanks were manned by the 2d Marine Tractor Battalion, while the Army's 708th Amphibian Tractor Battalion handled the vehicles on the right. This first wave hit the beach at precisely 0843. Only two of the sixty-eight tanks of the 708th Battalion failed to reach the beach. One broke down as it came up over the reef, and the other was hit by point-blank fire from a 77mm gun in position just off the beach.

Farther to the north enemy shell fire was much heavier, and more vehicles were knocked out, but the landing suffered more seriously from confusion on the part of guide boats, which resulted in assault waves veering too far to the left. This brought the entire 2d Marine Division front ashore in an area farther north than intended and, in the case of the extreme left-wing units, resulted in a general mixup in unloading plans and a jam of landing vehicles on the beaches when it was discovered that the tracked amphibians could not negotiate a small bank just off the water's edge.

Orders to all assault units had anticipated a rapid advance to the O-1 (first objective) line. The tanks and the first two waves of the troop-

carrying tractors were to push inland to this objective. There the Marines were to disembark and consolidate a holding position preparatory to a push farther inland. All subsequent landing waves were to disembark from the tractors at the beach line. Inasmuch as the rapid push inland by the initial landing elements would necessarily by-pass large pockets of enemy resistance, the third and fourth waves, upon disembarkation at the water's edge, were to mop up the by-passed pockets while moving inland to join the first echelons.

At no other place has there been such an excellent illustration of the confusion that surrounds modern amphibious war than at these landings. The original intentions of the planners were abandoned almost as soon as the assault reached dry land. All along the landing beaches, terrain features, natural and man-made obstacles, burning dumps, narrow streets, and swamps caused the huge clumsy amphibians to break down or belly up and stall. Marine troop commanders, without further ado, ordered their men overboard and made for the objective line on foot. In one case the Marine assault waves did reach the final beachhead line still in their vehicles. In another a company got halfway in. Only a fraction of the 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion reached the holding line. This failure to carry out the original plans was something that could have been foreseen but it was nothing for which the various unit commanders could have been condemned. The troop commanders had to reach the objective as quickly as possible and consolidate, and it was thought during the planning period that this could best be achieved by remaining in the vehicles. When this failed, the troop commanders simply felt that the best way to maintain the momentum was to continue on foot.

The resultant confusion was largely responsible for the failure of the landing forces to advance any farther than the O-1 line during D-day. It was not until late in the afternoon that any semblance of a firm line had been established along the objective. Marine infantrymen, after serious opposition and much heavy fighting, arrived along the ridge, a mile inland, all the way from 0950 in the morning until 1630 in the afternoon. In places, especially on the extreme right flank, at Agingan Point, these troops never did reach the objective during the first day. The Japanese fought tenaciously to hold their lines. Artillery and mortar fire blanketed the reefs and beaches. Inland, small enemy pockets, held by forces as large as thirty to forty men, had to be mopped up and this took time and delayed the general consolidation.

Opposition on D-day was most serious in the 4th Marine Division's zone of action. Here, despite the fact that both assault regiments had been able to place elements along the O-1 line by 1040, the small

groups of enemy behind these leading elements were particularly harassing and Japanese artillery emplaced in the Nafutan area interdicted every route of approach. The enemy position at Agingan Point was protected by well emplaced and fanatical units and the 1st Battalion of the 25th Marines, assigned the task of capturing the position, was met by the fiercest opposition. By nightfall on D-day this battalion held a beachhead only twelve yards deep at points. The 23d Marine Regiment also met serious trouble in the streets of Charan Kanoa and had to fight isolated groups which were entrenched in the village.

The 2d Marine Division had three main problems. The first was the confusion already mentioned. The second was an extremely heavy concentration of fire which enfiladed the landing beaches from a determined enemy pocket on Afetna Point. The 2d Battalion of the 8th Marine Regiment fought all day long to eliminate this threat and establish firm physical contact with the 4th Division. The last problem was the stubborn Japanese groups which held out in and around the swampy area of Lake Susupe. Here again the 2d Division found itself struggling against poor terrain and firmly entrenched defenders.

By 1430 the beachhead line had been roughly established along a front that ran in a long arc from the middle of Red Beach 1, around Lake Susupe, along the reverse slopes of Fina-Susu Ridge, almost to Agingan Point, where it dropped back sharply to Yellow Beach 3. From 1100, Company C, 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion, had vehicles on Agingan Point itself, but at no time during the day did Marine infantrymen get up to support them.

Beginning as early as 1400 on D-day, the newly established beachhead line was determinedly counterattacked.

For over twenty hours, from 1430 on 15 June, until shortly before noon on 16 June, the lines of the two opposing forces remained virtually stationary. The whole twenty-hour period was fought bitterly on all sections of the O-1 line. Shortly before noon on 16 June, however, the extreme right flank of the 4th Marine Division had reorganized sufficiently to be able to launch an attack that carried forward 1,500 yards, to the foot of the ridge in front of Aslito Airfield. In other areas the line still held fast along the first objective.

The action between H-hour and the evening of D plus 1 had been in the nature of small piecemeal fights. The fury of these struggles is attested to by the first casualty report, issued at 1600 on 16 June. By that time the casualties in both Marine divisions and supporting troops totaled approximately 2,500 men killed, wounded, and missing. In the strenuous efforts to plug the gaps, straighten out the line, and give momentum to the attack, every element of both divisions had been committed.

Chapter 18: Landing of the 165th

ORIGINAL PLANS had called for the arrival of the Expeditionary Troops reserve force off Saipan on D plus 1. At 0600 on the morning of 16 June, two transport divisions, bearing the 105th and 165th Regimental Combat Teams, plus 27th Division headquarters and headquarters units, were within sight of the island, about twenty miles to the eastward. The 106th Infantry, it will be remembered, had been detached and sent to join the Southern Troops and Landing Force for use in the pending action on Guam. At noon on 15 June, when it appeared that the Saipan battle was going exceptionally well, the Guam landing was set for 18 June, but by the end of the day, after it became apparent that the early optimism was unjustified, orders were again changed and the Guam assault was postponed indefinitely. However, the 106th Infantry was not detached from STLF and returned to the 27th Division.

The decision to employ the 27th Division on Saipan was not made immediately. As late as 1225 on 16 June, Rear Adm. William H. C. Blandy, in charge of the reserve group, had orders only to cruise in the vicinity. In the next hour, however, two unrelated events changed the entire picture and resulted in the hasty order to disembark the Division. The first of these was the commitment of the last reserve in the fighting ashore; the second was the growing evidence, as contained in reports from the scouting submarine force, that the Japanese South Pacific Fleet seemed determined to fight a major engagement in an attempt to relieve the Saipan garrison. With the depletion of American reserves ashore it became apparent that the Expeditionary Force reserve would have to be employed sooner or later, probably at once, and the approach of the enemy fleet made it imperative that the vessels of the invasion force put to sea at the earliest possible moment. Faced with these prospects the decision was made to unload the 27th Division and release the transports. At 1323 on 16 June, therefore, less than an hour after his last instructions, Admiral Blandy was ordered to proceed to the transport area off the Blue Beaches, prepared to unload upon arrival there.

The haste with which this decision was made and the further implied necessity for the utmost speed in debarkation resulted in undesirable confusion. No details accompanied the order. Maj. Gen. Ralph C. Smith and Admiral Blandy were instructed to report aboard the USS *Cambria*, the flagship, immediately upon arrival in the transport area, ostensibly for the purposes of briefing. In order to save time, General Smith ordered his two regimental commanders; Brig. Gen. Ogden J. Ross, Assistant Division Commander; and Brig. Gen. Redmond F. Kernan, Division Artillery Commander, to report aboard his ship upon

arrival. They were to wait there until his return with orders. Each regimental commander thereupon ordered his battalion commanders to report aboard his command ship to await his return with orders.

The 27th Division had left Kwajalein with a score of separate plans for employment and these were now all abandoned in the need for haste. Aboard the *Cambria* it was decided to get the troops ashore as expeditiously as possible and provide for their employment later. The greatest need ashore was for an infantry reserve to bolster the over-extended lines and for a medium artillery battalion to lend long-range support against the enemy positions in the Mt. Tapotchau and Nafutan areas. Accordingly, at 1620, just as the transport divisions were entering the debarkation area, NTLF headquarters ordered Admiral Blandy to prepare to unload one RCT. Upon receipt of this order, Maj. Gen. Ralph C. Smith alerted the 165th Infantry Regiment. Ten minutes later, the 106th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm) was also alerted for movement ashore. It should be borne in mind that these were only alerts, not orders for actual debarkation. Neither Admiral Blandy nor Major General Smith was aware of the exact plans of the flagship and assumed that the actual debarkation order would be withheld until they had visited Admiral Spruance and Lieutenant General Smith and had been briefed.

The transports dropped anchor approximately six thousand yards west of the Blue Beaches at 1615. Crews immediately prepared to lower landing craft and the various battalion commanders of the 165th Infantry reported aboard the *Harris*, Colonel Kelley's command ship. After a brief conference, Colonel Kelley set out for the *Fremont* shortly after 1700 to wait orders there from the Division Commander. At almost the same time, the Division Commander and Admiral Blandy had left for the *Cambria*.

With all these key personnel afloat and away from their commands, the Navy issued, at 1711, orders to debark the 165th Infantry. Boats were immediately lowered and the first troops went over the side at 1748. It was then only one hour and fifteen minutes until darkness, the ships lay some three and one half miles from shore, and no clarifying orders had been issued to troop commanders regarding their mission. Upon boarding the *Fremont*, Colonel Kelley learned of the debarkation order and, after conferring with General Ross, he flashed orders to his executive, Lt. Col. Joseph T. Hart, by ship's blinker. Lt. Colonel Hart was to land the regiment on Blue Beach 1, in a column of battalions, 2d Battalion leading, followed by the 1st and 3d, in that order. Colonel Kelley would remain aboard the *Fremont* until the Division Com-

mander's return and then come directly ashore with the orders, meeting Lt. Colonel Hart on Blue Beach 1. This order was transmitted to the executive officer at 1830. He immediately ordered the battalion commanders to return to their units and clambered over the side with the regimental staff at 1900. It was already dark.

By the time Lt. Colonel Hart received his instructions from Colonel Kelley the 1st and 2d Battalions were already boated and the 3d Battalion had debarked more than half its strength. The landing craft were circling about the transports in the darkness. Lt. Col. John F. McDonough had no trouble joining the 2d Battalion, which had been embarked on the *Calvert*. However, the situation in the 3d Battalion was confused. This unit had sailed to Saipan aboard the *Herald of the Morning*, a vessel which carried only thirteen landing craft. These were loaded before darkness fell. At that time requests for additional landing craft from other vessels brought no response. Those troops already embarked remained afloat all night, circling. To add to the confusion in the 3d Battalion, Major Denis E. Claire, while returning from the *Harris* to join his men, was forced to row when the boat in which he was riding suffered engine failure. This resulted in a delay of over an hour before he finally reached the *Herald of the Morning*. Just as he boarded the transport, orders were flashed to the captain of the ship directing him to put to sea in the face of enemy air and submarine threats. Leaving the thirteen boats to shift for themselves, the transport now weighed anchor and cleared the area, cruising the remainder of the night.

The two boated battalions departed from the assembly area at 2040 under command of Lt. Colonel Hart. Arranged in a makeshift column of landing craft, these units now began a bizarre journey towards the beaches. The three-mile voyage was made through almost total darkness, the only illumination being the gun flashes from naval support ships standing offshore and an occasional explosion inside the Japanese lines on Saipan. No accurate instructions had been received. The column was poorly organized. Coxswains and boat crews were as unfamiliar with routes of approach to the beach as the troops they were carrying. The route was dotted with vessels of all types, swinging at anchor in the darkness. Hundreds of small craft were working their way out from the beach to ships farther removed from shore. Within a few minutes after the columns started for shore all organization was lost. Ducking in and out among the ships, dodging the other landing craft moving away from the beach, stopping for directions at various ships, and at times passing directly beneath the guns on the cruisers and destroyers, the flotilla of landing craft carrying the 165th Infantry shoreward became a hopelessly separated and uncoordinated mass of

boats. Most of the LCVPs, at one time or another, got as far as the reef itself and there could not locate the passage which would enable them to put their troops ashore. Nor could they locate the control base which regulated traffic to the beach. In some cases these confused coxswains were told they could find the control officer a few hundred yards to seaward. As a result of this information several of the boats retraced their courses to a point even farther from shore than that from which they had started. In most cases the coxswains finally tired of circling aimlessly, drove their boats up to the reef and ordered the troops into the water, where they waded ashore in water all the way from waist- to neck-deep.

The first troops to reach the beach were from the 2d Battalion. These men waded onto dry land at 2230, two full hours after they had left the rendezvous area. They were followed by other units who landed all the way from the Green Beaches on the north to the Yellow Beaches on the south. Lt. Colonel Hart immediately ordered out a system of patrols to find and assemble the various units of the regiment on the Blue Beach. This was a task that took well over an hour and even then the entire regiment was not found. Company C, for example, landed on the farthest north of the Green Beaches and was not located until 1045 the next morning. It did not join the 1st Battalion until that unit had been fighting for four hours. Major Mahoney, the battalion commander of this unit, was not able to find his troops until after 0100 in the morning and the task of organizing the whole battalion fell upon the shoulders of the senior company commander present, Capt. Lawrence J. O'Brien of Company A, who wandered about in the darkness gathering such men together as he could find.

Luckily, the boat containing Lt. Colonel Hart had been one of the first to land and the work of this able officer was largely responsible for the order which soon prevailed.

While the two assault battalions had been landing, Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith had returned from his conference on the flagship. He was still without definite orders for the 165th Infantry, other than the fact that the regiment was to constitute a reserve for use against counterattacks during the remainder of the night. Corps headquarters was contemplating a general attack at 0730 the next morning, 17 June, and if this attack were launched, the 165th Infantry would probably be placed on the right of the 4th Division line. General Ross was to go ashore at once and report to the 4th Marine Division CP for more definite orders. Until daybreak he was to act as a liaison officer with that Division and at that time was to locate a command post for the 27th Division which was to begin landing the remainder of its troops at dawn.

At 2030 General Ross and his party, accompanied by Colonel Kelley, departed for shore. For the next five hours this group wandered aimlessly about the anchorage, trying to find the way to the Blue Beaches. At 0115 in the morning, the whole party went overboard at the reef line and waded ashore.

In the meantime, the assembled elements of the 165th Infantry had run into further confusion. Captain O'Brien, in moving about the beach during the reorganization, had been challenged by a sentry and upon investigation, was told that the whole beach side of the perimeter had been alerted for a probable enemy counterlanding and that the Marines holding this particular portion of the line, had not been told that the 165th Infantry was coming ashore. Only the mere chance that the sentry challenged Captain O'Brien before shooting, prevented a slaughter. A conference between Lt. Colonel Hart and the commander of the Marine battalion followed this incident and it was agreed that all men of the 165th would dig in on the beach. A wet two hours followed; every wave that rolled up onto the beach drenched the infantrymen where they lay on the sand.

Shortly after this challenging incident, Lt. Col. Lewis Rock of 4th Marine Division headquarters, who had been designated as a guide for the 165th Infantry, managed to find Lt. Colonel Hart after searching up and down the beach all evening. He took the acting regimental commander to the nearest battalion command post and reported the location to his division headquarters. The other beach-guard units were then notified of the presence of friendly troops along the shore. Shortly before 0200 Colonel Kelley was escorted to the command post of the 23d Marine Regiment and there reached his executive by telephone at the battalion CP. Colonel Kelley told Lt. Colonel Hart what he knew of the situation and ordered him to move the troops south as far as Yellow Beach 2 in order that they would be in better position for employment on the right of the corps line, should the contemplated commitment be carried out. As soon as the executive officer had completed this movement he was to bring the battalion commanders with him and report to the command post of the 4th Marine Division for orders. Colonel Kelley would meet them there.

The regimental commander then proceeded on to the 4th Marine Division headquarters with General Ross and his party, arriving there shortly before 0300. Upon arrival he immediately went into conference with Col. William W. Rogers, Chief of Staff of the 4th Marine Division. He was informed that the regiment would take over the right of the 4th Division line, replacing the 3d Battalion, 24th Marines, and elements of the 1st Battalion, 25th Marines. An attack was scheduled

for 0730 with the objective, line O-2. Aslito Airfield lay within the zone of action of the 165th Infantry, which extended all the way from the south beaches to a line running along the north edge of the airfield. The regiment was to operate as an attachment of the 4th Marine Division until such time as the 27th Division could establish itself ashore and assume responsibility for the right zone of action. These orders were oral and no written confirmation of them was received until two days later. After a careful check with Colonel Rogers, Colonel Kelley left the CP of the 4th Marine Division and made his way to Yellow Beach 2. It was now 0430 and Lt. Colonel Hart and the battalion commanders had not yet put in an appearance.

The movement of the 165th Infantry southward from the Blue Beaches had been a slow and tedious affair. Passing along a chain of defensive beach perimeters, Lt. Colonel Hart had been forced to halt his men every few yards, answer challenges, and identify his command. Confined to a narrow strip of sand along the water's edge in order to circumvent the Marine squads as much as possible, the infantrymen moved along, sometimes in the water, sometimes out, now down, now up. One infantryman said later that he had "hit the dirt at least three hundred times" in this short march. The men later christened Lt. Colonel Hart "Jumping Joe" from the number of times he led them in going down and getting up that night, and the name stayed with him for the rest of his career in the Pacific. To further complicate this movement, just as the troops moved off down the beach at 0205, the enemy launched another in the series of heavy counterattacks which had been carried on throughout the previous days. Accompanying this attack a heavy mortar and artillery barrage was dropped into the area just off the sand of the beaches and into the water near the reefs so that the troops moving south were sandwiched between the two fires. No casualties were suffered, although at one point, the column passed within four hundred yards of serious hand-to-hand fighting and heavy random small-arms fire. Moving in single file, the two battalions finally reached Yellow Beach 2 at approximately 0500. Their arrival almost coincided with that of Colonel Kelley. It was not yet daylight and it was not more than two and a half hours before the men were expected to launch an attack from a point 2,500 yards away.

During the conference with Colonel Rogers, Colonel Kelley had carefully gone over possible routes of approach to the line of departure with the Chief of Staff. The most feasible lay up the main road that ran east and west from a point one hundred yards inland from the middle of Yellow Beach 2. Colonel Rogers warned the regimental commander that the enemy would blanket this road with artillery fire

as soon as daylight arrived at approximately 0530. With this information as a basis, Colonel Kelley decided to move his men up the road in the early darkness as far as the Funa-Susu Ridge and then deploy them to the south along the railroad tracks in the cut that ran along the reverse (west) slope of the ridge. This would give sufficient cover and protection to organize the regimental front prior to attacking. It was Colonel Kelley's plan to advance eastward from the railroad track to the line of departure at skirmishers. The Marine line was reported to be along a line of trees three hundred yards north of the little unnamed village which lay southwest of Aslito Airfield.

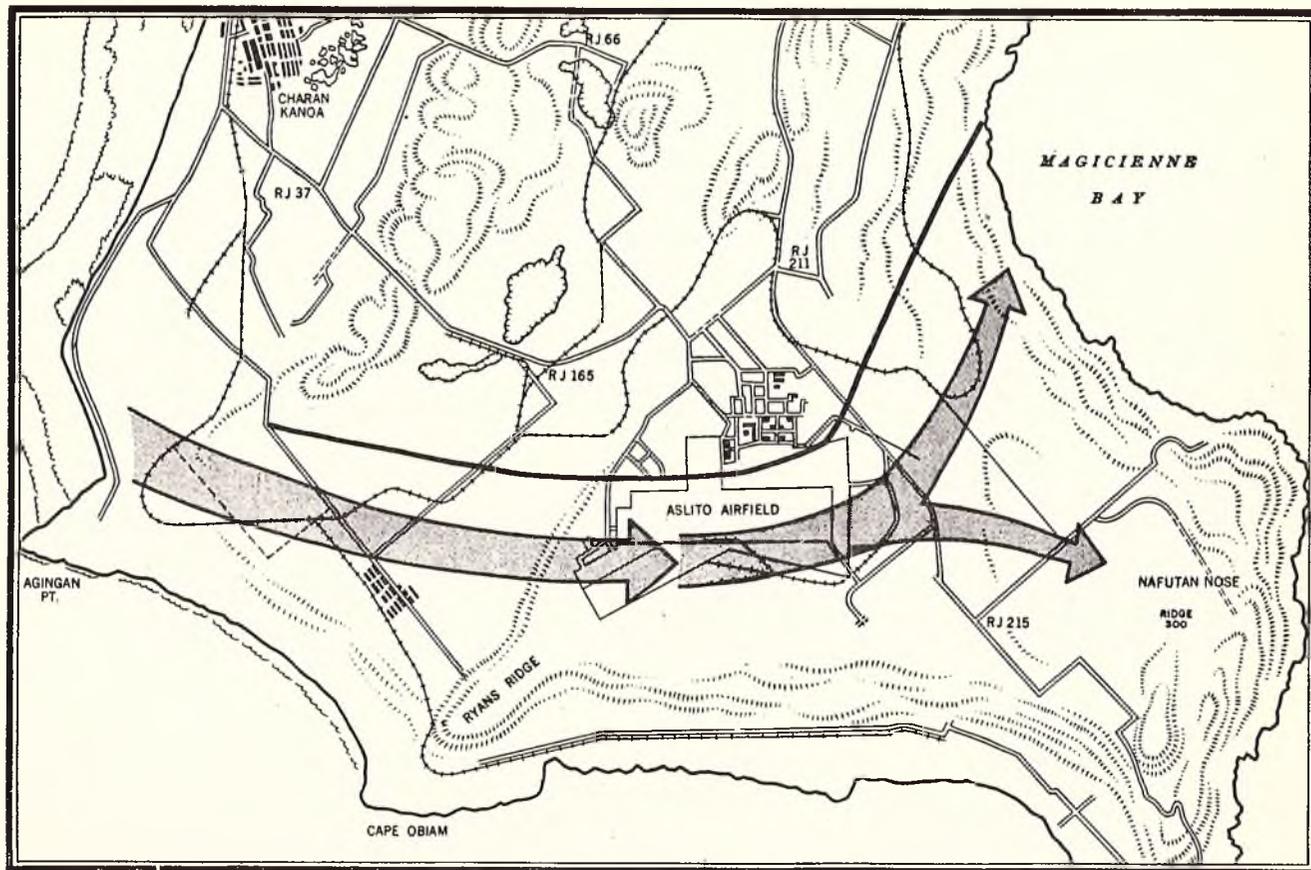
As soon as these preliminary orders had been given to the battalions Colonel Kelley took his two battalion commanders and visited the command post of the 25th Marine Regiment for further information. The troops, faced with crossing one thousand yards of open ground in less than half an hour, moved out rapidly in column. The leading elements reached the railroad track just as dawn was breaking and by fast work the company commanders were able to get their men off the road within a few minutes. The Japanese began shelling the highway promptly at dawn. So close was the timing of this troop movement, conducted at double-time, that the last soldier in the column, a man from Company B, was the only casualty. He was hit by fragments of the first shell to land in the area. The 165th Infantry was now in position to organize for the attack after an all-night movement from the transports. It was 0530.

Chapter 19: Capture of Aslito Airfield

ALTHOUGH THE 165th Infantry was now ostensibly ready to assume responsibility for the extreme southern flank of the 4th Marine Division, it was not by any means a regiment fully equipped and at full strength. The troops that took over the line at 0730 on 17 June numbered only two rifle battalions instead of three. The 2d Battalion was largely intact, but the 1st Battalion was minus C Company, still wandering on the beaches. Capt. Paul Ryan, its commander, did not manage to assemble his men and report to Major Mahoney until 1130, four hours after the attack jumped off. Most of the battalion Headquarters Company and some of D Company reported at the same time. Tanks were still afloat and were of no use during the first day's action, except for a few brief minutes during the late afternoon. Some amphibian tanks were commandeered during the day from the 708th Amphibian Tank Battalion, but these cumbersome vehicles added little in the way of close-in fire support. Each man carried one day's supply of ammunition with him and when resupply was slow in coming ashore, some redistribution had to be made on 18 June. For a short time strict economy was necessary. Artillery support from the 105th Field Artillery Battalion, part of RCT 165, became available shortly after 1000 in the morning. Up until that time it was furnished almost entirely by naval gunfire and one battalion of the 14th Marine (Artillery) Regiment loaned to Colonel Kelley.

The 3d Battalion resumed unloading at 0600 on the morning of 17 June and by 0945 Major Claire had the battalion ashore and assembled on Yellow Beach. He did not actually become available until over an hour later.

Beach conditions had worsened to such an extent by the morning of 17 June that for a time they seriously threatened the efficiency of the troops ashore. This was mainly due to the bottleneck at the gap in the reef on Blue Beach 1. This small opening was the only one through which heavy equipment could land and as the day progressed hundreds of landing craft were gathered on the seaward side, waiting for permission and room to make their way to shore and unload their cargoes. Valuable time was lost and some high-priority landing craft were delayed for as much as seven hours. The 106th FA Battalion, so urgently needed the afternoon before, did not land until after noon. Tanks were held up five and six hours. Artillery ammunition was slow in the reef passage and once ashore was unloaded in such haste that beach parties had neither the time nor ability to sort it out. As a result Marine and Army artillery ammunition was all dumped together and 27th Division artillerymen were sometimes gone for hours searching it out. These and



Map 3: Saipan: Aslito to Magicienne Bay

related problems of supply handicapped the 165th Infantry to some extent in its attack of 17 June, notably in the matter of coordinated fire support. Nevertheless, the action of this day was long and bitter and by nightfall, when the combat team was able to operate as a full strength unit for the first time, front-line battalions had registered substantial gains and were pressing the defenders of Aslito so heavily that the fall of the airstrip was only a matter of a few hours.

Aslito Airfield was defended by a hodgepodge of from 1,200 to 1,500 troops of all types, ranging from anti-aircraft gun battalions to labor battalions. There is no record of the presence of more than two companies of first-line infantry troops. Nafutan Point, backing up the airstrip, was the defense sector of coast artillery units equipped with six- and eight-inch naval guns. There were also very small field artillery detachments and at least one heavy mortar company. The defenders of Aslito and Nafutan, together, numbered about two thousand. The defenses were still under construction at the time of the American landings and were never fully completed. Troops later found several of the naval pieces still dismounted and unfit for use. The primary weapons used, outside of small arms and machine guns, were the ever-present dual-purpose guns which had originally comprised part of the anti-aircraft defense of the airfield. These had been moved back into the rough terrain at Nafutan early in the campaign. Here they fired point-blank against American tanks and infantry.

The airfield itself was undefended. American infantry found only one lone enemy weatherman on the installation. However, the Japanese attempted to hold a line running along the crest of a high ridge which extended from the southeast corner of the airfield to the vicinity of Cape Obiam on the Saipan Channel. American infantry reaching this high ground found themselves facing a relatively level plateau which stretched out to the east as far as Nafutan Point itself. Just beyond the crest was a slight swale which offered the Japanese some protection from flat-trajectory fire. On the slight reverse slope the enemy had built some pillboxes and constructed hasty fortifications. It was the first experience of 27th Division troops with the later-famed reverse-slope tactics of the Imperial Army. This heavily defended ridge was the key to Aslito Airfield. As long as it remained in Japanese hands, the airfield itself could not be safely captured or supplied.

Colonel Kelley had placed both available battalions on the line on the morning of 17 July. The 2d Battalion operated in the left zone of action and the boundaries designated would carry the left company directly onto the airfield. The 1st Battalion, on the right, was the unit most concerned with the ridge defense and was soon to be engaged in its re-

duction. The boundary between the two battalions ran in a southeasterly direction, through the little unnamed village at the base of the ridge, and virtually paralleling the highway that ran through it in the direction of the attack.

As soon as both battalions had been deployed along the railroad cut, Colonel Kelley ordered his subordinates to move off at 0700, giving them plenty of time to arrive at the line of departure and straighten the lines before H-hour at 0730. These plans were disrupted momentarily, however, when Mahoney's right-flank company became involved in a skirmish with an enemy position on Agingan Point. This position, supposedly knocked out earlier by the Marines, consisted of three mutually supporting pillboxes manned by six Japanese. The enemy opened fire as soon as Company A moved out of the railroad cut on its way to the line of departure. Here the 165th Infantry suffered its first dead of the Battle of Saipan, Pfc. Edward R. Smith, who was killed by rifle fire while trying to aid a wounded comrade. Lt. George E. Martin, company executive officer, was left in charge of operations with one platoon, while the rest of the company moved on to the line of departure. Martin borrowed a nearby amphibian tank and this, together with some able assistance by Pfc. Henry A. Shires, who mounted one of the pillboxes and killed the Japanese inside, soon reduced the position.

Only scattered opposition met the 165th Infantry during the rest of the distance to the base of the ridge itself. Advancing in a long skirmish line, the men relieved the Marines at 0740 and pushed on forward across canefields for a thousand yards, reaching the base of the hill at 0900. Here, as the left flank was moving along the outskirts of the little unnamed village, B Company began receiving some small-arms fire and Lt. Jose Gil, the company commander, pulled back his men and requested an air strike on the town. The strike was granted and then canceled when he revised his request and asked that the air strike be extended to include the whole area to his front. Gil was informed that the Marine artillery would fire a concentration on the area at 1030. Meanwhile, both Gil and Capt. Bernard Ryan of E Company had sent patrols into the village and cleaned it out, and the area was now removed from the target to be covered. Throughout this period, while waiting for the support to be delivered in front of B Company, the whole regimental line had been stationary. It was also during this time that two light artillery battalions of the 27th Division came ashore and began to register along the ridge line in front of the 2d Battalion positions, considerably to the left of Gil's zone of action. They had completed their firing prior to the concentration by the Marines at 1030. Upon receipt of notification that the 105th Field Artillery Battalion was

ready to fire missions, an additional thirty minutes of artillery fire was scheduled along the 1st Battalion front, beginning at 1050, to be followed by a general attack on the ridge line at 1130. One significant reason for this additional fire was the arrival of the 3d Battalion and the missing elements of the 1st Battalion during this period. Major Mahoney asked for additional time to place C Company in position to support the attack and Colonel Kelley wished to move Major Claire's battalion closer to the scene of action.

The attack of 1130 was not a success. The intense artillery fire along the top of the ridge had not damaged the enemy defensive positions and at this early moment the American command had not realized two significant facts. The first of these was the location of the enemy artillery, which was not behind the crest of the ridge, as supposed, but on Nafutan Point. The second was the general acceptance of the theory that infantry movements in the canefields could not be observed by the Japanese. They could because the observers were high enough to look down and trace every move. It was a simple matter, therefore, to step out of the deep defensive positions whence they had been driven by the artillery and lay down deadly accurate fire on the infantrymen moving up the hill. Within ten minutes after the signal to move off in the attack, virtually every man in B Company was pinned to the earth by this fire, and Company A which had previously not had much trouble, now began to experience difficulty as it moved closer to the hillside.

With the failure of the 1130 attack, Colonel Kelley once more asked for artillery fire along the ridge line and then instructed Lt. Colonel McDonough to move his right flank unit up into the village itself. This unit, E Company, was ordered to coordinate its attack with that of B Company. It was thought at the time that E Company, by moving up into the village, where it was close to the objective, could make use of the trees along the road and the heavy canefields on the north to get to the crest of the ridge much sooner than the 1st Battalion. Such a move would also divert some of the heavy fire which had thus far been placed upon B Company. The new attack was to be launched at 1230 after fifteen minutes of artillery fire. It bogged down within five minutes.

The two unsuccessful attempts to take the high ground had been due largely to the failure of our artillery to damage the enemy holding it, and also to the failure of our support fire to keep the Japanese underground long enough for infantry to reach them and destroy them.

Major Mahoney, the 1st Battalion commander, and Colonel Kelley took steps to regroup and reinforce their supporting weapons. The first of these was to call in the 249th Field Artillery Battalion to add to the amount of fire placed on the hill. The second was to move the cruiser

Louisville up the Saipan Channel to the east to a point where she could bring her guns to bear on the reverse slopes of the ridge. Last, Col. Kelley finally received two light tanks which had just been put ashore. Both of these vehicles were rushed to Company B, where the greatest opposition had been met up until that time.

From shortly after 1230 until 1415 artillery and naval gunfire pounded the ridge and Nafutan Point.

In preparation for the next attempt to take the ridge, Major Mahoney shifted his reserve strength. Company C, which had thus far taken no part in the task was now moved up to a point directly behind B Company. Capt. Paul Ryan, brother of the E Company commander, was ordered to follow Lieutenant Gil's attack at extremely close interval and to be ready to pass through or around B Company and carry the attack on to the ridge, if the assault company became stalled. To protect the 1st Battalion in the event C Company was committed in the line, Colonel Kelley dispatched I Company to act as Major Mahoney's reserve.

The final assault on the ridge by the 1st Battalion was carried forward, beginning at 1415. Almost at once the characteristic resistance of the morning began to appear. Company A, on the right, pushed home a sustained steady drive that did not stop once, despite the fact that the enemy continued to put fire on the advancing line in some volume. By 1535, Captain O'Brien reported to battalion that his company had taken its objective and was consolidating its position. Three men had been lost during the advance. In addition to this loss, the rear elements of the unit, including company headquarters and the Weapons Platoon, along with the D Company machine guns, had been cut off at the line of departure by the enemy fire which blanketed the whole area. When Company A reached the crest of the hill, some reorganization was necessary. The ridge in question ends in a rounded nose which drops off steeply to the low ground in front of it, only a few yards short of the beach cliffs themselves, leaving a low-lying corridor running between the ridge and the cliffs. The cane railroad curves around the nose of the ridge and uses the corridor to move on to the east. Inasmuch as Captain O'Brien's men were arranged in a long skirmish line that stretched from the Company B boundary to the sea, his right platoon would have arrived on the objective line, half on the ridge and half in the corridor had they made a direct frontal attack. With all indications pointing to the fact that the enemy was concentrating his defense on the ridge and with the probability being such that the corridor could be controlled by fire from the adjoining heights, Captain O'Brien ordered his men to disregard the corridor and to advance with the idea of placing and anchor-

ing the extreme right flank on the nose. The result of this plan was to pinch the 2d Platoon on the right because its azimuth of advance was more easterly than the rest of the company. When the men arrived atop the ridge, therefore, this right platoon was badly jammed together and some reorganization was immediately necessary.

Although Company A had achieved its objective with relatively little trouble, Company B had not been so fortunate. This unit had faced the core of enemy resistance since the ridge line had first been approached, and the determined stand of the defenders continued. Lieutenant Gil had arranged his company prior to the attack with three platoons on the line. His 3d was on the extreme left, adjacent to Company E and partly in the village. His 2d Platoon was in the center of his line and the 1st was on the right, next to Company A. The two tanks were operating directly in front of the center platoon. At the very beginning of the attack, two things happened. The 3d Platoon lost physical contact with Company E and thus became a dangling exposed flank unit. Secondly, company headquarters and the Weapons Platoon, together with the attached Company D machine guns, became cut off by the heavy fire and remained behind. Unlike Company A, however, one of Gil's light machine guns did manage to displace forward with the company and finally arrived atop the ridge with the 2d Platoon. It might be added that these elements thus left behind were subjected to the heaviest kind of mortar and artillery fire and when darkness fell they were still burrowing in behind rocks or any other terrain feature that offered protection. It was during this continued fire that Lt. Robert D. Chester distinguished himself by moving out into the open to rescue wounded men hit by the fire.

The pattern of the company action differed from that of Company A. Due to the more intense fire, Gil's men had to move by bounds, yet during the first twenty-five minutes of the advance the whole line was straight and abreast of Company A. At approximately 1440, as Company B entered the canefields on the hillside, however, the enemy fire, particularly on the extreme left, became so serious that disorganization was imminent. Ten minutes later the whole 3d Platoon was cut off and pinned down on the approaches to the crest. The two right platoons, by veering constantly to the right toward Company A, managed to maintain their momentum and arrived on the crest of the ridge at the same time as Company A. Here Lieutenant Gil found his situation to be the exact reverse of Captain O'Brien's. The total strength of his two platoons on the objective amounted to between eighty and ninety men. From his left boundary to the point where he joined Company A was a distance of four hundred yards. Most of his men were scattered in widely

dispersed groups over the right half of the frontage with nothing at all covering the two hundred yards between his left flank and the supposed Company E right. As soon as he took complete stock of the situation, Lieutenant Gil tried to get through to Major Mahoney on the radio, to describe his position, only to find that his communications to battalion were out. In this emergency he switched and called Captain O'Brien and asked him to relay the information to the battalion commander.

Company A was just beginning its own reorganization when the call came in and Captain O'Brien immediately arranged with Gil to move his own unit a hundred yards to the left, thus thinning out his own line and taking up some of the overextension on Company B's front. Major Mahoney, who had been listening in on the radio, now broke in to tell Captain O'Brien that he had already ordered Company C to move in on the battalion left flank and not to make the adjustment too big. With this understanding both O'Brien and Gil turned their attention to the shift in lines.

Company B had already received orders to dig in and consolidate its positions and had begun this work immediately upon reaching the ridge top. Officers and men knew that the enemy would make every effort to drive the Americans off the newly gained heights and reoccupy the key ridge. In view of these coming tests no one had waited to be told to dig deep and fast. The terrain directly to the front was covered with a dense scrub brush, only a little of which had been stripped of its foliage by the prolonged artillery fire. Here and there from ten to one hundred yards away were small dugouts and a few concrete pillboxes. The men of Company B had arrived almost directly in the middle of an enemy strongpoint. Even as they began to dig, harassing enemy fire landed in the little groups atop the ridge. Wherever a Company B man raised his head, bullets were sure to hit. Very soon the whole left of the 1st Battalion line was lying flat to dig. For the time being, the company commander could only make gestures at closing up his line to permit Companies A and C to move in. His men were forced to stand sentry duty in groups. Two men dug while a third stood guard, trying at once to locate the harassment and at the same time standing ready to beat off any infiltration. Company A, which was not receiving nearly the amount of fire that Company B was, nevertheless was impeded in its efforts to reorganize and move to close up the gaps in Gil's line. The riflemen had to move with extreme caution and a constant cover of fire had to be laid down to the front. Farther to the left, beyond the left flank of Company B, the ridge was still in enemy hands, and from this holding force, the slopes below the two successful companies received a constant with-

ering fire from machine guns and mortars that seriously limited the movement of reinforcements to Gil and O'Brien.

The anticipated counterattack was not long in coming. It began as a series of what appeared to be infiltration attempts. Taking advantage of the heavy undergrowth, a group of from five to twenty Japanese soldiers would creep and crawl forward as far as they could go, then jump up, yelling and screaming, to launch a shower of grenades or a charge on the newly formed line. These first attempts were probably probing parties, pushed forward by the enemy commander in an effort to find points of weakness. The first few parties to approach the line were beaten off without much trouble and with no casualties to Company B. Soon the tempo of the Japanese activity increased to a point where one assault would no sooner be beaten off than another would begin somewhere else along the line. The first Company B casualties proved to be the most serious. Gil had placed his lone light machine gun near the center of his line and the crew, supported by a rifleman and a BAR man, had finished digging in the position. One enemy soldier had charged this position shortly after 1615 and had been killed so close to the gun that he had almost fallen into the hole. As the five crew members and guards were inspecting this one Japanese, between six and ten more of the enemy crept up around a bush just to the left, threw a grenade, then jumped up, yelling, to charge the position. Both Sgt. Dudley O. Fowler and Pfc. Albert A. Lanham dove for the grenade, but just as they reached for it, it exploded, blinding Fowler and wounding Lanham seriously. All other crew members and guards were hit at the same time.

Private First Class Marvin L. Lowry, BAR man who had been sitting almost at the exact spot where the grenade had rolled to a stop, jumped up to get out of the way, took three steps, and then stood there, in the midst of the flying fragments, and pulled his trigger. He cut down at least five of the Japanese. The others wavered, broke, and dove back into the bushes. However, with its crew gone, the machine gun, Gil's only real fire power, was now temporarily out of action.

A little farther to the left, at almost the same time, another group of three riflemen was hit by a Japanese raiding party.

These two attacks were characteristic of the action for the next hour. By 1700 the fighting had become continuous and heavy all along the crest of the hill. As casualties mounted in B Company the wide gaps in the line became even larger. The position of Gil's men became more and more precarious. The company commander did not want to give up his position but with only forty-five minutes to go until darkness he did not feel that it was tenable. Had reinforcements gotten through to him he could have held; or had he been able to utilize clear fields of fire, the

men would have been able to defend the area with fire power. With both of these alternatives lacking and seemingly no chance that the situation would improve, Lieutenant Gil, by pulling his men back one hundred yards down the slope, would be able to make physical contact with his lost platoon, thus reinforcing his strength and fire power and at the same time giving his men a clear field of fire. This order, transmitted at a moment when the fighting had reached its peak all along the line, came too late. Japanese had already begun to infiltrate through the gap in the line and as B Company men began to pull back down the hill they found themselves surrounded. Off balance, now, the retiring unit could nowhere stop long enough to dig in and fight. Lieutenant Gil, trying desperately to keep his command from disintegrating completely, now directed the men to fold back like a gate on Company A's left flank. Much of the credit for the fact that B Company did not go completely to pieces rests on the action of two men.

One of these was Sgt. Richard E. Mooneyham, who had rescued the light machine gun after the crew had been knocked out. He and Pfc. William Langewisch, a BAR man, covered the retiring company. Over thirty enemy bodies were found where Mooneyham and Langewisch had been firing when American troops entered the area next day.

Gil's plight, it will be recalled, was originally the result of a lack of manpower. Three sources for relieving this shortage existed when the two assault companies reached the top of the ridge. One of these, the taking-up of slack in Company A, had been essayed by the two commanders, but in the heavy fighting, which began shortly after the move had been agreed upon, Company A was never able to get organized to an extent which would allow them to make the shift in strength. The second alternative, the reinforcement of B Company by its own missing platoon, was also tried and failed.

The one other alternative for the reinforcement of B Company's thin line atop the ridge had been the use of C Company, the 1st Battalion reserve. Major Mahoney had instructed Capt. Paul Ryan to follow Gil's attack at close range for just such an emergency. At the time of the attack, it will be remembered, the most serious opposition had come far from the left of B Company's front. Captain Ryan, therefore, had followed the advance in this area, almost directly behind the missing platoon led by Tech. Sgt. John F. Stabile. When these men were cut off and pinned down on the hillside, the C Company commander had been in good position to see the nature of the action and reported it to the battalion CP. Major Mahoney had received only a few moments before the news that E Company had been cut off on the east edge of the village. Realizing that the whole left flank of the battalion was now ex-

posed, he immediately ordered Ryan to push on ahead to the ridge and extend and protect the exposed wing of the line. By the time this order reached the front, Stabile already had become involved all along his front and Captain Ryan asked permission to move to the right and through the area already passed by Gil's right platoons. The company commander had reached the same conclusion as that arrived at by Stabile: that because units had already by-passed the troubled area in this zone, it could be done again. When permission was granted the captain moved forward and to the southwest around Stabile's extreme right flank. Upon coming to the edge of the cane he deployed his leading platoon to infiltrate across the one hundred yards of open space between himself and the crest of the ridge. This infiltration was to be accomplished by squads, but when the first squad stepped out of the cane to sprint across the open ground they met a volley of small-arms fire, accompanied by mortar shells and sustained machine-gun bursts. The first man out into the field was wounded before he had taken three steps and the rest of the men dropped in their tracks among the furrows. Ryan instructed the platoon leader to stay where he was and try to work the men across the field by laying down a base of fire. He then moved back down his column and consulted the leader of his 2d Platoon, Lt. Merit L. Pequeen. Together the men decided that the best chance of gaining the ridge hurriedly was to move to the extreme battalion right flank and come up through Company A by crossing the tracks where they began curving around the end of the ridge. Unknown to either Ryan or Pequeen at the time was the fact that the enemy atop the ridge had perfect observation of the movements of the whole company so that when the two officers made their move to the right through the supposed covers of the canefield they were followed closely by the Japanese weapons on the high ground.

Nothing happened until the company made its turn to ascend the ridge. Then, as Ryan and the leading squad stepped from the cane to the open ground, they met a tremendous concentration of mortar fire. The company commander and five of the men were already moving swiftly up the hill and kept on going, eventually reaching Captain O'Brien and Company A. Pequeen and the rest of the platoon had to dive for cover in the plowed ground and in the cane. The platoon leader noticed a little mound of earth between the rows of cane and crawled over behind this for better protection. Once again the fallacy of the concealment estimate was proven when the enemy, following every move the platoon leader made, used the mound as a check point and began dropping shells directly behind it. One shell landed inches away from Pequeen and blew him over backward, and a moment later a direct hit

killed him. Seven other men were hit at approximately the same time, and now the men began scattering in all directions. For a short time, this platoon was badly disorganized, but the noncommissioned officers soon collected the men and followed the 1st Platoon under Lt. Everett W. McGinley.

McGinley's platoon had been following along behind Ryan and Pequeen at the time the mortar shells began landing in the area. McGinley, a quick-thinking Irishman, knew that it was imperative for some help to reach the ridge at once and seeing the men in front of him scatter, he set to work to take an even more roundabout route to the top of the ridge. Noticing that to his right a cliff bordered the waters of Saipan Channel, he ordered his men to clamber down its side to the water's edge. Here, free from all possible observation and in defilade from enemy fire the men could move rapidly east to a front opposite the end of the ridge and scale the cliffs to come up on Company A's right flank. Within a few minutes the platoon leader had his men down over the coral bluffs and on a narrow strip of beach. From here he started moving southeast with a four-man patrol ahead of him. This patrol was under the command of Staff Sgt. William Siegrist and had orders to locate some way back up over the cliffs opposite Company A by the time the balance of the platoon arrived opposite the end of the ridge. Halfway to his objective, however, Siegrist received some rifle fire and soon became involved with Japanese who had hidden in a cave overlooking the narrow trail. Using grenades and BARs the patrol reduced one position, drilling three soldiers and an armed Japanese woman and her little daughter. This was the first contact any of the Army troops had with Japanese civilians and the fact that the first one they met was armed and fighting left none of the company in a happy mood.

Although his experience had held him up for some little time Siegrist now pushed on to complete his mission. Opposite the end of the ridge he found a little path which ran directly up from the water's edge and followed it up over the precipitous overhang to find himself only a short distance away from Company A's line. He radioed this information back to McGinley and the platoon leader, with Pequeen's men following, hastened forward. Meanwhile Siegrist and his patrol proceeded to the Company A CP in search of Captain Ryan to notify him that the company was on its way to him. Before Siegrist ever reached the crest of the ridge, however, he met one of the C Company men who had accompanied the captain in his dash across the open terrain shortly before Pequeen's death. This soldier informed Siegrist that the company commander was dead and that Captain O'Brien had decided to withdraw from the ridge. The sergeant now radioed this information to McGin-

ley who decided to stay where he was until he found out what the situation was ahead.

Captain O'Brien's decision to withdraw had been forced upon him by the action in B Company. From the time he first conferred with Lieutenant Gil, the Company A commander had been trying to get his men straightened out so that they could move to bolster the adjacent line. Although this unit was not hit with the ferocity with which its neighbors had to contend, it was subject to heavy fire of all types. Movement was difficult and a constant curtain of fire had to be maintained to the front. This combined fighting and reorganizing, instead of being a comparatively easy task, to be accomplished within a few minutes, became a desperate struggle that was still going on at the time B Company pulled back off the hill, an hour and a half after the conference between the two company commanders.

The time that had elapsed between the time Captain Ryan received his orders from battalion and the moment he arrived at Company A after his hard run up the hill, is not hard to reconcile. The line shifts that C Company had made to the right, plus the conferences Ryan had held with his platoon leaders, had consumed an hour, and when Ryan came puffing into the Company A CP it was between 1630 and 1700. Lieutenant Gil was already fighting a savage battle atop the ridge and Captain O'Brien had just finished getting his 3d Platoon together to shift into the B Company position. Ryan and O'Brien, close personal friends, held an immediate consultation and it was decided that the Company A platoon would start moving at once and that C Company would follow it along the ridge top and then push through and along behind B Company until it reached the battalion left flank. At this time Captain O'Brien had received no word from Gil for some little time and although he could see heavy fighting going on down the ridge he could only guess how bad the situation was in that quarter.

After leaving Captain O'Brien, the C Company commander began looking for his company. It was only then that he realized that very few of the men had managed to get through and up the hillside. The five men who had followed at his own heels and between five and ten who had crept and scrambled forward from the 3d Platoon, the first to make the try, were all that he could find. It was at this critical moment that B Company began to withdraw. Lieutenant Gil called Company A on the radio and told Captain O'Brien his situation. He informed the A Company commander that his whole line was shot to pieces and that enough enemy had infiltrated behind him to make his position untenable. He voiced at that time his intention of pulling back only a short distance.

Captain O'Brien immediately passed this information on to Captain Ryan and the C Company commander got on his radio and begged Gil to try and hold out a few minutes longer. By that time, however, B Company's radio was out and the message never got through. B Company had already begun to pull back.

This withdrawal had almost immediate effects upon A Company's situation. As Gil's men pulled back, the Japanese began to overflow on the hillside. Captain O'Brien, who was now facing along the ridge to the northeast as much as to the east, suddenly found the enemy moving in between himself and the rear areas. Almost at once his one line of communication with battalion was severed and he found himself beating off attacks from three sides. Instead of anchoring its right flank on the A Company left flank and swinging back like a gate, B Company had been pulled away from the contact, allowing a gap to develop into which the enemy had poured. Company A was now in a precarious position and once more the two captains consulted. Ryan finally convinced O'Brien that he should attack with his 3d Platoon anyway. Perhaps by launching an assault down the ridge line, the Japanese attack could be broken off at the stem and B Company could hold. The C Company commander offered to lead the assault himself and ordered his handful of men to take part. With this understanding, Ryan pushed along the ridge until he came to the outer fringe of A Company's outpost. There he got down behind a rock to survey the situation ahead prior to moving out. While lying there Captain Ryan was hit by a mortar shell and killed instantly.

There was very little that Company A could do by this time. As soon as the 3d Platoon tried to move out they ran head on into the Japanese pouring down the hill across the front. Captain O'Brien now felt that he was left all alone on the ridge. His line of communication was cut off and his radio could not raise battalion. It was only a matter of minutes until he would be completely surrounded and he was getting low on ammunition. He could see that the Japanese had not yet reached the beach at his rear and he decided that the best thing to do was to pull back off the ridge and move his company back along the same strip of ground below the cliffs that McGinley was at that moment using. He intended, upon reaching a front opposite the morning's original line of departure, to move inland to the battalion CP, and there, on better ground, to take up his defense against what appeared to be a general Japanese counterattack. Captain O'Brien had discussed this alternative with Captain Ryan on the radio while the C Company commander was pushing forward and Ryan had persuaded him to hold until he could see what could be done about choking the enemy attack off at the neck.

Upon learning of Ryan's death and the inability of the men to move forward, O'Brien now ordered his men to pull back over the end of the ridge to the beach. The withdrawal of Company A, together with the handful of C Company men, was orderly. Captain O'Brien leapfrogged one platoon over another until he moved back down over the cliff. It was not until the narrow beach strip was reached that any confusion was encountered and this was due more to the gathering darkness and the mingling of all three companies than it was to lack of control on the A Company commander's part.

All of the 1st Battalion units had ended up on the narrow sand strip.

Immediately upon arriving at the water's edge, Captain O'Brien began reorganizing his men for the rapid movement back to the CP line. With three companies jammed together on the narrow pathway along the beach, this was no simple task, but within fifteen minutes all the men were moving westward at a fast pace. It was now well after 1800 and darkness was fast approaching. The rapidity of the movement, the poor visibility, and the long thin column of men which materially lessened control, resulted in a growing confusion which had some bad effects. One hundred and twenty-three men, eventually commanded by Lt. Matthew A. Masem, missed the point at which Captain O'Brien turned inland and continued along the water's edge as far as Agingan Point, where they turned inland. The next morning this group was led into the regimental command post by Lieutenant Masem and from there dispatched to rejoin their companies. Sixty-nine of the men were from A Company, and most of the rest were from Felder's platoon of C Company or from Stabile's platoon of B Company. The mistake had two minor effects on the action for 18 June inasmuch as it considerably weakened A Company's strength for the attack which took place that morning and it also accentuated the seriousness of the 27th Division supply situation. Most of the men, in scrambling back over the coral rocks and rough terrain, either lost their equipment or broke it and upon reporting back to regiment, it was discovered that resupply was not available due to reef conditions at the landing beaches. The ingenious Masem, however, lost little time leading his men back to the front lines where he equipped them almost wholly from Japanese supplies taken from the dugouts and bodies behind our lines. Two of the men in A Company even fought with Japanese rifles and ammunition during the next few days. Most of Stabile's platoon, it might be added, twenty-three men in all, made the journey back along the water's edge alone and did not stop at Agingan Point. After alternately swimming and climbing all night long these men finally reported in to the Division CP at Yellow Beach 3 the next morning. All were suffering from

exhaustion and severe coral cuts. One man had his clothes completely ripped to shreds by the rock pinnacles. All of the men were sure that the enemy counterattack had pushed all the way through to the landing beaches and had not turned inland for that reason.

Captain O'Brien and the bulk of all three 1st Battalion companies, however, returned to the battalion CP without incident and dug in along a line of trees at the line of departure from which they had attacked at 0730 in the morning. At the time the counterattack hit the front lines Major Mahoney had notified Colonel Kelley. Although I Company had already been moved up to the 1st Battalion command post to constitute a reserve, the regimental commander now ordered the rest of the battalion to move into position behind Mahoney's CP. This gave the battalion commander two companies to interpose between the enemy and the beaches should the line fail to hold (K Company had been attached to 2d Battalion during the afternoon as a reserve for that unit). To further bolster his line, Colonel Kelley had called Division and the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, had moved up into the area behind the 3d Battalion just at dark.

The Japanese had not followed up their advantage, however, and no enemy soldier advanced any farther than the base of the ridge. From the time Captain O'Brien reported in to Major Mahoney, the whole area to the front of the 165th Infantry position was blanketed with artillery and mortar fire. This concentration lasted for the rest of the night. Morning found the enemy withdrawn completely behind the ridge line.

This Japanese failure to exploit their gains is due not only to the artillery, however, but to the action of the 2d Battalion as well. Ryan's Ridge extended completely across the 165th Infantry front, as already noted, so that steps to capture it were undertaken by both assault battalions. One factor in its defense should be noted before going farther. This was the evidence that the enemy had concentrated most of his troops and fire power at only one point on the commanding ground. It was localized almost entirely in an area three hundred yards wide, running from the road that intersected the high ground above the village to a point halfway toward the sea on the southwest. From here the Japanese controlled the road approaches and the village. This coincided almost exactly with the boundary between the two battalions and throughout the late morning and early afternoon hours of 17 June the two adjacent companies, B and E, had borne the brunt of enemy resistance. It has already been seen that in the final assault on the ridge position by the 1st Battalion, Company A moved to the crest with little to bother them, while B Company was badly mauled. In the 2d Battalion zone of action the same truth held, on a smaller scale. G Company, on

the flank, advanced virtually unopposed and by 1400 reported that it had reached a line on the edge of the airfield itself. There they were ordered to hold while the attack was carried forward by the remainder of the regiment.

Company E, commanded by Capt. Bernard E. Ryan, brother of the C Company commander, had pushed up into the village at the same time as B Company and had waited there most of the morning for the air strike and artillery on the ridge to the front. The attack at 1230 was a coordinated regimental attack and it was at this time that G Company pushed forward to the edge of the airfield, then held. Captain Ryan had ordered his men to take cover in the air raid shelters which lined the streets of the town during the preparation that preceded the attack. Following this, it was planned to send one platoon up the line of trees along the road to the top of the ridge, while the 1st Platoon, under Lt. Henry G. Pearl, was to cross the road and move on the objective through the canefields in that area. At the conclusion of the preparation, E Company took too long in forming for the attack and Lieutenant Pearl was just in the act of getting his men across the road when the enemy counterfire struck, landing in the village and on both sides of the road. Within a matter of minutes, three men were killed and four were wounded in E Company and eight more casualties were reported in the machine-gun platoon from H Company supporting it. All of the men scurried for cover wherever they could find it. Most of the men, with the exception of Pearl's platoon, retired to the extreme western edge of the village with little semblance of organization. Captain Ryan was not present, nor could he be found. Lt. John J. Raleigh, company executive, fearing that Ryan had been killed in the barrage and suspecting that the fire might be the prelude to an enemy counterattack, took charge of the company and ordered the men to dig in and reorganize. For better than an hour the greater part of E Company was immobilized in the village. During most of this time the enemy continued to drop intermittent artillery into the area and it was during this period of immobility that Raleigh, by close observation, was able to locate and accurately report several of the Japanese gun positions.

Raleigh never did reestablish any contact with Lieutenant Pearl's platoon and at no time during his sojourn in the village did he have any control over that unit. The platoon commander, like everyone else, suffered under the misconception that the cane offered concealment. When the first shell from Japanese guns landed in the village, Pearl had most of his platoon across the road and he immediately ordered them to get into the canefields as quickly as possible. From there they were to continue advancing on the ridge. The men made a wild dash for the con-

cealment ahead and arrived there still fairly well organized, but as soon as they pushed off toward the high ground the enemy, with full observation, merely switched some of his fire into this zone of action. Shells began landing in the midst of the platoon, cutting it in two and pinning the men to the ground. With his platoon badly disorganized, Pearl now spent over an hour trying to get the elements back together again so that he could push on ahead.

Captain Ryan had been with the forward elements of Pearl's platoon at the time his company was hit, and was already in the canefield, making a reconnaissance toward the ridge. When the first artillery landed in the village, Ryan, with Staff Sgt. Lawrence I. Kemp, Pearl's platoon guide, and a rifleman, Pfc. Thomas Chapa, took cover in a fold of ground at the eastern edge of the cane. Ryan heard Pearl order his men to keep moving ahead, but minutes passed and no one came near him. When shells began landing nearby, the company commander turned to Kemp and said "It's getting too hot where we are. Come on with me." Under the impression that Pearl and his platoon had moved on forward and was ahead of him, Ryan now headed toward the ridge, using a little draw to his left front. Chapa followed along with Ryan and Kemp because he "didn't want to be left alone in that canefield." Within a few minutes, Ryan, Kemp, and Chapa emerged atop the ridge. No one had seen them and not a shot had been fired at them. Once atop the high ground, Ryan began looking for Pearl and the platoon and only after thirty minutes did it dawn on him that the company had not reached the objective. He could see, below him, the whole regimental front, pinned down by enemy fire, and inasmuch as he was now behind the enemy lines, he thought that he might just as well see what type of positions were holding up the advance. For the next three hours the company commander and his two companions wandered around all over the area on the hill, observing the enemy, his positions, his numbers and getting other valuable information, most significant of which was the fact that every movement in the cane could be seen from above. Some of this information was gathered while the men squatted behind rocks or trees, not thirty yards away from enemy soldiers and while under American artillery fire.

At approximately 1500 the company commander ordered Sergeant Kemp to carry these data back to Raleigh, together with instructions that he, Kemp, was to lead the company up onto the ridge by the route followed earlier by the three men. The return to E Company's lines presented a difficult problem for Kemp to solve. He could not return by the same route he had come up because that meant rejoining his platoon through the canefield and from where he was, the sergeant could see

all his comrades well dug in. They would shoot first and ask questions afterward. South of the road his route was blocked by the 1st Battalion, which at that time was attacking up the ridge and to go that way meant moving straight into their frontal fire. After some little thought, Kemp settled the whole thing by tying a white handkerchief to the barrel of his rifle, doing a right shoulder arms, and marching casually down the middle of the road for a matter of 1,500 yards in full view of both the enemy and American troops.

Upon the return of Sergeant Kemp to his company with Captain Ryan's detailed information, Lt. Colonel McDonough, commander of the 2d Battalion, called Colonel Kelley and notified him that he was inserting F Company into the line on the left of E, to fill the gap between E and G and that he was attacking as soon as possible to secure the ridge to his front. Colonel Kelley readily agreed to this arrangement and attached K Company to the 2d Battalion as a reserve. At 1610 the battalion attacked toward the ridge. Within ten minutes, using the route pointed out by Sergeant Kemp, both companies had reached the ridge and were beginning to dig in. Only one casualty was suffered during the advance and at no time after the arrival on the objective was this battalion molested by counterattacks, the enemy seeming to be too much occupied with the activities farther to the south, in front of the 1st Battalion. By nightfall, half of the ridge was firmly in possession of the 165th Infantry while in the right zone of action the 1st Battalion occupied ground approximately at the point from which they had attacked on the morning of the 17th after having held the ridge briefly.

The experience of the 1st Battalion had not been wholly fruitless. The action had shown Colonel Kelley that more troops were needed to take and hold the ridge and the defenses had now been developed to such an extent that accurate supporting fire could be utilized to the fullest advantage. Furthermore, by the night of 17 June, tanks were ashore and these weapons, so sorely needed during the first assaults on the ridge position, were now available. The regimental commander now ordered an early attack the next morning to recapture the ridge. Orders from NTLF which were delivered to Colonel Kelley at 0550 on the morning of 18 June provided for the assumption of control of the 165th Infantry by the 27th Division at some time during the day. The 27th Division was ordered to launch an attack at 1200 to advance the lines the remainder of the way across the island. Accordingly Colonel Kelley resolved to restore his regiment's line of farthest advance before the hour of general attack, and at 0605 he ordered his 3d Battalion into the line

on the right of the 1st Battalion. The regiment would attack at 0730 to recapture the ridge.

The action of the morning of 18 June was anticlimactic. With twice as many troops in line as on the previous day, with tanks laying down accurate and effective supporting fire in front of the troops, and with additional fire support, in the form of enfilade fire from the 2d Battalion atop the ridge, together with all the pooled information as to enemy emplacements, as turned in by Captain Ryan and Lieutenants Gil and Raleigh, the ridge was captured with very little actual fighting. In one long skirmish line, the 1st and 3d Battalions swept up the slopes with guns blazing and at 1000, both battalion commanders reported the ground in our hands and the positions consolidated. Very few enemy were killed in this push. Shortly before 0900 observers reported large numbers of enemy withdrawing in the direction of Nafutan Point. The ridge which had caused so much trouble the night before was thus left in our hands without further struggle.

Chapter 20: Aslito to Magicienne Bay

THE REDUCTION of the enemy positions on Ryan's Ridge opened the way for the easy capture of Aslito Airfield, the primary objective of our landing forces in southern Saipan. Operations began at daylight. During the previous afternoon, Capt. Paul Chasmar, commanding Company G, had ordered patrols to probe the western apron of the airstrip while he was held up awaiting the capture of the ridge on his right. By nightfall these patrols had returned with reports of no enemy opposition. The Marine unit on Chasmar's left had likewise pushed patrols through the buildings and settlement on the northwest corner without meeting any Japanese. Early on the 18th, therefore, while he waited for the units on the regimental right to capture the ridge, Chasmar ordered out patrols to go as far as they could. Company F also pushed out exploring parties along the whole south edge of the installation and when these patrols reported back that there was no sign of enemy nearby, both company commanders worked ahead and at 1000 reported to battalion that they were in complete possession of the airfield. Only one Japanese was found in the whole area and he was a wounded weatherman who was captured while hiding between the double doors of the control tower when the regimental command post took possession half an hour later.

The ferocity of the action on 17 June everywhere gave way to a lull on the 18th. The ridge and airfield, as already noted, were captured against virtually no opposition. From 1000 until 1330 the 165th lines remained stationary during which time Colonel Kelley made some necessary shifts in his front lines. The 27th Division had been ordered by NTLF to assume responsibility for the extreme right zone of action on the corps front and launch an attack across the island at 1200. Coincident with the fulfillment of this order the 105th Infantry was to be inserted on the Division right in the zone held by the two right battalions of the 165th Infantry. At the same time the Division boundary was extended on the north to include the whole airfield; that is, the buildings through which the Marine patrols had worked on the previous afternoon. In order to meet these changes Colonel Kelley ordered Major Mahoney to move his battalion around behind the 2d and take up positions on the extreme left flank. The 3d Battalion would hold the ridge line until relieved by the 105th and then revert to regimental reserve. As it happened, the 3d Battalion was relieved a few moments before the 1st, but Major Mahoney moved his men at a fast pace around behind the airport and by 1335 was in position. The whole 165th Infantry line now moved forward and by 1700 in the evening had reached a point just short of the beach fronting on Magicienne Bay. The whole

day's action had been practically devoid of opposition and the only casualties had been caused by some half-hearted shelling of the 2d Battalion front lines by dual-purpose guns from Nafutan Point.

The Marines on the left of the 165th Infantry had moved abreast of the advance during the day but a minor gap had come into being late in the afternoon. The action of both the 4th Marine Division and the 165th Infantry had, by the night of D plus 3, cut the island virtually in two. With the exception of the narrow strip of ground along the beach, the enemy, who had been driven back into Nafutan Point, was cut off from the main forces farther to the north.

The advance of the 165th Infantry on 18 June had been over open country. Between the eastern end of the airfield and Magicienne Bay there was little in the way of terrain obstruction save the beach area itself. This small strip that separated the 165th's two battalions from the sea was almost unbelievably rough terrain. The cultivated fields gave way, about three hundred yards from the water's edge, to a crevassed, coral formation that sloped gently down toward the bay and then dropped off 50- to 100-foot cliffs to the sea. It was impossible to walk in a straight line in any part of this jumble of rocks and pinnacles and, except for five or six well defined paths, it was impossible to walk at all. Any one who got off the trails could only pick his way from rock to rock. Growing out of the cracks and from the thin and spotty soil which sometimes covered the rocks was a tangled morass of thick, impenetrable vines and small trees that reached to eye level and clustered so thickly that the sunlight itself was cut off.

The 165th Infantry had approached this terrain in the late afternoon and plunged into it without knowing what they were getting into. Ten yards into the undergrowth the tanks were stopped. A short time later Company B ran into a group of Japanese and in the growing darkness was unable to distinguish friends and enemies. Furthermore the Marines had decided not to move into the area. Under these conditions the men were withdrawn back to the open ground for the night and the 165th Infantry advance held there. Some adjustments were made to protect the flanks, the regiment having advanced well ahead of the 105th.

The advance to the shores of Magicienne Bay was completed the next day, 19 June, in a series of small patrols. In only one instance was any opposition met and this was in the Company A area on the extreme left flank where one of Captain O'Brien's platoons was ambushed. Two men were killed and six wounded. Following the action of the morning of that day the beach area was outposted and the lines of the 165th were drawn back to the edge of the overgrowth where a tight noose was drawn to prevent enemy from moving to join the forces to the north.

Chapter 21: Landing of the 27th

THE NIGHT LANDING of the 165th Infantry Regiment and its subsequent attachment to the 4th Marine Division had been a hastily conceived and executed maneuver. The struggle for Ryan's Ridge and the capture of Aslito Airfield had all been carried out by the regiment before Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith assumed control over its operations at noon on 18 June. The lapse was an informal one, as can be seen best by the fact that Colonel Kelley called 27th Division headquarters on the night of 17 June and borrowed a battalion to use as a reserve in case the Japanese breakthrough on the ridge should be exploited.

Plans for the landing of the 27th Division had been laid down at the conference aboard the flagship USS *Cambria* on the evening of 16 June, but the necessity of bolstering the 4th Marine Division line at the earliest possible moment dictated that the 165th Infantry should be rushed ashore during the night. The rest of the Division was to disembark the next morning with priority given to the 106th Field Artillery Battalion. General Ross was accordingly ordered to proceed ashore during the evening, and at daylight to conduct a reconnaissance for a Division CP ashore.

Disembarkation and landing of the 27th Division proceeded at daylight on the morning of 17 June. The 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, together with all other elements of the RCT that were still afloat, were landed early. They were followed by the various artillery battalions, RCT 105, and Division troops. For the time being RCT 106 was to remain attached to STLF.

The landings on 17 June were slow, and complicated by beach conditions. No difficulty was experienced in landing the infantry battalions or Division troops. Otherwise, however, the landings went slowly. Water between the reef and shore was generally too deep to allow the various vehicles to negotiate the distance under their own power. Landing craft carrying heavy equipment such as bulldozers and tanks were, therefore, forced to land their cargos on the beach itself. The only opening through the reef which would permit such a discharge of cargo was opposite Blue Beach 1. With hundreds of landing craft seeking entrance through this passage, traffic was in a continual jam. LCMs and LCVPs loaded with the 106th Field Artillery Battalion, tanks, ammunition, and trucks, floated for hours outside the reef waiting for permission to work their way in to unload. No one was to blame for the congestion at this point; there was simply no help for it. Vitally needed matériel waited while other vessels with even higher priority were shunted through to the beach. By 1100 congestion had become so bad that the Navy issued orders that no further cargo, which had to

use the channel of the Blue Beach, would be discharged from the ships.

This order caught most of the organizational equipment of the 105th Infantry Regiment still aboard the USS *Cavalier*, including, among other things, practically all the regiment's communications equipment, vehicles, and the personnel who manned it. The embargo on discharge was not lifted during the remainder of the day and at 1700 in the afternoon all ships unloading at Charan Kanoa were ordered to put to sea in the face of an impending air raid. The intention, of course, was to return these ships the next morning and finish the unloading. On the morning of 18 June, however, the First Battle of the Philippines Sea took form and, unless absolutely necessary, none of the ships was brought back to Saipan where they might be caught by a breakthrough of Japanese fleet units. The *Cavalier* did not return until 25 June, and RCT 105 was forced to operate for a seven-day period with almost no signal communications and transport and without most of its headquarters personnel.

The sudden order to lift anchor and put to sea on the evening of 17 June affected the whole Division, particularly in vehicles. For the same seven-day period the Division had to depend upon three 2½-ton trucks and the forty-nine DUKWs of the artillery which were borrowed to haul supplies from the beaches. In desperation Lt. Col. Charles B. Ferris, Division G-4, finally asked for and obtained the 773d Amphibian Tractor Battalion. Even with this help, however, Division dumps were never completely supplied and on several occasions jeep drivers from front-line rifle companies had to go all the way back to the landing beaches for such vital items as food and water. In some cases the enterprising jeep drivers actually stole the needed matériel from other dumps, this being the only way they could get it. One supply sergeant from the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, on 19 June wandered up and down the beaches and finally stole several drums of water from Marine dumps. By the time he reached his own company, half of *his* water had been stolen by other supply parties out on the prowl.

Efforts were made to alleviate these reef conditions from the first. NTLF immediately began construction of floating piers from the Blue Beaches to the reef but the early completion of these did little to relieve the congestion. Lt. Colonel Ferris asked for permission to attempt to blast passages through the reefs on Yellow Beach 3 and work was begun on this project on 18 June. This remedy was only partly successful but some of the vitally needed supplies were eventually landed through the gap.

Not only was the passageway through the reef congested, but the beaches themselves in the vicinity of the main passage were hopelessly tangled. The necessity for unloading quickly and getting clear of the

cargo discharge area resulted in congestion of supplies in a very small sector. Beach parties worked feverishly to remove this tremendous backlog but never fully succeeded. There was no time for sorting and separating. Marine supplies found their way into Army dumps and vice versa. Front-line troops in the infantry regiments had many opportunities to poke good-natured fun at their comrades who received issues of fatigues plainly marked USMC. On the other hand, much of the 27th Division artillery ammunition turned up in Marine dumps and Army artillery supply officers had some difficulty in making their claims to it stick and then finding some way to get it back to their batteries.

Despite the various supply difficulties, which continued for a week, operations were impeded only in the 105th Infantry. Here the efficiency of the command was so impaired that at one time two of that regiment's battalions were commanded by Colonel Kelley of the 165th Infantry who had adequate communications facilities. The ingenuity of individual company supply sergeants and the activity of the supply personnel of other echelons largely succeeded in overcoming the inconveniences of short rations and water.

Chapter 22: Ridge 300

THE ACTION of 18-19 June in the 27th Division zone was divided into two separate parts. The first of these, the capture of Aslito Airfield and the drive which cut the island in two, has already been described. The second involved the 105th Infantry.

This regiment assumed responsibility for the right half of the Division front at 1245. Col. Leonard A. Bishop, commanding, placed his only two battalions in the line. The other battalion, the 2d, had been attached to NTLF as Corps reserve on the evening of 17 June and was not available on the 18th. The 1st Battalion held the left of the regimental front and the 3d the right. The greater part of the next two days' fighting took place in front of the 1st Battalion. The struggle of the 3d Battalion properly belongs to the fight for Nafutan Point itself and will not be dealt with here.

The 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, was destined to become, before the close of the battle on Saipan, both the most colorful and the busiest unit in the 27th Division. Wherever it appears in the narrative of the battle it lights up the whole scene and finally, on the morning of 7 July its members were to stand in the face of the greatest single enemy Banzai raid of the Pacific War. They were to die almost to a man in one of the more courageous struggles of American military history.

Much of the credit for the record of this fine battalion must be given to its commander, Lt. Col. William J. O'Brien. A cocky little rooster of a man who couldn't stand still, O'Brien's characteristics were mirrored in his battalion. When it entered the line on 18 June, it was without previous combat experience. Given the mission of pushing to the sea on the east side of the island, it jumped off at 1400 after being subjected to artillery fire from the Nafutan Point area for almost thirty minutes. This baptism of fire threw the green men into a panic and some disorganization resulted. The battalion commander came forward, regrouped the men and called for supporting fire. The troops then moved off. Moving cautiously through intermittent artillery fire, slowed down by the necessity for eliminating some minor enemy positions, the battalion line had reached a point even with the east end of the airfield by 1600. Here the advance was halted by a shift to the left in a reorganization of the Division front lines, brought about by the rapid and unopposed advance of the 165th Infantry during the afternoon. The 1st Battalion, therefore, dug in for the night some distance in the rear of the 165th line at a point equal to its own farthest advance.

On the morning of 19 June the advance was continued at 0730. Nothing serious had yet developed but at 1030, both assault companies ran head-on into the strongest position yet encountered at Ridge 300.

The terrain in this area looked much like a giant ramp that tilted upward, into the rugged hills and valleys of Nafutan. The whole 165th Infantry, in its progress on the 18th, had skirted the lower end of this sloping ground and had crossed the base of the Nafutan Point area unmolested. Lt. Colonel O'Brien's left flank met the upslope at its foot, his right flank met it where it joined the high ground. This high point of the rise was depicted on the maps as Ridge 300. As the assault companies approached this sharp ridge from the west they began to receive considerable small-arms and automatic-weapons fire. By firing their own rifles and laying down constant overhead support with their own heavy weapons, however, the men were able to maintain their momentum. The lines crossed a small saddle and began the ascent of the sides of the hill. Scrambling up the slope, they reached the crest without having stopped, but as they emerged over the rise they were met by such a heavy concentration of all types of fire that they were immediately pinned down. The leading elements reported back that they were confronted by several pillboxes, just over the crest. Both company commanders, Capt. Louis F. Ackerman of Company A, and Capt. Richard F. Ryan of Company B, went up to look the ground over and both agreed that the fire seemed to be coming from a large concrete dugout which rested on the boundary line between them, about thirty yards beyond the crest of the ridge. The whole area was filled with big coral rocks and other concrete emplacements. After a consultation it was decided to try and work the flank platoons ahead to form a huge semicircle around the area. Once this had been done fire could be aimed into the position from all angles. This maneuver was accomplished rapidly and without difficulty. Captain Ackerman now ordered a squad from his reserve platoon to crawl out to the right flank, skirt the end of the line and assault the position from the rear. The squad moved out and executed the plan as far as skirting the flank, but as the men started toward the position, thirty yards away, they were suddenly pinned down by machine guns to their right rear which had previously been quiet. Captain Ackerman immediately sent Lt. Van M. Crocker forward with a machine-gun section from his Weapons Platoon. Lieutenant Crocker was instructed to place the gun on the extreme right flank and bring the new enemy emplacement under fire, thus relieving the assault squad. The platoon leader got his gun in place and began firing, but when the squad tried to get up and move again, it was once more pinned down. Crocker consulted with the company commander and showed him that he was effectively neutralizing the position in question and that the fire must be coming from some other position. Captain Ackerman called Captain Ryan on the radio and asked him if Company B could try to work men out to the big position from the left. The Com-

pany B commander thought he could. His men were not yet affected by the new fire. Company A now waited while the attempt was made from a new direction.

Captain Ryan ordered his whole company to lay down covering fire behind the pillbox and ordered Lt. Martin L. Olsen to take one squad and try to knock out the first position. Olsen selected a squad commanded by Staff Sgt. William D. Stamzach and "reenforced" by Staff Sgt. Stephen P. Chinnici who came along to "see if he could be of any help." These men began crawling through the short grass toward the objective, forty yards away.

The pillbox to be reduced was an oblong, concrete structure, four feet high. Directly to the front of it was a deep tank trap which was not visible from the line held by the company. Olsen saw it only after he had crawled about ten yards, so he ordered his men to halt. He then told Sergeant Stamzach and Pfc. William L. Stahl to come with him. They were to get up and make a run for the pillbox. When they arrived there they were to jump into the tank trap. Four other men were to move to the left and come on the position from that side and a third group of four men were to circle clear around to the right and assault it from there while the attention of the enemy inside was diverted by the other two groups.

Both Olsen and Stamzach made the tank trap without difficulty and Stahl dropped on the ground just short of it and began crawling the rest of the way. At the very moment that the two leaders hit the hole, a Japanese soldier inside the position stuck his head out the top and dropped a grenade over the side and into the trap. The explosion of this grenade killed Stamzach instantly, fragments from it wounded Stahl, and concussion blew Olsen right back out of the trap, cut and bleeding and with most of his clothes and equipment torn off. He lay there for several minutes, stunned, and unable to move.

The second four men who had moved to the left were commanded by Sgt. William Gilkes. Sergeant Chinnici had accompanied this group and the other two men were Pfc. Harrell L. Weaver and Pfc. Ralph Shalae. When the Japanese dropped the grenade into the tank trap with Olsen and Stamzach it was the first sign of activity for several minutes in this position, but it seemed to be the signal for a general awakening of the occupants. With Olsen's group taken care of they now turned their attention to Gilkes. The Gilkes group had absolutely no protection from anything that might be used by the enemy inside the position, particularly grenades. This was the weapon the Japanese chose to employ. One after another the defenders stood up and tossed grenades out of the top into the midst of Gilkes and his men. Within minutes all four Americans

were hit. Weaver had one grenade go off a foot from his face, but by some miracle escaped with only minor injuries.

While this grenade tossing was going on, a medical aid man, Pfc. William Schuerpf, darted over the crest of the hill and scrambled to Olsen's group. He first examined Stanzach, found him dead, and then moved to Stahl and began to work on his wound. One of the Japanese popped out of the top of the pillbox, made a motion as if to throw a grenade at Gilkes, noticed Schuerpf and threw the missile at him. It hit Stahl instead of the aid man, blew his leg off and killed him instantly. Schuerpf was badly hit by fragments. Something in this grenade explosion shook Olsen from his daze and he felt around as he lay on the ground, found his carbine, and while still in a semiconscious state, managed to get off a shot that killed the next Japanese as he stuck his head out of the hole. Twice more Olsen fired, killing an enemy soldier with each shot as they tried to get a grenade away. At this critical point Olsen ran out of ammunition and as he fumbled around trying to reload he found that his clothes and equipment were missing and with them his cartridges. Schuerpf, who had been lying calmly watching Olsen, now pulled a pistol out from inside his fatigue pocket and picked off a fourth enemy soldier as he popped his head over the parapet to get at Olsen. The lieutenant now shouted orders to his men to pull back to the company, and the survivors immediately complied. Olsen's men had not been bothered throughout this episode by fire from other positions because Captain Ryan had instructed his company to lay down a protective screen on the other suspected enemy positions to the rear. This had been done with a heavy enough volume to keep the enemy's attention diverted from the big pillbox. However, as Company B continued this fire, still other enemy positions, from farther to the rear, came into the fire fight and by the time Olsen got his men back to the company line, the whole left flank was pinned down and with it Captain Ryan who had been over there directing the covering fire.

As Company B was forced to cease its fire, more and more of the enemy positions to the front took it up. Ten minutes after Olsen's return the whole crest of the ridge was swept with a hail of bullets from machine guns and small arms of all types. Lieutenant Crocker was hit in this blast of fire and gradually Company A was forced to stop its support.

In the face of this general heavy firing, Lt. Albert D. Brockett of Company A asked permission to see if he could crawl out and get some of the hidden positions that were covering the main one. Captain Ackerman granted this request and Brockett took two volunteers with him. One of these men was Sgt. Floyd J. Wilson of Company A, 102d Engi-

neers, who carried a demolition charge and the other was Pfc. Herman L. Burks, who loaded himself down with grenades.

After some little time spent in observation, Brockett and his two comrades located a position forty yards away and off to the right front of the Company A end of the semicircle. All three men crawled out through the grass until they were next to the position. This approach was made under constant fire that continually kicked up dirt all around the men. As soon as they were close enough, Wilson got out his demolition charge and fixed the fuze. As he raised up to throw it he was killed by a rifle shot from a nearby position which had been quiet up until that time. Brockett now grabbed the shape charge and fixed the fuze which Wilson had managed to pull before he died. While he was fixing it he was shot and mortally wounded. At almost the same time a Japanese popped out of the position and threw a grenade which seriously wounded Burks. With both his companions gone the rifleman decided to get back to the company. By hard work he managed to crawl back. Once there he asked to talk to Captain Ackerman and before he was evacuated pointed out the exact location of several of the enemy positions.

Captain Ackerman now tried to get a tank up onto the ridge to fire on the whole area. While he was doing this four litter bearers came up from the battalion CP and tried to crawl out into the field to bring Brockett in. They were in the field when the tank appeared up over the crest of the ridge. Almost at once a dual-purpose gun opened fire on the vehicle. Some of the shells landed in the midst of the litter bearers, killing one and wounding the other three. These three wounded men did manage to drag Brockett back over the brow of the hill, but he died a short time later. The tank, meanwhile, in the face of the heavy gun, withdrew from the ridge.

The enemy were now covering the area with such a heavy concentration from all types of weapons that Captain Ackerman decided he had better pull his badly jumbled company back to the reverse slope of the ridge and reorganize. Accordingly he ordered his company to withdraw to the base of the ridge and then to the north to a point beneath a little cliff where he would have some protection not only from the flat-trajectory fire, but from mortars which were now beginning to drop shells into his zone. The A Company commander had tried to reach Captain Ryan before giving up the ridge, but the B Company commander was pinned down and out of communication with everyone. Captain Ackerman did reach Olsen who was still running about with no clothes on and wounded, trying to direct the counter-fire of his platoon. Olsen told him that he would try and reach Ryan and for Captain Ackerman to go ahead and pull his men back. Company B would follow as soon as the com-

manding officer could be reached. The disappearance of Company A from the crest of the ridge, however, did not result in any slackening of enemy fire. On the contrary, the Japanese now switched everything to the Company B front and one man was killed by rifle fire and one by the dual-purpose gun. Another man was wounded by fragments from the latter weapon and Lieutenant Olsen now discovered that his platoon couldn't move if it wanted to. He called Ackerman again and the captain came back and looked the situation over. He then called battalion and talked with Lt. Colonel O'Brien who told him to order Olsen to pull back. When Ackerman told him that he didn't think it was possible to pull Company B back due to the fire, the battalion commander dispatched a self-propelled gun from the 105th's Cannon Company to the ridge. This vehicle tried to pull up over the crest to lay down covering fire but it had no sooner appeared than the enemy dual-purpose gun took it under fire and it had to withdraw. Captain Ackerman now called for massed fire from the battalion and company mortars and this was laid in close, in front of the lines. With this as some protection Olsen and Ryan were able to pull their men back beside Company A.

This whole action had consumed over an hour and a half and by the time the battalion had completed its reorganization it was after 1300. Lt. Colonel O'Brien now called regiment and told them that he did not think another frontal assault on the position was feasible. He suggested that he be allowed to swing his battalion around so that it faced south. By attacking up the ramp he could bring his tanks into play and perhaps outflank the enemy. Permission was granted by Division to make such a move and the plan for the attack was drawn.

Beginning at 1530, a fifteen-minute air strike with rockets, bombs, and strafing was delivered. This was followed by a thirty-minute artillery concentration which blanketed the area. This was in addition to almost constant mortar fire with which rifle companies and the Company D mortars had blanketed the area since 1300. At 1610 the whole battalion jumped off. Lt. Colonel O'Brien had placed his left flank along the railroad spur that ran southwest from the airport, almost four hundred yards below the point at which the loop circles off toward Magicienne Bay, and this constituted the axis of attack. Tanks accompanied the advance. A few minutes after the troops jumped off one of these tanks fired a shell which landed in an ammunition dump. The exploding ammunition was dangerously close to Company B, and in order to continue the forward movement, Captain Ryan had to swing his men wide to the right. By the time this was done and the company was reorganized it was 1730 and the sun had already begun to go down. Company A had held up during this period waiting for the situation on

the left to straighten out. Heavy opposition had been encountered although Pvt. Thomas C. Baker, who later won the Medal of Honor for his action on 7 July, managed to steal along the ridge where he observed the location of several of the enemy positions. He then borrowed a bazooka from one of his comrades and, under heavy fire, walked boldly out into the fields that covered the ramp, and calmly knelt down and fired his weapon singlehanded into one of the dual-purpose-gun positions, knocking it out with his second round. Then he got up and walked back to his company with the bullets still landing around him.

The combination of all these circumstances, the lateness of the hour, the burning ammunition dump which still harassed Company B from the rear, and the heavy fire which was handicapping Company A, caused a cessation of the attack at shortly after 1800 and the whole battalion retired to the line of departure for the night. The next day the struggle for Ridge 300 was to become a small part of the larger fight for Nafutan Point itself.

Chapter 23: The 165th Attacks

THE EVENING of 19 June had seen the 165th Infantry standing above the beaches of Magicienne Bay, holding the ground there, to all intents and purposes idle except for numerous patrols and outposts maintained in the tangled undergrowth and coral formations that bordered the sea.

Word of the activities of Lt. Colonel O'Brien's battalion had been brought back to the Division CP during the day and Maj. Gen. Ralph C. Smith had held frequent conferences with his regimental commanders. Shortly after dark on 19 June, when word reached the Division CP of the failure of the 1st Battalion's second attack, the general called to a meeting his Chief of Staff, Col. Albert K. Stebbins, and the Division G-3, Lt. Col. Frederic H. Sheldon. At this meeting the terrain in front of Lt. Colonel O'Brien was discussed, together with the command situation within the 105th Infantry where Colonel Bishop was seriously handicapped by the shortage of communications equipment. Inasmuch as Colonel Kelley of the 165th Infantry had established his command post at the control tower on Aslito Airfield from whence he had a good view of Lt. Colonel O'Brien's action and where he could direct this battalion easily, it was decided to place the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, under control of the 165th the next morning, thus relieving Colonel Bishop's difficulties to some extent. At the same time, in view of the terrain situation and the exceedingly stubborn opposition, the Division Commander decided to commit the 165th Infantry in the fight to end enemy resistance in the Nafutan area. Colonel Kelley would attack from the north with three battalions abreast, one of them the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry. Approaches to Nafutan from this direction were much simpler and the long, relatively level ramp-like approach to the stronghold would allow maximum use of artillery and tanks.

Accordingly another conference was held at the CP of the 165th Infantry at 0700 the next morning at which the proposed change in plans was outlined. The new move was heartily endorsed by the regimental commanders and Field Message No. 1 was issued at once. The attack was to take place at 1000, or as soon as Colonel Kelley could rearrange his assault battalions to face in the new direction of attack. This hour was later set back to 1200 due to the difficulties involved in making the necessary changes.

Colonel Kelley designated his 2d and 3d Battalions to make the effort, leaving his 1st Battalion to continue outpostting the Magicienne Bay area. The 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, was to hold down the right of his line and would eventually join the 3d Battalion of the same regiment, which was moving east along the shores of Saipan Channel.

The terrain varied to some extent in front of each of the three battalions. The 2d and 3d Battalions, 165th Infantry, were faced largely by wide open country that sloped gradually uphill to their front until it reached the high ground of the Point itself. Here and there were clumps or lines of trees, but there was little cover beyond this. The left-flank company skirted the dense undergrowth along the bay and would eventually come face to face with Mt. Nafutan itself, the nose of which stuck out sharply from the hill mass like the prow of some gigantic ship. The 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, straddled the edge of the ramp. Its left was on high ground and its right would push through the saddle below the ridge. As the advance (now perpendicular to that of the day before) progressed, the left flank would get higher and the right flank lower so that at least one company would be strung out in a thin line along the ridge.

The three battalions took positions along a road that ran from southwest to northeast about two hundred yards short of the end of the railroad spur. This placed the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry 1,500 yards southwest of the point at which it had assaulted Ridge 300 the day before.

Following an intense artillery concentration, with additional support from tanks and automatic weapons, this line attacked at 1200. For the first fifty minutes the advance was quite rapid with the exception of I Company, 165th Infantry, which was the right-flank company of the 3d Battalion. This unit faced the same position which had heretofore caused so much trouble to Lt. Colonel O'Brien's battalion. At the end of this first period, both Companies F and K had gained a thousand yards at a half-run across the open ground. They had received only token fire so when they reached a point partly sheltered by trees and good natural cover the company commanders stopped the advance to wait for the flank units to catch up.

Company I had moved off preceded by a platoon of medium tanks. During the first stages of the advance, the men had to move through a field almost boxed in by tree lines. When they reached the halfway point across this open area they were suddenly hit by all types of fire along their whole front. Capt. John J. Potter pushed his men forward another 150 yards, but here the fire became so intense that no further advance was possible. One man was wounded during this preliminary movement. For almost an hour Company I remained pinned down. Captain Potter endeavored to make use of his tanks, a move that soon caused more trouble. The vehicles were operating buttoned up, all ports closed, and visibility was especially poor. Radios failed to work during this critical period and all communication between the infantry and the tank

crews was lost. As a result, after the original order was issued, the tanks simply moved about the area with no fire direction, firing at any suspicious object. Some of this well-meant support landed among the Company I men, themselves. Shortly after 1300 the Japanese brought mortars and dual-purpose guns into play against the vehicles and they withdrew. Almost simultaneously with the disappearance of the tanks, the enemy fire slackened. Captain Potter immediately sought to take advantage of this lull and ordered the company to move ahead, this time skirting the box-field by using the tree lines on each flank. Two platoons moved to the left and within a short time had advanced to a front almost even with Company K and then began receiving enemy small-arms fire from the right rear, from a position within their own zone of action which they had by-passed.

The tanks had moved back to the battalion CP where they were intercepted by irate Major Claire who wanted to know what the reasons had been for withdrawing. When the fire was mentioned the battalion commander ordered them to turn around and rejoin Company I. This order was complied with at once, but instead of joining the main portion of the company, the vehicles found the 3d Platoon which was working slowly forward along the end of the railroad spur on the right, using the dense tangle of trees there for cover. Once again tank-infantry communication failed and for the second time that day the tanks managed to effectively pin down American troops with their fire. One rifleman, Pvt. Louis Franciavella, finally became exasperated and rushed out to the vehicles and grabbed the telephone on the rear and from here began directing fire.

For the next thirty minutes, due mainly to Franciavella's courage in hanging onto the phone, the advance proceeded. Enemy fire had become heavy again with the reappearance of the tanks but this time the platoon kept moving forward by bounds. Eventually, the line came to a little house that nestled in some trees at the bottom of Ridge 300 (north slope). It was from here that the enemy seemed to be directing most of his small-arms and automatic-weapons fire, including that which had pinned down Company I's two left platoons. Under Franciavella's excellent direction the tanks advanced directly up to this house and its outbuildings and poured devastating fire into them with every available weapon. Once again the Japanese dual-purpose guns from atop Ridge 300 opened fire, this time accompanied by a heavy mortar concentration. Shells landing in the midst of the 3d Platoon wounded two men and were dangerous enough so that the tanks received permission to retire. Franciavella concluded his good work by personally escorting them to a hiding place just over the edge of the ramp. He then returned and carried

out the two wounded men under fire. Company I now remained pinned down for another thirty minutes while Captain Potter tried to locate the source of fire and either bring artillery to bear on it or direct Company K in an effort to outflank it.

Both Companies K and F had resumed their advances shortly after 1300 when it seemed that Company I would finally come abreast. By 1405 Capt. Howard Betts reported that his men were four hundred yards farther south than the farthest point of Company I's advance. From that time on he kept in close radio contact with Captain Potter, and during the rest of the afternoon confined himself to pushing out patrols and observing artillery fire along his front in an effort to eliminate the fire that had held back the company on his flank. At 1530 Major Claire called Captain Betts and asked him if he thought a company could come up behind him and sideslip into the Company I zone. Upon receiving an affirmative answer, the battalion commander ordered Company L to carry out this maneuver. At 1630 Capt. Joseph Stampher reported that he had completed the move. A coordinated mortar barrage, laid down by every available 81mm, 60mm, and 4.2-inch chemical mortar, now preceded another general attack by both battalions, but by 1730 neither 3d Battalion companies was able to report any appreciable gains. The advance had carried by this time onto the edges of the main Nafutan stronghold, and terrain and undergrowth were as much limiting factors as was enemy opposition. The end of the day's action in the 3d Battalion had brought the front lines from 1,500 to 2,000 yards forward from the starting point and the troops dug in for the night not more than a hundred yards away from the main enemy stronghold atop Ridge 300.

The 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had an experience that differed somewhat from that of the 3d. As already noted, Company F had advanced rapidly during the first fifty minutes, keeping abreast of Company K and meeting little serious opposition. Company G, on the extreme left of the regimental front, ran into little in the way of enemy during this early advance, but did not move nearly so far as Company F due to terrain difficulties. Part of the company was forced to push through the seaside coral and dense undergrowth and this contributed considerably to the slowness of their advance. While Company F was taking its ten-minute break, Company G plodded on ahead in an effort to catch up. At approximately 1235 three circumstances acted to force the whole left of this unit down into the tangled terrain. One was a gradual narrowing of the island which began to pinch off the relatively open area. As this narrowing became more and more in evidence, the rough coral-studded terrain encroached more and more on the Company G zone of action.

The second factor was enemy action from an unexpected quarter. Captain Chasmar's men were moving on a hillside which was plainly exposed to view from across Magicienne Bay and there the enemy had emplaced one, and possibly more, naval guns of large caliber. As the men moved forward along the open hillside they were taken under fire by these pieces and forced to take cover in the tangled undergrowth. The last factor dictating Company G's advance through the coral jungle was the fact that the nose of Mt. Nafutan jutted out above the whole area and Captain Chasmar became more and more certain that the enemy was defending this nose in some force. If he continued to advance on it across open ground he would be almost sure to incur heavy casualties. In view of all these considerations he resolved to move southward under cover of the foliage and then move inland once he had passed the nose of the mountain, extending his lines to make physical contact with Company F. In order to make certain that the force moving through the difficult terrain would be strong enough he ordered two platoons into the area. The 3d Platoon was leading, closely followed by the 2d. The 1st Platoon was to skirt the open area, just inside the tree line, work around the base of the nose to its right, and establish physical contact with Company F as soon as the left elements were able to push their flank up over the top of the hill.

The 3d Platoon was commanded by Lt. Dell R. David. For some little time he pushed his men forward and then, when he decided he was well beyond the nose, he turned inland to climb up over the hill. He found, however, that his progress was blocked by a sheer cliff which no one could climb. He tried to call Captain Chasmar on the radio and found that his communications with the company commander were out. Thinking that it might be his own radio that was faulty he passed word back through his platoon for Lt. Earl W. Montgomery, who commanded the 2d Platoon, to come forward and bring the platoon radio with him. Montgomery immediately started ahead, leaping from rock to rock, pushing the thick foliage apart as he moved. About halfway from his men to David, he slipped between two rocks and almost fell on a Japanese soldier who had hidden in the crevasses which they formed. Montgomery stopped momentarily to shoot this Japanese and then pushed on to David, keeping his eyes open. He told the 3d Platoon leader that he thought the area might be full of enemy who had been hiding that way and that it would probably be a good idea to scour it. David immediately called Sgt. Ernest Hall to him and told him to take a small patrol and move a little way ahead, and to look under every rock and bush. Hall was gone about fifteen minutes and soon came back to report that he had killed another Japanese hiding in the brush. Lieutenant David was

now firmly convinced that he was being watched by hidden enemy so he told Staff Sgt. Frank R. Rushowski to go with Hall a second time, and to take more men and go farther ahead.

The patrol pushed out and was almost immediately lost to sight. With Pfc. James M. Cowley in the lead, they found a little trail ten yards away from the main platoon position. This trail ran for approximately thirty yards and then disappeared between two coral pinnacles that partly obscured any further view. Cowley began to follow this trail cautiously and as he came to the rocks he found a sharp step up. The scout was watching his footing as he took this step and when he looked up he found himself staring directly into the faces of three enemy soldiers. Both he and the Japanese were startled and stood looking at one another a moment, then all of them tried to get their rifles up to shoot. Cowley's gun missed fire and the leading Japanese soldier's rifle went off, the bullet hitting the American in the arm. The impact knocked Cowley off balance and he fell over backward, down off the step. The three Japanese who evidently could not see the rest of the patrol, jumped down after him. The leader had his bayonet fixed, ready to finish Cowley off. Sergeant Rushowski, who had ducked behind a rock when the shot rang out, now stepped out into the open. He was armed with a submachine gun and with one burst he killed all three enemy soldiers.

The patrol returned to David with the new report and Lieutenants David and Montgomery decided that the best thing to do under the circumstances was to comb the area with a long skirmish line. Lieutenant Montgomery's platoon was now moved up on David's left, a line was built up and both platoons began moving ahead. This line had moved thirty-five yards ahead and David's platoon was just approaching the little coral gateway when Pfc. Walter T. Simmons, a BAR man who was moving along the path, turned around to say something to his squad leader behind him. As he turned he saw out of the corner of his eye, through the gateway, two Japanese soldiers walking down the path toward him. He signalled for quiet and dropped to the ground, took careful aim and opened fire. In his first burst he killed both enemy soldiers. Then Simmons saw a startling thing. Behind the gateway and in the side of the cliff, a hole opened up and Japanese soldiers began pouring from it, running in all directions. There were so many of them that they were stumbling over one another in their haste. Simmons moved forward to the gateway and began firing. In a moment he was joined by two other BAR men. Within the next few minutes these three men killed over forty Japanese. All the enemy did not run out of the cave, however. Some remained behind, worked a machine gun into place and began returning the fire of Simmons and his two companions. The three BAR

men now endeavored to knock out the machine gun with their BARs but after several attempts to maneuver into position to do this, they ended up by being pinned down themselves.

Staff Sgt. George Horvath now decided to see if he could knock out the machine gun. He borrowed as many grenades as he could get and started to crawl up the trail on his stomach. He arrived at the mouth of the cave without being detected, and, while still lying flat on the ground, tossed twelve grenades inside as fast as he could pull the pins and throw them. There was no further activity from within.

The sound of firing seemed to have attracted other Japanese to the area and these new enemy additions now began taking up a harassing fire that seriously hampered any further movement. Under these conditions David and Montgomery pulled their platoons back twenty yards and began to reorganize. The two platoon leaders then discovered one of their men missing. When they eventually found him, unconscious on the trail ahead, it was necessary to lay down extremely heavy covering fire to evacuate him. Lieutenant David now decided to re-investigate the cliff behind him to see if he had overlooked some way to get up over the nose. This was fruitless. While this search was going on, Montgomery finally reached Captain Chasmar on the radio and explained the situation. The company commander then ordered both platoons to withdraw to a point some distance to the rear and rejoin the company.

Lieutenant Colonel McDonough had already committed Company E on his left flank and had ordered Captain Chasmar to contain and mop up the resistance which David had encountered. This decision had come about some time after the two left platoons had run into trouble, at about 1450. Company F had pushed on ahead and then stopped to wait a second time. Rather than hold up the whole regimental line until the enemy was cleaned out of the difficult terrain on the left, the battalion commander decided to replace Company G with his reserve.

It was 1545 before Captain Ryan reported that his men had moved into line and were ready to continue the assault. Moving off at that time, Ryan swung his assault to the right and his two leading platoons cut diagonally across the edge of the open ground underneath Mt. Nafutan. After an advance of one hundred yards the men began receiving some small-arms and machine-gun fire from atop the nose. Within another hundred yards this had become so serious that the company was gradually pinned down and the whole forward push dribbled to a stop. By 1730 the men had been unable either to eliminate the enemy positions or to move farther ahead, and were given permis-

sion to withdraw to a high hill facing the nose, a position which would give them more defensible positions for the night.

While the 2d and 3d Battalions, 165th Infantry, had met with varying degrees of success during the day, the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, had been struggling to keep abreast. Plagued by enemy machine-gun and heavy-weapons fire almost from the time they moved out at 1200, the two assault companies moved forward by leaps and bounds, eliminating a variety of enemy positions. Lt. Colonel O'Brien himself came forward and set fire to a village which proved to be full of enemy riflemen harassing the advance. By nightfall the line had progressed as far from the line of departure as had the other two battalions and was dug in almost at the foot of Ridge 300 where the original assault had been made on 19 June. No physical contact was established between O'Brien's left flank and the right flank of the 3d Battalion, 165th, despite the fact that Major Claire ordered Company I to take up a position on his right flank just before dark in an attempt to bring the two lines together. This failure to establish contact was mainly due to the fact that the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, was advancing on relatively level ground while the 165th was attacking directly up the ramp. As the forward movement went on the difference in height produced a gap, neither unit being able to maintain troops on the sharp slope of the ridge that came into being between the two adjacent companies.

The action of 20 June, as already pointed out, had carried the whole line directly into the fringes of the main enemy position on Nafutan Point. The 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, was almost directly in front of the nose of Mt. Nafutan and the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, was below the Ridge 300 position, ready to outflank it the next day. The 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, was facing this latter stronghold on the north and, although it was not known at the time, had pressed the defenders back into their final defensive positions, a fact which was to have some significance during the night of 20-21 June.

The enemy remained relatively quiet during the first two and a half hours of darkness on this night and then, at about 2130, troops of Company I, 165th Infantry, and men all along the line in the 1st Battalion, 105th, began to hear signs of much activity along this front. One Japanese in front of A Company, 105th Infantry, went so far as to run up and down yelling "Shoot me! Shoot me!" at the top of his voice. Company commanders and platoon leaders in the area had made sure to caution their men to withhold fire against this obvious attempt to learn the exact location of the American lines. Troops lay silent in their foxholes, listening to the Japanese jabbering only a few yards away.

There was the sound of much digging. Now and then a mortar shell fell into the general area, but these caused little trouble.

At 2200, a half hour after the noisy Japanese soldier had first implored Americans to shoot him, the whole area to the front blazed with fire from machine guns, mortars and dual-purpose guns. All parts of the front line felt some of the effects of this concentration except for Company A, 105th Infantry.

At daylight on 21 June, as soon as it was light enough to permit a man to make out the outlines of another's body, the line became aware of what the Japanese had been doing. Directly facing them was a formidable defensive position containing several machine guns and almost a company of riflemen that had not been in evidence the night before. Only a few of these new positions were more than forty yards away.

The fighting that followed bore heaviest on Company I, 165th Infantry, although all units were involved to some extent. The first move came with the earliest light. Two Japanese machine guns, placed at opposite ends of Company I's line, opened fire simultaneously. At the same time, rifles took up the fire, grenades began falling in the American foxholes, and a general blanket of mortar fire enveloped the front. Men in Companies I and L immediately took up a heavy return fire from their holes, trying to keep the enemy down and trying to find out just what the situation was to the front.

All along the line the action had been extremely heavy. Company I had managed to recover from its early surprise to fight back with everything at hand. The Mortar Section got into the melee when its crews crawled out behind the lines and set up the mortars without base plates in an effort to obtain shorter range and place their shells in the trenches the enemy had dug during the night. One man of the section was shot and killed doing this.

Companies L and K in the 165th Infantry also experienced trouble from the heavy fire, and Company A, 105th Infantry, below the ridge, eventually had to withdraw one hundred yards in order to find better defensive positions. The intensity of this action did not fully subside until after 0700 at which time tanks moved up to Company I with resupplies of ammunition and sprayed the whole area to the front with canister and machine guns. Even after this an enemy soldier, here and there, kept on firing or throwing grenades. Captain Potter, commanding Company I, did not feel this sporadic resistance or the nature of the terrain ahead warranted a general advance until the installations had been fully investigated. In the interim he ordered his executive officer, Lt. Robert A. Elliot, to take a patrol and explore the undergrowth and network of defenses.

Chapter 24: The Attack of 21 June

THE CONTINUATION of the attack on the morning of 21 June had been scheduled for 0930. The lateness of the hour was due to some major changes which were to be made in the front facing the enemy. During 20 June the 106th Infantry had landed, and it had begun to appear that the missing equipment of the 105th Infantry would soon be unloaded. The original conception of the attack on Nafutan Point had been that the 165th Infantry, attacking from the north, would make a juncture with the 105th Infantry's 3d Battalion, moving in from the west. As the whole line advanced more and more to the south the 105th Infantry would pinch out the 165th Infantry and assume all control for the balance of the operation.

On the morning of 21 June this link-up was believed near. The advance of the day before had been relatively fast and there was every reason to believe that it would continue during that day and that by shortly after noon Colonel Bishop would be in control of the whole operation. The Division Commander was anxious to have two complete RCTs to place at the disposal of corps at the earliest possible moment and this contributed toward his decision to get the 165th Infantry free of the Nafutan area as soon as possible. Late on the afternoon of 20 June the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, was released from NTLF reserve and returned to control of the 27th Division. One company was dispatched at dusk to Magicienne Bay to bolster the outposts there and the rest of the 2d Battalion was kept in reserve near Aslito Airfield.

In view of the pending assumption of control by the 105th Infantry and the availability of the 2d Battalion, 105th, Colonel Kelley requested that he be allowed to employ it in place of his 2d Battalion on the morning of 21 June. At a conference at Division Headquarters this request was granted and control of the battalion was given to the 165th Infantry. The regimental commander ordered Lt. Col. Leslie Jensen to relieve the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, beginning at 0730 the next morning. The attack was scheduled for the later hour to allow for this relief.

The line-up now presented three battalions of the 105th Infantry and one of the 165th Infantry in line. The 1st and 2d Battalions, 105th Infantry, would eventually pinch out the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, and as the front further narrowed, the 2d and 3d Battalions, 105th, would pinch out the 1st.

The action on 21 June was heavy and complicated. Each of the three battalions in line met strong opposition during the day and by nightfall the optimism occasioned by the long advances of 20 June was completely dispelled.

From the very beginning of the attack things did not go well. A

thirty-minute artillery concentration, scheduled to begin at 0900, was delayed for twenty minutes because Lieutenant Elliott's patrol was still some distance ahead of the front lines and had to be called back. The resultant ten minutes of fire was entirely inadequate, particularly in the zone of the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry. In this locality two shells fell on the nose of Mt. Nafutan and none at all in the surrounding area, a factor which was to cause a full day of trouble.

The 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, was seeing action for the first time when it relieved Lt. Colonel McDonough's battalion. Lt. Colonel Jensen placed his Company G on the right of the line and Company F on the left. Company E was left facing Magicienne Bay as battalion reserve. The brunt of the day's fighting was to be borne by Company G. This unit, commanded by Capt. Frank H. Olander, faced the nose of Mt. Nafutan across the same wide-open, cane-stubbed field which had stood in the way of Companies G and E, 165th Infantry, the day before. Capt. Earl L. White, of Company F, had orders to proceed through the overgrown coral area which had occupied Lieutenant David the day before and clean it out, after which he was to scale Mt. Nafutan at its south end. Captain Olander was to neutralize the nose of Mt. Nafutan and advance along the right, seizing all the ground between it and Ridge 300. Handicapped from the very beginning by the lack of an adequate artillery preparation, Company G moved out at 0930 in a skirmish line with two platoons abreast. The right platoon had physical contact with Company K, 165th Infantry. Captain Olander had instructed his men to move across the open ground as quickly as possible. He thought that if they hugged the base of the cliff that they would be protected from the fire of enemy weapons almost directly above. Furthermore, to the right of Mt. Nafutan there was a small wooded area, overgrown with shrubs, which would give adequate cover once it was reached.

The first attack of Company G met terrific fire before it had gone twenty-five yards. Enemy riflemen, machine gunners and mortar men had reenforced the position during the night. Two Company G men were killed and three more wounded in the first attempt to go forward and the rest of the men, now in the open, were forced to seek cover.

When forward movement ceased, the fire slackened and Captain Olander ordered his men to try again, this time moving individually, in short bounds. When the first man jumped up to move, the fire was renewed in greater intensity. By the time the forward elements had pushed ahead another fifty yards, three more men were dead and four more wounded. Olander had by this time been able to locate some of the enemy positions which were causing him trouble. One particularly troublesome machine gun was emplaced in a little shack on the north

edge of the woods which was the intermediate objective of the right (2d) platoon. The company commander passed the word along his line for every rifleman who wasn't moving to shoot at the shack. His mortars, at the same time, were to put as many shells into it as possible. For ten minutes Companies G riddled this position and then at a signal, the whole line rose to its feet and moved forward on a dead run. One more man was killed, but the bulk of the company managed to reach cover.

The 1st Platoon, on the left of the line, assembled in a little cove about seventy-five yards from the base of the cliff. From here the platoon leader, Lt. Don F. Lee, Jr., discovered that an enemy machine gun had been placed on top of the nose, from where it commanded all the open ground behind him. He told his platoon sergeant, Tech. Sgt. John F. Polikowski that he was going to take one squad and scale the cliff and get the gun. He asked Polikowski to move the rest of the platoon under the lip of the bluff and from there to lay down covering fire on the surrounding area. However, this move was to the left and almost directly away from the 2d Platoon on the right. A large gap would thus come into existence between the two halves of the company and Lieutenant Lee felt that this would offer the enemy an excellent opportunity to work men in between and behind him. A call to the company commander eventually got through and Captain Olander promised that he personally would get the 3d Platoon forward and into position and not to worry about it. Lieutenant Lee turned the scaling mission over to Staff Sgt. Joseph Ochal, and went along himself. The rest of the platoon crouched under the cliff, trying to find some protection from fire which was raining on them from all directions. Ochal and his men reached the top of the nose without trouble and as they came over the crest killed one enemy soldier. Then they found themselves blocked and unable to see or move because of the dense undergrowth and terrain formations. After half an hour Lieutenant Lee ordered the men to retire to the low ground.

While the 1st Platoon had been trying to move ahead at the base of Mt. Nafutan itself, the 2d Platoon, farther to the right, had run into another position that was to cause it almost as much trouble as the original one. The last rush in this zone of action had carried the men forward slightly farther than it had in the 1st Platoon area. They had overrun the little shack and found its occupants dead and the machine gun knocked out. From there they had reached a little strip of woods seventy-five yards west of the nose with one squad separated from the rest of the platoon by a strip of open ground that stretched fifty to a hundred yards farther west than that. Both sections of the platoon had ample cover, but Lt. Arthur G. Hansen, in command, did not want any large gap separating elements of his platoon. He crawled over to

the edge of the clearing and shouted to the squad leader to infiltrate across to the rest of the men. Three men were killed and one wounded in the attempt. Two men decided not to try it.

After some little time had passed, Lieutenant Hansen became aware of the fact that his missing squad had not reported so he told his platoon sergeant, Tech. Sergeant Max J. Tracz, to go and see what had happened. Tracz crawled to the clearing, called across, and receiving no answer decided to cross and see what was wrong. As he stepped out into the open he received four wounds in quick succession and dropped to the ground. Lieutenant Hansen had seen Tracz hit and as he surveyed the open space he saw one other wounded man lying near the opposite edge of the clearing. He and his runner, Pfc. Harry R. Pritchard, managed to reach the wounded man's side without a shot being fired. The two remaining men from the squad, who were still opposite, noticed this and walked to the wounded man. All four men now picked him up. At that moment a machine gun atop the mountain opened fire, cutting the wounded man in two and wounding Pritchard and one of the other men. Everyone dove for the trees on the platoon side of the clearing and all four men made it safely. In the meantime, Tracz had managed to crawl to safety also.

Lieutenant Hansen now tried to reach Captain Olander on the radio to tell him of the platoon situation but after trying for some little time had to give up. He then tried to locate the 1st Platoon without success. By 1300 his wounded men were in such pain that he turned his full attention to them. Every attempt he made to move was met by heavy fire and inasmuch as he was unable to get any information from anyone regarding the surrounding situation he decided to stay where he was until he received further orders.

One reason Hansen had been unable to reach Captain Olander was because the company commander was moving his 3d Platoon forward. After a series of efforts, during which three men were killed and two wounded, the platoon reached the base of the cliff, but in the rapid movement and fire the men had veered too far to the left and were now to the east of the nose, on the left of the 1st Platoon instead of on the right. Here they were pinned down by accurate and heavy fire which wounded still another man. Captain Olander now called battalion and asked Lt. Colonel Jensen if some help could not be sent forward, particularly for the wounded men. There were now about fifteen seriously wounded men lying about, some of whom later died of their wounds. At about 1200 a medical jeep poked its nose up over the rear hill near the line of departure and was immediately hit by intense fire. The aid man

was wounded and the driver forced to jump from the vehicle. Medical aid was thus kept from the men.

The company commander was now desperate. All of his men were under adequate cover but they could not move. Ammunition was low and there seemed no way to reduce the enemy fire. Poor radio communication nullified his efforts to get word back to the battalion command post. As a result Captain Olander decided to take off personally and make the trip back to see the battalion commander, although this meant running the full length of the open field through the intense fire. Ordering the 3d Platoon to lay down as heavy fire as they could on known or suspected positions, he made a dash for safety and eventually got back to the battalion command post.

Company G at this time was separated into four groups. The company CP and headquarters were still standing by behind the LD and using the hill for protection from enemy fire. The three rifle platoons were all in cover in the shadows of the nose. With them were attachments from the Weapons Platoon, Lieutenant Lee having the Mortar Section with him.

After rejoining his platoon from the cliff scaling expedition Lieutenant Lee had waited for the rescue platoon to put in an appearance on his right. He could not raise the company commander on the radio, and when the 3d Platoon did not come he decided to move over and make contact with Hansen's platoon himself. This involved pushing on forward along the right face of the cliff and then rushing across another open space to a strip of woods between the cliff and that in which Hansen was located. This move was accomplished with the loss of one man killed and two wounded and the two platoon leaders then got together and dug in a perimeter defense. Neither was able to reach Captain Olander on the radio.

The company commander had explained his situation to Lt. Colonel Jensen and taken the battalion commander up to the little knob from which he could see the company positions. Lt. Colonel Jensen went back to battalion and advised Colonel Kelley of his predicament. Two SP guns of the Cannon Company were present at the CP and these were loaded with medical supplies, rations, water, and ammunition and sent forward to find Hansen, Lee, and the 3d Platoon. Within half an hour the vehicles had reached all three platoons and the two lieutenants, using the radio on the SP guns, talked to Captain Olander. He ordered them to dig in for the night where they were and both platoon leaders agreed, but asked the company commander to try and get the wounded men evacuated. He again surveyed his situation and talked it over with Lt. Colonel Jensen. Both agreed that to leave the company where it was

would result in further heavy casualties before morning and that nothing could be gained by holding the ground until the high nose of Mt. Nafutan was cleared off. Col. William Browne, executive officer of Division Artillery, was in the 2d Battalion CP at the time and Captain Olander took him forward to look at the terrain. The artilleryman said that he could not place an artillery concentration on the area as long as Company G was in its present position and other troops along the front line were in advanced positions. He wanted Captain Olander to withdraw his men. This, said the captain, would only result in further casualties. Another conference followed and at its conclusion Colonel Browne called General Kernan at Division Artillery headquarters and the general agreed to send forward Battery B, 104th Field Artillery Battalion. This battery would go into position on the rise of ground at the LD and lay direct fire on the nose of Mt. Nafutan. Under cover of this fire, Olander was to withdraw his men. This decision was reached at 1535.

For the next hour Captain Olander turned his attention to evacuating wounded. Using the self-propelled guns, he worked elements of the battalion medical aid station forward with litters and loaded the wounded men in the vehicles. By the time the howitzers were in place the company was ready to move. From its forward position the field artillery battery now proceeded to lay down a terrific concentration on the nose of Mt. Nafutan and under cover of this fire all of Company G withdrew.

While Company G had been trying to advance on the right side of the rugged mountain, Company F had been having more success through the coral fringe along the shore, although progress was slow. Working along through the dense tangle they eventually found a place to scale the cliff some distance south of the point Lieutenant David had reached the day before. They had seen no Japanese.

By 1100 Captain White had worked one platoon up the face of the cliff and established a small toehold. Here he was greeted by a burst of machine-gun fire which killed one man and wounded two others. One of the company's light machine guns was now worked to the top and emplaced to fire on the enemy position, but in the duel that followed the two gunners were wounded and Company F's gun put out of commission without any appreciable effect on the Japanese. Captain White now ordered his 60mm mortars to fire a concentration on the area from below, but after the cessation of this fire, the enemy gun was still in place and firing. Until this time none of the infantrymen had actually seen a Japanese and were not absolutely sure where the fire was coming from. All they knew was the general direction.

At 1230 Captain White finally decided to try and get on top of the ridge still farther to the south and encircle the position by coming up on it from the rear. Leaving the majority of his company to face the enemy and keep them occupied, he took the 2d Platoon and worked on through the scrub to the south. At 1700 after a whole afternoon of hard work, during which time he still did not see a single enemy soldier, Captain White climbed the mountain and started back toward the north. Just at this time battalion notified him of the artillery fire that was to be placed on the nose, so the company commander ordered his men to get down off the mountain, which was to be the impact area. From there the company withdrew to the starting point of the day.

The 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, it can be seen, had finished where it started from. Other units along the entire 165th Infantry front had little or no success. The 3d Battalion, 165th, had moved forward slowly during the morning trying to adjust its movement to that of the battalion on either flank. By 1130, Company I had been pinched out of the line by the narrowing of Ridge 300. Finally, at 1210, acting upon orders from battalion headquarters, both company commanders of units still in the line were ordered to push on forward without regard to the action of flank units. Forty-five minutes later, after a short advance, the right unit (Company L) ran into an enemy position and in attempting to knock this out, developed the core of the main Japanese strongpoint atop Ridge 300. It was this strongpoint which had caused so much trouble to the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, on 19 June. After a few random exchanges of rifle and machine-gun fire, Captain Stampher's men were hit by the heaviest mortar barrage yet received on Saipan. In the course of a few minutes one man was killed and eleven seriously wounded. Mortar shells dropping on the exposed lines of Company K and the rest of the battalion, scattered the men and completely disorganized the whole battalion line. The fire continued for over an hour, and then another half hour was spent in reorganizing the front. During the mortar fire, Captain Betts of Company K had noticed Japanese in the vicinity of his left flank, which was dangling free, and so he asked that he be allowed to wait until the 2d Battalion, 105th, came up on his left to cover him. Instead, Major Claire ordered Company I into the line to fill the gap. By the time Captain Potter managed to complete the movement it was late, so the whole battalion line dug in where it was for the night. Little or no gain had been made during the day.

It will be remembered that parts of the line of the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, had been forced to withdraw under the heavy shelling

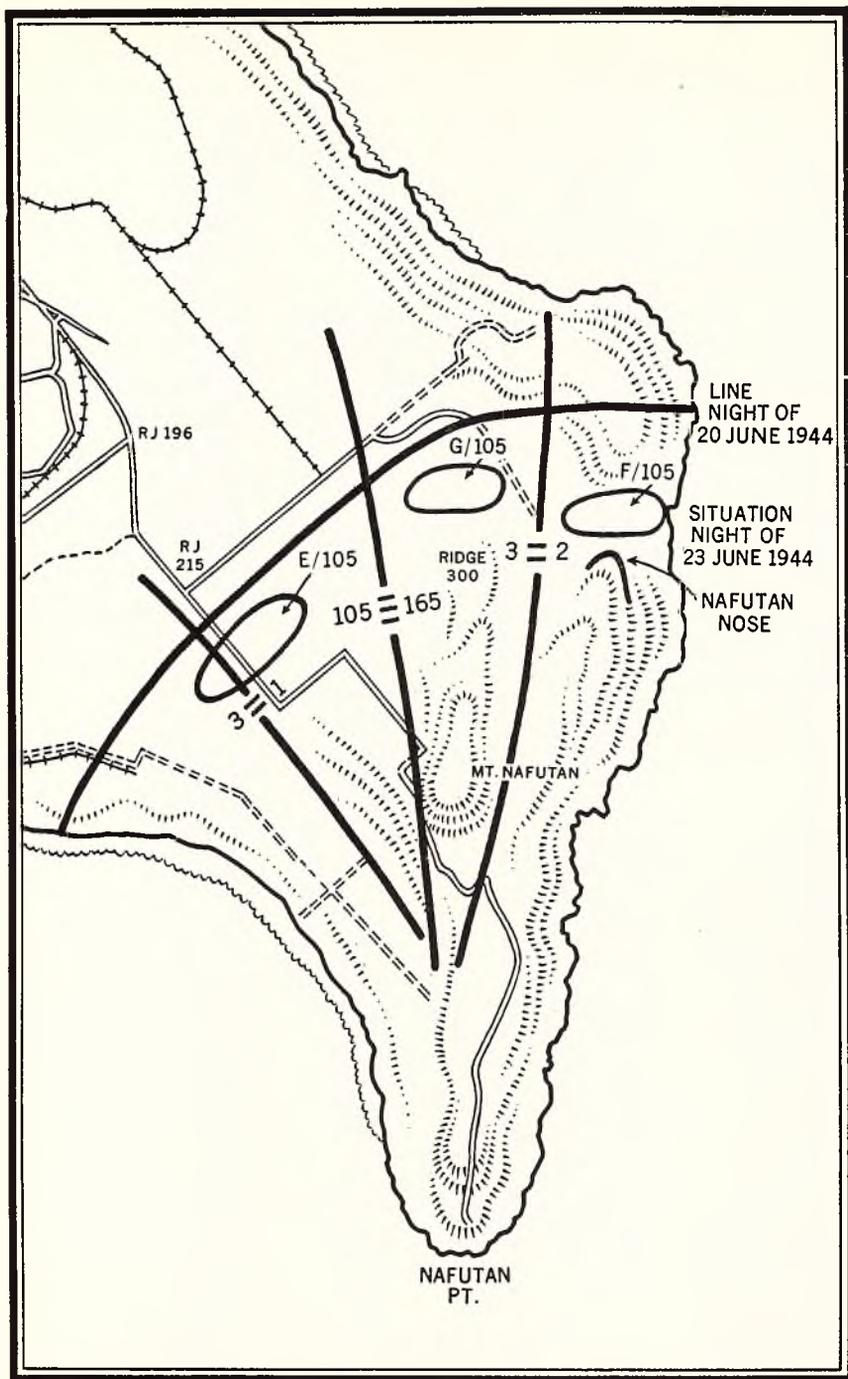
of the early morning hours. Between 0700 and 0930 the time had been spent in trying to establish firm physical contact with the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, before beginning the scheduled attack. Owing to the terrain conformation along the ridge this had not been accomplished satisfactorily the night before and Company I, 165th Infantry, had been inserted to close the gap, without success. When Captain Ackerman of Company A, 105th Infantry, did manage to establish this contact on the morning of 21 June, he did so only by pulling his men back another two hundred yards from the point to which they had withdrawn shortly after daylight. As a consequence, when the advance began at 0930, he pushed ahead for two hours before he finally reached the place where he had dug in the night before. Here he stopped to readjust his line, and in the readjustment Company I, 165th Infantry, was pinched out. In conjunction with Major Claire's battalion, the men now resumed the advance. When the heavy concentration of enemy fire fell into the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, at 1255, Captain Ackerman's company was also hit hard. Three men were wounded almost at once. The company commander, his men caught in the open field with no cover, ordered the company to withdraw to the foxholes of the night before, one hundred yards behind, and wait for tanks to come up. A few minutes later Company C, on the battalion right, was hit by a counterattack. At the moment this counterattack hit, Lt. Colonel O'Brien arrived at the CP of Lt. Bernard A. Tougaw, commanding the company, with a platoon of tanks. With the aid of these vehicles the enemy attempt was broken up in short order. At the conclusion of this unsuccessful effort to force Company C's line, Lt. Colonel O'Brien took the three tanks and moved over to the left to meet Captain Ackerman. Over an hour had now elapsed since Company A had retired to their foxholes.

The battalion commander now launched a coordinated attack along the whole front aimed at securing the intermediate objective line at which the 165th Infantry would be pinched out. This attack was supported by tanks which were to move off ahead of the riflemen, firing. Shortly before 1500 this attack began, following an artillery concentration placed along the front. Everyone was firing as the line moved out and the enemy was returning almost as heavy a fire as he received. The tanks were a short distance ahead of the infantry, but continued to advance and spray the area ahead with machine-gun fire. A few yards from the line of departure these vehicles, with their inadequate vision slits, began to veer off to the left, and within a few minutes had turned almost completely around and were coming back toward the Company A line, still firing. Both Companies A and C were immediately pinned to the ground. Lt. Colonel O'Brien, who was with the assault line at the

time, tried frantically to make contact with the tankers by radio. When this failed, he jumped to his feet and ran out through the hail of fire to meet them. He eventually stopped their movement by crawling up on the turret of the lead tank and banging on it with his pistol butt. This tank then called the other two on the radio and the movement and firing stopped. The battalion commander now turned the vehicles around, took up a position on the turret of the lead tank and ordered the advance to proceed. The whole line jumped off in a rapid push that carried them five hundred yards across the open ground below the ridge.

Throughout this whole movement, the infantrymen jogged ahead at a dogtrot behind the tanks, keeping up a steady fire to the front and left flank at the enemy positions atop the ridge. It might also be added that Lt. Colonel O'Brien majestically sat up on the turret of the lead tank for the whole length of the advance, alternately firing his pistol, banging down on the turret top with its butt to give directions to the men inside, and shouting encouragement to the infantrymen running along behind. The whole performance was carried out under considerable enemy fire. Two men were killed by this fire and three wounded. The advance halted so that the companies could reorganize and adjust their lines with the battalion on their left with whom contact had again been lost. Characteristic of O'Brien in this action was his first act on its conclusion. He put his pistol back in its holster, very deliberately crawled down from his perch and walked back to a man who had just been mortally wounded, picked him up and carried him back out of the heavy fire which was still continuing. Then he moved back into Captain Ackerman's zone of action. He had given the tanks permission to withdraw and the minute they pulled back from the area, the enemy opened fire with small arms and automatic weapons which effectively pinned down the whole line. The battalion commander surveyed the ground to the front and finally found what he took to be an enemy position in a small building some distance ahead. He ordered Company A's 60mm mortars to take this building under fire. When this was done Japanese came running from its shelter and scattered in all directions. Some of them were killed by Company A's machine guns and riflemen, but the majority escaped. This mortar concentration relieved the Company A line from the enemy fire which was pinning it down.

It was during this period that a patrol from Company L, 165th Infantry, reached O'Brien with information as to the exact location of the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, which was out of sight above the ridge. O'Brien had already deployed a platoon under Lt. George B. Dolliver with instructions to establish physical contact between his flank and Company L's. When he received the information from the patrol he



Map 4: Saipan: The 105th Infantry at Nafutan

Chapter 25: The 105th at Nafutan

THE ACTION of 21 June had been severely disappointing. Only the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, showed any appreciable gains at the conclusion of the day. The 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, after a bitter experience, was right back where it had started from in the morning. The 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had spent the first four hours of daylight on the defensive and had then failed to gain, first while waiting for the flank units to come up abreast and then in the face of stubborn resistance.

It is a curious fact that all plans for subsequent action in the Nafutan area were based upon the optimism of the 20th rather than on the pessimism of the evening of the 21st. This fact and these plans had their beginnings during the early morning hours of the 21st. At 0900 NTLF issued its Operations Order 9-44. The background for this order is easily understandable.

While the 165th Infantry had been capturing Aslito Airfield and driving to Magicienne Bay on 18 June, the 4th Marine Division on its immediate left had kept abreast and at the close of the day was also perched on the high ground overlooking the eastern shore. During 19 June this division had consolidated its lines and early on the 20th had shifted its frontage so that it now faced north. During this same period the 2d Marine Division had completed its pivot to the north and NTLF was now poised for a general attack toward the enemy stronghold at Mt. Tapotchau. In drawing up his plans for this major effort, Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith desired to have the 27th Infantry Division available for a reserve which could be readily committed wherever needed. This condition was not attainable as long as the greater part of that Division was tied up with the remaining elements in the south.

The rapid advance of the 165th Infantry during the afternoon of 20 June against what seemed to be only token resistance indicated a general collapse of all enemy forces in the Nafutan area and bore out the more optimistic figure presented by the corps G-2 of a figure of not more than three hundred Japanese left in the southern sector. It was under these circumstances that Operations Order 9-44 carried a paragraph that read as follows:

One Infantry battalion, 27th Infantry Division, (to be designated) will operate in the garrison area . . . [Nafutan Point]. It will mop up remaining enemy detachments. . .

This field order was delivered at the 27th Division CP at 1215, 21 June. By this time the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, had run into the de-

terminated opposition to its front and there were indications that the enemy would defend his Nafutan position stubbornly. However, it was still thought that the 1st and 2d Battalions, 105th Infantry, would pinch out the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, by nightfall. During the next two hours the situation in front of Lt. Colonel Jensen's battalion did not improve and the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had run into a strong enemy position across its entire front. At 1430 Colonel Stebbins, the 27th Division chief of staff, was moved to call Col. R. C. Hogaboom, USMC, G-3 of NTLF, and tell him that he thought at least two battalions would be needed at Nafutan the next day. He based his estimate on the slowness of the advance which would still leave 2,500 yards of frontage to be covered even if the lines moved forward rapidly through the remainder of 21 June.

As the day progressed and no further gains were registered, except in the zone of the 1st Battalion, 105th, Maj. Gen. Ralph C. Smith became more convinced that one battalion could not accomplish the job to be done. Accordingly, at 1700, he personally called Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith on the telephone and recommended that the corps commander leave all of RCT 105 in the Nafutan area to finish the job. This the corps commander agreed to do, stipulating, however, that Colonel Bishop could use only two of his battalions. The third was to be held in reserve near Aslito Airfield, ready for immediate use anywhere. Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith agreed to this and immediately issued 27th Division Field Order No. 45A. Paragraphs relating to the Nafutan Point area contained the following points:

- (1) RCT 105 would *hold* present front line facing Nafutan Point with two battalions on the line and one in reserve.
- (2) Elements of RCT 165, then on the present front line, would be relieved by 0630 the next morning.
- (3) The reserve battalion would not be committed to action without authority of the Division Commander.
- (4) Reorganization of the front lines facing Nafutan Point was to be effected *not later* than 221100 June. *Offensive operations were to be continued at that time.* [Italics supplied.]

This field order was issued on the basis of the telephone conversation between the two generals. Written confirmation from Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith appeared at 0830, 22 June, in the form of a mailbrief modifying Operations Order 9-44. This telephone conversation and the subsequent issuance of 27th Division Field Order No. 45A were major evidence in the later dispute between the two generals. Lt. Gen. Hol-

land M. Smith in his original request to Admiral Spruance, asking for authority to relieve Maj. Gen. Ralph C. Smith, stated two points:

(1) Major General Ralph Smith contravened the corps commander's orders by ordering the 105th RCT to *hold* when Operations Order 9-44 ordered RCT 105 to attack.

(2) Major General Ralph C. Smith had no authority to issue orders to RCT 105 because Operations Order 9-44 removed RCT 105 from control of the 27th Division.

Neither of these two points was later found to be justified by an Army board. The Division Commander's order to "hold" was given to allow a reorganization of lines that accompanied the assumption of control by two battalions on a front formerly held by four battalions. Furthermore, Field Order No. 45A specifically ordered RCT 105 to continue offensive operations upon completion of the reorganization. At no point in either the oral or written orders is there any reference to the fact that RCT 105 was to be removed from 27th Division control. Indeed, the very fact that NTLF never issued any direct orders to Colonel Bishop of the 105th Infantry, except through Division channels, seems to indicate that the RCT was to continue under 27th Division control.

The assumption of responsibility for the Nafutan area on the morning of 22 June was somewhat complicated by events on the extreme left flank of the line still held by the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry. This unit had dug in for the night facing the nose of Mt. Nafutan. Between the men and this stronghold stretched the same open ground which had seen such heavy fighting on the previous two days. The direct artillery fire of the late afternoon of 21 June had seemingly destroyed most of the enemy positions which had caused so much trouble. The Japanese machine guns were silent and there was no sign of enemy activity. Lt. Colonel Jensen, therefore, had ordered both his assault companies to dig in on the open ground, rather than on the reverse slopes of the knob where they had spent the previous night. It was his intention to keep the nose positions neutralized with artillery and mortar fire and then make an early assault from advanced positions to occupy the difficult ground. The men of both assault companies were weary, however, as they dug in. The coral-studded ground offered poor digging and the troops were forced to build up rock shelters instead of digging foxholes. They had no cover and sat out in the open ground "like pins on a bowling alley." The uneasiness grew as the night wore on. Little fire was received but the sounds of enemy activity were unmistakable. All night long there was much jabbering, grunting and digging, plainly discernible to the

men below the nose. During the early morning hours Captains Olander and White both called the battalion CP and begged for permission to pull their men back behind the rim of the saucer in which they found themselves. When the sounds of enemy activity increased to a crescendo an hour before dawn, Captain Olander again tried to reach Lt. Colonel Jensen but found his radio out of order. Hurriedly the company commander got up and made his way back to see Jensen personally although this meant wandering through outpost lines in the darkness. He gave the battalion commander a graphic description of his situation and the enemy preparations and Jensen finally gave him permission to withdraw. He immediately dispatched two runners to Lt. George H. O'Donnell, his executive, with the orders. The time was just at daybreak. Both companies, F and G, lost no time in moving. They gathered their equipment together and started back over the rise of ground at double-time. Part of the men managed to get to cover, and most of Company F was close enough to the edge of the dense beach area to scramble into it, but three platoons of Company G and the company headquarters were caught in the hot blast of fire that the enemy turned loose when the morning light revealed the movement. The Japanese had spent the night moving riflemen, mortars and machine guns into position where they could sweep the 2d Battalion night positions at the first light and now their quarry was moving away. The fury of the enemy concentration was almost unbelievable. Within the space of a few minutes Captain Olander's company lost six men killed or mortally wounded and twenty-one other casualties. Company F had one man killed. All organization was lost within both companies and elements were pinned down all over the area, behind rocks, in shallow holes, or in the furrows between rows of cane stubble. Company F had to crawl and scramble back through the coral-studded jungle growth along the shore. Captain Olander obtained three SP guns from the Cannon Company and rolled them up to the knob facing Mt. Nafutan and laid down another concentration on the nose. This eventually dispersed the enemy and allowed the evacuation of the wounded and regrouping of the company, a procedure that took the better part of an hour.

Lt. Colonel Jensen now replaced Company G with Company E. Captain Olander had lost over half his company in the twenty-four hours the men had been in the line and his survivors were pulled some distance to the rear where they bathed and refreshed themselves. By 0945 the company commander reported that he was ready for action again. At that time Lt. Colonel Jensen ordered Company G to relieve the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, in its zone of action.

This order was just part of the whole reorganization of the front

necessitated by the restriction of the force in the south to two battalions. Colonel Bishop, upon assuming responsibility for the Nafutan area, ordered Lt. Colonel Jensen to take over the two left battalion zones, then occupied by the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, and the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry. The 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, was to assume responsibility for the two right battalion zones, then occupied by that battalion and the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry. If each of the two battalions then taking over the line had to leave one of its rifle companies in reserve, there would be only four rifle companies to do the fighting, one for each of the zones of action formerly occupied by a battalion. When one considers the prospect of Company G, with its four officers and seventy-two men assuming responsibility for a frontage formerly held by two rifle companies at relatively full strength, one can easily see the problems confronting the regimental commander.

The 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, has not yet been mentioned as participating in the fighting in the south. This unit fought an entirely different type of battle during the period from 18 June to 22 June from any of the other battalions on the line. Lt. Colonel Edward T. Bradt had led his men during the battle for Makin in November 1943, and this was the only unit of the 105th Infantry that could be considered seasoned.

When the battalion went into the line at noon on 18 June, it was plagued by poor physical condition. The long confinement aboard ship, a heavy incidence of diarrhea, the extreme heat, and the rugged terrain, all combined to reduce the effective strength of the battalion to one-third. This skeleton force made little gain during that day, and on 19 June plunged into the most difficult terrain on the island. For four days the men pushed forward through the same type of dense jungle growth hiding sharp coral pinnacles that was met by units operating along the shores of Magicienne Bay. In this instance, however, the troops could not skirt this terrain, but had to push directly through it. Large numbers of civilian prisoners were taken from the undergrowth along with a few soldiers. Despite the time it took to make the advance to Nafutan, little opposition was met and most of the casualties suffered by the battalion were either from artillery or from the terrain itself. Not until the afternoon of 21 June did the assault troops meet any serious opposition, and this was eliminated with the aid of tanks and SP guns. On the morning of 22 June Lt. Colonel Bradt had his battalion drawn up facing the Point from the west in physical contact with the 1st Battalion, 105th. When ordered to relieve the 1st Battalion, he complied by inserting his reserve company in the line and was ready to advance.

The action at Nafutan Point during the day was negligible, being

almost entirely concentrated in front of the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry. Here, Lt. Colonel Jensen's two left-flank companies, E and F, again tried to advance against the nose of Mt. Nafutan. The three self-propelled guns used earlier by Captain Olander were now utilized by Captain White and Capt. Clinton C. Smith, the Company E commander, to pound the positions at Mt. Nafutan. After an hour of this shelling the companies tried to advance, but met almost undiminished fire from the enemy strongpoint ahead. The battalion commander called in artillery fire only to receive complaints from the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, that this fire was falling in their lines. As a result, Major Claire was ordered to pull his lines back two to four hundred yards to allow this concentration to be placed. This movement was not completed until after 1000. Meanwhile the whole 105th Infantry Regiment had been fouled by its poor communications and the remainder of the day was spent in trying to straighten out the front lines.

The first flaw in the new alignment occurred when Captain Olander completed his relief of Major Claire's battalion at 1025. He was now some four hundred yards behind the point of farthest advance and when he tried to take over the frontage assigned to him he had to place every man on his line, including cooks and supply sergeants. He finally reported that his men were twenty yards apart and that he did not feel he could attack with such a thin line. He had already been informed that his ship's party of twenty-two men was being returned to him during the day, but rather than wait for these reinforcements, Lt. Colonel Jensen decided to take Company E from his left flank where it was trying to encircle Mt. Nafutan and use it between Companies F and G in an effort to shorten Captain Olander's line. This meant uncovering his whole flank. If the Japanese discovered that all American forces had been withdrawn from the dense beach area they could easily infiltrate a large force through that sector and reoccupy positions in the 2d Battalion's rear. Lt. Colonel Jensen tried to get through to regiment by radio and ask for another company to guard the beach approaches, but with no telephone equipment available and radio communication unsatisfactory, everything had to stop until the battalion commander could meet Colonel Bishop personally. The two men talked the situation over on the ground and then went to the 3d Battalion and looked over Lt. Colonel Bradt's situation. As a result of this conference, which lasted until 1300, Colonel Bishop ordered the 3d Battalion commander to release Company K for employment on the extreme left flank of the regiment to prevent a breakthrough there. This change necessitated a delay of another hour and a half while the lines were readjusted. The regimental commander

then ordered both battalions to move as soon as all units were in place.

The drama of poor communications was not yet over. On the morning of 21 June a patrol under Lt. Myron C. Brewer, then S-2 of the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, had discovered what appeared to be a sizable ammunition dump nestled in among the coral rocks of the beach jungle opposite Magicienne Bay. He reported this to Division and early on the morning of 22 June a party from the 727th Ordnance Company moved into the area to salvage the matériel in the dump. After some investigation it was decided that salvage was impracticable and the 27th Division Ordnance Officer, Lt. Col. Armand C. Feichtmeier, ordered the ammunition blown up. The men went to work wiring it for destruction and when the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, moved into the area after their relief by the 3d Battalion, they were warned to stay clear and asked to notify other units. Lt. Colonel O'Brien tried frantically to reach the regimental CP by radio, without success, and when he finally did get through, late in the afternoon, it was to discover that there was no clear channel of communication to the 2d Battalion.

At 1520, the 2d Battalion was busily engaged in getting the attack under way once more and was blissfully unaware of what was impending. The explosion of the dump caught them completely by surprise. Furthermore, it was much more of an explosion than had been anticipated. Out of the resultant confusion came the fact that the 2d Battalion CP, which was situated on the fringe of the beach area, was almost completely destroyed. Vehicles were damaged, radios were so badly shaken up that they would not function and some of Lt. Colonel Jensen's CP personnel were seriously wounded by fragments and flying rocks. Among the more prominent of those injured were the ship's party of the already badly depleted Company G. These twenty-two men had reported at the CP before the explosion. Six of them were wounded.

With the nerve center of the battalion knocked out for some little time, there was no coordinated forward movement along the left portion of the regimental line. Company F continued its efforts and Captain Olander, reinforced by one platoon of Company E, had managed to restore all of the ground given up by the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, when it withdrew during the morning. The 3d Battalion on the right reduced several strongpoints on the face of the hill south of Ridge 300.

The final action of the day involved the ill-fated CP of the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry. Captain White of Company F, in continuing his reduction of Mt. Nafutan, had called on a destroyer, lying offshore in Magicienne Bay, to deliver fire on the seaward side of the nose. By mistake this naval gunfire was delivered directly into the battalion command post, killing eight men and wounding thirty-two.

Chapter 26: The 2d Battalion, 105th

THE 27th Infantry Division had moved the 165th Infantry to a position northwest of Aslito Airfield during the morning of 22 June, at the same time regaining control over the 106th Infantry, less the 1st Battalion. The Division now constituted NTLF reserve for the drive north. At 1500 Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith, with members of his staff, visited the CP at NTLF and had a short conference with the commanding general. During this talk Lt. Gen. Holland Smith voiced some displeasure over the failure of the 105th Infantry to clean up Nafutan during the day. The Division Commander agreed that progress had not been satisfactory, but predicted that remaining enemy resistance would rapidly be eliminated. Even at this late date there was still no accurate estimate of the enemy force facing American troops in the south. The only Japanese military prisoner thus far captured who could give any information at all had vaguely referred to 1,200 troops who had defended Aslito Airfield. He did not know where they had gone, but assumed they had retired into Nafutan, as indeed they had. Estimates of American officers in the area ranged all the way from 300 to 1,500 Japanese soldiers facing the front line. Corps headquarters accepted the lower figure. The Corps commander is reported to have said at one time that there were "not more than ninety enemy in the whole area." This minimum view had been bolstered by the rapid advance of 20 June, but the signs of succeeding days which proved conclusively that the Japanese possessed a well armed, numerous, and superbly organized force were seemingly ignored. Part of the dispute which followed arose from the fact that corps headquarters was not willing to revise its estimates upward.

After the conference with the corps commander, Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith visited Brig. Gen. Graves B. Erskine, USMC, corps Chief of Staff. There he learned that the 27th Division was to be committed in the line in the north on the next day, 23 June. As a facet of this plan, General Erskine ordered the 27th Division to withdraw all but one battalion from Nafutan to support the more important northern action. The 27th Division commander immediately protested this decision, pointing out the inadequacy of the force. General Erskine reemphasized the need for full strength in the north and told the Division Commander that if one battalion was not enough to do the job, the enemy could be contained and mopped up with a larger force later. So strongly did the Division Commander feel on the subject that he wrote the next day to the corps commander, asking that the garrison in the vicinity of Aslito Airfield be warned that enemy groups from within Nafutan Point could infiltrate through the lines of the defending battalion at night and damage airfield

installations. He asked that Seabee and Air Force personnel take steps to provide security against such an eventuality. This warning was issued on 23 June.

Despite all objections, corps headquarters went ahead with its plans to reduce the force to one battalion. The 27th Division delegation was handed an advance copy of NTLF orders for the next day. This copy was carried back to Division headquarters and its provisions incorporated in 27th Division Field Order No. 46, which was issued at 2130 that evening. Relating to Nafutan Point, the Division order read:

2d Battalion, 105th Infantry (1 platoon light tanks attached), continue operations to mop up remaining enemy detachments in the Nafutan Point area. On completion of this mission revert to Corps control as Corps reserve at TA 130 D.

A half hour after FO 46 was issued, NTLF released its Operations Order 10-44. Two copies were received at 27th Division headquarters at 2330, two hours after FO 46 had been sent through message center to subordinate commands. The paragraph of Operations Order 10-44 which deals with Nafutan reads as follows:

2d Bn. 105th Inf (with one platoon light tanks atchd) continue opns at daylight to mop up remaining detachments in Nafutan Point area . . .

This paragraph is word for word the same as that included in FO 46, except that the words "at daylight" have been added. The time of attack, according to FO 46, was to be 1000. (See Appendix I.)

The preliminary order from which the 27th Division order had been taken said nothing at all about a daylight attack, nor had any mention of such a contingency been made at the conference at NTLF headquarters during the afternoon. The failure to include the daylight attack order in the Division order was later cited as one of the two cases of contravention of orders directed at Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith when he was relieved. Also in connection with this particular episode, Lt. Gen. Holland Smith claimed that the Division Commander had no authority to issue orders to the battalion, that it had been removed from Division control. NTLF headquarters, however, did not formally notify the 27th Division of this. Although they did issue a separate set of orders for the battalion commander, indicating assumption of control, this set of orders was passed down through Division headquarters at an hour far too late to allow preparations for the attack to continue at daylight.

The problem thus cast into the lap of the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, was not an easy one. Aside from the fact of a formidable enemy defensive group, the battalion was asked to cover a frontage of more than three

thousand yards in extremely rugged terrain, where a day earlier four battalions had been unable to make any headway. To make matters even more difficult, the battalion was left without any artillery support and only one platoon of light tanks. Colonel Bishop, in an attempt to alleviate this condition somewhat, attached one platoon of the 105th's Cannon Company to the battalion. This platoon was armed with self-propelled howitzers.

The new orders necessitated a complete reshuffling of the line for the second time in as many days. Lt. Colonel Jensen, immediately upon receiving the orders during the night, called Captain Smith of E Company on the radio and ordered him to move his men to the extreme right flank of the regimental zone at daybreak. The relief of the 3d Battalion was to be effected by this company as early as possible so as to make it available to the Division in the north. Captain Smith moved promptly, but the difficulties of spreading three rifle platoons along the frontage then held by a battalion took some careful planning and required adjustment even after it was completed. It was 1025 before E Company was ready to attack.

Jensen also called Captain Olander and ordered him to deploy facing Ridge 300. This difficult position, the core of Japanese defenses at Nafutan, was to become the specific problem of G Company. Olander's company had already been badly mauled. Inasmuch as one of his mortars and one of his machine guns had been destroyed in the action of the previous two days, he made riflemen out of his whole Weapons Platoon, leaving only skeleton crews to man the remaining heavy weapons. With his small force he determined on an attempt at encirclement of the position. While half of the company made a diversionary attack straight up the gradual north slope of the ridge, the other half was to work along the west bluff and try to get behind the positions without being discovered. It was not until 1230 that Captain Olander notified the battalion commander that all of his elements were in position and ready to attack.

Company F had not been committed until it was determined how well the other two companies would be able to cover their frontage. When he had heard from G Company, Lt. Colonel Jensen was able to send all of Captain White's command against Mt. Nafutan. The bitter experience of the past two days had proved that further frontal assaults against the nose position were out of the question, particularly without artillery support. Jensen therefore instructed Captain White to try and work platoons around the flanks. If outflanked, the Japanese might withdraw. White thereupon equipped his 2d Platoon with two days' supplies and told them to move south through the brush along the shore of Magi-

cienne Bay. When they found a place where they could scale the cliffs they were to attack the nose positions from the south, or rear. After an all-day struggle with the brush in the coral-studded jungle, this platoon climbed up to the top of Mt. Nafutan at its peak at approximately 1700. There they found a radio station and some kind of a CP location which they immediately converted into a position for the night. Until that time they had encountered no enemy. The CP seemed to have been abandoned, with its six 6-inch naval guns, which the platoon now carefully rendered unusable.

While the 2d Platoon was thus successfully completing the first part of its mission, the rest of F Company had been engaged in a flanking movement on the opposite side of Mt. Nafutan. One platoon had worked up a little road that ran through a narrow valley that lay between Mt. Nafutan and Ridge 300. This platoon was accompanied by three light tanks whose crews had instructions to lay down covering fire on Mt. Nafutan on the left. To protect the right flank of this force, Lt. Cecil A. Greenwell was instructed to take the 3d Platoon along the inner slopes of Ridge 300. He was to knock out any position that put fire into the valley.

The 1st Platoon in the valley had no trouble during the early part of the afternoon. It moved cautiously up the road until it was 250 yards beyond the troublesome nose. There the men ran into their first opposition, sustained machine-gun fire from the front. Captain White called in his tanks and ordered them to poke ahead of his column. The tankers misunderstood the orders. Instead of moving a few yards forward they moved out at full speed and soon disappeared out of sight up the road toward the head of the valley. For thirty minutes these vehicles roamed up and down the road. Almost all of their fire was directed at the slopes of Mt. Nafutan and it included everything the tankers had. When they returned to Captain White they reported that they were out of ammunition, that they had killed two hundred Japanese, and that they had cleaned out all of Mt. Nafutan. According to one tank driver, the slopes of the mountain had been "swarming" with enemy who had been surprised by the sudden appearance of the vehicles. There was some conjecture about the truth of this report, but the enemy fire to the front had ceased, so Captain White released the tanks to return for more ammunition while he returned to the valley floor better to coordinate the activities of his three widely separated platoons. The 1st Platoon, now under command of Lt. Charles C. Magyar, resumed the advance up the valley, but soon ran into fire from Ridge 300 and had to halt while Lieutenant Greenwell's platoon came up to eliminate it. When he received word that Greenwell couldn't get at the position, Magyar sent out a patrol,

accompanied by an SP gun, to try and reach it from below. While the patrol was engaging the enemy, Magyar pushed on forward, eventually reaching a small group of farm buildings. When a patrol attempted to investigate these buildings a Japanese machine gun opened fire and wounded Magyar's platoon sergeant, Tech. Sgt. Raymond Levesque, and one other man. An aid man who attempted to reach Levesque was also wounded. At almost the same time the patrol sent out to eliminate the position on the inside of Ridge 300 was taken under mortar fire and four men were wounded in quick succession.

At this time the three tanks returned with a new load of ammunition and Magyar sent them forward again to try and eliminate the new position. The tankers came back in a short time to report that the upper end of the valley was still swarming with Japanese. They estimated there were at least three hundred enemy in the area. It was now almost 1700 so the platoon commander called Captain White for instructions. He repeated the information which the tankers had brought back. The company commander thereupon ordered Lieutenant Magyar to move back to the mouth of the valley and dig in for the night. He did not feel that it was advisable to leave the platoon in the valley, surrounded by high bluffs, no matter what the size of the enemy force. The 1st Platoon dug in with company headquarters and the Weapons Platoon to form a blocking force across the mouth of the valley. The platoon under Lieutenant Greenwell spent the night with G Company at the base of Ridge 300.

Captain Olander had spent a busy but unsuccessful afternoon. By 1500 he had pushed his line to the point of farthest advance, the position reached by the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, two days before. Until that time he had encountered no enemy opposition. As he moved on ahead up the slope, one of his advance patrols under Sergeant Ochal stumbled on a Japanese machine-gun position, surprising its crew and killing all five members within a few moments. The noise of this skirmish, however, seemed to alert the whole Japanese position and soon the northern slope of Ridge 300 was blanketed by a heavy mortar barrage and sustained machine-gun fire typical of that put upon units in the area ever since it had first been entered. Captain Olander's men took cover wherever they could and tried to locate the source of all this fire. Within fifteen minutes four heavy machine-gun positions had been located and the company commander ordered up his lone mortar and began trying to knock them out. New Japanese positions took the mortar crew under fire at once, however, and pinned the men to the ground. For the next hour groups of enemy as large as a platoon tried three different times to counterattack in force, but were beaten off before they got to close quarters. During the prolonged fighting one man, Pfc.

Michael E. Lane, was killed. Throughout the period, Lieutenant O'Donnell, the company executive officer, had been trying to work three light tanks into the area to take the enemy positions under fire. The terrain was so rough and rocky that the vehicles were unable to negotiate it. Tracks became caught on coral outcroppings and would not disengage. All three tanks eventually became immobilized. When, at 1730, the enemy attacks continued in force and no suitable night defensive positions could be constructed, Captain Olander withdrew the company to already prepared positions at the north base of the slope. Lieutenant Greenwell of F Company, whose platoon was adjacent to G Company on the left, had fought with Captain Olander's men throughout the afternoon. When G Company dug in for the night, Greenwell called Captain White and received permission to dig in with them.

The character of operations at Nafutan Point, in the case of F and G Companies, had already settled down to two separate actions which had only a slight bearing on each other in Nafutan Valley. Lieutenant Greenwell reported that in order to see his company command post, six hundred yards away, he had to use field glasses and that he was only vaguely aware and very little concerned with what the left flank of his company was doing. As far as he was concerned it was a different campaign. E Company was even farther removed from the center of things. As long as they were working on the plain on the right, they were fighting their own war.

Captain Smith's mission on the right flank of the battalion line saddled him with a frontage of one thousand yards. Ahead of him lay a broad open plateau, hemmed in on one side by the steep slopes of Ridge 300 and on the other by the coral jungle that dropped sharply off to the Saipan Channel. This plain was composed almost entirely of farmland. In some places it was given over to canefields which partly obscured visibility. There were two or three groups of farm buildings and one or two minor roads. The whole area was vulnerable in two places. If E Company were to advance straight down the plain, a sizable enemy force could slip by them through the undergrowth near the sea and encircle them. Furthermore, the whole plateau was subject to observation and clear fields of fire from the heights of Ridge 300. It was the mission of G Company to clean off the ridge, but the face of the cliffs overlooking the plain was filled with caves and natural defensive positions which Captain Olander would not be able to reach from above without over-extending.

With this problem in mind, Captain Smith ordered his 1st Platoon to move down into the coral jungle and clean it out as far as the point where it pinched off the plain at its juncture with the high ground. This pla-

toon was also responsible for seeing that no enemy force got through on the company flank. The 3d Platoon, under Tech. Sgt. Oscar L. Knight, was to move along the cliff face on the other flank, cleaning it off and, at the same time, observing the plain below for any signs of enemy activity. The rest of the company was to comb the plain to the south.

The bulk of E Company's action on the first day lay in the work of the 3d Platoon on the left. Sergeant Knight scaled the bluff almost to the top and then methodically searched every nook and cranny of it. At the very beginning one cave yielded twelve civilian prisoners. By 1500 Knight's men were even and in physical contact with G Company. When that unit became involved in the afternoon's counterattacks, Knight's platoon had to hang onto the steep hillside and fight for their lives. When Captain Olander eventually withdrew for the night, the platoon leader called Captain Smith and asked for instructions. The E Company commander felt that he needed every man to keep the Japanese from escaping along the open route out of the point and so told Knight to return and dig in with the rest of the company. Meanwhile, the 1st Platoon had emerged from the coral jungle after combing through it for three hundred yards. Although they had not seen a single Japanese or fired a shot their clothes were ripped to shreds and most of them had cuts. They reported several well used paths, however.

The first day at Nafutan had served only to emphasize the magnitude of the task before the 2d Battalion. Little had been accomplished other than the development of a rather well defined position atop Ridge 300. The work of the 2d Platoon of F Company in capturing the mountain CP was still unknown to most of the battalion, and the reports of the tankers who had forayed up Nafutan Valley had been discounted as more or less pure cock-and-bull stories. Actually, although heavy fire had been encountered in various areas, most of the men had yet to see a Japanese soldier.

Orders for 24 June were for the various companies to continue their missions. During the first two hours of daylight Lt. Colonel Jensen tried unsuccessfully to shift some of his units to strengthen the line where the heaviest opposition had been met the previous day. This reorientation failed because there were no spare men. All three rifle companies were using even their company headquarters to bolster their own lines. The delay entailed in attempting to make this reorganization, however, served to bring down further sharp criticism on the battalion from NTLF headquarters.

All the companies had spent a relatively quiet night. One lone Japa-

nese soldier had attacked E Company with grenades early in the morning. One grenade had landed in a foxhole and Staff Sgt. Max Yusselman was seriously wounded trying to get it out before it went off and wounded him and his companions. The Japanese also put a heavy fusillade of rifle fire on E Company from some distance to the front as soon as daylight revealed the perimeter. Pfc. George C. Gracyalana was wounded in this fire.

Captain Smith started in where he left off the day before. The 1st Platoon reentered the coral jungle and the 3d Platoon went back to the slopes of Ridge 300, while the rest of the company continued to advance across the plain. Once again the main action fell on the platoon that worked along Ridge 300. The 1st Platoon in the coral killed four enemy soldiers they found walking along the paths or hiding in the undergrowth and cleaned out an additional two hundred yards. The 2d Platoon on the plain found much abandoned enemy equipment, but no enemy soldiers. By nightfall E Company's job was half done.

Sergeant Knight's platoon, however, had a different kind of a time. By 1100 the men had moved methodically along the slopes of the ridge to a point where the steep bluffs gave way to a more gradual rise in ground. They were four hundred yards ahead of G Company on their left and as far ahead of the rest of E Company below them. No Japanese had been encountered. Just before noon the platoon was working along opposite one of the groups of farm buildings on the plain. Sergeant Knight felt that his men were unduly exposed to fire from these buildings if they were occupied and ordered Staff Sgt. Angelo D. Nicoletti to take a patrol of fifteen men to investigate them before the platoon ventured out into the open above them. Knight and the rest of the platoon would stay on the slopes to cover the patrol.

Nicoletti and his men reached the low ground without incident, but as they started across the level to the buildings they came upon a lone Japanese soldier and killed him with rifle fire. They then sprinted across the open ground to the buildings at a dead run. Just as they reached the houses the whole hillside behind them blazed with rifle and machine-gun fire, all directed at the patrol. The fusillade was coming from a point about two hundred yards ahead of Knight, and, although the platoon leader attempted to lay down covering fire on the enemy, and then tried to advance on the position, his efforts were ineffectual and only involved him in a fight of his own that gave him no opportunity to think of anything else.

On the plain below, the first burst of enemy fire had wounded Pfc. Clifford W. McCallum seriously. Nicoletti was forced to order his patrol to take cover under the buildings. From there for the rest of the

afternoon the little group kept up a steady fight at long range with the Japanese in the hills. As the day passed the volume of enemy fire became progressively heavier and it became obvious to Nicoletti that the enemy was preparing an attack against his patrol, probably as soon as it got dark. Under these conditions, in the middle of the afternoon, Pfc. Herman L. Militante volunteered to try and get back to the company CP and bring up reinforcements and help for McCallum, whose condition was becoming quite serious. Nicoletti gave his permission to make the try, but it took Militante two hours of running, crawling, and dodging to accomplish his mission. It was only three quarters of an hour before dark when a party under Lt. Claude M. Gregory, of H Company, set out with litter bearers and ammunition. As the party moved forward the Japanese on the ridge took them under fire and eventually pinned them all to earth. Lieutenant Gregory was wounded and the others had to find cover wherever they could. Two of the litter bearers became separated from the patrol and in trying to get out of the enemy fire, stumbled into Nicoletti's position. When they reported to the sergeant what had happened he decided not to try and hold his position. He made ready to move back to the company CP as soon as it became sufficiently dark to hide his movements.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Knight, up on the ridge, had found himself in a difficult spot. His efforts to protect Nicoletti with rifle fire had not been successful and so he called up the two light mortars that had been attached to him and tried to drive the Japanese to cover that way. This had no effect at all and Knight decided the only thing to do was to attack and drive the enemy out. In order to do this, he sent out a three-man patrol to find G Company on his left and get some help. It was 1500 before the patrol returned with the report that G Company was some distance to the rear and was heavily engaged with a position to its front. Sergeant Knight decided to attack anyway. He formed his men into a skirmish line on the side of the hill and started out, under fire every foot of the way. In half an hour he had moved a hundred yards and reached a point where he was receiving such a volume of rifle and machine-gun fire that further forward movement was impossible. With his men all pinned to the ground, the enemy counterattacked. A group of from fifty to seventy-five Japanese rose out of the ground higher up the slope and came charging down the hillside at the twenty men lying there. For thirty minutes Knight and his men fought off this attack successfully, killing many of the attacking force, but by 1630 Japanese had begun to work around the platoon and appear between it and the company. The platoon leader decided then that he had better withdraw. He ordered his men to leapfrog over one another in small groups and get

back to the American lines. It was after dark before he reported to Captain Smith at the E Company CP.

Captain Smith had been trying to get help to Nicoletti since Gregory's party had run into trouble. One of the patrol had scrambled back to the company commander shortly after Gregory was wounded and reported the predicament of the rescue group. Another, and larger, patrol was immediately organized and moved forward, accompanied by an SP gun. As this patrol reached the vicinity of the farmhouse it was subjected to the same heavy fire that now blanketed the area. Two men were wounded and the self-propelled gun was disabled by mortar fire which had now begun to fall on the plain. The new reinforcing group was pinned to the ground. Captain Smith, back at the company CP, now prepared to organize the rest of the company in the gathering darkness to go to Nicoletti's aid, but before he had a chance to get under way, the sergeant picked up and vacated the farm buildings. As he retired, the Japanese attacked his position with a force of approximately a hundred soldiers, setting fire to the buildings and then breaking up in smaller groups to work toward the airfield. All of the elements of E Company retired as fast as possible to their already prepared positions which effectively blocked escape from the plateau. There they fought off the Japanese patrols in a pitched battle that lasted all night long. By next morning the enemy had retired to Ridge 300, leaving twenty dead behind.

The day had ended for E Company with no registered gains. It had been almost as futile for G Company, working on top of Ridge 300. The experience of 23 June had convinced Captain Olander that the reduction of the position atop the ridge would require more fire power than he could generate with his rifles, carbines, one mortar, and one machine gun. His plan for the day was built around tanks and the SP guns. Before he launched an attack he wanted these vehicles in position to take the enemy strongpoints under direct fire. The morning, therefore, was spent in working the vehicles to a forward position. This was an exceedingly difficult task because the drivers had to pick their way through the rough terrain, guided by infantrymen.

When, shortly after noon, G Company jumped off in the attack, the men were greeted at once with heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, and pinned down before they had gone fifty yards. For a short period everyone tried to find out exactly where the Japanese machine guns were located. Sergeant Ochal was the first to find one and transmit his information to the company commander. Captain Olander crawled back to one of the SP guns and got inside. From there he directed the vehicle's crew into place and supervised the firing. The first round from the 75mm howitzer scored a direct hit on the gun and crew and sent bodies flying

in all directions. The whole enemy line now fell silent and the company commander ordered G Company to move forward. As soon as the men tried to advance the Japanese opened fire again in seemingly undiminished volume. Captain Olander now ordered his SP guns to open up with their machine guns and traverse the whole company front. It was during this period that Sergeant Knight's patrol from E Company reported to try and get help ahead. To meet this request, G Company once more tried to launch a coordinated attack under cover of every available weapon of the self-propelled guns, together with mortar and machine-gun fire from H Company. The Japanese met this with heavy fire. For the next two hours a full-scale battle raged near the crest of Ridge 300. Twice during the period G Company tried to advance, each time being pinned down by the fire from prepared positions. Three times during the period the Japanese attempted counterattacks by forces ranging up to company strength. They were stopped by the massed fire of the SP guns and the automatic weapons which were now practically on the front lines. Meanwhile, Captain Olander remained in one of the SP guns. He had moved his vehicle to within thirty yards of a long line of big rocks that seemed to form a wall directly across the ridge. The Japanese machine guns were placed somewhere among these rocks. Although his situation so close to the enemy position cost him three wounded in his vehicle it also enabled the company commander to locate four different machine guns. He took these guns under fire, one by one, with the machine guns aboard the SP gun and knocked all of them out, killing the crews. When he thought he had eliminated the last one he shouted to Sergeant Polikowski to take a squad and rush the line of rocks at its nearest point under cover of the SP guns. Sergeant Polikowski picked eight men, lined them up carefully, and explained what each was to do. At a given signal all eight men rose to their feet and sprinted for the rocks with bayonets fixed. They managed to get all the way to the rocks without a single shot being fired, but just as they dove into the enemy position one Japanese threw a grenade that wounded two men seriously, one of them the dependable Sergeant Ochal.

The momentum of Sergeant Polikowski's men carried them into the midst of the enemy line and they immediately separated to deal with the positions from the rear. Everywhere in the area Japanese lay dead at their machine guns. The work of Captain Olander and the SP guns had been very effective. While the remaining enemy were recovering from their surprise and trying to deal with Sergeant Polikowski's group the rest of G Company swarmed into the rocks. Within a few minutes all Japanese opposition had been ended. It was now nearly dark.

The action of the rock line did not conclude G Company's action for the day. Off to the left, on the inside (east) slope of Ridge 300 there was another troublesome position, an extension of the one just overrun. This part of the line had been holding up Lieutenant Greenwell's platoon of F Company all afternoon and Captain Olander now proposed to knock it out. He was behind it and a left-face on the part of G Company would enable them to take it from the flank and rear while it was still engaged with the F Company platoon to the front.

Lieutenant Greenwell had coordinated his movements from the time of the attack with G Company, rather than with his own company in Nafutan Valley. Like Captain Olander he had worked during the morning to get SP guns up to his lines to help in the attack. He had been allotted the other two self-propelled guns of the Cannon Company platoon which had been left with the 2d Battalion. At the time the attack jumped off, however, Lieutenant Greenwell's two vehicles had not managed to get all the way forward so he had to move off without them. He had advanced cautiously and had evidently escaped the early attention given to G Company, by moving through dense underbrush which blanketed the inside slopes of the ridge. About fifty yards beyond where Captain Olander's men were held up, Pfc. Wesley F. Walker, the platoon's leading scout, came upon a path that cut diagonally across the front and led uphill toward the crest of the ridge. Walker was suspicious of the path. There were two strands of barbed wire that ran along both edges of it, about three inches above the ground. He moved along the path, being careful not to touch the wire. Thirty yards from where he first encountered it, the trail ran out into a large clearing. On the opposite side were the rocks which marked the main defensive line. Walker went to his stomach and crawled along out into the open, trying to use some deep grass for concealment. He had gone several yards in silence when a lone enemy machine gun opened fire from among the rocks. Walker was killed instantly. The remainder of the platoon, which had just begun to crawl out into the clearing, scrambled back to the cover of the trees, just in time. A second later a shower of grenades landed in the open area. Lieutenant Greenwell reorganized his platoon. No one had any idea where the machine gun was located or where the grenades had come from, except that they were generally in the line of rocks to the front. Observation netted nothing. The gun had ceased firing as soon as the F Company men ducked back into the trees and no one stirred in the Japanese position. Staff Sgt. Edward Bleau volunteered to crawl out into the clearing in an effort either to make the rocks and find the gun or draw its fire and locate it by its muzzle blast. He had moved fifty yards out into the open without being seen, when two Japa-

nese suddenly appeared from behind the rocks. They walked boldly down the path toward Walker's body without seeming to take any cognizance of the fact that there were Americans nearby. Bleau waited until they were almost beside him, then killed both of them with two shots. His fire was greeted by bursts from the machine gun, but he had managed to roll into a hole and the bullets couldn't reach him. He tried to locate the gun without success, deliberately drawing fire in his effort to do so. Eventually he gave up and crawled back to Lieutenant Greenwell.

The platoon leader now spent some little time working an SP gun, commanded by Lt. Raymond E. Agee of Cannon Company, into position. He pointed out the general area in which the gun was located and asked if the vehicle could do any good. After looking over the ground and talking with Bleau, Agee thought that the terrain in the clearing might be easier than that behind him, thus allowing him to move across it at a good speed. It was finally decided to use the vehicle as a shield for the infantry.

When Agee moved out into the open it was already close to 1300. The enemy opened fire with his machine gun as soon as the big SP gun emerged from the trees and on almost the first burst a ricochet wounded Sgt. Robert Simmons. The alert Agee, however, was immediately able to use the angle of ricochet to locate the machine gun and he now fired two rounds from his 75mm howitzer directly into the position, demolishing it and killing the crew. Greenwell immediately ordered his men to push on ahead into the line of rocks at full speed. Ten yards was as far as they got. Another machine gun, quiet until this time, opened fire. This one was considerably to the left of the first and its first burst scored a lucky hit through the periscope of the SP gun, wounding one of Agee's crew. The vehicle was forced to back out of the clearing to unload the wounded man before it could attempt to locate and knock out the second enemy gun. When Agee got the self-propelled gun back into position to fire he got off one round which had no effect. Because the Japanese position was right on the edge of the ridge, the howitzer was aimed down into the valley, and this first round landed dangerously close to Lieutenant Magyar's platoon which was working there. Magyar called Greenwell on the radio at once and told him to cease fire. Agee was just in the act of firing again when Greenwell yelled to him to stop. The SP gun commander stuck his head out of the vehicle to find out what the yelling was about and just at that moment the Japanese fired another burst from the machine gun. Agee got a bullet through the shoulder for his trouble. The SP gun was now undermanned and had to back out of the area, leaving the second gun intact. By this time, however, Lieutenant Green-

well had pinpointed the new position and was in much better position to work on it. He ordered one squad of the platoon to go back into the woods and circle to the left, working along the inner slope of Ridge 300 until opposite the gun, then taking it from the flank. This maneuver had no sooner begun than the flanking squad was taken under fire by a third gun which was even farther to the left than the second one. By the time Greenwell had reassembled his platoon it was 1530.

The platoon commander now went over to G Company on his right and borrowed two of the tanks working there. (Lt. John B. Phalen had just brought three vehicles up onto the ridge.) Again the difficult task of guiding the tracked vehicles through the coral rock had to be completed before they could be put to use. When they were finally in position Greenwell ordered the lead tank to move out into the clearing, keeping well to the right. Inasmuch as his efforts to move to the left had been unsuccessful he thought he might get around the positions to the right, using the tanks as a shield. His men were to walk along on the right side of the vehicle, being careful to keep the steel between themselves and the enemy guns. The Japanese opened fire as soon as the little procession moved out into the clearing, but they had no effect on the tanks. It was not until everyone was well out in the open that a fourth Japanese gun took up the fire. This new gun, furthermore, was on the right side of the tank. Staff Sgt. Ralph DeShazo, the squad leader in charge of the expedition, was wounded in the first burst. The rest of the men dropped to the ground and crawled out.

It was now well after 1600 and Lieutenant Phalen felt that he had better start getting his tanks back out of the difficult terrain before it got too dark. He told Lieutenant Greenwell this, and the platoon leader asked him to use up what ammunition he had before he left in an attempt to blast the Japanese out of their position. For the next twenty minutes the tanks threw every round of ammunition they had into the rock line, then retired. There was no indication what effect this prolonged shelling with canister and raking with machine guns had produced, but Lieutenant Greenwell decided to try a direct assault on the line, supported by mortar fire from H Company mortars and 60mm mortars sent up from Captain White. He was just about to begin his attack when G Company on his right broke through the right flank of the enemy line and began mopping up. This was in the area where some of his mortar fire would fall so he had to call off his attack.

In this situation the platoon leader called Captain White to ask for further instructions. He couldn't make his position clear over the radio so the company commander instructed him to come down into the valley and talk things over. He left the platoon with instructions to keep firing

at the enemy so that they would not emerge from their positions. He had no sooner left to talk with Captain White than Captain Olander decided to attack the positions in front of the F Company platoon from the flank.

Company G swung its front to face east and moved off in the gathering darkness toward the machine-gun positions after the men of F Company had been cautioned to fire high so as not to hit the attacking force. The G Company move was accomplished quickly. Within twenty yards after moving off, a force of fifty Japanese had been completely surprised. By taking advantage of the surprise and firing at close range the enemy was denied any retaliation except for grenades. One of these wounded Lieutenant Hansen in the shoulder. For ten minutes the fighting was almost hand-to-hand, the men loading and firing at point-blank range. The Japanese ran in all directions, some of them charging into G Company's ranks where they were bayoneted. By the time the last enemy soldier had been killed it was totally dark and the company was completely disorganized. Lieutenant Hansen, who was now in temporary command, despite his wound, ordered the men to withdraw from the area to reorganize. (Captain Olander had remained in the SP gun during organization for the attack. Shortly after the men moved off, the vehicle's commander, seeing that he was of no further use, left for the tank park for the night. In the excitement of the moment, Captain Olander was carried halfway back down Ridge 300 before he managed to get out of the vehicle.) G Company finally moved back to the area in which it had spent the previous night and organized a night perimeter. Lieutenant Greenwell, who returned from his conference with Captain White to find the position in front of his platoon destroyed, dug in with him.

Early in the morning of this day, the 2d Platoon of F Company, which had spent the night at the mountain CP, began its sweep back along the nose of Mt. Nafutan. This went without incident, except that over 150 enemy dead were found on the inside slopes of the ridge, all recently killed. This seemed to confirm the story which the tankers had told on the previous afternoon. No live Japanese were found on the nose which had been so strongly defended two days before, although there was plenty of evidence of the defense.

The other platoon of F Company once more pushed up into Nafutan Valley, but as on the other occasion fire from Ridge 300 interdicted this approach to the point and Lieutenant Magyar made little progress. His men spent most of the day waiting for the position on the ridge top to be eliminated. During the afternoon Pfc. Thomas Ryan of the 2d Platoon was killed by a rifle shot from somewhere in the valley as he investigated the dead bodies that strewed the nose of Mt. Nafutan. Captain White

of F Company was also slightly wounded by scattered rifle fire late in the afternoon, but continued in command of his company.

The end of the second day at Nafutan Point saw some progress, although troops were virtually in the same positions they had occupied at the start of the campaign. Mt. Nafutan had evidently been abandoned by the enemy. He had no heavier pieces left and his sparing use of mortars indicated that he either had no ammunition or only a few of those weapons. He had taken severe losses in the upper end of the valley and one of his main defensive positions on Ridge 300 had been overrun by the late afternoon action of G Company.

In spite of this optimistic outlook, the 2d Battalion could look with no certainty upon a quick end of the campaign. Lt. Colonel Jensen still had no idea how many Japanese were left in the point. After two days most of the front-line troops still admitted that they hadn't seen very many Japanese. The terrain was ideal for hiding and for camouflaged positions and the enemy stayed in his cleverly devised strongpoints, for the most part, undetected. In addition to providing an ideal defensive stronghold, the terrain posed difficulties to the battalion in other ways. Maneuver of tanks and other vehicles was virtually impossible. The big tracked vehicles could never progress more than a few feet at a time without getting their tracks caught on coral outcroppings. Infantrymen had to point out paths for the vehicles to follow, and exploration to find these routes of advance consumed a great deal of time. Lack of artillery fire also handicapped the men. Even if they found the Japanese, they were sometimes powerless to expel him. With no night supporting fires they had to dig in securely, an almost impossible task with coral rock lying two or three inches below the surface of the ground. Consequently, as on this night, gains had to be sacrificed in order to safeguard against enemy attacks. The positions were the only strong defensive ones on the peninsula that were in American hands. The rock line had been taken too late to permit its organization for night defense.

One significant event, however, occurred on 24 June. At approximately 1800 NTLF passed control of the battalion to the Saipan Garrison Force. Col. Geoffrey M. O'Connell, acting commander of the garrison, gave his full attention to the problems confronting the 2d Battalion. His first move, early on the morning of 25 June, was to visit Nafutan Point and go over the ground with Lt. Colonel Jensen. After talking with the company and platoon commanders he attached two batteries of the 751st AAA Gun Battalion to the Nafutan force for general support, as well as four 40mm anti-aircraft guns from another battalion. The 751st was armed with 90mm guns. All these supporting

weapons were to fire air-burst from their positions south of Aslito Airfield, the 40mm guns moving just behind the battalion CP.

Meanwhile, Lt. Colonel Jensen had decided to concentrate his effort on Ridge 300 for the time being, inasmuch as the bulk of the enemy strength had thus far been found there. Furthermore, Japanese were in command of the whole peninsula as long as they controlled this high ground. F Company, therefore, was to assume a blocking position across Nafutan Valley and Mt. Nafutan with two platoons while Lieutenant Greenwell's platoon continued operations on Ridge 300. Captain Smith of E Company was ordered to leave one platoon to block the plain on the west and move the rest of his men to help out on the ridge.

This reorganization was effected by 1000 on 25 June and the attack moved off at that time. The first trouble was encountered by Lieutenant Greenwell's platoon at approximately 1130 after a 150-yard advance which brought him back to the clearing where he had been held up the afternoon before. During the night the Japanese had mined the approaches to the rock line and moved new machine guns into the position. Engineers were brought up and worked over the mines, eventually getting them removed at approximately 1230. Lieutenant Greenwell, although he could not see where the machine-gun fire was coming from, guessed that the enemy had reoccupied exactly the same positions he had held on the previous afternoon. He ordered his two tanks to put fire into the two emplacements on the left and was proven right a moment later when both machine guns were seen lying broken on the ground after several rounds of canister.

The platoon leader then ordered Staff Sgt. Thomas L. Wilson to inspect the two strongpoints and mop up any Japanese that might be left in them, while the tanks concentrated on the right position. Wilson and his squad had no sooner ventured into the clearing than two guns, which had never fired before, opened fire from other positions along the line, pinning all the men down in the open.

Greenwell remembered that Captain Olander had destroyed several positions in the G Company zone on the previous day and reasoned that the Japanese could not possibly have replaced them all, so he sent another squad into the adjacent zone on his right to encircle the line. By this time the action on his front had become embarrassingly familiar. His new attempt suffered a fate similar to the others. The squad got to within twenty yards of the rocks without a shot being fired, but when the men rose to assault the line, they were subjected to fire from two entirely new and hitherto silent guns.

The tanks were now asked to move out into the clearing and lay down a heavy concentration on the whole line with their 37mm guns. When it

came to moving them into position, however, the Japanese laid down a concentration of their own from several machine guns which hampered infantrymen who were trying to guide the vehicles to points from which they could fire. It was 1500 before Lieutenant Greenwell could bring full fire power to bear all along the line. Then, under a terrific concentration of canister and machine-gun fire, the whole platoon rushed forward and into the Japanese line. Within a few minutes all opposition had ceased. Greenwell's men found six machine guns, seventeen mortars, two wrecked dual-purpose guns, all types of grenades, and ammunition in large quantities. In and around the area lay the bodies of well over a hundred Japanese, all dead only a few hours. This number of bodies was particularly surprising to the platoon leader, who, up until this time, had seen no more than three live Japanese in the whole period he had been trying to reduce the position.

While the left flank of the line had been recapturing a position it had held once, E Company had been encountering something entirely new on the right flank. Until Greenwell ran into trouble at 1130, Captain Smith's men had pushed forward without receiving any fire or encountering any enemy positions. When the opposite end of the line was held up, E Company pushed forward for fifty yards, then began receiving enfilade fire from the left which could have been either friendly or enemy. Captain Smith held up his advance to wait until the situation cleared up. While he was waiting he dispatched a three-man patrol to work along just under the skyline ahead of the company with orders to investigate the terrain through which the company would soon be passing. Twenty yards in front of the company, the patrol frightened two Japanese who had been hiding in the undergrowth and killed them when they tried to get away. There was evidence of more enemy nearby so the men sent word back to the company commander. Tech. Sgt. Karl H. Enstad took a full squad and went out to reinforce the patrol. Staff Sgt. Eugene C. McCandless, the patrol leader, pointed out the possible enemy positions. The two Japanese he had just killed lay on the slopes of a deep and wide bowl-like crater among several large coral rocks. There were also several rocks and some undergrowth at the bottom of the crater.

Sergeant Enstad formed his enlarged patrol in a skirmish line and began to push cautiously forward, circling the crater on the uphill side. Almost immediately a fusillade of rifle fire came from the bowl. Enstad and one other man were hit and the rest of the men were pinned to the ground. Lt. Chester W. Sillman, the platoon leader, now sent out a second squad under Staff Sgt. Broadus L. Albertson with orders to work around the lower, or right rim of the bowl and outflank the enemy inside.

As the new squad reached the lower lip of the crater, Albertson, in the lead, spied a Japanese soldier among the rocks below. He pulled up his rifle and fired, but missed. The enemy soldier fired back and Albertson fell dead. Fire from inside the position now pinned down the lower squad as well as the first one.

Lieutenant Sillman now tried to move tanks into position to fire into the crater, but as everyone else had discovered on Ridge 300 during the past three days, the vehicles were almost useless among the sharp coral outcroppings that stuck out all over the hillside. After an hour, the attempt had to be given up and Sillman received permission to commit his remaining squad. This unit circled wide around the bowl on the uphill side and came back on it from the rear. When the squad was finally in position everyone began firing into the hole and rolling grenades down the bank. The Japanese fired back in sufficient volume to neutralize most of the efforts of all three squads. One man, Pfc. James F. O'Donnell, was killed in the exchange. Once more Lieutenant Sillman worked with the tanks, with no success. At 1700 E Company was still trying to solve the riddle of the little fortress without being any closer to a solution. Eventually, Captain Smith ordered the advance platoon withdrawn and air bursts from the antiaircraft artillery were used for the first time. This cleaned out the enemy thoroughly, but by that time it was almost dark and the company commander ordered his men to dig in where they were, tied in with G Company on the left.

Captain Olander's men had spent a relatively inactive day. Their advance had been geared to that of Greenwell's platoon on their left. When the F Company unit was held up at the rock line, G Company worked some men forward into the area which they had cleaned out on the previous afternoon. It was still unoccupied and the four machine guns and two mortars which had been destroyed in the action were picked up and sent to the rear. When the company tried to duplicate the feat of the night before by launching a flank attack it was discovered that the Japanese had prepared for such an eventuality by constructing a circular defense, and the scheme had to be given up. When the rock line was finally reduced shortly after 1500, both F and G Companies advanced another hundred yards, then withdrew so that Captain Smith could use his artillery on the crater position. At 1700 all elements of the battalion dug in for the night on top of Ridge 300, using the former enemy defensive position as a base.

The well organized Japanese defensive position that had defied three battalions for a week had finally been reduced on this day, 25 June. Originally it had contained over twenty mutually supporting machine

guns, approximately fifty mortars, and ten 5-inch dual-purpose guns. The fall of this position, added to the abandonment of all of Mt. Nafutan, and the lack of any defenses on the western plain, indicated a weakening of the whole Nafutan garrison. Captured orders later revealed that on this day the Japanese commander lost all of his remaining heavy and automatic weapons, that he was becoming desperate for ammunition, and that his food and water supply had become dangerously low. The morale of the defenders was also sinking. Despair appeared in the diaries of all the enemy soldiers—despair at the lack of matériel, despair at the failure of the rest of the Saipan garrison to rescue them and the absence of the Imperial fleet, and last but not least, despair at the all-too-plain evidences of American strength.

The position of the 2d Battalion was not entirely favorable. Although the position on Ridge 300 had been reduced, other large areas were extremely vulnerable. Only two platoons covered the entire area from Ridge 300 to Magicienne Bay, a distance of some 1,300 yards, full of many ideally hidden routes of egress should the enemy choose to try and escape. On the west one platoon covered the entire plain, an open area that extended 1,100 yards toward the sea. A 200-yard expanse of coral jungle remained uncovered altogether. After fighting in the area for four days no one knew just how many Japanese were left in the Nafutan force. Approximately three hundred bodies had been found in Nafutan Valley and on Ridge 300, but there were no others. The Japanese had gone out during the night and retrieved their dead, carrying them back to caves in the rear. For all the 2d Battalion knew, they hadn't killed any more than these three hundred they had found. Another disturbing factor in the Nafutan situation lay in the evidences of a firm, well organized leadership. Not once in the whole campaign had the enemy positions deteriorated and not once had any unit of the battalion come across a poorly organized position. Even though the enemy was subjected to serious attrition, he was aggressive, counterattacking at any opportunity. Lt. Colonel Jensen and his staff felt that the commander might at any time choose to use his closely knit organization and this aggressive spirit to attack through one of the many imperfectly covered areas. If such an attack were launched it could have serious consequences in the service areas behind the northern front, particularly at Aslito.

The conformation of the Nafutan peninsula determined the tactics for 26 June. Mt. Nafutan runs almost due south, Ridge 300 more to the southeast. The two join where the land juts out into the ocean, the peninsula narrowing rapidly to its point south of the juncture. If this narrow point could be reached the battalion could easily cover the frontage and close the door on escape. Inasmuch as Mt. Nafutan had

been explored without finding any Japanese, further search of the area was abandoned, along with operations in Nafutan Valley. All the battalion strength was gathered for a rapid drive down Ridge 300 to the juncture. Company F headquarters, elements of H Company, and 2d Battalion Headquarters Company were moved into blocking positions on the left flank and the 3d Platoon of E Company was left on the western plain. Every other man was to take part in the push down Ridge 300. Both F Company platoons guarding Nafutan Valley and Mt. Nafutan moved to the right at daylight. At 0800, following a long mortar preparation and a ten-minute concentration by the antiaircraft batteries, using air-burst, the attack moved off. From the beginning the whole line met little opposition. Shortly before 0900, Lieutenant Greenwell's platoon, still operating on the eastern slopes, came to a large cave, where it received mortar and rifle fire, as well as a few grenades. As usual, the tanks could not be maneuvered into position over the rough terrain, and air-bursts from the artillery were ineffective. Engineers then came forward with TNT charges and threw them inside. These destroyed the position. Upon investigation twenty dead Japanese were found inside and along with them maps and papers outlining the whole defensive system of the peninsula. Only one man, Pvt. Robert F. Van Deusen, had been wounded in the reduction of this position.

Captain White pushed his men on forward after the reduction of the cave. No further opposition was met until approximately 1630, by which time F Company had moved 1,800 yards and was past the juncture point.

The F Company advance, while it had been pushed home through heavily overgrown terrain, had been faster than that of the other two companies. G Company, in particular, had been hampered by the undergrowth and coral rock formations in its zone. Captain White had abandoned his tanks after the episode at the cave and moved on ahead without them, feeling he could make faster progress. Captain Olander, however, tried to keep his vehicles with him, and only let them go early in the afternoon. By that time F Company was some distance ahead and the two units had lost physical contact. From the time Captain Olander let his tanks go, he tried to catch up with Captain White, but he was still behind when he encountered a strong enemy force across his front.

The first unit to meet any determined opposition during the day had been E Company, on the right flank. From the time the advance began in the morning Captain Smith and his men had been forced to investigate and mop up a series of craters such as he had encountered on the previous afternoon. By 1400 the company had seemingly worked clear of all of them without incurring any casualties. Two self-propelled guns

had been worked forward with the advance and the efforts expended in bringing the vehicles along seemed to have been rewarded when the leading elements of the company stumbled upon a little trail that ran along the western edge of the ridge. Aided by the big machines and the easier going which the trail afforded the men pushed rapidly south. E Company soon overtook G Company and passed it as both struggled through the undergrowth atop the crest. At approximately 1500, after over an hour of quiet, a burst of machine-gun fire from directly ahead of the advance, pinned the company down and wounded Sgt. Walter E. Ghedozzi in the neck. As soon as the men went to earth, the enemy fire ceased and everyone began looking around to see if he could locate the gun. Ghedozzi, after some little time, jumped to his feet, evidently with the intention of running back to the company aid man. As soon as he stood up, the gun opened fire again and this time he was hit in the arm. Ghedozzi now tried to crawl on his stomach in the deep grass, but the effort was too painful, so he got up again to run. Almost at once the Japanese opened fire and this time the sergeant was mortally wounded. In the third burst, Pfc. Kenneth E. Durst and Staff Sgt. Edward Orzechowski were both wounded, but both managed to crawl back to safety.

The third burst of the Japanese gun had given away the position. It was in another depression, almost identical with the earlier craters. Captain Smith ordered his SP guns to move forward and take the position under fire with the turret guns. When the big vehicles got to the edge of the bowl, however, it was found that they could not depress their guns enough to do any damage. Once more the company commander tried to outflank the enemy. One squad was directed to crawl along the right of the trail, using the SP gun as a shield, in order to get behind the crater. This maneuver was doomed to failure because of events that had begun to take place on the extreme right of the company.

Captain Smith's advance had been made in two platoon columns since the trail had been found. The left platoon had been engaged with the machine gun that killed Ghedozzi. The right platoon, moving somewhat lower on the slope of the ridge, had stopped its movement when the left platoon had been held up. When the order to flank the crater was given, the right platoon moved out ahead and almost at once came to a bowl in its own path. In trying to keep clear of the machine-gun fire farther up the hill, the lower platoon used the crater to its front as a means of securing enfilade. The first men had no sooner moved down into the depression than a rifle shot rang out from the bottom and Staff Sgt. William H. Allen, one of the squad leaders, was wounded in the head. He immediately yelled for Sgt. Everett J. Barrett, his second in

command, to move in and take over the squad. As Barrett tried to crawl forward he was hit in the hip by a rifle shot, also from the bottom of the bowl.

The right platoon now forgot about the upper Japanese position and turned its full attention to the enemy on its own front. Barrett was lying on the rim of the bowl in an extremely exposed position, and before any grenades or mortar fire could be used, the sergeant would have to be moved. Pvt. John M. Purcell and Pvt. Edward E. Widman tried to make a dash over the slope to grab Barrett and get him out. They were fired at, so they decided to use grenades anyway, rolling them down into the undergrowth at the bottom. As these went off and the Japanese took cover, the two privates managed to get hold of Barrett and yank him back out of danger. However, as they pulled him over the rim, he was hit a second time and killed. The whole platoon had, meanwhile, crept forward and ranged themselves around the bowl where they began pouring rifle fire into the hiding places below. Until this time no Japanese soldier had shown himself and it was hard to determine just how many were in the position. Targets were unobtainable so the men kept edging around to try and find a glimpse of the occupants. Pfc. Fred H. Johnson, a BAR man, was one of these who was trying to improve his position. As he moved he was shot through the chest and killed. A short time later, Sergeant McAndless was wounded. At 1630 the men were still trying to solve the puzzle of the position. They still had not seen a Japanese soldier.

Artillery could not be used in this area because F Company on the extreme left was now considerably advanced and any overs might land in the midst of that unit.

The intense rifle fire which now came from the lower crater was also having its effect on the efforts of the upper platoon to knock out the Japanese machine gun on its front. The squad that had begun to outflank the enemy by using the SP gun as a shield had worked to a position almost opposite the emplacement when it became exposed to the fire of the Japanese below. The men were soon pinned down and unable to move forward or backward.

At this point G Company finally came abreast on the left. Captain Smith told Captain Olander of his predicament and the G Company commander dispatched a squad from his extreme left flank to move around and come up from the left rear. This scheme worked. Pfc. Frederick Workman, a BAR man, calmly stood a few yards away and killed the whole enemy crew before they knew what was going on behind them.

Company G then moved on forward while Captain Smith concentrated

his whole company on the task of eliminating the lower crater position. As G Company moved off to the front, Pfc. Donald Mikeles was killed by rifle fire from the still-active bowl. This was the last American casualty suffered in its reduction, however.

Captain Olander's men never did catch up with F Company on the afternoon of the 26th. As they reached the juncture of Mt. Nafutan and Ridge 300 they came upon a new terrain conformation. Heretofore, on Nafutan Point all the ridges and ravines had run north and south so that the advance ran along their axis. Now, suddenly, the whole pattern changed so that the contours crossed the line of advance, running east and west. Just south of the joining of the two main ridges, first F Company, then G Company, had run into a deep gulch from which sharp coral pinnacles jutted and over which a deep, thick tangle of jungle undergrowth had spread. It was very nearly the same type of coral jungle which had already been met along the shores of South Saipan. Visibility was extremely poor and footing was precarious. Because little or no enemy opposition had been encountered, Captain White, who was the first to reach the ravine, plunged on forward, the men wading down into it and then laboriously scrambling up the other side. The tip of Nafutan Point was only 1,800 yards away and there was still time to reach it if no enemy blocked the way.

As G Company came up to the rim of the ravine, the two company commanders talked to each other on the radio. White described the terrain where he was and assured Olander that there were no enemy in the area. Consequently G Company entered the brush and began working its way toward the opposite ridge. While G Company was still working downwards, F Company reached the crest of the next hill to find itself faced by a second gulch as steep and precipitous as the first and as heavily overgrown. The company moved on over the top and started down the other side. As soon as the first man appeared on the forward slope, rifle fire began blanketing the entire area, increasing in volume as the minutes passed. G Company reached the crest to find a fire fight taking place on their left and as the men moved over the top of the ridge they were greeted by a shower of grenades from the reverse slope. Like F Company, G Company now took up a heavy rifle fire into the tangle below and received a much heavier volley from the gulch. For thirty minutes both sides kept up a steady fire. The Americans suffered no casualties, but it was extremely doubtful whether they had inflicted any. It became increasingly evident as the fighting progressed that the force in the gulch was by far the biggest yet encountered at Nafutan. Neither company commander could employ the antiaircraft artillery because he could not tell exactly where the other was. Furthermore, although the

Japanese were present in large numbers, not one showed himself in the open and the exact location or nature of the positions was not evident. At 1830 both company commanders talked briefly on the radio. Darkness was only forty minutes away. Ammunition was low, and resupply over the tangled terrain was two hours away, and then only by carrying party. There was no place to dig in and no fields of fire. The companies were out of physical contact. And last, but not least, the shouting and yelling below was a good indication that the number of Japanese was larger than any single concentration yet found on the peninsula and that when night came there might be a sizable counterattack.

Taking these things into consideration, Captain White and Captain Olander both felt that they had better get into a good defensive position with good communications to the rear and some means of resupply. With less than thirty minutes until darkness, therefore, both companies withdrew through the gulch at their rear and sought a position on the high ground. Conditions there were no better so the men traipsed all the way back to the top of Ridge 300 where there were prepared positions and good fields of fire. E Company, which had meanwhile finished mopping up the crater on the slope, joined them there.

Chapter 27: The Counterattack of 27 June

THE 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, dug in for the night in five separate perimeters. The bulk of the three line companies was on Ridge 300 after resupplying and digging secure defensive positions. After reporting to Lt. Colonel Jensen, all three companies were alerted to move anywhere on the peninsula in the event of a counter-attack. On the plain on the eastern shore of Nafutan Point, the 3d Platoon of E Company, reinforced with a platoon of H Company's heavy machine guns, outposted the area. Listening posts were established across the open ground, with scattered patrols on the edge of the coral jungle. Elements of F Company, together with most of 2d Battalion Headquarters Company, and all of H Company except the machine-gun platoons, covered the area between Ridge 300 and Magicienne Bay in a series of small groups, spaced as close together as the number of men would allow. This was sometimes at intervals of fifty yards. This line was in command of Major Edward McCarthy, battalion executive officer, who had established a forward CP near the mouth of Nafutan Valley. The last night position was that of the 2d Battalion CP, consisting of battalion headquarters, the Medical Detachment, and a small security group. There were also several wounded in the aid station who had been carried down from E Company after the fight at the crater.

The battalion strength on this night had shrunk to 556 officers and men. At the time no one had any idea just how many Japanese there were left on the peninsula, although later counts show that there were approximately 500. The action of this day, 26 June, had been most encouraging.

American optimism was not overdrawn. Diaries inscribed on this day by the Japanese force and later picked up and translated showed that the enemy, from the commander down to the lowest-ranking soldier, had reached the low point of morale and supplies.

One of the most significant actions of the whole day on 26 June had not been connected at all with the main attack down Ridge 300. It concerned the lone platoon of E Company left to operate on the plain below. As the action on Ridge 300 had driven the Japanese back from the high ground, this platoon, unharassed by fire, could explore the whole plain. Late on the afternoon of the 26th a patrol under the same Sergeant Nicoletti who had been involved in the action on 24 June worked all the way to the south end of the plateau. There, while investigating one of the ravines that branched off into the hills, the sergeant saw, at a distance, a large cave around which there seemed to be a great deal of activity. Many enemy soldiers came and went and there were large

groups of soldiers gathered outside, as though waiting for orders. Convinced that this was a CP, Nicoletti called the antiaircraft artillery and asked for a TOT (time on target) concentration on the area. The batteries of the 751st Battalion were extremely accurate and the first salvo caught the entire Japanese group completely by surprise. For over an hour the artillery kept the survivors of their early fire bottled up inside the cave. Later in the afternoon, Sergeant Nicoletti observed the enemy burning papers just outside the cave and watched all of the remaining soldiers disappear into the hills behind Ridge 300. After the Point was secure this cave gave up the bodies of almost forty Japanese, together with several destroyed radio sets and some furniture. It was undoubtedly the headquarters of Captain Sasaki, commander of the 3d Battalion, 89th Infantry, which was the principal element of the Nafutan garrison.

The frontage at Nafutan Point had not been adequately covered since 23 June, but as the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, prepared for the night of 26 June it was even less so. The failure to make any gains against the strongpoint on Ridge 300 during the first three days had prompted Lt. Colonel Jensen, with the advice and consent of Colonel O'Connell, to concentrate all his power in the ridge area. This left only small outposts to hold the rest of the line. The late afternoon success of the battalion and the fight which followed had occupied all the companies until it was too late to dispose the men over the whole frontage. Besides, too much time would be consumed in reassembling them next morning to resume the attack. It was hoped, therefore, that the system of outposts would be able to give sufficient warning to allow a shift of strength to meet any enemy attempts to break out of Nafutan. Captain Sasaki, Japanese commander, had been forced by the events of the afternoon, however, to a desperate attempt to save his command. Two days before he had issued orders to his men to assemble on signal for movement to the north to join the main force. He had carefully laid out routes for two or three different sections to use in the exodus and had also picked out definite American installations which raiding parties would destroy during the movement as a diversion to the main effort. When his CP was shelled by the antiaircraft artillery during the afternoon he evidently felt that his whole defensive system was discovered and issued an immediate call for execution of the final order. The arrival of the two companies of the 2d Battalion atop the last ridge of the point had evidently caught the enemy during his assembly.

The movement began shortly before midnight. Captain Sasaki seems to have moved his columns by three carefully selected routes. One used the coral jungle area that ran along Saipan Channel, west of Ridge 300. Another used the tangle of undergrowth along the beaches next to

Magicienne Bay. The third evidently made its way down Nafutan Valley and slipped through the lines somewhere near the nose of Mt. Nafutan. None of the three columns was discovered, although Sergeant Nicoletti of E Company, who outposted the shore adjacent to the coral jungle on the west with an outpost group of twenty-three men, did investigate mysterious sounds of activity in the dense brush, without result.

At approximately 0200 an extremely large group of enemy stumbled into the main CP of the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, east of Aslito Airfield. In a short and sharp encounter, four Americans were killed and twenty wounded. In the darkness it was impossible to tell how many Japanese were in the attacking group, but the engagement was broken off as abruptly as it began and the attackers disappeared into the night to the south. Next morning twenty-seven dead Japanese were found in and around the CP.

Two hours later a sizable force appeared at the eastern end of Aslito Airfield where they managed to set fire to one P-47 and cut a hole in the belly tank of another before they were driven off. Service troops on the airfield killed a few Japanese during the night and, after daylight, sent out patrols which killed a few more, bringing the total to fifteen.

At 0500 large groups of enemy began running into American defensive perimeters all the way from Aslito Airfield to the front lines in the north. One large detachment attacked the bivouac area of the 25th Marines, then in reserve, a mile and a half above Aslito. Another hit the regimental supply dump of the 105th Infantry, while a third force raided the gun positions of the 27th Division Artillery. The 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, began combing the whole area at daybreak and by noon had cleaned up stragglers in every part of the rear area. Altogether 367 enemy soldiers were killed, exclusive of those at Aslito and at the 2d Battalion command post. This figure includes those despatched by the Marines and 27th Division Artillery.

As for the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, no one in the line companies was aware of the breakthrough until next morning. Not a single Japanese soldier had confronted their positions or those of the outposts. It is doubtful that any of the battalion would have been able to do anything about it if the enemy force had been discovered, due to the necessity for moving over difficult terrain in a short space of time, a feat that could not be accomplished at Nafutan.

The breakthrough from Nafutan Point was the climax of the campaign there. Early the next morning the three companies formed a skirmish line and swept to the end of the peninsula by 1800, meeting no opposition, and encountering no live Japanese. Mop-up squads investigat-

ing ravines and other out-of-the-way places found one cave with over two hundred bodies in it, all neatly stacked, proof that the enemy had been removing his dead from the battlefield whenever he could do so unobserved. There were a few enemy left in the peninsula as was evidenced by the fact that three G Company men were wounded by a mortar shell during the afternoon. At 1840 on 27 June, Lt. Colonel Jensen notified Colonel O'Connell that the peninsula was secure.

Documents captured after the Point had fallen showed the entire defensive plan for South Saipan. Nafutan Point itself was defended by the Japanese 3d Battalion, 89th Infantry, part of the newly organized 47th Independent Mixed Brigade. Aslito Airfield had originally been defended by elements of this battalion, aided by the 25th AAA Regiment and miscellaneous service troops, some of them naval personnel. The whole Aslito garrison withdrew into the mountainous Nafutan position during the night of 17-18 June, after stubbornly resisting at the approaches to the airfield on the 17th. Figures compiled by the garrison force commander and submitted to the War Department on 12 July estimated the total Japanese strength in the peninsula as of 23 June at approximately 1,250. Of these, 409 escaped on the night of 26-27 June and were killed in the rear areas as already described. Two hundred bodies were found in caves, where they had been carried. From 27 June to 3 July, 175 prisoners were captured by patrols which combed the area. Eighteen others who refused to surrender in the same period, were killed. In addition, the 2d Battalion captured 89 armed civilians. Burial parties in Nafutan Valley and on Ridge 300 counted 350 more Japanese dead, all killed in the area in which the 2d Battalion had fought. These figures clearly refute the charge made against the battalion by one news magazine that it had failed dismally against a "handful" of Japanese.

The 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, was retained in the Nafutan area until 3 July 1944. On the afternoon of that day it joined the rest of the Division at Tanapag in northern Saipan.

Chapter 28: Mount Tapotchau

AFTER 22 June, difficult as it had been, the fighting at Nafutan Point was a subordinate action to the main effort of the 27th Division. As already indicated, NTLF had launched a drive to the north against Mt. Tapotchau as early as 20 June. By the 22d a strong enemy position at Hill 500 had been reduced and the two Marine divisions swung out to the north in a rapid advance. At 1500 that afternoon they had pushed to a point only a few hundred yards south of the crest of Mt. Tapotchau and it appeared that the peak would soon be in American hands. However, both Marine divisions were tired and the 4th Division had suffered extremely heavy casualties in the landings and again at Hill 500. By late afternoon of the 22d all three regiments of the 4th Division were committed in the line.

At approximately 1230 on this day, the 27th Division was moving to its reserve area north of Aslito. No further orders had been received since noon of the 21st. In order to be thoroughly familiar with the situation at the front line where his troops might be committed at any time, Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith set out by jeep with Colonel Sheldon, the Division G-3, and a War Department observer, to visit the command posts of both Marine divisions. At each division the party studied the front-line situation, and General Smith talked with staff members to get what additional information he could. After leaving the headquarters of the 2d Division, the party proceeded directly to NTLF headquarters at Charan Kanoa to attend the staff conference held there every afternoon at 1500. After the conference was over the Division Commander had his visit with Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, already described, and then moved on to see General Erskine, the corps chief of staff. The corps commander had said nothing at all about plans for the next day.

Almost the first information the 27th Division commander received from General Erskine, however, concerned the Division. The chief of staff informed him that a plan was already under consideration whereby the 27th would relieve the weary 4th Division before the next morning's attack. The two generals immediately stepped to the big situation map and went over the details. General Smith told General Erskine after some study that he did not think the 27th could cover the whole front assigned to it because the widening of the island at Kagman Point was just ahead of the 4th Division at that time. General Erskine agreed that it was a difficult task, and after further discussion it was decided to pass the 27th Division through the two left regiments of the 4th Division, leaving one Marine regiment in line on the right to take Kagman Point and protect the 27th's right flank.

As soon as this decision was made Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith set the

wheels in motion to alert the Division. He stepped to the phone in General Erskine's headquarters and called General Kernan, ordering him to begin reconnaissance at once for positions from which Division Artillery could support the attack next day. The two regimental commanders who were to take part (Colonel Ayers of the 106th Infantry, which had come ashore at Saipan on the 20th, and Colonel Kelley of the 165th) were ordered to report at once to Division headquarters to await orders. The order to Division Artillery was issued at 1650; that to the two regimental commanders at 1700.

As soon as these arrangements had been made Colonel Sheldon set to work to copy the corps situation map as it was then detailed. The Division Commander and General Erskine resumed their discussion in an effort to work out the final details of the commitment of the Division. The hour of attack was set for 1000 the next morning. There was some question as to whether the 27th could meet this hour, General Smith pointing out that it was likely to be very close, but General Erskine made no point of the matter and at the close of the conference the Division Commander was simply instructed to keep corps headquarters informed as to the progress of the relief next morning.

It was shortly after 1700 when the Division Commander and his party left NTLF to return to the 27th Division CP. In addition to his notes on the conference and Colonel Sheldon's sketch of the corps situation map, they carried with them a preliminary copy of the corps order for the next day. They arrived at the CP at approximately 1720 and the Commanding General immediately checked with Division Artillery to see if the reconnaissance he had ordered was under way. It was. Colonel Ayers and Colonel Kelley arrived before 1730.

The conference between General Smith and his regimental commanders was quite short. As soon as the latter learned of the nature of the conference they alerted their battalion commanders so that there would be no delay in passing the orders down through the chain of command. All battalion commanders were to wait at the regimental CPs for the return of the two colonels.

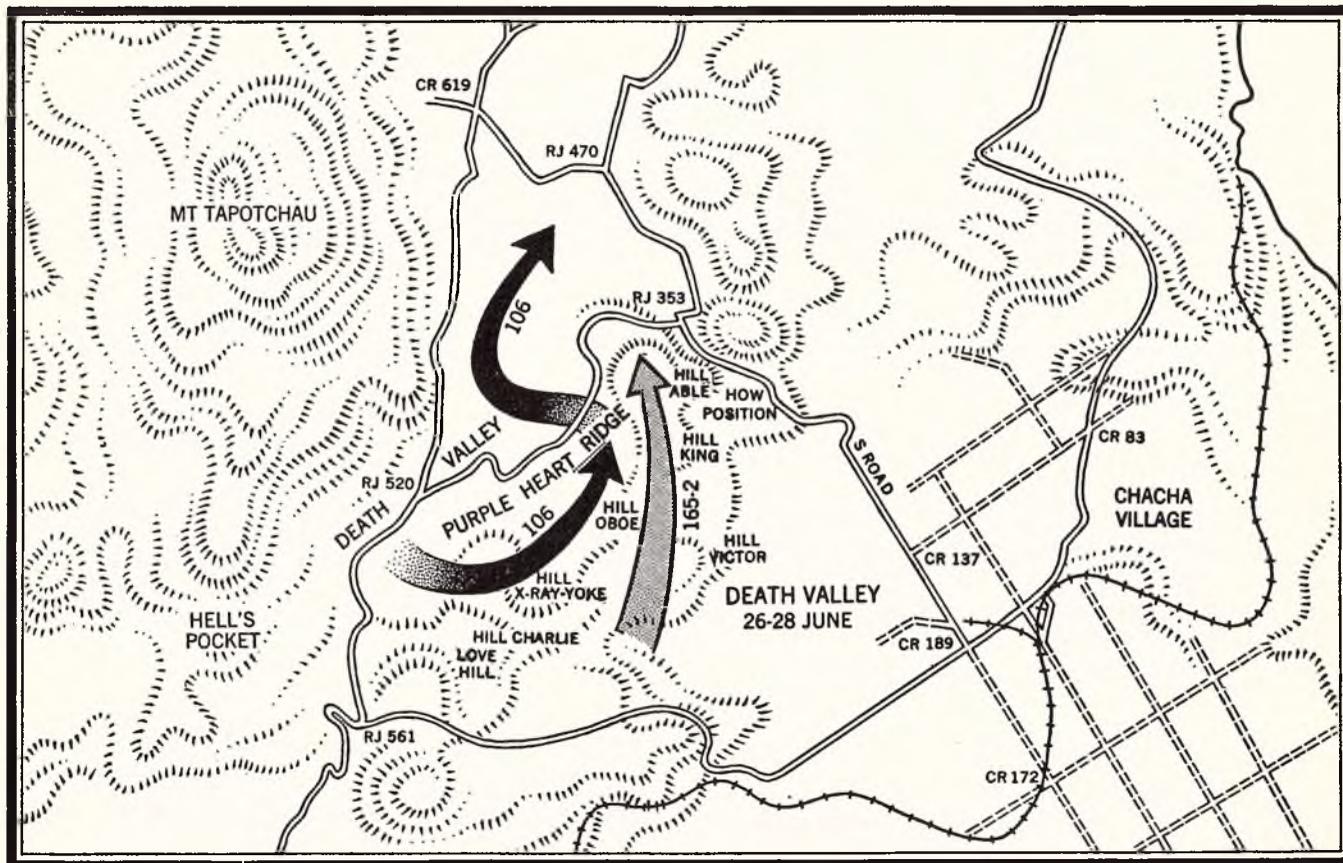
General Smith went over his notes of the meeting at NTLF with both commanders. He decided to attack with two regiments abreast, the 106th on the left, the 165th on the right. Routes of approach were studied and each regiment was assigned nonconflicting road nets. Each had already conducted extensive road reconnaissances during the day. There was no written order issued at the time of the meeting at Division CP. Each regimental commander made notes as General Smith talked and the S-3s copied the overlay which Colonel Sheldon had brought back from NTLF.

As soon as the conference with General Smith was concluded the two regimental commanders returned to their command posts and held meetings with the battalion commanders that lasted until approximately 1830. Colonel Ayers, after studying the overlay and finding himself with a relatively narrow zone of action, elected to attack in a column of battalions, the 3d under Lt. Colonel Mizony in the lead. Colonel Kelley placed two battalions abreast, the 2d under Lt. Colonel McDonough on the left, and the 1st under Major Mahoney on the right. The 165th Infantry, which had sent patrols throughout the area to the front during the 22d, made no road reconnaissance that night, relying on their knowledge of the roads to carry them through the planning. Colonel Ayers and Lt. Colonel Mizony, however, who had been on the island of Saipan for only two days, got into a jeep and conducted a thorough investigation of their projected route which took them until 2030 and carried them virtually to the front lines in the darkness.

The 106th Infantry, it will be remembered, had left Kwajalein attached to the Southern Landing Force with the distinct probability that they would be used at Guam. When the Guam landings were postponed indefinitely on 16 June, most of the ships carrying the III Marine Amphibious Corps were returned to Eniwetok to await further orders and the 106th Infantry had landed on Saipan on 20 June. For two days the 1st Battalion had been attached to the 2d Marine Division with the mission of mopping up the swamp areas in the vicinity of Lake Susupe. This had been accomplished with a loss of two men killed and six wounded, almost all of which were in C Company. Forty Japanese were killed in the mop-up. The assignment of the 106th Infantry to a zone of action on the Division's front was the first formal order issued to the regiment since its arrival on the island.

The information transferred through General Smith to the Division on the evening of 22 June was scanty. No detailed information existed as to the exact front-line situation, the type of terrain likely to be encountered, nor was any accurate estimate of enemy strength in the area available. Reports from corps headquarters had merely intimated all had gone well on the front of the two Marine divisions during the day.

Colonel Sheldon's first act upon returning to Division headquarters had been to start preparing 27th's Field Order No. 46 covering the attack for next morning. This had not been completed until 2100, three hours after the conference between the general and his regimental commanders had ended. It was drawn up almost two and a half hours before the corps final order was delivered at the Division CP. With the exception of that paragraph pertaining to Nafutan Point (see Chapter 26), there was no great difference in the two orders.



Map 5: Saipan: The Action at Death Valley

Chapter 28: Mount Tapotchau

AFTER 22 June, difficult as it had been, the fighting at Nafutan Point was a subordinate action to the main effort of the 27th Division. As already indicated, NTLF had launched a drive to the north against Mt. Tapotchau as early as 20 June. By the 22d a strong enemy position at Hill 500 had been reduced and the two Marine divisions swung out to the north in a rapid advance. At 1500 that afternoon they had pushed to a point only a few hundred yards south of the crest of Mt. Tapotchau and it appeared that the peak would soon be in American hands. However, both Marine divisions were tired and the 4th Division had suffered extremely heavy casualties in the landings and again at Hill 500. By late afternoon of the 22d all three regiments of the 4th Division were committed in the line.

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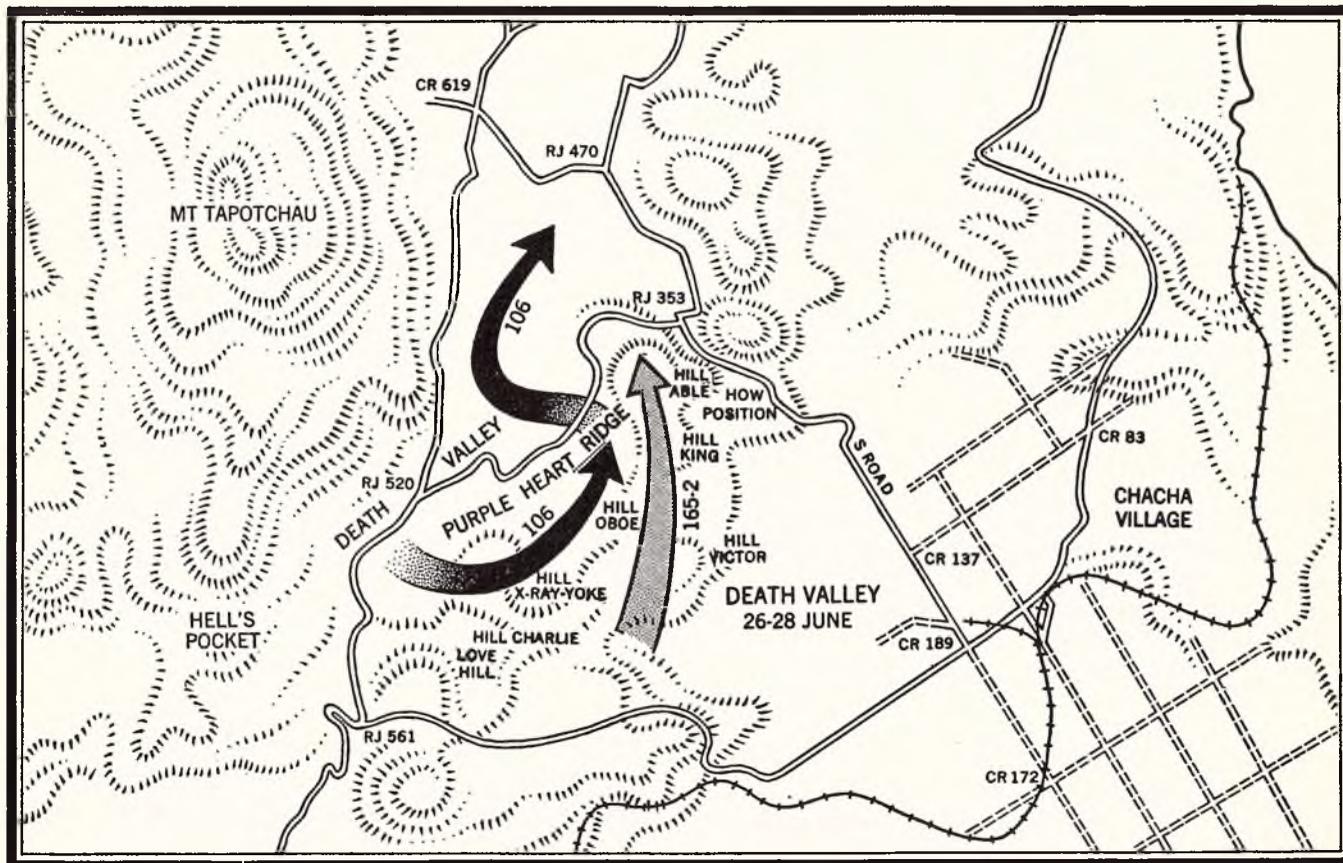
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As soon as the conference with General Smith was concluded the two regimental commanders returned to their command posts and held meetings with the battalion commanders that lasted until approximately 1830. Colonel Ayers, after studying the overlay and finding himself with a relatively narrow zone of action, elected to attack in a column of battalions, the 3d under Lt. Colonel Mizony in the lead. Colonel Kelley placed two battalions abreast, the 2d under Lt. Colonel McDonough on the left, and the 1st under Major Mahoney on the right. The 165th Infantry, which had sent patrols throughout the area to the front during the 22d, made no road reconnaissance that night, relying on their knowledge of the roads to carry them through the planning. Colonel Ayers and Lt. Colonel Mizony, however, who had been on the island of Saipan for only two days, got into a jeep and conducted a thorough investigation of their projected route which took them until 2030 and carried them virtually to the front lines in the darkness.

The 106th Infantry, it will be remembered, had left Kwajalein attached to the Southern Landing Force with the distinct probability that they would be used at Guam. When the Guam landings were postponed indefinitely on 16 June, most of the ships carrying the III Marine Amphibious Corps were returned to Eniwetok to await further orders and the 106th Infantry had landed on Saipan on 20 June. For two days the 1st Battalion had been attached to the 2d Marine Division with the mission of mopping up the swamp areas in the vicinity of Lake Susupe. This had been accomplished with a loss of two men killed and six wounded, almost all of which were in C Company. Forty Japanese were killed in the mop-up. The assignment of the 106th Infantry to a zone of action on the Division's front was the first formal order issued to the regiment since its arrival on the island.

The information transferred through General Smith to the Division on the evening of 22 June was scanty. No detailed information existed as to the exact front-line situation, the type of terrain likely to be encountered, nor was any accurate estimate of enemy strength in the area available. Reports from corps headquarters had merely intimated all had gone well on the front of the two Marine divisions during the day.

Colonel Sheldon's first act upon returning to Division headquarters had been to start preparing 27th's Field Order No. 46 covering the attack for next morning. This had not been completed until 2100, three hours after the conference between the general and his regimental commanders had ended. It was drawn up almost two and a half hours before the corps final order was delivered at the Division CP. With the exception of that paragraph pertaining to Nafutan Point (see Chapter 26), there was no great difference in the two orders.



Map 5: Saipan: The Action at Death Valley

Chapter 29: The Action of 23 June

DAYLIGHT ON 23 June came at 0530. According to the orders issued the night before, both regiments moved from their bivouac areas with first light. They had approximately three miles to go. The men of the 165th Infantry slung their rifles and light packs and began stringing out across the fields of lower Saipan in the early morning light. In one long double-ranked column on each side of the roads they traversed, the infantrymen trudged toward the high ground, through fields littered with wreckage and soaked in the stench of dead cattle. By 0800 the sun was already hot and perspiration began to run freely. The 2d Battalion was in the lead.

As the head of the column neared the road that ran along the high ground overlooking Magicienne Bay, the main road from Aslito to the north, it was to find the highway already congested with supply traffic of the 4th Marine Division. It was a narrow road to begin with, with deep ditches on each side in spots. There was no room on it now for the column moving north. Lt. Colonel McDonough veered to the left down a little lane, cutting across country toward Road Junction 268 where the approach of the 165th and 106th was to meet momentarily. But the cross-country route soon had the 106th and the 165th entangled with each other, and with 4th Marine Division vehicles. By the time the congestion was relieved K Company of the 106th had lost half an hour, as it turned out, an extremely valuable half hour. Meanwhile, Captain Hallden with L Company had proceeded to the front lines and at 0930 called Colonel Ayers to report that he had relieved the Marines in his zone and was ready to attack upon order. Captain Heminway, delayed, did not reach his point of relief until 1030. Both battalions of the 165th were in place prior to 1000. This left a gap one company wide in the 27th Division front line at the hour of the corps attack.

Both Colonel Kelley and Colonel Ayers reported to the 4th Marine Division CP before 0900 and received a complete résumé of the situation. They then went to the command posts of the respective regiments which they were to relieve for further details. It was at this time that the rosy picture that had been painted for them in all earlier conferences began to fade. At 1655 the previous afternoon, even as Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith and General Erskine had been conferring at NTLF, the rapid advance of the 22d had suddenly run into trouble. At that time the Japanese had launched a sudden, determined counterattack all along the left front of the 4th Division, inflicting heavy casualties and driving the Marine lines back some four hundred yards. From that time until darkness the Marines had launched a series of offensive thrusts, but in extremely courageous fighting, typical of the Marines, recovered none

of their lost ground. Lt. Col. A. A. Vandegrift, Jr., commander of one of the Marine battalions about to be relieved, told Colonel Kelley that he was up against the strongest position yet encountered on Saipan. The point of relief at which the 27th Division took over the front lines on the morning of 23 June was, therefore, some four hundred yards behind that shown on the situation map at corps headquarters. One high-ranking officer of corps headquarters later made the statement that the 27th had "mistakenly" relieved the reserve elements of the Marine regiments on the line. This is refuted by several facts. In the first place, the elements of the 27th which took over were led to the point of relief by the guides customarily furnished by the retiring units. This writer was present at the time and distinctly heard the conversations of the company commanders and platoon leaders that accompanied the relief. There was no Marine officer or noncommissioned officer present at the time who was under the impression that he was a member of a reserve company. Furthermore, the events of the morning which followed the relief would seem to indicate quite clearly that the Japanese were still in firm possession of the four hundred yards between where the corps map showed the lines to be and where the lines actually were.

One of the most striking aspects of the situation in which the 27th now found itself was the terrain. This terrain, equally as much as the enemy, was to shape the course of the battle for the next seven days in this immediate area. Directly to the left front of the Division was Mt. Tapotchau. This 1,554-foot peak, as already described, is the dominant terrain feature on the whole island. It rises steeply from the coastal plain about a mile from the sea on the west. The highest point of the mountain lay entirely within the zone of action of the 2d Marine Division. On the east side of the peak, however, the conformation is somewhat different. The whole face of the summit here drops abruptly some six hundred feet to a rolling plateau of open farmland. The eastern face, except in two or three places where slides have carried away some of the dirt, is sheer so that the appearance is one of a rounded turret, a broad semicircle of rock that faces in an arc of almost 180 degrees.

The plateau which the eastern bluffs of Mt. Tapotchau overlook is some 1,200 yards wide at its broadest point. It was almost entirely devoid of cover except for three or four small groups of farm buildings, surrounded by small groves of trees, and one or two small wind breaks of the same scrub tree so common on Saipan. On the eastern edge of this plateau the land curls up, like the lip of a saucer, to a small line of hills, the highest of which rises not more than 150 feet from the floor of the open ground. This line of hills forms, in effect, a low ridge line, tree-covered for the most part, that parallels the face of Mt. Tapotchau.

The plateau is thereby made a corridor that runs between the cliffs on the one hand and the hills on the other. On the east of the ridge line the ground slopes gradually down to a low, level plain that forms Kagman Point. On the southeast it drops off rather sharply to Magicienne Bay, and on the south it runs sharply down to the plain on which lay, three miles away, Aslito Airfield.

One of the main roads of the Saipan highway system runs directly from Aslito through the corridor to the naval base at Tanapag Harbor. It is straight until it reaches the foothills of Tapotchau, then winds gradually upward for a mile until it is approximately a mile from the summit of the mountain. There, in two sharp hairpin turns it ascends abruptly to the plateau, turns a sharp left and continues leisurely on through the corridor. At the top of the last hairpin curve there is a little road junction from which a secondary trail branches off to wind its way down the east slope of the lesser ridge to Kagman Point and Chacha Village, thence up the eastern coastal plain all the way to the northern end of the island.

The road junction mentioned above is not in the corridor proper. It is what might be termed a "vestibule" of that corridor. For four hundred yards from the junction to the wide-open spaces that marked the valley there was good cover. The entire area between the north-south highway and the base of the Tapotchau cliffs was overgrown with scrub trees, about ten feet high, that had the appearance of typical American willow swamp. On the east of the road, extending to the southern limits of the line of hills, were several small tree lines that looked much like a Midwestern apple orchard. At the northern limits of the vestibule is a slight rise in ground covered by a solid line of the same little scrub trees. A traveler moving from Aslito to Tanapag Harbor, in more peaceful times, would move calmly along the low ground, climb gently through a pleasant vista of foothills, find himself suddenly tossed up through a wild series of primitive hairpin turns and thrust violently out upon a high shelf, pleasantly wooded. After a few moments he would emerge into a broad, peaceful valley, sunlit and open, through which he would travel for five or six miles before descending rapidly to the sea again.

It was at the southern edge of the plateau that the 27th Division found itself on the morning of 23 June. The previous afternoon the 4th Marine Division had pushed all the way through the vestibule, only to be driven back to the rim of the high ground at nightfall. In the days that followed men of the 27th were to christen the open corridor Death Valley. The ridge along its eastern edge was to become

Purple Heart Ridge. By some peculiar twist of fate the western boundary of the Division ran almost directly between Mt. Tapotchau and Death Valley. The eastern boundary ran along the eastern base of Purple Heart Ridge.

From left to right, at 1000 on 23 June 1944, the alignment of the 27th Division ran as follows:

- 106-L: Capt. Charles N. Hallden
- 106-K: Capt. William T. Heminway
- 165-F: Capt. Francis E. Leonard
- 165-G: Capt. Paul G. Chasmar
- 165-A: Capt. Lawrence J. O'Brien
- 165-C: Lt. Edward L. Cloyd.

There was one gap, that caused by the failure of K Company to get on line on time. However—and this should be emphasized—the absence of K Company did not delay the attack of the 27th Division at 1000. Every other front-line company moved off promptly at King-hour.

To understand the action of the next seven days requires a minute attention to detail. Five minutes after the attack moved off, the battle had settled down into a definite pattern. The problem of the various companies was to reach the intermediate objective line set by the Division Commander. For the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, this lay almost entirely in forcing a passage through the open ground of Death Valley. For the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, it also meant moving through the open ground, as well as cleaning off parts of Purple Heart Ridge. For the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, it meant cleaning off the eastern slope of Purple Heart Ridge. All battalions were to reach a line drawn through Hill Able, running east and west. (Hill Able marked the northern limit of Purple Heart Ridge proper, where it bent in towards Tapotchau, like the upper end of a parenthesis, forming a neck for Death Valley, some five hundred yards wide at that point.)

Unknown to the American command, the Japanese had selected this area for one of their main defensive positions. The most favorable landing beaches on the island of Saipan had been considered by both the Americans and Japanese to be those on the northern shores of Magicienne Bay (Purple Beaches). It will be remembered that one of the favored plans of the V Amphibious Corps staff had been a landing on these beaches, followed by a quick drive over the Aslito-Tanapag highway to cut the island in two. General Saito had anticipated just such a move. To him the Magicienne Bay beaches presented an invading force with ideal landing areas. Consequently he established one of his main defensive lines to stop it. On a line running just south of Hill Able he

placed one full regiment of infantry, reinforced by the 9th Tank Regiment, and all headquarters troops of the Japanese Thirty-First Army. His own CP was hidden in the deep ravine later known as the How Position, just east of Hill Able. Altogether a force of some four thousand men guarded the plateau. They had spent many weeks in placing their weapons and planning the battle that would be fought here. Had an American landing been attempted on Magicienne Bay the landing force most certainly would have been cut to ribbons.

The accident that brought the 27th Division into this defensive area from the south instead of over the beaches in no sense lessened the effectiveness of General Saito's plans. His 135th Infantry Regiment was still intact, not having been committed in the southern fighting. The two tank companies he had centered in the Tapotchau area were also at full strength. And the American drive was still directly into the face of the prepared position. The guns were not changed and the carefully calculated fields of fire of each weapon served just as well now as they would have against a landing.

The action on the morning of 23 June started very calmly. Captain Hallden was to advance his company by column to the approximate point where the line was supposed to be, then fan out to the right in a skirmish line to establish contact with K Company on the right and form a battalion front on the line of departure. Mopping up in the area behind this line could be done by I Company, the battalion reserve.

Captain Hallden's left flank was up against the cliff of Tapotchau and his right was bounded by the steeply rising ravines that ran from the low plains to the south up to the plateau. A little lane ran along the base of the cliff directly to the front. Some four hundred yards ahead it bent sharply to the right, just after entering Death Valley, and joined the main highway. The cliffs on L Company's left flank were about forty feet high at the jump-off point, but rose steadily to a hundred feet by the time they entered the cleared area of the corridor. At this particular spot the bluff line receded to the west approximately fifty yards in a gentle bend, forming a little cove, Hell's Pocket, in the mountain wall. This recession was protected from the open floor of the valley by a gate of small trees that seemed to have been put where they were to make a quiet and sheltered little nook. In the midst of the circular park thus formed, rose Queen Rock, a hundred feet high, twenty yards across at the top, and overgrown with a vine that looked like ivy. The rock had one or two caves in it, and a sunken area at the top. The cliff walls that surrounded it were honeycombed with caves. The whole face of Mt. Tapotchau, for that matter, was pockmarked with these same caves. All of them housed gun positions of one sort or another.

Captain Hallden had learned from the Marines that the Japanese had placed positions in Hell's Pocket and on the nose of Mt. Tapotchau at the point where it jutted farthest out into Death Valley again, after curving to the east as it left Hell's Pocket. When L Company started moving at 1000, the men picked their way cautiously forward in a series of platoon columns. All suspicious terrain features were inspected by these small groups which moved either to the right or left to do it. The whole company eventually assembled near a small house that nestled in a clearing in the shadow of Queen Rock. Until that time, approximately 1045, no fire had been received and there had been little or no evidence of the enemy reported by the Marines. The advance was resumed, but as the head of the column moved out across Hell's Pocket, a heavy mortar barrage landed in the area. This was the beginning of an almost constant rain of fire of all types that lasted for the rest of the day. L Company suffered no casualties in the opening mortar fire, but was forced to take cover. Before Captain Hallden could resume the advance, one of the enemy's shells set off an ammunition dump near the house. For the next hour and a half this dump exploded in all directions, pinning the company. Eventually, by 1400, Captain Hallden once more had his men assembled, this time on the north side of Hell's Pocket. They were now receiving fire from front and rear, but because they had moved cautiously, not one man had yet been wounded.

The right side of Company F, in the 165th Infantry area, had received the same gradual heavy fire. Lt. Colonel McDonough's men had relieved the Marines along the Chacha road, facing Death Valley, three hundred yards away. The ground of the vestibule, immediately ahead, was relatively open, but to the left, on the 106th side of the road, was the growth of trees already mentioned, and far ahead to the left front loomed the forbidding cliffs of Mt. Tapotchau.

Lieutenant Colonel McDonough was skeptical about moving out across open ground while his left flank was exposed to a wooded area. At 1000, when K Company had not yet put in an appearance on the left, he asked permission to delay his attack. This was granted, and the 2d Battalion did not move off until 1055. When it did move McDonough ordered his two companies to get across the open ground as rapidly as possible and into the shelter of the thick tree line on the southern edge of Death Valley. There they would have some protection. As a result of this order both F and G Companies moved out at a rapid gait, almost at a run. In one long skirmish line they reached the tree line within twenty minutes. There were no Japanese in the area through which they moved, but they received some long-distance rifle fire from the cliffs. There were no casualties.

On the extreme right of the Division, the whole 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, held their lines until the 2d Battalion moved off. The terrain to the front of this unit was somewhat different from that faced by any other unit in the Division zone. Like the 2d Battalion, Captain O'Brien and Lieutenant Cloyd had relieved the Marines along the Chacha road. However, directly to the front, on the north side of the road, rose a little stubby hill about seventy-five feet high and heavily wooded. The ruins of a farm nestled on the eastern nose of this eminence. This hill later came to be known as Hill Love. It was separated from the main mass of Purple Heart Ridge by a swale about a hundred yards across in which had been planted a canefield. It was Captain O'Brien's intention to push his men around the left base of this hill rather than go over the top of it. Once on the other side he would extend his line to the right to join C Company, which would circle the rise around the opposite end. Once a line had been formed on the north side of the hill, the two companies could advance across the canefield together.

In order not to leave any active positions atop the hill to harass him from behind, Captain O'Brien sent a ten-man patrol under Staff Sgt. Edward Chappeta up to the crest to clean off any enemy that might be hiding there. Chappeta found no Japanese, but as he worked over the top and onto the forward slope a machine gun opened fire from the undergrowth around the base of Hill Charlie, the southernmost of the Purple Heart Ridge group. Rifle fire followed the automatic weapon and the whole northern face of the hill was soon an impact area for bullets. Chappeta kept steady control over his men and began directing their withdrawal back to the reverse slope. Before he could get back himself, however, he was hit and killed. Pfc. Daniel Carroll had already been wounded. Sergeant Didrick now took command of the patrol and led it back down to Captain O'Brien to report what had happened. The company commander now sent out another larger group to go back up and see if they could locate the source of the fire. It was while this second patrol was out that the company commander learned that the 2d Battalion, on his left, was ready to move. Company A therefore edged ahead according to the original plan, making use of the heavy foliage around the base of the hill in an attempt to extend the line and make contact with C Company, coming around the other way.

The first man had no sooner gotten well around on the forward base than the enemy position to the north erupted again. This was grazing fire from all types of weapons and it pinned the whole company to the ground. Captain O'Brien now asked Sergeant Didrick to take out a large patrol to see if he could crawl through the cane and get at the Japanese at close range. It was while Didrick was organizing his group that the

enemy fire set off a large ammunition dump on the edge of the cane and for some little time this completely immobilized the whole company. When the exploding ammunition had subsided, Didrick and his men crawled out into the cane. It was now almost 1300.

Didrick's progress was slow, and half an hour later he was only half-way through the field and pinned down. Three light tanks which were standing by on the road moved out into the cane and sprayed the northern slopes of the swale with machine guns. Under cover of this support, the patrol was able to crawl back to the company. By 1700, after crawling on their stomachs all afternoon, Company A had only reached a point twenty yards north of the base of Hill Love.

Company C, on the extreme right flank of the Division, had had similar trouble from the same enemy position. The Division boundary ran along the slope of a hill that rose gradually from the Chacha road toward the south. Both the left-flank company of the Marines and Company C came under extremely heavy rifle and machine-gun fire from the same positions that bothered Company A. These emplacements not only covered the forward slopes of Hill Love, but interdicted the Chacha road where it emerged from behind the hill and bent to the northeast. During the afternoon Lieutenant Cloyd lost three men killed and thirteen wounded trying to infiltrate men down the road. The Marine company on Cloyd's right also suffered several casualties and finally pulled up over the crest of the hill and pushed on ahead toward Kagman Point, using the natural defilade to protect themselves from the heavy fire. Cloyd also tried to use tanks to furnish a covering fire for his men, but the vehicles did little good. At approximately 1430 one of the light vehicles of the 766th Tank Battalion, working on the C Company front, caught on fire, and Lt. Louis W. Fleck, the platoon leader, who was helping Company A in the canefield, went to its aid. The fire was put out without much trouble, but Lieutenant Fleck, for some reason, decided to push on down the Chacha road, probably to try and get at the Japanese from the rear. Four hundred yards ahead of the point at which Company C was pinned down, the road made a sharp turn to the right and dipped down around the hill to the Kagman Plain. When the platoon leader's tank reached this turn, the crew evidently decided they had gone far enough and tried to take advantage of a shelf of ground to turn around and return to the C Company line. As the vehicle was being backed, Japanese literally swarmed down on it from the trees on the hillside above and from the deep valley that bordered Purple Heart Ridge on the west of the road. Company C men later estimated there were over two hundred enemy soldiers in and around the tank. The vehicle soon caught fire from a Molotov cocktail and the crew were forced to aban-

don it in the midst of the milling horde of Japanese. Lieutenant Fleck and two of his men were killed as they emerged from the turret. A fourth crew member dropped to the ground in the middle of the mob and played dead. When he saw his chance he crawled into a culvert and hid there. For over an hour the Japanese walked around, even trampling on his hands, but did not molest him. After dark the tanker crawled out of his hiding place and up a deep ditch, finally being taken into the Company C line at about 0300.

The fact that C Company was not able to drive off the large group of Japanese brings to light one of the main difficulties of the action in the area on this day and on ensuing days. The Marines on the right, protected by the hill, were able to push a considerable distance ahead. Every time the C Company men tried to fire into the Japanese they received orders from Division to cease fire, that the bullets were landing among the advanced Marine lines. Artillery fire was constantly denied because of the danger it presented to friendly troops ahead. C Company, therefore, had to suffer through the entire afternoon while large numbers of Japanese ran around in the area to the front, in plain view. Lateral communication between the units on the immediate right had been lost as soon as physical contact had been broken by the Marines' sideslipping over the crest of the hill. Liaison was then maintained back through the labyrinth of command channels by radio. It was sometimes three hours before a message from one company commander reached the other.

At approximately 1700 neither A nor C Company had been able to push north of Hill Love. The tanks under the supervision of Captain O'Brien had tried all afternoon to eliminate the positions on the south slope of Hill Charlie without success and until these emplacements were put out of action all units in the 1st Battalion zone of action were closely pinned down. In view of this situation, Major Mahoney, commanding the battalion, ordered both assault companies to dig in along the north base of the hill at their backs, using the dense undergrowth there as cover. Late in the evening, under protection of heavy tank fire, all patrols were withdrawn from the canefield and night positions prepared facing the enemy. The 1st Battalion's reserve, B Company, which had been mopping up all day in the area behind the line of departure, was brought up and dug in for the night along the south slope of the hill, bordering the Chacha road. The 1st Battalion, therefore, showed little or no advance for the day, despite the loss of ten men killed and thirty-five wounded.

The 2d Battalion, 165th, had fared even worse. After the opening

dash which had carried the two assault companies to the tree fringe bordering the south edge of Death Valley, Lt. Colonel McDonough had halted his advance. His rapid movement had outstripped K Company, 106th Infantry, on his left flank, which was working its way through the dense tangle of woods on the west side of the Aslito-Tanapag highway, by some four hundred yards.

The battalion commander ordered the men to wait until K Company came up and cleaned out the trees that covered his left flank. He felt that movement out into the open ground with this wooded area still unexplored would leave him subject to enfilade fire should there be enemy positions hidden there. When K Company, 106th Infantry, had not put in an appearance on his left by 1230, Lt. Colonel McDonough ordered out a patrol to locate it. When the patrol returned it was to report that Captain Heminway was still two hundred yards to the rear and moving slowly. Upon transmitting this information to Colonel Kelley and the Division Commander, the battalion commander was ordered to attack at 1315 without regard to what was happening on his left. If necessary he was to commit his reserve company to cover his flanks. Consequently, Captain Ryan of E Company was instructed to use one platoon to furnish contact on the left and one on the right.

The attack of the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, at 1315 was preceded by a fifteen-minute artillery preparation along Purple Heart Ridge. When the men moved off out of the trees, it was in one long skirmish line. The first man to appear in the open was Pfc. William H. Walker, leading scout of F Company's right platoon. Until the time he stepped out from cover there had not been a single round of enemy fire received in the company area, but on his second step, a bullet hit him in the side and he went down. In rapid succession Staff Sgt. Thomas J. Dougherty and Staff Sgt. John J. McCarthy of the 2d Platoon, on the left, were wounded. Lt. Albert H. Andrews, in command of this platoon, immediately ordered his men to run for a drainage ditch which he saw about seventy-five yards ahead, down the slight hill into the valley. When they got there it was to find the ditch not more than eighteen inches deep, but most of the men managed to get into it and found it offered some meager protection.

The fire was now coming in volumes. It originated in the woods, now to the left rear, in the nose of Mt. Tapotchau to the left front, and from the cliffs all along the left side of the corridor. It included fire from several machine guns, hundreds of rifles, two or three high-velocity guns, and mortars. Bullets and fragments were kicking up the earth all around the men. Each time a man appeared above the ditch he was hit. Pfc. Dorth Foster received a bullet in the stomach when he tried to shift his

position and Pfc. Byron Kepley was wounded a moment later trying to do the same thing. Pfc. Ernest Perreria was wounded several times by a machine gun without moving at all, and the fire was increasing instead of diminishing. Lieutenant Andrews tried to reach Captain Leonard, the company commander, by radio, but failed to get through. The platoon leader, feeling that something would have to be done at once to relieve his situation, finally decided he would attempt to get back to the CP. He left the platoon in charge of Tech. Sgt. Thomas J. Murray, and started out. After dodging from one little piece of cover to another all afternoon he made it at approximately 1630. By that time, however, the situation within the platoon had changed.

Murray had waited for some little time for Lieutenant Andrews to come back. He was unable to advance and he was unable to withdraw. The wounded men were becoming worse all the time. At about 1500 Murray finally decided to try for a little more cover by moving the men down the ditch and into the banana grove near the house.

Unknown to the 3d Platoon sergeant the right platoon, the 1st, was already there, however. This unit, under Lt. Ford E. Martin, company executive officer, had suffered much the same experience as that of the left one. Within minutes after moving out from the tree line, four men were wounded. Like Andrews, Lieutenant Martin looked for the nearest cover ahead and hit on the house in the banana grove. He ordered his men to get there as fast as possible. After it was certain that there were no Japanese in the near vicinity, the platoon crawled forward and deployed on the east side of the house, next to Purple Heart Ridge. It was while they were still there that Murray's men began to filter in, crawling along the ditch until they were inside the grove, then running in a crouch to the house where they joined Martin's platoon.

Until Sergeant Murray's men joined the 1st Platoon behind the house there had been no noticeable fire from the Purple Heart Ridge side of the valley. Now, however, the whole line of hills began to put fire on the grove from machine guns, small arms and mortars. The men who had considered themselves quite safe from the fire on the left now found themselves badly exposed to the sudden volley that fell on them. Pvt. Elmer L. Heaps was killed and four others badly wounded within five minutes. Caught under a serious cross fire Lieutenant Martin now felt that he had better pull back to the line of trees at the south end of the valley. He began ordering the men back, one at a time, across the seventy-five yards of open ground, uphill every foot of the way. The whole area was swept by a virtual hail of fire that made it necessary to sprint at top speed for the whole distance. Several of the men made the dash successfully, but when Pfc. Elmer Booth was killed, the attempt ceased

for the time being while Lieutenant Martin tried to raise Captain Leonard on the radio. When he did finally get through to the company commander, Lt. Colonel McDonough was in the line of trees looking over the situation. Lt. Merle H. Johnson, of Company C, 88th Chemical Mortar Battalion, was ordered by the battalion commander to put down a smoke screen on the whole valley and under cover of this fire from the big 4.2-inch mortars the rest of the men at the little house managed to scramble back successfully, taking the wounded with them.

Only the two platoons of F Company had moved out into the valley at the jump-off. The reserve platoon, company headquarters, Weapons Platoon, and a machine-gun platoon from H Company had remained behind, cut off after the fire started. Nevertheless, they had one man killed and eight men of the 2d Platoon wounded while they sat in the tree line, vainly trying to pour retaliatory fire onto the hidden enemy gun positions which were causing so much damage. Three H Company men were also hit, and E Company, well back toward the road junction, had two men wounded, one of them Capt. Bernard Ryan, the company commander, whose brother, Capt. Paul Ryan, had been killed on 17 June at the ridge to which both brothers had given their name. Some of the men who had successfully made the dash back out of the valley survived only to be hit by the heavy fire which cut through the wooded barrier.

Company G, on the right of the 2d Battalion, was somewhat more fortunate. At the first impact of the enemy fire only one platoon had ventured out into the open. Sgt. Harold J. Serwin was killed in this first volley and four others were wounded. The extreme left squad, which was nearest to F Company, continued to advance to the house with Lieutenant Martin. In the attempts to get back, Pvt. Ernest J. Butler was wounded, but the remainder got out under cover of smoke with few casualties. The rest of G Company was close enough to the tree line, which curved slightly to the north in the company zone, to get back safely. By the time Captain Chasmar had reorganized them the situation of the two platoons of F Company was plainly evident and so the G Company commander held his men in the cover. During the afternoon nine G Company men were wounded as they placed fire on the Tapotchau cliffs in an attempt to knock out some of the enemy positions.

After the failure of attempts to push out into the valley, Lt. Colonel McDonough and Colonel Kelley, who had now come forward to look the situation over, began trying to find some means of eliminating the sources of enemy fire, both in the cliffs and along Purple Heart Ridge. Artillery was called in, but had little effect. The axis of fire was such

that shells merely skimmed along the face of the cliffs without doing any damage and artillery placed along the ridge immediately brought protests from the 4th Marine Division on the right that overs were landing in the Kagman Point area and endangering some of the more advanced patrols working there. Most of the light tanks assigned to the regiment were occupied on the 1st Battalion front and self-propelled guns only seemed to succeed in drawing mortar fire. At nightfall no solution had yet been found and the battalion dug in for the night along the tree line facing the valley.

Meanwhile, the 106th Infantry, on the left side of the Aslito-Tanapag road, had little more success than did the 165th. K Company, as already recounted, arrived at the line of departure half an hour late. When Captain Heminway moved into position it was to find the Marine company he was relieving had already withdrawn. The guides led him to the vacated foxholes, but could tell him nothing about the situation to the front. Captain Heminway, therefore, had no way of knowing where the Japanese positions were or what he might encounter.

Ahead of the men loomed the dense scrub growth already described. Riflemen had to crouch to get through it and visibility was limited to a few yards. The company commander decided to form a skirmish line and comb the whole area. By 1055 he had organized and pushed off, with I Company following close behind and mopping up. Twenty minutes after the men had moved out, the leading scouts reached a little trail about halfway to the entrance to the valley. This lane branched off from the main road and wandered off into the woods toward the cliffs of Tapotchau. As the advance scout, Pfc. Martin Knouse, stepped out into this lane, a burst of machine gun fire killed him instantly. The rest of the company went to earth and began trying to locate the enemy machine gun. They had no sooner taken cover than the whole area was blanketed by heavy mortar fire. By the time Captain Heminway got his company reorganized it was after 1200. The mortar fire had had one beneficial result. The men, to get away from it, had scattered to various parts of the woods. In so doing some of them had discovered that the Japanese had cut quite definitely marked fire lanes through the whole area and that anyone who stepped into one of them immediately drew machine-gun fire. In view of this discovery, Captain Heminway now ordered his men to move forward in individual jumps. Upon reaching one of the fire lanes, he was to stop and investigate the ground ahead to make sure there was not more than one, then jump across it. The company commander also brought up a platoon of SP guns from Cannon Company and gave them instructions to locate as many of the lanes

as possible and then fire up them with the howitzers as the infantry moved forward. The exact location of the Japanese emplacements was not discernible, but all of them seemed to be in the cliffs, rather high up. Machine guns from M Company were also placed to cover the advance.

The move forward was a painfully slow one and it was 1500 before the right flank of the company reached the point where the highway burst out into the open valley.

Upon arriving at the exit into the open ground Captain Heminway found that L Company had not yet extended its line to make physical contact on his left. He felt that before venturing any farther forward this solid line should be established so he ordered out a patrol to find Captain Hallden and help establish the contact.

Company L, since its move to the north of Hell's Pocket, had found itself under as much fire as the whole 27th Division front had run into elsewhere. Movement was accomplished only with great difficulty. The fire lanes in the left zone were not nearly so evident as they were in front of K Company and Captain Hallden was still trying to solve the puzzle when the K Company patrol arrived. With the knowledge which they imparted, he was able to begin extending his lines back to the right rear, using the same methods of individual infiltration that K Company had used. As Captain Heminway had discovered earlier, this was a long and tedious job. The slightest misstep would result in casualties. Part of I Company, which had been following Captain Hallden, also had to shift to join the main battalion line and three of the group were hit. Fragments wounded three other 3d Battalion men shortly after the lines had been joined.

By the time the men were ready to move out into the open ground it was already well after 1600. Lt. Colonel Mizony had observed the effect of a similar move on the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, and now talked over the situation with his two assault-company commanders. At this time Colonel Kelley had concentrated his efforts on attempting to knock out the sources of enemy fire in the face of the cliff and had called off any further attack until he had been able to do something about it. In view of this Lt. Colonel Mizony allowed his company commanders to do what they thought best. When it became evident that the 165th would make no further attacks that evening, Captain Heminway and Captain Hallden decided to dig in and hold the ground south of the valley. They felt that from where they were they could control any enemy movement in the open ground to the front, at the same time taking advantage of good cover for the night positions.

During the movement of L Company to the right K Company had

discovered another Japanese ammunition dump, buried deep in the woods. It was completely booby-trapped and some of the time before darkness was spent in removing the pull fuzes which were scattered all through it. When the two companies finally dug in, they formed a perimeter around the dump, being extremely careful to plan their defense to stop any infiltration attempts which might be designed to blow up the ammunition. I Company, under Lt. George T. Johnston, dug in on the south side of the perimeter, thus drawing a complete circle around the dump. Across the road the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, also discovered a dump in its area. Lt. Colonel McDonough ordered it moved, however, inasmuch as it was not booby-trapped. For over an hour before darkness set in every man who could be spared from the front-line positions was engaged in moving shells to the rear areas behind the Chacha road where they were well dispersed.

From approximately 1700 until half an hour before dark efforts in the 106th and 165th continued to be directed at reducing the volume of fire being placed along the front-line areas by the Japanese. Self-propelled guns of both cannon companies rolled up and took the Tapotchau cliffs under direct fire, but the heavy return mortar fire made the operations of the open-topped vehicles largely ineffective. Tank fire proved to be too inaccurate. As dusk began to creep over the valley, Lt. Robert J. Garnett, Jr., of K Company, organized a sizable patrol to try and attack the nearer cliff positions, but as the group waited in the edge of the woods, the Japanese picked them out and opened fire with machine guns, killing Pfc. Martin J. Kreuger and Pfc. Michael Serafino, and wounding Pfc. Robert Schuck. The enemy machine guns which had caused the casualties seemed to be much closer at hand than the cliffs, but in the poor light Garnett could not tell just where they were, so he withdrew his patrol and reported back to Captain Heminway.

Two other developments had arisen in connection with the 27th Division's efforts during the afternoon. Both had to do with the question of contact. According to NTLF Order 10-44, the burden of contact was from right to left. This made the 27th responsible for seeing that contact was maintained with the 2d Marine Division at all times. This proved to be a difficult task and as the day progressed several complaints were received from corps headquarters that this obligation was not being fulfilled. The main difficulty lay in the cliffs which coincided almost exactly with the Division's left boundary. During the latter part of the morning and early afternoon, Captain Hallden had moved forward with his left near the base of the cliff while the Marines advanced along the top. Contact was visual. When L Company moved to the right

to contact K Company Captain Hallden found himself overextended and a gap developed between his left flank and the bottom of the cliffs which he covered for a time with the machine guns of his Weapons Platoon. The Marines had been running a series of patrols along the cliffs and about 1430 these patrols reported they were no longer able to find the left flank of the 27th Division. Furthermore, Japanese were putting fire on the right rear of the Marines' line from the 27th Division zone. Actually this fire was coming from machine guns placed on the top of Queen Rock, which Hallden had already passed, but which he had made no attempt to scale. Upon receipt of the Marine report, Colonel Stebbins, the 27th's Chief of Staff, called Colonel Ayers to inquire into the difficulty. When it had been explained, the regimental commander was ordered to insert his 2d Battalion in the line at once to re-establish the contact. Major Almerin C. O'Hara, the battalion commander, set out at once to reconnoiter the area and his troops began moving into position at approximately 1715.

The 2d Battalion was committed with F Company on the left and G Company on the right. Capt. Roderick V. Lemieux, of F Company, moved directly onto the cliff and established physical contact with the Marines by 1800. He used two platoons in the line, his right flank resting on the very edge of the cliff. His situation was made somewhat precarious, however, when it was discovered that he had moved into an area in which there was very little topsoil and his men were thus prevented from digging adequate foxholes for their night positions. Most of the men lay on top of the ground until morning. At 2300 an enemy mortar concentration began falling nearby and one shell landed in the midst of the 2d Platoon, killing Sgt. John Osipovich and wounding five other men. The shelling continued all through the night, but caused no other casualties. The 1st Platoon of the company, next to the cliff, was attacked at midnight by a party of fifteen enemy soldiers who came wandering down from the peak of Tapotchau. The leaders got all the way inside the perimeter before they were discovered and then there ensued a wild hand-to-hand fight in which grenades, bayonets, and fists were the principal weapons. Next morning the platoon found twelve enemy from the raiding party inside the perimeter, all of them dead from bayonets, knives, or beating.

Company G, 106th Infantry, moved in below the cliff line, with its left flank up against the wall and its right in contact with L Company. The move into position was made through the same heavy machine-gun, small-arms, and mortar fire that had caused trouble in the area all afternoon.

Chapter 30: The Japanese Tank Attack

THE NIGHT OF 23 June was bright with moonlight. It was also loud with enemy activity. At 1925, just at dusk, the enemy launched a full-scale attack down the valley from the vicinity of Hill Able in the north, with six medium tanks and approximately two companies of infantry. The first tank got through, but in quick succession the other five vehicles were hit and knocked out.

The leading enemy vehicle kept on clattering down the road toward the junction with the Chacha road. All its guns were blazing, traversing from right to left. Everyone had to duck as it went by. When it reached the road junction it seemed to hesitate for a moment, then turned around and started back for the valley, this time moving across the open fields behind the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry. It ran through the battalion aid station, its guns still spraying fire, and was rapidly bearing down on the men in the F Company foxholes when it veered sharply again and ran directly at the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry. As it reached the highway it turned once more toward the road junction. Everyone who saw this tank later described it as something like a big, wounded, caged wild animal.

As the lumbering vehicle started back for the road junction one shot from its turret gun landed squarely in the midst of the ammunition dump, which in turn was squarely in the midst of the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry. The dump began exploding, slowly at first, then in a mounting crescendo. As the shells began flying, the Japanese in the cliffs of Tapotchau unloosed a heavy concentration of mortar fire. Within twenty minutes the whole area occupied by the three line companies of the 3d Battalion was an inferno. Four men were killed and 27 wounded. In the midst of the inferno which it had touched off, the enemy tank lumbered around until it was blocked by Lieutenant Fleck's ill-fated vehicle, and knocked out by a Marine bazooka.

From 1945, the time when the Japanese tank moved out of the area, until after midnight, the 27th Division front lines were subjected to a minor hell on a spectacular scale. Only one unit on the Division front moved during this hectic night. This was the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, in whose midst the ammunition dump had exploded. Lieutenant Johnston kept his I Company under complete control throughout the explosion of the dump, withdrawing it across the highway, behind the 165th front lines. There his men dug in, while lying on their stomachs, and organized a position covering the road. Captain Hallden swung his left flank back at right angles and doubled up his lines. Captain Hem-inway moved about in the midst of the fire, ordering his men to withdraw across the highway into the 165th area. There he reorganized them

and marched them by a circuitous route to the rear and organized a new night position one hundred yards in rear of the dump, on the same side of the road. Shortly after midnight the Japanese began to quiet down. By dawn there was only an occasional hostile shot heard along the whole front.

The first day at Mt. Tapotchau had been the hardest day the 27th Division had spent in action in World War II. Everywhere the units had bumped their heads against determined resistance. At the end of the day, except on the right flank, the lines had been advanced approximately four hundred yards, but on NTLF operations maps no advance was shown. According to corps, the division occupied exactly the same lines which they had taken over from the 4th Marine Division. The action had been intense, not only on the front lines, but all over the Division area as well. From his vantage point atop Mt. Tapotchau the enemy had excellent observation on the whole road network for a distance of two miles to the south. From time to time they dropped artillery fire and mortar shells onto critical road junctions or on blind curves. Small bands of snipers roamed densely wooded areas in the rear, harassing command posts and roads. Medical jeeps were particularly vulnerable to enemy action. Because of their loads of casualties they had to move slowly and the Japanese seemed to take a particular delight in trying to knock them out. By morning of 24 June all jeep drivers had adopted the practice of hiding their human cargo under blankets or ponchos, anything to disguise the fact that they had wounded men aboard. Vehicles winding up the tortuous hairpin curves that led to the fighting zone finally were forced to travel at breakneck speed to minimize the fire that was placed upon them. Engineers came forward with bulldozers and cut new roads to reduce the number of turns and thus speed up traffic in the Division area.

By late afternoon of the 23d, the Division knew pretty well what it was up against. If nothing else, the first day had been valuable in developing the enemy's position. At 1715, Colonel Kelley, Colonel Ayers, General Ross, and General Smith met in a conference to determine the course of the next day's action. They decided that the 106th Infantry would concentrate on the Tapotchau cliffs, using tanks and Cannon Company vehicles to support a direct infantry attack by the 2d and 3d Battalions. The 3d Battalion would also be responsible for the toughest job of all, the floor of Death Valley. The 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, would shift its attack. Instead of again trying to push out into the open ground, Lt. Colonel McDonough would advance directly down the crest of Purple Heart Ridge, cleaning it off as he went. Experience had shown

that the Japanese had extensive positions along the chain of hills, but there was also good cover to be found in the heavy foliage, in contrast to the exposed terrain in the corridor. The 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, would clean up the position in its front by a diversionary attack. While Companies A and C continued to engage the enemy on their front, the battalion reserve (B Company) would move by a covered route around the left flank, passing through the 2d Battalion zone to a point opposite the Japanese guns, then face right and launch an attack against the flank of the position. When all the opposition in this area had been reduced, the 1st Battalion would move on to the north, cleaning off the east slopes of Purple Heart Ridge and the low ground as far to the right as the Division boundary.

Chapter 31: The Controversy Continued

THE ACTION OF 23 June, as already seen, had been conducted against mounting Japanese opposition. Every front-line unit had taken several casualties against an aggressive enemy. Before the end of the day, Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith had already expressed dissatisfaction with the progress of the 27th Division. At 1500 Maj. Gen. Sanderford Jarman, commander of the Saipan Garrison Force, then charged with the development of Aslito Airfield, visited NTLF headquarters and attended the daily afternoon staff conference. At its conclusion General Jarman held a long talk with the corps commander. At this time, five hours after the attack had jumped off, General Smith already expressed concern over the 27th's failure to advance. He made the statement that the 27th wouldn't fight and that "Ralph Smith won't make them fight." He further asked General Jarman to visit the Division CP to see what could be done to make the 27th move. General Jarman did this with the result that on 24 June Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith personally visited his front-line rifle companies at 0630 in the morning and remained there until the time of his relief at 1500. In the course of that time he learned by his own observation and experience where the enemy were, what the nature of the opposition was, and evolved a plan to deal with it. During the Division Commander's action on 24 June he narrowly escaped death on at least seven occasions. At one time General Smith was caught in the midst of a Japanese mortar and artillery attack which took the lives of sixteen men within thirty yards of him.

NTLF seems to have been under a serious misapprehension as to the amount of opposition in front of the 27th Division during this period. Lt. Col. Thomas Yancey, corps G-2, repeatedly published in his reports that the opposition was "light" and consisted of small groups of enemy. Not once during the next three days did Colonel Yancey or any member of his section visit the front lines of the 27th Division or talk with any of the commanders there. Nor were there any other members of the corps staff in the area during the next three days, save an artillery officer attached to the G-3 section and an aide of Lt. Gen. Holland Smith who came up on the afternoon of 24 June to deliver the relief orders to the 27th's commander. Furthermore, there is no official record in corps headquarters papers of the fact that the 4th Division gave up ground on the night of 22 June. In NTLF G-3's Periodic Report No. 9, dated 1600 23 June, there appears the notation that the 27th had mistakenly relieved reserve elements of the 4th Division in the morning. Yet, at the time, as already noted, 27th Division units were led to the point of relief by guides from the 4th Marine Division, as is military

custom, and the author was present during the relief and expressly heard reference to the fact that elements of the 27th Division were taking over the front line from Marine officers.

Lieutenant General Holland Smith finally relieved Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith of his command during the afternoon of 24 June. The corps commander visited the flagship of Admiral Turner during the morning and obtained authority to make the change, presenting a letter giving his reasons for the request. The two main points in his case were the contravention of orders at Nafutan Point, and the failure of the 27th Division on 23 June which, according to the corps commander, disrupted the entire corps scheme of operations on Saipan. In regard to the latter charge, it was held specifically that the 27th launched an uncoordinated attack from seventy-seven minutes to two hours late, then maintained such a slow rate of advance in the face of light opposition that the flanks of the two Marine Divisions were uncovered and they were forced to halt their advance.

The original letter thus presented was elaborated upon four days later, upon request of Lt. Gen. R. C. Richardson. In his 27 June letter, the corps commander made two charges in connection with the 23 June action as follows:

(1) The attack was launched piecemeal. Units crossed the line of departure from fifty-five minutes to two hours late.

(2) At darkness the 27th Division pulled back on the right flank. This resulted in a gap. [In respect to this charge, we have already noted that C Company did pull back its lines to dig in around Hill Love, but according to journals, contact was re-established upon receipt of complaints from the 4th Division. The gap was not an important one, being easily covered by fire. Furthermore, as already pointed out, responsibility for maintaining contact belonged to the 4th Division and they had deliberately broken it off shortly after noon in order to pull over the hill on their left flank for protection from the fire that was hitting the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry. The gap existed all day without serious consequences and with no complaint from anyone.]

The 27 June letter also contained other minor charges and some information as to distances traveled, all of which had little actual bearing on the case. On 4 July, General Richardson appointed a board of general officers to inquire into the relief of Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith. On 4 August, after a full investigation, this board held that the relief was not justified by facts and ordered the general restored to full duty. He was given command of the 98th Division and later served in ETO.

Chapter 32: The Attempt on Death Valley

THE HOUR OF ATTACK on 24 June was set at 0800. The plan of attack, as already noted, called for action against three principal strongpoints. In the zone of the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, all units moved out promptly at 0800. Lieutenant Cloyd, of C Company, with the permission of the Marine unit on his right, moved to his rear and up onto the ridge in the Marine zone of action. By putting the crest of this ridge between him and the enemy emplacements he was able to advance easily all the way northeast to the end of the hill and by 0900 had completely by-passed the pocket. When the leading elements of the company reached the nose of the ridge, overlooking the small shelf where Lieutenant Fleck's burned-out tank blocked the Chacha road, they built up a firing line and proceeded to cover the whole east side of Purple Heart Ridge as far north as Hill Victor. The Japanese freedom of movement, which had been so evident the day before, was ended by this one move. C Company took no further forward steps during the day, but kept a firm physical link with the Marines on the right. One platoon advanced well down onto the Kagman Plain, working with the Marines to clean out the high ground that remained east and south of Purple Heart Ridge. Early in the afternoon, the enemy on Hill Victor tried to drive Lieutenant Cloyd's men off the hill which controlled the Shrine Valley, by which the deep depression between Purple Heart Ridge and Hill Q came to be known in succeeding days. Mortar fire which dropped into C Company in heavy volume, wounded thirteen men and killed two, but caused no shift in position.

Lieutenant Cloyd's move had not helped the rest of the battalion in its efforts to clean out the pocket in front of Company A. Fire from C Company could not reach the Japanese and there had been no weakening of the position during the night. Company A had moved from its night positions at 0800 and once more attempted a frontal attack across the canefield. The heavy small-arms and machine-gun concentration which greeted it killed Pfc. Apollo Abilene and pinned down the rest of the company almost at once.

While Captain O'Brien had been trying to push home a frontal attack, Lt. Jose Gil and B Company were moving cautiously around the left flank. The area was shaped like a big saucer and the west lip gave B Company enough concealment so that its movement was undiscovered. When opposite the point from which most of the enemy fire seemed to be coming, Lieutenant Gil faced to the right and ordered his 2d Platoon to scramble up the slight rise of ground and into the saucer at full speed, to effect a maximum of surprise. Lt. Sam A. McBride, in command of the platoon, pushed his men rapidly, and succeeded in getting

fifty yards beyond the saucer's lip before being taken under fire. There the full force of the Japanese position was switched to meet him and the platoon was forced at once to go to earth. McBride and Pvt. John Connelly were mortally wounded in this first blast and eight others of the platoon were hit. The survivors were all in a precarious position. They were pinned down in an open field with no cover except the furrows between the cane stubble.

During the hour in which the men were pinned down in the cane-field, every effort was made to extricate them. Lieutenant Gil and his first sergeant, Bartholomew Mooney, personally moved up to the edge of the saucer and scrambled into the field where they managed to get hold of Lieutenant McBride and two other wounded and drag them back, but until Captain O'Brien of A Company brought a platoon of light tanks into the area, the majority of both A and B Company remained pinned down. Then, with the help of the tanks, the whole line advanced a short distance, flushing eight enemy soldiers into the open and killing them. By noon, however, enemy mortar fire had forced the retirement of the vehicles and both rifle companies. The position resisted as strongly as ever.

Both the Division Commander and Colonel Kelley had been nearby when the unfortunate B Company platoon was trapped in the cane-field and at 0935 held a conference with Major Mahoney at the 1st Battalion CP. At this conference it was decided to commit the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, moving it along Hill Q by the same route which Lieutenant Cloyd and C Company had just followed. When the battalion reached C Company's front line, it would turn left, descend to the bottom of the deep Shrine Valley, and then attack straight up Purple Heart Ridge to the crest of Hill X-ray-Yoke, the second peak. There it would meet the 2d Battalion, tie in, and advance down the ridge as the regiment's right flank. This movement would by-pass the pocket in front of the 1st Battalion, which would be left behind to mop it up. Major Claire began moving his troops toward the front line at about 1000.

Meanwhile, the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had been moving to clean off Purple Heart Ridge. Like all other troops in the 27th Division zone, Lt. Colonel McDonough's men had jumped off at 0800. On this morning he used a column of companies, with G Company in the lead and F Company following closely, echeloned slightly to the left, to mop up the lower fringes of the ridge. Because of the narrowness of the ridge, G Company used a platoon column. The lead platoon was the 2d, under Lt. Earl W. Montgomery. The advance was extremely slow because of the dense tangle of undergrowth which covered the entire

ridge. By 1000 Lieutenant Montgomery's platoon had investigated the western slopes and crest of Hill Charlie without finding any trace of enemy and was pushing on toward Hill X-ray-Yoke. At the bottom of the valley between the two hills the leading men came suddenly upon a terrain conformation for which they had not been prepared, one which the deep foliage had hidden. Instead of good footing they found a gulch some thirty or forty feet deep. In order to cross the fifty-yard chasm they would have to crawl down a series of ledges that were arranged like steps. Each step varied from three to eight feet in height. On the opposite wall similar steps led up to the base of the next hill. Lieutenant Montgomery had been advancing in two squad columns and now directed his right squad to begin descending while the one on the left delivered covering fire on the next hill. The whole right squad had dropped down to the first step, about four feet, and was beginning to make the seven-foot drop to the next before any fire came in. The leading man, Sgt. Carle E. Pearson, let himself over the ledge and dropped to the ground below. When he turned around, he took one step and then suddenly brought his rifle up to fire across the gulch. Before he could get his shot off, however, he dropped dead with a bullet in his stomach. Both Pfc. John A. Anderson, who was next behind Pearson, and the squad leader, Staff Sgt. Roger J. Sheehy, saw him fall. Sheehy could see a rock on the ledge below that would give cover from the direction in which Pearson had been going to shoot. He told Anderson to drop down behind the rock, but as the rifleman moved to comply he got a bullet in the back. The rest of the squad immediately took cover wherever they could on the ledge. Sheehy called over to Pfc. Howard W. Ennis, leading scout of the left squad, to see if anything was visible from over there. There was no answer. Ennis had dropped to the ledge and had been wounded without anyone having seen him. When he failed to answer Sheehy's call, Staff Sgt. Michael Barbera, the left squad leader, crawled forward to see what was the matter and saw Ennis lying on the ledge below. Barbera dropped down over the ledge to try and lift the wounded man back to safety, but as he hit the ground below, he was hit in the stomach himself. Lieutenant Montgomery now crept forward and forbade any more men to go down over the ledge. Pfc. George M. Matthews now went to each man in the platoon and borrowed as many rifle slings as he could. From these he made a rope with which he intended to lift Ennis out of the gulch. Montgomery took the slings and he and Pvt. Frederick B. Miner went over to the rim and began lowering them to Ennis. As they lowered, both the platoon leader and Miner were seriously wounded. Matthews then came down to the edge and finally succeeded in lifting Ennis out. By this time the whole area was

blanketed by rifle and mortar fire and Captain Chasmar ordered the platoon to hold up until the outcome of F Company's attempt to bypass the gulch was determined.

Captain Leonard had been quick to act. As soon as G Company had been held up, he had fanned out his column to two platoons abreast and started a movement around the left flank. On the extreme western slope of Purple Heart Ridge the gulch had given way to a mere valley and the F Company commander thought he could push across this easier route, by-passing the gulch and the enemy therein. As the two platoons started up Hill X-ray-Yoke, however, Pfc. Willie Warren, the leading scout of the left platoon, detected fifteen or twenty Japanese. He immediately passed the word back to the company commander and the order was given to form a skirmish line and advance to knock out the enemy positions.

As the platoon pushed forward it began to receive heavy machine-gun fire and some mortar fire. It was soon determined that there were at least three machine guns facing the company, together with many more than the twenty riflemen that Warren had estimated. Before the attack had progressed many yards everyone was pinned down, but because of the good cover most of them could keep on firing.

Warren picked off the entire crew of one machine gun, one by one, and the continued American fire caused some cessation of the enemy action. When the infantrymen tried to advance again, however, they were met by a renewal of the Japanese fire. In rapid succession Pvt. Henry T. Smith was wounded and Pvt. Albert Silva was hit twice and killed. Several of the defenders were killed, however. Captain Leonard, who by now was with the platoon, ordered Warren to take a squad and circle to the left and try to get on higher ground, but in the attempt Warren was wounded as was Pfc. Thomas Q. Perkins, who engaged unsuccessfully in a duel with a Japanese rifleman behind a bush. Perkins missed but his adversary didn't. Once again the Japanese fire became heavy enough to pin down the advance.

Captain Leonard now decided upon a wider flanking movement, using his reserve platoon, but when it was found that this would bring the platoon out into the exposed valley itself the company commander ordered a large patrol to move out to the farmhouse to be sure that no enemy had reoccupied it during the night. Fire from there would be extremely dangerous to his projected move. The patrol was under the command of Lieutenant Andrews and consisted of nine riflemen, one LMG squad of six men, and two BAR men. It was accompanied by Lt. Henry W. Morrow, company executive officer, and Lt. Arthur H. McManus of Company H. (Lieutenant McManus was not a member of the

Division. Prior to the departure for Saipan he had been one of a group of infantry replacements attached to the 165th Infantry for training. When he was detached on the eve of the regiment's departure for battle, he stowed away on the USS *Custer* and presented himself to Lt. Colonel McDonough on the second day out from Pearl Harbor. He was attached to H Company for the battle, a fact which pleased him very much.) The patrol made its way cautiously across the floor of the valley to a point only a few yards short of the house. There, without warning, the men received a sustained burst of machine-gun fire and several rounds from mortars and high-velocity guns. This sudden outburst killed Lieutenant Morrow and Pfc. John R. Horton and wounded six others, including Lieutenants Andrews and McManus. Two of the F Company men, Private First Class Nagle, who had crawled along the ditch the afternoon before in order to help bring in the wounded Perreria from the valley, and Pvt. Roy P. Moore, dove for cover to the right of the main body and in so doing accidentally discovered the Japanese machine gun near the house. Both men charged it at once and killed the two enemy who were manning it. They also found a second gun in the vicinity which was unmanned and destroyed it.

The 2d Battalion now made ready to renew the assault on Hill X-ray-Yoke, but before anything further could be done, word was received that a Japanese tank attack was moving down the valley from the north and the men had to take up defensive positions to repel it. This attack was eventually knocked out by the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, but it had no sooner ended than another was reported forming. It was well after 1400 before the second one was definitely deemed unlikely, and by the time Lt. Colonel McDonough had reorganized for the push up the hill, the 3d Battalion was already moving up it from the opposite direction. The 2d Battalion waited, therefore, until the other attack should reach a point nearer the summit. The battalion commander felt that it was foolish to attempt any more expeditions into the open valley and unless this was done he would be attacking directly into the face of the troops on the other side of the hill. There was no further advance on the part of the 2d Battalion during the day and at 1700 all companies dug in on the forward slope of Hill Charlie.

The 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, meanwhile, had been fighting the action that gave Death Valley its name. Plans had called for a continuation of the action broken off the evening before. The whole of the valley had now become the battalion's responsibility with the shifting of the 165th Infantry's attack along Purple Heart Ridge. The immediate task facing the battalion was the elimination of the Japanese positions along the cliffs of Tapotchau and the mopping-up of any enemy

emplacements that might be found in the northern edge of the woods. Inasmuch as F Company had received considerable fire from that direction on the previous afternoon, it was thought probable that there might be one or two machine guns there. Two platoons of medium tanks had been assigned to the battalion for the day, one under Lt. Jack Lansford, attached to L Company, the other under Lt. Richard Hitchner, attached to K Company. The two assault-company commanders had agreed that L Company would move first on the left. Captain Heminway would wait on the edge of the woods until L Company had cleared out the fringe where it bent to the north in his zone. During the waiting period K Company would direct tank fire and canister from the battalion antitank platoon against suspected cliff positions. The work of L Company would bring it close to the cliffs on the left and as soon as the last traces of enemy had been removed, a coordinated attack would be launched with L Company moving against the cliffs while K Company advanced across the floor of the valley toward the north.

The tanks were late in arriving, but L Company moved out promptly at 0800 with two platoons abreast. The whole line crept forward through the trees for approximately sixty yards and had reached the edge of the woods without receiving a shot. As the right platoon's leading scout, Pfc. Thomas A. Menafee, emerged from the tree-line he was confronted by several piles of large rocks. He kept moving forward and soon began to scramble over the stones. He eventually used his arm to vault over the last part of the pile and found himself sitting on the laps of five enemy soldiers who had been manning a machine gun. To say that Menafee and the Japanese were surprised would be understatement. They just sat and looked at one another for several moments. Menafee was the first to recover, jumping to his feet and shooting two of the occupants and bayoneting a third to death. Then dropping a grenade into the lap of a fourth, he scrambled back out of the position. The fifth Japanese threw a grenade at him that sailed over his head and landed in the midst of a little group of L Company men who had just moved out of the trees, wounding three men, including Tech. Sgt. Russel E. Harjung, the platoon sergeant. Menafee then turned around and killed the last man in the position. Captain Hallden immediately ordered his men to cover the area surrounding the rocks to prevent any reinforcement of positions that might be remaining in them. Individual soldiers began crawling forward to investigate the other rock-piles. Pfc. Bob T. Brown was one of these men and he rounded one big pile just in time to meet five enemy soldiers coming the other way, dragging a machine gun with them. Brown sat down where he was and squeezed off five shots, killing one Japanese with each shot.

At almost the same time this situation developed in front of L Company's right platoon, the left, under Lt. Robert E. Ebersole, had stirred up a hornets' nest. These men had found nothing in the woods, but by observing the cliffs closely to their front they had definitely located two 40mm gun positions. In trying to kill some of the crew with rifle fire, the platoon had become involved in a duel with the whole cliff side. At this time Lieutenant Lansford's tanks arrived and Captain Hallden turned them over to Lieutenant Ebersole. The platoon leader maneuvered them into position and continued his fight on more even terms. One of the tanks scored a direct hit on a Japanese gun, but within half an hour three of the vehicles had been seriously damaged. One suffered a hit on its 75mm gun tube and the other two were hit several times by mortar fire. As it had since the American troops first developed the position, Japanese fire now became serious. In the general concentration which followed, M Company lost thirteen men wounded, including Lt. Samuel M. Clark and First Sergeant Lambruscetti.

Shortly after 0900, while the 3d Battalion was in the midst of the enemy fire, 27th Division headquarters received a call from the 2d Marine Division, via corps headquarters, regarding the failure of the left flank of the 27th to move forward. Colonel Stebbins, the Chief of Staff, called the 106th Infantry to find out the situation there and was informed that the 106th had pushed its lines from fifty to a hundred yards north. Colonel Stebbins told Colonel Ayers that this advance was unsatisfactory and that the failure of the 106th to advance was proving embarrassing to the Division. The regiment must move forward at once. This message was relayed to Lt. Colonel Mizony who went to K Company where Captain Heminway had been holding up until Captain Hallden had completed cleaning out the woods. The battalion commander showed the message he had just received to Heminway. The company commander told Mizony that he did not like the situation, but that he would carry out the order. As he left the colonel he turned and waved his hand and said, "Goodbye, Hi. It's been nice knowing you."

Company K immediately pushed out into the valley with two platoons abreast, accompanied by Lieutenant Hitchner's platoon of tanks. The mediums laid down a steady stream of fire on the cliffs at the left. Captain Heminway had picked for an intermediate objective a small ditch at the end of the downslope a hundred yards ahead. Here, he thought, the small fold in the ground would give him some cover to reorganize before pushing on north. In addition to that from his tanks, covering fire was delivered on the cliffs from a platoon of M Company's heavy machine guns, his own lights, and from his own reserve rifle

platoon all of which he left in the cover at the point where the highway entered the valley. His own mortars, those of M Company, and fire from the 106th Field Artillery also supported his advance. The two assault platoons moved forward in a long thin skirmish line, at a run, firing their rifles as they advanced.

Halfway to Heminway's objective, there had been no return fire from the Japanese, but then the whole cliff seemed to erupt at once. Five K Company men dropped, one killed. Then seven more were killed, including Captain Heminway, and ten wounded. The company commander's death paralyzed the whole line. The company executive, Lt. Jefferson Noakes, had remained behind with the rear elements of the company at the entrance of the valley. Lt. Carroll Schwebel, platoon leader of one of the platoons, immediately called Noakes on the radio and notified him of Heminway's death. The new commander told Schwebel to hold the men and find what cover he could. Noakes then started at a dead run through the fire-swept ground, arriving at the ditch within a few minutes.

While the infantry was pinned down in the bottom of the valley under a withering fire, the tanks had been wandering around in the immediate front, trying to put some kind of effective fire on the cliff positions. At almost the same time that Noakes made his dash, Lieutenant Hitchner's tank was hit by mortar fire and set aflame. The crew had to evacuate and then scurry back thirty yards through open ground to K Company. Three of the five men were wounded in the process. Shortly afterwards another of the vehicles received a direct hit and at this the other three withdrew. On the way out a third vehicle was damaged by shell fire.

Lieutenant Schwebel was the commander of K Company's right platoon. The left was commanded by Lieutenant Garnett. Schwebel's men had a little better protection from the Japanese fire than did Garnett's, the ditch in the latter's area being scarcely a foot deep. When Captain Heminway was hit, most of Schwebel's platoon had crowded over to the right to take advantage of the better cover, leaving a considerable gap between the two platoons. When Lieutenant Noakes joined the assault elements of his company, he joined Schwebel's half. His first move was to attempt to reorganize the company to continue the advance, but when he tried to reach Garnett on the small radio which Schwebel carried he could not raise the other platoon leader because Garnett was hugging the ground with his aerial in defilade. It was during this time that the tanks reached the entrance to the valley and after talking to the tankers about the situation in the open ground, Lt. Colonel Mizony immediately got on the company -300 radio and

ordered Noakes to withdraw the company under cover of a smoke screen which would shortly be laid in the valley. When this message went out, Garnett received it and Noakes missed it. When the smoke was laid down, Garnett's platoon got up and ran back to the valley entrance. Schwebel's stayed where they were. The smoke proved to be largely ineffective and seven more of Garnett's men were wounded during the withdrawal.

It was several minutes before Schwebel realized that Garnett had pulled back. He informed Lieutenant Noakes and the new company commander ordered him to see if he could work to the right along the ditch into the 165th zone of action and out that way. Schwebel agreed to try and for almost an hour he and his men crawled along the ditch and through the furrows of a canefield, eventually reaching Purple Heart Ridge behind the 165th Infantry lines. Schwebel then circled back and reported to Lt. Colonel Mizony. The platoon had suffered three more wounded during the movement.

Lieutenant Noakes and two others had remained behind in the ditch with the wounded. One of the two who stayed with the company commander was Pfc. Arvo Arlberg who had already been wounded, but who would have been able to make his way out with Schwebel. At approximately 1140, Lieutenant Lansford, with two tanks and eight volunteers under Tech. Sgt. Lester Klein, moved back into the open and down to the group of wounded. Those who were unable to walk were dragged in through the escape hatch in the bottom of the vehicle, while others were half-carried, half-supported by the able-bodied patrol as they moved slowly back up the slope toward the line of trees, using the tank as a shield.

The two vehicles that Lieutenant Lansford took into the valley had been the last two remaining of the ten mediums that came up to the 3d Battalion four hours before. Three others had been damaged in the continuing action of L Company on the battalion's left flank after K Company moved out into the open ground. One of these vehicles had received a direct hit from a Japanese artillery piece at about 1000. The shell not only put the tank out of commission, but fragments had also wounded Lieutenant Ebersole seriously. L Company had fought continually during the period after 0900, but at noon was still held on the edge of the woods by serious fire from all along its front, some of which came from the piled-up stones only a few yards away. At least one machine gun from these positions was also putting fire on K Company from the rear.

At 0955 Lt. Colonel Mizony received another call from Division headquarters which ordered him to commit his reserves, if necessary, to

speed the advance. The battalion commander now called up Lieutenant Johnson of I Company and the two men looked over the situation. There was a big gap between K Company's left flank (then in the valley), and L Company's right. Between the two were many of the rockpile positions. Mizony thought that if I Company moved down the road in a column that they might be able to destroy some of the positions and then deploy to fill in the gap. Lieutenant Johnson ordered his 1st and 2d Platoons to move out in that order, stringing through the gap by which the road entered the open ground, then cutting to the left along the edge of the woods to the positions.

The movement was executed swiftly, but the head of the column had not gone more than a hundred yards when mortar, small-arms, and machine-gun fire began raking the line from end to end. By this time the valley was one big cloud of dust from the fire which was being placed upon it. Observers later stated they had never seen Japanese fire sustained over such a long period of time in such volume. The I Company platoons began taking casualties almost at once. The commander of the 1st, Lt. John P. Kolling, was mortally wounded and the platoon guide, Staff Sgt. Earl Mills, was seriously hit. As Kolling lay dying he called back for Tech. Sgt. Benjamin Morra, the platoon sergeant, to come forward and take command. On the way to the head of the column Morra was seriously wounded by a mortar shell that landed a few feet away from him. Some minutes later the injured man recovered and dragged himself forward and assumed command. Almost an hour later Morra was killed while still directing fire from a prone position beside Kolling's body. I Company's two platoons now proved to be in a more serious position than K Company. They lay in the open on the gently sloping hillside going down to the bottom of the valley. It had been both Lieutenant Johnston's and Lt. Colonel Mizony's intention that the men would get back into the trees if enemy fire became too thick, but before such steps could be taken all the men were pinned to earth where they were, unable to move anywhere without drawing heavy fire. Pfc. Keith Kingdon, Pfc. John Kraleman, Pfc. Rosario Sara, Pvt. Robert Shough, Pvt. Robert Stephenson, Pfc. William Van Wicklen, and Pfc. Elmer Koeppe were all killed as they lay there, or tried to move out. Thirteen other men were wounded. Not only did the enemy direct fire from the cliffs, but shortly after 1200, after K Company had successfully withdrawn, they launched a tank attack down the highway from the north. Three of the Japanese tanks, out of a total of nine that started, reached the last bend of the road before arriving at the woods. These three vehicles in some cases were only a few feet from the I Company men. Fire from one of them killed Morra, and wounded another

thirteen men. The three tanks were all knocked out by antitank gunfire from the AT platoons of the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, and 3d Battalion, 106th.

Lieutenant Johnson, using his reserve rifle platoon, his weapons platoon, and his company headquarters, had worked frantically to relieve some of the pressure on the two exposed platoons. Lt. Colonel Mizony added every available man, including Battalion Headquarters and Headquarters Company to the firing line that was now pouring fire into the face of the cliffs. The total of American fire equalled that of the Japanese. The din of battle was deafening. In the midst of the efforts to release the two I Company platoons Japanese riflemen were discovered infiltrating into the woods and it became necessary to clean up the handful who seemed to be abandoning the rockpile positions immediately in front of L Company. Several of the enemy were killed by the reserve platoon of I Company under Lt. Robert J. Bonner, but in the process two more I Company men were wounded and Lieutenant Johnson was hit by fragments from a grenade dropped on him from a tree.

The last 3d Battalion man in the valley finally managed to get back to the tree-line at 1400. Since 0800 the battalion had lost 137 men in the attempt to force an entering wedge into the corridor. With the losses suffered on the previous day this left all three rifles companies severely understrength. All of them had lost the equivalent of one platoon. What was worse, the morale of the men was extremely low. In the gloomy light of the cloudy day they could look out into the valley and count over a hundred dead bodies in plain view. Not a thing lived in the whole expanse of the corridor.

In view of the high casualty rate within the battalion, Colonel Ayers, late in the forenoon, decided to give Lt. Colonel Mizony a chance to reorganize his companies. Shortly before 1500, therefore, the 1st Battalion began relieving the 3d in the line. By the time the relief was completed the Division was already digging in along the whole line.

The problem of the enemy's cliff positions had been attacked from still another direction. The 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, stumbled onto it more or less by accident. As previously described, Colonel Ayers had inserted the unit into the line the night before as an attempt to solve the problem of contact with the 2d Marine Division. From the time Major O'Hara's companies entered the fight a new problem arose. The gap between the two divisions was closed, but a new one arose between F and G Companies of the battalion. For the next four days neither unit had any knowledge of the other's action except by radio.

G Company, squeezed between L Company and the cliffs, took little part in the action of this day, the direction of L Company's attack being such that it would eventually pinch out Captain Tarrant's men. F Company, high above on the cliffs, found itself almost an independent unit when daylight came on the morning of 24 June. Radio communication with battalion headquarters was sketchy. Physical and visual communication was virtually impossible because of the terrain. There were no roads leading back into the 27th Division zone so that supplies had to be brought in by carrying parties who scaled the cliffs and picked their way over open ground to the company position. When the attack moved off on the 24th, Captain Lemieux sought without success to get definite orders from Major O'Hara, but radio communication was unsatisfactory. In this emergency Major Chamberlain, commanding officer of a battalion of the 29th Marines on F Company's left flank, came over to Captain Lemieux at the hour of attack and ordered him, in lieu of other orders, to gear his actions to those of the Marines. From that time forward Captain Lemieux and his men, to all intents and purposes, became a part of the 2d Marine Division. As the days passed without any improvement in either the communications or supply problem, F Company took orders from the Marines and was supplied through Marine channels. On 24 June, after jumping off at 0800, this unit advanced for some little time without any opposition to the front.

By 1230 F Company's advance had carried it just to the north of Hell's Pocket and the right flank was opposite the point where the cliffs jutted out more into the valley to form the north point of the pocket. The incursion of this high ground into the corridor correspondingly widened the zone of action above the cliffs. Captain Lemieux's right flank was some fifty yards from the edge of the cliff as it moved up on the slopes of Tapotchau. In this situation a few scattered rifle shots landed in the platoon on the right and the company commander, rather than commit his reserve platoon to extend his line, decided to send a six-man patrol down to the edge of the cliffs to see just how much opposition was there.

After a skirmish, which killed one and wounded two Americans, a large patrol was sent out to return to the area. Within half an hour, with the help of mortar fire, this new group was able to drive the Japanese off the ground above the cliffs. Captain Lemieux surveyed the situation from the top of the cliffs overlooking the valley, and established an observation post on the point of ground that extended farthest out into the valley and put it in charge of Lt. Clarence F. Stoeckley, who was accompanied by Lt. John J. Minett of H Company, Staff Sgt.

Howard C. O'Neill, and several riflemen. Stoeckley was hardly in position before he located a Japanese field piece on a shelf of the cliff some five hundred yards to the front. This piece was placing fire on American troops at the bottom of the valley. It was in a cave out of which the enemy ran it to fire. There were nearly a hundred other Japanese nearby, all busy with the tree line in the south. Stoeckley turned the enemy group over to Minett who carefully observed their actions for some little time, calculating the intervals at which the gun was run out of the cave. After compiling the necessary data, Minett called in a concentration of mortar fire which caught the piece in the act of firing and destroyed it together with approximately thirty enemy soldiers. A short time after the completion of this mission, Pfc. Chester Kolodzeig, one of the security group for the OP, noticed a large body of Japanese making their way along the shelves of the cliff, toward the nose of ground. Stoeckley immediately began directing mortars, riflemen, and machine gunners in an effort to break up the group. He succeeded in dispersing it, but fifteen minutes later Japanese soldiers began reappearing within a few yards of the OP. It was evident that the position was being surrounded by many enemy who were crawling steadily and doggedly upward through the rocks and underbrush. When the foremost of them was within ten yards Stoeckley and his men began dropping grenades on them in large numbers. The lieutenant also called Lt. Warren F. Smith of the F Company reserve platoon and asked for reinforcements. As Smith began moving his men toward the cliffs the Japanese dropped in a heavy mortar concentration that killed the platoon leader and seriously wounded Captain Lemieux. Lt. Herbert N. Slate now took command of the company and ordered the OP withdrawn to higher ground where adequate fields of fire would give the men better protection. While engaged in this, he was ordered by the Marines on his left to adjust his line to provide better contact. Because of this order he had to abandon the OP altogether and shift considerably to the left.

The failure of F and G Companies to establish direct physical contact between them had led Major O'Hara, the battalion commander, to commit his reserve, E Company, between the other two units, during the afternoon. Company E, under Capt. David M. Waterson, had probed into Hell's Pocket by nightfall and there, amid surrounding walls that ran straight up and down, and heavy foliage, tasted the first severe opposition of this tight little stronghold. A patrol under Lt. Alexander Delgarno, Jr., managed to push a hundred yards into the area before nightfall against steady hidden opposition. One man, Pfc. John Glaze, was mortally wounded, and another, Pfc. Arthur Jones,

was seriously hit. Jones refused to allow himself to be evacuated, lying in the open under heavy fire, until he had managed to direct his companions to one enemy machine-gun position, which they eliminated. This was the only Japanese emplacement destroyed during the day, even though E Company poked around the floor of the Pocket under incessant fire. The other positions simply could not be found.

By 1500 the 27th Division had been stopped in all its attempts at a frontal advance up the corridor and the whole attention of the Division was focused upon the effort of the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, to out-flank the Japanese positions at the southern end of Purple Heart Ridge. If Major Claire were successful in placing his men on top of these hills, they could make a sweep along the wooded ridge to the north, clearing a covered route for the rest of the Division, which would then be spared the push through the open ground beneath the cliffs.

The movement of the 3d Battalion had been accomplished swiftly after the receipt of orders. Moving in column, K Company leading, the troops had climbed to the plateau, circled around behind Q Hill, and passed through C Company at 1335. No opposition was encountered during the descent into Shrine Valley. Upon reaching the floor of this deep depression, Captain Betts of K Company deployed his men with two platoons abreast. From his line of departure to the crest of Hill X-ray-Yoke lay five hundred yards of open ground on a sixty-degree slope. The order issued to the assault platoons was simply to scramble up the hillside in short rushes, using fire and movement and taking advantage of any folds in the earth that might offer cover. K Company met no serious opposition until the men reached a point fifty yards from the crest. There they ran into a blanket of machine-gun and small-arms fire that swept the hillside. Only a few feet separated the men from the trees and undergrowth of the top of the hill, but before a single soldier made it, two men had been seriously wounded and the rest of the company was pinned down on the open slope. Captain Betts tried to work his reserve platoon around the others but it, too, was soon pinned flat. Major Claire now sent I Company to circle farther to the north, but Capt. John J. Potter's men could make no headway. By 1700 the 3d Battalion's attack had stalled and Major Claire ordered both companies to pull back to the base of the hill and dig in for the night. In the two hours that remained before dark the battalion encountered serious trouble in evacuating its wounded from the hillside. Captain Betts had expressly forbidden his men to risk their lives trying to rescue the wounded, and several of them had lain in the open in a serious condition for over two hours. It had been Captain Betts' theory that to go after the men would mean delaying the attack and that once the

company's objective had been taken the wounded could be removed without too much danger. The failure of the attack had left these wounded lying exposed. The task of getting them out safely was given to Lt. William F. Sixkiller, who had volunteered for the job. The wounded had not been entirely without aid due to the work of the K Company aid man, Pfc. Andrew Zahodony, who moved from man to man administering to them until they could be removed. It was well after dark before Sixkiller, aided by Staff Sergeant Thomas J. Maloney, Staff Sergeant Matthew Wilson, and Pfc. Matthew Devlin, managed to get the last wounded man to the battalion aid station. The two most seriously hit, Pfc. Marsden L. Wittke and Pvt. Ben F. Colvin, Jr., had to be dragged by men on their hands and knees through 250 yards of intense fire.

Only one other action took place during the rest of the day on the Division front. This was in front of the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, where the attempts to reduce the pocket behind Hill Love was still going on. B Company's attack from the flank during the morning had been unsuccessful, but at about the same time that Lieutenant Gil finally succeeded in pulling his wounded out of the canefield word was received that the 2d Battalion had cleaned off Hill Charlie. This seemed to indicate that American troops were now behind the enemy group which was causing so much trouble along the 1st Battalion front. Major Mahoney therefore ordered the B Company commander to send a platoon to Hill Charlie through the 2d Battalion zone. From there it was to sweep to the south toward the 1st Battalion lines, taking the Japanese from the rear. By noon the 1st and 3d Platoons of B Company were deployed and moving down into the saddle from Hill Charlie. For seventy-five yards there was no opposition, but then two machine guns opened fire from the left rear, pinning the company to the ground. The men, however, soon discovered that they could return some of this fire and within half an hour the riflemen were engaged in a duel with the enemy positions. After two hours of continuous fire which killed two and wounded two, the efforts of B Company to eliminate the positions behind it seemed to be having little effect. Captain O'Brien of A Company finally located one of the positions and brought light tanks along the Chacha road to the east of Hill Love and took it under fire. Until darkness the vehicles continued to blast away at the Japanese positions and just before digging in for the night B Company got to its feet and walked through the whole area without drawing a single shot from the Japanese. The 1st Battalion, with the exception of C Company, dug in for the night around Hill Love.

Chapter 33: A New Plan of Attack

THE END of the second day saw little apparent change in the 27th Division's situation from the previous night. The front lines still faced Death Valley, although the 2d Battalion had extended its lines along Purple Heart Ridge as far as Hill X-ray-Yoke. On the Division's extreme right the 3d Battalion had been inserted in the line and faced Hill X-ray-Yoke from the east but had made no inroads into the enemy's position. Only in front of the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, had any important change occurred. The elimination of the stubborn position there opened the Chacha road for vehicle and troop movements and freed the entire eastern slope of Purple Heart Ridge to a flanking movement.

The Division had been under constant harassment in the rear areas throughout the day. Japanese on Mt. Tapotchau had perfect observation and put high-velocity and mortar shells on all road junctions and curves where traffic slowed down. Any extraordinary activity immediately brought down enemy concentrations. Once, early in the afternoon, the CP of the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, on Hill Q, was shelled heavily during a conference between Colonels Kelley, Ayers, Hart, McDonough, Major Mahoney, and General Smith. Six men were killed and sixteen wounded in this one attack. Later there were thirty-two more casualties in the same general area. Wounded men being returned to regimental aid stations were sometimes hit again as the slow-moving medical jeeps passed the junction of Chacha road and the Tanapag highway.

General Smith had been relieved while at the front lines at approximately 1500. Shortly after the shelling of the battalion CP General Smith was walking along the Chacha road toward Hill Love, near the road junction. A jeep drove up beside him and one of Lt. Gen. Holland Smith's aides alighted and handed the Division Commander an envelope. Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith tore it open, read it, refolded it and placed it in his pocket. The aide climbed back in the jeep and the vehicle turned around and sped toward the road junction.

The Division Commander had just formulated his plan for the next day. He had discussed with his subordinates a move by which the corridor and ridge would be by-passed by the main body of the Division and mopped up by the reserve. After reading the letter from the corps commander, General Smith turned and went back to the 1st Battalion CP. There he conferred briefly with his two regimental commanders, going back over the plan again, then climbed into a jeep and returned to Division Headquarters. He said nothing about the letter.

Maj. Gen. Sanderford Jarman had already assumed command of the Division when Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith entered the CP at approximately 1700. The former Saipan garrison commander had been ordered to proceed to Division headquarters at approximately 1330 and arrived there at 1500. When General Ralph Smith and General Jarman met, they immediately went into conference. The new commander knew absolutely nothing of the situation at the front lines and asked his predecessor to outline what he knew. General Ralph Smith called NTLF headquarters and asked permission to remain with General Jarman until next morning to orient him. After this was granted, the two generals went over the plan for the next day. Colonels Ayers and Kelley were called in and questioned. After the conference General Jarman accepted General Ralph Smith's plan in its entirety. Colonel Ayers was ordered to pull all but one battalion out of the line before daylight the next morning and march them, via the Chacha road to the curve where Lieutenant Fleck's tank had been knocked out. There they were to cut down across country to the north, along the eastern base of Purple Heart Ridge. Upon reaching the S road, which connected Chacha Village with the Aslito-Tanapag Highway, they were to attack over the ridge and into the valley. This would bring them into position beyond Hill Able. While they were reorganizing in the corridor the 165th Infantry would follow the route along the eastern slopes of Purple Heart Ridge, deploying at the S road and tying in with the right flank of the 106th. Once a Division front had been formed, the advance to the north would be resumed. The by-passed Japanese in the valley would be cleaned out by the battalion of the 106th Infantry left at the south end of the valley, with help from the Division reserve if necessary.

Both regimental commanders returned to their respective CPs upon conclusion of the conference and Generals Smith and Jarman continued their discussion. At 2230, NTLF headquarters called the 27th Division and ordered General Smith to report to Blue Beach before 0330. There he would be given air transportation back to Oahu. The discussion between the new and old commanders was then broken off. General Smith packed in the dark and left for Blue Beach shortly before midnight.

The departure of General Smith was scarcely noticed by the rank and file of the Division. The Japanese were still in position to the front as the dawn of another hot Sunday morning broke over Saipan, and the problems were still the same. Colonel Ayers had ordered his fresh 1st Battalion to lead the move toward Chacha, followed by the 3d. The 2d

Battalion was to remain behind at the entrance to Death Valley, moving its lines to the right and then attacking north to clean out the positions along the rim of the valley.

The 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, was to complete mopping up the Japanese position which had held it up for the past two days and then proceed north in rear of the other two battalions as regimental reserve. The 2d Battalion was to swing right and gain the top of Hill X-ray-Yoke behind the gulch which had held it up the day before. Access to the summit of the hill, which had been denied to the 3d Battalion, was to be gained by pushing to the top slightly south of the open ground over which Captain Betts had moved earlier. Here dense foliage would give the men some cover from the enemy fire which had swept the open hillside. This movement was now possible because the Japanese emplacements south of Hill X-ray-Yoke had been eliminated by the 1st Battalion the evening before. Once the 2d Battalion reached the top of the ridge it was to sweep swiftly toward the S road in order to arrive there in time to tie in with the 106th, moving through the pass into the corridor. The 2d Battalion was to clean off the inside of the ridge while the 3d Battalion was to clean off the outside (east) slope. The battalion boundary was to be along the crest.

All battalions moved out promptly at 0630. The day's action began in the zone of 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry. There Company A, reinforced by one platoon of B, under Lt. Arthur E. Forlands, formed a long skirmish line at the north base of Hill Love. The mission of the line was to comb the area as far north as the gulch between Hill Charlie and Hill X-ray-Yoke, eliminating any stray enemy who might have been left over from the previous evening or who might have drifted back into the area during the night. The line moved off in orderly fashion, but had not moved more than fifty yards when a machine gun opened fire directly in front of the B Company platoon, mortally wounding Lieutenant Forlands. Sergeant Brennan and Pfc. Jack Dermody managed to crawl out and drag the platoon leader in, but it was plain that he was dying so Brennan called over and told Tech. Sgt. John H. Stabile he was in charge of the platoon. Stabile came over and looked at his commander, and then "got so mad I couldn't see." He called over a BAR man and borrowed his weapon and ammunition. Then, standing up behind the first tree available he proceeded to pump four full magazines of ammunition at the Japanese position. In this brief action he killed five enemy soldiers and destroyed a machine gun which had been moved back into the old position during the night. After he had finished using the BAR Stabile continued to stand behind the tree throwing borrowed grenades into the position. When he finally calmed down

he discovered that the tree he had been "hiding" behind was a sapling not more than two inches thick in any part. The platoon sergeant's action finished off the last remaining trace of enemy occupation in the area.

The 2d Battalion had meanwhile been moving around behind Hill Love by way of the Chacha road and into Shrine Gulch. By 1010, G Company on the left and F Company on the right, were in position at the base of Hill X-ray-Yoke ready to attack the top, but ten minutes before jump-off time, the sound of voices drifted up from the chasm on G Company's immediate left. Captain Chasmar immediately held up the attack so that he could investigate. It seemed foolhardy to attempt an attack that might be enfiladed. Patrols sent into the deep gulch found it to be some sort of a Shinto shrine of arches and altars in a beautiful setting. Tracing the voices, the men found twelve very frightened civilians who were persuaded to come out of a cave and surrender only after an hour's work on the part of an interpreter. The attack of the battalion was thus delayed until almost noon.

Both G and F Companies now began a slow climb up the steep hill without opposition. Shortly after the attack jumped off, Lt. Colonel McDonough, the battalion commander, came to F Company to see if he could speed up the advance. When he left he was accompanied by Captain Leonard, and one squad of men from the Battalion Headquarters Company. He was going, he said, to make a reconnaissance for a battalion CP. He disappeared into the brush to the left, toward G Company. It was with some astonishment, a few moments later, that F Company suddenly saw the battalion commander emerge from the woods on the crest of the hill and stalk out across the open toward Hill Oboe. Lt. Colonel McDonough's party had completely circled G Company's left flank, lost its direction and inadvertently arrived on top of the hill ahead of the advance. When Lieutenant Martin, who was commanding F Company in the absence of Captain Leonard, saw the party walking unmolested along the hilltop, he took two men and ran up the hill toward them, after ordering the rest of the men to follow him as fast as they could. When Lt. Colonel McDonough saw Lieutenant Martin come scrambling up the hill he stopped to orient himself. After the executive joined the party they all stood looking at the maps trying to find out where they were on the ridge. The open ground extended for another hundred yards toward the north and then gave way to dense foliage at the base of Hill Oboe. On the edge of the woods sat a little house. Captain Leonard sent one squad under Pfc. Frank Melgoza ahead to inspect this building while the remainder of the command group laid plans for hurrying up the realignment of the battalion. As the squad

approached its objective the whole woods atop Hill Oboe blazed with machine-gun and rifle fire. Lt. Colonel McDonough, Captain Leonard, and Lieutenant Martin were all wounded seriously, Leonard later dying of his wounds. One other man was killed and four more were wounded at the same time, one of the latter being the F Company radio man. Of Pfc. Melgoza's patrol one man, Pfc. Edward Reynolds, was killed in the action.

The Japanese were quick to follow up the advantage they had gained in their surprise move. While the small-arms fire and machine guns kept F Company pinned to the hillside, mortar shells began to fall all through the area. There was absolutely no protection. To make matters worse, the wounding of Captain Leonard and Lieutenant Martin left only one officer anywhere near the hilltop. He was Lt. Joseph W. Kiley, of H Company, who had been near the battalion group. Kiley was wounded a few moments later by the mortar fire. The next senior officer in the area was Lt. Harry W. Brown of the F Company reserve platoon. When he received word that the battalion and company commanders had been hit he started up the hill and arrived near the head of the company just in time to be wounded in both legs by mortar fragments. Command of the company now passed to First Sgt. Edward Heikens. Heikens quickly got the men in hand and withdrew under orders from the new battalion commander, Major Gregory Brousseau, fifty yards down the slope to a good defensive position for the counter-attack which the enemy gave every evidence of being ready to deliver. Lt. Colonel McDonough had been wounded at approximately 1330 and Sergeant Heikens, with the help of a platoon from E Company, under Lieutenant Pearl, had succeeded in establishing a firm defensive position by 1415. For the next forty-five minutes both Heikens and Pearl, together with Capt. Joseph E. Sokal, the battalion surgeon, bent every effort to get the many seriously wounded men off the top of the hill under the intense fire which was now blanketing the area. The battalion commander was the last to be evacuated, Pfc. Melgoza and Pfc. John Rosson finally scrambling out in the midst of the fire to drag him back down the hill. Captain Leonard died before reaching the aid station. After the rescue of the wounded, F Company tried three more times to reach the crest of the hill without success and at 1700 Major Brousseau ordered Heikens to pull the whole line back to the base of the hill where good defensive positions could be established for the night. The whole action was handicapped by the fact that neither artillery nor mortars could be used due to the position of surrounding troops. When Major Brousseau attempted to work self-propelled guns and tanks into position to support the riflemen they were stopped by the terrain. At the close of the

day, command of F Company was assumed by Lt. Joseph L. Trommel, who was transferred from G Company.

The lack of supporting vehicles had been the chief reason for the failure of G Company to advance during the afternoon. Captain Chasmar's men had reached the hilltop without incident and had then swung to the north to sweep along the ridge. Unlike F Company, G Company was able to move through covered terrain after reaching the crest. Chasmar moved forward to a point opposite F Company and then held up as fire from the men below crossed his front. While waiting he called battalion, and Major Brousseau ordered him to hold where he was until tanks or SP guns could move up on top of the ridge and support him. These vehicles never arrived and at darkness G Company moved back down to the base of the hill to dig in with the rest of the battalion.

Two other attempts were made during 25 June to gain a foothold on Purple Heart Ridge from the east. The first of these was made by the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, who had bivouacked near the base of Hill Victor after its first assault on the previous afternoon. On this day, because the 2d Battalion was trying to move up Hill X-ray-Yoke, the 3d Battalion centered its attention on Hill Oboe, trying to move up just to the north of Hill Victor. Hill Victor was a jutting, rocky eminence that formed a dormer and poked out to overlook the entire plain surrounding Chacha. Three of its sides were sheer and would have to be scaled if they were climbed at all. However, while enemy positions on its top could command the road net in Kagman Point, the very formation of the hill seemed to offer some protection from fire directed by Japanese on Purple Heart Ridge at Americans in the low ground. Captain Betts decided to make use of this protection if he could.

Before beginning its attack on the morning of 25 June, K Company dispatched a six-man patrol to work up the south side of Hill Victor where it joined Hill Oboe. From this vantage point they were to take under fire any enemy who might be stationed on Hill Victor in a position to harass the attack of K Company up the slopes on the north of the projection.

Sergeant Russell Penwell and his men had no sooner started from the company bivouac area than they discovered the cliffs of Hill Victor to be honeycombed with caves from which erupted enemy fire. The sergeant kept trying to work free, and within fifteen minutes had managed to scramble forward to the base of the cliff, followed by the remainder of the patrol. He was now convinced that the Japanese

could not see exactly where he was and that by being careful he could complete his mission. However, due to the volume of fire that he was receiving from atop the hill he was not sure whether his patrol was large enough to accomplish the mission and before continuing he decided to return and report the situation to Captain Betts. Meanwhile, the company commander, hearing the fire, and not being in radio communication with the patrol, decided that he had better send out a larger group to reinforce Penwell. By the time the sergeant got back to the CP a full platoon had already gone out under Lt. Arthur H. Garber. Somehow in the brush Garber and Penwell missed each other.

Captain Betts immediately called Garber on the radio and told him to return to the company with his patrol. He had decided to take the whole company to the top of Purple Heart Ridge by swinging around Hill Victor some distance to the north. In this way he hoped to minimize the effect of the fire from Hill Victor. Before Garber could pull his men back, however, they were discovered by the Japanese and a machine gun began to play up and down the route of retirement, killing three men and seriously wounding three others.

Lt. Lloyd Welch of the company Weapons Platoon set up his machine guns in the foxholes and traversed all along the top of the cliff and searched the caves facing the American position. One member of the platoon was wounded in the duel which ensued. Tech. Sgt. Charles R. Tatelewas also brought three bazookas into play and the concentrated fire from these weapons and the machine guns soon silenced the enemy. Captain Betts immediately reorganized his company for the move around Hill Victor and set out in a column toward the north. It was only 0730.

Sergeant Teshon acted as leading scout in the new movement. Approximately five hundred yards behind Hill Victor, Teshon found a thick tree-line that ran straight up the slope of Purple Heart Ridge. The ground here was extremely steep, but the sergeant was sure that men moving in the cover of the trees could not be seen by the Japanese on Hill Victor. He turned and started upward. The others followed him, scrambling along on all fours or pulling themselves upward by the branches. Teshon's hope of moving unseen was not realized. The enemy peppered the tree-line with machine guns and small arms, but as long as the Americans stayed close to the trees they were not hit and the line moved steadily toward the top. By 0845 Sergeant Teshon had reached a point only a hundred yards from the crest of Hill Oboe. Here the steep hillside gave way to a more gradual slope, but the tree-line ended. For fifty yards there lay before the men an open grass-covered field.

Sergeant Teshon halted his advance and told the man behind him to wait until he could see if there was a ditch or some sort of defilade by means of which the company could cross the open ground. Teshon then crawled out into the field to have a closer look. Twenty yards from the end of the tree-line he was hit by a bullet and mortally wounded. Three men crawled out and grabbed him by the heels and dragged him back to cover, then one of the three, Pfc. Jack W. McClendon, volunteered to crawl back down the tree-line to Captain Betts and tell him the situation. This was an extremely hazardous trip because of the intense fire which was coming through the trees every foot of the way. McClendon only managed to get halfway before he was hit and mortally wounded. He died in the arms of Tech. Sgt. Walter J. Watkins, leader of the second platoon in line, but managed to gasp out the message he was carrying before he died. Watkins called Captain Betts on his radio (he was close enough to do so), and told him what McClendon had said. Watkins thought that by being careful a tank could climb up the hill and asked if there was one available. The company commander said there was, but doubted whether the vehicle could negotiate the hillside. Watkins told him that he would send down a guide who would know a way to get the tank up. Pfc. James R. Frayer volunteered to make the dangerous descent. Meanwhile the Japanese fire from Hill Victor was becoming more intense. Movement was extremely difficult. One K Company man, Pfc. Eugene J. Denall, peering through the branches of the trees, saw a Japanese soldier moving along one of the ledges of Hill Victor. Denall jumped through the trees to take a quick shot at the enemy, but before he could even get his rifle up, he was the target of concentrated small-arms fire. Taking careful aim he brought down his man, but before he could get back to the safety of the trees he was shot through the chest and killed.

Private Frayer scrambled down to the bottom of the hill, meanwhile, and got the tank. By circling wide to the north he was able to find a more gradual slope and by 1015 had the vehicle all the way up to the end of the tree-line. Sergeant Teshon had died while the vehicle was being brought up. Furthermore, while the tank was creeping up the hillside, Captain Betts had received a change in orders from battalion, and just as the crew was taking the big cliff of Hill Victor under fire, word came over Sergeant Watkin's radio that the company was to withdraw to the bottom of the hill for a new mission. The order was passed up the tree-line and Staff Sgt. James J. O'Rourke, who was now in command of the leading platoon, decided to move back down to the company position by using the tank for protection. As he was moving his men behind the vehicle he was hit and killed by a rifle bullet.

Unfortunately, no one saw him hit. Private Frayer guided the tank all the way to the bottom and only then discovered that O'Rourke was missing. The soldier then turned around and scrambled all the way back up the tree-line alone to find out what had happened. He found the sergeant dead.

Neither I Company nor L Company had been heavily involved during the morning. The former was deployed on the right flank of K Company and received little fire, but could not move beyond Captain Betts' line because such movement would eventually mask K Company's fire. One man was wounded by rifle fire which spilled over into the company area from Hill Victor. L Company was in reserve and spent the morning running patrols to maintain contact with the Marines who were now operating in the plain of Kagman Point.

The third attempt to carry Purple Heart Ridge from the east on this Sunday was made by the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry. This battalion had been relieved by the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, at the foot of Death Valley, beginning at daylight. By 0630 Lt. Colonel Cornett and his men were moving along the Chacha road beyond Hill Love. Behind him moved the 3d Battalion of the same regiment, which was initially to be in reserve. After the 1st Battalion had forced an entry into the corridor north of Hill Able, the reserve would move in behind it and take up responsibility for the right zone of action in the attack toward Tanapag Harbor.

The original plan, as already noted, had been to move down the Chacha road as far as the corner where Lieutenant Fleck's tank had been knocked out. Then the column was to move cross country, along the base of Purple Heart Ridge to the S road. This route actually brought the 106th through the area in which the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, was operating against Hill Victor. There would most certainly have been an intermixture of troops of the two units with a great deal of confusion had the plan been carried out. Furthermore, from the ledge upon which the Chacha road wound down to the Kagman Plain to the low ground at the eastern base of Purple Heart Ridge there was a steep drop that could not be negotiated by vehicles.

The column approached the corner where it was to leave the road very early in the morning. Lt. Colonel Cornett was in a jeep at the head of his battalion. Patrols were sent out to find a way down to the bottom of the hill, and reported back within a few moments that the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, was at the bottom and was engaged in an action against the enemy on Hill Victor. Although the Chacha road was not wholly marked on the map, Cornett learned from members of C Com-

pany, 165th Infantry, who were still on top of nearby Hill Q, that the road joined the S road right at Chacha Village, that it was open, and that it would support the traffic necessary to supply the regiment. Lt. Colonel Cornett was most concerned about this feature and felt that even though it would carry him almost half a mile out of his way, it would be much more suitable than trying to move his vehicles down over the steep ridge and through the 3d Battalion, 165th. He called regiment on the radio and asked for permission to go on down Chacha road as far as the village and swing up the S road in his attack from there. Colonel Ayers readily granted permission and the 1st Battalion, 106th, moved out and down the road in good order. One fact had been overlooked by both Lt. Colonel Cornett and Colonel Ayers. By going to the road junction at Chacha Village, the two battalions would pass well within the Marine zone of action. As it later turned out, the road junction was badly congested during the afternoon since it had to bear supply traffic for the Marines, for the 165th Infantry, which attacked north late in the afternoon, and for the 106th, which was attacking almost due west up the S road. To make matters worse, the Japanese, attracted by all the traffic there, registered several artillery pieces on it and by nightfall it was an exceedingly dangerous spot. Traffic had to detour through the canefields, which added to the confusion.

Lieutenant Colonel Cornett's men approached the road junction without difficulty at approximately 1030. The battalion commander surveyed the ground ahead. The road followed a gradual slope toward Purple Heart Ridge, almost three-quarters of a mile away. For the most part the surrounding terrain was open. Green fields of deep, waving grass were the dominant terrain features. Approximately two hundred yards before it reached the ridge, the road turned abruptly in an S turn (which gave it its name), and passed between two knob-like hills. Then it straightened out briefly, ran across more open ground and disappeared into a pass that cut through the ridge to the corridor. Cornett ordered his troops to deploy along a tree-line approximately two hundred yards west of the road juncture. The S road was to be the boundary between the two assault companies. Company A extended for two hundred yards on the right (north) side of the road and B Company extended for a like distance on the south.

Deployment was completed at 1135 and the attack was begun immediately. The battalion commander set, as a preliminary objective, the two small hills in front of the main ridge. The attack of the 1st Battalion was made with the support of antitank guns and all the battalion machine guns, which had been lined up along the LD to provide overhead fire. Howitzers from Cannon Company also placed direct fire

on the ground beside the pass. Because the ground was so open the initial advance was extremely rapid, the men of both companies moving up the slopes at a run, firing as they moved. Within twenty minutes of the jump-off, Company A reported they were on their first objective. But the cost had been high. In the pell-mell rush up the hill, Company A had lost four men killed and seventeen wounded, including the company commander, Lt. Robert C. McCoy. As far as the men knew, they had neither seen nor killed a Japanese soldier. The fire which they received was long-range, but in extremely heavy volume. It included every type of weapon the enemy had, including artillery laying direct fire. The B Company experience was similar to that of Company A, although casualties were only one killed and four wounded during the advance.

Thus, by noon, the 1st Battalion had reached a point only two hundred yards from the crest of Purple Heart Ridge. One platoon of B Company, on the extreme left, was even closer. Its platoon sergeant, Tech. Sgt. Edward Fabieszewski, had discovered a little ravine shortly after he moved out and directed his men to use it. Moving rapidly they had reached the crest of the little hill that was their objective without losing a man. They had received only a little fire. The optimism engendered by this rapid advance was soon dispelled. Reorganization was necessary before further advance was possible. In most places there were gaps in the line and casualties had thinned out the assault platoons, particularly in Company A. Furthermore, it was discovered that the hill occupied by Company A was seventy yards west of that taken by B Company and that before the attack could continue the direction would have to be changed slightly. Both companies wanted more ammunition and B Company wanted to move up its reserve platoon to fill a gap that had opened between its two assault elements. Last, but not least, fire from the enemy was growing more intense and the company commanders wanted to look over the terrain to the front in order to map out a method of attack that would suit the terrain. There could be no more headlong rushing.

As soon as the attack's forward momentum stopped, the enemy moved his fire in on the two companies. Within five minutes, all except Fabieszewski's platoon were pinned to the ground. For some reason this platoon did not receive any fire and the sergeant was not aware that any other units were pinned down. He had placed most of his men in defilade in a little ravine on the side of the hill and sat down to wait for the rest of the company to arrive. When, after fifteen minutes, no one appeared, Fabieszewski began investigating and found that the other assault platoon was pinned down on the other side of the hill.

Moving carefully, the sergeant explored the whole crest of the hill and soon discovered several pillboxes and one machine-gun position. The latter was not more than fifteen yards away from him and was firing on the other B Company platoon. He was just about to call up more of his men when an unfortunate incident served to nullify all his future action. Fabieszewski had begun to suspect that the Japanese had not seen his men approach the hill and did not realize they were there and was planning his next move on that basis. While he was motioning help forward to knock out the enemy gun closest to him, however, a Japanese soldier came running out of Purple Heart Ridge and headed toward the hill. Pfc. Frank Toth, a member of the platoon, evidently not realizing the situation, fired a shot at the running figure and killed him, but that shot gave away the position of the platoon.

Almost immediately Japanese from all along Purple Heart Ridge began laying heavy fire in on the platoon. Toth was killed and the fire became so intense that Fabieszewski had to order the platoon to pull back down in the ravine and take cover. When his men began returning the fire, Americans on the other side of the hill, not knowing where the platoon was, and thinking it must be enemy, also opened fire and Fabieszewski found himself caught in a vicious cross fire. In this situation the sergeant decided he had better try and get around to the other platoon and tell them where he was. He told his second in command, Staff Sgt. Frederick C. Smith, what he was going to do. He also instructed Smith to move the whole platoon around to the other side of the hill if he (Sergeant Fabieszewski) was not back within twenty minutes.

By using a circuitous route the sergeant reached Lt. Frank J. Pryor, the company commander, and told him where the platoon was and that if American fire was lifted, some of the Japanese positions might be reduced from the south side of the hill. Pryor agreed, but when Fabieszewski tried to get back to Smith to tell him, he was pinned down. Smith, acting under Fabieszewski's orders, eventually pulled the platoon back around the hill and joined the rest of the company.

Meanwhile, both A and B Company were trying to build up strength for the second phase of the attack. From the time they first reached the little hills, both units had kept up a steady stream of fire on the crest of Purple Heart Ridge. Under cover of this fire the reserve platoon of B Company was ordered to move forward under Lt. Arthur Klein, the executive officer, to fill the gap between platoons. This movement revealed better than any other single thing the type of resistance which the battalion was up against. Klein himself was wounded before he had taken twenty steps from the line of departure. Pfc. Charles B.

Strubel and Pfc. Joseph Burt were both killed shortly afterward and five others were wounded. An hour later, after crawling up ditches and through the long grass, the platoon finally got into position in the middle of the B Company line. Tanks were worked up the S road to the two hills and with directions from the riflemen already there, proceeded to pour direct fire at the enemy positions. Staff Sergeant Cahill of B Company took one of the vehicles up to the crest of the hill and knocked out the Japanese emplacement earlier discovered by Fabieszewski. Sgt. William Allander, also of B Company, took another tank and went to work on some of the pillboxes discovered by the left platoon on Purple Heart Ridge. At least one of these structures was destroyed, and hits were scored on several more.

The Japanese were active, too. They poured fully as much fire on the two 1st Battalion companies as they received. One by one, men of two assault companies were hit as they lay on the hillside. Pfc. William Freeman of B Company was killed as was Sergeant Cahill after his return from his expedition with the tank. Two other B Company men and twelve A Company men were wounded. Attempts to move forward were broken up before they started by the heavy fire. By 1400 it was impossible to bring up any more ammunition and attempts to move up C Company from battalion reserve were halted by fire which swept the open ground east of the two hills. The 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, which had followed the 1st Battalion to Chacha were kept behind the road junction all afternoon waiting for an opportunity to move up the hill.

Entirely by coincidence, the 106th Infantry's attack had been directed against the strongest part of the Purple Heart Ridge defenses. The line of advance of B Company would have carried directly into the heart of General Saito's CP, and on the afternoon of 25 June the Japanese commander was still there. In later days the point at which the 1st Battalion aimed its attack came to be known as the How Position. It was tacked on the rear of Hill Able, the key to the defenses of Death Valley, and was defended by approximately one battalion of infantry, armed with twenty-five machine guns and supported by three tanks, dug into revetments. There were also four artillery pieces in the position and several 37mm high-velocity guns. Behind this array of power General Saito directed the defense of Saipan from a series of caves. Later investigation proved that it was the nerve center of the whole island. Twenty radios were found there and message files of the general's communications to Tokyo. The action of the 106th Infantry on this day resulted in General Saito's abandonment of his CP in favor of one

farther north. From the moment he left this area, enemy communications broke down. Mistake followed mistake until the last days of the battle when two days' work proved insufficient to issue orders to all the remaining Japanese units on the island.

Active direction of the move to the Chacha area by the two battalions of the 106th Infantry had been left largely to the two battalion commanders. As the afternoon wore on the situation at the Chacha road junction became so tangled that the Marines complained to corps headquarters. Colonel Ayers insisted that both his battalions were west of the junction and well within the 27th Division zone. When it became obvious that the 3d Battalion was not within the Division zone and that it could not cross the road because of the heavy fire, Lt. Colonel Mizony was ordered to move it back to the mouth of Death Valley. This was at 1455.

It had already become increasingly obvious that the strategy of attacking into the valley by way of the S road presented just as many obstacles as the original move up the corridor. As night fell and the 1st Battalion was unable to extend its gains it, too, was ordered to withdraw from the area. Just before darkness fell Lt. Colonel Cornett pulled his men back to the line of departure. Next morning he marched them back to Death Valley. This attempt had cost the 1st Battalion heavily in casualties. Very few of the men had even seen a Japanese soldier during the day.

The 1st Battalion, 106th, was not the only unit of that regiment to be heavily engaged on 25 June. The 2d Battalion had been left at the entrance to Death Valley with orders to make a holding attack to the north while the other operations were taking place along Purple Heart Ridge. During the night of 24-25 June, Major O'Hara's battalion had formed the extreme left flank of the Division. F Company was atop the cliffs tied in with the Marines, and as already noted, had virtually ceased to operate as a part of the Division. E and G Companies had spent the night between the left flank of the 1st Battalion and the cliffs of Tapotchau. When Lt. Colonel Cornett was pulled out to make his attempt west of Chacha and the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, moved around to attack Purple Heart Ridge from the east, the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, was ordered to assume responsibility for the entire frontage in Death Valley. Major O'Hara moved at daylight and his two companies were ready to attack at 0800. (F Company was still atop the cliffs.) E Company occupied the frontage on the left of the Aslito-Tanapag highway, on which the 3d Battalion, 106th, had fought during the two previous days. G Company was deployed west of the highway

in approximately the same position as that occupied by the 2d Battalion, 165th, on the first day of the attack.

It was thought that the action of the units on Purple Heart Ridge would divert most of the enemy's attention there away from the valley. It was Major O'Hara's intention to push his men forward by way of a series of intermediate objectives such as the little house in front of G Company where the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had run into so much trouble on preceding days. This advance would be covered by men working along the cliffs on the left.

Before moving out into the open, Captain Waterson, of E Company, decided to send one squad under Sgt. John C. Baker to investigate the house. The men slipped out of the tree-line and ran swiftly across the open ground to the banana grove, reaching their objective without trouble. As they began to poke around the house three Japanese hiding there broke out from under it and started to run. Rifle fire from the patrol killed all three. It also ruined the peace of the Sunday morning. Almost at once the same deadly machine-gun, small-arms and mortar fire which had blanketed the area on previous days again descended. Baker was wounded quickly and a moment later Pvt. James D. Armstrong and Pfc. Vlade Zlansky were mortally hit.

The Japanese were particularly attentive to the woods where the road emerged into the valley. Here, at the juncture between E and G Companies, two men were killed and ten wounded within ten minutes by terrific mortar and machine-gun concentrations. Captain Tarrant, of G Company, now ordered his men to pull back a hundred yards to get out of range of this deadly fire.

Captain Waterson shifted his line to the left out of the fire and then bent his efforts to extracting the patrol from the grove in the valley. The E Company commander surmised, as Captain Hallden of L Company before him, that the rocks in front of the woods contained several machine-gun positions. L Company, on the 24th, had knocked out two of these positions. Captain Waterson felt that if these guns could be destroyed some of the fire on the valley floor might be eliminated. He ordered his middle platoon to move up and see if they could locate and knock out the machine guns. Lt. Elwin F. Cassady, the platoon leader, took Sgt. Ernest J. Love and Pvt. Ray F. Rosebeary and crawled forward toward the rocks. About twenty-five yards in front of the tree-line they came to a rockpile built up on a slight ledge. When they looked over the ledge they found a cave burrowed back up into it. Sergeant Love launched six grenades into the opening, flushing six Japanese. Cassady and Rosebeary killed them. Meanwhile, unknown to Lieutenant Cassady, his platoon sergeant, Tech. Sgt. John F. Polasch, had become

angry over the fate of the patrol out at the house and started on a Jap hunt of his own. He moved off to Cassidy's left and found a similar cave. Crawling in, he killed the four occupants with his rifle, and destroyed their machine gun. Some time after this Polasch was wounded as he sat in the woods, leaning against a tree, resting.

In a further effort to lift some of the fire on the valley, Captain Waterson had dispatched his extreme left platoon to work into Hell's Pocket where many of the Japanese seemed to be located. Here, as the men worked along the base of the cliff, an enemy machine gun opened fire at close range, wounding three men, one of whom died later. Shortly after receiving reports from the platoon leader, Captain Waterson ordered the patrol to hold fast until the ammunition dump within the pocket could be destroyed. This was one of two which had been discovered by E Company during the morning. Major O'Hara called a platoon of engineers to blow up the dumps to prevent a repetition of the experience of the 3d Battalion. By noon six more men had been wounded by mortars and everyone had been forced to take whatever cover they could find. Shortly after noon a platoon from B Company, 102d Engineers, began crawling forward toward the dumps, but it was almost 1500 before they succeeded in wiring them and blowing them up. While this work was going on, the whole battalion line remained stationary. During the early afternoon Sergeant Baker's patrol succeeded in getting back from the house. Baker was carried out on the back of Pvt. Homer B. Cooley, but Armstrong and Zlansky, who were still alive, could not be moved.

General Jarman, spending his first day in command of the Division, had kept a close finger on activities from his CP, instructing artillery liaison planes to make frequent reports as to the situation on the front lines. During the early part of the afternoon he made a trip forward, visiting Major O'Hara on the battalion front. At the time of his visit the two companies were immobile, waiting for the engineers to complete their work. After looking over the terrain, General Jarman ordered Major O'Hara to move his battalion along the inner slope of Purple Heart Ridge, in approximately the same area used by the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, on 24 June. This time, however, the advance was to stay just as close to the open ground as possible, skirting through the fringe of vegetation to keep out of sight of the enemy on Tapotchau and also endeavoring to keep from becoming involved with the Japanese on the ridge. Upon reaching the first line of trees that stretched across the valley, the column was to swing out along it, using its cover to deploy. After forming a skirmish line both companies were to drive

toward the battalion objective, a second line of trees that cut the valley about four hundred yards farther north. This second stand of trees seemed to be situated on top of a ridge that marked the upper end of the valley. On the maps it was shown to be only a little short of Hill Able where the 1st Battalion would supposedly break through into the corridor. Major O'Hara was to dig in for the night on this objective line and in the morning follow along in rear of the other two battalions in the drive toward Tanapag.

In order to support this attack General Jarman ordered two batteries of field artillery to be brought up from the rear and emplaced in the field adjacent to the Chacha-Tanapag road junction. From here they were to lay direct fire on the Tapotchau cliffs. The time of attack was set for 1600. Major O'Hara pointed out that the projected move would by-pass all the enemy then situated in Hell's Pocket and along the Tapotchau cliffs in the lower part of the valley. Once the 2d Battalion was moved there was nothing to stand in the way of a concerted enemy drive through the open hole to the south. (The 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, had already been committed and the 3d Battalion was some distance in the rear, in no position to move north in time to take over the blocking position.) Notwithstanding this information, General Jarman ordered the attack to proceed. Major O'Hara eventually tried to provide some protection by detaching one platoon of G Company and deploying his battalion headquarters company along the mouth of the corridor.

Battery A, 106th Field Artillery (155mm), and Battery B, 249th Field Artillery (105mm), rolled into position at approximately 1530 and registered on the cliffs. The attack was set back until 1630 to allow better coordination with the big howitzers. A platoon of medium tanks reported to the battalion commander at approximately 1600 to help in the attack. These vehicles were ordered to wait until the infantry was in the first tree-line before moving out into the valley so as not to give away the attack to the enemy. Once the two rifle companies were ready to move toward the battalion objective, the tanks were to move out and join the assault. While waiting to move into the corridor they were to put fire from their main batteries on the cliffs, along with the artillery.

The advance from the south end of the valley to the first tree-line was made rapidly and without incident. It was made in a long thin column that moved out into the hedge-like windbreak in single file. E Company was leading.

Both Captain Waterson and Captain Tarrant had had ample opportunity to observe the amount of fire that could be placed on the

open ground from the cliffs and neither wanted to expose his command more than necessary. For that reason both agreed not to spend any undue time in organizing at the proposed line of departure. Each commander would form his own skirmish line and jump off as soon as it was formed without waiting for the other. Firm physical contact would be established upon reaching the objective. The lateness of the hour also helped to make swift execution of the maneuver imperative. Captain Waterson, who was the first to get into the tree-line, deployed rapidly and jumped off within four or five minutes after he arrived. G Company was right behind and moved off to E Company's left and slightly to the rear.

The terrain between the improvised line of departure and the objective was entirely open, a deep saddle between two transverse ridges that crossed the valley. At the bottom was a small ditch. E Company, veering to the east to come up to the objective in the right zone of action, plunged forward rapidly. Just after the company left the ditch the first enemy fire began falling into the battalion. Lieutenant Cassidy, on the right of the company line, kept plugging ahead with his platoon, but the other assault platoon, nearer the cliffs, caught the full brunt of the Japanese fire and most of the men soon sought cover in the ditch. E Company was thus split, one platoon reaching the objective amid a hail of bullets, while the other was cut off about a hundred yards behind. The rest of E Company, consisting of the third rifle platoon and company headquarters and Weapons Platoon, were behind the cut-off platoon. G Company, moving farther to the left, had almost the same experience. Lieutenant Cassidy's platoon was some distance away from Captain Tarrant's men when the objective was reached, however, and neither unit knew the whereabouts of the other.

As soon as the Japanese realized that American units had reached the line of trees they seemed to turn their full attention to that quarter. Machine guns fired up and down the shelter and mortar shells began falling nearby. Lieutenant Cassidy realized within a few minutes that he was trapped and that no one in his platoon could move. In the growing dusk he could only return rifle bullets in the general direction of the cliffs, hoping they would hit something. No enemy soldiers could be seen. The platoon leader tried to raise Captain Waterson on the radio without success. When G Company set off a purple smoke pot just as it was getting dark, Cassidy asked for volunteers to go out and see if contact could be made. Sergeant Love volunteered to make the try and crawled along the line of trees for 125 yards without seeing or hearing anything of the adjacent company. There he was seen by some Japanese who began shooting at him from the cliffs. Unable to

get farther because of the fire, Love returned and reported to Cassady. Love's report that there were no friendly troops within 125 yards convinced the lieutenant that his platoon was the only unit still in the line of trees, that the smoke signal had been some kind of a sign that G Company was withdrawing. Rather than try to face an obviously superior enemy, Cassady decided to pull back to the first line of trees where he thought the rest of the battalion was and where he could get the benefit of supporting weapons.

The move back to the jumping-off point in the semi-darkness proved to be an extremely dangerous one. A little lane ran back from approximately the point where he was located to a point on the main highway just south of the trees where the company was located. Cassady reasoned that movement would be much faster along this trail than through the deep grass and told the men to move back along it singly as fast as they could. The first man had no sooner moved out than it was discovered that the Japanese had crawled into the grass in large numbers and were busily working their way toward the platoon position. Cassady's retreat proved to be a nightmare. Americans would rise to run a few steps and enemy soldiers would pop up out of the grass on all sides to intercept them. Cassady instructed his riflemen to watch closely where the enemy were, then to train rifles on the spot and shoot every time a Japanese showed himself. As the movement progressed farther to the rear the platoon broke up into small groups to cover one another. The enemy soon adopted the same tactics and the field between the two tree-lines soon became a grotesque scene of men jumping up and down to take a shot at one another.

Meanwhile Waterson's second platoon in line had been having a bad time. After being cut off and pinned down in the ditch at the bottom of the swale, they were subjected to intense rifle, machine-gun, and mortar fire. Within a few minutes seven of them had been wounded, including Lieutenant Delgarno, the platoon leader. When the mortar fire was augmented by fire from high-velocity guns, Delgarno ordered his men to disperse and crawl back to the shelter of the first tree-line. In the growing darkness a few of the men became lost and wandered around in the night trying to find the rest of the company. Most of these eventually reached the lower end of the valley and dug in there with the 3d Battalion which had moved up from Chacha Village. E Company's reserve platoon (the 1st) had only moved a few paces out from the line of departure when the enemy fire began to fall. Waterson, seeing the volume of the fire, held them in the tree-line and put them to work delivering return fire along the cliffs in an effort to relieve some of the pressure on the other platoons. The E Company Weapons Platoon

had been waiting on the slopes of Purple Heart Ridge for the rest of the company to deploy and get out of the trees so they could move in and set up their weapons. In the severe action which followed, the platoon lost physical contact with the rest of the company. Weapons were set up to fire on the cliffs, but Japanese mortar fire almost immediately dispersed the men, and rather than lose his organization the platoon leader moved them back out of range of the enemy's guns. Two of the men, Pvt. Joseph Medina, and one other man he didn't know, became separated from the platoon. Eventually they found a ledge high up on Purple Heart Ridge and settled down for the night. They were exceedingly sleepy, but before they dropped off they heard voices which they soon determined to be Japanese. After some investigation they found themselves sitting atop the entrance to an enemy cave CP. Fearful of being discovered they each took several anti-sleeping tablets but immediately dropped off to sleep. When they awoke it was well along toward noon the next day and the Japanese had departed. The two men made their way back to the 165th's lines. Meanwhile, the E Company Weapons Platoon had wandered around the valley in the dark, trying to find Captain Waterson, and, when it was unsuccessful, made its way back to the bottom of the valley and the lines of the 3d Battalion.

Company G had initially escaped much of the fire that was put on E Company and more of the men reached the line of trees. However, like E Company, before Captain Tarrant could get the whole company to the objective line, two platoons were caught in the open field and cut off. The men who did reach the tree-line were soon subjected to extremely heavy fire. Some of this was deliberately diverted to the men in the trees by Staff Sgt. Herman Salisbury, one of the first men to arrive there. Salisbury tried to attract attention to himself in order to relieve some of the fire on the rest of the company. Pfc. Arthur Gabrielson was killed and three others, including Tech. Sgt. Claude Dingman, platoon leader of the group in the trees, were wounded in the stiff fire fight that followed.

The courageous action of Salisbury's companions had some effect and the rest of G Company began to scramble forward into the shelter. Three men, Pvt. Joseph Trigger, Pvt. John Fisezi, and Pfc. David Gerdes, were killed in the move and two were wounded. One of them, Sgt. Philip T. Pincher, was hit as he dived for the trees, and the company aid man, T/4 Joseph J. Lusardi, dashed out to give him some help. Lusardi was hit in the leg, suffering a compound fracture. In spite of this he pulled Pincher to safety, then crawled around on his good leg helping where he could. Lusardi later died from loss of blood,

The rest of G Company was soon gathered in the trees and Captain Tarrant set out at once to organize a defensive position for the night. While the position was being organized the company commander ordered every available weapon trained on the cliffs to the left. He attempted to reach the platoon of tanks which were now wandering around the valley in the early dusk in an effort to locate the infantrymen. These vehicles, under Lieutenant Bullock, made three trips up and down the open corridor without seeing any of the 2d Battalion men. Before darkness set in, three of the vehicles had been hit and disabled and Bullock finally withdrew the others before they were destroyed. The smoke flare that Cassady had seen was sent up by Captain Tarrant during one of his attempts to attract the attention of the tankers.

Only one more of Tarrant's men was hit before dark. This was Staff Sgt. Nick J. Roshan, who was killed while directing mortar fire on the cliffs. Nevertheless, fire was becoming heavier by the minute and the Japanese were no longer content to stay in the cliff positions. Large patrols began moving down into the open valley and probing along G Company's positions. The company commander eventually decided to try and find E Company and form a stronger position with more fire power. After wandering up and down through the trees for half an hour, Captain Tarrant asked for a volunteer to go back through the open field to the line of departure to see if E Company was back there. Pfc. Allen R. Kennedy offered to go despite the fact that the fields were now full of marauding Japanese. After wandering around in the open for some little time, Kennedy eventually stumbled on Lieutenant Delgarno and his seven wounded men in the bottom of the ditch. Delgarno told him where Captain Waterson was and the messenger moved on back there. When he found the E Company commander he told him where G Company was and its situation. Captain Waterson immediately called Captain Tarrant on Kennedy's radio and the two officers discussed their next move. Waterson felt that the tree-line at the line of departure was the better position of the two and the more easily defended and Captain Tarrant agreed that his own position was largely indefensible because large parties of enemy were now on all sides of him. Kennedy volunteered to come forward and meet the company and guide them back to Captain Waterson.

Immediately upon finishing his conversation with E Company Captain Tarrant organized his men for the move back across the open ground. As he pulled out, however, one squad was left behind accidentally. This was an outpost squad under Sergeant Salisbury. When Captain Tarrant gave his order to withdraw the men thought it was

the Japanese who were whispering, "Come on," so paid no heed. They were left all alone without realizing it for some little time after the company left.

As G Company moved out of the tree-line toward the rear they ran into a party of ten Japanese soldiers and immediately had to take cover in the grass and shoot it out. Fire from this skirmish pinned Kennedy to the ground as he approached and almost resulted in his missing the unit as it moved back. By luck someone stumbled on him in the grass. When the march to the line of departure was resumed, Kennedy led the company back by way of the ditch where Delgarno and his wounded lay. Three more wounded had meanwhile crawled into this ditch. G Company was already carrying several wounded, but stopped to pick up the E Company men. Lusardi, delirious by this time, was being carried on a rifle litter. The others were supported or carried picka-back. Two of Delgarno's men were also in serious condition. They were Staff Sgts. William A. Amy and Edward A. Garwol, who were picked up on additional rifle litters. By 2230 the little procession had reached E Company and dug in again for the night.

The whole valley was now full of wandering bands of Japanese who were out looking for the two companies. Lieutenant Delgarno later said that several of these groups, some of them as large as rifle companies, had passed close by without seeing him as he lay in the ditch. Neither company had been able to raise battalion on the radio to tell Major O'Hara what the situation was, and supporting fire could not be utilized to protect the perimeter in the event that a serious counterattack materialized. Nor was there any method by which the companies could control activities of other American units. Particularly embarrassing was the use of flares by the naval gunfire support ships. Each time one of these flares went off it outlined the perimeter the two companies had established and attracted more and more of the scattered enemy bands, even drawing fire from the 165th Infantry positions near Hill Charlie. Finally, at approximately midnight Captains Waterson and Tarrant held another conference. Both men felt that their units were in a precarious position. They were out of water, almost out of ammunition, had only enough rations to feed part of the men, and their position would be open to murderous fire once daylight arrived. Before making any decision in the matter both company commanders used their radios in one last attempt to get through to Major O'Hara and ask for instructions. When this failed, they agreed that the best course of action was to pull back out of the valley. In order that the withdrawal would not be hampered and so that the wounded men, who were now all in great pain, would not give away the movement, a

volunteer guard was left with them until a tank could be sent out to bring them back to the bottom of the valley.

Company E moved out first, in a long column. Sergeant McKenna of E Company, who was in charge of the wounded, stopped Captain Tarrant, however, just before G Company moved and told him that he didn't think some of the wounded would last until the tank arrived and sought permission to join the procession. This was given and the G Company commander detailed a platoon to act as a carrying party. Sergeant McKenna and his wounded fell in at the end of the line.

The march that followed was a gruelling one. For two hours the companies zigzagged back and forth across the valley floor. Every five minutes a flare went off and everyone had to stop in his tracks. Large Japanese patrols moved back and forth through the area and on more than one occasion the exploding flares revealed foxholes nearby, filled with enemy soldiers. For some reason these Japanese did not offer any opposition, nor did they give any alarm.

Most of the wounded who were able, refused to be carried, but walked, or dragged themselves painfully along behind the column. The two companies finally reached the tree-line at shortly after 0300. There they were challenged by outposts of the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, and were ordered to stay outside the perimeter until daylight. The men of both companies simply dropped to the ground and went to sleep without any attempt to dig a foxhole. The wounded were passed back to the 1st Battalion aid station and evacuated.

The ten men left behind in the valley by G Company did not discover their plight until well after midnight, and then only four of the men knew what had happened. These four were the tail end of the squad and were separated by about ten yards from the rest. As the night wore on, the marauding bands of the enemy who had swarmed through the area discovered that the main body of American troops had withdrawn, and moved back to find them. Sgt. Carl P. Swineford became conscious of the end of enemy activity and became suspicious of the unnatural silence. Thinking that the Japanese might be up to something, Swineford crawled back to find Captain Tarrant to find out if there were any special instructions. It was then that he discovered the company had moved. He then tried to find Sergeant Salisbury, the squad leader, to tell him and after a half hour search in the dark and deep grass, gave it up. He was afraid by that time that Salisbury would shoot him if he did find the squad leader. When he talked it over with the other three men they all thought it best to try once more and then, if Salisbury could not be found, to try and find the company. On their last attempt the men ended up almost on the slopes of Purple

Heart Ridge, two hundred yards from where they had started. From there they struck out to the south and at a little after 0200 arrived opposite the 165th Infantry outposts and were taken inside the perimeter. During their march they had hidden several times from large parties of Japanese.

Salisbury and his men remained where they were until daylight the next morning. As dawn approached several bodies of enemy troops passed nearby on their way back to the cave positions. None of Salisbury's group fired on them because they did not hear the rest of the company firing. The story of this little band belongs to later stages of the Death Valley episode.

Only one other unit of the Division saw action in the Tapotchau area on this day. That was F Company, 106th Infantry, which was still attached to the right flank of the 2d Marine Division. At approximately 0830, Lieutenant Slate, the company commander, was ordered by Major Chamberlain, the Marine battalion commander on his left, to advance when the Marines moved off. Behind heavy artillery preparation and constant small-arms and automatic-weapons fire, the company pushed straight up the slopes of Tapotchau, arriving on the crest at 1200. There, following orders from Major Chamberlain, Lieutenant Slate swung his company to the east and dug in overlooking the valley. He was to remain there for three more days. The advance to capture the crest of the mountain had been made without opposition and without the loss of a single man, killed or wounded.

Chapter 34: Death Valley By-Passed

THE FAILURE OF I and K Companies of the 165th Infantry to capture the crest of Purple Heart Ridge in their area during the morning of 25 June had seemed to foredoom to failure the plan for a wide swing around Death Valley. However, at approximately 1030, just as the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, was moving into position to launch the attack west from Chacha Village, L Company, 165th Infantry, which had been assigned the mission of maintaining contact with the 4th Marine Division, reported that the left flank of the Marines had moved beyond Chacha Village and was advancing north with no opposition. Upon receipt of this message Colonel Kelley ordered his 3d Battalion to move from near Hill Victor and fill the gap between the Marines and Lt. Colonel Cornett's battalion. At the same time he changed the orders of the 2d Battalion, giving them the task of mopping up Purple Heart Ridge after the main advance had passed to the north. This order, it must be remembered, was issued at a time when it looked as though the 2d Battalion was going to reach the crest of the ridge without trouble. To supplement the 3d Battalion in its gap-filling mission, Colonel Kelley used the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, which had been made available to him by General Jarman and which was already en route to the north by way of the Chacha road. Lt. Colonel O'Brien, the battalion commander, was ordered to move his men to Chacha Village and fill the gap on the left of the 3d Battalion as it widened with the attack of Cornett's men toward the ridge and as the Marines moved north. Major Mahoney of the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, was to complete mopping up enemy positions in and around the Chacha-Aslito-Tanapag highway road junction during the day and move to support the two assault battalions early the next morning. Lt. Colonel Hart was sent forward to the Chacha Village area to coordinate the execution of this order. Major Claire, of the 3d Battalion, had his companies moving before 1130 and as soon as the attack of the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, moved off against the ridge, the 165th moved across its rear and began taking up positions, facing north, between the Marine left flank and Lt. Colonel Cornett's right, just north of Chacha Village. At 1445 the 3d Battalion attacked to the north and reached its objective, a line some five hundred yards north of the little town, in thirty minutes. At approximately 1700 the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, had moved in on Major Claire's left flank and established a night position well to the north of the S road. The whole movement had been completed with the loss of one man wounded and one killed. The only opposition came from the hills in front of Cornett's men in the form of long-range flanking fire. There had been no posi-

tions facing the advance. In view of the lack of enemy opposing this movement, General Jarman ordered the 27th Reconnaissance Troop to reconnoiter north along the east coast of the island after dark to determine where the next prepared position might be. Shortly after 2100 the troop, riding in halftracks, passed through the Division line and scouted ahead. At 0300 the vehicles returned to report that there were no enemy for at least three thousand yards, except for small parties of stragglers. Colonel Kelley prepared to make a long, rapid movement the next morning and told Major Mahoney to move his battalion at dawn and to be prepared to fill in on the left of the line as the gap widened between Colonel O'Brien's left and the 106th Infantry right.

During the day the action to reduce the Death Valley-Purple Heart Ridge stronghold had continued with as little success as on previous days. The floor of the valley had proven to be untenable, as on previous days. Troops who ventured out into its open areas were immediately driven out by intense fire that seemed not to have slackened a bit since the position was first developed. Only at one point had there been any appreciable gain and this was at the extreme southeastern corner where the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, had chipped away a big block of positions. This had allowed full freedom of movement along the Chacha road for the first time, and the movement of troops thus begun had resulted in by-passing of the whole position before nightfall.

In three different places during the day attacks against the eastern slopes of Purple Heart Ridge had failed, but early in the afternoon, after clearing out the shrine at the south end of Hill X-ray-Yoke, G Company, 165th Infantry, had managed to reach the crest at a point just to the north of the deep gulch that had caused so much trouble on the 24th. The next morning this was to prove the key to unlocking the whole ridge.

Two new strong positions had been developed during the day. The first of these, Hill Victor, proved beyond a doubt that the ridge had been organized as an all-around defensive position. The second was to be known as the How Position. It was that which had been attacked by the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry.

The capture of Mt. Tapotchau by the 2d Marine Division had made little difference in the situation within the valley. Although the summit of the mountain was in American hands, the cliff positions had been left untouched, and until they were wiped out fire from them would continue undiminished.

The success of the 165th Infantry in by-passing the Death Valley position and the failure of the 106th Infantry to break through the

S road pass into the corridor caused some change in the plans for the Division on the next day. The 106th Infantry was ordered to return to the bottom of the corridor and force its way through from the south while the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, cleaned off the eastern slopes of Purple Heart Ridge. In order better to coordinate this action, General Jarman attached Major Brousseau's battalion to the 106th until the position had been reduced.

General Jarman was particularly displeased with the action of the 106th on this day. He severely reprimanded Colonel Ayers for allowing his regiment to swing too wide in making the flanking maneuver. When, the next morning, the 106th was slow in moving back to the foot of the valley and launching its attack, the new Division Commander summoned the regimental commander to the Division CP and relieved him. Colonel Stebbins, Division Chief of Staff, replaced him. During the relief, Colonel Stebbins asked for Major Henry Ross, Assistant G-3 of the Division, for his executive officer, relieving Lt. Col. Joseph Farley, who now assumed duties in the G-3 section. These were the only command changes within the Division during General Jarman's period as Commanding General.

The action of 25 June also saw the beginnings of the hard feelings which were later to color the relations of the Division and the Marines in the months to come. The Japanese in the How Position continued to put heavy fire on the Chacha road junction during the next two days causing considerable damage to Marine vehicles and troops who were forced to use the junction. The Marines were indignant over the failure of the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, to reduce this position and several times threatened to send a company over to clean it out. They never did. Also a source of friction was the Japanese position atop Hill Victor. Mortar and machine-gun fire from here had been registered on a small road junction on the Chacha road where it straightened out into the plain. This road junction came to be known as Charlie Chan's Corner in succeeding days and every vehicle or soldier who came near it received a good dose of enemy fire. Particularly embarrassing to the Marines was the fact that in order to get to the 4th Division CP traffic had to use this corner. One Marine colonel finally became so exasperated that he threatened to send a platoon of Marines over to Hill Victor to get Charlie Chan. He never did. Eventually, General Jarman was forced to lodge an official protest to the theater commander about what he called "unjustified" statements of Marine officers in the matter.

Chapter 35: End at Death Valley

WITH THE FAILURE of the 106th Infantry to cut through the ridge into the corridor, action in Death Valley once more reverted to the lower end of the position. Late on the afternoon of the 25th the 3d Battalion had moved back to the tree-line at the south. It was planned to send the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, once more to the top of Hill X-ray-Yoke and with this protection move the 106th in column along the inner slopes of the ridge. General Jarman stuck to his original plan of moving the 106th into the valley along the tree-line which had served as a line of departure for the two companies of the 2d Battalion on 25 June. Due to the disorganized condition of the 2d Battalion on the morning of the 26th, Lt. Colonel Mizony's 3d Battalion was ordered to lead the attack along the ridge. It was expected that Major O'Hara would complete the reorganization of his troops before 1000 and follow along behind Mizony. When the attack reached Hill Oboe, Major O'Hara would again swing his battalion into the valley and the 106th would then advance with two battalions abreast. Meanwhile, the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, would be tied into the right flank of the 3d Battalion at the crest of the ridge. As the advance progressed Major Brousseau's command would sweep the eastern slopes.

An important addition to this plan was made by Colonel Ayers at approximately 0930. The first movement of the 3d Battalion along Purple Heart Ridge and the appearance of tanks at the end of the valley had once again roused the Japanese in the cliffs of Tapotchau. Until this time it had been hoped that as American troops by-passed this position the enemy would withdraw. It was now evident that General Saito had no intention of pulling out his troops no matter what the situation was in other parts of the island. To all intents and purposes the soldiers in the cliff positions were by-passed by the troops on Mt. Tapotchau, yet they continued to fight as though nothing had happened. When the fire began on the morning of 26 June, Lt. Colonel Cornett's 1st Battalion was en route back to the foot of the valley and Colonel Ayers went to meet him. His orders were for the 1st Battalion to clean out Hell's Pocket and the cliffs while the main attack proceeded to the north. Lt. Colonel Cornett moved his men to the south end of the Pocket at once and embarked on a task that was to keep him busy during the next three days. Even then it was not completed.

Due to the narrowness of Purple Heart Ridge the 3d Battalion moved off in a column of companies, L Company in the lead, followed by I, battalion headquarters, M, and K. Starting at 0600, the men moved without opposition as far as the crest of Hill Oboe, reaching there at

about 1020. Ahead lay Hill King which had not yet been touched by any American troops. Between it and Hill Oboe lay a deep, thickly wooded saddle. All morning the battalion column had been harassed by random rifle fire, but there had been no serious opposition. As he started down into the saddle preparatory to ascending Hill King, Captain Hallden of L Company thought he detected traces of fire lanes similar to those he had encountered in the woods at the foot of the valley. He halted his company and dispatched a patrol to work forward under Pfc. Robert E. Feller and see what type of opposition, if any, lay ahead.

While the 3d Battalion had been working forward along the inside of Purple Heart Ridge, the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had started operations on the outer slope. Major Brousseau had ordered Captain Chasmar of G Company to climb back up along Hill X-ray-Yoke, clean off any enemy he found there, and advance to Hill Oboe. Upon reaching that point he was to stop and send out patrols to work down on Hill Victor, cleaning it out from above. As soon as this mission had been accomplished they were to move on north along the ridge, in contact with the 106th Infantry on the inner slopes. To speed up the elimination of the enemy Major Brousseau dispatched E Company to the S road, where it was to engage the Japanese in How Position. If possible, the men were to clean out the area, paying particular attention to the guns that were creating so much consternation among the Marines at Chacha Village. If they completed this mission successfully they were to comb back along the S road as far as the village, wiping out any infiltrators they found there. F Company was to constitute the battalion reserve and was to remain near Hill Victor for use there, if necessary.

Company G's operations against Hill Victor began very early in the morning. Captain Chasmar did not want to wait until he had worked his whole company to the top of Purple Heart Ridge so he sent his 3d Platoon under Lieutenant David, accompanied by two Cannon Company self-propelled guns, to knock out enemy guns on the top of the hill as early as 0600. Lieutenant David split his platoon, sending one squad around to the north of the hill and taking two squads up the south side. He hugged the base of the cliffs so that Japanese guns could not be depressed to reach him and started up toward the point where the dormer of Hill Victor joined the ridge. The two SP guns were placed, one on either side of the hill, to lay down covering fire as the men climbed toward their objective. The plan failed because the vehicles could not work into position to cover the whole side of the hill and mortar and machine-gun fire soon began landing along the path followed by the two contingents. By 0815 Lieutenant David reported that he had lost two men killed and two wounded. In addition one of the guns had

been hit by enemy fire which wounded two of the crew and forced the vehicles to withdraw. Mortar shells were dropping right into the open tops of the gun mounts. It was at this point that the battle took a queer twist. On the morning of 26 June, Hill Victor had not been identified as such by the men operating around it. Lieutenant David, reading his map, was certain that the hill he was working on was Hill King and reported it as such. After he reported his first failure to his company commander, Captain Chasmar told him to keep working on the position. David talked the situation over with his squad leaders and one of them, Staff Sgt. Robert G. Sherman, thought he could climb straight up the steep cliffs if given an opportunity. David told him to make the try. Within five minutes Sgt. Earnest Hall had found a route up the steep precipice. One by one the men set out to climb up the face, slinging their rifles and holding on to anything that would support them. The ascent was unbelievably easy and at 0835 David called Captain Chasmar on the radio and reported exultantly that he was "halfway up Hill King" and that the rest of the platoon was following. Chasmar relayed this message to the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, and it was passed on down to Captain Hallden of L Company.

It was more than an hour and a half later that Hallden dispatched Feller with the patrol to investigate Hill King. Feller and his men moved cautiously through the thick tangle of foliage in the saddle and started up Hill King. As he started up he began receiving light rifle fire that soon became quite heavy. He couldn't see anything ahead, but ordered his men to return covering fire. He then reported to Captain Hallden by radio. The message puzzled Captain Hallden. According to the message he had received earlier, American forces should be on the crest of the hill by now. He called battalion and Lt. Colonel Mizony checked his maps. The battalion commander thought it was the platoon from G Company that was firing and called Major Brousseau to have it stopped. Captain Hallden expressed the opinion that it *could* be Japanese that had set up a position covering the valley from the inner slopes of Hill King. They quite possibly could have remained undisturbed and unseen by any Americans who had taken the eastern slope and crest. To take care of such a contingency he sent a platoon under Lt. Wilbur Turpin to circle around to the east slope of Hill King, make contact with G Company of the 165th, pass through their lines and comb off the western slope of the hill from above, thus taking whatever Japanese there were there from the rear. As Turpin started his move a Japanese machine gun opened fire from the crest of the hill, wounding two men. The platoon circled wider without finding G Company, and eventually returned to Captain Hallden with the word that the 2d Battalion, 165th

Infantry, was nowhere near Hill King. To make absolutely certain, the L Company commander sent out another patrol under Staff Sgt. Berle Shreve and at approximately noon this patrol reported that G Company was back on Hill Victor.

During the time that Captain Hallden was trying to locate the supposed American units on his right, he had made a careful investigation of Hill King itself. He was almost certain that he had most of the enemy riflemen and machine guns located and could eliminate them. When he passed the information about G Company back to Lt. Colonel Mizony he asked permission to attack Hill King as soon as possible. Permission was granted and every available mortar and machine gun in the 3d Battalion was passed forward to Hill Oboe. At 1300 this combined fire power opened up on the hill to the front in a fifteen-minute concentration that was designed to search out every Japanese weapon on the hill. Due to the narrowness of the ridge line at this point, Captain Hallden put only one platoon in the attack, his 2d, under Lieutenant Sedmak. The men pushed forward in a long skirmish line. The company commander moved along with the advance to be able to direct the support fire from close quarters. The advance was rapid, the men scrambling from rock to rock, using trees and holes where they found them, delivering rifle fire as they moved. The Japanese were waiting on the hill, and as the platoon reached the bottom of the saddle and started up Hill King, many more weapons than had heretofore made their presence known began firing. The assault of L Company lasted for only ten minutes. It did not die out. It simply melted away. Thirty yards from the bottom of the saddle, only three men remained of the force that started. Six men had been killed, seventeen wounded. The 2d Platoon of L Company had ceased to exist.

One of those who was not hit was Captain Hallden, the company commander, who was the only man left standing on the line. The other two men were Staff Sgt. William C. Robinson and Pfc. Earvin C. Martin, who held down the extreme left flank of the line. It was not until all the men around him had stopped moving that Captain Hallden gave up trying to advance. Then, dodging back as he had come, he reached the reserve platoons and ordered a defensive line built up on the forward slopes of Hill Oboe to prevent the development of a counterattack. After that he ordered his men to evacuate the wounded as soon as possible and called battalion headquarters to tell Lt. Colonel Mizony what had happened. L Company was now badly depleted. The action just completed had left two able-bodied men in one platoon, and the 1st Platoon was down to twelve men after having borne the brunt of the action at the mouth of Death Valley on 24 June, and the ex-

plosion of the ammunition dump on the night of the 23d. The other rifle platoon was nearly intact, but before he could launch another attack, Captain Hallden felt that he would have to reorganize his company. In view of this Lt. Colonel Mizony ordered I Company to pass through L Company and resume the attack. Company I had just lost its commander to the harassing fire of enemy riflemen along Purple Heart Ridge and at the time of Mizony's order Lt. Pierre J. Font had just assumed command. Company I effected the relief of Company L at approximately 1500.

Meanwhile, at 1300, Colonel Stebbins had assumed active command of the 106th Infantry. His first action was to visit the front lines to see the situation at first hand. He arrived as I Company was relieving L Company and ordered the attack resumed as soon as possible. To speed up the action he moved the 2d Battalion up onto Hill Oboe and ordered Major O'Hara to swing his companies out into the valley as soon as I Company had captured Hill King. Colonel Stebbins' orders were not received with any enthusiasm by either Lt. Colonel Mizony or Major O'Hara. For four days both battalions had been receiving all kinds of orders from regiment, division, and corps and in every case the only result had been heavy casualties with little appreciable gain. Nevertheless, both battalion commanders prepared to launch the attack vigorously and instructed their company commanders to push home their part of the attack as fast as it could be done. The company commanders were, by this time, inclined to be cautious, but promised to do the best they could. Morale, particularly in the 3d Battalion, was at an extremely low ebb.

Lieutenant Font of I Company prepared his attack with great care. Using the same collection of supporting weapons earlier utilized by Captain Hallden, he laid down a thirty-minute preparatory concentration on Hill King. At about 1530 he moved off in the assault. He had hardly started down Hill Oboe when the enemy opened fire. Two men were wounded and the advance slowed down. Bearing in mind what had happened earlier, I Company now crept ahead to the saddle and up the slopes of Hill King. Using extreme caution, and making ample use of supporting fire from Hill Oboe, I Company had only reached the farthest limit of L Company's advance by 1700. In that time, it had one man killed and nine wounded. The enemy fire seemed to be undiminished. As the day ended, Lt. Colonel Mizony decided to hold what he had gained and ordered Lieutenant Font to dig in around the forward slopes of Hill Oboe. Hill King was left to be captured the next day. The 2d Battalion was still situated just behind Hill Oboe, waiting for

the 3d Battalion to push forward so that it could swing out into the valley.

Elsewhere in the Death Valley-Purple Heart Ridge area the fight had narrowed down to the task of eliminating the enemy strongpoints one by one. The battle that had begun early in the morning for Hill Victor became the principal engagement of the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, for the remainder of 26 June. Captain Chasmar of G Company moved the rest of his company to the crest of Hill X-ray-Yoke early in the morning. Before noon he had pushed forward to Hill Oboe and there had to stop because fire from Hill Victor swept his flank. He pushed no farther the rest of the day while waiting for Lieutenant David's platoon to clean out the enemy in the stubbornly defended strongpoint below.

The platoon of G Company had reported as early as 0835 that they were halfway up the sides of the promontory. By 0900 David had the bulk of his platoon on top of the level plateau that formed the crest of the hill. His first concern was the elimination of the enemy machine guns that seemed to be located there and he ordered Sergeant Sherman to form a skirmish line and sweep toward Purple Heart Ridge. The infantry had not advanced thirty yards on this mission before they began running into a tangle of underbrush, crisscrossed by crevasses and deep gulches. From unseen positions the Japanese began throwing showers of grenades into the platoon. There seemed to be no machine-gun fire on Sherman's men, but the chatter of machine guns could be plainly heard. After looking around carefully, Sherman discovered that the enemy's automatic weapons were all below him, placed in caves and along overhanging ledges of the hill. After trying every other method he could think of, the squad leader tied grenades on ropes and swung them down over the cliffs, hoping that he'd be able to land one in the positions. This he found was unsatisfactory and resulted in no gains at all. The only other solution was to lay direct artillery fire from below. Although this had been tried earlier without success, Sherman resolved to attempt it again. In an endeavor to keep enemy mortar fire from falling into the tops of the SP guns he called for M8s, vehicles equipped with 75mm howitzers and with much smaller openings than the bigger M7s used in the morning. The effect was the same. As soon as the Cannon Company gun mounts moved into the area, Japanese mortars from all over the hillside began dropping shells on top of the vehicles, and they had to withdraw. Sherman, who had by this time pulled his men back down off the crest of the hill so the vehicles could fire, now called up tanks with closed tops. When the tankers moved into position the Japanese began firing machine guns at the openings, forcing the

crews to button up and thereby removing the effectiveness of the vehicles' main batteries. By 1300, however, with the infantrymen standing at the rear of the tanks, manning the intercommunication phones, several Japanese had been forced to abandon the positions in the cliffs and Sherman and his men felt that enough of them had been killed to warrant going back up to the top of the hill again.

With one squad, plus Staff Sgt. Frank Ruskowski, the platoon guide, the ascent was started. About ten yards before he reached the top, Pfc. James Cowley, leading the column, happened to look up to see the barrel of a machine gun above him. It had been placed so as to catch anyone who popped over the ledge squarely in the face. Cowley worked himself to the side and found that there were two enemy soldiers sitting behind the weapon. Cowley whispered the word back to the next man behind him, Pfc. George Grunninger, a BAR man. Grunninger worked up beside the leader and together the two took careful aim and killed both Japanese. They then scrambled upward as fast as they could go and reached the gun just as another Japanese grabbed the trigger. A third American shot this one before he could do any damage.

As soon as Sherman had his squad on top of the hill he again deployed to comb the brush toward Hill Oboe. After moving twenty-five yards he sent back for more reinforcements and by 1500 a whole platoon was on Hill Victor. In the next hour the brush and foliage became so thick that flamethrowers were used to burn away some of the undergrowth. Only one path seemed to exist in the whole area and when a squad started up this path they ran head-on into a Japanese machine gun which pinned them down momentarily. At this juncture Pfc. Walter T. Simmons, the same BAR man who had killed so many Japanese at Nafutan on 20 June, got to his feet and emptied a magazine in the direction of the fire, killing the crew and destroying the gun. No other opposition was encountered.

At 1700 Sherman reported that he was still fifty yards from the base of the dormer and that because of the hard going he could not complete the job before darkness set in. Chasmar gave him orders to pull his men back down to the low ground for the night and this was done. Chasmar later explained that this was done because the men atop the cliff were absolutely exposed to enemy action of all kinds. The hill was of almost solid coral rock so that foxholes could not be dug. The area was so limited that fire placed on it could not fail to hit most of the detail on the hill, and in case of a counterattack there was no room for maneuver.

Company E, as directed, spent the day cleaning out the lower part of Purple Heart Ridge as far north as the S road. Late in the afternoon

they pushed along the road toward How Position in the same area through which the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, had attacked the previous afternoon. Fire was extremely heavy and Lieutenant Raleigh, now in command of the company, instructed his men to use every available bit of cover. Moving very cautiously up the drainage ditches, crawling through the deep grass, using trees, the company had managed to reach the two little hillocks by late afternoon. There they dug in for the night under intense fire. Shortly before dark the Japanese began to find the foxholes with mortars and machine guns. Staff Sgt. Kenneth Hockensmith was killed and several others were wounded. Raleigh talked the situation over with his platoon leaders and decided that one isolated company was in no position to fight off a counterattack. Furthermore, the presence of Americans along the S road was aggravating the situation at the Chacha road junction. As long as troops appeared from that direction the enemy gave the rear areas a severe pounding. Lieutenant Raleigh tried for half an hour to get hold of Major Brousseau by radio to get further instructions and when he was unsuccessful, finally pulled the company back to the Chacha road junction, thence back to Hill Victor where he rejoined the rest of the battalion in bivouac.

One of the most important factors in the failure of the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, to take Hill King during the day was the lack of either artillery fire or the support of tanks or Cannon Company vehicles. Every request for artillery fire had been denied. The axis of fire was such that any overs would endanger the front lines of the 165th Infantry and the Marines, farther north along the eastern coast of the island. Tanks and other vehicles could not negotiate the tangled terrain along Purple Heart Ridge itself and in both General Jarman's and Colonel Ayers' original orders for the attack of the battalion it had been stipulated that the vehicles would move out into the valley by way of the highway and join the attack wherever their presence was needed by coming across the open ground. When the first tanks tried to make their way out into the corridor they were taken under the same heavy fire from the cliffs that had greeted them on earlier days. Three tanks were knocked out at once and the others withdrew to the protection of the trees south of the valley's southern rim. One of Colonel Ayers' reasons for directing the 1st Battalion to work on the cliff positions was to eliminate this fire once and for all so that the other battalions would have some tank support and, at the same time, some logistical support. Until trucks could get out into the valley all supplies had to be hand-carried along the ridge line.

Lt. Colonel Cornett had his battalion in position well before noon.

His first idea was to make a frontal assault on the cliffs supported by direct artillery fire. He deployed his C Company on the left, B on the right and placed A Company in position in the trees at the south end of the valley with all the automatic weapons of the battalion to deliver overhead fire on the enemy strongpoints. Beginning at 1200 two platoons of Cannon Company, two platoons of tanks, and the 104th Field Artillery Battalion poured forty-five minutes of direct fire against the cliffs as far north as the northern limit of Hell's Pocket. Then, at 1245, the two assault companies crept out of the tree-lines to move over the open ground, all the supporting fire continuing. Within a few minutes the battalion suffered four men killed and twenty-five wounded, including Capt. Robert T. Bates, commander of C Company. The rest of the assault units were pinned flat to the ground, unable to move in either direction. Cornett now ordered smoke put into the valley while the wounded were withdrawn and the battalion pulled back to better cover. Beginning again a little after 1400 another heavy concentration was put along the cliffs, 360 rounds of 105mm fire being put into Hell's Pocket alone. When the infantry tried to advance again, the Japanese were waiting. Cornett again resumed his artillery concentrations. They seemed to have little or no effect on the enemy positions. At 1700, the 1st Battalion was right where it had started and the cliffs were still filled with Japanese.

Some indication of the strength which still remained in this part of the position may be had by examining the experience of Sergeant Salisbury and his men who had been left in the open by G Company the night before. When dawn came all of the men still believed they were part of a full company. All lay in the deep grass about forty yards in front of the tree-line that had been the company objective. As soon as the light revealed them, a Japanese machine gun in the cliff opened fire, wounding Pvt. Glen Fultz in both legs. Sgt. Patrick F. Massineo, nearby, was able to crawl over to Fultz and help him. The wounds were not serious, but Massineo had nothing to work with except the supplies in his jungle kit. It was when Massineo called for an aid man that the six discovered they were all alone. As they looked around and decided what to do another machine gun joined the first, and then a third. After that Japanese riflemen began firing. Massineo and Salisbury crawled out, grabbed Fultz by the arms and dragged him back to a little ditch that would protect him. Then the five able-bodied men decided to try to make it back to the south edge of the valley. This move could not be made because fire of all types was now blanketing the area. All of the men finally got into foxholes and hid there all day long. They were unable to move, they had no food or water, very little ammunition, and

no means of communicating with anyone. They could see Fultz lying in the ditch where they had placed him, but whenever they tried to get back to him to help him they only succeeded in drawing more severe fire on him and on themselves. By late afternoon he was delirious, and then dropped off into a coma as night came on. As soon as it got dark several Japanese patrols came down out of the cliffs and spread out through the valley looking for the group of Americans. Salisbury and the others had planned a break for the American lines as soon as darkness fell, but the closeness of the enemy forced them to remain in the cover of their foxholes to escape detection. Several times individual Japanese came within feet of the holes, but when the morning of the 27th came, none of the party had been discovered. They settled down for the second day, with Fultz seeming better but still in great pain.

27 JUNE AT DEATH VALLEY

The close of 26 June had seen advances made all along the 27th Division front. Along Purple Heart Ridge the 106th Infantry and the 2d Battalion, 165th, were in firm possession of Hill Oboe. Only Hill King and Hill Able remained to be taken. East of the ridge Hill Victor had been pounded to a point that promised its elimination as a strongpoint early the next morning. The optimism engendered by these gains was countered by the knowledge that the Japanese in the cliffs of Tapotchau were still defending their positions as fiercely as ever. Furthermore, the tank strength of the Division was "critical." Out of seventy-two vehicles that had come to Saipan as part of the 762d Tank Battalion on 16 June, only ten mediums and eighteen lights were left in fighting condition. Almost all of the forty-four damaged or destroyed had been hit in the Death Valley area since 23 June.

Plans for 27 June called for a continuation of the action begun the day before. The 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, was to capture Hill King as early as possible the next morning. As soon as this landmark had been reduced, both battalions were to swing out into the corridor, deploy and resume the advance to the north to tie in with the left flank of the 165th Infantry, which was now some distance ahead on the outer slopes of the ridge. The fact that the 106th was to move out into the corridor after the capture of Hill King left Hill Able still unattended to. This was to be the task of the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry. Major Brousseau was to finish cleaning off Hill Victor as early as possible, then push his companies along the east slope of Purple Heart Ridge as far as Hill King. From there he was to attack across the saddle between the two hills and reduce Hill Able. The 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry,

was to continue mopping up Hell's Pocket and the cliffs of Tapotchau. Lt. Colonel Cornett changed his plan of action, however, deciding that any further attempts to clean out the Japanese from the south would be fruitless. He therefore ordered C Company to hold along the trees at the base of the valley and sent A and B Companies back and around the base of the mountain to come up above the positions. The whole Division confidently expected that the last opposition within Death Valley would be eliminated before dark.

The Japanese had been active throughout the night of 26-27 June. Along Purple Heart Ridge several parties of as large as twenty men were killed while trying to infiltrate through the American lines. The 1st Battalion also killed several Japanese who seemed to be attempting to reinforce the Hell's Pocket position.

The 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, which had the key part in the whole attack, the capture of Hill King, had spent the night with I Company holding down the front-line positions. Before moving off the next morning, Lt. Colonel Mizony placed K Company on the left of his line so that when the pivot was made into the valley he would not have to stop to reorganize. Both companies used only one platoon in the assault.

Artillery was not available prior to the attack. As on previous days, Division Artillery refused all missions because the axis of fire was such as to endanger units farther to the north. Lieutenant Font of I Company protested bitterly over this lack of preparation, and Lt. Colonel Mizony replaced him with Lt. Robert M. Smith, battalion S-2, who had recently rejoined the regiment after being seriously wounded on Eniwetok.

The experience of the attacking platoons was almost identical with that of the previous day. The Japanese waited until the Division troops had reached the bottom of the saddle, and then opened fire with mortars, machine guns and small arms. One man was killed and eight were wounded at once and the others were pinned down. One of those hit was the assault platoon leader of K Company, Lieutenant Garnett. For twenty minutes the line kept trying to move forward against an unseen enemy, but by 0800, all attempts had been unsuccessful and Lt. Colonel Mizony ordered his company commanders to pull back to Hill Oboe until some solution to the problem could be found. One of the K Company wounded, Pfc. James R. Miller, had been hit in the leg and was unable to move. After Lieutenant Noakes got his men back to Hill Oboe and discovered Miller was missing he personally went back over to Hill King to find the wounded man and bring him back. While he crawled around on the hillside Noakes had a good chance to look the

area over closely, and his investigation confirmed the suspicions first voiced by Captain Hallden the previous morning. The Japanese had constructed fairly well defined lanes of fire. Most of them seemed to be on the inside of the hill. Lieutenant Noakes carefully charted these lanes on a sketch map and found that if his surmise was correct the hill was organized as a perfect main line of resistance with interlocking final protective lines. While a squad made use of the company commander's sketch to get Miller out of the saddle, Noakes went back to Lt. Colonel Mizony with his information. The battalion commander called Colonel Stebbins and told him what had been discovered and the regimental commander personally took the matter to Division headquarters. General Jarman then decided to give the battalion the artillery fire they wanted, even though Lieutenant Noakes' sketches showed that Hill Able as well as Hill King would have to be hit. The new plan called for a thirty-minute preparation, beginning at 1015. Due to the difficulty involved in alerting all the various units who might be affected by this fire, the time was eventually delayed until 1045 with the attack scheduled for 1115.

While the 106th Infantry had been planning for the new attack, the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, was pushing ahead on the outer slopes of the ridge, trying to bring its line even with Mizony's. Before moving off, Major Brousseau had come forward to G Company and had given his exact location on the ridge so that there would be no further mixup in giving locations. In the previous afternoon, most of G Company had reached Hill Oboe, but due to the presence of Japanese on Hill Victor, the company had not attempted to clean out the lower slopes of that hill. Captain Chasmar felt that his first problem on the morning of the 27th was to clean out whatever groups there might be in the woods that reached down below the north side of Hill Victor. It was from this area that Lt. Colonel McDonough and his party had been hit two days before.

The approach to the wooded area was largely covered on the uphill side, but there was one twenty-yard clearing that had to be crossed. Rather than send the entire company across this open area, Captain Chasmar sent a patrol under Sergeant Jones to see if they could get into the woods on the opposite side and determine what was there. Jones sent two scouts across the area first, followed by a BAR man, then followed himself. He had just started to run when he saw a Japanese rifle barrel tracking him from the woods. He gave one jump and landed ten feet away from the enemy rifleman, behind a tree. There had not been a shot fired as yet, and as the patrol leader waited for something to hap-

pen he began to think that maybe the Japanese soldier was dead and that he had just imagined the rifle barrel was moving. He decided to look around the tree to see if he could find the sniper. There, as he looked, was the enemy soldier, who had crept forward to the opposite side of the tree and was having a look himself. The Japanese soldier yelled and Jones got his rifle up and fired, killing his adversary. Jones later said that his shot seemed to wake up every enemy soldier for miles around. The first thing he and the three men who had preceded him knew, Japanese began popping up from all sides. Jones later estimated the number to be "around fifty," but other members of the patrol said there were probably about twenty-five. The most peculiar thing about the whole affair was that the enemy soldiers were not shooting. They were just jabbering back and forth as though they had been surprised in some sort of a patrol of their own and didn't know what to do. The leading scout of Jones' patrol, Pfc. Orville Stark, had meanwhile gone some distance into the woods. When the Japanese jumped up, Jones yelled, "Let's get the hell out of here!" and started to back up. Stark couldn't tell what his patrol leader had said, but took it to be a warning. He pulled up his rifle and began going after the nearest Japanese. In his first eight shots he killed seven as fast as he could pick them out in the semi-darkness. As he reloaded he began to think about what it was that Jones had said and it suddenly dawned on him that it was "Let's get the hell out of here!" He looked around and saw all the Japanese and decided it was time he had better be frightened. He turned around and ran all the way back to the company before he realized that the enemy had not yet fired a shot.

When Jones got back to Captain Chasmar and reported what he had found, the company commander moved two SP guns into position on the lower slopes of Oboe and threw a concentration into the woods. At its conclusion the company walked through the covered area without opposition. It was littered with enemy bodies. G Company arrived abreast of the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, just in time to jump off with them in the attack on Hill King.

The artillery concentration on King and Able was well directed and extremely effective. At its conclusion scarcely a tree was left standing and the thick stand of foliage had been blasted from the face of the hill. L Company had meanwhile replaced K Company on the line. K Company, with the casualties suffered during the morning attack, was depleted even more than Captain Hallden's command, having less than one full platoon of riflemen left. During the last ten minutes of the artillery fire, both L and I Companies had moved down from Hill Oboe and when the last shell landed on the crest of King the men were al-

ready moving up its slopes. Company I reached the crest without running across a single Japanese and as the troops broke over the summit and onto the reverse slopes they found the enemy defenders huddled there, evidently waiting for the artillery to cease fire. The advance of Lieutenant Smith's men had been extremely fast. Both Americans and Japanese were surprised to meet one another face to face. The enemy evidently thought the I Company men were Japanese because as soon as the Americans appeared the defenders began jabbering and gesticulating wildly, at the same time motioning for I Company to get down. The attackers were so surprised to find live enemy soldiers so friendly and so helpful at close range that they hesitated for a moment to look at them. Then grenades began flying in all directions. Company I dispersed and jumped for the enemy foxholes. In the first exchange of fire several of the Japanese were killed, while a grenade mortally wounded Tech. Sgt. George Schmidt and seriously hurt two others. Within five minutes after it had begun the first flurry of fire was over and the surviving Japanese had disappeared into a dugout from where they put fire on the advancing I Company men. Lt. Robert Bonner, the platoon leader, ordered his men to take cover, then attempted to launch a double envelopment of the position. He ordered Pfc. Jack Suarez, a BAR man, to try to circle to the left of the position and put fire on it from that flank. While Suarez thus engaged the Japanese, Staff Sgt. Glenn E. Danforth took a squad and moved to the right in an attempt to circle and come on the position from the rear. Suarez moved out as he was told, opening fire at a range of approximately twenty yards. As soon as he began firing, the muzzle blast from his weapon gave away his position and the enemy immediately countered with grenades, one of which wounded Suarez seriously. This left Danforth and his squad without any diversion and they were immediately discovered and pinned down with grenades and small arms. Lieutenant Bonner now called to Danforth and told him to get back out of the area. Suarez dragged himself out under his own power. Bonner then pulled all his platoon back to the reverse slope of Hill King and asked Lieutenant Smith to give him a mortar concentration with the company mortars. This lasted about ten minutes. At its close, Bonner and his platoon got up and walked down the hill on the other side.

With Hill King in American hands by 1150, Lt. Colonel Mizony wasted no time in executing the second part of the battalion's attack. He called both company commanders and ordered them to swing out into the valley at once. Inasmuch as G Company, 165th Infantry, was slowed up by the terrain on the right, thus delaying the attack on Hill Able,

Mizony elected to neutralize that position by fire during the move out into the valley. The machine guns and mortars of I, L, and M Companies were ordered to move to the top of King and from there place fire on Able.

The 3d Battalion attack was now changing its direction from north to west. Captain Hallden had halted his left flank at the bottom of the saddle between Oboe and King and begun a pivot which brought his extreme right flank into line on the west slope of King, facing west. As soon as I Company completed the capture of King, Lieutenant Smith anchored his left flank on the right of L Company and began a wide swing to the west that brought Lieutenant Bonner and the right platoon of I Company directly underneath the cliffs of Hill Able. The heavy fire poured onto this wicked-looking hill kept the Japanese from moving across its flat top to drop grenades down on Bonner's men.

The objective of the 3d Battalion had been set as the ruins of a small house that squatted squarely in the middle of Death Valley, on the northernmost and highest ridge in that valley, a ridge that traversed the open area from east to west. It was on almost a direct east-west line between Hill Able and the summit of Tapotchau. The ground between the line of departure for the westerly attack and this objective was open, without cover of any kind. Along Captain Hallden's left flank ran the same tree-line that had been the objective of the 2d Battalion on the 25th. It was thought there were no Japanese in front of the attack on the open ground, but it was known that the terrain was vulnerable to fire from Hill Able to its rear and from the cliffs of Tapotchau, a thousand yards away to its front. The battalion would move downhill for fifty yards as it descended from Purple Heart Ridge, then start uphill again toward its objective in the valley.

The attack moved off shortly after 1200. After a cautious advance down the slopes of the ridge, the companies reached the Aslito-Tanapag highway, which at this point ran along the eastern edge of the valley. As the men crossed the road, fire began to pick out men. It seemed to be coming from Hill Able and from the tree-line that ran along L Company's left flank. Hallden immediately called Lt. Colonel Mizony and informed him of the situation. The battalion commander then ordered Lieutenant Noakes to take K Company and move into the tree-line to give L Company flank protection on its left. Meanwhile, L Company had moved on out into the open field that ran uphill toward the objective, as had I Company on the right. Lieutenant Turpin, in command of the assault platoon of L Company, ordered each of his squad leaders to move their men independently, in short bounds. No man was to stay on his feet for more than a few seconds and no man

was to remain lying on the ground for longer than it took him to pick out a spot farther ahead. Turpin hoped, by offering shifting targets and widely dispersed ones at that, to minimize the casualties that were sure to occur in the heavy fire that now swept the field. Turpin advanced with the first squad of nine men to move out. Within twenty minutes he arrived at the objective and started digging in. A few moments later he was joined by Sgt. Frank H. Riordan. The others all arrived, one by one, over a span of fifteen minutes. Shortly afterward, Lieutenant Bonner of I Company and four men joined the group, giving the 3d Battalion a total of fourteen men on the objective. These fourteen dug in to hold and remained all alone in the center of the valley for most of the rest of the afternoon. Behind them, the field had become blanketed with fire nearly as heavy as that which had met them at the mouth of Death Valley on the 24th. It included mortar fire as well as fire from machine guns and small arms. In L Company three men were wounded and Pfc. Dewey F. Tucker was killed when he stopped to give aid to them. Other than this there were no casualties. A second of Turpin's squads finally made its way to the objective line at about 1530, but the rest of the company, using the dispersal tactics which both Turpin and Hall-den had ordered, soon became scattered and disorganized, being pinned down all over the open ground.

Companies I and K were both hit hard by the fire. In I Company Lieutenant Smith ordered the same individual dispersal, but as the company moved off, Smith, who was personally moving about the field directing his men forward, was seriously wounded. To make matters worse, the last two surviving squad leaders in the company, Sergeant Danforth and Staff Sgt. Clark W. Tallman, Jr., were both killed by machine-gun fire early in the advance. The only surviving officer in the company, Lieutenant Bonner, was at the objective and cut off from communication so that he had no knowledge of the injury to Lieutenant Smith. Six other men of I Company were wounded within the next ten minutes and it, like L Company, soon became scattered and disorganized.

Lieutenant Colonel Mizony's order to Lieutenant Noakes of K Company had been executed as soon as it was received and the head of the company moved down into the tree-line as the other two companies started to move out into the field. The 3d Platoon was leading and moving along from tree to tree in a column. When fire became heavier in the open, Lieutenant Noakes split his company, ordering half the men to fire along the trees in an attempt to silence the considerable volume of fire that was coming from that direction, and the other half to fire on Hill Able where the majority of the Japanese activity seemed

to be taking place. The advance platoon continued to move along the tree-line, the company commander with them. Within an hour this detachment of the company had knocked out two machine guns and killed twenty Japanese riflemen. However, at the end of that period Lieutenant Noakes was out of touch with the rear half of the company and in his absence one man had been killed and five wounded, including the radio operator through whom orders were relayed. The lack of officers and NCOs in this rear detachment had the same paralyzing effect upon it as the disorganization the other companies suffered.

At 1530 the whole 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, was scattered over the open fields under enemy fire of all types and unable or unwilling to move in either direction. At this juncture Captain Hallden of L Company moved into the scene, walking slowly and upright, back and forth between the prone men. As he progressed he talked to the men, steadying them and coaxing them to move forward. Ten minutes after he had appeared on the field he had all three companies moving slowly but surely toward the objective. At a little after 1600, he had completed the movement to the objective. As the men came into the perimeter which had been established on the ridge, Lieutenants Bonner, Turpin, and Noakes separated them and began organizing a battalion perimeter. At 1700 Captain Hallden wearily reported to Lt. Colonel Mizony that the battalion was on the objective and dug in for the night, but that he needed medical supplies, food, water and, most of all, ammunition. Furthermore, Hallden informed the battalion commander, he needed some kind of fire support. All of the battalion's machine guns had been left behind on Hill King to furnish fire on Hill Able. He asked if any tanks had been able to get through the gap at the lower end of the valley and Mizony told him that he would see to it that they *did* get through. He called regiment, and a platoon of light tanks there was loaded down with water, rations and ammunition and ordered to run the gantlet of fire from the cliffs and deliver the supplies to the companies at the upper end of the valley. This was done, the four vehicles arriving at the battalion perimeter just as it got dark. On the way they stopped at the battalion CP back on Purple Heart Ridge and picked up the battalion's machine-gun squads. These soldiers advanced with the tanks, using the armor as protection from the Hill Able position.

Meanwhile, Lt. Colonel Mizony, upon getting the reports of casualties within the line companies, ordered Captain Hallden to form a composite company from the remnants. There were only three officers left besides Hallden. Of these, Noakes was to command the K Company "platoon," Bonner the I Company "platoon," and Turpin, the Weapons

"platoon." This was the situation in the 3d Battalion at nightfall on the 27th. The worst was still to come next day.

The 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, had been waiting behind the 3d Battalion for two days until the swing was made into the valley. Now, as soon as the 3d had cleared the ridge ahead of him, Major O'Hara prepared to move his men into line beside it, on the right flank of the battalion line. The action of the 3d had been visible to the men of the 2d, and Major O'Hara and his two rifle-company commanders had ample opportunity to study the action. When Captain Hallden eventually called back that his companies were on the objective, Captains Waterson and Tarrant had worked out a scheme of action which they hoped would save them much of the trouble that had befallen the other companies. Inasmuch as most of the fire which had fallen on the other battalion seemed to come from Hill Able, Waterson was to lead off in a column and move out along the tree-line which K Company had cleared. This westerly advance would continue as far as a point directly in rear (south) of the 3d Battalion. There the line would swing north and approach the objective by moving straight toward Captain Hallden's positions. Upon arriving at the 3d Battalion perimeter E Company would tie into the right flank of the position and build up a line on the right, toward Hill Able, under cover of direct fire from the H Company machine guns. Captain Tarrant would follow the E Company route, moving in on E Company's right and extending the line as soon as his company reached the objective.

The 2d Battalion move was accomplished much faster than that of the 3d Battalion. Captain Waterson sent his men along the tree-line by squads with instructions to the squad leaders to keep firm control and to stay under cover. As the leading platoon moved out and sprinted down to the trees, Japanese mortar fire from Hill Able wounded four men, including Sergeant Love. During the advance along the tree-line two men were killed and two wounded by heavy rifle fire with which the Japanese sought to halt the movement. One of the wounded, Private Jones, later died. Captain Tarrant followed the same tactics used by E Company and suffered no casualties, but the heavy-weapons company suffered two wounded because the men were slowed down by their cumbersome equipment.

Shortly after 1730 the first contingent arrived at the 3d Battalion position. Captain Waterson talked the situation over with Captain Hallden, and the L Company commander pointed out that the site where the 2d Battalion had planned to dig in was almost directly under the cliffs of Hill Able, that enemy fire of all types could be directed into the fox-

holes, and that there was no purpose in extending so close to the hill. The highway, which would have run close by the 2d Battalion's right flank, could be interdicted from where the 3d Battalion was situated. Captain Waterson called Major O'Hara, who relayed the call to Colonel Stebbins, and permission was finally given for the two 2d Battalion companies to dig in on the rear (south) side of the 3d Battalion's position. The last of Captain Tarrant's men did not arrive at the position until shortly before dark so that it was 2100 before the perimeter was completely organized.

Much of the fire that was being placed on the 106th Infantry from Hill Able would have been eliminated had the attack of the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, gone according to schedule. At the time of the attack on Hill King shortly before noon, the battalion's assault unit, G Company, was in position and jumped off abreast of the 106th attack. However, the situation in front of Captain Chasmar's men was different from that in front of the unit on his left flank. The 106th Infantry had been pushing forward on the inside slope of Purple Heart Ridge while G Company moved along the outside, or reverse slope from the artillery. The bombardment had not reached this area, and in fact had driven the Japanese into it. Almost from the beginning of his attack, Captain Chasmar had to stop and deal with these fugitive Japanese soldiers. Halfway up the hill in the tangle of foliage the men began to run across shallow caves, in each of which several enemy were hiding. In a short time the whole company had been split up into teams to mop up these positions. Shortly after noon the sound of much firing was heard on the eastern slope of the hill and the company commander sent Lieutenant David around to that side to investigate. The patrol found a large body of Japanese with machine guns and mortars firing on E Company which was working along the S road. David's men surprised this enemy group and killed them without much trouble. The lieutenant reported back to Captain Chasmar just as the company men reached the crest of the hill. It was then 1355. Since leaving Hill Oboe two and a half hours before, G Company had killed over a hundred Japanese and F Company was still combing the area through which G had moved for more stragglers.

Upon reaching the crest of Hill King, Captain Chasmar found the 3d Battalion, 106th, already pushing out into the valley. Chasmar reported briefly to Major Brousseau and pushed off toward Hill Able. At this time the 3d Battalion's machine guns were still on Hill King, firing on the Japanese on top of Chasmar's objective.

The northern slope of Hill King was well covered with heavy foliage

and G Company advanced without opposition to the foot of the incline. There the foliage gave way to open ground. From all sides, Hill Able presented an awesome sight. It was almost a rock instead of a hill. The south and west faces were almost sheer cliffs, over fifty feet high. On the south side there were a series of small ledges, like gigantic steps, connected by a path. On the west there was nothing to break the cliff face, and the top of the hill jutted out over the highway like a theater marquee. The north side, of course, was not visible, while the east side sloped down to the razorback continuation of Purple Heart Ridge. The top of Hill Able was an oblong-shaped, rounded knob, covered with dense undergrowth. It was heavily defended, as was evidenced by the heavy fire which now emanated from it. Actually it was the point around which the Japanese had built the Death Valley defensive system. On its northeast General Saito had placed his CP. The hill guarded the approaches from the south, while the How Position guarded its back door from attackers advancing from Chacha Village. The only prisoner captured from the Hill Able-How Position testified later that a full battalion of the 135th Infantry Regiment had been the defenders of the fortress and that they fought to the last man. Over a thousand bodies were found in and around the position when American troops finally got into it.

The ground directly between King and Able was an open saddle, but on the right (east) the low-lying hump of the continuation of Purple Heart Ridge was covered by a narrow belt of foliage that seemed to connect the two hills like a canopied walk. Captain Chasmar chose this as his route of approach to the hill and asked for artillery, which was denied him. While he was organizing his company to resume the attack without the preparation, a large Japanese patrol came down the canopy and split to move around Hill King on the east and west. In the melee that followed for the next fifteen minutes the crews of the machine guns were also involved. G Company suffered seven casualties from grenades and bayonets and the weapons detachments of the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, suffered several more. All of the thirty-five Japanese were killed. Just as the struggle on Hill King ended, Japanese on Hill Able opened fire with mortars. As a result of this mortar fire and the counterattack, Lt. Colonel Mizony ordered the machine guns pulled back to the 3d Battalion CP rather than have them destroyed or captured. This left G Company, 165th Infantry, on Hill King all alone. It was now almost 1600.

Captain Chasmar felt that the enemy's attack and the mortar fire which followed it was more reason than ever for artillery and again called battalion to see if something couldn't be done about it. Major

Brousseau came forward himself to look over the situation and agreed with the company commander. It was now getting late and so the battalion commander ordered Chasmar to dig in for the night on Hill King and attack Hill Able at daylight the next morning. In the meantime he would see if he could arrange some kind of preparation. Already the Japanese were beginning to give Hill King a good deal of attention with machine guns and rifle fire. While Captain Chasmar and Major Brousseau were trying to decide where the battalion would dig in for the night an enemy machine gun fired a burst into the command party, killing Pvt. Spencer Benfer. This convinced the battalion commander that King's forward slope would be unsafe for a night position and he ordered G Company to dig in on the reverse (south) slope where F Company was already preparing foxholes. While the perimeter was being prepared, both Lieutenant Trommel of F Company and Captain Chasmar posted lookouts on the crest of King. One of the G Company men soon detected movement along the canopy between the two hills and after watching it for a moment killed one Japanese soldier who showed himself. As though this were a signal, the whole hill seemed to erupt. The Japanese on Hill Able turned every weapon they had available onto the American foxholes. Mortar shells began dropping in clusters of ten or fifteen. For fifteen minutes this fire continued, then ended as abruptly as it had begun. G Company suffered five men mortally wounded and nineteen others less seriously hit. Major Brousseau suffered several serious wounds, and F Company lost ten men. In spite of his serious condition, Major Brousseau continued to direct orders, steadying the battalion and supervising the evacuation of the wounded. Although he himself was losing a tremendous amount of blood he refused to allow himself to be treated until the last soldier had been given aid and carried back to the battalion aid station. Almost an hour elapsed before he was finally treated. That night he was evacuated to a hospital ship where he died from loss of blood.

During his last hour as battalion commander, Major Brousseau had directed the establishment of a new perimeter on Hill Oboe which he felt was less vulnerable than the one which had just suffered the Japanese concentration. All components of the battalion moved into this new position, E Company moving up from the S road to join F and G.

Once again on the morning of 27 June, Lieutenant Raleigh had been given a mission separate from that of the rest of the 2d Battalion. Accompanied by two self-propelled guns he had moved out at daylight with orders to clean out How Position. Instead of moving all the way to the S road and then attacking to the west as had been done in all

other attacks against the position, Lieutenant Raleigh chose to advance on it from the southeast by moving across the fields diagonally. In this way he hoped to be able to outflank the enemy's fire power which had obviously been placed to fire directly to the east, commanding the S road and the Chacha road junction. After swinging around the base of Hill Victor, E Company moved in column straight toward the position, with one squad acting as a point. The terrain was gently rolling with very little cover until the advance began to move up the slopes of Purple Heart Ridge. There the advance led through an arm of the woods that branched down from King, emerging into the open again between two small hills about three hundred yards short of the objective. As the leading squad poked cautiously into the clearing an enemy machine gun stopped them. By the time another assault was attempted a sizable force of enemy was on the high ground directly to the front. Two attempts to advance were met by heavy fire. With the enemy now aware of his intentions and in position to sweep the open ground through which he had to advance, Lieutenant Raleigh decided to see if he could move around to the north and find some means of access there. By taking advantage of the series of little knolls that rose just below Purple Heart Ridge, Raleigh hoped to make his shift unobserved. He had negotiated almost half the distance and was nearly on the point of crossing the S road when his left flank was hit by a sudden counterattack, supported by machine-gun and mortar fire. In the hand-to-hand fighting which followed and which lasted for not more than five minutes, Pfc. Luther Walters was killed and five others were wounded. Ten Japanese were killed and the remainder, about ten, scrambled back over the little hill which shadowed E Company's flank and which was no more than twenty yards directly in front of How Position. Lieutenant Raleigh reasoned that if the Japanese could pull such a short, swift attack as they had just launched, he must be near enough to the position to do the same thing. He instructed Sergeant Kemp, who was now in command of his 2d Platoon, to send his men up the hill at a dead run. Once they reached the top they were to keep going until they reached the center of the position. The rest of the company would lay down covering fire and follow by platoons as soon as the leaders got over the crest.

As Kemp's men started out, they did not know what they would find over the top of the little hill. They had to run straight up a very steep terrace-like slope for twenty feet before they could even get an idea what they would be facing. The first man to reach the crest in the dash up the slope was Pfc. Lawrence Contreras, a little man who carried a BAR. As he suddenly came over the crest of the hill he looked down on a

group of about thirty Japanese who were evidently organizing another flash attack over the hill themselves. Contreras pulled up his weapon and fired a whole magazine into the group, killing half of them and scattering the rest into the rocks and caves of the position. Then he waded down into the ramparts of the position, followed by others who were close behind him. Ten minutes after he had arrived in How Position Contreras and the others had cleaned it out. Lieutenant Raleigh was quick to organize the company into a series of mop-up squads, and for over an hour E Company moved through the position, mopping it up. With How Position destroyed, Lieutenant Raleigh decided to try and push on into the hills behind it, not realizing that what he proposed to do was attack Hill Able. There had been only a small number of Japanese, thirty or forty at most, in the position when he finally captured it and Raleigh knew from personal experience that there were many more than this in the area from the amount of fire that he had received on previous days. He figured that those enemy he had not killed had merely pulled back up into the hills behind the position and that if they were not destroyed they would come back down into the position as soon as the Americans had pulled out. Just as he was organizing to carry on the attack, Japanese from above him, on the heights of Able, turned their attention to his company. Machine guns began to traverse the area, accompanied by mortar fire, and in quick succession two men were seriously wounded. Lieutenant Raleigh called Major Brousseau by radio and described his situation. The battalion commander ordered him to destroy any weapons he could find and then to pull over to Hill King and join the rest of the battalion for the night. It was the battalion commander's idea that the enemy could be kept from re-entering the position by keeping up a steady concentration of mortar fire on the area from King, which was near enough to it and high enough to be in as commanding a position as Able. Following the battalion commander's orders, E Company moved around the south base of Hill King, arriving on the south slopes just in time to escape the mortar barrage which caused so much damage in G Company. In the ultimate withdrawal from King to Oboe, How Position was left open for reoccupation by the enemy.

Elsewhere in Death Valley, action had not been lagging. The 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, after the failure to make any impression on the Tapotchau cliff positions by a frontal attack, had moved to work on them from above. Early in the morning of the 27th, Lt. Colonel Cornett had deployed C Company across the base of the valley and then moved A and B Companies back through the woods five hundred yards

south of Hell's Pocket where they could climb the cliffs without being seen. Then, with Company A leading, both units moved along the rim of the escarpment. As the leading squad came opposite the center of Hell's Pocket, some distance to the south of the point where F Company had engaged the enemy on 24 June, Staff Sgts. Walter F. Stasilowicz and Frank Dacato, in the van, discovered that below what they had taken to be the rim was a crater-shaped ledge which was approximately fifty yards across. As the two men investigated, a large group of enemy soldiers appeared, seemingly intent upon something that was happening near the highway entrance to the valley. Both Dacato and Stasilowicz dropped to the ground and began firing at these Japanese. The rest of the squad, coming up behind, fanned out along the edge of the high ground and took up the fire. Eventually the two assault platoons, with a mortar and a machine gun, were deployed along to the north.

The fighting at the crater position continued for over an hour. Three more Company A men were wounded, but the Japanese were being killed, one by one. At about 1400 (the movement of the two companies to the top of the cliff had taken until noon), Lieutenant Sergio moved his reserve platoon onto the firing line and all the Company A men got to their feet and walked down into the crater, guns blazing. Only one enemy weapon was left in operation. This was a machine gun that opened fire almost at the feet of the left platoon. Tech. Sgt. Ralph Devito and Staff Sgt. Giovanni Grasz, who were literally standing almost on top of it, dropped grenades into the foxhole in which the gun was situated and there was no more fire. In the mopping up which followed one more man was wounded. For all the fire that had been received from the position, Company A found only twenty-eight bodies, two machine guns, five mortars, and two American BARs, with enough ammunition to keep them in operation for weeks.

When Company A first ran into the position on the edge of Hell's Pocket, B Company tried to move around the left flank and continue up the cliffs. Almost at once, machine-gun fire was directed at the company from north of the Company A position. Lieutenant Pryor, the company commander, ordered the men to hold while he sent out a patrol under Staff Sgt. Daniel Kish to see what kind of a position it was and to see if there were any way to get around it. (This was the first of seventy-six patrols to be run by Kish during the remainder of the operation. The company commanders who followed Lieutenant Pryor had trouble pronouncing some of the names of the other men in the company and took the first and easiest one that they *could* remember. This was always Kish.) During the whole time that Kish was gone, B Com-

pany remained idle. When the patrol finally did return, it reported that there were at least two positions north of the one that had been attacked by Company A and that it would be impossible to by-pass them as the Japanese were now alert to the threat to their rear and had fired continuously at the patrol during the whole time it was in the open. Lieutenant Pryor now decided to wait until Company A had eliminated the position to its front before moving on forward. Part of his decision was based on the fact that the enemy had strewn mines throughout the area and while the company was waiting for Kish to come back one of them had exploded, mortally wounding Private First Class Burchill. Pvt. Michael DiCurcio lost a leg in the blast and two other men were wounded.

The decision to wait for Company A was relayed to the advance battalion CP, and Major John Nichols, battalion executive officer who had been put in charge of the operations above the cliffs, came forward to see what was the matter. After talking with Pryor, Nichols replaced him with Lt. Charles Warga. Under further orders from Major Nichols, B Company was then deployed and ordered to attack around A Company and on up the cliffs.

As soon as B Company moved north the two assault platoons were pinned down by fire from two machine guns. Lieutenant Warga immediately sent his reserve platoon under Lt. Ralph Hills, the aggressive officer who had caused the enemy so much damage on Eniwetok, to work wide to the left and get behind the two machine guns. Hills and his men moved quickly, but just as they started Company A made its final assault on the crater position on the right. By the time the B Company platoon reached the machine guns, they had been abandoned and there were signs that the enemy was withdrawing from the Hell's Pocket position. Major Nichols was quick to seize the initiative and, organizing the two companies into a skirmish line, he pushed rapidly forward along the top of the cliffs for 150 yards. By nightfall all the enemy had been cleaned out of the pocket except for a few who were holding out atop Queen Roger rock. Later investigation revealed that there had been over a hundred weapons, from machine guns on up to three-inch dual-purpose guns in this one position alone. Over three hundred dead bodies were found in the area and there were evidences that as many more had been engaged in the defense of the pocket during the battle.

One last finishing touch marked this fight for the position. Early in the afternoon, while Company A was engaged in its struggle to evict the Japanese in the crater, Staff Sgt. Willard Van Wie had become interested in Queen Roger rock, the tower of stone that rose in the center

of the pocket. He was sure there were several enemy atop the rock and that they were placing machine-gun fire into the company area. In order to get a better look he moved close to the edge of the cliff and tried to see what was going on by crawling up on a little rock. As he stood perched on the precipice, a Japanese atop the pinnacle shot him in the leg. Tech. Sgt. George Hettie took two men over to Van Wie to see what was happening, and as the wounded man pointed at the rock, two more shots rang out and the two men who were with Hettie were hit. The platoon sergeant helped the men out of range and then called the rock to the attention of Major Nichols, who was nearby. The battalion executive looked the position over and decided that the next morning C Company could attack it from below. That evening a Japanese plane came overhead and dropped four sticks of bombs into the Pocket; two of them landed squarely on Queen Roger rock.

This completed the action of 27 June in Death Valley, except for the men who had been left behind on the night of the 25th. Early in the morning, just before daylight, Salisbury and the other four tried once more to get to Fultz where he lay in the ditch. As they moved out of the tree-line they were taken under intense fire from close at hand and had to scramble back to cover. The Japanese had discovered Fultz and were using him as a decoy in hopes that the others would attempt to rescue him. All of the men had now been without food or water for thirty-six hours and were in bad condition. Fultz was in intense pain and the others could hear him crying out in delirium. Several times they tried to get out to him after the sun rose, but each time they appeared in the open they were driven back by fire.

At 1045, when artillery was placed on Hill King, shorts began landing in the immediate area where the men were hiding. Fultz was killed by a direct hit. Messineo was also killed by fragments and Pfc. Scarcella and Chester Bara were seriously wounded. Sgts. Salisbury and Herbert W. O'Dell escaped unharmed. After thirty minutes the fire ceased and the two sergeants tried to administer aid to the two wounded men, but both were so seriously hurt that neither could be helped much. Salisbury now decided that the best thing to do was to make a run for it and try to get help. Both men who were able began crawling along the line of trees toward Purple Heart Ridge. They received fire from behind every foot of the way.

Both Salisbury and O'Dell had heard the 3d Battalion digging in on the ridge the night before but neither knew just where they were. Inasmuch as they did not know which way to turn they decided to keep going straight ahead up into the foliage on top of the ridge where they would

have some cover and get their bearings. Just as they reached the trees they stumbled into five Japanese sitting on a rock. Salisbury pulled up his rifle and killed all five without taking aim. (He was not more than five feet away. At the time, although he did not know it, he was on the reverse slope of Hill King and the 3d Battalion was pushing up the other slope. The Japanese had been waiting, evidently, to make sure that the artillery fire was over.) After some debate as to their next course of action, the two sergeants decided that the best thing to do was to keep on moving across the ridge, which seemed to be in enemy hands, and see what was on the other side. As they swung around the hill they ran into G Company, 165th Infantry. There they were given water and taken back to their own battalion CP. They explained what had happened to them and told Lt. John P. Green where Scarcerella and Bara were lying. Green organized a rescue party, and when K Company pushed out into the tree-line that afternoon, this party accompanied the attack and brought in both wounded men.

28 JUNE IN DEATH VALLEY

To most of the men who had fought through Death Valley and along Purple Heart Ridge the 27th of June had seemed to be the end of that bitter struggle. For the first time troops were able to dig in on the open ground in the middle of the corridor and stay there. Purple Heart Ridge had been all but cleaned off, and only Hill Able remained. The vicious enemy fire that had so long poured on the entrance to the valley from the cliffs and Hell's Pocket was now only scattered small-arms fire. For the first time, late in the afternoon tanks and jeeps had been able to come through the south gate and skitter along the valley floor without being knocked out. The tanks, however, were still the safest means of transportation. Enough enemy riflemen and machine guns still remained in the cliffs to put fire on the occupants of the jeeps.

The optimism of the moment was tempered somewhat by the knowledge that Hill Able was still to be reduced, and the brief experience that the men had had with it made them fear that it would be the worst of all. They were not far wrong.

Death Valley had indeed become a valley of death. From the line held by the 106th Infantry back to the south gate, the floor was littered with dead who could not be picked up for another three days. Burned and broken tanks could be seen wherever one looked and the once peaceful little farming valley was now a litter of broken buildings, blasted bridges, leafless trees, and gaping shell holes. Japanese groups still hung on in their cliff positions and on Hill Able, and the peace that

should have come to Death Valley did not come. All night long rifles fired and mortar shells whispered through the air. To the men who had started at the south end and worked north, however, it was a peaceful night. They looked forward to the next day because on the 28th they would push on north through the corridor. They would still be between the cliffs of Tapotchau and a ridge on the right, but they would be out of Death Valley.

Of the units that had borne the fighting in Death Valley, the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, had suffered most. Only six officers remained, including the battalion commander, his executive, and his operations officer. In the line companies, approximately 130 men were still able to carry on. The rest had been killed or wounded. Major Watts, an officer of the Canadian Army who had been attached to the battalion as an observer, volunteered to serve as a company commander for the action of the 28th, but his offer was turned down for the time being. Morale was extremely low in the battalion, but Captain Hallden reported that the prospect of moving beyond the valley's limits had buoyed up the men.

Next to the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, the unit that had taken the biggest losses in the struggle had been the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, which had dug in for the night on Hill Oboe after losing its second battalion commander in two days. Late in the evening of the 27th General Jarman had ordered Colonel Stebbins to send a field-grade officer to the battalion to replace Capt. James Dooley who had succeeded to the command on the evacuation of Major Brousseau. After a conference with Colonel Kelley of the 165th this order was rescinded, however, and Major Denis Claire was transferred from the 3d to the 2d Battalion and Major Martin Foery assumed command of the 3d. This change was made because Major Claire had long been executive officer of the 2d and knew its men well.

Plans for the 28th called for the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, to attack Hill Able, then to turn and mop up stragglers in the valley. The 106th Infantry was to push on to the north with two battalions abreast in an effort to catch up with the 165th Infantry which was now two miles to the north, on the outside of the corridor. The 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, was to complete the mission of mopping up Hell's Pocket and the cliffs of Tapotchau. F Company, 106th Infantry, which was still perched on top of Mt. Tapotchau, was to descend to the valley and join the rest of its battalion in the push north.

Daylight on 28 June came at 0500. By 0530 the light was good enough for the Japanese on Hill Able and in the cliffs of Tapotchau to pick out targets among the men of the 106th Infantry in the valley. In

an effort to reduce casualties from this fire, General Jarman had ordered the attack to the north to jump off at 0630, the earliest possible moment that reorganization for the attack could be completed.

The regimental objective had been set as the 0-6 line, three thousand yards ahead, but Colonel Stebbins had ordered his battalion commanders to seize a series of intermediate objectives. The first of these was a sharp and clear-cut ridge line about four hundred yards in front of the point at which they had spent the night. Upon arrival there, the advance was to halt, a new intermediate objective was to be chosen, and any special plans necessary to capture it would be laid. Bitter experience with unexpected terrain obstacles had taught Colonel Stebbins that this was the best way to advance. It gave a better opportunity for terrain study and maneuver.

Between the line of departure and the objective ridge there was a deep ravine. There was little cover from enemy fire from Tapotchau and Hill Able, but the Japanese to the north would have to occupy the crest of the objective itself to put any fire on the advancing troops. Both battalions left their entire heavy-weapons complement at the line of departure to deliver interdiction fire along the crest. After artillery fire was denied for fear of hitting the Marines, Captain Hallden was more than exasperated. He was standing on a hill from which he could see the area where he wanted the artillery placed. After a ten-minute search of the ground he could find no evidence of any Marines. He could see them, however, high on Mt. Tapotchau on his left, a good four hundred yards from where he wanted his fire. He called his artillery forward observer, Lt. Donald J. Quigg, of the 104th Field Artillery, to him and pointed out the Marines and asked whether the fire he wanted would endanger them. Quigg said no. "Then goddamit, get me that fire," Hallden told him. "I don't care how you do it, but get it." Quigg prepared firing data for a target far to the right of the desired target. These he called in to Division Artillery, and had the mission approved. Ten minutes before the preparation was to begin Quigg called the firing batteries, told them there was a mistake in the first information he had given them and read off a second group of figures placing the fire where Captain Hallden wanted it. It was recorded at battalion and within a few minutes a perfect concentration was put exactly where Captain Hallden wanted it. Japanese came running from the cliff in all directions and most of them were killed in the fire. At King-hour the battalion moved off into the ravine. Captain Hallden had not been gone for more than five minutes when Division Artillery called Quigg on the radio and told him that they were sorry, but the second set of coordinates he

had given could not be fired. Quigg told them to forget it. He did not tell them that the concentration had been over for ten minutes.

The 106th Infantry order of attack on the morning of the 28th was K, L, I, E, and G Companies, from left to right. The first stages of the forward movement were not difficult. On the way down to the bottom of the ravine, it was discovered that the enemy occupied holes or caves in the slope from which they were endeavoring to shoot the Americans in the back as they slid past on the way downhill. Two platoons of B Company, 102d Engineers, were brought forward and began blowing up the caves with demolition charges. Although this slowed the advance somewhat, there were no casualties. By 0745, both battalions were climbing the south slopes of Bloody Ridge.

Bloody Ridge had not yet earned its name when the troops started to climb it. It was a steep razorback, shaped parenthetically, its crest almost level with the floor of Death Valley. From a soft, clay-like soil, coral rocks protruded, and here and there a clump of grass grew. For the most part the top of the ridge was not more than a few feet wide, the north side dipping down almost as sharply as the south. On the left it extended almost to the cliffs of Tapotchau, on the right it sloped gently down to the junction of the S road with the Aslito-Tanapag highway, about 150 yards north of Hill Able.

The climb to the crest of Bloody Ridge was not as easy as the descent to the ravine. Almost as soon as the first man appeared on the slope, Japanese riflemen and machine gunners began a steady, although light, fire. All along the line, squad leaders and platoon leaders pushed their men forward. By the time the crest had been reached, four men had been killed and three wounded, and the fire, most of which came from the rear, was getting heavier. Two principal sources of enemy activity were causing most of the damage. One was the position on Hill Able, the other the cliffs of Tapotchau, on the left.

Both battalions lost no time in digging in. Just at the juncture of the two commands, a thick grove of trees grew on a little nose of ground that jutted out to the north of the ridge for fifty yards. Company E took refuge among these trees, G Company dug in close to the road junction on the right, and the three 3d Battalion companies occupied the open ridge line to the left, just on the reverse (south) slope.

All units had moved off so early that there had been no opportunity to bring up rations and water. Captain Hallden and the two 2d Battalion commanders, in looking ahead toward Bloody Ridge, had estimated that it would take approximately an hour to reach the objective. Inasmuch as they had to stop the advance there while waiting for new orders, Captain Hallden called back to battalion as soon as the five

companies had reached the crest and told them to send up the resupply. At the same time he asked for artillery fire to be placed on the cliffs to his rear to see if some of the Japanese fire from that quarter could not be reduced. Lt. Colonel Mizony once more informed him that artillery was out of the question, that it would endanger Marines who were in the area. Captain Hallden told him to try and do something and Mizony agreed. He had a platoon of medium tanks at hand and these he gave to his executive officer, Major Francis Fisher, and the Canadian officer, Major Watts. These two men climbed onto the turrets of the vehicles and started toward Mt. Tapotchau. Running along the base of the cliffs they found a little secondary road and proceeded to direct the vehicles up and down this thoroughfare, blasting the caves and ledges with every weapon at hand. Both officers remained atop the turrets, in plain view of the enemy and subject to the fire directed from the positions. The tanks, under the command of Lt. Gordon E. McQuain, succeeded in knocking out at least one machine gun, and scored several direct hits on caves, but were eventually forced to retire when one of them ran over a mine. So serious was the shortage of tanks in the Division at this time that all platoon leaders had orders not to risk them unnecessarily and the presence of mines along the road was considered reason enough to withdraw from the area. Shortly after the tanks returned to the battalion CP, F Company, coming down from the top of the mountain, succeeded in eliminating most of the fire that was bothering the battalions on the ridge from the left rear.

The Japanese on Hill Able presented a much more serious problem. There was a sizable force still in this position. Artillery fire could not be directed against them due to the presence of G Company, 165th Infantry, which was operating at the base of the rock by this time. Nor could rifle fire or machine guns do any good. The Japanese merely remained hidden in the thick foliage where they could not be seen and trained their weapons on the ridge.

The supplies which had been ordered by the companies had been put aboard self-propelled guns as soon as Captain Hallden's call was received at battalion and by 0920 the big vehicles were winding their way down through the ravine on their way to the ridge. There was no way to reach the troops by any of the main roads so the commander of the Cannon Company platoon had veered off the Aslito-Tanapag highway just opposite Hill Able and followed a little lane that angled off to the left across the canefields, dipped down into the deep ravine and then climbed at an angle up Bloody Ridge, emerging suddenly at the extreme left end of the crest, in the K Company area. Upon arriving at this point the vehicles tried to turn and make their way down the razorback to

distribute the supplies. Owing to the projections of coral and the narrowness of the ridge, this effort had to be abandoned and all companies soon organized carrying parties to go over to the SP guns and bring back the water, rations, and ammunition they had begun to unload.

The appearance of the vehicles had increased the tempo of Japanese fire all along the ridge, but the carrying parties had managed to get to them without casualties. In the midst of unloading, however, there suddenly descended upon the area a tremendous fusillade of fire from rifles, machine guns, mortars, and at least one dual-purpose gun. It was as though every Japanese weapon on Hill Able had opened up at once. Practically all of the carrying parties suffered one or more casualties, but the units which suffered most were I and K Companies, in whose area the largest part of the fire landed. Seven men were killed, including Lieutenant Green of G Company and Lieutenant Bonner, the last commander of I Company, and twenty-two men were wounded, all but two or three from K and I Companies.

The effect of this fire was to completely break the morale of the two companies hardest hit. All of the men came scrambling toward the trees in which E Company had taken cover. Captain Hallden and Lieutenant Noakes worked to get the men back to their positions and when, about 1000, this was accomplished, Lt. Spencer M. Pitts, who had just reported from the ship's party, was put in command of the remnants of I Company. He was the fifth company commander for that unit in forty-eight hours.

The Japanese fire had not died down after the opening fusillade. It continued to blanket the area and as Captain Hallden worked to get his line reorganized, man after man was hit. He had just finished his reorganization at 1020 when the second flash-fire concentration hit the ridge. This time K Company had five men wounded and I Company had three men killed and eleven wounded. L Company, which was so situated in a bend of the ridge that little fire reached it, had one man killed and one wounded in this second concentration.

Captain Hallden took this occasion to call Lt. Colonel Mizony on the telephone. He told the battalion commander that he had just finished counting heads and that with the latest casualties there were just ninety-nine men left in the three line companies and elements of M Company which were forward. He felt that he could no longer be responsible for the conduct of the men unless he was permitted to attack at once and get the men off the ridge, whether there was a new objective picked or not. He asked that some field officer be sent forward anyway, to take charge. Lt. Colonel Mizony told him that he would be forward around noon, that in the interim Captain Hallden had permission to make one

company out of the men that were left and attack immediately, but to guide on the 2d Battalion as he moved forward since that unit was swinging with the contours of the corridor and had a little farther to go.

Within ten minutes Captain Hallden had the battalion up and ready to move, but the 2d Battalion on the right could not advance. They had become engaged at the road junction and felt it unsafe to move out until the enemy there were cleaned up. Furthermore, F Company was moving up from the rear and Major O'Hara had given orders to wait until it could get forward. While the line waited for the 2d Battalion to move, the Japanese fire from Hill Able suddenly ceased as the attack of the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, caused the enemy to give their full attention to that threat.

Bloody Ridge was an incredible sight by this time. Dead men and wounded were strewn along the ridge and equipment was scattered all along the crest. Captain Hallden had ordered the SP guns to return the enemy's fire and they still sat on the extreme left of the line, half unloaded, surrounded by bodies and badly hurt men, unable to move, and firing as fast as they could load at Hill Able. No one was paying any attention to the corridor that stretched out to the north. Not a shot had been received from that direction all morning.

In the lull that followed the 2d Battalion's failure to move, Captain Hallden began another reorganization of his command. His first attention was to the construction of good, deep foxholes to replace the shallow ones that the men had dug when they first came to what was to have been a brief halt. Some of the new holes were as much as four feet deep. His second consideration was for the wounded. Evacuation at the moment was impossible. The slow-moving jeep ambulances still could not negotiate the valley as long as Hill Able held out. The SP guns, which would have offered a solution to the problem, had to be kept forward to provide covering fire for the infantry. In this situation, Captain Hallden ordered the wounded carried over to the grove of trees at the nose of the ridge where E Company had so far been relatively safe from the fire that had caused so much damage along the rest of the hill. By noon all of the wounded had been carried to safety and the two battalions were hastily preparing new positions on the north slope of the hill where, it had been discovered, fire from Hill Able could not reach.

While the two battalions had been on Bloody Ridge, F Company had been moving down from the heights of Tapotchau to rejoin the 2d Battalion. The movement had begun at 0730 and by 0845 the company had reached the halfway point in the descent down the treacherous remains of the slide that had fallen from the summit of the mountain

long before. No opposition had been encountered during this period, but within a few minutes after Lieutenant Slate reported by radio, the advance parties reached the ledge upon which the farmhouse perched and where the gun position had been destroyed on 24 June.

As the first men began probing through the farm buildings an enemy machine gun opened fire. The arrival of F Company from above, however, seemed to have taken the Japanese by surprise. Events in the valley below had evidently been occupying all their attention and the realization that Americans had descended on their rear seemed to confuse them. In trying to turn and face the new threat, most of them exposed themselves. Within ten minutes fourteen had been killed and F Company was fanning out through the area to eliminate the remainder. Scrambling from building to building and poking about behind walls and in cisterns, Lieutenant Slate's men completed the liquidation of what once had been a formidable Japanese position. As F Company spread out along the ledge, the last defenders of the Tapotchau position began streaming out of their hiding places and running north. Many of them were shot down as they ran, others managed to escape. By 1045 F Company had reached the now familiar line of trees that seemed to be a landmark for the 2d Battalion. All enemy fire from the Tapotchau cliffs, except to the south where the 1st Battalion was working, had ceased. Only one F Company man had been wounded during the whole action.

As soon as he had deployed his company in the tree-line, Lieutenant Slate called battalion headquarters for further orders. Major O'Hara, who had just been advised of the condition of the 3d Battalion's companies, ordered him to move to Bloody Ridge at once, prepared to take over part of Captain Hallden's line.

Company F arrived on the ridge at approximately 1145 to find all units firmly dug in. Scattered fire from Hill Able was still landing throughout the area. Rather than leave the company in the open while he became oriented on the situation, the company commander ordered them to move into the grove, where there was some cover, until he received further orders. The addition of F Company to E Company and over forty wounded who were now huddled in the trees, as one soldier later put it, "added slightly to the congestion."

Shortly before F Company arrived on the scene, Captain Waterson of E Company had received a phone call from Major O'Hara, who asked him if there was a suitable place there for the battalion CP. Captain Waterson, thinking that the advance would be resumed shortly, suggested the grove of trees. Ten minutes after F Company arrived, Major O'Hara moved up the slopes of Bloody Ridge with his CP group. At

1255 the 3d Battalion CP displaced forward and Lt. Colonel Mizony and his group came scrambling up the hill. The trees being on the boundary, the 3d Battalion commander picked the grove as a likely place for his command post and moved in. By 1315, therefore, one little group of trees on Bloody Ridge, not more than a hundred yards square, optimistically speaking, contained two full rifle companies, E and F, 2d Battalion headquarters and Headquarters Company, 3d Battalion headquarters and Headquarters Company, approximately forty badly wounded men, and various messengers, weapons, battle-fatigue cases and stragglers from I, K, H, L, and M companies. In the words of one man, "there wasn't room enough to sit down."

Both battalion commanders were quick to realize the hazards such a concentration embodied. Both set about immediately to get the battalions moving again. Lt. Colonel Mizony, Major O'Hara, and all the company commanders moved to the north fringe of the grove and sat down with maps, field glasses, and staffs to chart the next step in the advance. From where they sat, the corridor to the north spread out before them. Two hundred yards ahead was another transverse ridge, along the crest of which ran another line of small trees and shrubbery. The Aslito-Tanapag highway ran from its junction with the S road in a westerly direction along the side of this ridge until it reached the middle of the corridor, then turned abruptly north, running up over the center of the hill and out of sight on the other side. While the observers on Bloody Ridge had a good view of the whole valley to the north they could not see what was immediately behind the next hill, partly because of the foliage, partly because of its elevation. In addition to the men in the trees at this time, it might be added that the rest of the regimental line had now moved practically intact to the north side of Bloody Ridge to escape the effect of the scattered fire which still fell into the area from Hill Able.

The conference at the north point of the grove had barely gotten under way and Lt. Colonel Mizony was just pointing out some terrain feature to the front when a Japanese tank poked its nose up over the next ridge. It was followed closely by a second. These two tanks were on the highway. As they came over the brow of the hill, the first moved off onto the shoulder of the road to let the other into position. The movement from behind the next hill to the front had been undetected and the appearance of the vehicles over the crest went unnoticed. One soldier later said, "I saw them. I looked at them. Everyone else did. It was just as though they were part of the scenery." The measurement of time is difficult in circumstances such as these. The men who were present all insist that the two enemy tanks sat on the hill for some little

time before they fired. It was probably only a matter of seconds. The first vehicle turned its turret gun and machine guns directly on the clump of trees. The second covered the rest of the ridge. For some strange reason, this second tank never fired more than one or two shots, but the first used all its weapons. After pouring shells and bullets into the trees for a few moments, it traversed its guns up and down the ridge line again, then just as deliberately withdrew. In the brief and terrible time that it had occupied the hill to the front, it had sprayed every foot of Bloody Ridge with steel. Not one American shot was fired in return, so quickly did the whole affair happen. It was not until both enemy tanks had ducked back down behind the foliage that anyone could get his bearings. Then Captain Hallden ran to the SP guns which were still sitting on the extreme left flank. These vehicles opened fire with every weapon at their command, but it was too late. The Japanese were safely hidden.

The toll within the two battalions was awesome. Twelve men had been killed and sixty-one wounded. Among those killed were Lt. Colonel Mizony, Captain Tarrant of G Company, and Lt. John J. McGregor of M Company. Most of the casualties were in the 2d Battalion, except for I Company, which had been nearest to the clump of trees and again suffered several men hit. The fire had caused panic all along the crest of Bloody Ridge. The troops had scrambled back to the reverse slope at the first burst of fire. There, after the tank left, Japanese from Hill Able took up the fire. Two more men from F Company were wounded here. Most of the disorganization that ensued occurred within the 2d Battalion. Captain Hallden, it will be remembered, had spent two hours digging foxholes on both slopes of the ridge and for this reason he had a well established line almost immediately. Within a few seconds after the tanks had disappeared Captain Hallden was directing fire from his whole line to the north. Major O'Hara, Captain Waterson, and Lieutenant Slate all gave their attention to getting the 2d Battalion in hand and by 1330 had the men regrouped and back on the line.

The appearance of the tanks, it was feared, was the forerunner of a general counterattack down the corridor from the north. Major O'Hara immediately began organizing a strong defensive position atop the ridge and neither battalion moved forward for the rest of the day.

Major Claire, the new commander of the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had started to work early on Hill Able. After arriving at his new command shortly after daylight and going over the situation with his company commanders, he organized a two-pronged attack on the hill. Company G was to move against it along Purple Heart Ridge at 0630

while F Company circled and came up from the east, through How Position, which had been taken the day before.

From the position atop Hill Oboe, G Company pushed off to move across Hill King at the designated hour. As the company reached the saddle between Oboe and King where the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, had run into so much trouble two days before, Japanese machine-gun fire and mortar shells began hitting the column. One man, Pfc. Wallace Poore, was killed instantly. Captain Chasmar decided that there were more Japanese on the hill than a small group. After his patrols reported, about 0930, the company commander asked for artillery fire on the hill. When his request was denied he asked for tanks or SP guns. These vehicles were two hours in arriving at Hill King, during which time there was no advance.

A little after noon, supported by SP guns from Cannon Company, the attempt to retake Hill King was resumed. As the big vehicles pushed forward they found that their fire was having little effect. Sergeant Horvath, who had knocked out the Japanese positions on 20 June at Nafutan, now crawled onto one of the gun mounts where he could talk to the driver and gunners and directed fire. By 1300, all but one of the enemy machine guns had been knocked out. Horvath got down off the vehicle, and dropped grenades into the position. During the time in which the vehicle was pushing up the hill, the company had been inching forward. One man had been wounded by rifle fire, but there were no other casualties.

With the cessation of enemy fire, Captain Chasmar hustled his company forward, ordering them to keep going toward Hill Able as soon as they crossed the crest of King. No trouble was encountered until the men burst over the summit of the hill. At that point the whole G Company line was greeted by a shower of grenades and fire from machine guns. Most of the Japanese who were now encountered had evidently moved to Hill King from Able at about 1030 when it became apparent that G Company was going to try and repeat the tactics of the 3d Battalion, 106th, of the previous day. The enemy had organized a deep defensive position on the reverse slopes and now, when G Company came charging over the top, the men found themselves in the midst of the position. In the attack of the 27th, Lieutenant Smith's men had caught the Japanese unprepared for the swift attack following the artillery fire. This time the enemy were ready and waiting. As soon as the bulk of G Company had moved over the summit, the Japanese acted. Machine guns, rifles, and grenades were brought into play.

The melee on Hill King continued for thirty minutes. At the end of that time well over fifty Japanese were dead, but Chasmar had begun to

notice that his own ranks were thinning out. He called Major Claire on the radio and was ordered to pull his men back down into the saddle between King and Oboe so that mortar fire could be placed on the rear slopes of King. With the losses taken on previous days, G Company was now down to approximately one rifle platoon in strength. Shortly after digging in on Oboe, G Company had one more man wounded when the Japanese replied to the American mortar fire with another concentration such as they had put on Hill King the night before. In the resultant disorganization, Major Claire ordered E Company to take over the assault from G Company and the relief was not completed until after 1600. The battalion dug in for the night on Hill Oboe.

Company F, 165th Infantry, had also had a disappointing day. In order to save time Lieutenant Trommel decided to cut across the nose of Hill Victor, by this time considered cleaned out. (F Company had run patrols around the hill on previous days, looking for Charlie Chan, but had found no evidences of enemy.) The leading platoon had moved along the path that ran up the cliffs and had just started for the base of the dormer when a Japanese machine gun opened up from the brush at the west end of the hill, traversing the whole open plateau on top of the cliffs. Three men were killed and ten wounded almost at once, and as the gun continued to fire the elements of the company which had reached the top were forced to lie flat on the ground. Any man who tried to move was hit. Two men did try to change their positions and both were immediately killed. For an hour Lieutenant Trommel tried to work men into position where fire could be brought to bear on the Japanese. Eventually he sent two SP guns around to the north side of Victor and they laboriously made their way up the slopes of Purple Heart Ridge in an attempt to get at the gun from above. As they neared Hill King in their ascent, enemy soldiers in that position opened fire with mortars and the big vehicles were forced to retire.

Lieutenant Trommel now decided to by-pass Hill Victor, leaving one platoon to clean out the machine gun, and get on with his mission. Lt. John M. Flesche, Jr., who had just rejoined the company from the battalion's ship's party, led out with one platoon around the nose of Hill Victor and by noon was approaching How Position. He came up on it from the same direction that E Company had the day before. At almost the same point, in the little clearing between the two hills, machine guns opened fire both from the front and from the left flank. Flesche, who had been told that How Position was cleaned out, had walked into the trap with his whole platoon. Two men had been badly wounded in the opening fire and the rest pinned down. Flesche did not feel that

he could advance into the face of the guns to his front because they had clear fields of fire, but he did think he might be able to go around the hill so he gave his platoon orders to pull back. By this time the Japanese on Hill King had joined the firing and the rest of the company was pinned down on the open hillside. The men had to move by crawling a few feet at a time, always under severe fire, and it was 1600 before the men were all assembled and ready to start again toward How Position. At that time Major Claire ordered them to dig in for the night and resume the attack next morning. Lieutenant Trommel once more moved up to Hill Oboe and joined the battalion.

Discouraging as the action had been elsewhere in the valley, there had been one bright note during the day. It marked the end of Japanese resistance in Hell's Pocket and along the Tapotchau cliffs as far as the 106th's line. Part of this had been accomplished by F Company, 106th Infantry. The rest was the work of the 1st Battalion. Major Nichols, in charge of the operation above the cliffs, had split the side of Mt. Tapotchau into two zones, one of which he gave to B Company, the other to A. The latter unit had the southernmost section of the cliffs, including that part that faced directly on the highway entrance into the valley. C Company was to work with Company A, moving north along the base of the high ground.

Major Nichols left the work to be done in the Company A area largely to the discretion of Lieutenant Sergio, but told the company commander that a better job would be done if he made firm physical contact with C Company below. This promised to be a difficult task because the cliffs at this point were almost sheer. Nevertheless, Sergio detailed one platoon to make the effort. The first attempt to send men down over the rim ended in failure, first, because of the sheerness, and second, because of dense foliage which covered the approach to the cliff above and below the drop. As the platoon skirted along the mountain, moving north, it was suddenly hit by shells from a dual-purpose gun located somewhere to the front. This fire killed Pfc. Edward Rubin and wounded three others, including Major Nichols and Major MacCready, a Canadian Army observer who was attached to the battalion. Major Nichols had his wound dressed and came back to the platoon with the remark, "That is the easiest Purple Heart I'll ever earn."

The shells that had caused the casualties were followed by thirty minutes of intermittent mortar fire, during which Major Nichols kept the platoon moving in its effort to find a way down the cliffs. Eventually, to speed things up, Staff Sgt. Leslie Rock was sent along the cliff for a hundred yards in an effort to find out where the mortar fire was

coming from. On the way he was to keep his eyes open for another place to descend. Rock moved over the ground he was supposed to cover and found nothing except higher cliffs. Major Nichols reasoned that if there was no way to get up or down the cliffs at this point, then the Japanese could not be there either. He suggested to Lieutenant Sergio that one platoon be sent out to find a place where men could get down. There he would probably find the Japanese.

The company commander immediately dispatched Lt. Cleo B. Kuhl with the platoon and told him to keep going until he found a place to get down or ran into Japanese. Kuhl moved out, keeping close to the cliff's rim. Within twenty minutes he had gone a hundred yards north of the point reached by Rock. There he found a series of ledges that led to the bottom of the mountain. Just at this moment, however, an enemy soldier popped up from behind a nearby rock and killed Pfc. Anthony Kendonca with one shot. The rest of the platoon dove for cover and a moment later, when the Jap got curious, and looked out from behind his rock again, Sgt. Curtis Earlsby shot him in the head. These shots seemed to have awakened the Japanese to danger. All along the ledges below and to the front machine guns and rifles began firing and Kuhl's platoon was soon pinned down. Neither Kuhl nor any of his men could locate the enemy positions, and whenever any of them made a move it brought down heavy fire. Kuhl had no radio and both attempts to send runners back to tell Lieutenant Sergio were useless.

Lieutenant Sergio waited an hour for Kuhl's return and, finally, suspecting that the platoon leader might be in trouble, he dispatched Lt. Paul W. Burnett with another platoon to find the first and help it if help were needed. Barnett never found Kuhl. He worked north and in some way passed the other platoon without seeing it. As he moved north along the cliffs his platoon came under fire from the ledges and from positions higher up the cliffs which were above him. Barnett was wounded in the foot, and after trying for some time to find out where the positions were he ordered his platoon sergeant to move the men back out of the area until Kuhl could be found and point out where the positions were. Barnett was sure that the other platoon leader was experiencing the same fire and undoubtedly knew where the Japanese were shooting from, having been there for an hour.

Sergeant Hettie, now in command of the platoon, did as Barnett told him and started to withdraw his men. As the column filed back to the south it met both Lieutenant Sergio and Major Nichols moving up to find out what was going on. (Barnett was being carried along on a rifle litter.) Major Nichols immediately ordered Hettie to turn the platoon around and move back to the cliffs. Lieutenant Barnett protested the

battalion executive's decision and after the two officers had discussed the matter for some little time, the major decided to have a look for himself. Taking Hettie, Staff Sgt. Frank Bator, and Lieutenant Sergio, he moved back into the area from which the platoon had withdrawn. The fire was still heavy when the party walked into the edge of the cliffs. Major Nichols calmly looked the ground over and announced to Sergio that Barnett had been right. Until Kuhl had been located and some idea as to the location of the positions could be ascertained it was foolish to expose the men. As the party turned to make their way back to the platoon, Major Nichols was hit in the back. Sergeant Hettie picked him up and carried him to the aid station where he died.

While Barnett's platoon had been moving north Lieutenant Kuhl had continued to be pinned down. The sudden appearance of the second platoon atop the cliffs had focused the Japanese attention there momentarily and Kuhl seized the opportunity to get his men out of their predicament. One of his men, the same Sergeant Dacato who had been so instrumental in destroying the crater position the day before, had spotted the enemy positions, one by one, while he was pinned down. As soon as the platoon was out of danger and reorganized he told Kuhl and pointed them out. The platoon leader lost no time in getting back to Sergio with the information. The Weapons Platoon was moved forward, along with heavy machine guns and mortars from D Company. Under Kuhl's direction they were placed to bear directly on the enemy emplacements. Then, with Sergeant Dacato acting as a forward observer, Kuhl began directing fire. The ensuing action lasted for two hours. One by one the Japanese weapons were taken under fire with Dacato running around like a wild man, giving advice and exposing himself time and again so that the gunners would be able to see exactly where the fire was to be put. Men who saw the sergeant during that afternoon characterized his work as "absolutely foolhardy." Although the enemy very early recognized him as the source of their trouble and directed fire at him, in some miraculous fashion he escaped being hit.

The elimination of the position by Company A marked the end of the principal position facing the entrance to Death Valley. Both A and C Companies, by early afternoon, were moving rapidly to the north along the cliffs. There were still many Japanese in caves, but they were badly disorganized and offered little opposition. By nightfall the whole side of Mt. Tapotchau was cleared of enemy except for a few stragglers here and there. B Company had run into little opposition during the day, but blew up over a hundred cave positions in the cliffs, operating from above and along the little ledges wherever they occurred. B Company had no casualties, but C suffered two men killed and five men wounded.

SITUATION ON THE NIGHT OF 28 JUNE

At 1030 on the morning of 28 June Maj. Gen. George W. Griner took command of the Division, having been flown to Saipan from the Hawaiian Islands. He had formerly commanded the 98th Division. General Griner's introduction to the Division was anything but auspicious. He had arrived on the island late in the evening of 27 June and spent the night at corps headquarters with Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith. General Smith told him that the 27th had been a dismal failure as a fighting division prior to that time. Later in the evening, on going over the situation, the new commander found that he had only five battalions under his control. One, the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, was attached to the island's garrison force for operations at Nafutan. Three more were attached to the 4th Marine Division. When General Griner asked that his full strength be returned to him he was told that the other battalions would be put back under his command as soon as the Division had "demonstrated that it could fight."

The next morning, within two hours after he had reported to the Division command post, he learned that one of the other five battalions which he did have was so badly depleted by casualties as to be almost incapable of sustaining further combat.

General Griner arrived at the conclusion of the struggle for Death Valley. The next morning the 106th Infantry would move on to the north from Bloody Ridge. The first problem the general had to contend with, therefore, was the push north to the junction with the 165th Infantry, which had been waiting at Hill 700 since the morning of the 27th. Two battalions would be left behind at Death Valley. The 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, was to complete the reduction of Hill Able while one battalion of the 106th would complete the mop-up of the rest of the enemy stragglers in the valley.

To speed the advance of the Division to the north, General Griner, on the afternoon of 28 June, had ordered Colonel Bishop of the 105th Infantry to take over the right flank of the Division line. The only battalion Colonel Bishop had available, the 3d, was already in position near Hill Love and plans were prepared to march it into position at daylight on the 29th.

Colonel Stebbins asked permission to pull the 3d Battalion, 106th, out of the line and this was given. Accordingly, orders were issued to Lt. Colonel Cornett at 1530 to march his troops to the north under cover of darkness and relieve the 3d Battalion. C Company was to be left as a holding force at the south end of the valley until the 3d Battalion marched back to that area and took over the mission of mopping up.

The action which now devolved upon the 2d Battalion, 165th Infan-

try, focused on one point, Hill Able. As long as this jutting hill remained in enemy hands free access to the valley and to the road north was denied all but armored vehicles. Until the last Japanese soldier was killed the dead of Death Valley would remain unburied, the tanks would remain unreclaimed, and the road to the north would still be closed.

COMPLETION OF THE DEATH VALLEY CAMPAIGN

Although the main task ahead of the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, on the morning of 29 June was the capture of Hill Able, before that could be accomplished Hill King had once more to be cleaned off and the How Position once more reduced. Major Claire ordered E Company to take over the job of capturing Hill King and Hill Able, while F Company moved on the How Position. G Company was to mop up whatever enemy were to be found behind the front lines, including the troublesome position on Hill Victor. The time of attack was set at 0700. An artillery preparation was to precede the attack on Hill King.

Company E moved into the attack with two platoons abreast, jumping off down the slopes of Hill Oboe on time. Upon reaching the saddle between the two hills, Lieutenant Raleigh stopped his unit to wait for the artillery fire. At this moment an unusual incident occurred.

Following the orders issued by Division, the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, had moved forward at daylight to take over the right flank of the Division line at Bloody Ridge. At approximately 0630 the leading company, K, was met at Hill X-ray-Yoke by guides furnished by the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry. The column then moved along the inside of Purple Heart Ridge as far as Hill Oboe where it ran into the rear elements of the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry. One of the two guides wanted to push out into Death Valley to escape the congestion ahead, but the other guide, remembering that the enemy on Hill Able were still delivering fire on the open valley, held out for staying on Purple Heart Ridge where the foliage offered some concealment. The man who advocated the Hill King route had been on the ground two days previously and knew it well. He did not know that the hill had been reoccupied by the enemy. The covered route seemed more sensible to Capt. Alexander C. Bouchard, K Company commander, and he decided to use it. Accordingly, the column swung wide so as not to interfere with 2d Battalion troops and started along the inner slope of Hill King. As it reached a point halfway up the crest, rifle fire began landing among the advance elements. All of the men immediately took cover. Captain Bouchard asked the guide whether the hill had been cleaned off for sure and the answer was yes. The company commander then assumed

that the fire was coming from a small party of stragglers and dispatched a squad under Staff Sgt. Carl A. Neidt to circle the hill and clean them out, while the rest of the battalion moved on to the north. As Neidt started out on his patrol the artillery preparation began landing on Hill King. The first fifteen shells landed squarely in the midst of K Company, wounding nineteen men. Captain Bouchard looked around, saw the crest of the hill, and figured that if he could get his men on the reverse slope of it he would be safe from the artillery. Without any further ado he ordered his men to get over the top of the hill, rifle fire or no rifle fire. They were just in the act of following out the order when the full force of the concentration struck and the dispersal which the scramble up the hill had effected acted to cut down the casualties. As it was, K Company, 105th Infantry, landed in the Japanese foxholes on the reverse slope just as the enemy was settling down to wait out the concentration. Captain Bouchard's men found themselves unexpectedly in the midst of a considerable Japanese force. For the next few minutes the K Company men engaged in a battle royal, killing Japanese as fast as they could shoot.

Meanwhile, at the bottom of Hill King, E Company, 165th Infantry, waited for the preparation to cease before moving off, unaware that anything unusual was going on ahead of them. When Lieutenant Raleigh gave the signal to advance the men scrambled up to the crest of Hill King as fast as they could get there, meaning to catch the Japanese in their holes. As they came over the crest it was to find a bitter fight already going on, with K Company winning. The E Company men moved right into the struggle and within half an hour the Japanese had all been killed. As soon as he could disengage, Captain Bouchard had pulled his men out of the fight, but before he could resume his march it was approximately 1000.

By 1115 E Company had completed mopping up the Japanese on Hill King. Over 125 enemy bodies were counted, all freshly killed. The blackened bodies left over from previous assaults were still lying around, and were not included in this count.

Lieutenant Raleigh now turned his attention to Hill Able. After a consultation with Major Claire he set 1200 as the hour of attack. He wanted artillery placed on the rock, but due to the presence of American troops on all sides of the promontory, negotiations for the use of preparatory fire were prolonged and the attack was delayed until 1330. Raleigh's plan of attack called for an assault down the belt of trees between King and Able in a column of platoons. Upon reaching the base of the rock-like knob, the leading platoon would fan out and scale

the south face of the cliff while the next platoon in column would move to the right and attempt to gain the top by means of the more gradual eastern ramp. The reserve platoon would be committed between the other two, if needed. Raleigh was also given one platoon of G Company to use if he needed more strength.

The artillery fire was of short duration. The assault moved off down the belt of trees very rapidly to a point within fifteen yards of the cliffs. There some little fire was received, but by that time the company was ready to swing out for its attempt at scaling the cliffs. These cliffs offered in themselves some protection from enemy fire as it was necessary for the Japanese to lean out over the edge and fire straight down once the Americans reached the base of the hill. The assault troops, realizing this, lost no time in getting to the bottom of the rock, and what little rifle fire the enemy was able to bring to bear on the tree belt had little or no effect.

The face of Hill Able was sheer, broken by little ledges from two to four feet wide and spaced from three to six feet apart. The sides of the hill were pocked with small holes into which men could fit their feet. There was a little trail or path that started at the extreme southeast corner and ran diagonally across the face of the hill to the extreme southwestern corner, at the top. This would have permitted much easier access to the top of the hill, but Lieutenant Raleigh had ordered the company not to use it, feeling that the enemy had probably covered it with fire. Instead the men made their way up the cliff, from ledge to ledge, a laborious and slow job. The original plan of committing the reserve platoon between the other two if contact was hard to maintain was necessary almost at the start. This platoon, therefore, made its assault at the very corner of the hill.

Little trouble was encountered on either side of the hill until most of the men had begun their difficult climb. On the south face, the two leading men, Pfc. Michael N. Deperri and Pvt. James W. Hyland, had reached the fourth ledge, almost thirty feet above the ground, when Deperri, in climbing up to the next one, stuck his nose over the ledge and found himself staring into the eyes of a Japanese soldier, inches away. The enemy simply reached out with a grenade and dropped it down Deperri's back. Both Deperri and Hyland lost their balance and fell all the way to the ground below, the grenade, meanwhile, having fallen free. The enemy all along the top of the hill now began reaching out over the edge and dropping grenades. In the next few minutes the grenades were dropped in such quantities that the whole south side of the cliff seemed to be alive with explosions. To add to the difficulties, Japanese all along the top began standing up and firing down with rifles.

Many of these enemy were killed by the G Company platoon who picked them off from the trees on Hill King. Nevertheless the combined effect of the grenades and rifle bullets was causing the E Company platoon many casualties. Pfc. Jack B. Staus was killed instantly by this fire and Pfc. Aubrey D. Varney was mortally wounded. Varney fell over backward when a grenade exploded almost in his face, and landed in the top of a small tree where he lay unconscious for some little time while the Japanese threw grenades at him from above. Most of these missed him and he eventually regained consciousness to crawl down out of the tree and make his way to an aid station where he later died. Five other men were seriously wounded in the fighting on the side of the cliff and most of the remainder of the platoon eventually lost their holds on the cliff sides and dropped to the ground.

While the one platoon had been struggling to gain a foothold on the south face of the hill, the reserve platoon had been trying to climb it at the corner with much the same results. Lt. Henry Pearl, leader of this platoon, had been studying the action of the Japanese during the fight, however, and when all of his men were driven off he called them together with a new idea. He had been watching the path up the cliff and had noticed that little fire, if any, had been placed upon it, but that the Japanese were paying close attention to it. He asked Pvt. Donald J. McLean if he would be willing to try and move up the path in an effort to draw enemy attention to it while the rest of the platoon climbed up the corner where they had tried before. McLean agreed to make the try, guaranteeing Pearl that he would act as though he were being followed by a considerable force. Pearl later said that he had asked McLean to make the attempt because "he was the best man I had for the job. I knew that if he said he would do it, he would, somehow or other and would keep trying until he was dead." Before McLean agreed to the diversion, Pearl told him that he would probably be killed because he had to move along a completely exposed trail that every Japanese on Hill Able would be shooting at. McLean said he would go anyway. Pearl then ordered his platoon to start out just as before. Lieutenant Raleigh, who had been informed, ordered the G Company platoon to move up the ramp. As soon as McLean attracted enough attention, they were to assault the hill from that direction.

McLean had two other men with him, following him at about thirty yards. As soon as the rest of the company renewed their attempts to scale the cliffs, he inched forward, hugging the walls as closely as possible. The Japanese gave their attention at first to the scaling attempts, but as soon as McLean had reached the halfway point on the trail, fire began to be directed at him. More and more Japanese leaned out over

the ledge to shoot. The platoon of G Company and the one platoon of E Company began their move around to the east. No fire was received in that quarter at all, and the troops were soon halfway up the slope. McLean, however, was having difficulty. Shortly after getting past the halfway mark he was painfully hit in the arm and his wound made every movement torture. He tried to keep going, but soon had to give it up and lie down flat on the trail. At approximately this time the Japanese discovered the attempt being made to gain the crest on the east and turned their weapons in that direction.

Meanwhile, Lieutenant Raleigh, who had been wounded during the first assault, had gone back to the battalion aid station which was now located on Hill King. He discussed with Major Claire the problem of what to do if night fell before the hill was carried. Major Claire told Lieutenant Raleigh to go forward and talk it over with Lieutenant Pearl. As he, Raleigh, moved out into the open he was hit in the arm by a mortar fragment. When he reported this to Major Claire, the battalion commander was near the aid station where the first group of casualties was coming in. Mistakenly assuming that these were late casualties and that the enemy fire was causing extremely heavy losses in the company, Major Claire decided to wait until morning and try the hill from the north side where there was another gradual slope leading to the summit. When the order reached the two platoons on the eastern slope, they were almost at the top of the hill. Lieutenant Pearl expressed the opinion that had they continued they would have reached the summit by nightfall. Meanwhile, Private McLean had managed to drag himself back down the trail to the base of the cliff where he was rescued by other members of E Company who were just clambering down from the rock ledges.

While E Company had been working on Hill Able from Purple Heart Ridge, F Company had once again started out to recapture the How Position. In view of his experience on the day before, Lieutenant Trommel asked for some tanks and, to his surprise, was given three mediums under Lieutenant Lansford, along with three SP guns from Cannon Company. He moved off at 0800 toward Hill King from the bottom of Hill Victor. As the vehicles neared the east base of Hill King, the Japanese opened fire with mortars and high-velocity guns which scattered the infantry who were walking along close behind. Two men were wounded in this early fire. When Lieutenant Trommel had had a chance to survey the ground in front of him he decided that the mortars were being fired from the underside of Hill King and that direct fire from the tanks could scatter the Japanese manning the guns. There now

began an hour of futile efforts to bring the fire from the big vehicles to bear anywhere near Hill King. Part of the difficulty lay in the fact that the whole action was taking place on the side of a hill and the turret guns of the tanks would not depress quite enough to reach the caves. Whenever the infantrymen tried to advance without the vehicles they were brought under machine-gun fire as well as that from the mortars. One by one, five men were hit by either the machine guns or mortar fragments, including Lieutenant Laney.

At approximately 1430, after trying for three hours to solve the riddle of tank support and fire direction, Lieutenant Trommel had a discussion with the crew of one of the SP guns who volunteered to take their vehicle right up the hill to King and go after the positions at close quarters. Pfc. Roy Moore, who had been a member of the squad that had been hit by enemy fire on the previous afternoon, thought he knew exactly where the Japanese were and climbed into the SP gun to go along. The big vehicle lumbered up the steep grade, circled back toward Hill Oboe and eventually turned again and came at Hill King from the south, tilted at a precarious angle. Either the fact that the self-propelled gun had made a wide circle or a disbelief in its ability to reach the position had caused the Japanese to disregard it entirely. Lieutenant Flesche, in charge of the assault platoon of F Company, had ordered his men forward as soon as the SP gun started up the hill and the enemy began exposing themselves to take the infantrymen under fire. Under Moore's direction the gun mount was heading directly for them when this happened. In the first burst of Japanese fire two of Flesche's men were hit, but before any more damage could be done, the big vehicle plowed into the heart of the hill position, scattering the defenders in all directions, then shooting them down with its machine guns. Flesche was quick to take advantage of the help. Urging his men forward up the hill at a run, while the SP gun careened forward above them, they soon had cleaned out every vestige of enemy on the eastern slopes of Purple Heart Ridge. Just as Flesche was about to turn and move into How Position itself, he was notified that Lieutenant Trommel had been wounded by mortar fragments and that he was in command of the company. Flesche, who was called "the Kid" by some members of F Company, was the fifth company commander in three days. He turned the command of the assault platoon over to Sgt. Edward Davis and told him to circle around and hit How Position from the north, up through a little corridor that seemed to connect with the S road. Just after Flesche had left him, Davis was informed that the SP gun which had been doing such good work above him had been hit and that several crew members had been wounded. The platoon leader tried to reach Flesche to tell him, but by

that time the new company commander was chasing his tanks down the road trying to get them back. Lieutenant Lansford had been granted permission to return to his unit by 1545 and at the precise moment that Flesche took charge of the company, Lansford was in the act of leaving. The young officer argued Lansford into staying a few minutes longer, then ran back up the hill and got another SP gun to take the place of the one that had been hit. As soon as this vehicle was in place he ordered Davis to resume his advance. The F Company platoon pushed rapidly ahead, reached the S road and turned toward How Position. Flesche returned again to the tanks, just finding them turning to leave. It was at this moment that one of Davis's men yelled out that a Japanese tank was just ahead of him. The word was passed along from man to man until by the time it reached the rear of the company, "Japanese tank," had turned into "Japanese tank counterattack." The F Company tanks had already started back down the hill and all the yelling and shouting that the men did could not make the crews hear. Within a few moments, the reserve platoon was running after the vehicles in one big stampede. One of the crew members happened to look back and saw the commotion and stopped the three tanks. Flesche came back and told Lansford what he had heard. This was just what Lansford had been waiting for: a chance to shoot it out with enemy armor. He turned the tanks around and moved as far as the S road and up it to the little ravine. There he saw the Japanese vehicle. It had been dug in and expertly camouflaged. Its turret gun was the weapon which had been causing so much damage during the preceding days at Chacha Village. Lansford began firing as soon as he sighted it and within five minutes had completely destroyed it. Under cover of Lansford's guns F Company now pushed on into the heart of the How Position. There was no resistance. The enemy had fled. It was now 1600 and Flesche dug in for the night where he was.

Company F's capture of How Position ended the day's action in Death Valley. Only one position remained to the Japanese, Hill Able. In spite of everything, the defenders of that little rock were as active as ever. As long as they were able to hold out, American troops to the north in the corridor were hampered logistically. Full attention was given to American vehicles which had now begun to move up and down the Aslito-Tanapag highway. Just before dark a convoy of jeeps running supplies to the 106th Infantry tried to run by the hill at full speed. The leading vehicle was taken under fire and forced into the ditch where it overturned, pinning the driver underneath. It became necessary to send a platoon of tanks and detachment of halftracks to the point to bring enough fire on the hill to extract the injured man.

At the close of the day the 2d Battalion, 165th, underwent a minor reorganization. The wounding of Lieutenants Raleigh, Trommel, and Laney had left the battalion with only four officers in the line companies. Consequently, Lt. Colonel Hart, who was now in command of the regiment, placed Capt. John J. Malloy, regimental TQM, in command of E Company, and Capt. William J. Smtih, regimental transportation officer, in command of F Company.

With the Japanese concentrated on Hill Able, in a small area, Major Claire spent the hours between 1600 and darkness in accumulating mortar ammunition. As darkness fell he ordered all mortars in the battalion, plus some he had borrowed from neighboring units, to begin firing upon the strongpoint. The fire went on all through the night. At dawn there was no sign of life atop the hill. At 0630 Captain Chasmar marched G Company boldly out into Death Valley and around the hill to the north. There he formed a long skirmish line and moved toward the strongpoint. Some scattered rifle fire met the men, but they kept moving steadily forward, up the slopes of the north side of the rock. At 2050 the last man in the 27th Division to be killed in the capture of Death Valley fell a victim to the few riflemen left. He was Pvt. Alvin B. Herring. At 0900 Major Claire reported to General Griner that Hill Able was secure. The hill was covered with Japanese bodies, most of them the victims of the mortar fire of the night before.

During the next four days the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, acted as NTLF reserve, mopping up stragglers throughout the valley area. Vast stores of enemy matériel were uncovered, including the stores of General Saito's CP. Message files and records of the enemy commander's communications to Tokyo were taken, together with many high-powered radios and much food.

Although the fighting had remained bitter and costly up to and through 29 June in Death Valley, the main effort on Saipan had passed beyond that strongpoint on 26 June. The 4th Marine Division, on the right, with the 165th Infantry attached, had pushed on to Charan Danshii, while on the left the 2d Marine Division, after its capture of the heights of Tapotchau on the 25th had begun the conquest of Garapan which was to occupy them until 4 July. The 27th Division had pushed north up the corridor on the morning of 29 June, moving rapidly to overtake the units on either flank. The next objective was to be the great enemy naval base at Tanapag.

Chapter 36: The Road to Tanapag

IN THE MIDST of the fighting for Death Valley, on 25 June, the 106th and 165th Infantry Regiments had executed a flanking maneuver intended to by-pass the whole Japanese position in the area. The efforts of the 106th to force its way into the corridor above Hill Able had been a failure but the day had ended with the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, about 1,400 yards north of Chacha Village, on the outside of the corridor. Late in the afternoon, while Lt. Colonel Cornett was still trying to force his way through the hills, Colonel Kelley had inserted the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, on the 3d Battalion's left in an effort to present a solid line to the enemy. The subsequent withdrawal of the 106th Infantry did not see a similar adjustment in the lines of the 165th. Morning of the 26th found Colonel Kelley in position to launch an attack to the north, with two battalions abreast, but with an exposed left flank. Shortly after daylight he called General Jarman, and the Division Commander told him to readjust his lines, try to cover his left flank, and to continue the attack as soon as the Marines came abreast on the right. There were indications that the Japanese had withdrawn from the area east of the corridor and the general felt that a pursuit should be pressed home as rapidly as possible to prevent consolidation of another such position as that encountered at Death Valley.

Regimental orders were issued at 0610 and after a ten-minute artillery preparation, Major Claire's battalion jumped off. After moving some four hundred yards against no opposition, the attack halted to allow adjustment of the lines on each flank. On the right the Marines were slow in getting their lines re-formed to the north after the sweep through Kagman Point, and on the left the 1st Battalion, 105th, had run into difficult terrain which slowed them up considerably. Neither the Marines nor Lt. Colonel O'Brien's battalion had come abreast by 1700 and Major Claire eventually dug in where he was, astride the main coastal highway that led toward Donnay. Aside from occasional harassment from the hills to the left he had encountered no opposition and there were still no signs of enemy ahead at nightfall.

While the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, was operating on the relatively flat eastern coastal plain, the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, on its immediate left, found itself forced to push through the foothills of the extension of Purple Heart Ridge. Almost without exception this was badly cut-up country and Company B, the right flank unit, from the very first was forced to split up into small patrols to investigate a maze of deep ravines in their path. Only a few enemy were there, but these slowed the advance considerably. Lieutenant Dolliver of B Com-

pany and one BAR man, Pvt. William C. Callahan, knocked out two machine guns in one cave; and a few other enemy were cornered in the narrow ravines. There were no casualties, but the difficulty of threading the twisting corridors consumed time and forced B Company to swing wider to the left than had been intended.

Company C, 105th Infantry, also became lost in the maze of corridors and swung too far to the left, eventually ending up on top of the ridge next to the main Aslito-Tanapag highway. As the left platoon emerged on this ridge, two figures came out of the woods about two hundred yards to the front. They were dressed in Marine fatigues and wore the cloth-covered Marine camouflaged helmets. They waved their arms and whistled, and the platoon sergeant, Tech. Sgt. Raymond J. Toomey, answered their hail. Almost at once the two figures turned and ran back into the bushes. A moment later heavy machine-gun fire and shells from a high-velocity gun, probably a tank weapon, landed in the platoon area, killing Pfc. Lawrence D. Flynn and wounding nine others, including Toomey. The men broke for cover and, as they started to move, a Navy plane flew low over them. As the platoon reached the cover of a nearby grove of trees the plane circled and came back, letting go with a rocket barrage which landed among the trees, killing one more man. Lt. Bernard G. Tougaw, now in command of C Company, and Captain Ryan of B Company, got together soon after this and reorganized their companies, establishing a line which was ready to move out to the north abreast of the 3d Battalion by 1400. Four men of the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, had been wounded during the movement into position by fire from How Position, now almost 1,500 yards to the rear.

This fire also caused some casualties in the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, which was moving down from Hill Love to take up position as the left-flank battalion for the drive north. Among the five men so hit were Lieutenant Gil of B Company who had just been out of the hospital for three days following his accident near Aslito Airfield. Major Mahoney's battalion had begun its move from the south end of Death Valley at approximately 0700 and was moving into position at 1300, during the final adjustment of lines in the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry. The battalion commander had moved his men down to his designated position in a column of companies, Company A leading. As soon as he had established the location of the left flank of C Company, 105th, he ordered Captain O'Brien of Company A to lead out along the rear of Lieutenant Tougaw's company. He was to be preceded by a platoon of C Company, 165th, under Lt. Everett McGinley.

McGinley's mission was to furnish protection for the exposed flank of the battalion while it was organized for the attack to the north.

The accident that had swung the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, too wide to the west as it moved into line now served to force Major Mahoney's battalion into the Tapotchau corridor just north of Bloody Ridge. As Lieutenant McGinley's men reached the crest of the ridge they could look across a saddle of open ground at the Aslito-Tanapag highway and Bloody Ridge itself, some two hundred yards away. Lieutenant McGinley did not like the looks of this high ground overshadowing the open area where the rest of the battalion would build up its line and called up Captain O'Brien to ask further instructions. The Company A commander came forward and looked over the terrain, finally instructing McGinley to move over to the high ground and look it over. If there were any Japanese there, he was to clean them out. McGinley split his platoon into two sections of seven men each. Ahead almost a hundred yards was a little banana grove. Beyond it the open ground stretched uphill as far as the highway. McGinley and his section of the platoon moved out first, making the banana grove without incident. As he moved out to cross the uphill stretch to the road, Tech. Sgt. Mario Ruggerio and his section moved in, delivering covering fire for the first section as they ran up the hill. Almost from the time McGinley and his men left the banana grove, they received heavy rifle and machine-gun fire, which killed Pvt. Michael Campanello and Pfc. Charles Simmons, and wounded two others.

McGinley finally reached Captain O'Brien by radio, and the Company A commander now directed heavy mortar and machine-gun concentrations on the hill above the patrol. Under cover of this McGinley pulled back to the banana grove, bringing two casualties with him. From there the whole platoon moved back to the ridge overlooking the valley. Three other men were hit during this movement.

While McGinley and his platoon were in the open ground of the corridor Major Mahoney had come forward and talked over the situation with Captain O'Brien. On consulting the maps of the area, the battalion commander was convinced that he was much too far to the west. The boundary lines shown on the overlay accompanying the field order ran along the ground just east of the extension of Purple Heart Ridge.

Lt. Col. William O'Brien, the commander of the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, was consulted and agreed that he was much too far to the left. As soon as McGinley's patrol was safely back outside the ridge, both Mahoney's and O'Brien's battalions shifted to the right so that the

165th left flank rested on the ridge. This shift was made just before dark. As night fell on the 26th the 165th Infantry faced north with three battalions abreast, ready to resume the pursuit. Late in the afternoon elements of the 4th Marine Division came abreast of Major Claire, establishing a solid line from the Tapotchau corridor to the sea.

THE CAPTURE OF HILL 700

At 1815 on the afternoon of 26 June, Colonel Kelley received orders from General Jarman to report to Maj. Gen. Harry Schmidt of the 4th Marine Division for further instructions. Effective at once the 165th Infantry was to be again attached to that division. The new orders that Colonel Kelley received at 4th Division headquarters called for the regiment to attack the next morning to seize the O-6 line within its zone of action. The three battalions then on the line were to be echeloned to the left rear. The island in this area ran to the northeast and the general pattern of terrain conformation followed the shore line, so that the ridge paralleling the left boundary of the 165th Infantry also ran to the northeast. General Schmidt changed the right boundary of the regiment so that it ran in a more northerly direction. This had the effect of narrowing the regiment's zone of action at the point where it crossed the O-6 line to the width of a one-battalion front. As the attack proceeded to the north the two left battalions would supposedly peel off along the left boundary, thus imposing a solid line of troops along that boundary stretching back to the rear. This line was designed as a containing force to keep the Japanese penned within the limits of the corridor. It was, in reality, a device for closing the long vertical gap which would come into existence as the faster moving troops on the outside of the corridor moved north. As soon as the various battalions peeled off they were to take the ridge which would cross their front diagonally and hold it until the advance of the 27th Division within the corridor caught up to them. As the 27th's advance passed by on the way north, the units relieved would revert to reserve status.

The time of the attack on the morning of the 27th was set at 0630, but due to the necessity of adjustment of supporting fires caused by the transfer of control of the 165th, the jump-off took place at 0900. The movement of the 27th to the north was rapid and without opposition. The two left-flank battalions, moving in rougher terrain, had a hard time keeping up with the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, which moved across relatively flat, open country. A half hour after this battalion moved off Major Claire reported that he had moved forward

1,600 yards. At 1000 the 4th Marine Division ordered a halt in the advance for one hour while an air support mission was flown over the ground ahead. At 1100 the forward movement resumed and at 1400 the 3d Battalion was another fifteen hundred yards to the north. There they stopped for the night. Only twenty-six enemy had been killed during the entire day, all of them stragglers.

The movement of the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, was as rapid as that of Major Claire's battalion. Although the terrain was more cut up Lt. Colonel O'Brien's advance had reached RJ 547 by 1400. Directly ahead lay a water hole and from there the ground sloped steeply up to the ridge which crossed the battalion front. With two hours of daylight remaining to him, having encountered no opposition during the day, O'Brien decided to take the ridge in his zone before digging in for the night. Calling in artillery fire at shortly after 1400, the battalion commander swung his B and C Companies into a swift assault up the slope, the boundary between companies lying along a road that cut through the ridge through a steep pass. One platoon of light tanks under Lt. Gino Ganio led the attack. Just north of the road junction two small knobs of ground rose like sentinels guarding the pass through the ridge, one on each side of the road. As the assault companies broke over this rise they were caught by fire from one high-velocity gun and several automatic weapons. In B Company two men were wounded. In C Company one man was killed and six wounded. One of the light tanks received a direct hit, which killed a member of the crew and wounded the others. The battalion reserve company, Company A, which was following the assault, suffered eight men wounded.

Lieutenant Colonel O'Brien immediately ordered his troops to pull back into the defilade afforded by the two sentinel hills. The rest of the afternoon was spent in trying to bring naval gunfire to bear on the pass, inasmuch as the axis of fire prohibited the use of artillery. Before a destroyer could be worked into position, it was 1630, and rather than launch another attack in the late afternoon, O'Brien dug in for the night where he was, just north of RJ 547, facing the pass.

The 1st Battalion, 165th, moving along on the left rear of Lt. Colonel O'Brien's battalion, had much the same experience as that encountered by the other units outside the corridor. The only fire received during the day was from How Position now several hundred yards to the rear. By noon Major Mahoney had reached the point of farthest advance, where the ridge cut off his zone. He immediately began adjusting his line to extend it from the 1st Battalion, 105th, on his right, back to the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, on his left. He found, however, that his left flank was some five hundred yards short of the S road, and at approxi-

mately 1600 Colonel Kelley notified General Schmidt that he did not think he could reach back to the 27th Division line. After a discussion with 4th Marine Division staff officers, it was decided to commit the two reserve battalions of the 24th Marine Regiment in the line for the night to prevent any infiltration from the corridor. The two Marine units moved into position at approximately 1800. There was no activity, however, during the hours of darkness.

The advance had stopped on 27 June either on or close to the objective line set the day before by General Schmidt. Consequently, rather than risk any further overextension, the 4th Division orders for the 28th called for all units to stand pat. However, private instructions from the 4th Division commander gave his regimental commanders permission to adjust their lines in any way they felt necessary to take advantage of favorable terrain. Major Foery, now commanding the 3d Battalion, 165th, asked permission to take the O-6 line in his zone and Colonel Kelley gave him permission to do so. At 0810, Major Foery called back and informed Colonel Kelley that the 200-yard move had been completed without incident. The battalion commander then asked to be allowed to occupy Hill 700 which loomed up on his immediate left flank. Colonel Kelley again gave permission and by 1400 two companies had explored not only Hill 700, but Charan Danshii Mountain. These were the two northern terminals of Purple Heart Ridge. No Japanese were found in force on either of the two commanding hills although a few stragglers were killed. Reports from the patrols that went over the ground showed that they were much more of a prize than had been hoped for. From observation posts on them, American artillery observers could control all the central hogback of Saipan to the north. Particularly gratifying was the discovery that the Aslito-Tanapag highway could be completely cut off. This meant that enemy troops still fighting stubbornly against the advance of the 27th Division within the corridor were now cut off, both from reinforcements and retreat.

Hill 700 and Charan Danshii Mountain had their disadvantages, however. They were the most prominent landmarks in the lower part of the island outside of Tapotchau itself and were under direct observation for all the remaining Japanese artillery on the island. Particularly annoying was a battery of dual-purpose guns which the enemy had emplaced on Radar Hill, not more than a mile and a half away. These weapons could lay direct fire on Charan Danshii Mountain, and the slightest movement brought down heavy fire. During 28 June, the 3d Battalion's three companies suffered one killed and three wounded, including Capt. Joseph Stampher, commander of L Company. Fire from American artillery also caused considerable trouble atop the two hills,

shells often failing to clear the high peaks from positions on the coastal plains near Chacha.

The 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, also received informal orders to consolidate its position during 28 June. The main thorn in the side of this unit was the Japanese field piece and several machine guns which covered the road through the ridge from RJ 547. The position had been extremely active all through the night of 27-28 June. When daylight came, Lt. Colonel O'Brien decided that he would attempt to outflank the position rather than take it frontally. This decision was made primarily because of the difficulty encountered on the previous afternoon in bringing supporting fire to bear on the narrow pass.

Accordingly, a large patrol, composed of one platoon from B Company under Lt. John F. Mulhern and a platoon from A Company under Lt. Kendrick Newton, moved back to the south and ascended the ridge about a thousand yards below the pass. After getting to the top the patrol turned back and worked along toward the road cut, intending to take it from above. Before reaching the objective, however, the men ran into an abandoned Japanese field hospital filled with dead and dying enemy soldiers. This open-air cemetery—for it amounted to that—contained over four hundred bodies. The Japanese had moved out the day before, telling every wounded soldier who had been able to move to shift for himself. The rest were given grenades and told to commit suicide.

The problem of what to do with the Japanese still alive in the hospital occupied the patrol for most of the rest of the day. All attempts to get the wounded to surrender proved futile and from time to time an able-bodied enemy soldier would emerge from a cave and run around through the hospital killing off the ones who still were alive. The area was exceedingly difficult to get to, being situated in a deep gorge that cut through the hill parallel to the axis of the ridge. The sides were sheer cliffs and descent into the area was dangerous because a few armed stragglers remained hidden in the area. Despite attempts of interpreters and civilian prisoners of war to appeal to the occupants, all of them eventually died.

After trying vainly throughout the day to do something about the field hospital, Lt. Colonel O'Brien personally took charge of the patrol and circled the area to go after the position in the pass. Fire from the gun had been causing some damage in the rear areas all day. At about 1000 one of its shells scored a lucky hit on the CP of the 165th Infantry, wounding Colonel Kelley seriously. Lt. Colonel Hart assumed command of the regiment.

The patrol, now under Lt. Colonel O'Brien, moved along a little

path to the northeast after leaving the hospital area. This faint trail led through thick underbrush and the battalion commander had guessed that it might possibly lead directly into the pass. Two riflemen led the file through the tangled growths. They were Pfc. Ralph J. Carpenter and Pvt. Charles D. Smith. Closely following them was Tech. Sgt. Raymond D. Lefevre, then Lieutenant Mulhern and Lt. Colonel O'Brien. The rest of the patrol strung out behind. Progress was exceedingly difficult and by the end of an hour the whole party had moved not more than four hundred yards. Just when it seemed as though the path would not lead to anything, Smith and Carpenter came around a rock to find themselves standing not five feet away from the muzzle of a 77mm field piece. It was set up on a little ledge in the narrow pass which ran all the way through the ridge to the corridor, at no place more than twenty feet wide. On little ledges above the field piece, on each side, sat two heavy machine guns. Within twenty feet of all the weapons, thirty or forty enemy soldiers lolled around with rifles or pistols in their hands. Other enemy could be seen in caves nearby and Smith later said he was certain there were Japanese in the trees on both sides of the pass.

Both Smith and Carpenter had come upon the position so suddenly that they were unprepared for what they saw. They stood and gaped for a moment and the Japanese gaped back. Then, Lefevre, pushing along behind, bumped into the two men. Both woke up and started shooting. Lefevre stepped up beside them, and in a moment he, too, was firing as fast as he could pull the trigger. Mulhern and O'Brien were by that time around the rock and both started shooting too. The Japanese only returned one or two rounds of fire and then those who had not already been killed by the fusillade that was directed at them by the five men took to their heels. The rest of the patrol pushed into the pass after them. Within ten minutes the whole position had been reduced and O'Brien was calling his battalion CP on the radio with instructions to move two companies up onto the ridge at once. By nightfall all of Obie's Ridge, as it came to be called, was in American hands. Only a small stretch, between the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, and Hill 700 remained to be taken. This was to be the task of the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, the next day.

The 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, had not taken the ridge across its front the day before and had, like the other battalions, received informal orders to consolidate its position by occupying the high ground. While the two units farther to the north were faced either by local positions or stragglers this battalion was closer to the front of the enemy facing

the 27th Division on Bloody Ridge. The Japanese, evidently discovering their danger, had built some emplacements facing the low ground east of the ridge during the night. When the 1st Battalion moved out during the forenoon to occupy the ridge they were taken under mortar and machine-gun fire which wounded two men. Major Mahoney immediately ordered his battalion to form a two-company front to assault the ridge. This attack was launched at around 1000. The men had to cross a wide strip of open ground to reach the base of the ridge and the moment they moved out into the cleared area, heavy fire wounded two Company A men and pinned the rest of the line to the ground. Both Captain O'Brien of Company A and Lt. Audy Barnett, now in command of B Company, tried to move their lines forward by infiltration, but in the attempt, Lt. Albert Doss of Company A and Sgt. David C. Schmidt of B Company were mortally wounded. Five others were less seriously hurt. Major Mahoney called Lt. Colonel Hart and asked that artillery fire be placed along the ridge. When this fire began falling several overs fell into the midst of the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, then working at the enemy field hospital, killing one man and wounding four. Lt. Colonel O'Brien called regiment and asked that the fire be stopped. Lt. Colonel Hart then told Major Mahoney to withdraw his men to the cover below the ridge until artillery could safely be placed on the area. The end of 28 June saw the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, in the same position in which it had spent the previous night. The 1st Battalion, 105th, was now in possession of the ridge along the corridor, and Major Foery's 3d Battalion spent the night with one company on the O-6 line and the other two on the high ground between Hill 700 and Charan Danshii.

THE DRIVE THROUGH THE CORRIDOR

The positions of the 165th Infantry on Hill 700 and along the ridge behind it were to remain unchanged during the next four days. During this period troops in the high saddle were made constantly uncomfortable by Japanese artillery fire from Radar Hill. On 29 June, L Company lost six men killed and eight wounded while trying to maintain positions in the face of the fire on the north slopes of Charan Danshii Mountain, and finally withdrew to occupy positions on the reverse slope. The same day, a platoon from K Company under Lieutenant Garbers worked back to the south along the ridge from Hill 700 in an attempt to establish firm physical contact with Lt. Colonel O'Brien along the high ground, but this patrol was taken under fire by Japanese machine guns from well within the corridor. In the ensuing action two men were killed and four other men were hit.

While the long line held along the outer rim of the corridor, the main effort of the 27th Division turned to driving the Japanese up the Aslito-Tanapag highway. On 29 June, the day after the massacre of Bloody Ridge, General Griner had made two changes in the Division front line. The fresh 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, was brought up and inserted on the right flank of the line, while the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, replaced the 3d Battalion of that regiment on the Division's left. The attack did not actually move off to the north on 29 June until about 1400 because of the extensive reorganization necessary and the delay of the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, in getting into position. It will be remembered that the head of this battalion column had become involved in the attack on Hill King during the early morning. Although Lt. Colonel Bradt, the battalion commander, issued orders to his other companies to swing around K Company and move on up into line, it was almost 1000 before the column reached Hill Able. Here intense enemy fire necessitated a further detour and it was almost 1300 before the two assault companies finally got into position.

Waiting for the attack to move off, the 106th Infantry had not been idle. The 1st Battalion had sent out patrols to the front as soon as they were in position and B Company also dispatched a large group to the base of Tapotchau in order to meet a patrol of the Marines who were reported descending the cliffs in an attempt to establish physical contact. The Marines never materialized and when the B Company patrol put out a smoke pot to mark their position it attracted Japanese artillery fire to the area. This artillery continued to fall all along the regimental front during the morning; four B Company men were killed and seven wounded. The 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, meanwhile, had been directing mortar and artillery fire up and down the corridor. By noon they reported that they had destroyed two enemy tanks some distance ahead and broken up one large Japanese troop concentration.

The 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, moved into line with I Company on the left and K Company on the right. The attack moved off as soon as Colonel Bradt reported that he was in position. The right flank of the battalion rested at RJ 353, the point where the S road met the Aslito-Tanapag highway. This was some four hundred yards west of the pass by which the road from Chacha crossed the extension of Purple Heart Ridge and about two hundred yards northeast of Hill Able. Company K's orders were for an advance straight east with its right flank resting on the S road until it reached the ridge. Upon reaching the crest, the line was to pivot to the northeast and advance with its right flank on the crest of the ridge. Between RJ 353 and the ridge lay a wide-open field, hemmed in on two sides by thick foliage and subject to fire from Hill

Able on the right. The 1st Battalion, 24th Marines, was supposedly in position in the trees on top of the ridge, facing the advance, and Captain Bouchard had orders to contact them as he made his turn. As he passed along their front they were to be relieved from the holding mission which they had taken over after the conversation between Colonel Kelley and General Schmidt on 27 June. Although artillery support had been promised the 27th Division for the attack, little of it fell immediately in the front of K Company because of the supposed close proximity of the Marines.

Almost at the start of the forward movement the Japanese on Hill Able began laying down small-arms, mortar and machine-gun fire on the open area which K Company had to cross. At the same time, from directly ahead where the Marines were supposed to be, one or two enemy machine guns opened up. One of these guns was destroyed by Staff Sgt. Allen D. Parsley who accidentally discovered it, stood up in plain sight, and picked off the crew of four, one by one, with his rifle at a range of two hundred yards. Captain Bouchard kept his men moving ahead by laying down a cover of machine-gun and mortar fire to the front and by ordering his reserve platoon to move facing Hill Able so that they could keep some fire on the position to their flank. As the company reached the center of the open ground, however, and started the swing to the north, the fire increased in intensity and gradually the whole company was pinned down. Within a few minutes four men were wounded. At almost the same time that the fire from the front became heavy, the left-flank platoon of the company, which was making the pivot to the north, ran into a concrete pillbox which contained eight Japanese soldiers. A squad was pushed forward with a flamethrower, but before the weapon could be brought into play, an enemy soldier popped out of the top of the emplacement and threw a grenade that wounded two men. The men then destroyed the position with demolitions. By this time mortar fire was blanketing the whole area. One shell landed in the middle of the reserve platoon, wounding five men. Lt. William H. Morton, who commanded the right-flank platoon of the company, had worked his way forward and called Captain Bouchard on the radio and told him that either artillery or tanks were needed. The company commander said that artillery was out of the question, but that Morton should pull both platoons back behind the road junction until tanks could be brought up. The big vehicles at that time were still at the entrance to Death Valley, where they had been ordered to remain by Lt. Colonel Bradt until a reported minefield on the floor of the valley was investigated. (Shortly after Lt. Colonel Bradt issued this order a half-track from the tank battalion ran over a mine near the entrance to

the valley. Of the crew of eight, four were killed and four were seriously wounded. Subsequent investigation revealed that the Japanese had laid a carefully planned minefield all across the central part of the valley floor. In some freak manner the tanks which had roamed through the same area during the battle had not run onto any of them.) While he waited for the tanks to come forward, Captain Bouchard spent his time trying to evacuate the wounded in the field.

Lack of tanks also handicapped I Company. Like Bouchard, Capt. Ashley Brown had placed two platoons in the assault. From the line of departure on the extension of Bloody Ridge, I Company pushed straight to the northeast, down the steep slopes to the bottom of a ravine, and then began the climb to the top of the transverse ridge over which the Japanese tanks had appeared the previous day. The right platoon had just pushed across the road when a Japanese soldier stood up behind what looked like a brush pile and threw a grenade that wounded the two leading scouts. One of these men, Pfc. Miner F. Gardner, decided that despite his wound he would try to kill the enemy soldier before more damage could be done. He pushed forward and looked over the brush pile directly into a formidable looking concrete pillbox. He threw all the grenades he had into one of the openings but they seemed to have no effect, so he turned around to tell the men behind him that a tank would be needed because grenades weren't heavy enough. As he turned the Japanese soldier who had thrown the first grenade jumped up again and threw another. Everyone behind Gardner fired and missed. Gardner did a little dance and the grenade rolled on under his feet and exploded harmlessly in a ditch behind him. At this time the other men in the company urged the wounded man to go back for aid as he was bleeding badly, so Gardner retired. The rest of the platoon now worked forward and for thirty minutes used everything they had in an attempt to either silence the position or drive the enemy from it. Meanwhile, the left flank platoon of I Company had been taken under fire by machine guns and rifles from the position on the right. When after thirty minutes the right platoon had failed to eliminate the fire, Lt. Frederick C. Spreeman, in command on the left, ordered his men to move forward across the open ground by bounds. One by one the men pushed on toward the crest of the ridge.

Despite the heavy enfilade fire, the first two squads of Spreeman's platoon negotiated the slope without casualties and were only a few yards from the top. Just as he started to move over the crest Pfc. Robert M. Stevens, on the extreme left flank, looked up and saw a Japanese tank not more than twenty feet away. It was expertly camouflaged to look like a bush on the skyline. Stevens yelled a warning, but his words came

too late. Almost as he spoke the turret's gun and two machine guns on the vehicle opened fire. Three I Company men were killed instantly. At the same time, four men of G Company, 106th Infantry, which was immediately next to Spreeman's men, were killed and fourteen wounded. As the tank's guns traversed the area a Japanese soldier popped out of the bushes and began laughing and throwing grenades. Men dove for cover in all directions. So close were Spreeman's men that one of them, Staff Sgt. Francis A. Garceau, dove under the tank and remained there, safe from its fire.

The fire from the tank lasted only a few moments. Caliber .50 machine guns from the CP of the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, returned the fire almost at once and the vehicle backed off. Before it was out of sight, Tech. Sgt. Frederick N. Martin, Lieutenant Spreeman's platoon sergeant, got to his feet and ran over to G Company and commandeered one of the light tanks working in that area. He led this vehicle up to the crest of the hill and pointed out the Japanese tank retreating up the Aslito-Tanapag highway to the north. Sergeant Reidy, the tank commander, moved into position and fired two rounds, the second of which scored a direct hit on the enemy vehicle. He then started to follow it up the highway to add a *coup de grâce*. As he moved down the forward slopes of the hill he was taken under fire from a nearby strawstack. One round from his turret gun set fire to a second Japanese tank which had been hiding there.

At the moment the Japanese opened fire from the tank, Captain Brown was in the act of moving his reserve platoon into the attack to replace the one which was held up by the pillbox, and Lt. James M. Braly was sending his men to the left around the position preparatory to deploying. As the first man, Pfc. Edward L. Stevening, sprinted up the slope he was hit by a rifle bullet from the pillbox and killed. Almost at the same time the tank opened fire, and in its opening burst one man was killed. Pvt. George Kovocavich, a bazooka man, and Sgt. Conrad P. Steen, a rifle grenadier, both tried to fire on the tank, but before they could get their first rounds off, Kovocavich was seriously wounded and Steen was killed. A moment or two later, Pfc. Boyce O. Broome and Private First Class Krathy, an aid man, were both killed trying to help Kovocavich, and when Lieutenant Braly tried to drag Krathy out of the fire he was wounded. Captain Brown now ordered the men of the company to hold their present positions until tanks could be worked forward to destroy the pillbox. Thirty minutes later, when the vehicles hadn't appeared, the company commander brought up a self-propelled gun from Cannon Company and one round from this vehicle finished the five Japanese in the emplacement. By the time the wounded had been evacu-

ated, however, and the company's line reorganized, it was after 1700 and Captain Brown ordered the men to dig in for the night after tying in with K Company on the right and the 106th Infantry on the left.

Captain Bouchard's tanks had finally come forward shortly after 1600 and K Company immediately resumed its efforts to swing through the open ground northeast of RJ 353 and jump off to the north. Using the tanks to provide covering fire for the movement and protection from the positions to the front, K Company within an hour had completed its turn and was pushing north. Although little trouble was encountered from the front, the Japanese on Hill Able continued to pour a merciless fire into the advance from the rear. By the time Captain Bouchard announced that he was even with I Company he had suffered four men killed and two wounded. The 3d Battalion's action had advanced the lines approximately three hundred yards during the afternoon, but the success in capturing the ridge in front of Bloody Ridge seemed to have started a mass withdrawal by the Japanese. This was evidenced in several ways on other parts of the Division front.

The unit on the left of Lt. Colonel Bradt's battalion, in the center of the corridor, was the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry. Its right-flank unit, G Company, had run into little opposition in its own zone, but had become involved in fire from the tanks and from the enemy position on the right flank of I Company. In addition to this they received considerable fire from F Company's zone on their left, particularly from a pillbox that was situated along the highway at the point where it crossed the ridge. This pillbox was just inside F Company's boundary. It was to cause F Company trouble, too.

Lieutenant Slate had pushed forward from the line of departure with two platoons in the assault. Unlike the other units on the line, F Company received serious fire from machine guns and small arms as soon as they moved off. This was partly due to the terrain which was wide-open and slightly rolling. After the first fifty yards of the advance the company moved up a long slope which served almost as a chute down which the fire could be directed. Although he had been allotted two tanks for the advance, Lieutenant Slate was never able to make good use of them because the ground was studded with sharp coral rocks which caused the vehicles to hang up time after time. Eventually, in order to keep his men moving and present as small a target to the enemy as possible, the company commander ordered the two assault platoons to push ahead as fast as they could no matter what the tanks were able to do. The two platoons got off but the rest of the men were

pinned down before they could follow. The Japanese seemed to disregard the forward elements to get at the slower-moving rear.

The two assault platoons moved ahead almost at a run and in a few moments reached a point almost opposite the pillbox which was causing G Company so much trouble. Here the enemy turned their full attention on Lieutenant Slate's platoons, directing fire at them from the right and left flanks and from the left front. This included fire from at least five machine guns and one high-velocity dual-purpose gun. This fire, joined a moment later by mortar fire, pinned the exposed infantry to the ground. Five minutes after being taken under serious fire, four men had been wounded. Pfc. Fred Rynearson, after watching bullets from one of the machine guns cut the ground in front of his face for several minutes, took a bearing and located one of the enemy emplacements. It was the one next to the highway. Rynearson decided to go back to the tanks and bring one up personally, but as he got up to sprint back, he was hit in the leg by a rifle bullet. By this time several others had been hit, and the fire was getting heavier. Sgt. William Spahn finally managed to crawl, a few feet at a time, to a vantage point from which he could dash back over a small hill to where the supporting vehicles were still struggling through the rocks. Spahn took one of the rear intercom phones and guided the leading tank through the maze of rocks into position where it could direct fire at the Japanese emplacement. In a short exchange, one of the tanks was knocked out by a direct hit from a heavy-caliber piece, but not before it had succeeded in destroying the most troublesome enemy guns. Four other F Company men had been hit while this was going on, and one man from B Company, 102d Engineers, attached to the company, had been killed.

As soon as the position on his right front had been reduced, Lieutenant Slate called over Staff Sgt. Frank Honiski and asked him if it would be possible to get at the machine gun which seemed to be located in a small rockpile about a hundred yards to the left front. Honiski thought he could outmaneuver the position, which was already under attack by A Company on the left. He set out while mortars placed fire on the position. By the time Honiski and his patrol reached the area, the Japanese had abandoned the emplacement. The sergeant immediately asked for permission to push on ahead four hundred yards where he thought the Japanese had gone into a little house. Lieutenant Slate granted permission and pushed on ahead after Honiski with the main strength of the company. It was approximately 1800, and already getting dark, when the advance group reached the house that was their objective. After snooping around inside the building without finding anything, Honiski split his patrol, sending Private First Class Flynn to one

side to search the grounds while he went to the other. As Flynn and his men rounded the corner at the front, one of the men saw the machine gun and its crew about two hundred yards ahead. The weapon was trained directly on the house. Flynn yelled a warning, but before he could make Honiski understand what he wanted, the sergeant had walked out into the open. The Japanese opened fire and Honiski was mortally wounded on the first burst. Five minutes later, Lieutenant Slate and Captain Water-son arrived at the house to find out what the shooting was about. Upon talking with the wounded man, both company commanders decided to halt their advance for the day and dig in. The 2d Battalion had moved about seven hundred yards during the day and was now well ahead of both units on either side. The 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, had run into opposition from two quarters during the day. The first was in front of Company A and consisted of a group of rock emplacements much like those which opposed the 2d Battalion. Most of these were knocked out by four light tanks under the direction of Sergeant DeVito, now commanding one of Company A's platoons, or by Sergeant Hettie's platoon. Fire was constant throughout the afternoon, but most of it was from the cliffs on the left or from the far right of the 2d Battalion zone. Sergeant DeVito took a small patrol and advanced with Sergeant Honiski's group during the chase which developed during the late afternoon, but upon orders from Lieutenant Sergio, Company A commander, DeVito pulled his platoon back some two hundred yards and dug in with the rest of Company A.

Most of Company A, and all of F Company, were getting a taste of what the fighting was to be like in the corridor during the next three days. There seemed to be no longer any organized enemy positions. The Japanese were leaving a handful of men here and a handful there to delay and harass the advance as it pushed north through the corridor. Some of them built positions like those in front of F and A Companies or occupied advantageous terrain. They used every type of weapon. Never for long did they hold up the advance and most of them were killed by the action of supporting artillery or accompanying tanks. Some of the enemy withdrew upon the appearance of superior fire power, as had the groups in front of F Company. However, the fire with which they blanketed the infantry was dangerous and costly. In A and B Companies, four men were killed, including Capt. Frank D. Burske, commander of D Company, and Sergeant Dorn of B Company. Lieutenant Renner of B Company had the particularly difficult task of trying to maintain contact with the Marines, high above on the cliffs, and at the same time trying to knock out Japanese mortars and machine guns which had taken refuge in the caves along Tapotchau's face. This

was slow work and at the close of the day, B Company had not advanced more than three hundred yards. Rather than leave this unit too far in the rear, Lt. Colonel Cornett geared his entire advance on it until C Company could move up from Hell's Pocket to take over mopping up and releasing the rest of the battalion for a swifter advance.

During the night of the 29th the Japanese gave evidence of a complete withdrawal from the corridor. The road leading to the north seemed to be filled with enemy soldiers moving to the rear. These were taken under heavy mortar and artillery fire from the American positions on Hill 700 and over four hundred were killed before morning. Along the Division front at the south end of the corridor there was little activity, but B Company killed thirty Japanese who were pulling a field piece along the road that ran through the company perimeter. Lieutenant Warga had ordered his men to hold their fire unless enemy soldiers actually began to get inside the defensive ring. Shortly before midnight the men heard a large party struggling up the road. The Japanese stopped to rest, not twenty feet from the outposts, and one man couldn't resist firing. Soon, all the rest followed suit. Next morning the dead and the gun were right where the battery had stopped to catch their breath. Company B had little more sleep that night. Their position had been given away to the enemy and from midnight until dawn the bivouac area was the target of repeated infiltration attempts by small groups who seemed bent on doing as much damage as they could without regard to the cost to themselves.

The attack of 29 June, while it had made some gains, had not entirely satisfied General Griner. In order to speed up the action on the 30th he inserted the 27th Reconnaissance Troop on the extreme left of the Division line with the express mission of establishing and maintaining contact with the Marines above. This would free the assault units to move without regard to the difficult cliff-scaling job that had slowed them all through the 29th. As a complement to this move, Lt. Colonel Cornett inserted his C Company on his left, next to the Reconnaissance Troop, with orders to deal with the cliff positions. Company B was to concentrate on pushing the advance north. Outside the corridor, the 165th Infantry, still attached to the 4th Marine Division, spent a quiet day, consolidating their hold on Hill 700 and exploring Charan Danshii Mountain, at the same time interdicting all Japanese movement at the north end of the valley. Lt. Colonel Hart made ready to release the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, to the 27th Division, by shifting Major Mahoney's battalion to the north along the ridge as the advance of Lt. Colonel Bradt's battalion progressed. Although the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, uncovered almost all of the 1st Battalion, 165th In-

fantry, during the day, the shift recommended by Lt. Colonel Hart to General Schmidt of the Marines was not authorized until early on the morning of 1 July.

The advance of the Division was relatively fast during 30 June, and met only light opposition. The 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, pushed forward as far as RJ 482, encountering scattered fire from all types of weapons, mostly from long distances to the front. Terrain on the right flank of the advance was extremely difficult and slowed K Company considerably. Shortly after noon, Lt. Colonel Bradt brought a platoon from L Company forward to help in mopping up the numerous caves and ravines that dotted the ridge. Late in the afternoon, I Company developed the first serious opposition at Hill Uncle, situated right at the road junction. Rather than try to knock out this squat little hill in the hour that remained before darkness, the battalion dug in for the night just south of it on a ridge from which the enemy on it could be observed and harassed with all types of fire during the night.

The 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, in the center of the Division line, moved forward with little trouble. By 1835, when the advance halted on both sides, Major O'Hara had pushed forward 1,600 yards, spending the night approximately five hundred yards ahead of the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, and two hundred yards ahead of Lt. Colonel Cornett's battalion on the left.

Of the 1st Battalion companies, B and C had developed the most opposition during the day. Company A had moved forward until 1800 with no trouble. Company B had been harassed throughout the day by the fire from the cliffs, but had moved forward determinedly until about 1500. At that time the fire became increasingly heavy and Lieutenant Warga called Captain Campbell of C Company to see if something could not be done to relieve some of the pressure now being put on his left flank. The C Company commander pushed forward rapidly to come up even with B Company, leaving one platoon in the rear to work along forward, cleaning up the positions passed by. As C Company came up even with B Company, however, the Japanese in the cliffs suddenly opened fire with several machine guns from a position almost a hundred yards in rear of the advance. In the opening burst from these guns, six men from C Company were killed and eight wounded. The 27th Reconnaissance Troop lost one man killed and one wounded, while B Company had two killed and three wounded, including Lieutenant Warga, the company commander.

The effect of this fire was to momentarily disorganize the whole left side of the 1st Battalion. Captain Campbell, of C Company, feeling

that the area immediately beneath the cliffs was too exposed, pushed his men on to the north to get out of the range of fire and then reorganize. Lt. Holstein Harvey, commanding the 27th Reconnaissance Troop's platoon below the cliffs, followed C Company. Both units arrived on the 1st Battalion objective line within a few minutes. In B Company, however, the wounding of Lieutenant Warga left the unit under Lieutenant Renner, who had joined only three days before. He hardly knew any of his men, and by the time he was notified of Lieutenant Warga's wound, the unit was badly disorganized. His first action was to call Lieutenant Hills on the radio to find out where the company's right platoon was, and what its condition was. Lieutenant Hills told him that he was pushing on ahead and thought that he could make the battalion objective without trouble. The new company commander ordered him to go on ahead while he, Renner, tried to find out what had happened to the other platoon. As soon as he could get them reorganized he would push on ahead. Hills complied and pushed his men across the fire-swept ground, one by one, losing one man in the process. The whole battalion, with the exception of one platoon of B Company and one platoon of C Company, was now on a little transverse ridge that cut across the corridor. This had been marked on the map during the morning by Colonel Stebbins as an intermediate objective for the regiment and the 2d Battalion had reached it as early as 1400.

As soon as Lieutenant Renner finished talking to Hills he began surveying the ground ahead to pick out a route of advance for the rest of his company. At the moment he was hiding in the ruins of a house about fifty yards away from the base of the cliffs. As nearly as he could tell, the one remaining platoon of B Company had taken cover in a little grove of trees which huddled at the very foot of Tapotchau. As the new company commander snooped around the wreckage of the building he slipped on a board and fell into a well, knocking himself unconscious and breaking his elbow. He remained where he was in an insensible condition for fifteen minutes, and while he lay at the bottom of the well, Sergeant Lawler, the platoon sergeant, was looking for him. Eventually Lawler reached Lieutenant Hills on the radio and was told that Lieutenant Renner was out by the building and that the orders were to move forward to the objective. Lawler immediately pushed his men forward and soon joined the rest of the company on the ridge. When Renner finally revived it was to find everyone ahead of him. He crawled out of the well and made his way forward across the open field through the fire, and sheepishly mentioned the fact that he had fallen in a hole. He neglected to say anything about his elbow, however, and for the next eight days led the company without a word about it. On

6 July the pain became so bad that he reported that he had fallen in a hole and hurt it, without saying when the accident took place. Two days after that, after his company had been relieved from the line, Lt. Colonel Cornett finally got him to a hospital under the pretext of going for a ride in a jeep to see the island. Renner still denies that he broke his elbow on 30 June, but his company, almost to a man, verify that the accident took place that afternoon.

Part of Renner's reluctance to admit that he was injured is explained by the fact that within a half hour after his accident he was the only officer left in his company. After moving up to the objective line to rejoin his men he sought out Captain Campbell, commander of C Company, and the two men tried to straighten out the two units, which were now mixed together. Renner insisted that C Company was not supposed to be where it was, that it was supposed to be following along in the rear and next to the cliffs and that as long as the men occupied a position on the regimental objective it made the area too crowded and gave the Japanese in the cliffs too many good targets to shoot at. Campbell maintained that his orders were to advance abreast of the battalion line and that whenever opposition was encountered in the cliffs, he was to detach a platoon to deal with it. Eventually the two company commanders called Lt. Colonel Cornett to get a clarification of the orders.

While they were arguing, both companies had been digging in. Fire was now quite serious in the valley and the whole battalion was suffering casualties. In Company A, in rapid succession, four men were wounded, one of them mortally. Lieutenant Hills had been studying the cliff face intently and, while Renner and Campbell were still discussing the question of disposition, he went over and announced that he had found at least two machine guns on a ledge and asked permission to take a patrol over to knock them out. Renner told him that he didn't think such a step was necessary. When it got dark the Japanese would probably fold up their guns and withdraw to the north. After five more men had been wounded by the enemy fire in the next few minutes, Hills finally asked Pfc. William Hollowiak, his partner on Eniwetok, if it would be possible for two men to knock out the guns. Hollowiak answered, "Hell, yes." The two men then grabbed their weapons and started for the cliffs. On the way Hollowiak talked Sgt. Andrew Leway into going along.

With Hills leading, the three made their way back a hundred yards through the trees at the base of the cliffs and emerged in a few minutes in a clearing directly at the base of the escarpment. Just as he planned it, the maneuver had brought Hills to a spot directly beneath the Japanese

guns, which were perched on a ledge thirty feet above. The approach, however, had not been undetected. As Hills started to scale the cliff, the enemy soldiers of the gun crews ran out to the rim of the ledge and fired rifles straight down at the little group. One of the first bullets entered Lieutenant Hills' neck, traversed the length of his back, and came out at the other side of his body. Hills was spun around by the bullet's impact, but before he fell he pulled up his carbine and got off two shots, each of which killed a Japanese. A moment later one of the enemy dropped a hand grenade which exploded in the midst of the Americans, wounding all three. Hollowiak managed to shoot the enemy soldier who dropped the grenade, then told the others they had better "get the hell out of here." The three turned around and started to crawl back to the perimeter. When they reached the trees, both Hollowiak and Leway, who had been partially blinded by the grenade fragments and the blood from their wounds, somehow got lost and, after wandering for a few minutes, discovered that Hills was no longer with them. They immediately decided to go back toward the cliff to see if they could find where the lieutenant had dropped. They soon found him. He had been unable to crawl over a fallen log that blocked his path into the woods and had turned around and crawled back to the spot where he had been wounded. When Hollowiak and Leway found him, he had managed to get to his feet and was standing in the clearing, weaving back and forth, firing on the ledge. He had killed two more enemy and had the last remaining one pinned against the wall of the ledge. Both Hollowiak and Leway took up the fire briefly, killing the enemy soldier, then took the lieutenant by the arms and led him back toward the company position. Hills was hardly able to move and was babbling in an unintelligible manner, but refused to let the others carry him. He managed to get within twenty-five yards of the perimeter and then collapsed. Pfc. Jacob Moretti, who had seen Hills stumble and fall, ran out of his foxhole to pick the wounded man up, but as he bent over a Japanese bullet hit him in the stomach. Both Moretti and Hills were finally carried back to the foxholes by Sgt. Eugene Bigda.

By the time Hills returned Renner and Campbell had been ordered by Lt. Colonel Cornett to dig in for the night wherever they could find suitable covered positions. Both companies now moved over into the trees next to the cliff. None of the wounded were evacuated until morning due to the difficulties of getting transportation into the position. As Renner had predicted, all the enemy to the rear of the night position pulled out during the night and infiltrated to the north. There was much activity all along the Division front line during the night, but it was not an aggressive enemy that bothered the infantrymen in their

foxholes. It was the desperate remnant of the Japanese force trying to escape from the corridor to the north. The 165th Infantry atop Hill 700 and Charan Danshii Mountain again had a field day. In the morning they estimated that they had killed four hundred more frantic enemy between darkness and dawn.

The drive to the north continued during 1 July, but it was no longer a systematic, plugging movement against entrenched forces. Only in the zone of action of the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, did the opposition remain stubborn. This battalion was plagued from morning on with one ravine and cave after another, the various squads scrambling from rock to rock, investigating caves, poking through tangled undergrowth, and scrambling along sharp coral ridges. Early in the morning, Captain Bouchard and K Company began the reduction of Hill Uncle at RJ 482. This little cone-shaped knob that rose out of the floor of the corridor like a gigantic haystack had shown evidences the evening before of being occupied by a small force of riflemen, reinforced with at least one machine gun and several mortars.

Captain Bouchard detailed one platoon under Staff Sgt. James L. Webb to attack and seize the hill while the rest of the company moved around it to the north, concentrating on the pass by which the little road that joined the Aslito-Tanapag Highway at RJ 482 cut through the ridge.

During the successful attempt to take the hill from the front, Captain Bouchard, feeling that the Japanese might try to set up positions on the north side after they reached the summit, sent Lieutenant Morton around to that slope with a platoon to intercept the defenders as they clambered back over the summit. By the time the detachment got into position, Sergeant Webb had destroyed the Japanese, but the move had cost K Company the services of Lieutenant Morton, who was wounded by rifle fire from the cut where the rest of the company was working.

While the reduction of Hill Uncle had been fairly simple, the rest of K Company's action proved to be time-consuming and difficult. By noon the company was still working in and around the caves and ravines at the road pass through the ridge. Over thirty enemy were killed here, but each one had to be literally dug out of a separate hiding place. While K Company worked to reduce these numerous positions the rest of the Division had moved on to the north and was marking time, waiting for the right flank to catch up. Company I tried to maintain contact between the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, and K Company, but by 1400 the effort had become next to impossible so great had the gap become. In this situation Lt. Colonel Bradt ordered L Company to break off its mopping up

operation behind K Company and leapfrog over Captain Bouchard's company in order to expedite the advance. To make sure that L Company would not become involved in fire from the ridge, the battalion commander ordered Captain Spaulding to swing wide to the west of Hill Uncle and RJ 482 and to build up a skirmish line north of the pass. This skirmish line was to face east with its left flank hinged into I Company's right. When ready to advance, the line was to swing like a gate to the north, passing through an extensive coconut grove and placing at least one platoon on top of the ridge. Company K was to continue mopping up the pocket area at the road pass and then move along behind the advance in reserve.

Captain Spaulding moved as quickly as possible to execute this order, but because of an exploding ammunition dump near the road junction he had to take a wider detour than planned and it was 1600 before he was in position to swing into line. As he began to move forward, machine-gun fire hit his men from the direct front. This was extremely heavy and, as the advance was moving straight into it, very effective. The infantrymen soon took cover wherever they could find it, most of them hiding behind the coconut palms in the grove. Three men had been wounded and one killed.

To meet the threat the company commander set up his own light machine guns to traverse along the ridge and brought up two Cannon Company vehicles. Under cover of this combined fire L Company pushed on forward into line and dug in for the night approximately four hundred yards north of RJ 482. Elsewhere on the Division front the lines advanced another eight hundred yards. The end of the corridor was in sight, only a thousand yards away.

OVER THE HILLS TO TANAPAG

The action of 1 July may be said to have ended another phase of the Division's action on Saipan. Although the three battalions in the corridor still had half a mile to go before they emerged into the open ground of the northern razorback, still they had no appreciable opposition facing them. Simultaneously with the end of the 27th's advance through the valley, the 2d Marine Division on the left began the descent from Tapotchau. The only real strongpoint within their zone of action left occupied was the city of Garapan and the great Tanapag naval installation behind it to the north. In view of these considerations, and because he wanted to rest the 2d Marine Division for the coming assault on Tinian, Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, late on the afternoon of 2 July, changed the direction of the corps attack. The movement had hereto-

fore followed the general direction of the axis of the island to the northeast. On the morning of 3 July the attack was to shift to the northwest, a maneuver that would bring the 27th Division to the west coast of the island approximately at Tanapag Harbor, cutting off the 2d Marine Division north of the city of Garapan. The 4th Marine Division, also attacking to the northwest, would reach the west coast above Tanapag Village. As the latter unit advanced the regiments would peel off to form a blocking line facing to the northeast, thus confining the enemy to the narrow, mountainous extension of the island that stretches to Marpi Point. In this difficult country the Japanese would have few resources, no room to maneuver, and little chance to prepare defensive positions.

To make ready for the dash to the west coast, the corps order returned the 165th Infantry to the control of the 27th Division, effective on the morning of 2 July. The 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, already on the morning of 1 July, had been relieved of its mission of guarding the ridge line by the advance of the 27th Division within the corridor. Lt. Colonel O'Brien had moved his men, beginning about 1000, back down the coastal road to Chacha Village and dug in there for the night, preparatory to moving through the S road pass into the corridor to re-join the rest of the 105th Infantry the next morning. General Griner turned the battalion over to Colonel Bishop, who planned to use it as a mop-up force behind the 3d Battalion, thus releasing the full strength of Lt. Colonel Bradt's battalion for the push out of the valley. It was thought that such a move would speed up the work of the unit's advancing companies along the ridge. With a sizable mop-up force, every time one of the network of cave positions was encountered, one of the reserve companies could be brought up and the main advance by-passed around it. A further effort to speed up the dash to Tanapag Harbor was made when the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, was brought forward from Hell's Pocket to complete the mopping up of enemy elements along the cliffs of Tapotchau. This move would release the complete strength of the 106th Infantry's two battalions for the push to the sea.

The morning of 2 July was rainy and dark. Colonel Hart of the 165th Infantry chose to push home the assault in his zone with one battalion, the 3d, which had been at Hill 700 since the morning of 28 June. The territory through which the 165th would move was high, rolling, open country, with little or no cover and no road network. Between Charan Danshii Mountain and Radar Hill, the hill overlooking Tanapag Harbor, there were no visible enemy positions; and observers atop Hill 700 had noticed no evidence that the Japanese intended to defend the area. Troops advancing across the open hills would be subjected to di-

rect fire from the gun position on Radar Hill, which had been extremely active throughout the five days of American occupation of Hill 700. In order to neutralize this position, the 105th Field Artillery stationed observers on Hill 700 with orders to place a constant fire on the Radar Hill area.

Major Foery's 3d Battalion jumped off to the northwest at 0830, moving around Charan Danshii Mountain to the west. Almost at once the enemy batteries on Radar Hill opened fire and Captain Betts, whose K Company was one of the assault units, informed his battalion commander that it might be better to move around the mountain to the east where Japanese observation would not be so good. Major Foery agreed and Captain Betts withdrew his men to execute the movement. Almost at once, a small enemy force, evidently mistaking the withdrawal for a retreat, launched a counterattack. Over fifty of them were cut down by the combined mortar and machine-gun platoons of the battalion which had been placed on top of Hill 700 to deliver covering fire for the advance. This slaughter was the only chance throughout the day that any men in the 3d Battalion had to fire their weapons. Within half an hour the whole 3d Battalion had pulled around to the east side of the mountain and pushed out across the rolling hills. By noon, with no opposition, the advance had moved 1,500 yards. Shortly after 1300 the Marines on the right flank developed one enemy position which caused them some trouble and held up the advance of I Company. When the forward movement was again resumed the two assault companies moved another two hundred yards before they were halted at 1400 on orders from Division.

General Griner had been watching the progress of the 165th Infantry with growing concern. The rapid move to the west had left the whole left flank of the 3d Battalion uncovered. The two regiments inside the corridor had moved to the north quite rapidly against negligible opposition. Here and there small groups of enemy were encountered, particularly along the extreme right flank of the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, but the action was more a mop-up than a drive against strong positions. By shortly after noon the whole line had been straightened and an advance of more than a thousand yards had been recorded, but even with this gain the front lines were two thousand yards behind the point reached by the 165th Infantry. Furthermore, the assault battalions were reaching a point where a pivot would have to be made to the west. This meant that the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, which had been moving through the more difficult terrain and encountering the majority of the hidden enemy, would have the farthest to go. Coincident with his orders to the 165th Infantry to halt their advance for the day, therefore,

General Griner ordered Colonel Bishop to move the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, up close behind Lt. Colonel Bradt during the afternoon. When they reached the little road that cut to the east coast through Charan Danshii, the 3d Battalion was to halt its advance while the 1st Battalion moved through. Lt. Colonel O'Brien was to move in column directly to the north until he reached the left flank of the 165th's line. Once in position he was to face his battalion to the left and dig in for the night, moving his left flank up until he tied in with the right flank of the 106th Infantry. This was deemed an extremely hazardous move as it would have to be accomplished late in the afternoon. It also meant that O'Brien's men would have to move for 1,700 yards through territory not yet cleared of enemy. Due to the lateness of the hour and the necessity of establishing the line, there would be little time to stop and mop up any positions that might be encountered. There was every prospect that the 1st Battalion would dig in for the night with large numbers of Japanese in its rear as well as to the front. In order to counteract this situation as much as possible, Lt. Colonel Bradt was ordered to advance as far as he could after the 1st Battalion passed his lines. Mop-up of the uncleared area would be completed the next morning.

Lieutenant Colonel O'Brien received his orders at 1440, while still some eight hundred yards south of the Charan Danshii road junction. By the time he had his men moving north, at approximately 1515, the advance of the 3d Battalion had already carried as far as the Charan Danshii junction and Lt. Colonel Bradt had ordered his company commanders to push on to the north. Twenty-five yards beyond the road, L Company, on the right flank, came under heavy and sustained rifle and machine-gun fire from the west side of Charan Danshii Mountain. This fire soon pinned both assault companies to the ground, wounding two men. Captain Spaulding of L Company immediately sent Lt. Thomas J. Donnelly with a small patrol to work around to the right of the Japanese, who had holed up in the caves on the face of the mountain, and try to eliminate the fire. Donnelly and his men moved through the saddle between the mountain and Hill 700 and climbed up to the peak along the same route used by the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, earlier in the week. Coming down on the caves from the top, Donnelly and his men surprised twelve Japanese and killed them all without trouble.

While the 3d Battalion was halted waiting for Donnelly to complete his mission, the 1st Battalion moved up the Aslito-Tanapag highway and passed through the lines right at the road junction. The subsequent movement of the troops to the north was rapid. The battalion commander had instructed his men to waste no time. If opposition was en-

countered it was to be by-passed. The men broke into a dogtrot as soon as they passed the 3d Battalion lines. By 1650 Lieutenant Tougaw, in command of C Company, in the lead, had reported to Lt. Colonel O'Brien that he had reached the 165th's flank and was digging in. By 1800 all companies were in line and the 27th Division presented a solid front facing west, stretching from the extreme northern extension of the Tapotchau cliffs across to the Charan Danshii road junction, thence north for almost two thousand yards. The end of the corridor had been reached.

The dash of the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, had been made without regard to Japanese positions, some of which had been encountered. Most of them were left for the 3d Battalion to mop up the next morning, but they promised to cause some trouble during the night. In order to eliminate as many of these as possible, Sgt. Thomas C. Baker went to Captain Ackerman of Company A and asked permission to see if he could get rid of some of them before night fell. The company commander gave his assent and Baker asked three of his good friends, Staff Sgts. Cleo B. Dickey and Harold M. Rehm, and Pfc. Charles I. Coniry, to accompany him. Baker did all the work while the others covered him. Working up and down through the open fields through which the battalion had just passed, the sergeant investigated every position. In over an hour he personally killed eighteen enemy soldiers, at one time walking directly into a concrete pillbox and shooting four of them before they could get a shot off in return.

Baker's action, while it eliminated much of the enemy resistance, had not completely neutralized all the by-passed strongholds. After Lieutenant Donnelly's patrol had completed mopping up Charan Danshii Mountain, the 3d Battalion had pushed on to the north, but by nightfall had encountered three stubborn enemy positions, each containing from five to fifteen Japanese. In the mop-up of these positions, two men were wounded. Nightfall found the 3d Battalion pivoting on the road junction with the extreme right flank of the line about four hundred yards north of the Charan Danshii road. During the night the Japanese who remained between the 1st and 3d Battalions endeavored to escape to the north and most of them were killed. Along the rear of Lt. Colonel O'Brien's line more than thirty were eliminated in hand-to-hand fighting that blazed intermittently. In B Company five men were either wounded by grenades or bayoneted, and in A Company three others were hit.

As soon as word had reached Division headquarters that the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, had reached its objective safely and tied in for the night, General Griner prepared his field order for the next day. After a

period for adjustment of lines during the early morning, the attack was to move off toward the sea at 0830. In order to keep the advance even, an intermediate objective was designated along the high ground, just before the descent to the coastal plain was to begin. The Division was to adjust its advance to the forward movement of the 4th Marine Division.

There were still many enemy soldiers left in front of the 27th Division, but there was little organized resistance. The positions which faced the advance on 3 July were typical delaying devices, hastily constructed and able to hold for only short periods of time.

Between the night line of 2 July and the western slopes of the Saipan central hill range lay about a mile of open, rolling hills. Most of the Division had dug in along the reverse slopes of one of these small ranges. Morning revealed that the Japanese had emplaced a series of machine guns along the crest of the next hill beyond. At the first sign of American activity the guns opened fire, restricting movement, particularly on the front of the two left regiments, and delaying reorganization for over an hour in some cases. Most of the enemy weapons were taken under artillery fire and either destroyed or driven from their positions, but one or two were too close to permit employment of supporting weapons. One of these was eventually forced to move by a patrol which was sent out from Company A.

A strange incident occurred during the morning. Company C, 105th Infantry, which had suffered two killed and five wounded in the machine-gun fire that opened the day, had called for artillery. Lieutenant Tougaw, the company commander, sent a small party forward to crawl to the crest of the hill to his front in order to observe the fire. As the first man stuck his head over the rise he was amazed to see, sitting on a rock not more than a hundred yards ahead, a nude woman. She was sitting there calmly, combing her hair. Nearby in a dugout were several other civilians. When the report was called back down to Tougaw the artillery was postponed and within ten minutes virtually all of C Company had crawled forward to the crest to have a look. Company A also heard the report and they, too, lined up along the hill. Both Captain Ackerman and Lieutenant Tougaw suspected that the presence of the woman was some kind of a trick to get the men bunched and ordered them to come back down to the bottom of the hill. When the woman still continued to comb her hair fifteen minutes later, Ackerman and Tougaw asked for volunteers to go out and bring her in along with the other civilians. All the men claimed they demurred, using the excuse that it was some kind of a trap and that the woman was bait. It has

never been established for the benefit of the historian just who it was that eventually did go out and bring in the prize, each man vehemently denying it under questioning. She did get back to the civilian cage, however, and there continued to run about without any clothes on as late as August. Someone from A or C Company, 105th Infantry, brought her in.

Another cause for delay on the morning of 3 July was the decision of the 4th Marine Division on the right to relieve one of their front-line regiments with the 25th Marines, who had been in reserve since 23 June. This relief took until almost 1000 and while it was being made, the whole 27th Division line waited.

When the advance did move off, however, it moved rapidly against negligible opposition. By 1400 the 106th Infantry, on the extreme left of the line, reported that they were on the objective line and could look directly downhill at the installations of Tanapag Harbor. Ten minutes later, Lt. Colonel O'Brien reported his battalion had also reached the last high ground above the plain. The whole advance had been conducted with artillery support, a novel experience for the Division so far in the battle for Saipan.

Ironically, the most serious Japanese opposition of the day was to come after the objective line had been reached. Company A, 105th, had halted its forward movement just behind a secondary road that ran along the rim of the high ground at the point of descent to the sea. As he settled down to await orders to resume the advance, Captain Ackerman was notified that one of his men had been wounded by rifle fire that came from somewhere to the front. After looking over the ground ahead the company commander discovered a well camouflaged concrete pillbox not thirty yards away across the road. He ordered the company to cover the openings of this strongpoint while Tech. Sgt. Harry E. Okonzack, Sgt. Thomas L. King, and Pfc. Ruben Aiperspach crept forward and eliminated the two or three Japanese who appeared to be inside. Not a shot was fired from either side until the three men had reached the structure and looked inside. At that moment a fusillade of fire killed King and wounded Aiperspach. Okonzack dropped to the ground and began throwing grenades into the openings as fast as he could pull the pins. Shortly thereafter three enemy soldiers ran out one of the doors and were cut down by rifle bullets from the rest of the company. Okonzack signalled back that he thought all resistance had been eliminated and got to his feet to look into the stronghold. As he did so he was hit in the stomach by an enemy bullet. Captain Ackerman now ordered a self-propelled gun forward to take the position under fire, but the vehicle

could not depress its gun enough to have any effect. Some little time was spent in trying to maneuver it into position so that it could bring its weapons to bear and then, under cover of its fire, Cpl. Wilfred MacIntyre, an engineer, crawled forward and blew up the pillbox with a demolition charge. By this time, however, Japanese fire was being received all along the left of the Division line and investigation revealed that the enemy had at least three more of the concrete emplacements to the front. They were flanked by a chain of forty or fifty spiderholes and presented a rather effective deep defensive line. All company commanders in the 105th and 106th Infantry set to work cleaning out this position, working squads forward under cover of fire to lift up the covers of the holes and either drop grenades or fire rifles into them. The Japanese retaliated by taking quick shots or rolling grenades up the hill into the American groups. Over forty enemy were killed, but in the process four of Ackerman's men were wounded. One man was hit in C Company and five more in the 106th. It was not until well after 1600 that the last trace of enemy resistance was terminated. At that time, the Division was ordered to dig in for the night and prepare to move down to the sea early the next morning.

The 165th Infantry had spent an unusual day on 3 July. It had started with an experience almost as unusual as the 105th Infantry's encounter with the nude woman. In striking out from Charan Danshii Mountain on the previous morning, the regiment had left all roads behind. The advance had proceeded over the rolling hills without difficulty, but the rapidity of movement soon outstripped all supporting vehicles, which were forced to move over a trackless bed of sticky volcanic ash. When the 3d Battalion dug in for the night it had had no resupply. Ammunition levels were still fairly high because opposition had not been heavy. Food, however, was low, and as the men dug in they had to split what they had. Breakfast the next morning depended upon an early arrival of promised rations. During the early evening and just after dark a heavy shower fell on northern Saipan, turning the red clay into a hopeless, sticky mass, over which no vehicles could make their way. Carrying parties were sent back to Charan Danshii Mountain shortly after daylight, but it promised to be 1100 before anyone got any breakfast. In this situation there suddenly appeared to the front a deer. The animal obligingly headed straight for the L Company perimeter where he was shot. It was only a matter of minutes before the experts in all three 3d Battalion companies were carving up the carcass. Shortly after 0800 the whole battalion sat down to a venison breakfast. It was "the best meal we had on Saipan."

Meanwhile, the carrying parties were returning across the more than a mile of open ground. Because of the heavy burdens each had to carry, most of the men had left their weapons behind. Halfway back, as they trudged around the end of a ravine, they received rifle fire from the bushes that covered the floor of the draw. One of the party, Pvt. George O. Ruckman, of I Company, walked over to a nearby company that was marching toward the front lines and borrowed a BAR. With this he returned to the rim of the depression. He said later that he thought there were only two or three enemy hiding in the brush and that he would spray them from above, but when a few shots failed to halt the return fire, he boldly walked down into the draw, closed his eyes, and marched through, throwing bullets in every direction. After stopping once to reload he finally emerged from the lower end of the ravine unhurt. Later investigation revealed that he had killed eighteen Japanese with his eyes closed!

The 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, the only unit in the assault, did not move off until shortly after 1000, being held up for most of that time by the Marines on their right during the relief that took place in that zone. The first unit to run into trouble was I Company, which suddenly ran into a machine gun after an advance of some three hundred yards. Capt. John Potter, the company commander, ordered his men to take cover until the weapon was located, but before the men had even gone to earth they received a heavy mortar barrage. The combined effect of the two fires killed one and wounded five others. In the midst of this fire Sgt. Joseph Markov accidentally discovered that a thicket to the front about three hundred yards was filled with enemy soldiers. He signalled Captain Potter to send him up an SP gun, and it, with a machine gun and a BAR, killed over forty enemy soldiers.

The 3d Battalion moved slowly forward during the next three hours, killing a few scattered Japanese, and at 1512 Lt. Colonel Hart reported the 165th Infantry as being on the objective line. For the next hour all units of the Division were held up waiting for the positions on the left of the line to be mopped up, and shortly after 1600 were ordered to dig in and complete the advance to the sea next morning.

Several developments occurred during the day to influence the 27th's future action. At noon the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, was released from its assignment at Nafutan and began marching north to join the regiment. Garapan was declared secure at approximately 1800 and the 2d Marine Division broke out to the north. The prospects of the 27th's move to the sea on the 4th of July caused corps to issue an order reliev-

ing the 2d Division of any further missions on Saipan as soon as the advance of the 27th had pinched off that unit's front. Lt. Colonel Hart of the 165th sought and obtained permission from General Griner to relieve the tired 3d Battalion with the 1st for the final push to the sea. Arrangements were made to complete the relief at 0630 the following morning.

Morale all over the island was high as the 4th of July dawned. In the 27th the watchword was "we'll spend the 4th on the beaches at Tanapag." In the 165th CP during the night thirty Japanese were killed trying to break out of the corridor where they had hidden. Morning revealed that one of them was Colonel Agawa, commander of the Japanese 136th Infantry Regiment. On his person he carried many valuable maps, documents which revealed the enemy's final plans for defending the island.

The 4th of July dawned rainy and dark. All units moved down the sharp slopes toward the sea at 0800 in the heaviest showers of the battle. By 1000 all of the men were drenched to the skin and the steep slopes had become difficult to negotiate. There was little opposition from the enemy, but the terrain proved to be very difficult. Sharp gullies, box canyons, and ledges that dropped abruptly twenty or thirty feet slowed up the advance and caused great gaps in the advancing line that had to be filled by shifting companies and battalions. Only in the zone of action on the extreme left where the 106th was fighting did the terrain allow any rapid advance. Here a long gradual slope gave easy access to the coastal plain. The 106th moved rapidly downhill, far outstripping the other two regiments. At 1322, Lt. Colonel Cornett, whose 1st Battalion was on the extreme left flank, reported that he had reached the beach and was mopping up the northern half of the destroyed Tanapag Harbor naval base, including the wreckage of the seaplane station at Flores Point. Only one Japanese had been killed by B Company during the whole 1,700-yard advance. In Company A, Pfc. Harold Bunting had spotted one enemy soldier shortly before noon and gave chase. The fugitive ducked into a culvert at the junction of the Aslito-Tanapag highway with the coastal road, and Bunting dove in after him, only to find himself face to face with a "whole army." There were over thirty Japanese huddled in the culvert. Bunting called over two other soldiers and the three threw white phosphorus grenades into the little passage-way and killed the enemy as they came out.

The rapid push of the 106th Infantry to the sea and the last northward movement of the 2d Marine Division had now produced a phenomenon which was to shape the character of the action in front of the

Division during the rest of the day. Shortly after noon large numbers of enemy soldiers could be seen moving north along the coastal plain. It was not an organized movement. There seemed to be no exercise of command, nor did the Japanese seem to have any uniform method of moving. Some of them merely ran along in the open as far and as fast as they could go. Others moved from cover to cover. Still others sought hiding places to wait for darkness. Most of them were armed, some with rifles, some with machine guns, some with mortars. In many places two Japanese joined forces and gathered others around them to set up positions from which they could direct fire on the Americans descending from the high ground above. In many instances these groups were out in the open. In others they selected clumps of bushes or groves of trees. As the American companies arrived on the last ridge before descending to the plain they were presented with an amazing sight. Never before in the battle had so many targets been presented so plainly. Most of the men simply lined up along the ridge and took up a fire on the plain below. By midafternoon a fire fight was raging all along the Division front with the Japanese still trying to retire to the north. As the opposition ceased in front of the companies farther south they moved out and onto the plain toward the beach.

The first unit to follow the 106th Infantry was Company A, 105th, which was next in line to the north. This unit had very little difficult terrain in its front, the left half of the zone sloping gradually, but in front of the right platoon the ground dropped off in a series of ledges or steps. Captain Ackerman, after trying to get his men down the steep bluff there, finally gave up and pulled them to the south, detoured through the easier ground, and re-formed his line below the hill. Almost at once his advance entered a settlement area, occupied by small houses, each with a little garden plot, like a suburban community in the United States. After investigating one or two of the buildings and finding enemy stragglers in both, the company commander split his men into small teams and began a systematic mop-up of the whole area. Almost immediately the rural community became the scene of a fantastic battle. As the Company A squads began deploying through the settlement, Japanese began crawling out from under the houses, running out through the doors, jumping out the windows, and even crawling down from the roofs. They could be seen running in all directions and the Company A riflemen had to be careful not to hit their own men. Captain Ackerman had reported at 1220 that he was re-forming his company below the bluffs preparatory to moving to the beach. Two hours later he was just reaching the western edge of the settlement area after having killed

over two hundred enemy and moving less than two hundred yards. Company A had suffered no casualties.

Although the 106th Infantry had pushed to the shore with practically no opposition, both companies of the 105th were to have more trouble. Company A, after passing through the houses, moved almost at once into a lumberyard with several large piles of boards standing in it. The Japanese were hiding here, too, and the infantrymen began a game of hide and seek that lasted over an hour. The enemy ran up and down the piles, between them, and under them with Americans chasing them, trying to get in a shot. The right platoon of the company, trying to move around the north edge of the yard at the same time, ran into a large clump of trees and underbrush from which they flushed over two hundred Japanese, most of whom ran to the north in one big howling mob. This last group was later taken under fire by the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, and most of them killed.

Lieutenant Colonel O'Brien finally reported, at 1620, that Company A had reached the beach, but the fighting was not yet over. The drive had ended up in the northern extremities of the Flores Point seaplane base. There the enemy had constructed a series of pillboxes and firing trenches as defenses against beach landings in that area. As Captain Ackerman's two leading scouts, Pfc. Andrew Sandoval and Pfc. Leo Lund, approached the water's edge, they jumped one of these firing trenches. Sandoval noticed some movement in it and stopped to go back and investigate. As Sandoval poked along the excavation a Japanese soldier popped out ahead of him and shot a bullet that hit the scout in the stomach, mortally wounding him. Lund knew exactly where the enemy was and calmly walked along the ditch to the point, bent over, placed his rifle against the Japanese soldier's head, and pulled the trigger. As he turned back to retrace his steps, a second Japanese popped out of the ditch twenty feet away and fired. Lund died instantly. Pfc. Charles Emig killed the enemy soldier almost as soon as the shot rang out. This was the beginning of another melee, the third of the day in which Company A had been involved. This time, however, the enemy returned the Americans' fire. For thirty minutes, Captain Ackerman and his men squirmed along the ground dropping grenades and firing into every ditch and concrete emplacement. Then the action subsided as quickly as it had begun. Forty dead Japanese were counted in the area.

Company B, following the pattern which had been established by noon, had a progressively harder struggle with the terrain and met more opposition from the Japanese. By 1220, when Company A was forming up below the bluffs that faced the plain, B Company was starting its attempt to get down to the low ground over the last ledge,

after pushing through heavy rain and a tangle of undergrowth and badly cut up terrain all morning. Contact with the 165th Infantry had been gained and lost five times during the forenoon and one platoon of Captain Ryan's command had wandered into a small box canyon about 1000, from which they had to retrace their steps for fully half a mile. Several small parties of Japanese soldiers had been found hiding in caves and ravines, but none had offered resistance. One large group of approximately fifty civilians had also been taken. They had been hiding in the box canyon and were discovered by the platoon that was lost there after a girl, dressed like a soldier, had been killed, giving away the position.

Company B finally reached the plain about 1500 and, under orders from Lt. Colonel O'Brien, immediately reorganized for the drive to the beach. At this particular point the road north from Garapan cut almost directly beneath the ridge before angling back a mile toward the coast. Captain Ryan's men found, as Company A had before them, a small settlement along this road. The first task had to be the mop-up of the houses and the job proceeded in much the same fashion that it had earlier. The buildings were well populated with fugitives and these enemy soon filled the area, running in all directions. Company B was less lucky than A, however, suffering three men wounded, one by Japanese grenade fragments and two by American fire.

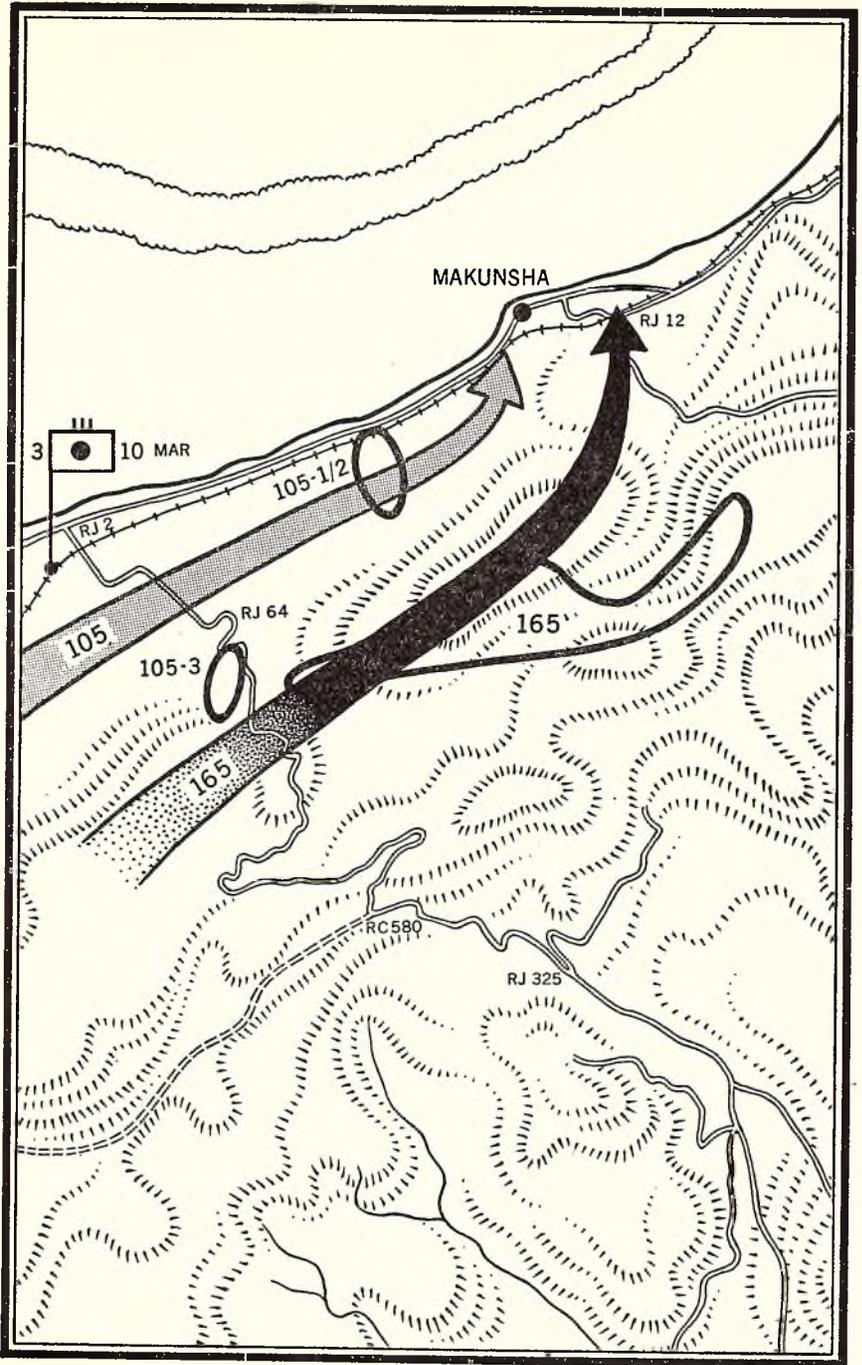
An hour after the mop-up had begun, the houses were cleaned up and Captain Ryan reorganized for the push to the ocean. This reorganization was conducted under heavy rifle fire which seemed to come from various hiding places to the front. Now and then, however, a shot came from the rear where a few Japanese had taken refuge in caves in the hills. Before the advance toward the sea could be resumed, two B Company men were killed and two were wounded, and the company commander finally was forced to abandon the project and turn around to mop up the enemy behind him again. In the midst of this operation, Lt. Colonel O'Brien called and ordered Captain Ryan to push on to the beach at once. Company B turned around and headed for the beaches, leaving a patrol under Sgt. John A. Sidur to complete the mop-up of enemy stragglers behind it.

The movement to the west was made in a column, the men following a tree-line and detouring to the south around a wide swamp. This route soon brought the head of the column into the same lumberyard through which Company A had passed earlier. As the men picked their way through the piles of lumber Lt. Colonel O'Brien appeared and held a conference with Captain Ryan at which it was decided that B company would move directly north and then move to the beach from a point a

hundred yards above the lumberyard. This would bring them through an area not yet reached by American troops and in which there seemed to be large numbers of stragglers.

The new shift brought B Company into a large oil-storage dump. As soon as the column moved into this area Japanese began popping up from behind every drum, taking a shot and then dropping back down again to crawl a few yards and repeat the process. Tech. Sgt. Atterigi Colangelo, who was in command of the lead platoon, ordered his men to scatter and use the enemy's tactics. For the next thirty minutes the dump was the scene of a wild game of tag with Americans and Japanese chasing one another through the maze of oil drums. It was almost a repetition of the scene earlier enacted by Company A in the lumberyard. When there seemed to be no more enemy near, Colangelo straightened up and began assembling his platoon, but before he had completed this task a machine gun opened fire from the north and the platoon leader dropped with a bullet through his head. Staff Sgt. Edward G. Morris, who now took charge, called up a nearby tank, but before the vehicle could destroy the Japanese gun, it ran out of ammunition. Morris decided to let the position go and move on to the beach. Followed by the remainder of the company, he reached the water's edge at 1800.

The move to the west was completed. The 165th Infantry, on the extreme right of the 27th Division line, was not destined to reach the water for five more days. The 1st Battalion of that regiment had struggled and slipped over the roughening terrain throughout the morning of the 4th. By noon the assault companies were working their way toward the plain, but a succession of enemy dumps and bivouac areas slowed the advance. These were empty, but each one had to be investigated, a time-consuming process. At 1400 the 165th reached a point on the last ledge above the plain, but had become involved with swarms of Japanese on the ground below. Most of these enemy had been driven from their hiding places by the two regiments to the south and were making their way north directly across the front of the 165th. As they came under fire from Major Mahoney's battalion they sought out new places of refuge and engaged in harassing fire on the troops outlined against the sky. Little groups with mortars and machine guns dug in and fought till their ammunition was exhausted, then tried to make a run for it to the north. Most of them were killed, but the whole 1st Battalion of the 165th Infantry had soon become involved in a fire fight at long range which would not for the time being, permit any further advance. While thus involved the corps issued orders which changed the whole direction of the attack and turned the battalion to the north. The final stage in the battle for Saipan was being set.



Map 6: Saipan: The Drive to the North

Chapter 37: The Division Moves North

AT THE BEGINNING of the day's action on 4 July, the 27th Division had the prospect of reaching the sea by nightfall. General Griner queried corps headquarters at approximately 0900 as to what the next mission would be. Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith replied at approximately 1300 to be prepared to swing to the north on order. A boundary was drawn roughly down the center of the island, the left zone of action falling to the 27th Division, the right to the 4th Marine Division.

General Griner immediately divided the 27th Division area into two regimental zones, assigning the left to the 105th and the right to the 165th. Prior to final receipt of the corps orders the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had been released from corps reserve as a mop-up unit in Death Valley. At the time of assignment of regimental missions Major Claire was already marching north up the Aslito-Tanapag highway. Ahead of him and nearing the front lines was the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, which was just completing the long march north from Nafutan Point. For the first time since he had assumed command of the Division, General Griner had all nine battalions under his control.

Lt. Colonel Hart, as early as 1400, upon notification of his probable mission for the next day, had withdrawn his 3d Battalion from mopping up in rear of the 1st Battalion and ordered it to make ready to relieve the battalion of the 4th Marine Division on the immediate right of the 27th. This battalion, like other elements of the 4th Division, had been moving toward the western beaches under terms of the earlier corps order. By the afternoon of the 4th it was fighting to reach the plain bordering the sea and was well within the new 27th Division zone. Lt. Colonel Hart also asked General Griner's permission to use his relatively fresh 2d Battalion in the new attack and it was immediately released to him. The 1st Battalion was to continue its efforts to reach the beach, reverting to reserve behind the other two battalions the next morning.

In the 105th's zone of action the 2d Battalion was to attack on the left, along the beach, while the 3d Battalion was to be on the right, next to the 165th Infantry. Both of these battalions were still in the hills above the coastal plain at the time the orders were issued, and began moving into position at once. By 1745 it had become apparent that Major Mahoney's men (1st Battalion, 165th) were not going to reach the sea before nightfall, so that both battalions of the 105th Infantry would have to finish mopping up the territory between the hills and the beach before they could attack next morning. In order to accomplish this expeditiously and at the same time prevent any gap between Ma-

honey and Lt. Colonel O'Brien's battalion on the beach, the 2d Battalion was ordered to take up a position on the plain below the hills and the 3d Battalion was moved in on the right of the 1st Battalion, 165th. The movement, begun quite late in the afternoon, was not completed until after midnight, the 3d Battalion of the 105th marching over two miles through the gullies and ravines in the darkness. The two battalions of the 165th completed the relief of Marine units in their zone before 1800.

At nightfall of 4 July the 27th Division was drawn up facing the direction of its new attack, except for the one battalion of the 105th. The terrain to the front promised to be the most difficult of the whole battle. From the west a flat coastal plain stretches inland for four to eight hundred yards, giving way to a gradual slope that carries up into the rugged central hogback of the island. Farther to the north this gradual ascent is replaced by abrupt cliffs which rise almost perpendicular out of the coastal plain. Ravines, gulches, and cone-like hills dot the landscape, and vegetation, except on the plain, was plentiful. A coastal road runs north along the shore, paralleled closely by a cane railroad. Roads branch off from the main coastal highway, some of them angling aimlessly across the plain, others striking out determinedly for the hills, climbing into the interior through a system of hairpin curves or else following one of the steep-sided ravines to higher ground. Two of these "cross-island" roads could be considered well traveled. One of them branches off from the coastal road at RJ 2, just north of the village of Tanapag and winds up into the hills about fifty yards south of a particularly deep gulch. Once it has gained the heights it splits in two, one branch going south to join the Aslito-Tanapag highway beyond Radar Hill, the other cutting across the island to the east shore. The other road cuts off to the east from Makunsha, moving over the Karaberra pass to the east coast.

Facing the American troops on the morning of 5 July were between five thousand and seven thousand Japanese. A good percentage of these were members, either of the 55th Base Force (naval) or the 47th Independent Mixed Brigade. The base force constituted the naval garrison on Saipan before the invasion. Its principal element was a special naval landing force unit of about 1,500 men. Some of this force had been committed against the 2d Marine Division at Garapan on 2 July, but had fled north when the 27th Division cut across the hills behind it and was considered to be almost intact. Also attached to the 55th Base Force were about a thousand civilian construction laborers of doubtful value as a military force. They had been concen-

trated at Marpi Point throughout the battle and had seen no action. The 47th Brigade had been the principal unit opposing the Marines at Hill 500 on 20-22 June, but had been withdrawn from the line before that stronghold fell and had not seen action since. Composed of four battalions drawn from crack Japanese divisions, it was a relatively fresh and strong unit. The 43d Division, which had furnished most of the opposition until this time, was now considered to be destroyed although large remnants of it were roaming the northern hills and needed only to be rounded up and put under competent leaders to add weight to the Japanese defenses. One artillery battalion remained available to the defenders, but it had little ammunition. Tanks numbered less than ten.

Japanese morale was definitely low. Water and food were scarce. Communications were practically nonexistent. Hospital facilities were so overtaxed that at no place were the Japanese able to get adequate medical care. Field hospitals had been forced to move backward with the withdrawing lines and at each move they had killed their more seriously wounded and turned loose those who were able to move about. In almost every case these walking wounded became stragglers who wandered back up into the hills in the Marpi area. They never rejoined their units nor communicated with them and were later either dug out of their hiding places or killed by troops mopping up in the north part of the island as late as the end of August.

The enemy was not well equipped with weapons, particularly small arms. There were many more troops on the island than there were guns. A great many of the leaders had been killed. All of the commanders of the various infantry regiments were gone. Yet, on 5 July, the two top-ranking officers on Saipan were still alive and directing the defense of the island. They were the supreme commander, Lt. General Saito, and the highest ranking naval officer, Vice Adm. Chuichi Nagumo. The latter was the notorious commander of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. Although Nagumo was in command of naval forces on the island, he seems to have had no part in the tactical command. He maintained his headquarters at Marpi Airfield, while Saito had established his final CP in the area of Paradise Valley, a deep, almost canyon-like ravine that ran to the southeast out of the Tanapag plain into the hills east of Makunsha.

Most of the Japanese strength was gathered in one of two places, either at Banaderu, near Marpi, which seemed to be the gathering place of the naval forces, or in Paradise Valley itself. Information regarding these troop concentrations had been gleaned from the order of battle captured on Colonel Agawa on the morning of 4 July, and from piecing together information gleaned from prisoners of war captured

in preceding days. It was apparent that the Japanese had organized one final strongpoint of resistance.

Facing this strongpoint on the morning of 5 July were the troops of the 4th Marine Division and the 27th Infantry Division. The placing of boundary lines on the map had placed the principal Japanese position directly in the zone of action of the 27th. Just what its extent was, and how strong the opposition was to be, could not yet be determined.

The final great battle of the north began inauspiciously on the morning of 5 July. The two battalions of the 105th Infantry moved cautiously ahead, against light opposition. The plains which had been swarming with Japanese the night before were now curiously deserted. The advancing infantry poked under bushes, investigated farmhouses, and cleaned out pillboxes. Particularly in the zone of the beach shortly before noon, did the situation promise trouble. Major McCarthy's men were moving directly through the beach defenses which had been built long before to repel landings on the north coast. Pillboxes, air-raid shelters, spiderholes, trench systems, and elaborate concrete command posts were overrun. Here and there a Japanese was found and killed, but there was no organized opposition. Just enough of the enemy remained to necessitate a complete investigation of the whole area. Slow as this made the advance, Major McCarthy reported by 1600 that he had gained 1,500 yards and was at RJ 2, north of the village of Tanapag, about to cross the cross-island road. The 3d Battalion had gained only slightly less ground. One of its companies moved across the flat plain and by 1500 was entering the large coconut grove that bordered the same cross-island road which branched out of RJ 2. This was K Company under Captain Bouchard. The other company, L, was keeping abreast along the slope that led up into the high central hill section.

On the extreme right of the Division line, the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, occupied Hill 767, which had already been in possession of the Marines at daylight. They sat there until noon without incident, a thousand yards ahead of the troops below them on the plain, waiting for the left flank to catch up. Shortly after 1200 patrols poked out to the north, still without opposition.

The heavy action of the northern advance began in the area of the 3d Battalion, 165th. It had started the night before. Throughout the night troops all along the front of this battalion had been subjected to local counterattacks. In an effort to eliminate two positions immediately to the front, a patrol from K Company had gone forward in the early darkness, but had suffered six casualties without appreciable results.

Dawn on 5 July had brought fire from these same positions all along K Company's front. This was particularly annoying to the infantrymen who were trying to prepare for the day's action. Ahead of the company's night line was a big rock, eight feet high and about ten feet broad at the base. In the center of this gigantic boulder was a cleft, three or four feet deep. It nestled against the side of the hill so that one face of it was higher from the ground than the other. Pvt. William H. Brown had been working near his foxhole and diving into it every few minutes to escape bursts of fire from the Japanese. After standing it as long as he could, he decided, a little after 0700, to see if he could do something about it. He walked forward, scaled the near side of the rock and crawled into the cleft. After waiting a few moments for the enemy to fire, without result, he stood up in an exposed position. He was rewarded by two rifle shots that hit close to his head. This was all he needed to line up the fire. He took aim and killed the enemy soldier, crawled back down off the rock and went back to his foxhole where he told his partner about his exploit. The other man, Pfc. Roy J. Burnett, wouldn't believe him, so Brown said, "Come on. I'll show you." This time, instead of going up on top of the rock, the rifleman led his companion down around the obstruction to the left. As the two men rounded the rock they were surprised to see a Japanese soldier sitting about forty yards away from them, across a deep ravine, with a light machine gun between his legs. Both men immediately dropped to the ground, took position, and fired. The Japanese rolled over, dead.

The shots fired by Brown and Burnett seemed to be the signal for the whole hillside to come to life. About twenty-five Japanese had been lying behind the machine gunner, camouflaged in the undergrowth and at the sound of firing they all jumped to their feet, yelling. Burnett and Brown looked at one another and then started firing. Burnett estimated that between the two of them they killed ten enemy soldiers. After he had fired off a complete clip, Burnett told Brown he was going back to the company to bring back more help. When Burnett got back to the company, he told Lieutenant Sixkiller the situation around the rock below, and the platoon leader grabbed some ammunition, and went back to where Brown was, accompanied by Burnett and Pvt. Peter A. Duffy. When they reached the point above the gully they found that the Japanese had sent a large party down into the gully and so all four men immediately began throwing grenades and firing into this party. Within a few minutes they had killed the whole enemy group. There was no longer any sign of life in the whole area. Brown now straightened up and told the others, "I'm going after that machine gun over there." With that he moved off down the hillside into the ravine. Just

as he reached the bottom a shot rang out and he fell. All of the men above were sure that he was only wounded, but before they had a chance to ascertain this, they were startled to see a Japanese officer running up the slopes of the gulch toward them. This officer was waving a saber and yelling "*Banzai!*" At the same time two of the enemy in the gulch who were supposed to be dead raised up and threw grenades, both of which landed right in the middle of the little group atop the hill. Simultaneously, rifle fire began landing in the area from the brush across the gully. The grenade caused no damage, but Lieutenant Sixkiller was mortally wounded by the flying bullets. Burnett raised his rifle as the grenade exploded and shot the Japanese officer at point-blank range. Duffy shot one of the enemy who had thrown the grenades and Burnett then fired and killed the other. While all this firing had been going on other members of K Company had come down around the rock, and a hot two-hour fire fight ensued, which accounted for about a hundred Japanese.

Rather than be delayed further by the action in front of K Company Major Foery decided to by-pass the area. Lieutenant Wiegand moved L Company into position to contain and mop up the gully, and at 1130 Captain Betts moved K Company around it to the east and proceeded to the north in column. Before noon he had crossed the road that wound up from the plain below and within half an hour had reached a much larger and deeper gulch directly in his path. K Company had been the first to arrive at Hara-Kiri Gulch, although it was not to receive its name until the next day.

As previously described, the road from RJ 2 moves straight east across the plain, skirts a coconut grove, and climbs into the hills. Just before it begins its climb, a little secondary trail branches off, skirts around a nose of high ground and moves east up through a tremendous steep-sided canyon toward Hill 721, the second most prominent point on the west side of the island. This canyon through which the trail winds is Hara-Kiri Gulch. Its floor was covered with underbrush, a few trees, and several deep ditches. Little grass shacks also dotted the landscape. From one wall to the other was never more than fifty yards. From RJ 64, where the trail branched off from the cross-island road, to the point where it emerged from the gulch below Hill 721, was four hundred yards. It was a perfect natural position, the key to General Saito's Tanapag Line which had been constructed as a last defense on Saipan. On 4 July the 4th Marine Division had first sent units into the gulch with disastrous results. At least one medium tank had been knocked out and abandoned and several corpses lay on the exposed floor.

There were three ways to enter Hara-Kiri Gulch. Units could come in from the south, letting themselves down the cliff-like sides; they could come down the trail from Hill 721, descending the steep eastern slope; or they could come up from the canyon's mouth, from RJ 64.

The first approach of the Marines had evidently been from the Hill 721 side. That of K Company on 5 July had been from the south. Without realizing the situation Captain Betts had sent his two leading scouts, Pfc. Harry F. Noles, and Pfc. James S. Frayer, down over the cliffs. They let themselves down without trouble, intending to cross the floor and scale the northern sides. There was no fire, no sign of activity. The rest of the leading platoon followed. Quietly the men moved across the ground, poking into the shacks, which were full of dead enemy. One man saw a live Japanese and killed him with one shot. Shortly after this, within moments, Noles, in the lead, stumbled across a trench, and there, below, were four enemy soldiers. Noles had not been seen. He wanted to take his time and surprise the Japanese because he didn't think he could kill all four before one of them could get him. Before he had a chance to do anything, however, Frayer, coming up, gave his presence away. Noles began shooting at once and then the peaceful little valley became a hellhole. The machine gun on the abandoned Marine tank opened fire, Japanese rifles cracked, and grenades began flying all over the place. Both Noles and Frayer dropped to the ground and tried to crawl back to the edge of the gulch where there was some cover. Before they had crawled more than a few yards, Frayer received a mortal head wound. Noles hugged the ground and stopped crawling. Captain Betts had seen Frayer hit, but he couldn't see Noles. He immediately deployed his leading platoon and ordered them to lay down covering fire. For over half an hour the whole platoon searched out every nook and cranny of the gulch while Pvt. George Clempner, the company aid man, Staff Sgt. James B. Connolly, and Pvt. Thomas L. Fitzhugh with Noles dragged the helpless Frayer back to safety, but he died a short time later.

While all this had been going on, two light tanks of a platoon commanded by Lieutenant Phalon had been circling about on the high ground above and now they started down into the gulch via the road from the east. As they moved down into the canyon it became apparent almost immediately that they would be of little use because contact could not be established by infantry with the crews. The infantry were pinned down and each attempt to move brought down a hail of fire. Both tanks were disabled by Japanese who darted out from the ditches and placed mines on them. Prompt action by one of the gunners, Private Donovan, did, however, knock out one Japanese cave position. He

simply swung his turret around and put three rounds into a cave in rapid succession. While the infantry did their best to cover the withdrawal of the wounded men from the tanks, the tankers slowly crawled out and took cover either under or close by the knocked-out tank. One of the men even managed to get over and into the other vehicle. In a few moments Lieutenant Phalon, with three others of his platoon's tanks, put in an appearance at the top of the hill and started down. These three tanks did manage to put a good deal of fire into the hillside opposite Betts' men, but when Phalon tried to edge his tank by the two already damaged to get deeper into the gulch, a Japanese soldier again ran out of a hole and placed a mine over the engine. Phalon's tank was now temporarily disabled. For a few moments Phalon worked to get his motor started, succeeded, and then turned his tank around. At that point, two more of the injured tankers who had evacuated the destroyed vehicle, made a run for it and got safely inside Phalon's tank. One man had still not been rescued. One tank was a total loss, Phalon's tank was damaged, and the other tank seemed to be on fire. In the midst of all this, the commander of the tank, Sergeant Brown, jumped out of his turret to the ground, and directed the vehicle while it turned. In rapid succession he was hit three times, but he remained exposed until the tank was headed in the right direction, then he sought cover. Within a few minutes he made a run for it and got back inside another tank nearby. With this, after the one remaining man from the originally crippled tank had been picked up, all four vehicles which were still able to move made their way back up out of the valley. Betts had first run into trouble around 1230. The tanks had finally pulled out of the gulch at about 1500.

While most of K Company was busy trying to get Frayer out of the line of enemy fire, and while tanks were running into their trouble in the area, Betts was still making every effort to get across the draw. Shortly after Frayer had been hit, while the whole company was pinned down by heavy fire, Captain Betts had been searching for the source of the enemy fire. Knowing of the numerous trenches and holes dotting the area, the company commander was convinced that much of the enemy fire was being placed on his company from a series of these entrenchments to the left, farther down the gulch. He called Lieutenant Welsh and told him to take one squad and circle to the left for some little distance and come up on these holes from below. Welsh led his squad out and came down over the bank. After liquidating two holes occupied by the enemy, Welsh was hit while investigating a third. The whole area became alive with enemy fire. The squad was forced to take cover. As soon as they were able, they picked Welsh up and car-

ried him back up the hill to get him out of range of the fire. One more man was wounded while the men tried to get out and halfway up the hill they had to disperse and take cover. They laid Lieutenant Welsh down. A Japanese machine gun began probing for the wounded man. Captain Betts, seeing that Welsh was helpless and apt to be found at any moment, crawled down the hill, and rescued the lieutenant. Welsh died, however, before he could be taken to an aid station.

All along the line K Company had failed to penetrate the defenses in the gulch. The tanks had not been able to reduce the hidden Japanese positions. After they had pulled back out of the area, self-propelled guns from Cannon Company were sent down the road and spent some little time searching the caves on the north side with point-blank fire from their 75mm and 105mm howitzers. After this Betts' men tried to move forward again, but once more began receiving heavy fire which pinned them down. Finally, at 1445, Captain Betts decided to ask for artillery and called battalion. Major Foery now gave him permission to pull his men back out of the gulch to allow the placement of this fire. Betts immediately built up a line along the rim, tying in with I Company on his right, and L Company on the left. At 1650 all three companies were still exactly where they had been, and battalion ordered them to dig in for the night.

Neither I nor L Companies had run into much trouble during the day. L had furnished one platoon to help in mopping up the pocket which had caused K so much trouble early in the morning, and the rest of the company had followed in reserve behind K. Company I had advanced with only light opposition, tied in with the left flank of the 2d Battalion, and then waited for K Company to come up abreast.

Elsewhere on the Division front, as already described, the day had largely been uneventful. It was not until late in the afternoon that other units began to run into trouble. The 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had moved north from Hill 767 shortly after 1200. The terrain and difficulty in maintaining contact with the Marines on the right slowed progress considerably. After a 600-yard advance the inability of the 3d Battalion on the left to move beyond Hara-Kiri Gulch resulted in a dangerous overextension on that flank and Major Claire halted and dug in for the night. It was not until the establishment of this night position had begun that the 2d Battalion experienced trouble. The foxholes of the two left companies strung out along the high ground in some cases only yards away from the walls of the canyon known as Paradise Valley. This deep and winding gully that cut into the hills just east of Makunsha was the main defensive position left to the Japa-

nese, the key to the whole Tanapag Line, and General Saito's CP. Even before the companies moved into the area there were signs of extensive activity in the valley and these evidences were multiplied as evening approached. Grenades were used freely by the Japanese, and rifle fire became intermittent all along the line. In the gathering dusk of evening Major Claire finally felt it necessary to clean out all ground for a distance of thirty yards ahead of the night positions. In completing this task, Sergeant Gribbon of C Company, 102d Engineers, was killed and two men from G Company, 165th Infantry, were wounded. The 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, and the 27th Reconnaissance Troop which had moved up to Hill 767 during the afternoon, soon discovered that they controlled not only the inland exits, but the Makunsha end of Paradise Valley, the latter by direct observation. Throughout the night interdictory fire was placed on the mouth of General Saito's hideout with resultant heavy casualties to the remaining enemy. Japanese who tried to leave by the back door ran into the fox-holes at the top of the pass and were killed. Company E, 165th Infantry, which occupied the positions nearest Paradise Valley, counted over twenty enemy bodies next morning. During the night they themselves had suffered one man killed. Company F had had one killed and two wounded.

The 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, on the extreme left of the Division, had reached RJ 2 shortly after 1430. A few scattered Japanese had been encountered and an exploding ammunition dump had held up the advance for some little time. At 1600, after reorganizing south of the cross-island road, the whole battalion moved on to the north, hoping to reach Makunsha by nightfall. Thirty yards north of the junction the opposition, which had been lacking all day, suddenly came to life. Machine-gun fire swept across the front of both E and F Companies in the assault. Captain Smith, of E Company, immediately tried to locate the source of some of this fire which seemed to be a cross fire rather than a frontal defense. After some little time the company commander decided that some of it was coming from the cliffs far to his right front, but that at least two Japanese machine guns were emplaced in a beached hulk about six hundred yards to the north, along the coastal road. He called Lieutenant Bullock, who was in command of the platoon of tanks operating with the battalion, pointed out the boat, and asked if tanks could get at the guns. Bullock volunteered to look after the matter personally. In his own tank, followed by another commanded by Sgt. Henry B. Linder, he ran on up the coastal road, turned to face the hulk, and blasted it with canister and machine-gun

fire. This seemed to silence the enemy and Bullock turned to return to E Company, which was waiting at the road junction. Upon approaching the junction, Bullock pulled off the road, intending to cut across the open field to meet Captain Smith who had set up a CP at the point where the little cane railroad crossed the branch highway. Bullock's own tank ran all the way through the field without mishap, but the vehicle following him suddenly ran over a mine. There was a terrific explosion and the tank was lifted into the air and turned completely upside down. Of the four crewmen inside, three were killed, including Sergeant Linder. One man from E Company, Pfc. Jack Levine, had discovered the minefield before the tanks entered it and had run out to stop them when they turned off the road. He had been not more than fifteen feet from Linder's tank when the explosion occurred, and suffered the loss of an eye when hit by flying metal. He managed to drag himself back to his company's line without assistance.

The demolition of the tank opened the defense of the Tanapag Line. Almost at the instant of the explosion, Japanese weapons opened fire from the whole area to the front. What had been a quiet scene a few moments before was now turned into an inferno. Two men of Lieutenant Bullock's crew, T/4 Tijorina, and Private First Class Sudovich, crawled out into the midst of this fire and brought in the survivor of Linder's tank. Both Captain Smith and Lt. Frank Titterington, who now commanded F Company, tried for over an hour to bring artillery fire to bear on the enemy to the front, without success. At approximately 1700, the 2d Battalion dug in along the road that ran from RJ 2 into the hills. The battalion front now extended from the beach to the coconut grove where it bent back toward K Company of the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry.

Lieutenant Colonel Bradt's men had moved forward slowly throughout the day. Like the other companies of the Division, L and K Companies, which constituted the assault, ran into little more than routine mopping-up operations until late in the afternoon. Company L geared its advance to that of the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, on its right, moving along the rugged hillside as far as Hara-Kiri Gulch. During the afternoon Captain Spaulding's men had attempted to cross the floor of the canyon, without success, and eventually, through an arrangement with Captain Betts, settled down along the southern cliffs to support the efforts of K Company, 165th Infantry, by fire. In these activities, Captain Spaulding lost two men killed and three wounded, mostly from enemy rifle fire directed at long range from across the canyon.

Company K had advanced until 1500 without incident, but as it

entered the coconut grove, which was almost entirely within its path, it encountered heavy fire from machine guns which were emplaced in the grove and along the cliffs to the right front. Tanks under Lieutenant Sillix were sent forward and moved about among the trees for thirty minutes, trying to eliminate the many Japanese positions which seemed to be there. Just at the conclusion of this action, while trying to direct the tanks to a machine gun he had discovered, Captain Bouchard, the company commander, was mortally wounded. Shortly afterward three other men were hit, two of whom later died. It now being quite late in the afternoon, Lt. Roger Peyre, who had taken command of the company, ordered a withdrawal from the grove and the company dug in for the night in the extensive drainage ditch system that cut the plain to the south of the grove.

All along the 27th Division front, a relatively easy day had ended with the two assault regiments in firm contact with determined enemy opposition. Each company commander on the line had ample opportunity to locate the enemy positions to his front, but their extent and strength were not yet fully appreciated. Orders for the next day were to continue the attack to the north, with the main emphasis along the Division left, which, because of its starting position, was still 1,500 yards in rear of the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, on the right. The right-flank units were to delay their attack until those on their left came abreast, thus evening up the line.

Chapter 38: The Tanapag Line

THE EVENTS of the late afternoon before had largely shaped the course of action for Major McCarthy, commander of the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, on this morning. In an effort to bring his lines up even with the rest of the Division he was ordered to attack to the north at 0700. Ahead of him lay an extensive minefield and the wide, open stretches of the level coastal plain. Between the hour when he dug in and darkness on 5 July he had made a thorough reconnaissance of the area through which his attack must pass. Company F, on his right, faced the most difficult problem, there being no cover in its zone. Company E's zone was half covered by the minefield. In surveying the situation, it appeared that the only area within the whole battalion zone that offered any opportunity for a rapid advance lay within the narrow strip between the beach and the road, a sandy piece of ground about fifty yards wide. He ordered F Company to move to the left early the next morning and attack through this narrow corridor under an old-fashioned rolling artillery barrage. Company E would follow in column, fanning out north of the minefield to cover the zone between the highway and railroad, an area about a hundred yards wide. The open plain between the track and the cliffs that bordered it eight hundred yards away on the east would be covered by fire but would not be entered by troops, Major McCarthy feeling that physical possession of the ground was unnecessary.

The 2d Battalion moved into the attack promptly at 0700. A patrol of three men, under Sgt. Carlos A. Harris, was dispatched across the plain to the coconut grove to make contact with K Company there and to keep Major McCarthy informed of the movements of this unit which was the left flank of the adjacent battalion. Preceded by a heavy artillery preparation that rolled to the north on a fixed schedule, F Company moved rapidly through the corridor and, five minutes after leaving RJ 2, had reached the northern limits of the minefield. Behind them E Company scrambled up and began to deploy beyond the minefield. A hundred and fifty yards ahead was a ditch, as yet undiscovered by the infantry, and as E Company fanned out, the artillery passed beyond the depression. Almost at once the whole 2d Battalion was hit by concentrated fire of all types of weapons. In F Company, Lt. Ferdinando Savastano was seriously hit, the rest of the company going to earth. Major McCarthy moved up and down the line, yelling, "Up and at 'em!" When the men tried to carry out the order, two from E Company were killed and elsewhere along the line others were hit. Twenty minutes after the jump-off, the attack of the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, had stalled. It was to move forward no farther until late in the afternoon.

From 0730 until 1000, Major McCarthy tried one expedient after another to move his battalion forward, but the enemy fire continued so heavily and with such accuracy that it was almost impossible to move. Tanks were brought forward, but almost at once two of them were hit and knocked out by fire from artillery emplaced in the cliffs on the right. Lt. Richard M. Hughes of the 102d Engineer Battalion came forward with a platoon from A Company of that unit and worked all morning, the men lying flat on their stomachs, to remove the mines which restricted freedom of movement, particularly of the tanks. F Company was finally moved back out of the narrow corridor between the beach and the highway and shifted to the open plain west of the railroad track. An attack launched there met fire even heavier than that encountered farther to the left, and had to be abandoned.

Shortly after 1100, Pfc. Edwin J. Kula of E Company, while trying to crawl forward, noticed the ditch to his front and, after some study, accurately located at least one machine gun and was convinced that he had found more. His platoon leader, Sergeant Nicoletti, crawled back to RJ 2 and commandeered a self-propelled gun, but artillery took the vehicle under fire and it was forced to withdraw. Nicoletti was determined to knock out the machine gun, however, and was finally granted permission to move his platoon up the railroad track in an attempt at a frontal assault. For two hours Nicoletti and his men crawled forward, losing one man wounded. Finally, while still fifty yards away from its objective, his platoon was pinned to the ground and prevented from moving farther. At this juncture, Staff Sgt. William H. Allen, one of the platoon's squad leaders, proposed that he take his men and rush the ditch. After carefully organizing the squad, Allen carried out this scheme. Almost immediately enemy fire met the rush and all of the men except Allen dived for cover. The sergeant, however, managed to reach the ditch and in one blind dive landed sprawling in the midst of eight enemy soldiers. Allen shot two of the Japanese and bayoneted a third. He was wounded four times by a bullet which passed through different parts of his body. After being hit, the sergeant decided that he was outnumbered. He dived again, this time out of the ditch, and crawled back to his platoon, bullets kicking up the dirt all around him. Although painfully wounded, Allen insisted that he be allowed to take the company back to clean out the remaining enemy soldiers. However, the volume of fire that had been directed at Allen and his incoherent description of what had happened to him, for the first time gave Major McCarthy some idea as to what was confronting him. Allen was not permitted to return to the trench. Instead Major McCarthy com-

municated his information to regiment where new plans were already being laid for continuing the move north. It was now nearly 1500.

The battle for the Tanapag plain had been just as bitter in front of K Company, which had started the day behind the coconut grove. This company, like the 2d Battalion, was ready to move off in the attack at 0700, accompanied by a platoon of tanks under Lt. Willis K. Dorey. Lieutenant Peyre, profiting by the experience of his company the previous afternoon, ordered his men to move up along the deep ditch that circled along the south edge of the grove, making use of the cover and concealment that it offered. Slinking along this trench, the men were able to get almost into the grove itself before they were detected, but as they emerged from the defilade they were taken under fire by at least two machine guns firing from deep within the grove. For a short time the whole company was pinned down, unable to locate the source of fire.

It was just at this point that Sergeant Harris and his two men from E Company blundered into the coconut grove from the west. Sergeant Harris had been told that he would probably find Lieutenant Peyre in the grove, and had worked his way directly there without realizing that it was still in the hands of the enemy. He and his two men, Pfc. John Lopez and Pvt. Keith M. Jarrell, had no sooner entered the grove than a machine gun opened up not more than twenty-five yards away, seriously wounding Harris in the back. Lopez spotted the gun at once in a small crib-like building. He immediately told Jarrell to crawl back out of the grove and get back to Captain Smith with the information that Harris had been wounded. He, himself, would stay with the wounded sergeant to guard him until Jarrell could get back with help. For several minutes Lopez lay on the ground with his charge and in that period was able to spot and accurately mark the Japanese machine-gun positions in the grove. While thus engaged he noticed K Company trying to move forward against this fire and without hesitation got to his knees and tried to attract attention to himself and the gun positions. When this failed, he made his way by short rushes to a point at the rear of the grove where he could see Dorey's tanks. It took him only a few moments to orient the tank commander on the Japanese positions and Dorey immediately waded into the grove with his guns blazing. Ten minutes later two machine-gun positions had been destroyed and K Company was moving freely through the trees. By 0815 Lieutenant Peyre had reached the north limits of the grove and faced the open ground of the plain to the north.

For the next three hours K Company remained stationary in the grove

while Lieutenant Peyre sought some means of neutralizing the cliffs to his right front. Serious fire swept the open ground over which he had to advance and most of it came from cave positions which the Japanese had carefully constructed in the sheer bluffs that overlooked the open ground north of Hara-Kiri Gulch. For two hours after reaching the north limit of the grove the K Company commander tried to neutralize the positions by tank fire. Although this proved momentarily successful, until the cliffs could be cleaned out by the unit on his right, they would be a menace to K Company's advance. After working on them all morning, however, Lieutenant Peyre finally decided to try to advance at least to a small hill to his front, about a hundred yards away. At 1100, after permitting his tanks to refuel and resupply with ammunition, the company commander issued his instructions. The men were under orders to cover the ground to the hill as rapidly as possible. When the signal came to attack, the whole right platoon of the company jumped up from behind the road and began running at full speed across the open ground. The Japanese from within Hara-Kiri Gulch and from the cliffs along the axis of the advance had evidently been waiting for just such a move and were well prepared for it. Almost at once a terrific and deadly hail of small-arms and machine-gun fire was laid across the whole space of open ground. Most of the K Company men were forced to take to the earth almost at once, but one man, Pvt. Herman C. Patron, kept on running and managed to get all the way to the crest of the hill before he was hit through the chest by a bullet. Sgt. John A. Monaco, seeing Patron hit, got to his feet and ran on out to where the wounded man lay, and was joined there a moment later by Tech. Sgt. Arthur A. Gilman. Together the two sergeants tried to get Patron back out of the fire, and within a few minutes had managed to drag him back behind the rest of the platoon. There they called for an aid man, but while they waited, Monaco was shot and killed and when the aid man reached their side, he was wounded.

Meanwhile, Peyre, seeing the right platoon stalled, had ordered his left platoon to make a try for the hill, and this platoon now ventured out of the coconut grove, laying down covering fire as they came. The company commander had also directed that his light machine guns and one section of heavies from M Company should move forward with the advancing riflemen. Lieutenant Peyre had his orders to capture the ridge and he was making every effort to do so.

The Japanese had picked this precise moment to launch a counterattack on their own in an effort to get back to some guns on the hill before the American attack could reach them. The men of K Company could plainly see the enemy soldiers running down the little paths off the

cliffs. Technical Sergeant Gilman, who was just a few yards in back of the hill at the time with Monaco and the two wounded men, looked up to see two Japanese running directly toward him at full speed. It has never been established just exactly what happened next, but there was a terrific explosion not more than fifty yards beyond the ridge. Gilman saw the two leading Japanese fly up into the air. He described it later as a tremendous geyser of dirt and debris. Before he was knocked from his feet by the concussion, Gilman swears he saw parts of the first Japanese soldier's body flying at least a hundred feet in the air. It appears from all the testimony received that this explosion was caused by the leading soldier inadvertently stepping on the horn of one of a series of large spherical marine mines that had been placed in the ground in this general area. Bits of the debris that fell within our lines consisted of parts of one of these mines, and demolition and mine detector squads who worked in the area later found a minefield had been placed there.

Whatever the cause of this gigantic explosion, its effect was devastating. Within the Japanese lines it created havoc. Crews were literally blown off their weapons and the counterattack which had started was blown to pieces. For some time afterward our troops could see random Japanese soldiers picking themselves up off the ground and wandering back up into the cliffs in a dazed manner. All firing from the enemy virtually ceased and for over an hour afterward, American troops wandered around in the open without having a shot fired at them.

Company K, which bore the brunt of the concussion on our side of the lines, did not suffer quite as much, although several freak accidents occurred. Nearly every man was blown from his feet. One man involuntarily squeezed the trigger on his gun and shot himself through the hand. Another man was hit by flying debris on two separate occasions and suffered a broken arm and a broken leg. Three men were wounded by fragments. Nearly all of the company were dazed and bewildered by the force of the blast. Reactions were confused and for a moment all organization was lost. Lieutenant Peyre, who had just called for artillery support a moment before, thought that the explosion was from our own artillery shells landing short. He consequently yelled for the men to get back to the edge of the grove to cover. One squad of the 2d Platoon, on the left, did not hear this order and remained sprawled out on the ground near the top of the hill. The machine-gun squad from M Company which had been displacing forward and had almost reached the top of the ridge when the explosion occurred, misunderstood the order, set up their machine gun and then walked down off the hill leaving it in plain view of the enemy while they waited for another explosion.

To add to all this confusion, Lieutenant Dorey's tanks just at this mo-

ment became involved in a fight in front of Hara-Kari Gulch. These vehicles had been slowly moving up in single file behind the infantry at the time the explosion occurred and the blast shook up the men in the tanks quite severely. While they were trying to get their bearings in the confusion that followed the blast, two Japanese soldiers ran out of the mouth of Hara-Kiri Gulch, attached a magnetic mine to the lead tank and threw a Molotov cocktail at another. Both vehicles were now out of action and Lieutenant Dorey hurriedly withdrew his remaining tanks.

In this scene of confusion Lieutenant Peyre immediately took hold in an effort to get his men back in hand again. He soon realized that it was not our own artillery that had caused the explosion and ordered his two platoons to recross the open ground and retake the hill that they had held so briefly. While the majority of the company was reorganizing, those men who had been left behind on the hill came to and all of them now ran back across the ground to rejoin the rest of the unit in the coconut grove. In the midst of this new distraction Captain Olander of G Company came up to report that he had been ordered to relieve K Company and that he was ready to take over. At almost the same time Lieutenant Dorey returned with his tanks from RJ 64, asking permission to retire for repairs. Lieutenant Peyre decided not to try and take the hill again, but to have G Company effect its relief in the relative security of the grove.

While Captain Olander and Lieutenant Peyre were talking, everyone suddenly became conscious of the M Company machine gun sitting unattended on the top of the hill. The Japanese seemed to have discovered it at the same time and the K Company men could see one or two enemy soldiers running along the base of the cliff toward it. Technical Sergeant Gilman and one of his men, Pfc. Rayburn E. Harlan, made a mad dash for the hill, almost 150 yards away from where they were. By hard running Harlan managed to get there first. He dived behind the gun and got off a burst at the Japanese, who were almost on him. This burst killed both enemy soldiers, but in a moment or two Harlan himself was hit in the hands by enemy rifle fire and both he and Gilman, who had come up, had to try and find cover from fire which was aimed at them. Meanwhile, another of Peyre's men was hit in the face by a random bullet.

In this situation, one of the M Company machine gunners, Private First Class Wong, commandeered one of Lieutenant Dorey's tanks and got aboard the turret. From this exposed position he directed the vehicle out across the open ground to the man with the broken arm and leg and lifted him aboard. Then he very calmly walked over to the machine gun,

picked it up and put it aboard the tank. As he finished this task, he himself received a serious head wound, but managed to make his way back to the safety of the grove along with Harlan and Gilman, beside the tank. It was now nearly 1230 and K Company's line was still on the north edge of the coconut grove. The next hour was spent in relieving K by G Company. Lieutenant Peyre moved his men back to the battalion CP behind the grove and Captain Olander began to organize his company preparatory to making an assault on the little hill.

The relief of K Company by G Company was part of an over-all change of plan that had been inaugurated during the early morning. The 4th Marine Division had made advances of three thousand yards or more on 5 July along the east coast of the island. The corps line, because of this advance, was echeloned to the left rear. Intelligence indicated, moreover, that the principal Japanese defensive positions were located in the zone of the 27th Division. At approximately 0900 the corps commander called General Griner and informed him that the mission of the 27th was to be changed. Instead of attacking to the northeast, along the axis of the island, the Division would swing more to the north. This meant that the right flank would reach the sea at the village of Makunsha. There it would be pinched out by the 4th Marine Division. The latter unit would continue on to Marpi Point to secure the rest of the island. The new order was to take effect at 1130.

The receipt of the new NTLF plan at 27th Division headquarters was greeted optimistically. General Griner was already making plans for the relief of the 165th Infantry by the 106th. He now called Lt. Colonel Hart, who was even then briefing Major Fisher of the 3d Battalion, and Lt. Colonel Cornett of the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry. He told the 165th's commander that his men would be left in the line to complete the relatively easy mission that remained to them. As the orders were handed down from Division to regiment and then to battalion, the expectations were that the battle of Saipan would be over for the 27th by nightfall.

In the regiments, shifts were made to expedite the action. Heretofore, in the 105th Infantry, the emphasis had been on the left where considerable ground had to be made up to bring the lines even. Now it shifted to the right. Lt. Colonel Bradt, who was faced with the necessity of forcing a passage through the lower end of Hara-Kiri Gulch, felt that he would need every ounce of strength and requested that his K Company be returned to him for use as a reserve, both I and L Companies being already committed on the high ground. This request was granted. The 2d Battalion was ordered to assume responsibility for all

ground below the cliffs, and G Company, which had been mopping up in rear of the attack, was now ordered to move up and relieve K Company in the coconut grove. Captain Olander reported to Lieutenant Peyre shortly before noon, as already described, and started the relief at once. It was completed by 1400. K Company retired to the 3d Battalion CP to await possible commitment in support of the other two companies.

The center of the fighting along the Division front was to shift during the early afternoon to the struggle for Hara-Kiri Gulch. The action on the plain did not cease, but it had reached a stalemate as Major McCarthy waited for the big minefield to be finally cleaned out so that he could get tanks up to work on the ditch that crossed his main front and seemed to be the core of enemy resistance. The Japanese maintained a heavy, continuous fire throughout the afternoon, manning guns in relays, never permitting any freedom of movement along the American line. Captain Olander of G Company, operating along the base of the cliffs which reared themselves from the plain just north of Hara-Kiri Gulch, prepared another assault on the little hill, 150 yards out in the open, that K Company had tried to capture earlier.

The effort to capture Hara-Kiri Gulch reached its climax at 1300. During the morning L Company, 105th Infantry, had tried to cross it by two methods. The first was by pushing a platoon up one of the little tributary gulches and establishing fire positions on the floor of the canyon from which Japanese positions could be neutralized while the rest of the company made a frontal assault over the cliffs from the south. The platoon that made the attempt to get into position to deliver covering fire was led by Tech. Sgt. Siegbert S. Heidelberg. It succeeded in moving out into the gulch undiscovered but before it could begin to fulfill its mission, its location was inadvertently given away and it was taken under heavy fire. Sergeant Heidelberg and his men fought for thirty minutes to knock out the abandoned American tank in the canyon, from whose turret guns the Japanese were delivering canister, but grenadiers and bazooka men were wounded as fast as they tried to fire their weapons. Eventually Heidelberg called Captain Spaulding and told the company commander that the Japanese fire had made completion of his mission impossible and he was ordered to withdraw.

Captain Spaulding had next attempted to force an entrance by sending a platoon of light tanks into the gulch by way of RJ 64. Under the guidance of Pfc. James R. Boyles, who had volunteered to man the intercom phone on the rear of the lead vehicle, Lieutenant Ganio, the platoon leader, managed to get well up into the ravine. There Boyles was

killed by machine-gun fire. Ganio, with no one to call fire for him, was helpless, and finally retired when fired on by the turret guns of the disabled American tank. Thirty minutes later he made another attempt to enter the gulch. This time he succeeded in destroying the abandoned vehicle that had caused so much trouble, and killed several enemy soldiers, but was eventually attacked by enemy soldiers carrying magnetic mines. These Japanese who ducked out of bushes that grew beside the little trail were killed, but their numbers grew and when one of Ganio's tanks was disabled the platoon leader was again forced to withdraw.

Having been preceded by these efforts in the gulch during the morning, the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, took up the burden when the afternoon attack began. Lt. Colonel Hart, in order to freshen his weary battalions which had been constantly in the line since they came ashore on 16 June, had decided to rotate them. Early on the morning of 5 July, therefore, the 1st Battalion had replaced the 3d Battalion on the line. The next day, after twenty-four hours' rest, the 3d was to replace the 2d.

The change in direction of the Division attack from northeast to north had resulted in an important shift in the efforts to take Hara-Kiri Gulch. The 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, still had to move across its lower part, but the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, would move into the area of greatest activity, coming down onto the floor from the direction of Hill 721, a new approach. Specifically, Company A, on the left of Major Mahoney's battalion, would move almost directly into the center of the position. Captain O'Brien had gone over the situation carefully with Captain Betts of K Company during the relief. He felt that by moving into the ravine from the east he might possibly escape much of the fire from the northern cliffs because the necessity of firing at a sharp angle would cut down the enemy's field of vision and fire.

Captain O'Brien advanced slowly down the hill into the gulch at approximately 1300. He had all three platoons on line, one of them moving to the left of the little trail that climbed up from the floor toward Hill 721, another on the right of it, and the last platoon moving through the open field next to C Company. This last platoon would not enter Hara-Kiri Gulch proper at all. It would cross an upper arm of the canyon where it bent to the northeast and began to peter out in the high ground between Hill 721 and 767. If the advance were successful this right platoon would skirt along the northern rim of the gulch on the high ground that jutted out toward the plain in a broad plateau to drop off in sheer cliffs to the low area. It was contemplated that C Company, tied in on the right of this Company A platoon, would move out across this plateau to the cliffs above the plain and climb down them for the

final advance to Makunsha. C Company would also cross the shallow upper arm of Hara-Kiri Gulch.

Company A, advancing into the gulch itself, noticed several important terrain features. The first was a series of ditches that looked almost as though they had been dug for piping a water supply line into a house. On each side of these ditches were the little mounds of earth which had been excavated from them, now hardened from long exposure to the weather. The ditches ran from north to south, giving the gulch the appearance of a washboard. Captain Betts had entered the valley at the extreme western edge of this network of excavations. Company A, by virtue of the direction of its attack, would work all the way through them.

Interspersed in these ditches were numerous spiderholes of the type which American troops had come across before on Kwajalein and Eniwetok. Round and covered by cleverly camouflaged nets, they were deep enough for one or two enemy riflemen to sit cross-legged in them.

The floor of the valley was also sparsely covered by trees with large trunks and enough foliage above to conceal riflemen. Last, but not least, were the little straw shacks, already mentioned. These haphazardly covered the upper end of the gulch at intervals of thirty or forty yards.

From the east rim of the gulch, Company A moved cautiously down the steep slopes of the hill. Captain O'Brien had called for an intense mortar barrage with his own 60mm tubes and with the 81mm mortars of D Company. This lasted for ten minutes before the actual attack began. As the men moved forward there was almost a dead silence in the valley below. Moving from cover to cover and taking advantage of every little hillock and bush, the whole company reached a line almost two hundred yards from the jump-off point. This brought them twenty or thirty yards into the valley itself. Then, suddenly, a strange thing began to happen. One after another, explosions shook the little shacks. Most of the men dived for the ditches and took cover. Then they looked around. The explosions continued over a period of fifteen minutes and then ceased. Infantrymen edged forward and peered into the first of the buildings. Inside three Japanese soldiers had committed suicide by holding grenades to their abdomens. In the next hut there were four more and in the next two. Later investigation showed that sixty enemy soldiers had unaccountably committed suicide in these little houses over a period of a few minutes. This was the incident that gave the valley its name of Hara-Kiri Gulch.

However, these suicides, unaccountable as they were, became all the more mysterious in the light of events of the rest of the afternoon. The men of Company A continued to move ahead cautiously for a few more

yards. Lieutenant Masem, commander of O'Brien's middle platoon, had just jumped into one of the ditches and from there was looking cautiously around when he was joined by three other men from his platoon. Just as they jumped into the ditch, a rifle shot rang out ahead and a bullet thudded into the earth near Masem's head. Staff Sgt. Clarence L. Anderson, one of the men who had just jumped into the hole, poked his head up over the mound of earth and spotted something moving in one of the trees a short distance ahead. It looked like a rope that might have been used by a Japanese soldier to climb up into the heavy foliage and it was still swinging as if it had been used very recently. Anderson rose up to take a shot at the tree and, as he did so, he received a serious wound that felled him. One of the other men in the ditch with Masem and his group was Sergeant Kice, the company aid man. Kice immediately told the others to "get the hell out of the hole so I can work on him." All of the little group except Kice and Anderson immediately scrambled for cover somewhere else. Masem and Staff Sgt. Joseph R. Murphy tumbled back into a ditch behind them and two other men, including Pfc. John Sekula, jumped behind a tree a few feet away. Sekula received one shot which ripped away his canteen and the men suddenly realized that the whole area was literally alive with bullets. The one that hit Sekula's canteen came from somewhere behind him. Lieutenant Masem was worried about the situation. The fire was so intense that neither he nor any of his men could risk movement without being hit. He decided to pull back to the base of the slope where the ditches were deeper and where no one would be behind him, until he could locate the source of all this fire and do something about it. He called over to Kice and asked him if Anderson could be removed from the hole to a safer place. Anderson answered, "Kice is dead." The aid man had been hit in the head while bending over the wounded man. Staff Sergeant Murphy, the platoon sergeant, now called over to Private First Class Shires, who was acting platoon sergeant of the left platoon, and asked Shires if he could borrow his aid man to help take care of Anderson. Shires sent Pfc. Standlee Morgan over to the 1st Platoon area and the aid man ran down one of the ditches to where Masem was. However, just as he tried to scramble across the hump of dirt to where the wounded man lay, he was hit in the ankle and tumbled back into the ditch behind. Shires himself now came crawling over to where Morgan lay and, together with Pfc. Arthur Coats, he managed to work the wounded Morgan back out of the fire to safety. However, when Shires attempted to get back to his own platoon he was trapped in a hole and couldn't move.

Another new complication had now arisen in the valley. The shacks

which had been occupied by the suiciding Japanese had caught fire and were now burning merrily. Most of Masem's men were lying in ditches which were so close to them that the heat was unbearable. It was imperative that the platoon get back in some way. The problem of the wounded Anderson, however, was still to be solved. Masem, who was in contact with Captain O'Brien, was trying to control his platoon and direct their fire. Shortly after Shires had crawled back with Morgan, Masem again asked if anyone would volunteer to try and get Anderson out of the hole. Pfc. Joseph Becay and Pfc. George Brieling answered. When they were given permission to go ahead, Becay yelled over to Anderson and told him to take off all of his equipment. After Anderson called back that he had done this, the two men made one dive and landed in the hole squarely on top of Kice and Anderson. Without wasting any more time, they picked the wounded man up by the head and heels and threw him bodily back into the ditch behind. They then dived over after him. After that Becay dragged Anderson back along the trenches to the edge of the gulch and then carried him up the hill.

Meanwhile, the platoon on Masem's left had become badly disorganized. They had run into the same accurate grazing fire. Almost in the center of this unit there was a little stretch of open ground that offered no cover whatsoever so that Shires had to split his platoon around it. Leaving a BAR man to cover the open space, Shires stayed with the right squad and during the attempt to get back to them after the rescue of Morgan, he was cut off altogether. When the fire broke out among the shacks, his unit was in the most danger and suffered the most from the intense heat. Three of the men made their way back to Captain O'Brien and explained the platoon's situation to him, so the company commander ordered the men to pull back out of the heat. Before the men could execute this order, two more were wounded.

The platoon on the right of the line, under Lt. George E. Martin, company executive officer, had trouble of a different kind. Moving under rifle and machine-gun fire, but with the advantage of better cover, the men had let themselves down into the ravine, crossed it, and emerged on the opposite bank into the open ground of the plateau. There they were taken under fire from the front and from the canyon below them, now on their left flank. Pfc. Harold Lees and Lieutenant Martin were hit almost at once and the rest of the platoon was pinned down. For the next half hour the two squads that comprised it tried to move forward. Light machine guns and heavies from D Company delivered overhead fire, but only the squad on the extreme right, under Staff Sgt. J. R. Murphy, was able to inch forward. In the other squad, after two more men were wounded, the attempt was abandoned. A mes-

sage was received from Captain O'Brien to pull back and rejoin the rest of the company, which was now withdrawing from the canyon. Tech. Sgt. Manuel Medina, the platoon sergeant, was not able to relay this command to Sergeant Murphy with the result that Murphy's men continued inching forward. Five men remained to the squad leader, three having been wounded in gaining the high ground across the gulch. These five men crawled fifty yards beyond the gulch crossing without realizing they were all alone, then veered to the left to see if they could knock out any of the positions in the north wall of the canyon from above. Sergeant Murphy first ordered Pfc. William Drew and Pvt. Raymond Johnson to creep up to the crest of the ridge and look over into the valley to see what the situation was below. When they looked over they found themselves staring down at thirty to forty Japanese in the trenches below them. These enemy soldiers were armed with machine guns and rifles and were very methodically firing at the rest of Company A farther up the valley. Drew and Johnson both pulled out grenades and rolled them down the hill, but in both cases the missiles were caught in the folds of the ground and exploded harmlessly. The two men next tried throwing them, but this did no good either. By this time the enemy had become aware of their presence and had taken the skyline under fire. Neither of the two men could lift their heads.

Farther back, near Murphy, was Pvt. John Shuart, a rifle grenadier of the platoon. Shuart had evidently been watching the two men up forward with their grenades because when they were pinned down by the fire, he moved forward. He talked briefly with Drew and Johnson, found out the situation below, and then moved out into the fire to the rim of the gorge where he could see what was going on below. Shuart moved very deliberately, crawling along the edge of the hill until he came to a tree. He turned to Drew and Johnson and yelled that he'd found a place from which his grenade discharger would be effective. He loaded his piece and got to his knee, taking aim. At that moment an enemy bullet hit him squarely in the heart and he dropped over, dead.

It was during this time that Sergeant Medina unsuccessfully attempted to tell Murphy to withdraw his squad. When Medina reported his failure to the company commander, Captain O'Brien had just finished talking with members of the 1st and 3d Platoons, which were withdrawing under his orders. One of these men, Sergeant St. John, had seen where Sergeant Murphy and his men were and thought that perhaps he could reach them by using a route along the ditches and thence up over the ridge through some bushes that grew there. Captain O'Brien gave him permission to try it and St. John took two men, Pvt. Peter Bolger and Pfc. Harold Brewer, and started out. Using the route that St. John

had previously marked out, these men finally reached Murphy almost a half hour later.

In the meantime, however, Murphy had discovered the situation he was in. He realized he was alone with a wounded man, Private First Class Sharkey, on his hands and that two of his men, Drew and Johnson, were trapped well out in front of him. He turned his attention first to getting Drew and Johnson out of the trap they were in. He sent his one remaining man out with a BAR to lay down fire on the Jap positions so that they would have to keep their heads down long enough for the two trapped men to get out. The plan worked and now Murphy asked for volunteers to go back to Captain O'Brien with word on his situation. Drew volunteered immediately. Neither Murphy nor Drew knew exactly where the company commander was and neither knew of any safe route to the rear, having been out of sight of the rest of the company when they pulled back. After a careful consultation between the two, they both decided that Drew should go back into the draw where C Company was supposed to be, work through it and out the other side. This meant that Private First Class Drew would come out into open ground for about fifty or one hundred yards, but both men thought he could make it by hard running.

Drew did get through the draw all right, but he had no sooner emerged into the open ground, running uphill toward Hill 721, than he was felled by a shot in the side and mortally wounded. Only one man saw him go down and this was Sgt. Lonnie McIntyre of D Company, who had a section of machine guns sitting back up under Hill 721. McIntyre got to his feet and ran down the slope to Drew's aid, but when he got to the wounded man's side he, too, was seriously hit. Murphy did not know of the loss of his messenger, but kept waiting for someone to come back from Captain O'Brien. When St. John and his party arrived some time later, Murphy assumed that it was the result of his message and asked no questions. With the help of St. John's three men, the squad moved down the hill to the trench system and all of Murphy's men were withdrawn. By the time Company A was all reassembled at the entrance to the gulch it was well after 1500 and it was not until an hour later that Murphy realized that Drew had been hit. At almost the same time, D Company reported that Sergeant McIntyre had not returned after his dash down the hill. By that time the situation in front of the battalion was well known and Captain O'Brien would not risk losing more men in a search for the two wounded men. He did authorize a night patrol of volunteers, and shortly after dark, eight men under Lieutenant Masem, and Lieutenant Chester of D Company, moved some six hundred yards back down into Hara-Kiri Gulch. They found Drew and

McIntyre still alive and huddled in the bushes. Both men had given up hope of being rescued and were in bad condition. Drew died just after he reached the aid station.

Company C, on O'Brien's right, also had a difficult afternoon. This company, only the day before, had been put under command of Capt. Joseph Kennedy, formerly of D Company. It will be remembered that the company had had a particularly high mortality rate among officers. Facing it at the time of the attack on this day was a little different terrain than that facing the other companies nearby. The company had relieved 3d Battalion units on the morning of 6 July in the shadow of Hill 721 itself. When the order changing the direction of the attack was handed down, the mission of the company was to push down a steep slope from Hill 721 as far as the bottom of the extension of Hara-Kiri Gulch. From there the men were to climb out of the gulch and push on across the plateau between the gulch and Paradise Valley. This was to be followed by a descent over the cliffs to the Tanapag plain, and a sweep to the sea. From the line of departure to the rim of the draw that marked the first objective was about six hundred yards, all downhill at about a 45-degree angle. This ground was almost entirely open, the only cover being some tall grass and an occasional small rock. Behind the company, in and around Hill 721, was sufficient foliage to offer some concealment. The bottom of the draw itself was also covered by small trees and bushes in a tangle that made detection of movement almost impossible. Beyond the draw, there was a gentle, even slope upward, and almost the whole plateau was devoid of any cover. There were two landmarks, however, which offered the Japanese definite advantages of observation and good fields of fire. One of these was a huge coral rock, almost big enough to be called a hill, which jutted some thirty feet into the air in the middle of the plateau. This was a jagged, square eminence, some thirty or forty feet to a side, with numerous crevices and one or two caves. Beyond this rock, a hundred yards nearer the sea, right at the edge of the plateau, was a narrow band of trees that varied in width from five to fifty yards. The Japanese had made the fullest use of all these natural defensive points, placing riflemen and machine guns in the draw, in and around the rock, and in the band of trees. From these vantage points they put a heavy and continuous fire all along the forward slope of the hill coming down from Hill 721.

Captain Kennedy had placed two platoons in line—all the riflemen he had left. The 1st Platoon was on the left, in physical contact with O'Brien's right, and the 2d Platoon was on the right. The whole company was echeloned to the right rear, the right flank hanging back in

order to maintain good communication with the 2d Battalion on the right. As a result, Kennedy's 1st Platoon caught most of the enemy fire during the afternoon, while the 2d was virtually unhurt.

The 1st Platoon of C Company was now under command of Lt. John H. Felder. Felder had been wounded earlier in the battle and had returned to duty on the morning of 6 July. Upon reporting to regimental headquarters, he had been assigned to one of the 2d Battalion companies which was short of officers. On his way to join his new company, however, he had stopped in to visit his old company, and Captain Kennedy had called battalion and asked permission to use him as he was short of officers himself. Regiment granted this request and he was put in command of the 1st Platoon.

As C Company moved down the hill with the beginning of the attack, the conformation of the ground and the fact that Company A was pulling a little to the left, caused Felder to lose sight of his company commander and a gap opened in the middle of C Company's line. When Company A first ran into trouble in Hara-Kiri Gulch and was held up, some of the rifle fire spilled over into Felder's area. The platoon commander, therefore, halted his advance until he could get the situation straightened out. For an hour the whole platoon remained immobile, lying on the ground in the open. During this time Felder sought to establish more satisfactory communications with the company commander. For some reason his radio would not work properly from the low ground and when he attempted to explain his exact situation to Captain Kennedy, the results were extremely unsatisfactory. He therefore decided to station two lookouts halfway up the hill with the radio where they could see both him and the company commander. Felder then brought down a light machine gun and placed it among two or three of the small rocks and ordered the gunner to place covering fire on the draw below.

The delay during which these things were done lasted for an hour, and during this time all of Felder's men lay out in the open on the ground. This almost resulted in disaster before the platoon resumed the attack. It was a depressingly hot day, with a bright sun. Within three-quarters of an hour, both of Felder's lookouts had suffered from sunstroke and the rest of the platoon were near exhaustion. Another man was hit while lying on the ground. Felder then put Pfc. Wilburn Jackson in position where he could manage the machine-gun fire and went back to the radio for his communication.

At approximately the time Captain O'Brien of Company A, on Felder's left, had decided to withdraw his men out of the gulch, Felder got through to Kennedy on the radio. The company commander had

been trying to reach his platoon leader for some little time, but had failed due to the loss of the two men and the balkiness of the radio. When he did get through, he asked Felder if he thought he could get men down into the draw and clean it out. He was not yet aware that O'Brien was pulling out. Felder agreed to try. He ordered his men to move out in groups of twos and threes. The men were spaced twenty or thirty yards apart and walked cautiously down the hill, like hunters stalking game. There was no hope of making quick dashes because of the wide extent of the open ground, and no possible defiladed route to use.

Most of the men were already moving down the hill in two or three widely separated groups before the enemy opened fire with machine guns and small arms in a fusillade that swept the entire hillside. Within a few minutes, Pfc. Frankie Miasco had been killed and Pfc. Jackson had been seriously wounded higher up on the hill. Felder found himself with eleven men of his platoon pinned down flat on the hillside and his only hope for fire support removed with the wounding of Jackson. He failed to reach Captain Kennedy on the radio, so he called to his platoon sergeant, Tech. Sgt. Mario Ruggerio, and ordered him to start sending the men back up the hill, one at a time.

This was an extremely difficult undertaking. The men were almost exhausted from their long stay in the hot sun, but Ruggerio and Felder found them willing to chance it, so at Sergeant Ruggerio's signal they began running up the long sharp incline, one by one, five or ten minutes apart. Felder and Ruggerio could not follow them for more than a hundred yards. About that distance up the hill, there was a little knoll which hid the rest of the slope from view. They were almost certain that the bullets were scoring hits on some of the platoon and when the eighth man, Pfc. Frederick Mencken, was hit and killed just as he reached the hump, the lieutenant was sure that all the men had been killed.

Felder turned to Sergeants Ruggerio and Mills who were left with him below after he saw Mencken drop dead and said, "This doesn't look like the spot for us to go up." They decided to try crawling through some grass to the right, feeling that perhaps it might lead them to some kind of defilade by which they could get back to the top of the hill. The three crawled some thirty yards without receiving any fire, and then they came to an open space. Felder continued crawling to the right and found, about thirty yards away up the hill, a rock about five feet wide and four feet high. He thought the three men could take shelter behind it and decide what to do next.

Sergeant Ruggerio made a leaping dive for the rock thirty yards away.

Bullets hit the ground all around him, but in a matter of seconds the sergeant was safe behind the rock. Lieutenant Felder was killed in the attempt. Mills decided that it was no time for him to make a break for the rock, so he lay quiet in the grass.

When Mills failed to show up around the rock, Ruggerio concluded that both men had been killed by the fire and decided to make another break for it. From where he now was there was the same steep incline for another twenty-five yards and then the ground leveled out a bit, forming a little knoll where the gradient changed. With some fast running he got to the knoll and ran on up the hill with bullets flying all around him. However, the sergeant was by this time in a state of near collapse. He was almost certain that he was the only man left out of his whole platoon. When he finally did get back to his company lines he was almost incoherent and for some little time could not even talk about what had happened to him or to the others. When ordered by Kennedy to re-form his platoon and go back down and get Felder and Mills he just walked over and sat down under a tree. He told the captain he didn't have any platoon left and that Felder was dead anyway.

Sergeant Mills, however, was very much alive, though he was sure Ruggerio had been killed too, and that he was all alone. Struggling carefully so as not to create too much movement, he took all of his equipment off, then lifted all of Felder's grenades. With these, his jack-knife, and a bolo as his only weapons, he started out to see if he could find another route of escape. For the rest of the afternoon he crawled through the grass toward the draw, and at dusk he found himself lying in the grass of the draw not ten yards away from a little party of Japanese soldiers who were gathered around a small campfire in a cave, cooking their supper. He crawled to within feet of the little group and after throwing two grenades, took to his heels up the hill, running all the way without having a shot fired at him. He reached the C Company line about half an hour after darkness.

This incident ended the activities of the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, for the day. They had finished fighting right where they had started, looking down into Hara-Kiri Gulch from the high ground above. The attack had started at 1300 and Company A was still involved in the gulch at 1440. The withdrawal was not completed until 1600. During the remainder of the afternoon, both Captains O'Brien and Kennedy had worked tanks and self-propelled guns down onto the fringes of the draw and poured fire into it, but there was no further attempt to advance troops into it during the rest of the afternoon. At 1600, the entire battalion dug in for the night on the ground immediately overlooking the gorge.

The 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had also experienced a fruitless afternoon. No one had yet attempted to enter Paradise Valley and it was definitely known to be a strongpoint. Major Claire, the battalion commander, had explored along the upper fringes during the morning, but the conformation of the ground and the heavy foliage had prevented his gaining any accurate knowledge of what the place was like or how it was defended.

On the morning of 6 July, the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had two companies on line, facing northeast. Both companies had moved from six hundred to a thousand yards beyond Hill 767 on the afternoon before and had then bent the left of their line back around Hill 767 facing the valley. G Company was on the right and F Company was on the left, facing the deep passageway to the sea, with E Company in battalion reserve behind Hill 767 (south). When the order came to change the direction of attack on the morning of 6 July, Major Claire was faced with the problem of holding the ground he had already gained until the Marines could move across his front and at the same time launch an attack toward Makunsha. He resolved this problem by telling Captain Chasmar of G Company to hold in position until the Marines had passed through him. F Company, now under the command of Capt. William J. Smith, former regimental motor officer, was to make the main assault. Major Claire, after his reconnaissance and a study of the area maps, could see no other way to get his battalion down to the sea except by going right through the valley itself. On the north of it were precipitous cliffs and such a mat of tangled undergrowth and coral rock as to make passage impossible for men on foot. South of the valley was the territory of the 1st Battalion and if passage through the valley was too difficult, the battalion commander decided to swing his men through Major Mahoney's zone of action. His first attempt to force the valley itself would have to be made by men in column and once it was effected E Company, following close behind the assault, would fan out on the plain to form a two-company front in the sweep to Makunsha. In order to compensate Claire for the loss of G Company, Lt. Colonel Hart authorized the release of L Company to be used as a reserve for the 2d Battalion, if needed. At 1000 in the morning, upon receipt of his orders to attack to the beaches, the regimental commander had ordered Major Foery to move his 3d Battalion up to Hill 767 and to go into reserve there, behind the 2d Battalion. For this reason, L Company was readily available.

At the time of the attack, Captain Smith did not want to send his men directly down the road into Paradise Valley. Instead, he decided to try and find some path which would lead down onto the floor of the

canyon somewhere near the middle of it. For over an hour his men worked along the cliffs trying to find entry, but each trail ended up in a sheer cliff that dropped straight down to the valley floor three or four hundred feet below. By 1315 F Company, steadily working back along the rim of the valley, had reached the main road that traversed the length of it. Inasmuch as there seemed to be no other alternative than to use this road, Captain Smith ordered his men to proceed down it. The road was precipitous, hardly more than a wagon trail itself, and dropped sharply down toward the floor of the valley between the canyon walls.

Into this formidable terrain, Smith's men advanced single file, moving very cautiously. Ten yards from the entrance things were very quiet, then after four men had gotten all the way into the opening, the Japanese sprung their trap. Rifles, machine guns, and mortars threw fire along the road, and grenades began dropping out of every nook and cranny of the steep walls. The four leaders went down immediately, but by crawling along the ground all four wounded men were able to get back to the safety of the high ground above. Captain Smith questioned them and reported what had happened to Major Claire. At 1357, the battalion commander called Lt. Colonel Hart and told him that it was impossible to get down to the plain through his own zone of action. The regimental commander immediately gave him permission to pass his battalion through the 1st Battalion zone on the south of the valley. Meanwhile Captain Smith had been blasting as much of the valley as he could get at with tanks and SP guns placed at the head of the trail. He tried again to get some men into the trail under cover of this fire. His men threw grenades into every hole they could find. The Japanese promptly threw them back out again.

When Captain Smith received word that permission had been given to pass through the zone of action of the 1st Battalion, he withdrew his company and began to move them around to the left, where he became stalled while waiting for C Company in their unsuccessful attempt to get through the draw that ran out of Hara-Kiri Gulch. One platoon of E Company had attempted to circle around and through this draw earlier in the afternoon, but had to hold up because of the trouble on their left. The 2d Battalion, therefore, at the close of the day was no nearer to Makunsha than they had been at 1200. Major Claire ordered his men to dig in around the west base of Hill 767 for the night, facing the valley and controlling the road that came out of it.

The 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, on the left of Mahoney's battalion, had no more success during the afternoon than did the two battalions of the 165th Infantry. Company I, next to O'Brien, moved off at 1200

when the whole line made its attack, but after moving seventy-five yards down into the gulch, began receiving rifle fire. Most of the company was pinned down on the hillside, unable to move for several minutes. Capt. Ashley W. Brown, in command of the company, tried to work small patrols forward to locate the source of this fire, but before the patrols got back, Company A, 165th Infantry, on Brown's immediate right, had become involved in the full-scale battle already described. Brown therefore held his men on the hillside and made no further attempts to descend into the gulch. At 1600, he withdrew his company to the top of the hill and dug in for the night.

Company L had not moved a foot all afternoon. All of its efforts to penetrate Hara-Kiri Gulch during the morning had failed and Captain Spaulding determined that it would be a useless waste of men to again attempt to push through the gulch until he had accurately located and eliminated the source of the fire that caught his men coming down over the cliffs. Furthermore, his tanks had left him just before the attack was scheduled to move off, and without their mobile fire support, he could do little. He did, however, order several small patrols to creep up to the edge of the gulch and see if they could locate some of the enemy positions. One of these patrols was just starting out when the tremendous explosion occurred in front of K Company, and although they were almost three hundred yards away and behind a hill, two L Company men were wounded seriously by falling debris. A little later, at about the time Company A, 165th Infantry, was running into their trouble below, Technical Sergeant Heidelberger, who was manning one of the observation posts, was killed by the intense rifle fire that still continued to pour over the south wall of the canyon. Only a few minutes later Pfc. Herman C. Kutch was killed in the same fashion. At the close of the afternoon, L Company had still not succeeded in moving.

The 165th Infantry had been unable, anywhere along its line, to reach the low ground for its drive to the sea. What General Griner had anticipated as a brief and short advance against demoralized resistance had turned into a bitter battle against stubborn defenders entrenched in almost impregnable positions. The 106th Infantry, which had been on the point of relieving the 165th at 0900, remained in position throughout the day in the hills east of the 165th Infantry line. At 1500 General Griner gave Lt. Colonel Hart permission to use one of these battalions to force his entrance to the plain; Major Fisher and the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, moved in between C Company and E Company at 1600. Before any action could be undertaken, the 165th Infantry dug in for the night.

Chapter 39: The Afternoon Attack, 6 July

NOWHERE on the Division front had there been any advance since the change of missions in the morning. The situation was under close study at Division headquarters, however, and at 1500 General Griner took steps to insure that the objective would be reached all along the line. After calling his two regimental commanders he authorized Lt. Colonel Hart to use the extra battalion of the 106th Infantry and at 1520 he ordered the 105th Infantry to insert its reserve battalion on the plain, to by-pass Hara-Kiri Gulch with the two left battalions and contain it with the 3d Battalion, which would now revert to regimental reserve and mop up the stubborn position the next day. G Company, which was now in the coconut grove, ready to attack, would, instead, be attached to the 3d Battalion, move to the right, and throw a blocking line across the mouth of Hara-Kiri Gulch to prevent the enemy in that stronghold from emerging and attacking the two assault battalions in the rear after they had passed on to the north.

Lieutenant Colonel O'Brien, whose 1st Battalion was at the Flores Point seaplane base at the time this order was issued, began moving his troops at once, and at 1610 Colonel Bishop notified Division headquarters that the attack to the objective would be launched at 1700. It was during the period between the issuance of the Division order and the arrival of the 1st Battalion in the coconut grove which marked their line of departure that the most important event of the afternoon took place. Lieutenant Dorey and two of his tanks returned from refueling at approximately 1530 and reported to Captain Olander in the grove only to find that he was moving his company out to make way for the 1st Battalion and would not need any tanks. Dorey, who had plenty of initiative, decided to move down to RJ 2 and see if E Company had anything for him to do. He arrived at the road junction to find Captain Smith's men resupplying preparatory to the 1700 attack. He also found that Lieutenant Hughes had just completed his work of removing the minefield and that he could get forward as far as the ditch without trouble. Dorey had already become acquainted with the eastern end of this ditch when he was working with K Company during the morning. Now, as long as there was no immediate work for his tanks to do, he decided to wander out and see what the lower end of it held. He discovered, upon reaching it, that it was, literally, full of Japanese. After informing the E Company commander, the intrepid tanker went up and down the ditch driving the enemy into corners and then slaughtering them with his machine guns and canister. At one time he chased a Japanese officer up the ditch with his vehicle, firing all the way. The enemy finally stopped short in his tracks and committed suicide by

falling on his sword. In the thirty minutes in which he worked along the ditch, Dorey is estimated to have killed 150 Japanese. In this brief and bold action, the tanker had wiped out the whole west end of the Tanapag Line which had held up the advance of the 105th Infantry for twenty-four hours.

Dorey's action was not without its cost. He had been accompanied by two other light tanks, and one of these, commanded by Sergeant Alloco, had been attacked by enemy soldiers with mines and knocked out. In trying to escape from the vehicle, both Alloco and Private First Class Magilto, the assistant driver, were killed.

The 1st Battalion moved into line at 1645. All three rifle companies were put into the assault, Company A on the left, B Company in the center, and C Company on the right rear. Companies A and B were to move straight to the objective, the beach about 1,200 yards south of Makunsha. C Company was to cover this advance by attacking the cliffs north of Hara-Kiri Gulch. None of the enemy positions in these high bluffs had been cleaned out and it was expected that the enemy weapons emplaced therein would cause considerable trouble. C Company's mission was to launch an aggressive attack against them and divert as much of the fire as possible so that the main attack on the plain could be driven home. Lt. Colonel O'Brien's orders to Captain Ackerman of Company A and Captain Ryan of B Company were explicit. "Keep going," he said. "No matter what else happens, keep going." In the 2d Battalion, Major McCarthy issued almost the same instructions. In the interim between 1500 and the time of attack he had shifted E Company inland so that F Company held the zone of action next to the beach, on the left.

All companies of the 1st and 2d Battalions, except G Company, moved off promptly at 1715. Company A's attack moved rapidly for the first 150-200 yards with the lightest kind of opposition. An occasional shot rang out from the hills on the extreme right and one or two came from directly forward. The men were practically running across the open ground, although Captain Ackerman had ordered them to move by bounds. The first halt in the company's advance came at the ditch which had caused so much trouble all day. Here, the right platoon found fifteen or twenty Japanese. Some of these were wounded and some were trying to hide from Dorey's tank fire by hugging the walls of the trench on the near side. These enemy were surprised by the sudden appearance of the infantry. Ackerman's men waded into the ditch with bayonets and knives. For twenty minutes a sharp hand-to-hand fight ensued, ending in the reduction of the whole stronghold. The men of Company A moved on forward, across the ditch, and toward

the beach. Japanese fire from the hills on the right was becoming more serious, machine guns having taken up the fire. One of Ackerman's attached machine gunners from D Company was hit in the hand by this fire, but the company commander urged his men ahead. Spectators in the 165th Infantry OP on Hill 721 could look down on the plain and see a rapidly advancing wave of men in one long skirmish line pushing across the level ground. Lt. Col. Leslie R. Rock, of the 4th Marine Division, who was attached to the 165th Infantry as liaison officer, was moved to remark to his superiors at the time: "The 105th has broken through. They're going a mile a minute up the island and if they go as fast as they are now, they'll be in Makunsha in about twenty minutes. They're all over the place. This looks like the end."

The headlong rush of Company A, indeed, continued pell-mell for five hundred yards beyond the ditch. Then fire again began coming from the front. Captain Ackerman halted his men and waited to see where the fire was coming from. Directly ahead there was a small house and a little stone building that might have been a cistern or a stable. There were snipers in the house. Two men, Pfc. Joseph S. Jarosewicz and Pfc. Frank N. Saetes, moved out to try and rout out the enemy riflemen, while the rest of the company waited. Saetes turned his BAR on the under part of the house while Jarosewicz crept forward and slipped a grenade under the floor. The grenade came flying back out and landed at Saetes' feet where it exploded, wounding him severely in the legs. (While Jarosewicz had been looking for the place to throw the grenade, Saetes had cautiously approached the house and was holding his BAR in one hand while he tried to light the straw of the roof with a match he held in the other.)

Captain Ackerman now ordered two more men forward and Sgt. Cleo B. Dickey moved up and walked boldly in the front door. A moment later he had killed at least one of the snipers and wounded another. While he was doing this, Sergeant Hermans, the company cook, stepped up and set the house on fire. This time it burned. The one live Japanese in the house, however, got off one more shot, wounding Saetes again while he was being carried back out of the way. Throughout this whole episode the fire from the side of the hill had been getting heavier. It was now almost 1800, less than an hour to darkness.

While Ackerman and Company A were busy trying to burn down the house, B Company came abreast on the right and took cover on the ground to wait, trying to find some protection from the machine gun in the cliff. This company had advanced almost as rapidly as Company A, but, being closer to the cliffs, had suffered more from the harassing fire which landed in their zone of action in some volume.

Captain Ryan had finally been forced to move his men by short bounds, but by constant encouragement and urging he had managed to keep the company well abreast of Ackerman. One man had been wounded during the advance.

When Company A had been held up the second time, Ryan had ordered his men to dig in as well as they could and had then sent his 1st Platoon, accompanied by two light machine guns, out to his extreme right flank. Here they built up a defensive line facing the cliffs and the machine guns began laying down fire all along the hillside. This seemed to stimulate the Japanese, for within a few minutes, the enemy fire had doubled in intensity. Two of Ryan's machine gunners were wounded in the new and heavier fire.

In view of this increased activity which was now becoming serious, Captain Ryan went over to Company A and talked with Captain Ackerman. Both company commanders decided to send out a strong patrol composed of members of both companies in an effort to knock out at least the nearest machine gun. Just after this decision was made, however, Captain Catlin, battalion S-3, came running up from the Coconut Grove to find out what was holding up the advance. He sympathized with the two men, but insisted that the battalion should move forward. He had no sooner voiced this opinion than a shot rang out and Captain Ryan fell dead with a bullet through his neck. Lt. Hugh P. King now took command of B Company and, acting in accordance with O'Brien's orders, cancelled the patrol and made ready to move forward. Captain Catlin had brought an SP gun forward with him and this was used to demolish the concrete building. Another advance of a hundred yards was then made before the battalion commander called a halt for the day.

While A and B Companies had rapidly pushed home their assault, C Company, following along behind B Company's right rear, had run into considerable trouble. Their route of approach led this unit directly beneath the cliffs where the enemy were holed up. Almost from the time he pushed off from the road, Lieutenant Tougaw was under direct heavy small-arms fire, but mindful of Lt. Colonel O'Brien's instructions, he ordered his men to keep moving. The company commander had used a peculiar formation to execute his mission. Each rifle squad was deployed as skirmishers, but each platoon was formed into a triangle. The company itself formed a huge diamond, with the 1st Platoon at the forward point of the diamond, the 2d on the right side, the 3d on the left, and Weapons Platoon bringing up the rear. Just as the company moved out from the road one man was wounded by the heavy fire which came from the northeast nose of the entrance to Hara-Kiri

Gulch. They also received fire from the machine guns on the little knoll to their direct front. These were the same guns that Dorey's tank fire had driven the Japanese away from earlier in the day and the same guns which Lieutenant Peyre had worked so diligently to keep the enemy from using before his company was relieved at noon. The men of C Company could plainly see the Japanese soldiers manning the gun. The American fire was fairly heavy on the area, but the Japanese had evidently formed relays out of a group of about thirty men. These enemy soldiers had what amounted to a bucket brigade. They were hiding in the cave in the cliff which emerged into the trench. The men of C Company could see one of the Japanese run pell-mell out of the cave, do a beautiful baseball slide that ended up under the gun, squeeze off one or two short bursts at the leading platoon and roll down the hill in back, out of sight. Here they evidently picked themselves up and crawled back into the cave to await their turn again. This was arranged also so that they didn't use either of the two guns in any regular order. You never could tell just which of the two weapons they would run for. Tech Sgt. Ralph N. Gannaway, in command of the 1st Platoon, ordered his men to lie prone on the ground and assigned half the platoon to watching each gun. In this manner, every time a Japanese popped over the horizon, one of Gannaway's men picked him off. Gannaway said later that the Japanese just couldn't seem to realize what was happening. They kept right on coming at the guns until they were all dead. Lt. Colonel O'Brien, who at the time was in the Coconut Grove not far away, watched the whole spectacle and about halfway through it he sent over one of his SP guns that had just come up and ordered the crew to fire into the cave. However, the gun fired only one round. This scored a direct hit on one of the Japanese coming at the guns. This evidently satisfied the vehicle crew and they moved off on up the plain toward where A and B Companies had gone. Lieutenant Dorey and his tank also took a hand in the proceedings, but were not very effective here.

When the Japanese stopped coming toward the gun, Gannaway decided that it would be safe to assault the position. Three men, Pfc. Irvin A. George, Pvt. Harold L. Peterson, and Pfc. Robert L. Jones, volunteered to rush the guns. All three got up and ran full speed up the little knoll to a point where they could look directly down into the trench, almost at the point where it entered the cave. They found several Japanese trying to hide in the ditch. For the next two or three minutes these three men engaged in a fire fight at point-blank range. They were heavily outnumbered, however, and when Jones received a face wound, Gannaway ordered them to get back to the platoon.

Shortly after this move was accomplished, the Japanese loosed a shower of grenades into the midst of the platoon, so Gannaway ordered the men to withdraw out of range. Then he left Staff Sgt. Raymond G. Norden in charge and told him to hold while he went back to the battalion CP and tried to get an SP gun to come up and help. It was just at this time that Lieutenant Dorey was trying to rescue the crew of his disabled tank which had been hit sometime before near the ditch where Gannaway had been fighting. For this reason Gannaway was unable to use Dorey's tank.

While Gannaway and the 1st Platoon had been engaged with the Japanese in the ditch, Lieutenant Tougaw, with the 3d Platoon and the Weapons Platoon and company headquarters, had been moving on forward. Tougaw had been following O'Brien's orders to keep moving no matter what happened and when Gannaway had stopped to take care of the ditch, the company commander had taken the left platoon and the trailing elements, sideslipped to the left, and by-passed the whole fracas to follow the battalion assault. The 2d Platoon, which was echeloned to Gannaway's right rear, was even closer to the cliffs than the 1st Platoon, but took no part in the action just described. When the leading platoon stopped, it also halted. This left Gannaway with two platoons at the rear, while Tougaw with the rest of the company had pushed on forward.

Gannaway had no sooner left Norden in charge of the platoon than Norden received a radio call from Tougaw who wanted to know where the other platoons were and why they weren't moving. Lieutenant Tougaw was extremely put out about the failure of Gannaway to move forward. It was now 1830 and the rest of the battalion was already digging in for the night with darkness only twenty minutes away. Norden tried to explain the situation to the company commander, but when Tougaw asked what the 2d Platoon was doing, Norden didn't know. Tougaw thereupon ordered Norden to bring the 2d Platoon and come forward at once. The 1st Platoon would move up as soon as they cleaned up the pocket they were facing. Norden did as he was ordered, moving the 2d Platoon back and around the 1st.

The 1st Platoon was now left to face a strong enemy group all by itself. The Japanese were very obviously getting added strength from somewhere, but no one knew where. For the next forty-five minutes all of Gannaway's men lay on the ground, engaged in a vicious fire fight with the enemy in the trench not thirty yards away. Darkness came and the fight continued. During this period both sides used every conceivable weapon—grenades, rifles, and machine guns. Three of the Americans were hit. Pfc. Emil S. Zimandel was shot in the head and

killed at some time in this fight, although no one knew exactly when it happened and his loss was not discovered until much later. Two other men were hit by grenade fragments, one of them, Pvt. Max O. French, who was an acting staff sergeant and one of Gannaway's squad leaders, being knocked unconscious and causing a good deal of trouble in the efforts to evacuate him.

A few minutes after dark, Gannaway's efforts to get an SP gun up bore fruit and one of the vehicles reported to the platoon and from forty yards away proceeded to pour howitzer shells into the Japanese positions. While the SP gun was at work, Gannaway had taken a small patrol forward to look for Tougaw in an effort to explain what was happening and calm the company commander's ire, but in the darkness, the platoon sergeant was unable to find anyone. While he was gone, Staff Sgt. Frederick A. Westlake, whom he had left in charge of the platoon, received another irate call on the radio from Tougaw who told him to get forward in no uncertain terms. Westlake told him he would just as soon as he could get his wounded men evacuated. Tougaw called the battalion CP and asked that aid men be sent over to help in this evacuation. At the time the battalion aid station received this call, however, they were in the process of moving forward from the Coconut Grove to the new battalion perimeter and the carrying party that went out looking for Westlake couldn't find him. After waiting some time for this party to come, Westlake finally gave up. He talked with the driver of the SP gun and finally got a ride for Jones back as far as the regimental CP. Pvt. Paul A. Flessenkemper, who had suffered multiple wounds in the legs from grenade fragments during the fire fight, voluntarily walked all the way back through the Coconut Grove in the darkness to the 3d Battalion aid station where he managed to hitch a ride on a medical jeep to the regimental aid station. Westlake and one of his men carried French back to the Coconut Grove where they hailed a passing medical jeep and got French aboard and out of the way. Westlake, then, after all this delay, ordered his platoon to move up in the darkness and join the rest of the company. By moving all the way over to the railroad tracks and following them north, this platoon managed to find Tougaw and the rest of the company by 2100. Before they left the pocket which had caused them so much trouble, it had been virtually wiped out by the action of the SP gun.

The 2d Battalion, E and F Companies, together with most of H and Headquarters Company, had moved forward in the assault with the 1st Battalion at 1715. Major McCarthy had placed his F Company on the battalion left, between the beach and the road. E Company had ex-

tended from there to the left flank of Company A, across the railroad tracks. It should be noted here that the work of Lieutenant Dorey had had its greatest effect in front of the 2d Battalion. The ditch, which had been the enemy's main strongpoint all across the 2d Battalion front, and which had held up McCarthy's advance since he arrived at RJ 2, had been very effectively reduced not thirty minutes previous to the time set for the attack. When E Company moved off in the attack, therefore, it was with surprising ease. The men simply got up and walked forward. Within minutes they were at the ditch. Hardly a shot had been fired.

When the ditch was reached the men could see without much trouble that Dorey had done effective work. In the words of Staff Sgt. Angelo Nicoletti: "We had to walk across that ditch on dead Japs. There were so many of them you couldn't find the ground. I must have stepped on about ten of them myself." Approximately twenty minutes was spent in mopping up remaining enemy in the ditch, and then the company pushed rapidly on to the north. By 1800 they were on their objective and waited there for the 1st Battalion on the right and F Company on the left.

Company F had almost as negative an advance, although they were held up by a series of pillboxes and dugouts that dotted the beach. No Japanese were encountered in most of these, but each one had to be carefully investigated, a procedure that took some time. Just before reaching the objective, the 3d Platoon, next to the road, did find a shelter occupied by three Japanese. Tech. Sgt. John W. Kuder, the platoon sergeant of this platoon, and one other man were wounded by a grenade which they threw into the shelter and the Japanese threw back out. This turned out to be an extremely lucky wound for Kuder because he was evacuated and missed the proceedings of the next morning. Upon completion of this work, F Company moved on to the objective, arriving there about ten minutes after E Company.

Company G, meanwhile, had moved to establish the block across the mouth of Hara-Kiri Gulch. After moving out of the coconut grove, Captain Olander had assembled his men just south of RJ 64 and then set out, accompanied by two men, to reconnoiter the area into which he was to move. The road, after passing along the north front of the Coconut Grove, made a sharp hairpin turn before it started its ascent into the hills south of Hara-Kiri Gulch. It turned sharply to the north, then moved abruptly east to RJ 64, after which it cut again to the south. Captain Olander moved along the eastern leg of this hairpin turn. Twenty yards from where he started was a burned-out tank, tipped over in the ditch. It had been lost by Lieutenant Ganio that morning.

Between the road on which Captain Olander walked and the west leg of the hairpin lay a thirty-yard stretch of ground, covered by dense brush and perhaps five feet lower than the level of the road.

When the company commander embarked on his reconnaissance, he moved along the deep ditch on the right of the road as far as the tank, the two men following at a distance of some yards. One of these men was a radioman. Upon reaching the burned-out vehicle, Captain Olander turned and shouted back to the radioman to order the 1st Platoon to move forward. This platoon moved out immediately, coming up the road close to the edge so that they could jump into the ditch, if necessary. The leaders had not reached a point more than halfway to the crippled tank when the Japanese opened fire on them with rifles and machine guns from the bushes on the left of the road and from a nose of ground on the right front. Two men were hit almost at once and the whole platoon was pinned to the ground.

Captain Olander, who seemed to be forward of the fire that was coming from the left, and behind the fire on the right, and right in the midst of the enemy, very calmly called back on his radio and told his 2d Platoon to move up on the high ground and his 3d Platoon to move into the area below the hairpin. From there they were to be prepared to support the advance of the 1st Platoon by fire on the suspected areas.

The execution of this order consumed approximately twenty minutes and it was now after 1800 and darkness was rapidly approaching. The enemy fire had died down completely as soon as the 1st Platoon gave evidence that they were not trying to move. Captain Olander had consumed the time poking around in the bushes below the road, trying to find out where the enemy were. The men in the company thought this was very foolish, a sure invitation to suicide.

Staff Sgt. Edward J. Wojcicki, platoon sergeant of the 3d Platoon, below the road, had been working his men forward along the lower ditch and had gotten about halfway to where Captain Olander was visible in the dusk, beating the bushes. At that point, the company commander ordered Wojcicki to halt the platoon and come forward through the brush to where he was. Wojcicki knew that there were Japanese in the area and he said later that he was sure Olander was crazy, but he did as he was told anyway. The men had no sooner stepped out of the ditch than they found themselves squarely in the middle of a large Japanese patrol or outpost which had been lying quietly in the bushes. Wojcicki later said that the first thing he knew he had stepped squarely on one of the enemy soldiers, then the ground seemed to erupt. Machine guns opened up, grenades began going off, men began running in all directions. Captain Olander, a short distance

away, fired his carbine, then used it as a club until he broke it, and finally picked up a saber which he wielded to good effect. Nearly every one of Wojcicki's men were engaged in wrestling or kicking their opponents as well as shooting and bayoneting them. The rest of Company G, which could barely see what was going on in the darkness, didn't dare to shoot for fear of hitting their own men. In the furious melee that raged for the next fifteen minutes, two of Wojcicki's men, Pfc. James Messer and Pfc. Vernon Bug, were killed. Another, Sgt. Benjamin J. Drenzek, was wounded four different times. On three occasions Wojcicki's men killed Japanese who were trying to carry Drenzek away, up into the gulch. After the last attempt to kidnap the wounded man, Olander told Wojcicki to get back out of the area and, a few minutes later, after he rejoined the company himself, he ordered all the platoons to pull back to the starting point. Once here, the company commander called Lt. Colonel Bradt on the radio and told him that he didn't think it was possible for him to build the line across the mouth of the gulch, but that he thought he could control it from the nose of ground overlooking RJ 64. He was given permission to dig in up on this nose and now moved his company across the road and up onto the high ground. During the establishment of the perimeter, the company was constantly harassed by machine-gun fire from across the gulch. During this time, Captain Olander made another personal reconnaissance and spotted the enemy gun in a cave in the opposite wall. He called up a volunteer, Pvt. Joseph F. Kinyone, to fire a bazooka at this position, but as Kinyone moved up to position, he was hit by a bullet and killed. This ended the day's activity for G Company.

Chapter 40: The Perimeter Established

IT WILL BE NOTED that E Company has been credited with arriving first at the regimental objective on the evening of 6 July. According to all reports, this was at approximately 1800. F Company arrived about 1810. The 1st Battalion arrived as a unit at approximately 1830, a good half hour after E Company stopped its advance. The objective had been given as the beach in TA 259 KI, 1,200 yards south of Makunsha. The point reached by both battalions was actually a hundred yards beyond the original objective.

In going over the ground later it was extremely difficult to orient one's self. When officers of a special investigating committee visited the scene on 9 July, they had to measure the ground north of RJ 2 with car speedometers to get an approximate location. There is no question that the perimeter of the two battalions was dug in approximately 1,200 yards north of the road junction. The underlying reason for this confusion was the inaccuracy of the maps used during the operation. These maps had been reconstructed from aerial photographs taken during the early air strikes against the Marianas. All through the operation, commanders of front-line units had been bothered by the readily apparent inconsistencies, but the maps had been generally adequate for the purpose. However, the map of the area north of Tanapag was distorted and this distortion had an unusual bearing on the situation of the 1st and 2d Battalions, 105th Infantry, on the night of 6-7 July. One important feature of the map was the location of the railroad and coastal highway.

Actually the road ran some forty to fifty yards in from the beach and was never closer than that, while the railroad ran another fifty yards inland from the highway. On the map, these appeared to be right together. This fact, coupled with the lack of distinguishing landmarks by which anyone could orient the map, and the general inadequacy of information about the area, served to confuse everyone. If the map had been correct it would be easy to see that the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, arriving at the objective, would have been squeezed into an uncomfortably small area between the railroad tracks and the water line. This was not the case at all. Both E and F Companies approached the objective with the companies fully deployed. E Company had a two platoon front and F Company had one platoon on line. Just short of where they were stopped, this frontage *did* begin to narrow down, but not to the dimensions shown on the map. Both Major McCarthy and Captain Smith halted the advance at the point where the area became smaller and studied the maps. Both men felt that they had reached their objective and when Lieutenant Titterington of F Com-

pany came up a few minutes later, he tried to fit his surroundings in with the information given on the maps. Over on the right flank, almost directly inland, were the houses that O'Brien's battalion was working on and all three officers decided that these were the same structures that appeared on the map. This would put them on their objective. Actually they were two hundred yards farther than that.

Major McCarthy, therefore, gave the order to dig in for the night on the spot. The perimeter prepared by the 2d Battalion was a good one as a single-battalion organization. The advance had stopped just in front of a small swale that extended some seventy-five yards out in front of them and traversed the whole area from the sea to the cliffs, perpendicular to the axis of the advance. The swale was not more than five feet deep at any place and with barely noticeable slopes leading down to its sand-covered bottom.

There was no vegetation of any kind in this swale, but on the opposite bank could be seen a thick tangle of the same small trees that flourished all over Saipan. These were four or five feet high and were as much bushes as they were trees. This wooded belt extended all across the front of the 2d Battalion, and the railroad and highway both cut into it and pushed on north through narrow cut lanes. Beyond the rim of this woods, vision was obscured to the north. Major McCarthy had picked his position admirably. He had used the only available terrain feature for his defense. Any enemy coming from the north had to emerge from the wooded area and come across seventy-five yards of absolutely open low ground to get at him. (The railroad and highway both cut across the swale on slightly built-up causeways.)

The terrain behind the 2d Battalion was the same rolling plain which offered very little chance of cover or concealment, although there were a very few clumps of bushes, the ditch which they had crossed earlier, and one or two wrecked houses. The railroad right of way alternately cut through the little hills or crossed through the low areas on fills. At no place, however were these cuts or fills more than three or four feet deep. Just at the point where F Company's advance stopped there was a huge clump of bushes that filled the space between the road and the beach. This ran back to the south about twenty yards and then there was a slight break and then another clump of bushes about the same size.

As soon as McCarthy had halted his advance and ascertained his location as well as he could, he picked the area in which to build his bivouac for the night. It was to be a tight perimeter, using the fifty- to sixty-yard space between the railroad right of way and the highway. Major McCarthy decided against trying to build his perimeter right

down to the beach, which was not more than fifty yards away. The bushes very effectively blocked Japanese use of this area, save for the sand of the beach itself.

The east edge of the perimeter was dug in along the railroad fill back approximately fifty yards where it entered a small cut. Company E's 1st and 2d Platoons dug in across the front (north) of the perimeter, and the 3d Platoon was bent back along the railroad track, forming one half of the east side. The other half of this leg was formed by the 2d Platoon of F Company. The back, or south side, of the perimeter was manned by the other two rifle platoons of F Company, while the west, or coastal, side of this square was held by Headquarters Company, 2d Battalion. The mortars of both rifle companies as well as those of H Company occupied the center of the perimeter along with battalion headquarters. Most of the vehicles of the battalion were also in the center of this ring. The battalion's pioneer platoon was used to reinforce the perimeter on the southwest corner and along the south side.

In placing his heavy weapons and machine guns Major McCarthy assumed that the main threat would come down either the road or railroad from the north, or across the plains from Paradise Valley. At the time this perimeter was built, it is well to note, it was assumed that the 1st Battalion would drive to the beach north of the 2d Battalion's position. For this reason, more attention was given to what was assumed to be the open side on the east than to the north where the 1st Battalion would intercept anything coming down the road from Makunsha. With this in mind, Major McCarthy placed two of his battalion antitank guns on the north side of the perimeter, one bearing on the road and one bearing out across the plain toward Paradise Valley. This latter gun could be brought to bear on the railroad track very easily. The third AT gun was placed on the southeast corner of the perimeter and also bore on the plain in the direction of Paradise Valley. All three of these antitank guns were flanked on each side by the E and F Company light machine guns, and the two heavies from H Company. The four lights were in position on the north side of the perimeter, one on each side of an AT gun, while the section of H Company guns protected the AT gun on the lower or southeast corner of the perimeter. Major McCarthy also ordered his company commanders to place all other automatic weapons, particularly BARs, on the north or east side of the ring.

It has been noted that the battalion commander did not choose to include the area between the highway and the beach inside his perimeter. He did order an outpost from 2d Battalion Headquarters Company to occupy a camouflaged position in the bushes. This actually

consisted of two men armed with carbines. Their orders were to report immediately any attempted enemy movement along the sand of the beach. One of the important things that happened during the night that followed was the withdrawal of these two men. At the time the action was being investigated, no one knew what had become of the two men (both were missing in action) nor why they had withdrawn. One of the noncommissioned officers of Headquarters Company who survived, however, remembered that they had been pulled back inside the perimeter at about 0200 and ventured the opinion that they had been given permission to make this move due to the heavy fire which covered the area. Neither man had any chance to dig in, and unless they kept high off the ground, anyway, they couldn't see anything. The fire precluded this and made it essential that every man be in a hole, so they were brought in.

Had the 2d Battalion maintained this perimeter organization as planned, without interference, it is still doubtful whether their defense would have been effective the next morning because of the sheer weight of enemy numbers. However, the perimeter did not remain as described.

At the time Major McCarthy began digging in, the 1st Battalion was still involved in the task of routing snipers out of the two houses on the right and followed this with the short conference, already described. At its conclusion, under Lt. Colonel O'Brien's orders, the battalion pushed ahead another hundred yards. This move carried them diagonally across the front of the 2d Battalion, toward the beach, and also placed them on the opposite bank of the swale. O'Brien, who was with his front-line companies at this time, halted his advance here. Although he was only 150 yards away from the beach, he did not want to push through the trees without exploring them with patrols first. Like Major McCarthy, he was confused by the map and shortly before Captain Ryan was killed, had been discussing his location with his two company commanders. All three had been unable to orient themselves, but seeing the 2d Battalion still moving on the left, thought that they would hit the beach about right. Now, Lt. Colonel O'Brien was convinced he had gone too far, as he actually had. He was also faced with the prospect of digging in his whole battalion on the beach in the midst of the thick tree growth where he would have no fields of fire.

The 1st Battalion commander, therefore, ordered his company commanders to halt their advance and to send patrols out into the brush. He himself went back to the 2d Battalion to talk to Major McCarthy. The two battalion commanders again tried to find out where they were, and finally decided they were both pretty close to being right. O'Brien then told McCarthy that he didn't like the looks of the place where he

would have to dig in, and after some discussion the two men decided to pull the 1st Battalion back and to the left slightly and to dig in with the 2d Battalion. Patrol reports from the men who had been pushing out in front of the 1st Battalion, into the bushes, indicated the presence of no enemy in the area within a hundred yards, so that both battalion commanders assumed that at daylight the next morning the 1st Battalion could push on up to its position on the beach without any trouble. For the night it would be safer on the open ground on the south side of the swale.

Lieutenant Colonel O'Brien, therefore, issued orders to his company commanders to pull back and tie in with the 2d Battalion for the night. The 1st Battalion was to occupy the ground on the east side of the railroad track. No attempt was to be made to tie in with the nearest unit on the right, G Company. This company was now some five hundred to six hundred yards away and both battalion commanders thought that any attempt to extend back that far to establish physical contact would thin the lines so much as to make any such move worthless. Furthermore, the ground was fairly open and could be covered by fire.

The 1st Battalion began to dig in about ten minutes before dark. The greater part of C Company had joined the battalion at the time, but the 2d Platoon had not come up yet and the 1st Platoon was still fighting near Hara-Kiri Gulch and would not arrive on the scene until 2100. Lt. Colonel O'Brien placed Company A on the north leg of his perimeter, tying in with the 3d Platoon of E Company at the railroad track, and extending for about a hundred yards off to the east. The 1st Battalion perimeter was to be rainbow-shaped, instead of oblong like the 2d Battalion's. In the original plan B Company was to join Company A and form virtually the center of the arc, while C Company was to tie in with B on its left and bend back to establish contact with F at the southeast corner of the 2d Battalion circle. A and B Companies both followed out this plan fairly well because they started digging in before dark, but when C was finally in position, digging in after dark, they extended their line well south of where they were supposed to and missed tying in with F Company by about fifty yards, although they did anchor on the railroad. In contrast to the organization of Major McCarthy's bivouac, Lt. Colonel O'Brien placed all of his antitank guns in such a position as to bear on the gap between himself and G Company, not firing directly at Hara-Kiri Gulch, but a little north of there so that they would cover the area between himself and the cliffs. All four of D Company's heavy machine guns were also placed along this section of the perimeter. Captain Ackerman of Company A placed both of his lights facing north, one covering the railroad track, and one

in the ruins of a little concrete building that he found along the line of his perimeter. This latter gun covered the swale to his front. One of B Company's lights was placed on the arc, facing Paradise Valley, and the other faced the cliffs. Investigation later showed that C Company's lights, which were put in after dark, never were placed exactly in relationship to the rest of the company. However, they were in place on the perimeter and most of the men think that they faced east.

Now, with the 1st Battalion in the joint perimeter, certain things had become evident. First, and most important, was that two whole platoons of the 2d Battalion, one from E Company, and one from F, were now completely *inside* the perimeter. These were the troops who had originally been placed along the railroad track by Major McCarthy. The loss of this manpower from the first line of defense was important, but in view of what happened later, it is doubtful whether it would have changed the outcome of the events the next morning.

The second situation that developed from the tacking-on of the 1st Battalion was the screening of McCarthy's third antitank gun and the screening of the H Company heavy machine guns which were originally placed on the outside of the perimeter but which were now inside. This fire power would have helped immeasurably the next morning. They certainly were not silent when the attack did come, but each time they were used, the fire pinned down Company A along the north front and caused some concern and confusion.

Lieutenant Colonel O'Brien had remarked on both of these two points at the time his battalion was digging in, but owing to the approach of darkness it was deemed inadvisable to try and move the men around at the time. Later in the evening, when word was received that a counterattack could be expected, H Company's machine guns were moved up onto the railroad tracks in an effort to give Company A more head room under their fire, but the effect was negligible.

One other factor about the perimeter should be noted and that was the fact that C Company was never able to find their place in the darkness and overlapped the 2d Battalion half, as already noted. This put the rear elements of this unit some hundred yards behind the front lines and resulted in a peculiar situation the next morning, when some of the C Company men were caught asleep in their foxholes. (This does not imply negligence. It was the custom for infantrymen to dig in in groups of three. One man stood watch while the other two slept.) The rear elements of C Company were so far removed from the front lines that the sentries couldn't tell exactly what was going on until the Japanese suddenly broke through and overran the perimeter. Then they were on the rear holes too quickly for all the men to be awakened.

This was not without its advantages, however. There are several cases noted where the Japanese ran right by these holes without seeing them.

The position of the other elements of the 27th Infantry Division has already been noted, with the exception of the artillery, which does not enter into the immediate picture, although they did notable work in giving fire support throughout the night. However, some note must be taken of the location of two regimental CPs.

The location of the 106th Infantry CP became important the next morning, for reasons which will be noted later. On the night of 6 July, this command post was located some 3,400 yards behind the night positions of the 1st and 2d Battalions, 105th Infantry. This distance is figured on a direct line. By the coastal road, the only feasible route, it was well over five thousand yards. From the 106th Infantry CP to the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, which was camped in rear of the 165th Infantry, was almost three thousand yards over a winding, twisting trail.

The 105th Infantry CP had moved during the morning of 5 July to a point just to the left of the road, halfway between RJ 2 and RJ 4. Situated between the highway and the beach, it sat among a group of trees overlooking an open field to the north. It was not placed on high ground, but it did occupy what had been Japanese fortifications, obviously part of the old Tanapag Harbor beach defenses. Colonel Bishop's headquarters were located in a concrete shelter which had once been an air-raid dug-out and which was dug into the ground. Other CP components occupied similar installations, either shelters, dugouts or pillboxes. Between the command post and the front lines stretched the open field already mentioned. This field was literally cut to pieces with trench systems and spiderholes and was devoid of grass. It was so low lying that it had the appearance of having been covered by water a good deal of the time, either from heavy rains or an exceptionally high tide. However, on 6 July, it was just a sea of thick, heavy mud.

The north end of this field dipped down abruptly into a creek, the only stream of any size that was found on the whole island of Saipan. Bloody Run, as this was later known, was between ten and fifteen yards across at the water's edge. The banks were steep and muddy. The highway crossed this stream on a simple concrete bridge, about twelve feet wide and some seventy-five yards from the beach. The bridge had no railings.

Bloody Run ran inland for three or four hundred yards, its course following a winding path a little to the northeast. On both sides of the stream, both east and west of the road, were several large trees.

The distance from the 105th CP to the stream was four hundred yards. All of this ground was extremely open. The ditches would offer some cover, however, as would the deep trench that ran parallel to the highway on each side of it.

The two battalions, 1st and 2d, were approximately two thousand yards northeast of the CP. The town of Tanapag, still largely intact, was eight hundred yards north of the CP and 1,400 yards south of the two assault units. Telephone lines were laid and were in working order between the two battalions and the regimental CP before 2100 on the night of 6 July. The lines ran along the main coastal highway and were simple ground-laid wire.

At some time during the afternoon—officers of the 105th Infantry believe it was close to 1700—two battalions of Marine artillery came rolling up the road from the direction of Garapan. These two battalions were the 3d and 4th Battalions of the 10th Marine (Artillery) Regiment. Both were charged with firing support missions for the 4th Marine Division which was operating in the area on the east side of the island and which was supposedly to take over the mission of mopping up the north of the island, from Makunsha north to Marpi Point.

It is important to note that no officer of either of these two Marine battalions took the pains of obtaining permission, either from the 27th Division, or from the 105th Infantry Regiment, to move into the zone of action of these units, despite the fact that they were occupying an area within 1,200 yards of the front lines and their location made it essential that they use the supply road, already congested, which served both Lt. Colonel O'Brien and Major McCarthy, and to some extent, Lt. Colonel Bradt. Not only did the Marine officers fail to get permission for this move, they also failed to notify either Colonel Bishop or General Griner that they had moved in or just where they were located. Nor is there any record that they talked with any officer of the 105th Infantry in an effort to find out what the situation was along the front. This neglect—and it must be called that—had one very significant result. Despite the fact that all other units in the area had some warning that a counterattack was brewing, Colonel Bishop and his staff, not knowing the location of the battalions, were unable to warn them. Marine officers of these battalions later said that they had not been warned by their own higher headquarters either.

These two battalions did not dig in together. The 4th Battalion moved into positions behind the 105th Infantry CP; that is to say, directly south of the headquarters, along the road. Colonel Bishop said later that the first inkling he had that the artillery had moved into this position was when the guns began firing so close that he could not finish

his conversation. He immediately dispatched one of his staff officers to find out the facts, and this officer returned with the information that the battalion had moved in. The guns had been placed so that they fired across the road. "The muzzles were hanging right out in the road," Colonel Bishop said later. All traffic up and down this main supply highway had to stop each time the guns fired and congestion along the road became so severe that Colonel Bishop was finally forced to order them moved to a place where they would not interfere with his communications. This was done before darkness after a sharp exchange between the two officers. However, the guns were only moved a short distance south along the road, and caused a good deal of interference in the 105th Infantry CP during the rest of the night, particularly in the matter of telephone and radio conversations, a highly important consideration to a front-line tactical command. It is also important to note that this Marine artillery battalion was not firing in support of operations on the west side of the island. They were supporting the night defense of the 23d and 25th Marine Regiments on the east side of the island.

The 3d Battalion of the 10th Marine Regiment had, meanwhile, moved on up the road and across Bloody Run. There they had turned right and moved into the trees along the north bank of the stream. All three batteries of the battalion set up in this general area, the left battery occupying space about fifty to a hundred yards off the road, the right battery being emplaced about two hundred yards west of the CP of the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry. The battalion, after setting up their guns, proceeded to register on points across the island. They never fired another round of ammunition the rest of the night after completing this registration.¹

The bivouac area of the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines, for the night of 6-7 July warrants some attention. It has already been pointed out that they occupied an area not more than fourteen hundred yards from the 1st and 2d Battalions, 105th Infantry, who were directly in front of them, but they were not more than six hundred yards from the mouth of Hara-Kiri Gulch. Between the right flank of the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, and the left flank of G Company, same regiment, there existed a wide open gap of five to six hundred yards with absolutely nothing interposed. For all intents and purposes, therefore, this one artillery battalion was directly on the front lines. As far as can be determined, and this could be reiterated, no officer of the battalion made any effort to see and talk with the units around him in an effort to find out just what the situation was. Another point that should be considered is the type of bivouac used by the Marines. Although they

were on the front lines, they set up pyramidal tents, lit campfires, and slept in cots. Some foxholes were used, but at least two Marines were found dead the next morning in hammocks which had been slung between two adjacent trees. Yet, all troops in front of this battalion and on its immediate flank, were thoroughly dug in for the night in deep foxholes. Even the personnel of the 105th Infantry CP, some six hundred yards behind this battalion, were firmly entrenched.

NOTE TO CHAPTER 40

¹This point later became quite important. The Division Historian was offered, at various times, a total of over fifty affidavits from officers of surrounding units that the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines, did not fire after registration. This knowledge was held by such a wide variety of officers and for so many different reasons that it is safe to assume it is correct.

Chapter 41: Gyokusai: Die in Honor¹

MUCH HAS BEEN WRITTEN about the seeming desire of the Japanese soldier to die for his Emperor. After the great *Banzai* attack which ended the Battle of Attu on 29 May 1943, in which more than five hundred Japanese gave up their lives in rushing American lines, it was generally considered by every American soldier in the Pacific War that every battle against the Empire would end in one of these all-out suicide raids. Evidence from other battlefields seemed to support this theory. Guadalcanal, Tarawa, Eniwetok all had their futile, crazed *Banzai* attacks at one time or another in the battle. Soldiers and Marines alike on Saipan had been waiting for this, and it seemed to be ever more imminent.

It was tradition in the Japanese Army, however, that such a raid could only be ordered by the Emperor himself. When the Emperor ordered such a move it was called "*Gyokusai*," which, literally translated, means "Die in Honor." When the order for such a move was transmitted, it meant simply that every living soldier facing the enemy had to take up arms and give his life for his country. The battle cry used on Saipan in the *Gyokusai* was characteristic: "Seven Lives for the Emperor!" Each Japanese soldier on Saipan was to die, and in dying was to take seven Americans with him. The great charge on Attu was undoubtedly *Gyokusai*. The raids on the other islands were probably not.

Surrounding the Saipan episode are a great many conflicting stories. Some Japanese later claimed that on the night of 4 July 1944 an airplane flew over Northern Saipan and dropped a written message over the headquarters at Marpi Point. This message was purported to have been from the Emperor, ordering the *Gyokusai*. There is little foundation for this story, although it is known that on the night of 4 July at least one, and possibly more, enemy planes did fly over Saipan on a bombing raid. It is not generally believed by American intelligence officers, however, that any such direct order from the Emperor was ever delivered. More than likely this was a battlefield rumor that circulated and gained widespread credence among the Japanese rank and file. There is also the ever-present possibility that Lt. General Saito may have deliberately set this rumor in motion in order to justify his order for the attack. Whether falsely based or not, the charge of 7 July was a true *Gyokusai* because all the soldiers and sailors and civilians who took part believed that they were acting on the personal orders of the Emperor.

The Saipan *Gyokusai* was not a wild, blind rush without an objective. General Saito, in his orders, instructed the Japanese that their attack was to push down the coast through Tanapag Harbor and Garapan to

Charan Kanoa, where they were to join forces with the 43d Division, sizable portions of which were still unconquered and holding out somewhere on Nafutan Point. Later, or at the same time, they would be joined by Japanese landing forces from the homeland which were even then on their way to help. The attacking force was to do as much damage as possible to all American installations on the way, particularly in the city of Garapan where, it was thought, the invasion headquarters had been established. The attack on the morning of 7 July was to be three-pronged. One prong was to go up through Paradise Valley, across the island, and thence down the east coast. Another arm was to go up over the mountains in the vicinity of the Coconut Grove and to Charan Kanoa via the pass through the valley east of Tapotchau. The last, and most important group, was to go along the west coast.

The pattern of the attack thus laid out was never followed. Virtually all of the enemy strength came down the coast. Japanese did make attacks up through Paradise Valley, but they were comparatively weak and were easily stopped. Also, attempts were made to push up both Hara-Kiri Gulch, and over the cross-island road that ran up from the Coconut Grove, but neither of these two attempts had much strength. There are probably two reasons for this: one, a confusion in orders; and two, the absolute domination of the herd instinct in the component parts of the raiding party. Observers aptly describe the force that came down from the north as a mob and the instinct seemed to be simply to follow the leaders. No other factor can explain the abandonment of the three-separate-attacks idea.

In a message to Admiral Turner on the morning of 8 July, Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith estimated the attacking force as "300 enemy supported by two or three tanks." This, of course, was an understatement. At the insistence of General Griner the figure was changed by corps headquarters to between 1,200 and 1,500. The V Amphibious Corps never had officially raised his estimate. There followed a long and heated debate between General Griner and General Holland Smith, and later between General Griner and Maj. Gen. Harry Schmidt, who succeeded General Smith in command of V Corps. In view of the dispute and the wording of General Smith's message of July 8, General Griner, on the morning of 8 July, ordered Lt. Col. M. Oakley Bidwell, G-1 of the 27th Division, to proceed to the area and make a careful and accurate count of each body buried from the area of the 105th Infantry command post to the area north of the point where the 1st and 2d Battalions had bivouacked on the night of 6-7 July. This count showed a total of 4,311 Japanese bodies actually buried in the area.

Some of these bodies were undoubtedly killed in the action of 5-6 July, which took place in the same area, but a conservative estimate of this figure would not show more than five hundred dead from that cause. General Smith insisted that a large percentage of these killed were casualties from our air raids that had taken place daily since 11 June. This was an erroneous assumption, for three reasons.

In the first place, had there been any large number of enemy dead in the area—let us say in the neighborhood of two thousand—that fact most surely would have been reported by the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, during the fighting of 5-6 July. No such report of a large number of enemy dead was ever received at Division headquarters. Questioning of members of all units who were in the area before the *Gyokusai* brought emphatic denials that there were any large numbers of enemy dead in the area before they passed through. Everyone mentioned the dead Japanese in the ditch north of RJ 2. These had been killed by Lieutenant Dorey's tank action. The most optimistic estimate of these was 250, turned in by the tankers themselves. The most conservative, turned in by infantrymen, was a hundred. The figure was undoubtedly between these two estimates. It seems reasonable to believe that General Smith's theory can be discarded as without basis, on this testimony.

A second reason for the assumption that General Smith was mistaken in his estimate can be found in the simple fact that after the raid was over, Japanese resistance on Saipan almost completely collapsed. What happened during the night of 6-7 July to cause this? There can be only one explanation: the complete draining off of all available manpower. This was reported at between five thousand and seven thousand on the morning of 5 July. No element of the corps reported killing a large number such as five thousand enemy between the morning of 5 July and the night of 6 July. According to all testimony of captured Japanese documents and prisoners of war, General Saito ordered all men on the island who were capable of bearing arms to take part in the *Gyokusai*. This was certainly more than 1,200 to 1,500.

Last, but far from least, is the testimony of officers who visited the scene. A committee appointed by Admiral Spruance which visited the scene on the morning of 12 July, after the burial had been under way for some little time, estimated the force to have been from 1,500 to 3,000. In a letter written on 12 July, General Griner puts forward further arguments to prove that most of the Japanese dead were killed on 7 July. Visiting the scene on 8 July, the first general officer to do so, General Griner went over the ground and took particular notice of the

condition of the Japanese bodies. In a letter written by him to General Schmidt on 12 July, he concludes:

The assumption that the Japanese dead found on the ground in the area around Tanapag were killed by the action of our air arm and by naval gunfire since the preliminary strikes on this island on 11 June cannot be supported. As the only general officer to visit the scene on 8 July, I must insist that my observations in the case be given credence. I viewed personally upwards of one thousand enemy bodies and nowhere did I find marked decomposition of bodies which would indicate that the enemy had been dead for more than thirty-six to forty-eight hours. I call your attention to the Army field manual on military sanitation and hygiene which states, "At temperature of 85 degrees Fahrenheit, maggots will begin forming on bodies in approximately forty-eight hours." There were no maggots on these bodies when I viewed them.

The general consensus, supported by testimony of all who saw the attack, and further substantiated by the number of known enemy on the island at the time, indicates that between three thousand and four thousand Japanese soldiers participated in the *Gyokusai* on Saipan. The exact figure will never be known.

The two senior Japanese commanders on Saipan were Lt. General Saito and Vice Adm. Chuichi Nagumo. During the evening of 5 July these two officers met at General Saito's headquarters in Paradise Valley. During that evening the general feted his naval counterpart at a ceremonial dinner that lasted all night. At 0800 on 6 July, the general assembled all his staff officers and read to them his farewell message:

I am addressing the officers and men of the Imperial Army on Saipan. For more than twenty days since the American devils attacked, the officers, men, and civilian employees of the Imperial Army and Navy on this island have fought well and bravely. Everywhere they have demonstrated the honor and glory of the Imperial forces. I expected that every man would do his duty. Heaven has not given us the opportunity: we have not been able to utilize fully the terrain. We have fought in unison up to the present time, but now we have no material with which to fight, and our artillery for attack is completely destroyed. Our comrades have fallen one after another. Despite the bitterness of defeat we pledge seven lives to repay our country.

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

As it says in the *Senjinkun* [*Battle Ethics*]: "I will never suffer the disgrace of being taken alive, and I will offer up the courage of my soul and calmly rejoice in living by the Eternal Principle." Here I pray with you for the eternal

life of the Emperor and the welfare of our country. I advance to seek out the enemy. Follow me!

This remarkable document was found on the body of a Japanese officer killed in the *Gyokusai*. It has since gained wide circulation. But General Saito did not advance with his troops to die on the fields of Tanapag. For days after the final "*Banzai!*" yell, rumors were allowed to float around the island to the effect that both Saito and Nagumo had died at the head of the column. American troops searched diligently for their bodies, but to no avail. Eventually, under questioning, a Japanese officer, purported to be Major Yoshida, former G-2 of the 43d Division, and a chief warrant officer of the Imperial Navy who had been Nagumo's secretary, told the true story of what happened next.

Saito called messengers to him and dispatched them to all parts of the island with copies of his farewell address. All troops were to assemble at 1800 on the evening of 6 July either in the vicinity of Makunsha or Marpi Point. From there they were to assemble in one large group at Makunsha and launch the all-out attack at 2200.

After issuing these orders, General Saito and Admiral Nagumo retired to their quarters. Both let blood in the traditional fashion and then were killed by their aides, by pistol shots in the head. This was at 1000 on the morning of 6 July, long before the attack was launched. Afterward, as they had ordered, the bodies of both officers were burned, although only partially, and the remains were interred. American authorities later disinterred the remains and carried them to Charan Kanoa where they were given burials with full military honors.

The difficulties of assembling the entire attacking force were greater than Saito had imagined. There was no longer any means of communication in the Japanese sector of the island. All messages had to be carried on foot. American air raids had made movement in the open practically impossible during the daylight hours. Furthermore, even Saito's staff officers did not know exactly where all the troops were located. Units had become lost and other groups had just banded together with no set headquarters and no exact knowledge of how big their units were or who comprised them. Most of these groups were reached by messengers before the end of the day, but not all of them. One messenger estimated that he had failed to make contact with fully half of the thousand troops he had been sent out to find.

The Americans, of course, knew nothing about these preparations during the day. Aside from a general uneasiness, there wasn't the faintest suspicion that anything unusual was afoot. The Japanese had not changed the pattern of their defense one whit during the day.

At about 2000 in the evening of 6 July, an hour after dark, in the full moonlight, the command post of the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, was suddenly startled to see a Japanese sleeping near the road where they bivouacked. He was immediately captured. For half an hour he was interrogated at the command post and at 2030 word was passed along to regimental headquarters. The message ran as follows: "Prisoner says that his unit has been ordered to attack at 2000 tonight. That all men alive at 1500 on July 7 must commit suicide." Major Malcolm M. Jameson immediately ordered the 3d Battalion to send the prisoner back to the Division POW collecting point which was then located in Gapan. The prisoner was already on his way. Major Jameson then notified Lt. Col. William M. Van Antwerp at Division CP of the message he had received and the Division G-2 immediately dispatched Lt. Benjamin Hazard, Division language officer, to the collecting point in an effort to see if more complete information could be gained. This was the beginning of a tense, almost unbelievable drama.

When Lieutenant Hazard arrived at the POW collecting point at approximately 2045, he found the prisoner just arriving. He immediately set to work questioning him. He found out that the prisoner was a member of the 55th Naval Base Force and that he had been instructed that there would be an all-out counterattack by all enemy troops at 2000. Any who were left at 1500 the next afternoon were to kill themselves. He went on, under questioning, to state that everyone who was able to bear arms was to participate. When Lieutenant Hazard asked him where the attack was to start from, he said that it was a road junction in the vicinity of the town of Matansa. This latter place he pointed out on one of the American target area maps. Lieutenant Hazard, knowing that it was even then well after 2000, endeavored to get this part of the story straight, but at the moment, the prisoner stuck to his story. The language officer then called Lt. Colonel Van Antwerp and told him what he had found out. The story agreed primarily with that phoned in earlier. It was now 2100. Van Antwerp ordered Hazard to go ahead and interrogate the prisoner at length. He himself then called Brig. Gen. Ogden J. Ross, Assistant Division Commander and Acting Chief of Staff. He then notified Division Artillery and followed by notifying each of the infantry regiments, specifically ordering them to alert their battalions.

At the 105th Infantry CP, the message was handed on down to the battalions. The 1st and 2d Battalions had already, at this early hour, become aware of excessive enemy activity to their front. The Japanese were extremely restless. In the 3d Battalion area, at Hara-Kiri Gulch,

numerous small counterattacks had been probing the lines intermittently since shortly after Olander had placed his company for the night.

Major McCarthy, after getting set for the night, at 1830 had ordered his forward artillery observer to register in his artillery. This had been started and the forward observer had used the town of Makunsha as a registration point. At approximately 2000, while the 1st Battalion was still digging in, Major McCarthy had become aware of a good deal of activity within the town ahead and had asked his artillery to try and break it up. Having just registered directly on the area, this fire was exceptionally accurate and its results extremely effective. Japanese later said that this one concentration of artillery had delayed the attack for several hours. However, at the time, Major McCarthy was unaware that anything big was afoot.

At shortly after 2100, both battalion commanders received the message that they must be ready to repel a counterattack. Major McCarthy and Lt. Colonel O'Brien conferred, and the 2d Battalion machine guns were shifted into a firing position atop the railroad tracks. Both battalion commanders notified their company commanders. Captain Ackerman's Company A, which was next to the railroad track at the time, went back to the 1st Battalion CP, which was in the middle of the perimeter, and asked O'Brien if he could shift some of his Company D machine guns to a point where they could be brought to bear on the railroad track to the north. The battalion commander told Ackerman to wait and immediately called Lt. Colonel Jensen, the regimental executive. He told Jensen that he was worried about the gap on his right flank (between himself and Company G), and asked if there was any chance of getting anything to fill it. He thought that some effort should be made to protect that fundamental point of weakness in the event of a counterattack. The regimental executive told O'Brien that he had no troops available and that he (O'Brien) would have to cover the hole as best he could. In the meantime, he would call Division and see if he could get some help from them. O'Brien turned and told Ackerman that he could not have the extra guns. They were needed more urgently to cover the gap, but that if any help came forward during the night he would most surely move the Company D machine guns to help Company A cover the railroad track.

Meanwhile, Lt. Colonel Jensen had called the Division CP and got hold of Lt. Colonel Van Antwerp again. He told G-2 about the gap, and that he was worried about it in view of the news just received. Van Antwerp told the regimental executive that he would take the matter up at once with Lt. Colonel Sheldon, Division G-3. Van Antwerp went to see him and had to have him awakened. Upon receiving

the information, Sheldon informed G-2 that there was nothing he could do. There were no reserves available. The matter was dropped. It was now 2150.

During this exchange of information, Lt. Colonel Van Antwerp had been hard at work trying to get more information out of the prisoner of war. This information came dribbling in little by little. The prisoner was confused, however, and some of his information contradicted itself. He changed the meeting place of the attacking force three or four times. As the questioning progressed, it turned out that he had been sent out as a messenger to order the troops to assemble. He gave the figure of from five thousand to seven thousand enemy troops taking part in the attack. However, he stuck to the time of 2000 hours as the time for the attack to begin. Repeated questioning only brought on more confusion and more contradictions, but the general thread of the information still pointed to something unusual going on within the Japanese lines. Lt. Colonel Van Antwerp had alerted the 27th Reconnaissance Troop, which was maintaining a lookout atop Hill 767, to be particularly alert to any activity on the plain below, and on two or three different occasions between 2100 and 2300 this observation post reported movements of fairly large groups of Japanese in and out of Paradise Valley. Furthermore, as the activity increased in front of the 1st and 2d Battalions, reports of great noise in front of Makunsha were carried back. At 2330 Van Antwerp called corps headquarters again and gave them a summary of all the information that had been obtained from the prisoner of war up until that time. "Though vague and contradictory, in places, there seems to be something in the air," he said. "All units should be particularly alert."

The Japanese had begun to assemble soon after dark. All enemy soldiers who were not able to walk and bear arms were killed before the assembly started. Every man was armed with something, although there were not enough rifles to go around. Officers gave away their pistols and kept only their sabers. Daggers and hunting knives were parcelled out. When these gave out, the men took long limbs of trees or bamboo poles, anything that would serve as a spear. Sometimes they sharpened the ends of these, sometimes they found a crude piece of iron or steel which they sharpened as best they could and tied onto the end of the stick. These were secured by everything from a common string to a leather thong.

Reports conflict as to the sobriety of the participants. Shortly after the attack subsided, the general story went the rounds of the island that the attackers had been drunk on *sake*. Prisoners interrogated later

said that this was not entirely true. Naval and army personnel participating had nothing more than a ceremonial toast before starting out, if that. However, civilians who joined the group were supposedly drunk. Admiral Nagumo had issued orders that the civilian construction workers on the island need not take part in the *Gyokusai*. If they wished, they could do so. Of the thousand laborers, most joined the final rush, and these were given *sake* to fortify them. They were intoxicated almost to a man and carried their bottles with them on the way south from Marpi Point. By the time they reached Makunsha most of the *sake* was gone and the bottles were thrown away, but by that time this part of the attacking force was degenerating into a rabble.

The naval force moved out from Marpi Point in one long column, beginning a little after dark, in order to assemble at the rendezvous at 2200. As they passed along the road, other and smaller groups joined the column. One Japanese estimated that when the head of the column approached Makunsha, the rear was just leaving Marpi Point (the column was three or four men wide). The Japanese attempted to enforce no march discipline whatever. It was a bright moonlight night with one of the typical brief rain squalls coming at about 2100, or shortly before. This rain lasted for not more than fifteen minutes and then the moon came out again. At shortly after 2130 a Japanese plane appeared overhead and dropped three or four bombs in the area to the rear of the 165th Infantry CP.

Members of the two battalions of the 105th Infantry first became aware of something unusual to their front at approximately the time Captain Ackerman returned from his brief conference with Lt. Colonel O'Brien. This was between 2115 and 2130. This coincides with the projected time of arrival at the rendezvous area in Makunsha. One noncommissioned officer of Company A, First Sgt. Mario Occhinerio, described it as follows:

Captain Ackerman came back from seeing Colonel O'Brien and he had just started to tell me about the machine guns. While he was talking, we began to hear this buzz. It was the damndest noise I ever heard. I think you could describe it as a great big hive of bees. It kept getting louder and louder and then it began to sound like I guess the old Indian war dances did, sort of like a chant. All at once a couple of Japs busted out of the bushes to our front. Somebody shot them. That's when things got going in earnest.

The noise and activity to the front increased. Flares were sent up by the enemy and an occasional fire could be seen in the distance. Captain Ackerman called in Capt. Bernard A. Toft, battalion forward observer for the artillery, and together they charted interdiction fires along the

railroad and highway north of Makunsha. Major McCarthy was doing the same thing in his battalion. Beginning at 2200 and ending at shortly after 0700 the next morning, 27th Division Artillery used 2,666 rounds of ammunition in the area immediately in front of these battalions. From the time that Captain Ackerman called Captain Toft, fire was almost incessant. By midnight, a full-scale artillery barrage was sailing overhead onto the Japanese column ahead.

This use of artillery was extremely effective. The attack, scheduled for 2200, was delayed until 0400 in the morning because of it. Japanese prisoners later captured said that, although it caused no great casualties after the first few shells, it completely disorganized the advancing column. Every few steps the Japanese would have to stop and dive for cover. Units that had held their integrity up to this time, were dispersed and never did get back together again. But the artillery did not stop the counterattack. Relentlessly, if slowly, the enemy column inched ahead. The officers urged their men out of the ditches, collected stragglers and herded them back onto the road. Singing songs and shouting encouragement to one another, the Japanese moved forward toward Makunsha.

In Makunsha, the head of the column waited impatiently for the strength to gather. The period between 2200 and 0400 in the morning was not spent idly. The Japanese command organized patrols and sent them out to probe the American lines. As these positions were developed a heavier and heavier volume of fire was laid down on them by advance parties.

The patrols were at first composed of six or seven men. They later grew to be as high as twenty in a single group. Almost without exception these patrols worked down the railroad track toward our lines. After the first two men were killed by Company A, they seemed to know exactly where to find the northern boundary of the perimeter. They used tactics that came to be recognized as typical before this long night was over. Part of the patrol would creep up to the very edge of the bushes on the north side of the swale and from that point, where they could not be seen, they would create a big commotion, yelling and singing and running around through the bushes and small trees, making an effort to attract attention with their movements, scraping against the trees and bushes so that they could be easily followed, even above the din that was rising to a constantly higher pitch.

Accompanying this noisy demonstration was a veritable blanket of fire. For the first time in the battle the Japanese began using tracer and incendiary bullets. Men of the 1st and 2d Battalions state that all night long these bullets came over. The sky seemed to be filled with red,

green, and yellow trails from the bullets. There was no uniformity in the Japanese ammunition. Sometimes the pattern of colors was broken up by the white of phosphorescence, and even a peculiar blue-colored bullet came sailing over now and then. It was an awe-inspiring sight and the men who saw it and lived through it, almost to a man, said that it was probably the biggest and best Fourth of July demonstration they had ever seen.

While these diversionary tactics were going ahead, the rest of the patrols were busy. Usually two or three enemy soldiers at a time would try to work down the railroad track. Some would crawl stealthily, others would just run out pell-mell and try to reach the perimeter before they were brought down. Without much variation, these infiltrators were armed with grenades which they tried to drop into foxholes alongside the small fill which carried the track across the scale. On both sides of the track at this point of the perimeter were A Company men. Captain Ackerman had been forced to place one squad on the west side of the track to complete firm contact with E Company. These men were the ones to bear the brunt of the all-night attack. On at least four different occasions Japanese infiltrators got all the way through to these foxholes and in each case managed to get a grenade in the hole. Seven of A Company's men were wounded, four of them seriously.

Although no serious damage was done to the perimeter as a whole during the night, none of the A, B or E Company men slept a wink.

HISTORIAN'S NOTE

Any attempt to portray the *Gyokusai* attack of the Japanese on the morning of 7 July in ordinary terms of military history would result in utter failure. There were no records of the affair in the units that suffered the most. The journals, morning reports and all other records of the 1st and 2d Battalions, 105th Infantry, were burned during the raid. The regimental command posts of the 105th Infantry and the 3d Battalion were too busy fighting to keep any records of events during the day. Every clerk, truck driver, supply man, and communications soldier was on the front lines at the 105th's command post, fighting for his life. In the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, only one officer, Lt. John F. Mulhern of B Company, survived unscathed. Captain Ackerman, commander of A Company, was seriously wounded and did not return to duty until late in September. He was the senior officer of the battalion to survive and the only one who could tell what had happened, and what decisions were made during the day. None of the 1st Battalion staff officers were available for questioning. The 2d Battalion was more fortunate, Major Edward A. McCarthy surviving, but all of his staff and all of his company commanders were killed or wounded.

Inasmuch as the whole action of 7 July revolves around these two battalions, it becomes necessary to tell exactly what happened to them. Beginning shortly

after the close of operations on Saipan, the Historian talked with every surviving member of both battalions, completing this work before 1 October 1944. It soon became evident that here was not a regimental action, nor a battalion action, nor even a company or platoon action. Within twenty-five minutes after the *Gyokusai* hit the perimeter of the two battalions, the fighting had degenerated into a series of desperately fought individual actions that followed two or three different patterns. No individual officer can be said to have had much influence on the events of the day within the battalions, for the simple reason that most of the officers were gone very early. Major McCarthy did play a big role in the area to which he finally retired, but it can truthfully be said that it was the sergeants, and sometimes the privates, who assumed the roles of leadership within their particular sectors. The different units were mixed together. Usually, during the questioning, one would ask a Company A man what had happened at a particular time. His answer would be, "Oh, a 2d Battalion man did that." He was usually never able to identify the man in question any further than that, never having seen him before or after the event in question.

In checking on the action of that morning, the Historian went into each company in question, assembled everyone in the company who had survived, and went right down the company rosters, checking off each name that he came to and asking what had happened to that man. It was found that someone had either seen or heard what had become of nearly every man. The stories are heroic. They were told without emotion and without any embellishment. But as pointed out before, they were a series of individual actions, most of which do not have any bearing upon the big picture at all. They are all a little part of a big whole, but any one of them could be subtracted without any appreciable change in the big picture.

There were almost 1,100 of these individual stories. The exact number of men on the line with the two battalions will never be known. Strength reports mean nothing. They show men who were on furlough, who had been wounded, but were still carried for duty, and above all, they show men who were back in the rear areas, either as members of supply details or as battle-fatigue cases. This we do know: 406 men of both battalions were killed on 7 July. This does not include members of G Company. These were bodies of men picked off the battlefield and buried in the Division cemetery. There were 512 men of both battalions wounded and evacuated. Most of these were wounded seriously and usually not once, but twice. The Historian knows of one case who was bayoneted nine different times in the neck and chest. One of the bayonet thrusts passed in the neck at one side and came out the ear on the other. This man was also shot twice, and lay under a pile of dead Japanese for forty-eight hours before being discovered. Yet he lived. Any number of men were wounded five and six times. At least twenty-five per cent of those evacuated suffered amputations. On 9 July, a muster was called of all men in the two battalions. At that time 189 men answered the muster from the eight companies which had been present on the night of 6 July. Another two hundred were present from G Company and elements of both battalions not on the line. This seems to indicate that there was a total of 1,107 men in the perimeter that night, but this figure can be accepted only as an estimate.

The key to the 7 July action, of course, lies in the 1st and 2d Battalions, 105th Infantry. From the time the *Gyokusai* hit the perimeter, these two units were the center of a whirlpool around which all the other action passed. Dur-

ing the day other units, notably the 106th Infantry, became heavily involved, but the Historian has deemed it advisable to go all the way through with the action of 7 July as it looked to the men of the two battalions involved, after which the reader can go back to the Division picture and retrace the steps with the whole action in mind.

NOTE TO CHAPTER 41

¹Information included in this chapter was condensed from a variety of POW interrogations contained in the files of the 27th Infantry Division, USAFIPOA, and JicPOA. The most important source of information was a Major Yoshida, purported to have been the intelligence officer of the 43d Imperial Division. Major Yoshida was picked up on a reef off Saipan during 7 July. Another source was the chief warrant officer who served as Admiral Nagumo's aide-de-camp and secretary. Another important prisoner was a messenger picked up by the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, at 2030 on the night of 6 July. He first gave our forces information concerning the impending attack. (Jwaya, Mamon.)

Chapter 42: Over-all Movement

THE TWO BATTALIONS of the 105th Infantry had dug in for the night, it will be remembered, 1,200 yards south of Makunsha. Throughout a night of rapidly intensifying activity to their front, they had fought off increasingly large infiltration attempts aimed principally along the railroad tracks. The main force of the Japanese effort had been gathering in Makunsha from shortly after 2000 on. Concentrated and sustained artillery fire had dispersed and disorganized the enemy to such an extent that he had not been able to launch his full-scale effort until 0400 in the morning. At that time, the entire Japanese force started south, following three general routes of advance. One, the main force, went down the railroad tracks and on each side of it for about twenty-five yards. Another sizable column went along the base of the cliffs at the edge of the plain, and thus through the gap between the 1st Battalion and G Company. The third, and much the smallest column, came down the beach, right at the water's edge.

It took approximately forty-five minutes for these columns to reach the perimeter of the two defending battalions of the 105th Infantry. There it broke all at once. Major McCarthy has since described the sight in a memorandum to his commanding officer:

It was like the movie stampede staged in the old Wild West movies. We were the cameramen. These Japs just kept coming and coming and didn't stop. It didn't make any difference if you shot one; five more would take his place. We would be in the foxholes looking up, as I said, just like those cameramen used to be. The Japs ran right over us.

Another soldier, Technical Sergeant Polikowski, of G Company, 105th Infantry, who was on the high ground south of Hara-Kiri Gulch, where he had a good view of the plain that morning, described the sight he saw at daylight :

Did you ever stand outside of a circus tent at about the time the evening show is over? That's just the way it was. It reminded me of a circus grounds, or maybe it was the Yankee Stadium. The crowd just milled out on the field, pushing and shoving and yelling and shouting. There were so many of them you could just shut your eyes and pull the trigger on your rifle and you'd be bound to hit three or four with the one shot.

This avalanche of humanity literally ran over the 1st and 2d Battalions. The fighting at the perimeter did not last for more than twenty-five minutes. It was a raging, close-quarters fight. Grenades, bayonets, firearms of all descriptions, fists, spears and even feet were used by the participants.

At 0510, a conservative estimate of casualties in both battalions was about sixty per cent of all those suffered during the day. By that time the whole area of the perimeter was one boiling mass of individual fights. There was no longer any semblance of unit organization.

Meanwhile, the two flanking columns of Japanese had surrounded the area. The east column, near the cliffs, had spread out over the entire field. Some of these attackers had branched off and joined the fighting at the perimeter. Others, large numbers of them, had kept driving straight on ahead. Some of this force hit the Marine artillery battalion, others branched off to the east and hit G Company of the 105th Infantry, and moved into the area between G Company and the 3d Battalion command post, thus cutting communication between these two units. Those Japanese who overran the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines, kept on going to the south and eventually brought up against the 105th Infantry command post. The beach column also moved south, by the embattled battalions, and hit the 105th CP.

These flanking movements were methodical and thorough. They cut every communication line to the rear and they placed men at every likely spot that might be used to interdict routes of retreat for the two front-line units. There wasn't any remote chance that a resupply could get through to the men in front, nor was there any chance that the wounded could be evacuated.

At 0510, the end of the twenty-five minutes of fighting, in addition to the loss of organization within the battalions, the men had begun to run out of ammunition. The decimation of the command had also resulted in a steady deterioration of fire power. Each man who went down removed just one more rifle or BAR from the fighting. Furthermore, the Japanese, with their apparently inexhaustible manpower, were beginning to capture and man the American machine guns, which they used indiscriminately on the area. And last, but not least, by 0510, many of the key officers and noncommissioned officers had been killed, thus removing the vital element of leadership.

It was at this time that Lt. Colonel O'Brien got through his first, last, and only message to regiment, telling them of his situation. He had already been seriously wounded but continued to fight until his death, minutes later. It was while he was talking over the radio that the situation began to disintegrate entirely. Men, all along the line, out of ammunition, and most of them wounded, had for a few minutes been stripped to roam the area, looking for ammunition or aid. Most of them stripped the equipment off the bodies of their comrades as fast as they fell dead or wounded and used it against the enemy. So widespread had this movement become at the time O'Brien finally reached regiment and

so many holes had developed in the holding line because of deaths, that there was actually no longer organized resistance.

The two battalions have been unjustly criticized for giving up ground at this time, but if the situation is studied closely it will be seen that this was not a voluntary withdrawal by any means. Men who left to get ammunition were cut off and could not get back to their original fox-holes. Others remained fighting until only dead men remained around them, and then, seeing a group of men behind them, they made their way back to it and fought from there. Officers of the 2d Battalion organized a holding position in a small railroad cut just behind the original position in one attempt to delay the Japanese.

The position in the railroad cut lasted for not more than fifteen minutes, at most. It was absolutely untenable for more than a few men. As a result little groups and individuals began drifting farther back, trying to find better cover from which to fight. The wounded men, also, began to stream to the rear, in search of cover and aid. By 0600, both battalions were moving south, not as battalions, but as individuals. The scene that now presented itself is almost indescribable. The whole plain, as viewed from above, was filled with running men. Observers were easily able to discern all sorts of unusual sights. Japanese hobbling along on crutches, trying to keep up with their comrades. Here and there could be seen an American running along a path, sometimes alone, sometimes supporting or even carrying a wounded comrade. Everyone was mixed together. It was not at all unusual on that morning to see a large group running along together, some of them Japanese, some of them Americans. So confused were the states of mind of both sides on the field below that this phenomenon happened not once, but many times over long distances of terrain. It would last until one man or another would notice an enemy nearby and he would then usually shoot him, or as happened on two or three occasions, the whole group would stop and fight.

The American retreat was not entirely headlong. Wherever a leader arose, he would sometimes organize a holding party and they would take up positions behind a tree or bush, or in a ditch and try to hold off the enemy in an effort to give their wounded comrades a little head start. Only the wounded kept going constantly.

It was not until the vanguard of American troops reached a point almost opposite RJ 2, that the rush stopped. Here, just as they were entering the outlying houses of Tanapag, they ran into the vanguard of the left prong of the Japanese attack which had come down the plain next to the cliffs. This group had overrun the three Marine batteries and had then run on into the 105th CP where they had stopped. In the process of

getting as far as Bloody Run, however, a good deal of this force had been dissipated and men were running around in the fields aimlessly. Some of them had taken to the ditches and others were hiding in the bushes. As the American wounded began to stream back toward them, they simply waited in ambush. The Americans were now faced with the prospect of fighting their way through this new enemy force or of making a stand. Two officers, Capt. Earl White, who had been badly wounded in the early fighting and who was now limping back to the rear as best he could, and Lieutenant King, commanding officer of B Company, took complete charge of the situation for the next few minutes. Taking a stand on the railroad tracks just south of the road to the Coconut Grove, they directed the men to the houses in the village, exhorting them to dig in there and take up a stand. Together these two officers managed to stem the pell-mell rush to the south. Lieutenant King was killed while directing this diversion. However, the men had at last found a place where they could stand and reorganize and put up some kind of a fight. Most of the wounded were dragged into the houses or into ditches inside the village. Under the direction of Major McCarthy, who had come up meanwhile, and with the help of Captain Ackerman, Lieutenant Mulhearn, and other officers and noncommissioned officers, a perimeter was organized that took up most of the village of Tanapag. It was almost 0800 before this defensive establishment was completely set up.

For the next four hours this group of men put up one of the great defensive fights in American history. The whole area was surrounded by enemy soldiers who made attempt after attempt to get inside the perimeter. Wounded men crawled about on the ground taking ammunition from their wounded comrades and bringing it back to a central point where it was cleaned and put into clips. Then it was parceled out to the men on the firing line. The wounded men also had a weapons-cleaning line which operated all day. One of the minor factors that had contributed to the difficulties of the first perimeter had been this fouling of weapons. The rainstorm of the night before had mixed sand with the dirt, and it jammed the weapons. The same trouble plagued the men all morning long back in the Tanapag defense area, which is known among the men of both battalions as the Second Perimeter.

There was no adequate aid for the wounded. As is usually the case, the aid men had nearly all been killed first so that there were only one or two still left in the Second Perimeter. Furthermore, there were no medical supplies and no chance to get any. Most of the first aid was administered by one wounded man to another and in the crudest fashion. One enlisted man even went so far as to perform an amputation

during the day without any previous experience or training. His patient lived.

From the time of Lt. Colonel O'Brien's last call to regiment at 0510 until shortly after 1000 these men, all that were left of both battalions, fought on without any contact with the outside world. At shortly before 0800 in the morning the 165th Infantry command post received a brief and cryptic message over the radio:

There are only 100 men left from the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 105th. For God's sake get us some ammunition and water and medical supplies right away.

This message was viewed with such skepticism in the 165th Infantry that it was not even recorded in its journal. Lt. Colonel Hart moved up to his OP atop Hill 721 and looked down on the plain. The Japanese were "as thick as maggots." The regimental commander, whose best friend was Lt. Colonel O'Brien, only needed this one look at the burning vehicles and dead lying on the ground below to change his mind. He immediately returned to his CP and dispatched a jeepload of ammunition which was just at the moment coming up the road to his own 1st Battalion. He then ordered three more jeeps to load as soon as possible and follow the first. All four vehicles tried to use the road that wound around the hillside from Hill 721 to the Coconut Grove, but none of the cars got any farther than the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry.

Lieutenant Colonel Hart's reaction was typical. Other units knew that a big counterattack was under way, but none of them realized how really serious was the plight of McCarthy and his men. Lt. Colonel Jensen knew that both battalions were having a hard fight, but until two or three hours had passed after O'Brien's last call, no one in the 105th Infantry command post realized the desperate straits of the men up forward.

One man had brought a radio out with him. Pfc. J. C. Baird, radio operator of C Company, was one of the men asleep in the rear of the perimeter. He awoke to find Japanese rushing pell-mell at his foxhole. He very calmly lay down and played dead for a moment or two and the enemy passed right on by. Then Baird jumped out of the hole, put his heavy SCR-300 radio on his back and carried it all the way back to the new Second Perimeter. This, in itself, was a remarkable feat, but Baird sat down in the midst of the flying bullets and in between the times he was manning a position on the firing line himself he repaired the radio, which had been damaged in transit by fire, then changed its frequencies so that he could reach regiment and reported to Major Mc-

Carthy and Captain Catlin, S-3 of the 1st Battalion, that he could get through. This was at 1000.

The subsequent talk between McCarthy and Jensen was the first news that the regimental CP had of their two battalions. McCarthy begged for tanks and for help in the form of ammunition and medical supplies. The regimental executive promised to do what he could, although at the time the personnel of the CP had their hands full. The help did not get up to McCarthy until much later in the day.

The radio that Baird had repaired continued to work for upward of an hour although the reception was so poor after that one message it was practically useless except to show that the battalions were still holding out.

The next important phase of the defense of the Second Perimeter was to be its most tragic phase. With the disruption of communications and the movement of the battalion into the trees of the village, they were largely out of sight of the rest of the troops on Hill 721 and Hill 767 which were the main Division observation posts. However, the men manning these OPs could see the plain quite easily, and as they watched, Japanese moved around openly in the whole area. Also, artillery liaison planes had been flying overhead all morning, picking out targets. Cannon Company, 165th Infantry, had perched itself up on the shelf of ground under Hill 721 and the gunners in the self-propelled guns had expressed a great deal of glee all morning as they threw shells into the swarms of Japanese below. Capt. Robert B. Marshall, in command of the company, estimates that his men had killed three hundred enemy during the day, although this figure is probably exaggerated.

Shortly after 1100—it may have been 1130—the men along the northeast side of the New Perimeter were subjected to an extremely heavy mortar barrage which wounded several more of the dwindling number. Ammunition was getting even scarcer and there seemed to be no help on the way. In view of the desperate situation, Major McCarthy decided that if he could muster a strong enough force, he might be able to fight his way back to the regimental CP and bring up help for the more seriously wounded. Accordingly he asked for volunteers among the less seriously wounded to go with him. Altogether these men numbered close to a hundred. Major McCarthy did not go, preferring to stay with the men who were left to help hold off the enemy.

It is evident that the activity which accompanied the organization must have attracted the attention of both Marshall's men and of an artillery liaison plane. Although both units must have known that there were American troops north of Bloody Run, the exact location they oc-

cupied and their number were not known. Major McCarthy's target maps had all been destroyed with the rest of his papers in the early stages of the raid and he was therefore unable to give accurate target squares of his location. It is doubtful whether this would have had any effect or not. All units of the Division had been firing at targets of opportunity all morning and anything that moved on the plain was taken for granted as being Japanese and was dealt with summarily.

The result was disastrous. The organization of McCarthy's "flying wedge," as he called it, attracted artillery fire of both Marshall's guns and elements of Division Artillery. There were two separate concentrations landing in the area. The first, evidently from Marshall's guns, landed on the edge of the group, causing extremely severe casualties. The men immediately began to move south along the edge of the road, running at full speed. Approximately two hundred yards from Tanapag, almost on the edge of Bloody Run, they were hit by the second concentration. This second was much more devastating than the first, landing directly in the midst of the group. Several men suffered direct hits. One of the worst features of this second concentration of fire was the fact that it not only blanketed the road, but virtually covered the entire area between the highway and the beach, and continued for several minutes. The men, panic-stricken and without leadership, stampeded like a herd of cattle. There seemed no place else to go and most of them headed for the water. Observers on the high ground suddenly saw a large number of men splashing into the lagoon. Of the total of about a hundred who started, seventy-one eventually managed to swim out to the reef some 250 yards from the shore. Not all of these men were from the original group who started out, half of them coming from other parts of the Second Perimeter. These latter men saw the others diving into the water and followed suit with no other reason than that it seemed like a good idea at the time.

Of the men who went into the water, two or three of the more seriously wounded drowned while trying to get to the reef. Others swam out a little way and then gave up and turned back to shore. Those that made the reef were eventually picked up by boats from a destroyer operating offshore. One of the amusing side lights on this group is the fact when these men were picked up during the afternoon, it was discovered that they had a Japanese officer in their midst. He had swum out with them and had sat undetected a short distance away for almost the whole afternoon. This will serve to show, to some extent, the utter exhaustion of the men in the two battalions.

The ill-fated attempt to break through to the American lines, however, had resulted in a very definite change in the situation of the sur-

vivors. Those that had started to swim out to the reef and turned back, totalling about twenty-five in all, now set themselves up in another perimeter, almost on the banks of Bloody Run. This came to be known as the Little Perimeter. During the afternoon this group was augmented from time to time by the addition of individuals who managed to get through from the Second Perimeter. By the close of the day, it numbered close to seventy-five men. It should be emphasized that this group had no communications with the larger group in the Second Perimeter.

The fury of the *Gyokusai* had now subsided to some extent. The Japanese were no longer massed as they had been in the morning. Casualties and the stone-wall defense put up by the CP group of the 105th Infantry had stopped and dispersed the enemy. However, it should not be thought that the situation was any less menacing. Japanese lurked behind every tree and bush, in every ditch, and under every obstruction. From these vantage points they continued to pour a deadly and costly fire on anything that moved. They had set up machine guns that controlled virtually every foot of the road. They had placed men—or perhaps it would be better to say men had taken refuge—in every defiladed route to the rear so that American soldiers who tried to escape back to our own lines would invariably run into one or two or more of them. There was no such thing as a front line. The two American perimeters can best be described as islands amidst a sea of Japanese. At all times this sea threatened to engulf the islands.

The first help to get through from the rear areas was a platoon of medium tanks which lumbered up the road from the 105th infantry CP shortly after noon. Neither Major McCarthy, nor anyone else, however, had any means of communicating with these vehicles. They rolled to a stop just on the north side of the bridge that crossed Bloody Run and sat there for more than two hours. During that time they laid down almost a steady stream of fire and blasted anything in sight that looked like it might be a Japanese hiding place. They did some damage, but because their visibility was poor and because they didn't know the real situation, they did not accomplish anything toward relieving the situation of the men in the two perimeters. The men inside the vehicles could hear an incessant drum of bullets on their armor and would neither unbutton nor come out, and Major McCarthy felt that he could not ask anyone else to go out and talk on the interphone. After two hours of just plain helpless watching, the battalion commander ran out to the vehicles and banged on the turrets with the butt of his pistol. While the bullets whizzed around his head he coaxed the crew of one tank to open their turret hatch and got inside with them. After some conversation with Lieutenant Lansford, the tank commander, McCarthy

used the radio to call the regimental command post. Again he pleaded for help, but he could get no intelligible answer. After finishing this he got back out of the tank, and returned to the opposite side of the road.¹ At this point he was still trying to get someone back to the regimental command post with some sort of accurate information as to his situation. All day long, he had sent party after party out in an attempt to find a way through. These parties had invariably run into superior Japanese forces and had to turn back. Captain Ackerman of Company A, who had been seriously wounded in the neck early, had started back a short time before with a patrol of twenty men, and shortly after McCarthy got out of the tank, Ackerman returned to report he had explored every possible route and found them all blocked. The battalion commander now decided to try it himself with the tanks, so he went over to the medium again, talked with someone through the porthole and told them he was going to try and follow the vehicles back down the road.

The battalion commander now organized a party of approximately thirty-five men, all of them from among the walking wounded, and when the tank got itself turned around, he led these men down the road after it. In this manner, McCarthy and about fifteen of his men finally reached the command post of the regiment by 1500 in the afternoon. He found that in the past hour some of the earlier parties had managed to push stragglers through with details of the two perimeters up ahead, but he was able to sit down and give Lt. Colonel Jensen much more information as to just where he had been and where the balance of the two battalions could be found.

Acting on this information, Lt. Herman Schroeder, S-4 of the 2d Battalion, and Lieutenant Albanese, S-4 of the 1st Battalion, organized a convoy of trucks and DUKWs loaded with medical supplies and ammunition, and at 1600 these vehicles made a mad dash up the road toward the embattled men. Some of the trucks were knocked out en route, Albanese failed to get through, and Schroeder was wounded but managed to get three of his trucks in to the men who were still fighting. Schroeder then loaded all three vehicles with the most seriously wounded and turned around. In another dash down the highway to the south, he was able to get all three trucks back to the regimental CP.

McCarthy's information had convinced General Griner that both battalions could not continue fighting until they had been rested and reorganized. The 106th Infantry was already in line, so the problem now was to get the men back through the lines. General Griner sent Brig. Gen. Ogden J. Ross to the 105th CP to supervise this job, and acting upon McCarthy's information, General Ross ordered elements

of the 734th Amphibian Tractor Battalion to proceed up the lagoon and to come ashore in the vicinity of the two perimeters and evacuate all the remaining men. This was accomplished at once. At 1730 in the afternoon the first LVTs poked their noses into the beach opposite the point where the weary defenders were still killing Japanese. These amphibian tractors brought with them elements of the 27th Reconnaissance Troop who now manned the perimeter, relieving the few men left who had not been wounded. The last man from the Reconnaissance Troop was evacuated at 2200 that evening, just before a second counterattack hit the area.

This, in brief, is the story of the Saipan *Gyokusai*. Members of the two battalions refer to it, simply, as "the raid." These weary men had killed, by actual count, 2,295 Japanese. This figure represents the number of dead enemy picked up in the area where the two battalions fought, at the First, Second, and Little Perimeters. Full credit must be given to these two units for this figure.

Of the remainder of the total dead (4,311 altogether) 322 were found in and around the positions of the Marine artillery battalion, while 1,694 were found in the areas defended by the 105th Infantry command post and the 1st and 2d Battalions, 106th Infantry, which came up during the day.

This is the simple story of the epic fight put up by the two battalions that bore the brunt of the *Gyokusai*. It lacks the smell of battle and it lacks any of the tales of heroism that can be unfolded by going deeper. One sergeant expressed himself later: "You can't pick out any heroes. Every man is a hero." And another noncommissioned officer, when asked to recommend some of his men for decorations, recommended his whole battalion, listing each name included on the rosters. The reader will get some picture of what went on on the field that day from the accounts that follow. It is impossible to pick out units, as pointed out before, inasmuch as no man fought as a member of a unit that day. He fought simply as an individual, to protect his own life, and the lives of those wounded men around him, without regard to their unit or rank.

NOTE TO CHAPTER 42

¹The accounts of this episode as told by the tankers and the infantry vary a good deal. The Division Historian visited the scene with both tankers and infantrymen on 12 July 1944. The two became involved in a heated argument as to what happened. The Division Historian's notes were taken from a series of interviews completed in early September 1944. Captain Appleman has written his account of Army tanks on Saipan from interviews given in December.

Chapter 43: Heroes of the Gyokusai

THE TWO most publicized heroes of the raid on the morning of 7 July 1944 were Lt. Colonel O'Brien, and Sergeant Baker of A Company, 105th Infantry. Both were awarded the Medal of Honor. Lieutenant Colonel William J. O'Brien, commander of the 1st Battalion, was a picturesque individual, irrepressible, loved by his men, and already a legend before his death. A slight, bantam rooster of a man, left-handed, he always carried a pistol in a shoulder holster under his right armpit. Whenever the going was the hardest he would appear in the thick of the fighting, pull the pistol from its holster and thrust himself into the center of things, waving the weapon under anyone's nose upon whom he wanted to impress a point.

On the morning of 7 July, he was, without doubt, responsible for the great stand made by the men of his battalion when "the raid" first hit the perimeter. Most of the men along the line of foxholes tell of his presence on that morning. Lt. Colonel O'Brien had somewhere acquired a second pistol and with one weapon in each hand he ran up and down his battalion's first line of defense, patting his men on the back, uttering words of encouragement, and every now and then taking a shot at the oncoming enemy. His radio man was constantly with him, trying to get through to regiment and finally, at 0507, twenty-five minutes after the first enemy soldier broke out of the trees across the swale, communication was established briefly. It was while O'Brien was running up and down the front line that he was wounded seriously the first time, a bullet wound through his left shoulder, near the collarbone. He did not even take the time to allow a bandage to be applied until he got through to Lt. Colonel Jensen on the radio. Then, while he was talking to headquarters, an aid man came over to him and clapped a crude bandage on his shoulder. By the time the radio went out, the front lines of the perimeter had already disappeared, engulfed by the howling mob of Japanese. O'Brien jumped into a nearby foxhole, grabbed a rifle from a wounded man and fired away at the enemy until he was out of ammunition. He ran to one of the jeeps parked in the middle of the battalion perimeter, jumped aboard and manned the .50-caliber machine gun mounted on it. By this time he was surrounded by a large group of enemy who were trying to get at him. These he mowed down with his machine gun until it, too, ran completely out of ammunition. Then he grabbed a saber from one of the group of Japanese and continued to stand on the vehicle, flailing away at his assailants until he was literally cut to pieces. Around his body lying beside the jeep, lay thirty dead Japanese.

Sergeant Thomas A. Baker had acquitted himself just as well. During the night he had commanded one of the squads on the front-line perimeter, near the railroad. Almost at the start of the *Gyokusai*, a Japanese had thrown a grenade which went off in Baker's hole, blowing his foot almost off. However, he continued to man his position until he had completely exhausted his ammunition. At that time, barely able to move, he crawled out of his hole in search of more ammunition. He had crawled back a distance of not more than ten yards when another man, Pfc. Frank P. Zielinski, also wounded, saw him. Zielinski picked him up in his arms and carried him back about 150 yards to the rear of the perimeter. At this point, Zielinski was hit in the hip and had to lay down his burden. As he laid Baker down, the latter was again wounded by a clean shot through the chest. By this time the situation on the front line had begun to disintegrate and Captain Toft, the artillery observer, came by, on his way to the new position in the railroad cut. He now picked Baker up and carried him back along the railroad track for thirty yards. At that time Toft was hit and again Baker had to be laid down. When a third man came by and tried to lift the sergeant, Baker became angry and refused to let anyone touch him. "I've caused enough trouble already," he is purported to have said. "I'll stay here and take my chances." Before the men went off and left him, however, he asked to be propped up in a sitting position, so he was lifted over to a small telephone pole nearby and propped up against that. "I'm done for," he said. When asked if there was anything anyone could do, he asked for a cigarette. This was given to him and lit. A few minutes later, Sergeant Patricelli of 1st Battalion Headquarters Company happened by. Baker called to him and Patricelli went over to the wounded man to ask what he could do. Baker asked Patricelli if he had any extra weapons and the battalion communications sergeant gave him a pistol he had just picked up. In this he put a full clip of seven cartridges and then put another in the chamber. When he walked away from Baker, the sergeant was still sitting propped against the post, the cigarette in one hand, the pistol in the other. "He was as cool as a cucumber," Patricelli said later. Two days later, both Patricelli and First Sergeant Occhinerio were called up to identify bodies. They found Baker still sitting propped up against the pole, cigarette partly burned out in one hand, empty pistol in the other. Almost directly in front of him were eight Japanese, all dead.

O'Brien and Baker were only two of the heroes that morning, however. There is Pvt. David M. Boynton. Boynton also manned one of the foxholes along the railroad track which received attack after attack from the patrols during the night. Some time, at least an hour before

the main attack hit, a grenade went off just outside Boynton's hole, wounding him seriously. He remained on duty, however, and when the attack hit, he was in the thick of the first charge. When last seen, he was standing up in his hole with blood streaming down his face, deliberately squeezing off each shot and yelling at the top of his voice, "Come on, you yellow bastards, and fight!" No one saw Boynton die, but his body was found later in the foxhole where he had fallen.

Private Frank W. Gooden had almost the same thing happen to him, although no one saw him after the fighting had really settled down to close quarters. Pfc. Leon B. Pittman had also been hit during the night and stayed and fought on after the Japanese hit. Some time during the early skirmish he ran out of ammunition, and although he had been hit in the leg, he limped back to the battalion CP for more. As he was on his way back to his foxhole with an armful of cartridges, he was hit and killed. Sgt. Edward A. Bogan, also of Company A, was hit in his right shoulder during the first fighting. He then switched his rifle to his left shoulder and continued to fire on the enemy until his position was completely overrun and he was killed. Sgt. Cleo B. Dickey, who had been a tower of strength to his company all through the battle for Saipan was almost the first man killed at the time the counterattack was launched. Cpl. Ralph T. Ross, radio man for Company A, had run out of ammunition during the fight and had gone back to the battalion CP to get more. While he was back there, the front line began to disintegrate, and Ross jumped in a foxhole near Lt. Colonel O'Brien and fought from there. As things became worse and worse on the front, Ross jumped from his foxhole and ran forward into the midst of the enemy. He was found dead near his original position two days later. His assistant radioman was found dead near him with Ross' radio. It is thought by the other members of the company that Ross had left his radio with Pfc. Olin H. Duncan while he went back to get the ammunition and that as he fought near the battalion CP he saw Duncan killed and went back forward to get the radio. At least six other A Company men are known to have been definitely killed while still in their original foxholes during the first charge.

Twenty-one men from B Company were killed in the fighting in the original perimeter, including one whole squad commanded by Sgt. Barney S. Stopera. This squad had stood its ground even after its ammunition was gone, and Sergeant Stopera led them in a hand-to-hand fight against steadily increasing numbers. Every man of this eight-man squad was later found dead in one group with almost thirty dead Japa-

nese around them. One of the men from B Company who got out alive was Pvt. Emytell W. Lynch. Lynch had been cut off when the men around him were killed. Alone and out of ammunition, he tried to fight his way back through the turning, twisting mob of men, only to find his way of escape cut off. Lynch decided the only thing to do was to get under cover. That way he might not be discovered by the enemy who were now just a big, pushing, confused mob. He jumped into the nearest hole. He landed squarely on top of two Japanese. Before Lynch could protect himself he was shot in the chest. This wound paralyzed him, and while he lay there he was bayoneted nine more times, one plunge, as described earlier, going through his neck and out the ear on the opposite side of his head. In addition he was shot again and left for dead. Late the next afternoon, 8 July, Marines moving through the area heard the sound of labored breathing and found the wounded man. He was evacuated to Guadalcanal and later to New Caledonia.

Company C was more fortunate than either A or B Companies during the early morning fighting, having been at the extreme south side of the perimeter. Most of the men in this company were caught by surprise by the gathering rush of Japanese in the early dawn, but bore none of the brunt of the attack. However, six men of C Company were killed before they had a chance to build up an adequate defense and were overrun. One of the main troubles as far as this unit was concerned was that by the time they had a chance to fire, the enemy were pretty well mixed up with American troops and every shot was likely to have hit one of their own men.

Both battalion headquarters and D Company were also hard hit in the first perimeter, D Company losing every gunner and assistant gunner on the machine guns, which were the first targets of the Japanese.

In the 2d Battalion, both E and F Companies suffered severe casualties in the earlier fighting, E Company losing sixteen men killed and several wounded. F Company's commander, Lt. John E. Titterington, had been hit very early in the first fighting. In his area, machine gunners of the whole battalion, as in other sections of the perimeter, became the first target of the enemy. Titterington rushed from one machine gun to another, manning them until he could get someone else to take over. The company clerk at one point in the action came by and urged the lieutenant to have his wound dressed. Titterington declined, saying, "I've got to go, I guess, but if I do go, I'm going to take a lot of those sons of bitches with me." He died on a machine gun. Besides Tittering-

ton, twenty-three other F Company men fought and died without giving an inch of ground.

Two other great heroes emerged from the 2d Battalion defense in this action. One was Lt. Robert J. McGuire, a platoon leader of H Company. McGuire, like nearly everyone else, had been hit in the first rush. When he saw his machine guns being overrun by the enemy, he rushed up to the front line and took over one of them. This he continued to man in the face of concentrated charges by the enemy. No one knows exactly how many times he was hit before he was killed, but at one time during the morning, when he was asked by one of the H Company men to leave and return to the rear so that he could have his wounds treated, he answered, "I'd rather stay here."

The other man was Capt. Ben L. Salomon, regimental dentist, who on the morning of 7 July was acting as 2d Battalion surgeon. When the counterattack hit the front line, Salomon manned his aid station for some little time, but as the outer perimeter began to be overrun and wounded men began to drift back, it became impossible for him to work. He ordered all his wounded to try and get back to the regimental aid station. He would try to help hold off the enemy until they were clear. He grabbed a rifle from one of the wounded men and ran forward toward the perimeter. He was seen once in a kneeling position, firing his rifle. Later, after four men had been killed on one machine gun, one right after another, Captain Salomon moved up and took it over. He seemed to be having the time of his life. He fired so fast and so well that witnesses say he piled up the enemy in front of his gun until he no longer had a field of fire. Four different times he moved the gun for this same reason. When his body was found two days later it was still slumped over the machine gun, riddled with bullets.¹

These were some of the heroes who died in the First or Old Perimeter. There was much more to it than that. Nothing has been said about those who were only wounded, and there were scores of them. Their story can be told in the withdrawal of the Second Perimeter.

THE WITHDRAWAL

This withdrawal was almost indescribable. The men of the two battalions were not driven in front of the oncoming Japanese. They ran *with* the enemy, even behind them. But they were not driven, and this point should be emphasized.

Typical of the experiences of the men in this withdrawal were those of Sgt. Adolph A. Auzis. Auzis was wounded seriously in the leg during the first stages of the fighting in the First Perimeter. He continued to

fight until he ran out of ammunition and then went to look for an aid station. He was barely able to walk. When he got back to battalion he was hit again in the arm. He could not find the aid station in the fighting, but someone told him to get on back to the regimental aid station if he could. Auzis started out, but had only gone a short distance when he saw Sgt. Felix M. Giuffre lying on the ground. Auzis saw that Giuffre was unconscious from a head wound, and as no one seemed to have time to do anything about him, he picked him up. As he lifted Giuffre into his arms, he received another bullet wound in the arm, this time the same arm. Auzis struggled with his burden and limped along with him to the rear. As he moved slowly back along the railroad track, other men passed him. When he finally came to the minefield above RJ 2 where the tank had been knocked out on 5 July, he could carry Giuffre no longer. He had to lay him down to rest. As he laid him down he received a bullet wound through his good leg. He could barely drag himself along now, so he had to leave Giuffre on the edge of the minefield and fend for himself. He managed to get as far as Tanapag. In the meantime the remainder of the two battalions had been streaming back and were in the process of building up the Second Perimeter. Someone dragged Auzis in and placed him in a hole which was being dug for the wounded men. Auzis lay here for some little time, and finally tried to help with the distribution of ammunition. After bandaging one of the leg wounds he was able to get about a little, but had no sooner got up and around than he was hit in the back by a large shell fragment. This was during the artillery barrage that landed in the perimeter during the first shelling. Auzis was almost unconscious by this time, but dragged himself down to the water's edge, arriving there just about the time the second concentration hit farther to the south. Auzis was just conscious enough to see the men below him take to the water in their attempt to swim to the reef so he shoved out into the water. Groggy and badly battered, he managed to swim out some distance, but finally gave it up and made his way back to shore. He was again pulled into the shelter of the foxhole and stayed there the rest of the day. He was eventually evacuated that evening by LVT.

Meanwhile, Sergeant Giuffre, left by Auzis on the edge of the minefield, had regained a slim fraction of consciousness. He could see, evidently, the figures of men running hazily through the fog that enshrouded his brain, and he tried to move himself. A few minutes after Auzis had left him, Pvt. Joseph Gomes came running by after having stopped at the railroad cut farther forward to try and delay the enemy for a few minutes. Gomes saw Giuffre and said later that the wounded man was moving an inch or two at a time, literally tearing huge chunks

of ground out with his hands as he tried to pull himself along. Somehow or another he had crawled all the way into the middle of the minefield without touching a single fuzed shell. Gomes stopped, tried to find a way in to the wounded man, and couldn't. He finally just decided, "to hell with it," and in three jumps was at Giuffre's side. He picked him up and carried him on across the road and into the perimeter that was now set up. Giuffre was hit by another bullet in the leg. He was finally evacuated late in the afternoon by LVT.

Lieutenant Seymour P. Drovis had taken charge of the little holding force that was built up along the railroad track just in back of the First Perimeter. He was killed there while running up and down his improvised line, trying to get his men organized.

Private First Class William Hawrylak, who had been wounded earlier in the battle for Saipan, had come back to duty the day before the *Gyokusai*, going AWOL from the hospital to do it. During the early morning hours when the fighting was furious he received a saber thrust which almost cut off his buttocks. Although he was bleeding profusely, Hawrylak continued to man a submachine gun which he had acquired somewhere. He continued to fire this gun at the enemy although nearly everyone around him was killed or wounded. Hawrylak, himself, couldn't walk. Staff Sgt. Dominic Daurio, his squad leader, ordered him to get back out of the hole while he could, but Hawrylak's answer was: "Hell, no! I like it here. Besides I got no ass. How can I walk?" Daurio then ordered him to leave and when Hawrylak disregarded the order, Daurio came over to him and picked him up bodily and began to carry him back to the rear. Halfway back to the beach, Pfc. Clayton E. Ernsthausen came along and helped carry the wounded man. Hawrylak was bleeding so profusely, however, that he finally had to be laid down on the ground. Daurio gave him a sulfa pill and while this was going on, Ernsthausen became engaged in a fight with a Japanese and disappeared. He was never seen again, and his body was never found. Daurio carried Hawrylak the rest of the way back to the Second Perimeter and placed him in a foxhole where he would have some protection. Hawrylak, however, refused to stay there. It was he who organized the wounded men into a depot to collect ammunition and clean weapons. Although he could not walk, Sergeant Hawrylak spent almost the entire day crawling around the perimeter on his stomach, collecting the vital supplies. When Lieutenant Schroeder's trucks got through, he was placed aboard and evacuated.

Private First Class Cassie Hill was another of the A Company men who was hit several times during the day. At the First Perimeter he received a rifle bullet that passed through his upper arm, shattering the

bone. Hill was unable to fire his rifle with this useless arm, so he gave the weapon to Pfc. Armin W. Kunde, who was in his foxhole with him. Hill and Kunde now became a team, Hill using his one good arm to load and keep Kunde's rifles in operation while the other man fired. They held their position on the line until they were completely out of ammunition, then moved back. During this withdrawal, Hill methodically stripped all the dead and seriously wounded of their ammunition, collecting a fairly large amount. Kunde helped the wounded to move back. As fast as Hill could get enough rounds of ammunition together, he would load a clip and put it in the spare rifle. Then Kunde would stop and kneel and fire at the enemy who were nearest. Kunde also had a BAR which he had field stripped at the moment the Japanese hit, so Hill carried this, too. About halfway back to the Second Perimeter, Hill was hit in his good arm and from that time on, all he could do was stick one of the rifles under each useless arm and carry them along. When the beach was finally reached, Hill joined Sergeant Hawrylak in his ammunition-collecting activities, cleaning rifles on the side with a great deal of effort on account of his arms. During these activities he was hit in the back, and finally, later in the afternoon, his leg was shattered by a bullet. This last wound finally anchored Hill to one spot. He was eventually evacuated by LVT late in the evening.

In B Company much the same type of thing happened. Most of this company's officers were killed before the Second Perimeter was ever reached. Lt. George B. Dolliver was hit by a stray bullet and killed during the withdrawal. It has already been told that the company commander, Lieutenant King, was killed while trying to get the Second Perimeter organized. King had been following Staff Sgt. James F. Rhodes in the withdrawal. Rhodes and King were both looking for a place to stop and make a stand and were moving back along the railroad track. Just south of RJ 2, Rhodes, who was in the lead, was killed by a grenade in the face. King turned to direct the men coming south into the houses on the west side of the road. He was joined a moment later by Captain White. As the two officers stood there, directing traffic and shouting encouragement to the men, a mortar shell scored a direct hit on Lieutenant King.

Sergeant John Domanowski had an experience which shows the type of thing with which the men pulling back from the First Perimeter had to contend. Domanowski had been hit in one arm during the original stand, and on the way back to the Second Perimeter he became faint from loss of blood and had to sit down to rest. He picked a spot underneath a tree, facing the beach. He had no sooner taken up this position

when a Japanese leaned out of the tree above him and shot him in the other arm.

Private Anthony J. LaSorta was another of those killed while trying to get back to the Second Perimeter. He was moving to the rear when he was hit in the thigh by a burst of machine-gun fire, which broke his leg. He fell to the ground, unable to move. A few minutes later Lieutenant Mulhearn of B Company came running by and LaSorta called to him. Mulhearn came over and picked LaSorta up and put him on his own back. He had only taken a few steps when the machine gun opened fire again. The full force of this fire hit LaSorta squarely and literally blew him to pieces, right off Mulhearn's back. Mulhearn did not receive a scratch.

An incident of a similar nature was that experienced by Pfc. Gerald D. Ostrum of C Company. His squad leader, Staff Sgt. Louis S. Doddo, had been badly wounded early in the fighting. When Ostrum pulled back, out of ammunition, he picked Doddo up and put him on his back, carrying him fireman style. As Ostrum made his way back to the rear he heard footsteps behind him and a loud swish. A Japanese had run up and with one clean stroke had cut off Doddo's head, which fell to the ground. Ostrum dropped Doddo's body and fired his carbine from the hip, killing the enemy officer.

Altogether men of both battalions estimate that some fifty of their dead were killed in this withdrawal from the original positions. It was accomplished without any weapons support whatsoever and almost entirely without organization.

One thing has been neglected thus far in the early stages of the *Gyokusai*. That is the important role played by Division Artillery up until the time the perimeter line was carried away. It has already been noted that 2,666 rounds of artillery ammunition were fired during the night in support of the defense. From 0300 this was directed at the area immediately in front of the defending battalions. Before that, it was used to interdict roads and routes of approach all the way from Marpi Point to Makunsha, with telling effect. When the attack began in earnest, Captain Toft, forward artillery observer with Lt. Colonel O'Brien, called in this fire to close-in defensive areas, usually two hundred yards. Pfc. Charles McCullough, of C Company, who had been assigned as O'Brien's runner and was with him during most of the first part of the attack, testified that Captain Toft had spent the first twenty minutes with the battalion commander, adjusting fire on the oncoming hordes of enemy. Captain Ackerman stated later that fifteen minutes after his company had been hit, he called battalion on his radio and

talked with Captain Toft. "For God's sake, Bernie, get that artillery in closer," he said. Captain Toft replied that he already was within 150 yards of Ackerman's line. The company commander then told him to pull it in to seventy-five; he would take his chances. This was done, just before communications went out completely. Even this did not have any effect on the *Gyokusai*.

THE SECOND AND LITTLE PERIMETERS

The third and longest period of fighting for the two rifle battalions of the 105th Infantry was the stage in which they built up and held the Second and Little Perimeters. It is interesting to note how many of the line officers were left at the beginning of this period.

In the 1st Battalion, Lt. Colonel O'Brien had already been killed. His executive officer, Captain Butkas, was still alive and took an active part in the defense of the Second Perimeter until he was seriously wounded during the first artillery barrage. Captain Ackerman of A Company was still unhurt and played a leading part throughout the morning and early afternoon in organizing and steadying the men. Of his officers, only Lt. Kendrick Newton was still alive, but he was wounded and largely ineffective. B Company had only Lieutenant Mulhearn left for duty, and as the day progressed this young officer became more and more a pillar of strength in the little group of men defending themselves in Tanapag. After the departure of McCarthy behind the tanks Mulhearn became the nominal leader. Lieutenant Tougaw of C Company was very much in evidence during the early part of the day and was killed in a very mysterious episode that occurred shortly after the establishment of the Little Perimeter. He had none of his platoon officers left. In battalion staff and Headquarters Company, not one single officer escaped being either killed or so seriously wounded as to be ineffective.

The 2d Battalion had only Major McCarthy. One of his officers, Lieutenant Greenwell, had gotten back to the Second Perimeter, but was wounded seriously there. The others were all killed or wounded before the Perimeter was established.

The Second Perimeter was a desperate affair. It was hastily organized. The men had little or no chance to dig in and protect themselves, and it was necessary to use whatever means were readily at hand for cover and concealment. In some instances the men used the little Japanese houses. A small number of these were, luckily enough, constructed of concrete and offered those that could get inside some protection from

small-arms fire. In the wooden houses, the men crawled into the air space between the ground floor and the earth. Both of these two types of shelters were saved almost exclusively for the wounded, but one can easily see how inadequate they were by the fact that more than three-quarters of the incapacitated could not find room in the buildings.

The second main feature found and used in the area was the trenches that ran through the town. These were still another part of the Japanese beach defenses, but in this area they were not nearly so deep nor so well constructed as those in front of the 105th Infantry's CP. Most of the remainder of the wounded men did find some of these ditches and spent most of the day in them. The defense established at the Second Perimeter was more or less dependent upon this trench system for cover. The men occupied these ditches and when they weren't firing, improved them until they had fairly good foxholes.

The nature of the Second Perimeter should be studied in a little more detail than it has been so far, so that it may be properly understood. It was not a closed circle in any sense of the word. Large gaps existed along its whole length and not all of these gaps were covered by fire. Small numbers of enemy could, therefore, infiltrate directly into the center of the position and on a few occasions during the day parties of at least ten enemy soldiers got into the houses where the wounded were. In each case these Japanese were killed without doing any damage. It seemed to the men who encountered them that they had stumbled into the perimeter without realizing what they had done. Furthermore, the perimeter was not wholly confined to one side of the highway. At least thirty-five men were placed by Major McCarthy on the east side of the road and guarded one or two small buildings on that flank to prevent their use by the enemy. The side along the beach was not protected. Thus, the whole position can be said to have been three-sided. After the Little Perimeter was established later in the day this Second Perimeter became largely two-sided, the south leg being abandoned in a readjustment that was made to fill up important holes left by the men killed and wounded in the artillery barrage which, incidentally, landed almost exactly on the northeast corner of the position. In spite of this imperfect organization, and in spite of the numerous small infiltrations that occurred, it should be emphasized that there were no major points at which the ring could be broken. The two main points at which the Japanese consistently tried to break the perimeter in any force were along the beach and along the road to the south. Major McCarthy and his men had these two areas fully covered. The work of two men was largely responsible for protecting the beach exit.

The first of these was Pfc. Willie Hokoanna, a Hawaiian. Hokoanna

was originally an ordinary rifleman in E Company, 105th Infantry, but at some time during the battle for Nafutan Point he had picked up a BAR which had been discarded when one of his colleagues was wounded. This weapon had been quite badly damaged, but the big Hawaiian liked it and decided to see if he could repair it. Throughout the rest of the battle he moved around through areas the company passed through, picking up a part here and a part there from damaged BARs. By 7 July he had a complete weapon in good firing condition, although it is noteworthy that he had to use a nail in one place to hold part of the assembly together. Hokoanna carried this salvaged weapon back to the Second Perimeter during the withdrawal on the morning of the *Gyokusai*. For some little time he wandered up and down the north side of the defensive position, firing it from the hip. At around 0900, Hokoanna noticed that large numbers of enemy were trying to work their way south by using the narrow spit of sand along the beach. He searched around for a place to take these Japanese under fire, finally locating a small tree whose trunk split about four feet above the ground, forming a fork. The Hawaiian calmly stepped over to this tree and placed his homemade weapon in the crotch. Using this support, Hokoanna held his position all day long, firing at the enemy as they came along the water's edge. Altogether he is credited with killing over 140 Japanese by nightfall. It should be borne in mind that Hokoanna had to stand up behind the tree during the whole period and was thus constantly exposed to a tremendous hail of small-arms fire and mortar-shell fragments. In spite of this he received only one inconsequential wound.

Helping Hokoanna was Sgt. William Baralis of A Company. Baralis had been the pitcher for A Company's baseball team in better days and in the words of one of his comrades, "he sure had a marvelous arm." At the time the Second Perimeter was forming, he had played a major part in organizing the north side, near the beach. At about the same time Hokoanna discovered the enemy trying to skirt along this area, Baralis became aware of the same thing. He watched the big Hawaiian work for a few minutes and then got hold of Hawrylak, the ammunition carrier, and told him to get all the grenades he could find. Hawrylak went from man to man around the Perimeter and obtained all their grenades. These he passed up to Baralis along a sort of bucket brigade of wounded men. The ex-pitcher would take them and look for a likely target and then throw. He usually waited until Hokoanna's fire would drive the enemy off the open sand spit, and then he would throw a grenade and drive them back into the open again. Men who were near Baralis during the day estimate that he threw 150 grenades and that he killed around a hundred Japanese. He, too, was extremely exposed, and

at 1500 in the afternoon he was finally felled by a bullet which hit him in the spine. He died the next day in a hospital.

Another good picture of the fighting that took place in the Second Perimeter through the rest of the day can be had by looking at the experience of Pfc. Charles E. Emig of A Company. Emig had taken up his position with the rest of the company along the lines of the outer ring. Not long after the Second Perimeter was established, the first party of Japanese got into the inside of the first ring and were not discovered until they were in one of the houses where the wounded had been placed. Sgt. Philip W. Dominique was one of the wounded men in this particular house and he gave the alarm. Before they were all killed, some Japanese escaped, but Captain Ackerman decided it might be best to put a guard over the helpless men in the house, inasmuch as they had all given up their weapons to the abler men. Emig was assigned this task. For the next four or five hours, he moved from window to window inside the house firing at any enemy who lifted his head. This eventually settled into a personal duel between Emig and a small contingent of Japanese who tried to get back into the area. In between times the enemy directed mortar barrages into the house. Emig was kept extremely busy running from window to window and trying to keep the wounded from being hit again by mortar fragments. When the artillery began landing in the area it came dangerously close and Emig decided that he had best get the men out and into a ditch. He covered the exit of most of these men, but was killed as he moved across a window opening to help one of the wounded move.

Most of the men who did get back safely to the Second Perimeter from the Old Perimeter were hit as they maintained the defense of the new position. The area was full of wounded and as the day progressed this group of incapacitated grew. The soldiers, however, were desperate. No man thought of leaving his part in the active defense until he was absolutely incapable of moving any more. The stories of Hawrylak and Pfc. Cassie Hill are typical of the sacrifice and devotion shown by these men throughout that day. Some of the men were never able to take any part in the defense because of being so seriously wounded, but they did their part by trying not to get in the way and by keeping quiet although many of them were in extreme pain. One of these cases was Sgt. Attilio W. Grestini. Grestini had remained active throughout the morning, manning a rifle position almost on the northeast corner of the perimeter. When the artillery began falling near him around noon, one shell blew Grestini's left arm completely off, and mangled his left leg at the hip. He lay there for some little time without uttering a sound, biting his lips to keep from crying out. Two men discovered him in his

hole and dragged him back into the center of the Perimeter. Although they insisted on helping him, Grestini refused to let them spend any time on him. He made a tourniquet for both his arm and leg and sat quietly in a hole in the middle of the area for the rest of the day, never uttering a sound and making himself just as inconspicuous as possible. He had absolutely no medical treatment nor did he have any drugs to ease the pain. Grestini was still alive in October.

Others were not so fortunate, but they too, followed Grestini's course of action. Pfc. Mark L. Winter had been seriously wounded in the withdrawal and was hit again shortly after getting inside the Second Perimeter. He was unable to move under his own power, but managed to talk someone into propping him up into a firing position. From that point on he fired his carbine slowly and deliberately all morning and is said to have killed several Japanese. When he finally ran out of ammunition, he hailed someone and asked them to hand him an M1 rifle which was lying nearby. The soldier protested, telling Winter that he shouldn't be firing from such an exposed position (he was propped up above ground), that bullets were landing all over the area. Winter's answer was, "I'll stay here and fire until I get the last Jap or they get me." He was killed on the spot where he lay, but not by the enemy. He was hit by artillery later in the day.

Altogether, though the figure is nowhere near accurate, both battalions suffered approximately fifty men killed and over two hundred wounded in defending the Second Perimeter. Of these wounded, more than one-third suffered two or more wounds and about thirty-five of the men were wounded three or more times. Some fifteen of those wounded in this defense died after having been evacuated. Approximately forty men were killed during the two artillery concentrations and over sixty were wounded. These figures were arrived at by checking over the stories told by the men of the companies after they had been assembled later. There were some omissions in the totals that probably could be included. These were men missing. No one knew exactly what happened to them.

If one takes the figure of ninety killed which was recorded above and adds another sixty to it to account for men that were killed in other places, such as on the way from the Original Perimeter to the Second Perimeter, or in making attempts to reach the regimental CP, or in certain individual actions that took place during the day, it appears that a total of around 250 men died in the original fighting that accompanied the first mad rush. Talks with Lt. Colonel Bidwell, who supervised the reclamation of American bodies for burial, point to this as a fairly ac-

curate figure. As to the wounded, some two hundred of the men received their wounds in the early fighting.

There is not room, naturally, to tell all the stories of each man during that horrible day, but a few of them will bear repeating. One of the most interesting of these is the so-called "Tougaw Incident."

Lieutenant Bernard Tougaw, commander of Company C, had reached the Second Perimeter without harm. There, during the morning he had taken an active part in the organization and maintenance of an adequate defense. About 1230, almost an hour after the artillery concentrations had landed in the midst of the men, Tougaw suddenly came careening down the road from the north in a jeep. Probably no one will ever know where he got the vehicle, or how. It is thought by some members of his company that he had been holding a place on the northeast corner of the Second Perimeter at the time the artillery hit and that he had taken refuge from it by running north into what was then purely Japanese territory. It is thought that he had escaped detection from the enemy and had decided that, inasmuch as he was safe up until then, he might as well make a try to get back up to the Original Perimeter and get one of the battalion vehicles. Most of these cars had been burned by the Japanese column as they passed by the area, but at least one must have been overlooked.

As he came down the road from the north, Tougaw had to run the gantlet of all the enemy along the highway, and men who saw him coming say that he drew round after round of small-arms fire, but none hit him. At RJ 2 he stopped for a fleeting second and an American soldier jumped into the car. He then proceeded south and reached the Second Perimeter without mishap. Here he stopped and shouted that he was going to try and get back to the regimental CP and asked if any men wanted to risk it. Four or five of the men nearby ran out of the ditches and houses and jumped in the vehicle. Tougaw then proceeded south again. One of the men who got in the jeep was Cpl. William Bowsh, a cook from Company B, 105th Infantry. Bowsh told the story of this ill-fated expedition later, and inasmuch as he was one of five survivors of the incident and the man who was most important, it is necessary to follow his footsteps for a few moments before he joined Lieutenant Tougaw. This is the story in his own words:

I had been lying in the ditch that ran alongside the road. Sometime during the morning my carbine jammed and I told the guy next to me to watch while I fixed it. I took the thing all apart and had just nicely got all the pieces laying out on the ground when this artillery begins coming in. I just grabbed all the parts and got out of there. I put all of them in my pocket so I wouldn't lose

them. I headed for the beach because there didn't seem to be any shells falling there, but by the time I got there, it didn't look so good. Then I looked up and saw these other fellows running down the road, and I decided maybe I'd better go with them so I took out after them. I didn't catch them and maybe it was just as well because the first thing I know they are all shot up by some more artillery. Some of them headed for the water and started swimming out to the reef, but I didn't like that at all. So I dove under a house which was right near me. I found five pretty badly wounded guys in there. One of them was Pfc. Chiaranti, one was Pfc. John Produit, and one was Pvt. William Banko. They were all from my company. The other two I didn't know. Well, I took off my undershirt and bandaged up Produit's and Banko's wounds, putting some of that sulfa powder on them and giving them a sulfa pill. While I was doing that, I handed my carbine to one of the other guys and asked him if he knew how to put it together. He said he could so I told him to go ahead and do it and then stand guard. While I was working on these two guys, this other wounded man killed two Japs with a grenade in between putting my carbine together. There were Japs prowling around all over the place and if you didn't watch out they crawled right in with you.

I finally finished bandaging up Produit and Banko and the carbine was all put together and this fellow who fixed it put in a full magazine so I took over the guarding job. It was a little while after that that this jeep comes barreling down the road. Lieutenant Tougaw was driving it and there was one other fellow in the front seat with him. Lieutenant Tougaw was the commander of Charlie Company. The jeep stopped and I jumped out from under the house and this one wounded man followed me. Tougaw said he was going back to regiment, and that was for me. I got in and the wounded man got in with me. Pretty quick four other guys come running up and they get in too and away we go. I never saw any of these other fellows before in my life. We didn't have a single shot fired at us for about one hundred yards. I think everybody was just too surprised. Pretty quick we came to this bridge which went across Bloody Run and Lieutenant Tougaw stopped the jeep again. There was a whole bunch of fellows down there who had set up another beachhead. Well, Lieutenant Tougaw sat there for quite a long time—it sure seemed like a long time anyway—talking to Captain Schuete [Capt. Seymour Shutzer] who was the MD of the 1st Battalion. While they were talking, all of a sudden, a machine gun opened up. Lieutenant Tougaw sure got that thing in high—but quick. The road was littered with dead Japs and that jeep sure bumped along over them just like we were riding on ties on a railroad track. I forgot to say that while we were talking to the MD a few more guys got into and onto the jeep. I think there must have been twelve of us altogether now. We finally got across the bridge all right, but right there on the other side there was a tree across the road. It wasn't the trunk of the tree; it was the top of it so that the road was all full of branches. At this point Lieutenant Tougaw put the car in creeper and barrels it right through these branches. But we don't get all the way through because just as we got to the other side the jeep began to stall. As it began to stop Lieutenant Tougaw was shot and killed. The bullet hit him right between the eyes. He slumps over the wheel and the jeep gave one big jump and rolled off the road into the ditch. All the rest of us got the hell out of that jeep in a hurry, you can bet. Everybody ran in different directions. I headed for the bridge where Bloody Run goes under the road. I couldn't get through under there because it was full of water, so I decided I'd

have to climb up and run across the road. I just started to do this when I look up and down the road there were three medium tanks coming. They were ours, but they evidently didn't know that I was an American because they opened up on me with machine guns. I just jumped up on the road and yelled and hollered bloody murder and waved my carbine. The tanks stopped firing. Well, the tanks stopped but the Japs commenced. They must have had a machine gun zeroed right in on the bridge and they let me have it. I gave one great big jump and dove over the other side of the road. There was a deep ditch there that ran alongside it. It seemed to me like it was ten yards away and ten feet deep. I landed right on top of two Japs. I pulled up my carbine to shoot them and the damned thing wouldn't go off. I just squeezed the trigger and nothing happened. I was sure mad at that guy that put it together so nice, but I didn't think much about it then. I just put two and two together and decided to get out of there. The Japs were getting ready to shoot me and no mistake. I turned around and was just getting ready to dive in this river, Bloody Run, when another American popped his head into the ditch up the way a little farther and he shot the two Japs. I had time to look at my carbine then, and what do you know? The guy hadn't monkeyed up the works at all. He had put it all together nice like and then he put the safety on. What a hell of a place to go around in with the safety on! I was so busy that I didn't even notice it before.

Well, then I decided I better keep on going down that road. Our lines were down there somewhere. I ran along the ditch a ways and the first thing I noticed was an American soldier ahead of me. This guy is walking along the middle of the road as big as life. He was wounded and limping and had a cane. I followed him a little ways and while I was watching him a Jap jumps out of the ditch on the other side of the road and came up to this guy. He was yelling and hollering and waving a pistol under the American's nose. There wasn't anything to do but shoot him, which I did. It took two shots to get him though. You know that other American just kept right on walking down the road like nothing had happened. I can't understand that and I don't know where he went, either. I never saw him again, but I guess he must have got to our lines.

I decided that I had better get that pistol because it must have some ammo in it and I only had a few rounds left. I climbed up and on the road and ran toward the dead Jap and I was just bending over to pick up the pistol when this damned machine gun opened up again. I looked for a ditch to jump in and it was a good thing I did look first, too, because there was another Jap in there, right where I was going to jump. He didn't see me, though, so I forgot about the pistol and jumped anyway. When I landed in the ditch this Jap turned around and takes one look and hollers "Suwendah, suwendah!" I said, "Suwendah hell," and let him have three shots. That killed him. I was in the ditch on the left side of the road now (away from the beach). I figured I was on the wrong side so I got up and ran like hell across the road and jumped in the other ditch. I landed right with two Americans this time and just when I got in there this damned machine gun opened up again. One of the Americans turned around and said to me, "Get the hell out of here. You're drawing fire."

Well, I looked around for some place to go and the only place I could see was some kind of a cement building about 150 yards away across the fields toward our lines and toward the beach. I found out later it was a Jap air-raid shelter. Anyway, I figured that if I could get there I would be safe. So I took a good long breath and started out. That's when I found out what mud is. I

ran and ran and every time I took a step I got more mud on my shoes and my feet kept getting heavier and heavier. I ran and ran and I was getting pretty tired, but I think I was going slower all the time. Some son-of-a-so-and-so was shooting at me, too. But I got there. I looked inside and there was nobody in there so I went in. Pretty quick three other guys came puffing and blowing and they came in with me. Two of them were from 1st Battalion headquarters. Were they pooped and was I pooped! We rested for fifteen minutes and then we rested for another fifteen minutes. I couldn't get my breath. Finally we decided we better go, though, so we got ready to move. I looked in my carbine and discovered that that nice full magazine wasn't full at all. There were only two more rounds left in it. I didn't think that was enough. I asked these other guys what they had in the way of ammunition. One of them (I think he was a cook or clerk or something from battalion headquarters) had a BAR he had picked up somewhere, but it was all apart and he didn't know how to put it together. I took time out and put it together and handed it back to him. He had one full magazine of ammunition for it. After that I decided to start back for our lines again. Well, this guy with the BAR went first and just as he poked his head out the door, two Japs came in the door, just as big as life. This guy with the BAR got excited. He had the damn thing on full automatic and when he saw the two Japs he just pulled the trigger and things happened. Do you know, that BAR didn't stop firing until every round was gone! He cut those Japs right square in two. I was mad at him, though, because he used up all his ammunition.

After that we all waited for five more minutes to see if there were any more Japs coming. I stood guard with my two rounds of ammunition. None came so I took out for our own lines. This time I only had to run about seventy-five yards and there I was with our guys all around me. It sure felt good. They took me to see Lt. Colonel Jensen and I told him all about my company. I was the first guy to come back from all the men in the 1st and 2d Battalions. I had to talk for about an hour, it seemed like. While I was talking, some other fellows got back, and finally Major McCarthy himself came in. That's all there was to it, but that was enough.

Another man who eventually got back to the regimental CP in safety was Pfc. Marcus H. Itano, of Company C. He had one of the most embarrassing experiences. As he told the story later:

I started out with a large bunch of fellows who were going to try and break through the Japanese lines to get back to our lines. We were just getting ready to go when a lot of artillery hit us. Some of the men were killed and pretty badly shot up—about half of them, I guess. We all started to run and we got hit again by some big stuff and then every one headed for the water, me right along with them. I ended up on the beach and some of the men ahead of me were already in the water swimming, but I could see bullets hitting the water all around them and I figured they'd all be killed. I figured my best chance might be to try for our lines alone by cutting down the beach, so I did. I ran about fifty yards, keeping pretty low and when I looked up I saw about twenty men ahead of me. They were laying prone on the beach with their backs to me and were pretty busy watching something farther on ahead. They had some kind of green uniforms on, just like our own. I couldn't see their faces. I took another

look and thought they were some of our own men who were hiding from the Japs so I thought I'd join them. I ran right smack into the center of the group and laid down. Nobody paid any attention to me. I must have laid there for two or three minutes and then I poked the man next to me to find out what they were looking at. When he turned towards me, I found myself looking right into the face of a Jap. It's a good thing my reactions were working good. The Jap was surprised, but not half as surprised as I was. I had a grenade on my shoulder strap and as I jumped to my feet I pulled this off and yanked the pin. Then I dropped it and ran like hell. I'm telling you, I stepped on heads and backs and everything else getting out of there. The grenade? I don't know how much damage it did. It went off, I know that, but I didn't turn around to see. I was in a hurry to get out of there. You know, those Japs never did fire a single shot at me. I wonder what they thought when they saw me tearing down that beach!

One of the incidents that everyone remembers well is one which happened to Private First Class Thompson of Company F. Thompson was also caught in the artillery barrage and headed for the reef. Before he dived in the water, however, he stripped everything off except his helmet. He had swum about one hundred yards out into the lagoon when someone opened fire on him with a machine gun. Thompson tried to evade the fire in every way he could, zigzagging and swimming under water. Finally, he gave up and headed back toward shore. Just as he came to dry land the machine gun opened fire again. Thompson was forced to run for it. Moving from ditch to ditch and from bush to bush he finally arrived at the regimental CP three hours later—stark naked except for his helmet.

As long as three months later, most of the men in the 1st and 2d Battalions, 105th Infantry, were visibly shaken by their experiences. They readily admitted being frightened to death and having been thoroughly "scared" all the way through the nightmarish day. However, there was one man in the 1st Battalion who was not frightened. Other men in both battalions long afterward shook their heads over this man. He was Pvt. Celso Flores, an eighteen-year-old boy, with Company C, 105th Infantry. Flores was fondly called the "Kid" by nearly everyone in his battalion. For the entire period of the battle of Saipan, Flores had been looking for a good shot at a Japanese. He had taken a few, but he always complained that he hadn't really had a good shot. First Sergeant Sweeney was near Flores on the morning of 7 July when the raid hit the perimeter. He says that he heard Flores exclaim, "Holy cow! Look at 'em. Just look at 'em. Oh boy! Oh boy!" Other men in the company state that whenever they came across Flores during the day, he was always muttering the same, "Oh boy! Oh boy!" To him the counterattack was fun. Although he was wounded during the stand in the Second

Perimeter he spent the entire day hunting the enemy like anyone else would hunt deer. He was one of the last to leave the Perimeter that night because, "I'll never get as many shots as this again."

This is the story of the *Gyokusai* as it affected the 1st and 2d Battalions, 105th Infantry. Out of 4,311 Japanese bodies buried on the Tanapag Plain in the next four days, 2,295 can be definitely attributed to the men of these two battalions. Dogged and determined, these men fought without ammunition, food, or medical supplies, except what they could dig out of the ground, for a total of eighteen hours, from 0400 in the morning, until the last survivor was evacuated from the Second Perimeter at 2200 that evening.

However, although these two battalions bore the brunt of the *Gyokusai* and suffered the heaviest casualties, it should be remembered that other units were involved. Headquarters and Headquarters Company, Antitank Company, Service Company, and attached units, all of whom formed the 105th Regiment command post group, took an important part. The regiment, less the 3d Battalion and Company G, received a citation. Company C, 105th Infantry, which was posted for the night of 6-7 July on the southwest nose of Hara-Kiri Gulch, received a particularly heavy share of the fighting. All other units of the Division then in the lines were heavily engaged during the day, but because they had extremely favorable ground to defend, were not driven from their positions.

It is now necessary to return and study the whole Division situation during 7 July and the actions of the other units.

NOTE TO CHAPTER 43

¹This story was first published in *Yank* for 20 July 1944. It was later verified by the Division Historian after a thorough check of all survivors of the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry.

Chapter 44: The Fringes of the Tide

IT WILL BE REMEMBERED that General Saito maintained his command post in Paradise Valley. Here, according to earlier intelligence estimates, was the main Japanese strength remaining on the island after the capture of the Tanapag Harbor area on 4 July. Part of the plan laid down for the *Gyokusai* called for a prong of the main attack to move up through this stronghold and emerge in the high ground near Hill 767. Estimates of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 165th Infantry, which were closest to the eastern exit, indicate that about five hundred enemy tried to use this rear exit at various times during the day. The heaviest attack came at daylight. Major Claire, commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, had ordered Captain Smith of F Company to send a daylight patrol into the valley to take the enemy outposts by surprise at dawn, thus knocking out the cave positions that controlled the narrow bottleneck through which the battalion had been unable to move on the previous day. This task was turned over to Lt. Charles L. Yarborough, company executive officer, who organized a thirty-man patrol for the task.

It was while Lieutenant Yarborough was gathering his men and supervising their supply before moving off, that the *Gyokusai* hit up through the valley. It was preceded in this area by an extremely heavy mortar barrage which completely scattered and disorganized Yarborough's men, but caused no casualties. After ten minutes of this fire, the Japanese surged up through the bottleneck. All the 2d Battalion was situated on rugged, high ground which afforded good cover from which to fire, and the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, which was in reserve behind Hill 767, had ranged almost their whole battery of supporting weapons on the point where the enemy would have to emerge from the valley. The result was a massacre. The men of both battalions literally mowed attackers down without suffering any casualties. At least three hundred enemy were killed in the first futile charge. After that they kept coming in smaller and smaller groups all through the forenoon. Yarborough managed to get his patrol reorganized within a few minutes after the close of the mortar barrage, but he had to wait until 0700 while the charges subsided. Then he moved his men over to the edge of the valley, ready to descend into it, but when he ventured out onto the road, the whole area was under heavy cross fire from both friendly and enemy troops and it was impossible to force an entrance. It was during this attempt to penetrate the area that Yarborough counted 165 Japanese bodies within the space of a few feet, all piled up by the fire of Major Foery's men.

The counterattack did not peter out in the valley until some time

after 1300, when some of the enemy, seeing that it was useless to attempt to get out at the upper road, began to use the exit nearest the coast. Many withdrew into the cave positions which they defended tenaciously. This valley never was entered by American troops from the upper end until a month later, when a large-scale mop-up finally cleaned it out. Small American parties were ambushed here as late as February 1945.

The left battalion of the 165th Infantry experienced almost the same type of action. Major Mahoney had drawn this unit back up near Hill 721 for the night of 6-7 July after the failure to clean out Hara-Kiri Gulch on the 6th. When the *Gyokusai* struck in the morning, the remaining force attacked out of the gulch, one sizable group trying to use the extension of the gulch, the draw that had caused C Company so much trouble on 6 July, the other group trying to use the long narrow tributary valley employed by Technical Sergeant Heidelberger in his expedition of the previous morning. The two attacks, however, were totally different. That against the 165th Infantry's 1st Battalion was impotent because of a general lack of strength and the excellent defensive positions of the battalion. It might be emphasized that in no case, save on the extreme right flank of Major Claire's battalion, was there any real hand-to-hand fighting. As one soldier in B Company, 165th Infantry, put it, "It was just like shooting ducks on a rock."

It will be remembered that the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, had been attached to the 165th Infantry at 1500 the afternoon of 6 July. This battalion's mission had been to drive directly down the boundary between Mahoney and Claire, pushing to the sea just south of Makunsha and tying in there with the 105th Infantry driving north. This mission had not been accomplished and Major Fisher had dug in almost directly behind the point where the two battalions joined. This word had been passed back to Division headquarters at the close of the day's fighting.

Between 1900 on the evening of 6 July and daylight the next morning, Lt. Colonel Hart decided that it would be easier to get the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, into position to attack by passing them around his left flank, and into Hara-Kiri Gulch near its upper end, thence up along the draw by the route Murphy's squad had taken the day before. This would bring them up on the big plateau where artillery fire could support their advance over as far as the edge of the cliffs after which they would descend onto the Tanapag plain. At daylight the next morning, almost coincident with the beginning of the counterattack, Fisher's men were on the move. By 0700 they were already moving

through the 165th Infantry CP and into line on the left flank of Mahoney's battalion. There they found the enemy counterattack in progress. Unable to advance down into the gulch because of the heavy fire, they sat on the hill beside the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, firing at the moving enemy until almost 0900. Then, when the fire had subsided enough to allow them access to the gulch they moved down into it. At 0930 Major Fisher advised Lt. Col. Hart that his men were on the floor of Hara-Kiri Gulch engaged in mopping up the caves and ditches there.

So well did this work progress that shortly after noon the whole 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, was able to advance through the draw at the upper end of Hara-Kiri Gulch and move onto the plateau which overlooked the plain. By 1450 in the afternoon, when General Griner gave the order to halt the Division advance for the day, the plateau was completely occupied and Major Mahoney was making ready to begin the descent down over the cliffs to the plain. No opposition was encountered in this advance.

Much criticism has been leveled at the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, and the 165th Infantry, for a failure to advance during the early morning to help the two beleaguered battalions of the 105th Infantry on the plain below. However, it should be borne in mind that all of these units were very distinctly on the defensive during the early morning hours of 7 July. General Griner has expressed the opinion that the 165th Infantry could have moved forward during the early morning, but that they preferred to "stand where they were and shoot Japs without any effort to move forward." He aimed this same criticism at Lt. Colonel Bradt's battalion. The two cases are somewhat dissimilar as will presently be seen, but it is true that the 165th Infantry did not make any effort to move forward. This may be explained by two factors. One was a complete ignorance of the situation on the ground below. No one knew just what that situation was, not even the regimental commander of the 105th Infantry. Division certainly issued no orders to the 165th Infantry to change their tactics, although it must have been evident that the front lines were not moving during the earlier hours of the day.

The second factor explaining the failure of the 165th Infantry to move during that morning was that the initiative had simply been wrested from the line-company and battalion commanders. Men all along the lines were so busy manning the firing lines that they had no opportunity to organize an attack on their own right. The enemy was coming so fast and so insistently that every parcel of strength available had to be employed to prevent a breakthrough. It is significant to note

that B Company, Major Mahoney's reserve, was forced to organize a bucket brigade from the company headquarters and ammunition details of the Weapons Platoon. This long line of men spent the entire morning doing nothing but passing ammunition from the dumps forward to the men who were manning the guns. Furthermore, as fast as the pressure was relaxed along this front, advances were made, as is evidenced by the early entrance of the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, into Hara-Kiri Gulch. There they found themselves facing a determined enemy, and, in spite of constant effort, were not able to push forward out onto the plain during the day.

The 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, presents even a greater picture of the confusion that existed during the day. In order to understand this battalion's action one must take into account the terrain and disposition of the men.

Company I was on the right. The men were either directly behind the small tributary canyon, the main exit from Hara-Kiri Gulch, or along its sides. L Company was situated on the reverse (south) slope of the hump which formed the south wall of the gulch itself. They had low ground behind and high ground in front. On L Company's left was G Company, which occupied the forward nose of the ground guarding Hara-Kiri Gulch and overlooking the Coconut Grove and the plain. In neither L Company's nor G Company's area was there any but the barest natural cover. Both units had taken up positions where the terrain to their front (the north) protected them from the fire of the enemy within the gulch, but there was no cover in any other direction.

The next units on G Company's left were, ostensibly, the two ill-fated battalions of the 105th Infantry, some six hundred to seven hundred yards to the north. However, if these two units are overlooked and one imagines the main line to have bent backward at the point where Captain Olander dug in for the night, one could say that the next unit on G Company's left was the 3d Battalion headquarters group of the 105th Infantry. This was composed of part of M Company, 3d Battalion Headquarters Company, and K Company. All of these units were some eight hundred to nine hundred yards behind Olander's left flank, in two or three deep winding ditches, particularly on the north side of the perimeter, facing the Coconut Grove, because the ditches offered much better protection than the foxholes dug out of the coral-studded soil. This perimeter of the 3d Battalion command post nestled up against the hillside where the ground began to rise into the rugged country inland. On the west was open, fairly level ground.

There seemed little reason on the night of 6 July to worry too much about the ground on the east, above the CP.

This arrangement of the three rifle companies, I, L, and G, and the 3d Battalions headquarters CP, was hit in three places and in an unusual manner at a little after 0500 on the morning of 7 July. The section of the attack that hit I Company first was that which came out of Hara-Kiri Gulch itself, probably the most vicious single small encounter of the whole *Gyokusai* outside of the attack on the plain.

By 0500 the noise on the plain below had been growing louder and louder, but to I Company, around the corner of the high ground from the plain, it was muffled. The Japanese inside the gulch worked their way stealthily up the tributary canyon, probing I Company's positions with small groups of men. Shortly after 0600 one rifleman, Pfc. Peter G. Young, was killed by scattered rifle fire which had been increasing in intensity since daylight. Young was one member of a group of riflemen which had been placed to protect a light machine gun about halfway up the little canyon on the rim. The Japanese put so much fire on this locality that the squad leader of the riflemen ordered his men to pull back where they could get better protection. This gave the enemy a chance to scale the cliffs without being fired upon. Using grenades, they seriously wounded seven men near the machine gun, forcing their retirement, and leaving the gun unmanned. Over 150 Japanese managed to climb up out of the gulch. Although this Jap mass attack cut I Company almost in two, the men manned their positions and continued to pour a concentrated fire on the attackers. It should be emphasized that there was at no time any danger of a breakthrough in this area because Captain Brown had so placed his men that the Japanese could not do more than attain the top of the cliff. Once there they were on open ground and were exposed to the fire of all of I Company. The fighting was particularly bitter on the two sides of the breach. Those Japanese who were not killed by the rifle fire directed into their midst tried to attack the exposed ends of the broken line with hand grenades and bayonets. Others attempted to crawl forward and seize the unmanned machine gun, which was almost in the center of the hole in the line but about thirty yards back from the edge of the cliff. Finally, after over half an hour of fighting, Sgt. Walter A. Drummond, a rifle grenadier, moved forward and manned the gun again. Drummond had lobbed grenade after grenade into the midst of the enemy as they emerged over the top of the ridge line. When he ran out of ammunition he borrowed a carbine, and when this weapon jammed Drummond walked down the slope toward the unmanned weapon. He was hit at least once, but kept on going and got to the gun. He sat down behind

it and began firing. His work was deadly accurate and within a few minutes he had killed all the enemy who were near enough to the gun to endanger it. Drummond, however, was himself killed while sitting behind the weapon.

While Drummond was manning the machine gun, one of his friends, Pfc. Herman C. Vanderzen, had crawled back up the hill toward the company CP in an effort to get some first-aid material to bring back to the wounded sergeant. Before he got back, however, he heard that Drummond had been killed. Vanderzen immediately got to his feet, borrowed a BAR, and waded into the midst of the enemy below, firing his weapon from the hip. Vanderzen succeeded in driving the rest of the enemy back into a small pocket at the cliff's edge, but he, too, was killed before he could push them all the way back over the precipice.

The action of these two men had contained the attacking Japanese in a little pocket not more than thirty yards square, and Captain Brown was quick to take advantage of this situation. He ordered his men to pull back fifty yards all along the line, and then for almost thirty minutes his mortars poured fire into the bunched Japanese, driving them back. It was now almost 0800 and for the time being the counterattack in the I Company area had ended. For over an hour after this, however, rifle fire was fairly heavy and Captain Brown's men pushed on back up to the edge of the gulch, scoured along the high ground in their area and fired at targets of opportunity in the canyon. Mortar fire was also maintained in the area.

By 1200 the advance of the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, had crossed the front of I Company and the mortars had to stop. The rest of the day was spent mopping up in the tributary canyon and in the gulch itself in conjunction with Major Fisher's battalion. Captain Brown withdrew his company to the top of the cliff for the night, occupying the same positions he had held on 6 July. During the day, besides Drummond and Vanderzen and the seven men wounded in and around the machine gun, I Company lost two other men wounded, one by grenades and one by rifle fire.

The events of the day, as they affected L Company, are closely tied in with what befell the 3d Battalion CP. In order to understand both, one must first look at the fighting that whirled around G Company.

It will be remembered that on the night of 6 July, Captain Olander was to swing his company across the mouth of Hara-Kiri Gulch and contain it. The gathering darkness and heavy fighting forced him to compromise and take up a position on the nose of ground from which he could control the lower entrance by fire. This left G Company exposed on three sides, but protected from the gulch itself. The next

morning, Japanese on the plain, from the cliffs across the gulch, and from the hillside southeast of the company position, could pour a merciless fire almost directly into the foxholes occupied by Olander's men. Conversely, the unit had excellent fields of fire itself. Captain Olander had placed one of his light machine guns directly on the nose and with it covered the entrance to Hara-Kiri Gulch. The other LMG he had placed across the road to his left front on a little rise of ground just short of the low ground where the hand-to-hand fight had occurred the night before. This gun could sweep the whole face of the cliff as it ran parallel to the beach to the north and prevent movement along the base of this escarpment. This second gun was not inside the company perimeter and was protected by one squad of riflemen.

At 0445 when the main attack hit the 1st and 2d Battalion perimeters, all of the men in G Company were conscious of extremely heavy firing in that area and, as one man described it later: "In the dark we could hear a lot of people running. It sounded like a big herd of cattle. There were so many of them that the ground rumbled." When darkness began to lift, almost twenty minutes later, the men on the high ground saw what "looked like a circus had just let out." The whole plain below them was filled with people. A sizable group of "at least three hundred" Japanese separated from the main body and started toward G Company.

Olander ordered his men to begin firing at once. So effective was G Company's fire during this early period that no Japanese ever got within three hundred yards of the company position. Most of the enemy were either killed or scattered within a matter of minutes. For almost an hour there ensued a deadly duel between G Company on one hand and the enemy force on the other. The enemy was constantly being reinforced. At some time between 0700 and 0800 small enemy raiding parties began attempts to infiltrate around G Company's left flank. These small parties seemed to have one objective: to knock out the left machine gun. After trying unsuccessfully to attack the gun frontally, several Japanese armed with grenades worked their way up close enough to the rear of the position to throw a shower of grenades that wounded one of the rifle squad. Sgt. Nicholas J. Graziano, in command of the small position, now decided that his men were about to be cut off from the rear and separated from the rest of the company. If this happened and his squad was wiped out the gun would fall into the hands of the Japanese. So Graziano asked for permission to bring his men and his weapon back inside the company perimeter. This permission was given and the move was made. However, while Graziano

was moving the second machine gun was finally hit by the enemy fire and put out of action.

The Japanese worked in closer and closer. In order to give his men some advantage in terrain in the coming close-range fight, Technical Sergeant Polikowski, in command of the platoon lowest on the hill, ordered his men to move back about ten yards. This gave them an advantage of about ten feet in height. Anyone coming at the company would have to climb a steep knoll to get at the men in the foxholes. Grenades would have to land squarely in the positions or they would roll back down the slopes and explode harmlessly. Meanwhile, the whole area was covered with intense small-arms fire. Pfc. James J. Davis, the gunner on the machine gun which was out of action, had been killed when the gun was knocked out, Graziano had lost a man while trying to complete his movement back to the main company perimeter, and Polikowski lost another man shortly before the move back. The battle now settled down to a steady fire fight, the G Company men firing as fast as they could pick out a target and squeeze off their shots. Most of the men had taken up positions in holes or behind rocks. Four of Polikowski's men had found positions behind trees and three of these four were hit one after another by a Japanese sniper who had somehow managed to get behind and above the company. Two of these men, Pvt. James E. Lehman and Pfc. Charles Hruby, were killed and the other was wounded seriously.

At about 0800 Captain Olander began to experience the same difficulty that beset all units on the edge of the plain on the morning of 7 July. This was a serious shortage of ammunition. For reasons to be explained shortly, G Company was cut off from the 3d Battalion to which it was attached and could not resupply through it. No one, naturally, could get through across the plain below, and at that early hour the supplies which were dispatched later by the 165th Infantry had not gotten through. Consequently, the company commander was forced to order his men to conserve ammunition. No man was to shoot until the enemy was close enough so that there would not be any question about the shot taking effect. As one enlisted man later described it, "that old whites-of-their-eyes stuff."

The enemy, who had been creeping closer and closer as G Company's fire power diminished, were now within fifteen yards in some places. A large number of them took up positions behind the disabled tank in the ditch below the company. From here they began to throw grenades into the company foxholes. This was the start of a grim game of baseball for Olander's men. Wherever possible they picked the grenades up and threw them back behind the tank. Usually they added

a few of their own. The Japanese were just as faithfully trying to pick out the American grenades and get them back before they exploded. By 0830 this game had resulted in heavy casualties on both sides. Five G Company men, including Captain Olander, were seriously wounded, the company commander having his left arm almost blown off. In the midst of this baseball game a new menace presented itself.

The removal of the machine guns from action and the order to conserve ammunition had resulted in a failure to continue the interdiction of the entrance to Hara-Kiri Gulch. Therefore, while G Company was becoming more and more closely engaged with the enemy, several of them were able to gain entrance into the gulch, where they climbed into caves in the north cliff. From there they proceeded to bring most of the company under fire from the rear. Pfc. Elmer A. Bornich was killed by this fire and two others were wounded before Captain Olander was able to neutralize it to some extent with his own fire, which was just that much more taken away from his frontal defense.

It had already become apparent that the enemy had infiltrated through the gap between G Company and the 3d Battalion CP. This was the factor that accounted for the inability to resupply by that route. Staff Sgt. George T. Mole, Olander's mortar section sergeant, took one man and ran all the way down to the 3d Battalion CP. There they loaded up with mortar ammunition and got back.

For the moment, however, Captain Olander had checkmated every move the enemy had made. This gallant company commander typified the spirit of his company. After his wound he had had a rough tourniquet placed on his arm above the break and continued directing the defense until 1200 when continued loss of blood finally made him so weak he could not continue. He was evacuated, but the Japanese had not heard the last of Captain Olander.

At approximately 0900, G Company was in a bad position. Hemmed in on three sides, almost out of ammunition, and with very little cover, these men continued to hold their ground and fight back. By a little after 1100 the enemy activity had all but ceased and the men could see the Japanese withdrawing. There was a silence for over half an hour and then the quiet was broken by a rain of knee-mortar shells. Three men were hit almost at once and in the midst of the fire Captain Olander collapsed. Lt. George O'Donnell, company executive, who now took command, immediately ordered the men to pull out of the exposed area. Moving his wounded back with him, he finally dug in with L Company some seventy-five to a hundred yards in rear of the original company position.

Company L, 105th Infantry, and the 3d Battalion CP group had been

hit by the *Gyokusai*. K Company, which was on the north side of the battalion perimeter, was first engaged before daylight. At approximately 0500, one of the men from the battalion Headquarters Company who had dug in with K Company, heard a noise some fifty or a hundred yards ahead. He decided to investigate and took a BAR and crawled out of the ditch. Forty yards ahead of where he started he almost crawled head-on into a Japanese carrying what appeared to be a machine gun. He was not discovered and managed to get outside the ditch and work his way on forward. There he found a whole line of Japanese crawling along on their hands and knees toward the 3d Battalion perimeter. There were at least thirty of them. This unnamed clerk then got to his feet, set his BAR on automatic and walked along the ditch spraying it with fire. He killed every enemy soldier in the party, lining them up for the whole length of the trench, head to toe.

Just at daylight, however, the enemy opened fire from the Coconut Grove with a machine gun and on almost the first burst knocked out the whole M Company heavy machine gun section on the front of the perimeter. Within a few minutes after this the full force of the *Gyokusai* which came through the gap between the 1st Battalion and G Company bore down on the perimeter positions. Part of this force hit and overran the Marine artillery positions on the left and part of it hit the 3d Battalion CP. This latter group was much the smaller of the two.

No one in the 3d Battalion CP group was able to move out of his hole all morning long. Everyone was so busy firing that they had no time for anything else, and the whole battalion CP group was virtually out of ammunition by noon. The Japanese literally blanketed the area with a thin cover of small-arms fire. Eight K Company men were wounded during the morning. No one dared to show a finger on the skyline. The situation was complicated by the fact that the enemy had somehow worked troops up through the gap between G Company and the battalion CP. These were very evidently some of those from the large and well organized group that had branched off and hit G Company just after daylight. Almost from the beginning they took up a harassing fire that had a great deal to do with keeping the CP personnel pinned to their foxholes. Lt. Colonel Bradt could only give this harassment token attention until well after noon because of the extremely large number of enemy on his immediate front. The force on the hillside was not overly large, probably numbering not more than fifty at any one time, but they had the advantages of high ground and good cover and concealment, and the damage they caused was considerable. The most important contribution these scattered forces made

to the day's action was to keep the 3d Battalion CP entirely cut off from the outside world except by radio. K Company, Bradt's reserve, was never able to reassemble and move out to help the units on the line. By 1200, when enough of the enemy had been killed to release the men somewhat, everyone was out of ammunition.

Company L also suffered at the hands of the Japanese who got through the gap to the hillside. This unit, like I Company, was first hit from Hara-Kiri Gulch by enemy trying to emerge from the floor. The men in L Company had very little trouble repulsing this threat, although a large party of Japanese set up mortars on the opposite cliffs of the gulch and concentrated on L Company's section of the line intermittently during the day. At approximately 0830 some of the enemy who had broken through the gap between G and 3d Battalion headquarters set up a machine gun in L Company's rear and at intervals for the rest of the day this weapon proceeded to rake the line from one end to the other. Although he maintained good radio communication with Lt. Colonel Bradt, Captain Spaulding was not able to get any men back to the CP, losing at least two in the attempt. At approximately 1000 in the morning the jeeps sent by Lt. Colonel Hart with ammunition and water for the 1st and 2d Battalions came down the road from the east and could get no farther than L Company. This supply was finally turned over to Captain Spaulding, and he used it to resupply both I and G Companies as well as his own unit. At approximately 1200 Captain Spaulding ordered his men to move forward and into the draw in an attempt to help the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, to clean up Hara-Kiri Gulch, but once more the sheer cliffs in his front prevented him from getting down to the bottom without undue casualties from the Japanese snipers who still remained in the area. He called Lt. Colonel Bradt, who ordered him to remain where he was until the situation changed enough on each flank to release his men for a movement either to the right through 165th Infantry territory or to the left through the bottom entrance to the gulch. For the rest of the afternoon, therefore, L Company did not move from the position then held, because neither I nor G Company could free themselves to move out of the way. Spaulding's men spent almost the rest of the day firing at targets of opportunity in the plain or in the gulch.

Two other units were hit by the initial charge of the *Gyokusai*. The first unit was the Marine artillery battalion. Marine reports state that this battalion stopped the counterattack. In the G-3 periodic report issued by NTLF on the morning of 8 July 1944, it is stated that two of the firing batteries were overrun by the enemy charge and intimates that

the third battery held out.¹ This report is also carried in the findings of the Spruance committee which investigated the affair on 12 July.² Robert Sherrod, a war correspondent for *Time*, carried an article in the 19 July 1944 issue of that periodical which reads in part as follows:

The artillerymen fired point-blank into the Japs with fuses set at four-tenths of a second. They bounced their high explosive shells 50 yards in front of the guns and into the maniacal ranks . . . When the order came to withdraw, they sent this answer back, "Sir, we would prefer to stay and fight it out." They did.³

On 11 July 1944, Headquarters NTLF issued this commendation:

At approximately 0500, 7 July 1944, the battalion's outposts recognized the presence of the enemy and engaged them with machine-gun fire, continuing the fire until their ammunition was exhausted. They then fell back along the beach road. Shortly after the initial attack on the outposts the enemy penetrated our front and attacked HOW and HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE BATTERIES. These units opened up at point-blank range with cut fuses and continued to fire until the enemy approached to such a range that it was necessary to resort to ricochet fire. HOW Battery withstood the attack until the shortage of ammunition again became a matter of great concern. With true American ingenuity it was then decided to allow the enemy to move in close before shooting them in order that their arms and ammunition could be used against them. This action continued until about 1500 the same day when relief arrived. The battalion then joined in the attack against the remaining enemy and recaptured the guns which had fallen into enemy hands. During this attack it is estimated that approximately three hundred (300) Japanese participated, supported by three (3) tanks. The tanks did considerable damage until they were knocked out, one by bazooka, one by machine gun, and one by artillery. HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE and HOW BATTERIES received the brunt of the attack while GEORGE and ITEM BATTERIES were defending themselves and rendering assistance wherever possible in breaking up the general attack.⁴

In a letter dated 28 September 1944 and addressed to the editor of *Time*, General Griner, in command of the 27th Infantry Division, made the following comment:

The Marine artillery battalion did not stop the attack. It fought very courageously and suffered 136 casualties. But it was likewise overrun . . . The number of enemy dead found in the position area of the Marine battalion was 322.⁵

The facts of the case will always be in doubt, but certain facts have incontrovertible proof. Over a thousand men of two different infantry regiments were questioned specifically on what happened in the area of the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines, on the morning of 7 July. On the whole, every single man had high praise for every member of all the Marine batteries. In the words of one veteran infantryman, "They

fought like the good men they are." However, certain facts should be brought out.

It is doubtful that the Marines ever fired a round from any one of their artillery pieces during that morning. Men of the 1st and 2d Battalions, 105th Infantry, who were in front of those guns are adamant in their statements that no rounds were fired. The personnel of the 3d Battalion CP who were closest and on a little higher ground than the battalion, also claim that no rounds were fired. Officers of this battalion later investigated the sites of the two batteries nearest them. They testified that the ammunition for these guns was piled neatly and the only used brass was also stacked in neat piles. Not a round had been fired since the registration of the night before.⁶ Troops of the 106th Infantry Regiment who recaptured the batteries at approximately 1500 in the afternoon were not at all certain that one battery had not fired. They were sure that two rounds at least had been gotten off, *but*—and this is important to the picture—members of the 106th Infantry declared that these two rounds had been fired from a gun which was turned around to face the rear. Both rounds appeared to have scored a direct hit on a tank which was behind the original position.

There is no question that the Marines in these positions put up a good defense, but when they were recaptured, American troops found several Marines dead in their cots and hammocks. Some of them at least, were taken by complete surprise in the early dawn. Two of the .50-caliber machine guns attached to the battalions were knocked out and their gunners were dead, but the Japanese captured at least one other, and used it against American troops. Inspection of the Marine positions after their recapture, and testimony of individual Marines taken at the time, seem to indicate that all of the artillery battalion was surprised and overwhelmed by the group of enemy that came through the gap between the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, and G Company. After a brief and gallant fight at close range in which these Marines killed 322 enemy soldiers at a cost of 136 killed and wounded, the positions were overrun. The brevity and surprise are attested by the fact that the guns captured by the enemy and recaptured later by the 106th Infantry were found intact without even one single breechblock removed.⁷ No artilleryman would abandon his piece in the face of the enemy without rendering it inoperative unless he was surprised and driven off so suddenly that he simply didn't have time to do so. Luckily, none of the enemy soldiers was able to master the mechanical details of the guns and use them against our forces. There was evidence that three or four of the guns of the Marine artillery battalion were turned around and one gun had a shell halfway inserted in the chamber, but the

Japanese were not able to figure out the details of firing the gun or even loading it.⁸

The one other group to be involved in the *Gyokusai* on 7 July was the command post group of the 105th Infantry Regiment. At least two other units were in front of this CP. Nearly every Japanese who got back that far had already come either through the 1st and 2d Battalion perimeters or through the positions of the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines. There were no vast hordes of enemy soldiers breaking on the men of the CP in wave after wave as they did on the positions of the two front-line battalions, and there was none of the suddenness and blind rush that would overwhelm a man eventually, no matter how hard he tried nor how many times he shot. Furthermore, it should be recalled that the men had the advantage of an excellent system of defenses, constructed by the Japanese and composed of bunkers and dugouts and trenches. No one in the CP group had to be overly exposed. The Japanese exerted constant pressure on the front of the CP group throughout the day. There was never a time throughout the day when an infiltrating party was not threatening to pierce the wall of resistance.

One or two circumstances in connection with this battle should be noted. The CP group ostensibly was under the control of Colonel Bishop, commanding officer of the 105th Infantry. But for several days Colonel Bishop had been in poor health. He had seemed unable to exert pressure on his units or move about physically himself to maintain complete control over his men. On the morning of 7 July, therefore, although Colonel Bishop was present in his command shelter, he played a relatively small role in the events that transpired on that day. Active direction fell almost entirely on his executive officer, Lt. Colonel Jensen, an able and courageous man.

Jensen was concerned with two problems during the day. The first was the defense of the CP group, a concern that was more or less forced upon him by circumstances. The executive officer managed this efficiently and well. Every available man in the group was sent to bulwark the main perimeter line, particularly on the north. All activities within the CP were suspended. Clerks, truck drivers, cooks, supply men, and observers all took carbines or rifles and went into the bunkers in front of the CP and took up the defense. Ammunition parties kept a steady stream flowing along the front lines. Whole boxes were carried up to the firing line, set down, and dished out as though they held soup. The firing was continuous and effective. The personnel of this CP guarded not only the ground to their front, but to the flank also. Most of the men stood, knelt or sat in their foxholes and trenches for six to ten

hours, sometimes in two or three feet of water. So well did these men do that only a few Japanese bodies were found back of the line occupied by the CP group. Just how many Japanese were killed by the personnel of this position cannot be determined, but 1,697 bodies were found in the area. Some of these must be credited to the 1st and 2d Battalions, 106th Infantry, which came up during the afternoon and repulsed a second counterattack during the night of 7-8 July. This regiment claims a thousand Japanese killed during that time and it is altogether possible that the figure may have run that high, although some dispute arose over the claim.

In addition to directing the defense of the CP, Lt. Colonel Jensen's second problem was in directing the relief of the 1st and 2d Battalions which he knew were badly cut up and out of supplies. Jensen's own account of the 7 July is recorded in the 105th Infantry journal for that day. There was no account in the journal other than that. The soldier keeping the records was on the firing line throughout most of the period. After the CP had been ordered to retire to a rear area during the early evening, he set the following account down in the journal at Lt. Colonel Jensen's direction.

At 0445, 7 July, 1st and 2d Battalions were attacked by enemy in great force. Perimeters were finally penetrated by enemy in mass whose casualties piled up in front of automatic weapons, blocked fields of fire. The enemy charged over their own dead, overrunning defense positions. Both battalions, less heavy casualties, retired as a unit to the south, fighting a delaying action from successive positions. We counterattacked at 1030 in the vicinity of 258 U and 257 X. Remnants of both battalions retired along beachline to south, a few personnel reaching regimental CP at 247 P by 1630. Wounded evacuated via beachline by LVTs during the late afternoon. The 3d Battalion line was also attacked about 0500. Attack repulsed and line held intact. Regimental CP was attacked about 0400 and the attack continued throughout the day. Perimeter line was held and enemy, suffering heavy casualties, were unable to penetrate the defense. Offensive action was undertaken during the late afternoon by personnel of Headquarters Company and A/T Company, in conjunction with 106 Infantry on right, and the bulk of the enemy force driven to north and destroyed. This action was undertaken to enable evacuation agencies to reach wounded of 1st and 2d Battalions in area north of Regimental CP.⁹

This account is not entirely accurate, insofar as times are concerned. The time of 0400 given by Lt. Colonel Jensen as the point of contact with the enemy appears to have been some two hours early. At 0530, the regimental executive reported to the Division (Lt. Colonel Van Antwerp) that, "by the sound of the fire [he] knew the enemy to be near the CP."¹⁰ At 0615, forty-five minutes later, Lt. Colonel Jensen again called to Lt. Colonel Van Antwerp to inform him that the regi-

mental CP was pinned down by rifle fire.¹¹ The counterattack appears to have hit in that area some time during that lapse of time. There was still no word from the 1st and 2d Battalions since the brief last message from Lt. Colonel O'Brien at 0509.

General Griner at Division CP, however, upon receiving Lt. Colonel Jensen's 0530 message, carrying the added one so briefly transmitted by Lt. Col. O'Brien, had immediately called Colonel Stebbins at the 106th Infantry and ordered him to alert his two battalions and to be prepared to move in support of the 105th Infantry at once.¹² He also ordered the 762d Tank Battalion to rush all available tanks to the support of the 105th Infantry at once.¹³ It should be emphasized that General Griner took these steps very early. It should also be pointed out that although he ordered Stebbins' battalions alerted, he did *not* order them into action. This was logical, inasmuch as he had as yet received no indication that the 105th Infantry was in grave danger. The situation was still confused at 0530.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 44

¹G-3 Periodic Report No. 22, Hq NTLF, 081800 July 1944, par. 5 a (4).

²Adm. R. A. Spruance: *Report on Japanese Counterattack at Saipan on Morning of 7 July 1944*, dated 19 July 1944.

³*Time*, 19 July 1944, "World Battlefronts." This same story about the artillery was contained in NTLF G-3 Periodic Report No. 23.

⁴General Order No. 3-44, Hq NTLF, 11 July 1944.

⁵Letter, Maj. Gen. George W. Griner to *Time*, 28 September 1944.

⁶This was a sworn statement by Lt. Col. Theodore Bradt, commanding the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, and was signed by his entire staff.

⁷Testimony of Lt. Max Renner, commanding Company B, 105th Infantry, which recaptured one battery, and Lt. Herbert N. Slate, commanding Company F, 106th Infantry, which recaptured the other two batteries. This testimony was substantiated by the entire rank and file of both rifle companies.

⁸*Ibid.*

⁹Journal, 105th Infantry Regiment, 7 July 1944, page 61.

¹⁰Journal, G-2, 27th Infantry Division, 7 July 1944, entry 97.

¹¹*Ibid.*, entry 11.

¹²Certificate, Maj. Gen. George W. Griner, dated 12 July 1944. (*Report of Proceedings of Boards of Officers, etc.*, Exhibit 22, par. 1i.)

¹³Capt. Roy E. Appleman: *Army Tanks in the Battle for Saipan*.

Chapter 45: The CG Commits the 106th

COLONEL STEBBINS began assembling his regiment as soon as he received General Griner's alert order. The 2d Battalion was at hand, only a short distance west of the CP, but the 1st Battalion was behind the 165th Infantry regimental CP. It had to be marched all the way down the hill over the rough terrain, a march that took until after 0800. As soon as they got to the 106th Infantry CP, Colonel Stebbins ordered them to dig in to furnish protection for the area. This order was issued at 0830.¹ The men immediately followed out these instructions, but had not completed the defense when they were ordered at 0920 to attack northwest astride the railroad tracks.²

This order had been issued by General Griner in view of further information he had received from headquarters of the 105th Infantry. The tanks had arrived at the CP shortly after 0630 and had been placed along the road and on the firing line where their fire power added considerably to the defense of the regimental CP. During the early part of the morning they did not attempt to move. It will be remembered that all through this period Lt. Colonel Jensen had absolutely no knowledge of what had happened to his front-line battalions. He was in contact with the 3d Battalion by radio and at 0615 had tried to send two self-propelled guns to Lt. Colonel Bradt's aid without success.³

Some inkling of the disaster that had befallen the men to the front was received at 0720 when a few wounded and frightened Marines from H Battery, 10th Marines, came running into the CP of the 105th Infantry to report that their battery had been overrun and captured by the Japanese.⁴ This information was immediately telephoned to the 106th Infantry. General Griner was informed that the 2d Battalion under Major O'Hara was then moving up into position to support the 105th Infantry CP and he ordered them to recapture the batteries. When Major O'Hara reached the 105th CP he was handed this order and immediately called Division on the telephone. He talked to General Griner personally and the order was repeated. He protested that this meant a delay of some little time because he was then along the coastal road with his battalion and the Marine batteries were far enough inland to cause him to make an entirely new deployment. General Griner, who was under some pressure from NTLF, reiterated his order to recapture the Marine artillery and so Major O'Hara was forced to retrace his steps all the way back to RJ 4 and deploy his troops along the railroad track east of that point.⁵

At 0905, Capt. Emmett Catlin, S-3 of the 1st Battalion, working with Private First Class Baird of C Company, the radioman who had carried his radio all the way back to the Second Perimeter, finally got a call

through to Lt. Colonel Jensen.⁶ He told the executive officer that O'Brien had been overrun and that most of the battalion was wiped out. He was at approximately RJ 2 with a hundred men and he needed help quick. This plea was reiterated by Major McCarthy and a few minutes later Baird's radio went out. No further news was obtained until 1135 when Baird got through again briefly. Shortly after that Baird's radio was knocked out in the artillery barrage that landed in the area between 1130 and 1200.⁷

The 0900 message was referred to Division at once, and at 0920 General Griner called Colonel Stebbins and told him to commit his regiment.⁸ They were to attack up the railroad track with one battalion on the left and one on the right of the roadbed. Inasmuch as Major O'Hara was already beginning to move down the east side of the track in his effort to recapture the artillery batteries, Colonel Stebbins ordered Lt. Colonel Cornett to assume responsibility for the left zone of action. Before Cornett could assemble his battalion, however, and start it down the road toward the beach, another half an hour had elapsed and it was not until 1000 that Colonel Stebbins could report that his regiment was deployed and ready to advance.⁹

This advance of the 106th Infantry on the morning of 7 July is one of the minor controversial points of the battle. In the 1000 message, the 106th Infantry reported, "Adv. CP located at RJ 2,"¹⁰ and this was passed on to Lt. Colonel Jensen, who immediately denied it. Actually, the 106th Infantry was at RJ 4 and had read the map wrong. This mistake confused the whole situation and delayed the forward movement of the relieving forces for some little time.

One other point in controversy is Colonel Stebbins' insistence that it was the 106th Infantry Regiment as much as it was the 105th CP group that stopped the *Gyokusai*. The lowest estimates show that the CP group killed at least 650 Japanese during the day. Records of the 106th Infantry and careful interrogation of the men show that only a few random Japanese were killed by members of either battalion prior to noon of 7 July. It was shortly after that that the advancing skirmish lines of the 106th Infantry came abreast of the 105th CP. Certainly, the Japanese strength was much more dissipated then than it was when it first reached the area between 0530 and 0615. Had the Japanese ever broken through the lines of the 105th CP, they would most certainly have done so when they were strongest, for the 105th CP group lost none of its strength as the day wore on. It was, furthermore, testified by virtually all members of the 106th Infantry that they had little or no trouble in advancing until they reached the line on which the 105th CP

was built. No enemy were encountered and no block put in the way of their progress.

Another point of controversy between the two regiments was the long delay in the arrival of the 106th Infantry. All members of the 105th Infantry were extremely bitter about the seeming slowness of the 106th in coming to their aid, and Colonel Stebbins, Major O'Hara, and others of the 106th in their turn criticized Lt. Colonel Jensen and Lt. Colonel Bradt for a definite failure to use the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, in relieving the situation on the plain.

Units of the 3d Battalion available for an attack, G and K Companies, were for fully six hours fighting for their survival. At the end of that time, both were out of ammunition and G Company was so badly depleted that it was no longer capable of the sustained offensive needed to relieve the pressure on the plain below. And until G Company moved, L and I were penned in with nothing to do but go straight ahead into Hara-Kiri Gulch, and fight off the enemy who were attacking L Company from the front and rear.

As for the 106th Infantry's slowness, it should be pointed out that there is no record of Lt. Colonel Jensen's calling for help prior to 0905. General Griner had alerted the 106th Infantry at 0530 and one battalion under Major O'Hara was already in position to help by 0730, but this order was countermanded by General Griner himself. No order for the whole regiment to move into line was issued until 0920. The blame—if blame is to be cast for the delay up until 1000—therefore lies with Lt. Colonel Jensen for not calling for help or to General Griner for cancelling the orders of O'Hara to support the 105th CP. After 1000 another two-hour delay occurred before the 105th CP line was reached. This can be charged to the reigning confusion.

Lieutenant Colonel Cornett had moved as soon as he had received his orders at 0920. By 1000 he had his battalion at RJ 4 and deployed with two companies abreast, B on the left and C on the right. However, he reported his position at RJ 2, which should have put him somewhere within the near vicinity of the 105th Infantry. He then tried to find the 105th CP, since he had earlier been given explicit instructions to look out for it. When he was unable to extend his line far enough to reach it, he inserted his reserve, Company A, in the line on B Company's left, giving him a battalion front of three companies. This move had no sooner been completed when he received word that there was some mistake, that he was not at RJ 2. He and his company commanders checked their maps and decided that they were actually at RJ 5. This was supposedly in the immediate vicinity of the 105th CP and so Lt. Colonel Cornett ordered Lt. James J. Sergio, now in command of Com-

pany A, to send out a patrol to locate the 105th CP. Sergio sent Sgt. Peter Sereda with one squad. The rest of the battalion sat down to await Sereda's return. Luckily, Sereda went in the right direction and fifteen minutes later he ended up in the 105th CP where he was escorted to Lt. Colonel Jensen. The 105th executive officer immediately ordered Sereda to go back to his unit and bring them forward.

Sereda returned, and the 106th Infantry line moved forward without opposition. Firm physical contact was established with the 105th at 1410. This four-hour delay was occasioned in part by the events just recorded, also by the fact that poor terrain and possible enemy action made the battalion proceed in an extremely cautious manner.

It should not be assumed that the whole 106th Infantry acted as one long skirmish line. The 2d Battalion had been ordered to recapture the Marine artillery and had redeployed east of the railroad as early as 0900. By 1135 one battery had been recaptured. This was Item Battery. It was retaken by Company F. In this area some opposition was encountered and although the Marines had been driven off their guns, many of them had remained in the immediate vicinity and continued to fight. Major O'Hara's men now mopped up the area around the artillery position and at 1328 he was able to announce that he was driving the enemy ahead of him to the north and that many of them were running across the flat ground or plain north of the Coconut Grove. At 1540, still acting independently of the 1st Battalion, Major O'Hara reported that his Company F had recaptured a second Marine artillery battery. This completed the advance of the 2d Battalion for the day, Major O'Hara now feeling it necessary to mop up in his rear. He had already made physical contact with the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, at the CP. The nature of this advance, like the 1st Battalion's, was slow and tedious. An illustration of the difficulty of the task is the fact that at 1700 in the afternoon, after the battalion had gone over the ground twice, a Japanese soldier popped out of a hole and killed Pfc. William Baker of Company F.

Upon arriving at the 105th Infantry CP at 1410, Lt. Colonel Cornett's line ceased forward movement, and patrols were sent out to the front while the various company commanders conferred with Lt. Colonel Jensen. This was shortly after the return of Cpl. Bowsh from the front line, and while the conference was still in progress Major McCarthy and his group returned behind the tanks. In view of the information now in the hands of the CP it was decided to sweep the remainder of the Japanese (there now appeared to be only stragglers left in the area to the front, albeit well armed stragglers) to the north and bring the remnants of the two battalions into the American lines. With this in mind Lt.

Colonel Jensen ordered his clerks and technicians to organize a skirmish line and prepare to go on the offensive.

The role played by the tanks has not yet been touched on. It has already been noted that the area for some four hundred yards in front of the 105th Infantry CP was a no-man's land through which only a few stragglers had been able to make their way during the morning. The tanks, however, had on at least three occasions ventured as far north along the road as Bloody Run.

The tanks assigned to the 105th Infantry on 7 July totaled three platoons—two of lights and one of the mediums. The two light platoons were commanded by Lieutenant Guffey and Lieutenant Phalon, the platoons of mediums by Lieutenant Jack P. Lansford. Lt. Ralph W. Spears accompanied them as infantry liaison officer. After their hasty summons, shortly after 0530, all three platoons set out and reached the 105th Infantry command post shortly after 0600. Lieutenant Spears reported to Colonel Bishop and was ordered to proceed up the road to the 1st and 2d Battalions. At that time, it will be remembered, everyone at the CP was ignorant of the situation at the front.

Lieutenant Spears returned to his jeep and started down the road, one platoon of light tanks commanded by Lieutenant Guffey following him. It consisted of five vehicles. The column had not proceeded a hundred yards when they sighted their first group of Japanese ahead. The column halted and Spears returned to the CP for further instructions. Colonel Bishop did not change his orders and so Spears started back up the road to his tanks. However, the attack was already under way against the CP and the liaison officer was cut off from the vehicles ahead. After failing to get hold of Guffey by radio, the tank officer decided to chance a run for it and by some miraculous good luck managed to reach Guffey's tank and crawl inside.

In fulfillment of Colonel Bishop's orders the column now proceeded to the north. As they neared RJ 5, the rear tank was knocked out.

Guffey, it should be reiterated, had no knowledge of just where he would find the 1st and 2d Battalions, but as he proceeded farther north and saw only Japanese, he became suspicious. He stopped his column just after his own tank, in the lead, had crossed Bloody Run with the intention of reconnoitering the area before proceeding farther. His second tank stopped just across the bridge to the north and his third tank was between the bridge and RJ 5. The third tank was in command of Sgt. Oliver Hendricks.

Guffey spent some ten minutes making his reconnaissance. While this was going on and the tanks were standing, a large party of Japanese

approached the bridge from the east, inland, and disabled the second tank, commanded by Sergeant Kernoschak, with a magnetic mine before Hendricks and his men recognized them as enemy. Kernoschak's driver decided to try to move the tank despite the blown track and by good chance he managed to roll it forward far enough to get out of the pool of gasoline and at the same time clear the bridge so that another tank could pass.

By this time the area was full of enemy soldiers milling about in large groups. For fifteen minutes Guffey and his tanks fired continuously at these enemy soldiers and then he decided he had better get the men in the crippled tank out of the area if he could. He radioed Kernoschak and told him to destroy his guns and crawl out while the other vehicles covered.

The four crew members climbed out through the bottom of the tank and then dived into a clump of bushes beside the road. Here they found four Marines from the artillery batteries, and the men managed to get back to the 105th CP, losing two men en route.

Meanwhile, back on the road, Lt. Guffey had decided that without infantry support his tanks could not function forward of the lines. Two of his vehicles had already been lost. He withdrew to the CP. Sergeant Hendricks' tank slipped off the road and bellied up on a concrete obstruction. The platoon leader left Hendricks and his crew in the tank to defend themselves as best they could and sped back down the road to the CP where he emptied his own crew from his tank, took over the controls himself, and returned to pick up Hendricks. This took some little time and while he was gone the men in the disabled vehicle literally kept their guns hot, so hot in fact, that one man suffered serious burns in manning them. Japanese were now all around the vehicle, trying to set it afire and get at the men inside.

While Lieutenant Guffey was busy unloading his crew, Lieutenant Lansford with his platoon of medium tanks had ventured up the road and arrived at RJ 5, just before Sergeant Hendricks ran out of ammunition. Lansford now covered Hendricks' tank with fire while the crew crawled out the escape hatch at the bottom of the vehicle. These men were eventually taken into Guffey's tank and evacuated without further casualty. Lansford himself now withdrew his mediums and all of the tanks were pulled well back of the regimental CP line, with the exception of Lieutenant Phalon's platoon of lights which remained to help support the defensive position of the command post. This was the last expedition up the road by any tanks until after noon, although at one time a plan was conceived which called for the use of tanks to pull

trailer-loads of supplies up the road to the embattled battalions fighting there. Colonel Bishop personally cancelled this, however. For most of the rest of the forenoon the various platoons, now joined by Lieutenant Ganio's lights, took turns in firing support for the 105th CP group. In the course of the morning, Lieutenant Guffey's tanks fired up three complete loads of ammunition. One Japanese tank was knocked out during this time by Lt. Phalon's vehicles. Phalon's platoon was later withdrawn from the 105th and assigned to supporting the advance of the 106th Infantry's 1st Battalion when that unit came up on the right about 1400.

The next expedition of the tanks was made between 1200 and 1230 as a direct result of the artillery shelling which was placed on the survivors of the 1st and 2d Battalions ahead. It will be recalled that this shelling drove many of the Americans into the water where they proceeded to swim out to the reef. A great many of these swimming men were brought under fire from Japanese small arms and machine guns placed along the beach. Lieutenant Guffey was ordered, therefore, to take what light tanks he had and get the Japanese off the beach. At the same time, Lieutenant Lansford was to try to get through on the coastal road with his mediums and reach the rest of the men holding out to the north. Due to the curvature of the coast line, however, and the extreme lowness of the terrain, Guffey could not bring his guns to bear on the enemy. He decided to take his tanks out in the water to see if he could do any good from there, but all three of them fell into a hole and were out of action, their motors drowned. Guffey immediately called Lieutenant Lansford on the radio and asked for help.

Lieutenant Lansford, meanwhile, with two medium tanks, had ventured north along the road. The Japanese continually sniped at the tanks and threw Molotov cocktails.

About eight hundred yards ahead of RJ 5 [writes Captain Appleman], the tanks came upon a wooded area with a couple of houses partly demolished, set back from the road in the trees. Here they found the American infantry on both sides of the road in considerable numbers. There were many wounded. The tanks stopped. Men came running up to them and banged on the lead tank with the butts of their rifles.

It was a scene of almost unbelievable confusion. Lieutenant Lansford said later, "The men were utterly done up, but their faces bore an expression of great relief as they approached the tanks."

Lieutenant Lansford, naturally, could not take all of these men inside his vehicle, but he instructed one of his men to tell them to bring

back their commanding officer. A few minutes later, according to Lansford, Major McCarthy came over and was taken inside. The commanding officer of the 2d Battalion used the tank commander's radio to call the regimental CP and reported the condition of his men. He asked for medical supplies and ammunition, and pleaded that someone be sent forward to evacuate his wounded. After that McCarthy left the tank. Some little time later the battalion commander again came over to the tank and asked for help, according to the tankers. Actually, Major McCarthy has said that he did not return to the tanks a second time, but at some time during this period a Marine officer from How Battery did go over to the tanks and asked for help. Lansford could not offer him the help he wanted because he did not feel it safe to take his vehicle off the road. At almost the same time, moreover, he received his call from Lieutenant Spears and was ordered to return and give help to Lieutenant Guffey's tanks which were in the water near the CP. He started back down the road. Lansford said later that he was not aware then that either vehicle was being followed on foot by infantrymen, but it was at this time that Major McCarthy made his break down the road with his party.

The arrival of the 2d Battalion commander at the regimental CP gave Lt. Colonel Jensen his first good picture of what the situation was in that area. Also at the 105th CP at this time was Brig. Gen. Ogden J. Ross, Assistant Division Commander and acting Chief of Staff. After listening to McCarthy's information it was decided to push the American lines ahead in an effort to reach the perimeters established by the 1st and 2d Battalions. It was then that Lt. Colonel Jensen ordered his clerks and technicians to advance with the 106th Infantry. On orders from General Griner, two platoons of tanks had already been dispatched to help Lt. Colonel Cornett and the rest were to advance up the road. By 1547, word reached Division headquarters that the new push had already carried halfway to Bloody Run. This was a sustained advance in which the troops on both sides of the highway engaged in systematic mopping up. All enemy were thoroughly cleaned out of the area to the north of the CP location. Neither the CP group, nor the two left companies of Cornett's battalion ran into any serious opposition. Altogether, both units estimated they had killed about a hundred Japanese during this advance. Company C on Cornett's right, ran into a little more resistance than the rest of the line and the tanks had to be brought up to eliminate it, but no casualties were suffered.

At 1600, the whole line reached Bloody Run and stopped there. The 1st Battalion sent B Company across the ravine and retook the position occupied by How Battery, 10th Marines. These guns were found in per-

fect position although the Japanese had evidently tried to make use of them. Several wounded Marines were also rescued and evacuated. The consolidation of this position took almost an hour. During the time, Lieutenant Renner's men cleaned out all the buildings in the vicinity and killed several Japanese. It is significant to note that up until this time Lt. Colonel Cornett's 1st Battalion had suffered no casualties. However, after the recapture of the artillery, while cleaning out the houses, Pfc. Antonio Diaz came around a corner of a house and stumbled into a barrel. There was a Japanese hiding inside and Diaz discovered himself looking down the barrel of a pistol. In a brief struggle, the gun went off and Diaz was killed. The Japanese then committed suicide with a grenade and one other man coming up was wounded by fragments.

While this was going on, A and C Companies had sent out details to mop up the rear areas and at approximately 1700 General Griner called the 105th CP and ordered Colonel Bishop to move his installation out of the area. The regimental commander protested this order, trying to explain that his men were manning part of the skirmish line, but the Commanding General, feeling that now that the 106th Infantry had by-passed the CP location and that the 1st and 2d Battalions were no longer tactically charged with the zone of action which they occupied, reiterated his order and Lt. Colonel Jensen ordered the withdrawal of CP elements. This necessitated a shift in the forces of Lt. Colonel Cornett's battalion. Company A now moved across the road to the beach side and relieved the 105th's Headquarters Company and Antitank Company, who returned to the rear. B and C Companies also shifted to some extent, widening their zones of action. This change required some little time to complete and at its conclusion Colonel Stebbins ordered his regiment to dig in for the night where they were.

NOTES TO CHAPTER 45

¹Journal, 106th Infantry Regiment, 7 July 1944, entry 1068. The coordinates given were just north of the CP.

²*Ibid.*, entry 1012.

³Journal, G-2, 27th Infantry Division, 7 July 1944, entry 11.

⁴*Ibid.*, entry 18.

⁵The telephonic communication was repeated to the Division Historian by Major O'Hara. It was later confirmed by both Lt. Colonel Jensen and Colonel Bishop, who were standing nearby and overheard it.

⁶Journal, G-3, 27th Infantry Division, 7 July 1944, entry 26.

⁷*Ibid.*, entry 44.

⁸See note 2.

⁹Journal, G-3, 27th Infantry Division, 7 July 1944, entry 32.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

Chapter 46: The Second Counterattack

THE LINE which had been advanced by the movement forward of Cornett's battalion and the 105th CP group was still two hundred to three hundred yards short of the 1st and 2d Battalion positions. It had been the hope of General Griner that this advance would proceed sufficiently far to relieve these two battered units, but with the failure of that hope, he ordered General Ross to remove these elements by LVT. The 773d Amphibian Tractor Battalion immediately dispatched vehicles through the waters of the lagoon, the first tractor arriving at the New Perimeter shortly after 1800. The amphibians were accompanied by the 27th Reconnaissance Troop who took over a major part of the defense of the various positions as the wounded men were relieved and evacuated. Most of the evacuation was conducted after darkness fell. The last man to leave the embattled areas left at 2200. The Japanese continued to harass the defensive positions throughout the evacuation.

The commitment of the 106th Infantry in the line during 7 July had depleted the 27th Division reserves. In consequence corps headquarters had moved one battalion of the 6th Marine Regiment into the Division area at General Griner's request. As reports of the condition of the 1st and 2d Battalions, 105th Infantry, reached corps headquarters, General Smith had, late in the afternoon, ordered the 2d Marine Division to move north from Garapan. They were to relieve the 27th Division in the line next morning. General Griner opposed this order as unnecessary, but the corps commander allowed it to stand. As a compromise, the 27th Division commander obtained permission to advance as far as he could on the plain, the relief to take place when the 2d Marine Division finally overtook Colonel Stebbins' line. Meanwhile, the 3d Battalion, 6th Marines, was committed, late in the afternoon of 7 July, to fill in the gap between the right flank of the 106th Infantry and the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, which still fought along the hillside above the Coconut Grove.

As night fell, the 165th Infantry, with the 3d Battalion, 106th attached, pushed through Hara-Kiri Gulch against only slight opposition and dug in along the cliffs overlooking the plain. The insertion of the Marine battalion had given the Division a solid line from the sea, just south of Bloody Run, across the plain, through the mouth of Hara-Kiri Gulch, thence along the top of the cliffs overlooking the plain as far as Paradise Valley, then inland around Hill 767 to the point where it tied in with the 4th Division. The night defensive positions were well dug in. The care with which Company A, 106th Infantry, prepared for the

night was typical of the whole Division. Three 37mm antitank guns, two light tanks, four additional light machine guns, three heavy machine guns, and one platoon of 4.2-inch mortars were combined with the company's own armament to present a strongpoint every five yards all along the line. All mortars in the regiment and all artillery on the island were registered on the ground immediately to the front. In addition, the 2d Marine Division was only a few hundred yards behind.

The Japanese had seemingly ceased to exist as a cohesive force. More than five thousand of them had been killed in twenty-four hours. In this group was a high percentage of officers. At nightfall only a handful of soldiers was in evidence to oppose the American forces. These men were grouped in small pockets, scattered, out of ammunition, and bewildered. As the day had passed more and more of them had given up the fight and moved back to the north, principally to the area around Makunsha and Paradise Valley. The few leaders left were unable to gather these forces until late in the day, but during the early evening the officers began reorganizing, catching stragglers as they drifted back to the north.

Earlier reports from prisoners of war captured at widely varied points on the night of 6 July and during the day on 7 July had indicated that all Japanese left alive at 1500 on 7 July were to commit suicide, but events during the day did not bear this out. Enemy still alive and not in direct physical contact with American troops had shown no inclination to end their own lives. However, the very nature of the attack had led all American observers to believe that the Japanese would regroup and renew the attack until they were all dead.

At 1900 the 27th Division received a report from the 165th Infantry that the Marines had information that the counterattack would be resumed at 0300 on the morning of 8 July. No confirmation could be obtained for this report, but as the evening wore on, repeated reports came in from observation posts all along the high ground that the enemy were again assembling north of RJ 12, in the area near Makunsha. At 0047 on the morning of 8 July further reports were forwarded from the OP on Hill 767 that the enemy were again moving south. It should be emphasized, however, that there was nowhere near as much activity as on the night preceding, and in contrast to the almost party mood of the Japanese during the *Gyokusai* this second night's attack was well organized and executed in a much more military manner. The smaller numbers of troops involved seems to have increased the control of those leaders left.

While the plans for the *Gyokusai* had been rather elaborate, calling

for a three-pronged attack with diversionary movements, the attack of 8 July was simply conceived and carried out with only one objective. The enemy column used the beach exclusively, by-passing the plain with its wide-open spaces until the village of Tanapag was reached. There the Japanese moved inland to a point east of the road and waited. Patrols were sent out to probe the American line at various points. These patrols began to run into American outposts all the way from Hara-Kiri Gulch to the sea as early as 0300, but the main body of the attack did not hit until approximately 0430. At this time only the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, was affected by the main body of the attack.

Company A, 106th Infantry, next to the beach, bore the brunt of this second attack. One member of the company later described the beginning of the attack:

The first thing we knew about any Japs in the area to our front was when these whistles started blowing. There was a fire somewhere up ahead and just then a flare went off and you could see these Japs rising up out of the ground. At first this whistle would blow and they just seemed to mill around in a big circle like they were doing some kind of a dance. Then the whistle blew again and they straightened out and started coming.

This was the signal for all of the weapons along the A Company line to open up. Every man fired and all of the mortars began pounding away. The enemy seemed to be heading diagonally across the front, toward the beach again. Some reached the water's edge and tried to swim around the A Company flank. The battalion commander called it a "massacre." Company A estimated they alone killed about seven hundred Japanese in the next two hours. All of the enemy were killed at relatively long range. Bloody Run formed a very effective barrier and for days afterward burial parties fished enemy bodies from this small choked estuary. Company A lost just one man in all this fighting, Pvt. George Finley, who was killed by a ricochet. No one was wounded. Only in one case did any Japanese ever get as far as the actual firing line and this group of three was quickly eliminated by bayonets.

Company B had almost the same experience, but in its area, to the east of the road, the protection afforded by Bloody Run was lacking. This allowed more of the enemy to get close in to the lines. Here the work of one man was largely responsible for successfully repulsing the closer Japanese. He was Pfc. Emil Dunfee, a machine gunner who had earlier distinguished himself at Eniwetok. Rain that fell during the night had caused Dunfee's LMG to work imperfectly. He had been placed overlooking a deep and wide trench that wound up to his posi-

tion. It was up this little ditch that a party of thirty-five or forty Japanese worked their way closest to the company line. Dunfee took these enemy under fire at not more than ten or fifteen yards and managed to kill the whole group, although he had to stop firing from time to time to repair his gun. This usually allowed the tail end of the column to come close and always Dunfee would just manage to get his gun fixed in time to resume firing. He was helped a great deal by Pfc. Anthony Fasino, who held off the enemy with a variety of weapons, including his carbine, a trench knife, and a captured Japanese saber.

Estimates of the 106th Infantry, as already stated, placed the number of Japanese killed during this second counterattack at around a thousand with some seven hundred of these supposedly accounted for by Company A near the beach. At no time during the morning was the division line threatened by a breakthrough. By shortly after 0700 the counterattack had died out completely and only a few Japanese were left in front of the 106th Infantry line, "yelling and jumping around among the bodies of their compatriots." About 0800 the whole 1st Battalion was able to leave their foxholes and move around. There began at this time probably the greatest single souvenir hunt of the whole Pacific War. Each company sent out patrols to clean up the area in front of its own troops. In these routine patrols the 106th Infantry suffered its last casualty of the official Battle of Saipan when Sgt. William Allender of B Company was killed by a sniper shortly after crossing Bloody Run. After the return of the patrols, the whole 106th Infantry line moved forward slowly, fanned out as skirmishers. So completely had the counterattack of 8 July depleted Japanese strength that these men moved forward as though they were policing the grounds rather than capturing enemy-held territory. By 1100 nearly every soldier in the 106th Infantry had slung his rifle and was busy picking up swords, pistols, battle flags and other souvenirs. One soldier had his arms so full of sabers that he could barely carry them. The 2d Marine Division, moving up behind, finally caught up with the advancing 106th skirmish line at a point four hundred yards beyond Bloody Run and took up the souvenir hunting.

Chapter 47. The 165th Finishes Saipan

THE 165th Infantry, on the cliffs above the plain, were to discover that the Battle for Saipan was still two days from being won. During 8-9 July this regiment was still to experience bitter fighting, particularly in the zone of action of the 1st Battalion.

Orders issued to the 165th Infantry during the night of 7 July had directed it to attack toward the beach to secure the coastline at Makunsha and for some five hundred yards south of that village. The attack was to move off as soon as the 2d Marine Division elements came abreast of the left flank of the regiment. Although ready to move off at 0700 in the morning of 8 July, Lt. Colonel Hart did not attack until 1124 due to the failure of the 8th Marine Regiment to get up on line.

At the time the 165th Infantry was attached to the 2d Marine Division it consisted of its own three battalions, plus the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry. In the area considered to be the 165th Infantry's zone of action was also located the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry. Both of the latter units were to be relieved from attachment and were to revert to the 27th Infantry Division in reserve upon being passed through by the 8th Marine Regiment. This was accomplished before the attack moved off on the morning of 8 July so that the action was carried by the three 165th battalions without any help from attachments. It will be remembered that the regiment was deployed with the 1st Battalion on the left and the 2d on the right, with the 3d in reserve. Furthermore, it had become evident as early as 6 July that the approach to the plain through Paradise Valley was impractical and that steps had been taken during the afternoon of that day to pass the 2d Battalion around this strong-point to the left and down over the southwest nose of the valley, supposedly in the zone of action of the 1st Battalion.

This same procedure was to be followed on 8 July. Major Claire, in command of the 2d Battalion, ordered his battalion to proceed in a column of companies, E Company leading. The first stages of this movement were made without difficulty, but when the low ground was reached and the battalion commander ordered F Company to fan out on the left, they ran into trouble. Company E had no opposition but Captain Smith and F Company ran into bad terrain and a cave full of enemy.

While they were clearing this out, Captain Smith received word on his radio from Captain Malloy that E Company was already in Makunsha so he decided to by-pass the resistance and move on down to the sea, leaving a patrol of about one squad to clean up the cave. The squad lost four men, and had not cleared the cave when they were ordered to rejoin the company.

Meanwhile, G Company, Major Claire's reserve, had been following

along behind the battalion advance with orders to mop up any resistance by-passed by the two leading companies. By the time F Company had by-passed the cave in the cliff, however, Capt. Paul Chasmar had already become involved in trying to penetrate Paradise Valley. Working with small patrols he tried to get men into the stronghold from both the bottom and the top. None of the patrols was successful although G Company did kill several Japanese trying to get out at the upper entrance. When the rest of the battalion reached Makunsha, Captain Chasmar was ordered to proceed to that village, and the rest of Paradise Valley was left to the 3d Battalion to mop up.

Lieutenant Colonel Hart had ordered his 3d Battalion commander to follow the 2d Battalion in its advance to the sea and to complete the mopping up which was left after Claire's battalion had moved through the area. Before this movement was completely under way, however, the 1st Battalion had begun to run into trouble, and so L Company was ordered to send, first one platoon, and later the whole company, to help in that zone of action. I and K Companies then took over the task of reducing Paradise Valley after Captain Chasmar had been ordered to Makunsha. This work had no more than gotten under way with a few caves blown at the upper end than it was time to dig in for the night. As a result the 3d Battalion took up positions in the old foxholes previously occupied by the 2d Battalion at the upper end of Paradise Valley and spent the night of 8-9 July there.

The action of F Company was the forerunner of trouble that was to plague the 1st Battalion for the next two days. The action of 8 July in this zone was particularly bitter. This was caused by two factors. The first of these was the terrain. All across the battalion front the descent to the plain had to be made over the sharp, steep cliffs that faced the sea, strongly fortified by the Japanese.

The second factor in this fighting was the strength with which the position was held. Although almost all the Japanese force assigned to defend the position had undoubtedly taken part in the *Gyokusai*, the nearness of the position to the plain and its easy accessibility made it an attractive spot for hundreds of refugees who were caught on the battlefield at nightfall on 7 July. These stragglers retired to the caves where they found some weapons and stores of ammunition. During the night following the *Gyokusai* these men were organized into some semblance of a defensive force and did not take part in the second raid. It was these stragglers that caused the 1st Battalion so much trouble.

Major Mahoney had maintained his battalion organization for the attack to the sea on 8 July. As of 6 July Company A was on his left and C on the right. However, in building up his line for the night of 7-8

July he had to improvise in order to maintain a solid front. In the large gap between the right flank of C Company and the left flank of F Company, he had been forced to commit his reserve, B Company and his Antitank Platoon from battalion headquarters. In the confusion of gathering darkness on the afternoon of 7 July, these units had become considerably mixed up so that the line ran from right to left in about the following manner: F Company, 1st Platoon of B Company, C Company, two more platoons of B, the Antitank Platoon of battalion headquarters, and finally A Company.

When the attack moved off at 1130, it soon became apparent that some semblance of this organization would have to be retained although the companies would naturally be assembled. This was because the descent over the cliffs was almost entirely a platoon maneuver. The cliff was not a straight-edged affair, but rather a jagged eminence with deep indentations cut into its face by erosion. There were at least five of these cups and each one seemed to present a route to the bottom. To go over the face itself would have meant a difficult scaling job, so the battalion and company commanders elected to send units of various strength down these indentations in column. Upon reaching the bottom of the cliff the companies would deploy in a skirmish line and sweep to the ocean.

Each one of the small canyons was hidden from the other. Once men started down them, they would be out of sight of the neighboring column until they emerged on the plain below. The caves heretofore mentioned were tucked back into these recesses as well as nestled on the shelves of the face of the cliff. There were also immense boulders and pinnacles of coral rock which littered the chutes. In some of them were paths evidently used by the natives in more peaceful times and later by the Japanese military to get from the low ground onto the high plateau. Other ravines had no paths at all. In all of these routes the columns of troops moving down onto the plain had to wind in and out of the rocks and past various caves before reaching the bottom. Within an hour after the battalion moved off down the hill, almost every one of the groups had become involved in hide-and-seek fights with the stranded bands of Japanese.

Company F's action has been described already. At the time Captain Smith became involved in the first contact with the caves under the ledge and was ordered to by-pass them to the right, B Company was in reserve, following along behind C Company on the extreme right flank of the battalion. When notified that F Company was going to pull to the right and take the easier route down the hill, Major Mahoney ordered Lieutenant Brewer, in command of B Company, to move up and main-

tain contact between C Company and F until they were on the plain below and deployed. Brewer immediately found himself faced with one of the chutes to the bottom of the cliff and sent his men down in column of platoons, the men moving in single file. No trouble was encountered here until the leading men got all the way to the plain. Then, as they emerged from the chute, under the cliffs, and started to move to the right to reestablish contact with F Company, they ran into several small grass shacks on the level ground. Directly in back of these shacks was a large cave in the side of the cliff, about ten feet from the plain level. This cave looked innocent enough, but when Lt. Orrin W. Brandon, in command of the leading platoon, sent his platoon sergeant, Technical Sergeant Boscarino, with a detail to burn down the shacks, they heard movements within the cave and the voice of a woman trying to soothe a crying child. One shack had already been set afire, but Boscarino thought the cave might be dangerous, so before setting fire to the others he went back to the mouth of the chute and told Technical Sergeant Antonacci, leader of the 2d Platoon, about it. Antonacci deployed his men facing the opening. Boscarino then returned and began trying to coax the people inside to come out. In the middle of this performance, the men were startled to hear a loud yell of "*Banzai!*" inside the cave and a body came flying out of the opening in two pieces. Those inside had thrown this out with a grenade attached to it. The grenade went off about the time the body hit the ground. Boscarino put rifle grenades into the cave. The Japanese replied with a dozen hand grenades, followed almost at once by six or seven wild-eyed, yelling enemy soldiers. All were cut down at once. Then the routine started over again, and continued until Boscarino had fifteen enemy soldiers piled up almost at his feet.

While engaged in this fighting, Boscarino heard someone call to him and discovered that the four members of his house-burning patrol that he had left behind when he went back to get Antonacci were now pinned down by fire coming from the cave. This fire had not been noticeable until that time. Boscarino now ordered his platoon to try to direct enough rifle fire into the cave mouth to stop this enemy fusillade. By now, well over an hour had passed and it was another thirty minutes before Boscarino was able to extricate his patrol. By that time F Company had managed to move all the way down to the beach at Makunsha, and Capt. James E. Dooley, executive officer of the 2d Battalion, had walked all the way back to B Company to find out what was holding up the 1st Battalion. This was one of the strangest exploits of the day. Captain Dooley was never even fired on, although he walked directly through an area filled with Japanese stragglers. A few minutes later

another 2d Battalion man, who had fallen behind his company, tried to make the trip and was fired upon every foot of the way.

When Captain Dooley consulted with Lieutenant Brewer and discovered that the 1st Battalion had not moved away from the cliffs, he asked that Brewer hurry his troops and try to tie in with the 2d Battalion before darkness. Brewer immediately passed the word along to Brandon who ordered Boscarino to forget about the cave and push on out to the right, preparatory to moving toward the sea. Boscarino collected his men and, by giving the cave mouth a wide berth, managed to get on the north side of it. However, Sergeant Antonacci's platoon, in trying to follow, was again pinned down by fire from the cave and had to go back to work on it again. For over an hour Antonacci poured all kinds of fire in the opening, including fire from SP guns which were eventually worked into the area. Antonacci's attack evoked the same kind of a response brought on by Boscarino's. A shower of grenades would be followed by a wild dash for the open. Antonacci's men later said that the Japanese were yelling "Charge!" in English as they emerged from the hole. The position was not finally knocked out until after 1700 when one of the self-propelled guns fired a shell into the cave which seemed to explode an ammunition dump inside. Debris came flying out the entrance in all directions. There was no more activity, but by this time any further movement was out of the question for the night.

While Boscarino and Antonacci had been thus engaged with the cave, another part of B Company had been involved in an even more bitter action. One squad, under Brandon, had been ordered to move to the left upon emerging from the chute with the mission of establishing physical contact with C Company, coming down another draw from the cliffs. Following Brandon and his men was Brewer's rearmost rifle platoon, the 3d, under Tech. Sgt. John F. Stabile. This little column of men moved along the base of the cliff toward the south. Approximately seventy-five yards away from the mouth of the chute rifle fire began landing in the area along the route of march. Everyone hit the ground at once, most of the men taking cover in a canefield on the right. However, two men, Pfc. Charles Burton and Pfc. Richard Herd, had located the source of the fire almost at once and remained standing and firing. Sergeant Stabile, who was nearby, passed the word along the line for his men to "stay put." Then he began to crawl back to Burton and Herd to find out what they had seen. There he also found Privates First Class Burgess and Chase. Burgess, Chase, and Burton were in the open, lying on the ground, but Herd had found a hole and tumbled into it. Stabile got behind a rock near Burgess and Chase. By the time he reached the men, they had resumed the fire. Chase was lying on his back

with a BAR propped up between his toes, firing away. Herd also had a BAR.

Although all four men were firing as rapidly as they could, it seemed to have no effect on the Japanese, who very obviously had a machine gun themselves. A few minutes after Stabile reached the men, Burton was hit by the enemy return fire, but he kept on shooting anyway. Stabile asked the men where the Japanese were. The only answer he got was, "We're shooting at the noise."

Herd finally lifted himself out of his foxhole to see if he could see anything and was immediately hit. He fell back into the hole, lay there a moment, muttered, "Those sons o' bitches," and lifted up to fire again. A bullet spattered against the rock next to his head. He kept down after that. Burton now decided to try throwing a grenade at the enemy, but in order to do so he had to ask the men closest to the Japanese position to move. They refused because the slightest movement at all brought down fire on them so this attempt had to be given up.

A grenade landed ten yards from Burton and a fragment hit Chase in his "trigger hand," as he described it. Stabile had been carefully studying the terrain and trying to line up the enemy position in the cane. He was interrupted continually by the wounded Chase, however, and finally he gave some attention to what Chase was saying. "I've been trying to tell you," Chase said to him, "that these bullets are going right over my head. I think they're hitting Burton." Burton had moved slightly when the grenade landed. When Stabile turned his head to look at Burton, he could see that this was indeed true and the rifleman was unconscious.

This left only Stabile and Burgess still unhit. The enemy fire continued. The platoon sergeant decided that from where he was there wasn't the slightest chance of knocking out the enemy position. At least five Japanese weapons were laying down covering fire not more than a foot and a half off the ground. Every time one of the men had moved he had been wounded. Sergeant Stabile called up ahead to the forward part of the line to where Pfc. Emil Guitterez lay, just outside the cane. He told the rifleman to lay down fire from his position which, at the time seemed free from enemy attention. However, as Guitterez shifted into firing position, bullets began landing all around him and he couldn't even complete his movement. Nearby was Lt. Thomas Landers of D Company with a section of heavy machine guns. He had heard Stabile's orders to Guitterez and had seen what happened. He was down the line a short distance farther, out of the immediate zone of fire. Landers ordered Sergeant Bolling, his section leader, to move down toward Stabile as quietly as possible and set up his machine gun where he could

bring the Japanese under fire. Bolling and his gun crew picked up their weapon and in a running crouch managed to get back to Stabile's position without drawing fire, but when Landers set down his tripod in the hole lately occupied by Herd, Bolling got up to put the gun in its cradle and was immediately shot in the head and killed, and fell over the gun. Landers was pinned down, but in a few minutes when the fire ceased momentarily, he scrambled for cover ahead.

Sergeant Stabile had seen his every effort fail. He now decided that perhaps the 1st Platoon could do something from where they were. He yelled at Boscarino, but as already noted, that sergeant was busy with the big cave and could do nothing to help. Stabile was "getting madder by the minute." He crawled over to the machine gun in the foxhole, although the minute he moved he drew fire, pulled Bolling's body off the gun, loaded the weapon, and began to fire in the general direction of the Japanese. It was at this point that the company commander, or Lieutenant Brandon—Stabile didn't know who—began to yell, "Cease fire! Cease fire! You'll hit our own men." Stabile's answer was unprintable. He kept on firing. However, Brewer was insistent and so Stabile left the gun. Once more he decided that the only way to handle the situation was to get the 1st Platoon to put down fire from where they were and to have the Weapons Platoon set up machine guns and fire from the same area. He therefore crawled back to company headquarters and got hold of Boscarino through the company radio and told him what he wanted. Boscarino explained his situation and said he couldn't help at the moment. Stabile then decided to try the machine gun again and started to crawl back toward his position. On the way he passed some litter bearers and the company aid man, Sergeant Mack. He was explaining to these men where his wounded were when two SP guns came up, under Lieutenant Brown of Cannon Company. The platoon sergeant told one to go to help Boscarino and Antonacci, and then gave instructions to the other as to just exactly where he thought the Japanese were. With this cover, Stabile and Mack evacuated Chase and Burton.

Stabile then again gave his attention to the final elimination of the Japanese in the pocket. Lieutenant Brown reported that he knew he had killed three, but there seemed to be more still alive. The platoon sergeant, therefore, ordered his men to form a semicircle near the supposed position while the SP gun moved in closer to the enemy. Within ten minutes the remainder of the Japanese had been forced to run from their cover and Stabile's men killed them as they emerged from their hiding place, a little trench tucked away in the cane. It was now approximately 1700 and Major Mahoney ordered Lieutenant Brewer to

take his company back up on top of the ridge and dig in for the night. Most of the men occupied the same foxholes they had used the night before.

Meanwhile, C Company had been having trouble of its own. Before moving off down over the cliffs Captain Kennedy had sent out a patrol under Staff Sergeant Siegrist to reconnoiter the ground and find a route of approach. Siegrist had thoroughly investigated the rim of the bluff and found no enemy there. He then found another of the chutes similar to that which B Company used on the right. However, while B Company's was relatively shallow, this one was cut deep into the cliff and the pathway to the bottom was very steep. Before emerging onto the plain, this passageway gave way to a ledge some ten or twenty feet above the lowest level. Situated on the ledge were two little houses and, perhaps twenty yards away from these buildings, was a large cave opening back into the cliff. Japanese in the houses or in the cave could train weapons on the narrow crevasse where the downward path emerged on to the ledge. For this reason Siegrist carefully looked over the whole area on top of the cliff. He then reported back to Captain Kennedy that he had picked out a spot on top of the cliffs where mortars could be placed to fire on the houses and also a machine-gun position from which fire could be placed directly into the mouth of the cave. He also stated that he had seen some movement between the two buildings and the cave mouth, but had been unable to tell who or what it was. Before the company moved out, therefore, Captain Kennedy put the mortars and machine guns in place where Siegrist had suggested. There followed one of the most amazing incidents of the Saipan battle. It was told by Sergeant Siegrist, who had charge of the two weapons posts on top of the hill:

Company B had a platoon going down the draw on the right of us and our company was going down the pass next to us on the left. As they started down, Captain Kennedy called me and told me to lay mortar fire two hundred yards ahead of the column, which we could see very plainly. I figured this meant the houses below, so I zeroed in on them. We were just getting ready to lay in this concentration when I looked down and here is this crazy Marine. I found out later he was from one of those Marine artillery battalions. He said, "I get tired of staying back there doing nothing so I come up to the front hunting Japs. I come every day." He acted like it was like hunting birds or something. Anyway, there he was, all by himself, running around from dugout to dugout firing into it and throwing grenades. He didn't hurry or seem excited. He just moved deliberately. All of a sudden he evidently heard the company coming so he ran over to the mouth of the path and yelled at the top of his voice. "Come on down. The area is secured." The company began moving down faster then. While they were still coming, a Jap ran across the field. Everybody in the com-

pany opened fire on him. The Jap fell and rolled behind a big rock. Well, this Marine took out across the field after him, tripping and falling. When he got to the rock he walked around behind it, big as life, and finished off this Jap. While he was doing that three more Japs suddenly appeared from a little group of trees near the houses and ducked into them. The Marine held up his hand at the company and yelled "Wait a minute. Wait a minute." Then he ran into the house, too. Right in there with those three Japs. A minute later the whole place seemed to shake all over. Smoke poured out the windows and doors and then everything was quiet. The Marine finally came out the back door. He looked like he had been in a fight with a wildcat. His clothes were all torn and he had blood all over him. Even his helmet cover was ragged. It was just like one of those comic movies where the comedian gets all his clothes blown off. He had a carbine in one hand and a knife in the other. As he came out the back door, he yelled, "Don't shoot! Don't shoot! It's me, the Marine." Later we counted seventeen fragmentation wounds in the guy. He had red hair, too, and was awful young.

The rest of the men in the company verified this story and added something to it. The first man to see this red-haired, one-man army was Private First Class Leek, the lead scout. He noticed him first when he heard the "area secure" speech. Leek came on down the path as far as the cave, fired into it and lobbed a grenade in, then walked on by. The Marine came over and joined him and said he thought there might be more Japanese in there. So Leek went back, stood twenty-five yards in front of the opening and put six or seven rounds into the mouth. Four Japanese came running out straight at him. The Marine stood there calmly, without moving, and killed them one by one. After that he used up another magazine of ammunition and called for more. The C Company men gave it to him. By the time he was ready to go to work again, other C Company men were already working over the cave with grenades so he was no longer interested. It was just about that time that the lone enemy soldier began running across the open ground below. Leek estimated that the Marine had killed fourteen Japanese altogether during his brief war. The action of this one man had completely cleared the way for C Company to reach the bottom of the cliff. Captain Kennedy now ordered one platoon to move out to the right and contact B Company while the second in column moved along the ledge to the left in an effort to establish contact with Company A before moving on down to the plain. Kennedy had sent one squad out in advance of this last platoon under Sgt. Robert Larson in an effort to prevent any ambushes on the way.

After cleaning out one cave they passed another without seeing it. As the last man, Pvt. William Hadden, moved beyond the cave opening, the Japanese inside opened fire with a light machine gun and killed him. The rest of the squad, hearing the sound of the firing, took cover,

but no one knew what had happened to Hadden. Sergeant Larsen, who was now at the extreme front end of the squad, came back along the line to investigate, and was killed by the same machine gun.

Sergeant Lawrence Milton, the second in command, now realized his squad was cut off from the company; but just at that moment, a second squad appeared along the bottom of the cliff. This squad, under Staff Sgt. William B. Van Iderstein, was working its way along in rear of the leaders, Captain Kennedy having decided to deploy his company in a skirmish line and advance down from the ledge to the plain in that fashion. Van Iderstein's squad arrived on the scene just in time to see Sergeant Larsen killed and the squad leader almost at once was able to locate the cave from which the fire was coming. Almost directly in front of the opening was a huge rock and both Hadden's and Larsen's bodies had rolled down behind this rock. Van Iderstein brought up Pfc. Anthony J. Olivieri with a BAR and told him to put fire into the mouth of the cave. Under cover of this fire, Pfc. Vincent J. Costanza ran out to the two bodies and made certain that the men were both dead. He, himself, once he got behind the rock, was protected from the fire from the cave.

Meanwhile, Milton, who could see Van Iderstein, decided that the second squad leader was laying down covering fire for his squad to withdraw so he began sending his men back across the mouth of the little indentation in the cliff. After some difficulty with two snipers the squad rejoined the company.

Captain Kennedy now decided that before deploying his company, he would wait until he reached the plain. He therefore re-formed in column and again started down the path toward the level. Between him and the lowest ground was another of the ledges and the path, while not so steep, still wound through more or less of a walled chute. Four men were wounded by machine-gun fire from this ledge, and by the time C Company could get reorganized again, it was well after 1700. Rather than leave his men on a ledge surrounded by caves, in an almost defenseless position, Captain Kennedy asked permission to withdraw back to the top of the cliff for the night. This permission was granted. B Company, as already noted, was called back to tie in for the night as a result of Kennedy's request.

Company A had a similar experience. In this zone of action, Captain O'Brien sent his men down three separate draws in three columns—one platoon to each draw. In two of these descents, no trouble was encountered at all, but the right platoon, commanded by Technical Sergeant Medina, encountered almost the same type of opposition as the other two companies.

This trouble had all taken place simultaneously with the B and C Company actions and Major Mahoney had reported to regiment that he was having trouble moving down over the cliffs and described his problem. By 1500 in the afternoon, all three 1st Battalion companies were involved in these little local actions and the lines seemed to be stationary. As no one else seemed to be having trouble anywhere along the line, it was hard for anyone who was not actually with the assault units to visualize their difficulties. Furthermore, Brig. Gen. Merritt A. Edson, Assistant Division Commander of the 2d Marine Division, had walked into the 165th Infantry CP early in the morning, and, except for a brief trip to visit the 8th Marine Regiment, who were slow getting on line, he remained there most of the day. His presence was enough to exert considerable pressure on Lt. Colonel Hart, who kept passing this pressure to Major Mahoney throughout the day. By 1500 tempers had become increasingly short at every level of command. When Medina reported over the radio to Captain O'Brien that he was having trouble with a cave, the company commander had just received a prodding from Mahoney and was in no mood to have any more delay. He told Medina in no uncertain terms to get moving.

Shortly afterwards the platoon sergeant called Captain O'Brien and told him that he was moving on down to the plain. The company commander told him to go ahead, but upon hearing that the Japanese were still alive, though dormant, he changed his mind and gave Medina permission to stay in the area and work on the cave. This change in orders had resulted from a message just handed down from regiment to the effect that each assault company was to leave one platoon to finish mopping up the resistance in their areas, and move to the beach at Makunsha with the rest of the men. After hearing the change in orders Medina told O'Brien that, if ordered to do so, he would stay and clean up the position, but that he would rather not unless it was considered necessary. O'Brien told him that L Company was sending a platoon to support Company A anyway, and that they could take care of it and Medina could proceed with the rest of the company. Furthermore, Medina could take his platoon down to the plain via the route used by the extreme left platoon, the 3d, which was now all the way down at the bottom of the cliffs. This was the plan agreed on and the platoon sergeant sent one man back to Captain O'Brien with the details of the cave position so that the L Company platoon would be able to move into position quickly and without trouble. The rest of the platoon, under Medina's orders, now climbed back to the top of the cliff again, moved over to the 3d Platoon chute and started down.

The 3d Platoon had moved down through this draw an hour before

without opposition of any kind. They had found one cave which they grenaded and investigated, but there seemed to be no life in it so they had moved on by without incident. The 2d Platoon, now coming upon this same cave was to run into trouble, however. Pfc. Perry Hill, who was acting as lead scout, came across a Japanese soldier lying just outside the cave mouth. The enemy was playing dead, a fact which Hill discovered by poking him, so the rifleman finished off the actor, "giving a little truth to his lie." When this happened, however, Hill heard movement inside the cave and decided that it was full of enemy. He called Medina who, in turn, called Sgt. Jack Gibson of the engineers to come down with his flamethrower. Gibson gave the cave opening one short burst and five enemy came running headlong from their hiding place. All were killed. Other Japanese inside the cave immediately opened fire and in the first burst Gibson was mortally wounded and Pfc. Elmer Bottke, Medina's bazooka man, was killed. Gibson, who had been badly hit, was in great pain and lying almost directly in front of the cave's mouth. Although Medina could by-pass this cave if he was careful, he felt that he should get the wounded man out of danger. He asked for volunteers, and Pfc. Lathie Simmons and Pfc. Richard King moved forward to try and drag Gibson out of the way. Both men got within a few feet of the engineer, however, and were then spotted and pinned down. After several minutes, Gibson was finally prevailed upon to roll down from in front of the cave. After one or two quick rolls he was far enough for Private First Class Guld to grab him by the feet and drag him out of danger. Guld gave him aid, but he died later.

Medina was now forced to extricate Simmons and King from their predicament and this he did by building up a firing line which poured heavy return fire into the opening. Although the Japanese seemed not to be affected by this, their attention was diverted for long enough so that both riflemen could scramble out of the way. With the completion of this task, Medina went down to the bottom of the draw where he found a company of the 8th Marine Regiment which had just come up. From them he borrowed a bazooka to replace the one lost when Bottke was killed. With this borrowed weapon he went back to the cave and within a few minutes had put several rounds into it which silenced it once and for all. It was now almost dark and Medina finally got his platoon down onto the plain in time to dig in for the night at the base of the cliffs. Captain O'Brien, just before dark, sent a five-man patrol under Pfc. Perry Hill to set up an outpost atop the cliffs. One of the men in this patrol was Pfc. D'Arcy Purty, who had been wounded during the day by the grenades first thrown from the caves. He had gone to the hospital and returned to duty just in time to be sent

on the patrol. During the night Private First Class Purty was killed by machine-gun fire.

The action of 8 July was now complete. The end of the day found the 2d Battalion in Makunsha, the only unit of the 165th Infantry to reach its objective during the day. The 1st Battalion had two companies still atop the cliffs and one below them. The 3d Battalion had dug in for the night on the ground at the head of Paradise Valley. This unit had pushed K Company all the way down to Makunsha, mopping up after the 2d Battalion, while I Company had been systematically engaged in blowing up and destroying caves at both ends of Paradise Valley. Late in the afternoon L Company had sent one platoon to mop up after Company A, particularly to liquidate the Japanese in the series of caves uncovered by Medina's platoon. However, before the L Company platoon, under Lt. Robert E. Dennington, could get into position, it was too late to do any more than make a short investigation of the area, and so Dennington was withdrawn to join the battalion perimeter at the base of Hill 767.

To all intents and purposes the battle for Saipan was over. There was certainly no organized resistance left. The two counterattacks on 7-8 July had left nothing but stragglers on the island. At the moment, the 165th Infantry was concerned with only a few enemy soldiers whom they had been unable to dislodge from the difficult hiding places in the caves on the cliff. This area was completely hemmed in at nightfall on 8 July and as soon as darkness fell some of the Japanese tried to escape inland. Many of these came up the chutes, to emerge on the cliff's rim. Here they ran into the outposts established by the companies of the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry. Some twenty of them were killed, as were two Americans. One of these, Private First Class Purty, has already been mentioned. The other was the fine young platoon sergeant of B Company, Technical Sergeant Antonacci, who during the day had been recommended for a commission in the field.

The 2d Battalion, in Makunsha, underwent a small attack during the night, the last gasp of the Japanese in the north end of the island. At dawn on 9 July they counted ninety-three enemy bodies on the outskirts of the ruined village. There was no evidence that any of the attackers survived.

The remainder of the 27th Infantry Division had been relieved from the line as of 1130 on the morning of 8 July when the 6th and 8th Marines of the 2d Marine Division passed through the lines of the 105th and 106th Infantry Regiments. There was no more fighting for the

Division as a whole. On the night of 8 July it had already begun to retire to permanent assembly areas near Mt. Tapotchau.

The last fighting in the official Battle of Saipan was to be done by A and C Companies of the 165th Infantry and one platoon of L Company under Lieutenant Dennington. It will be remembered that Company A had dug in at the base of the cliffs and on the morning of 9 July, Major Mahoney ordered Captain O'Brien to move out as soon as possible. O'Brien immediately formed a skirmish line and moved out toward the beach, and almost at once came under machine-gun fire from the caves in the cliffs above him. This fire was deadly and accurate and pinned the whole right platoon to the ground, wounding three men. The commander of this platoon, Pfc. Henry Shires, was able to locate the machine gun, however, and passed the word back to Captain O'Brien, who in turn oriented Lieutenant Dennington of the L Company platoon, just at that moment coming over the cliffs above. There ensued one of the most remarkable individual experiences of the whole Saipan battle. Dennington went to the large cave under the rock which had held up Medina on the previous day and set his men to work with satchel charges and grenades. In order to save time, he split his squads into two or three groups and told each to pick out a cave position and destroy it. One of these squads was commanded by Staff Sgt. Harry Harkbearth. Harkbearth was known by his companions as "Hairbreadth Harry" and on this day lived up to his title. Taking his BAR man, Pfc. Dennis M. Lancaster, and two engineers loaded down with demolitions, the squad leader began probing along one of the ledges of the cliff, directly above Shires' platoon. He could see and carry on oral communications with Shires and his men and the A Company platoon sergeant managed to tell Harkbearth exactly where the machine gun was that was causing him so much trouble. Harkbearth cleaned it out, killing three enemy. This completed the work to be done on this particular position. Harkbearth now moved on down the cliff, picking his way for twenty more yards. Here he came across another opening and killed one more Japanese with his rifle. He was now out of ammunition so he turned around and borrowed Lancaster's BAR and emptied it into the cave and threw the three remaining grenades into the mouth. Then he ordered Lancaster and the two engineers to go back to Dennington and get some more ammunition. While the other three men were gone, Harkbearth called to Shires below, and after some discussion the A Company platoon sergeant agreed to see if he could borrow some SP guns from the Marines who were nearby. The whole plain area was still under fire at this time from positions in the cliffs.

Some little time elapsed before Shires could get word to the Marine vehicles and in the meantime Lancaster came back with his companions and a considerable pile of ammunition. He also brought Pfc. John W. Stein, Jr. with him. Harkbearth took some of the grenades and two more demolition charges and used them on the second hole where he was sure there was more activity. During this process the vehicles came up below and the sergeant now retired to where Dennington was working above him. The SP guns went to work in earnest and in the next half hour blasted the whole cliff side. Shires said later that "the whole side of the cliff came tumbling down in big landslides."

At the completion of this work all units on the plain were able to move unmolested. The one platoon from L Company, however, was left to make sure there were no more stragglers in the area. This time Dennington instructed Harkbearth to go back and make sure all opposition had been removed from the caves where he had been before. The sergeant took Stein, the two engineers and Pfc. Henry L. Malloy and poked along back down the cliffs. In the first position which Harkbearth had attacked the men found seven dead Japanese. Three were found in the second cave.

The patrol began snooping around these two openings and Harkbearth himself worked on to the south along the base of the cliff. As he came around a little piece of rock which hung out from the cliff he stumbled into a Japanese heavy machine-gun position, killing two Japanese and wounding a third. Malloy and the two engineers, having heard the shots, came running up and Malloy volunteered to crawl in after the wounded Japanese. The rifleman got down on all fours and started into the cave. The Japanese, however, had taken off his shoe and filled it with a big rock, which he took careful aim and threw. The shoe hit Malloy in the forehead and knocked him unconscious. Harkbearth had to pull him out feet first. The sergeant now received word from Lieutenant Dennington to return to the platoon with his men. After reviving Malloy, the little party started back up the cliff.

While Harkbearth and the others had been working on the third cave, Stein had disappeared. Everyone was under the impression that he had gone on back to the company, but the rifleman, instead, had decided to do a little souvenir hunting and had crawled into the larger of the two caves which had been cleaned out earlier. As Harkbearth and his men crawled up the cliffs toward these two positions, the sergeant's eye caught a glimpse of movement as Stein crawled around in the depths. Harkbearth borrowed a pistol from one of the engineers that had been picked up from a body at the lower position. Taking careful aim, Harkbearth fired. The bullet hit Stein's helmet, went inside the

liner, spun around, and came out the back. The rifleman was momentarily stunned and lay still. Harkbearth could see the hole in the helmet, figured he had killed the Japanese and started to crawl on up the cliff. He had crawled about thirty yards when Stein came charging out of the cave like a bull moose, shouting at Harkbearth, "Harry, Harry! For God's sakes there's still a Jap in that goddam hole and he just shot me in the head." Without realizing that it was he himself who had done the shooting, Harkbearth now went back to the cave and shot every one of the Japanese again. It wasn't until several days later that both men realized what had happened.

The only other company on the regimental front that saw any extensive action during the day was C Company. It now appears that except for the Japanese encountered by Harkbearth and C Company, all the remaining enemy in the area had fled during the night.

Company C had spent the night on the cliffs above the plain and moved off promptly at 0700 in an effort to reach Makunsha. No resistance was encountered until about 0900 when the leading elements of the company reached the last ledge above the level ground. Here the leading scout, Pfc. James R. Payne, ran into three Japanese, almost touching them before he discovered them. All three were busy firing at Company A on the ground below and had their backs turned on the company coming down from above. Payne was so surprised when he saw the Japanese that he had no time to take careful aim. As a consequence, he fired a whole clip from the hip and killed only one of the enemy. The other two both managed to get off a grenade. Then Private Luigs, coming up behind Payne, killed another of them. The grenade exploded and wounded Payne and four others. All of these men continued to fire, however. The one remaining Japanese seemed to have an automatic weapon and had evidently been joined by others a few moments after the firing commenced. Furthermore, he and his companions had managed to duck into some rocks and were now in possession of excellent cover. Technical Sergeant Lehman, in command of the platoon, although wounded himself, now proceeded to bring every man on line and concentrated the fire of his weapons on the area in an effort to keep the Japs' heads down while he worked Sergeant Mosier and two BAR men forward into the rocks to engage them at close range. This move failed and the enemy were still entrenched when the Marine SP guns arrived on the scene. Lehman now withdrew his platoon to the top of the cliff and waited for over an hour while the vehicles worked over the ledge with their guns. In the melee before the withdrawal, however, Private First Class Cunningham was killed by a rifle shot after having been wounded earlier by the grenade.

Cunningham's death was the last suffered by elements of the 27th Infantry Division in the battle for Saipan proper. Upon completion of the firing by the Marine vehicles, C Company, followed by B, emerged onto the plain and swept across it to Makunsha and the beach. Lt. Colonel Hart notified the 2d Marine Division at 1245 that his battalions were on the beach, and at 1430, after some mopping up in the rear areas, he announced that his regiment's mission was complete. Almost simultaneously, word was received from corps headquarters that all artillery fire on the island would cease. At 1635, word was received, "Saipan Island secure as of 1600 today." The bloody battle was over after twenty-five days. It was 9 July 1944.

The end of the Battle for Saipan at 1600 on 9 July did not mean that all hostilities had ceased. There were, it is true, no organized Japanese left on the island, but there were upward of three thousand stragglers who wandered about the hills for months to come, either singly or in groups. In some instances three or four of these groups joined together and became formidable guerrilla bands.

In the period between 9 July and 16 July, each infantry regiment of the Division was withdrawn to bivouac areas south of the general Tanapag-Donnay line. From here they ran daily sniper patrols, combing their areas for snipers and stragglers. The 165th Infantry, bivouacked on the shores of Magicienne Bay, was alerted for employment on Tinian Island in the operation which was to begin there on 24 July. During this period, enemy activity in the north became increasingly annoying. Eventually, late in the afternoon of 16 July, the 105th Infantry was placed under the control of the Army Garrison Force and moved to a point in the hills east of Tanapag Harbor where they took over large-scale mopping-up operations.

With the landings on Tinian on 24 July it became apparent that the 165th Infantry would not be used there. Beach conditions were so bad in this operation that only a minimum of supplies and troops could be landed. Furthermore, opposition was much lighter than anticipated. Only the 27th Division Artillery was ever employed in this operation. In the meantime, however, the guerrilla activities in the north of Saipan had become so widespread and so annoying that on 30 July the whole 27th Infantry Division was released to Army Garrison Force to assist in cleaning up these enemy elements. On 31 July General Griner moved his two remaining regiments to the Tanapag Harbor area, formed a long skirmish line across the island, and began a systematic combing operation toward Marpi Point. On 5 August this culminated in the short but bloody battle of Reconnaissance Troop Gulch, a small coral

pocket about halfway between Makunsha and Marpi Point on the west coast of the island. In this short engagement the 27th Reconnaissance Troop, holding down the extreme left of the Division's skirmish line, had five men killed and fourteen wounded in the afternoon. Company E, 165th Infantry, in the same general area, also had two men wounded; one man from Company H, 165th Infantry, was killed.

On 6 August 1944 the Division ended its mop-up and the island was now divided into three zones from Magicienne Bay northward. Daily patrols were again instituted and training was begun. On 11 August the first contingent of the 105th Infantry left Saipan for Epiritu Santo, arriving there early in September. The last elements of the 27th Division left Saipan on 4 October 1944. In the period between the end of the battle on 9 July and that date, the 27th Infantry Division killed a total of 1,972 enemy soldiers and captured almost 3,300 civilians.

Chapter 48: Espiritu Santo

THE BATTLE OF SAIPAN brought many changes to the 27th Division. It was now in a "rehabilitation period." One thousand and fifty-three of the Division had been killed. They had to be replaced. Twenty-six hundred and seventeen men had been wounded. More than half of them would never return to duty. The transfer of Colonel Stebbins to command of the 106th Infantry left the post of Chief of Staff open. During the last week of July General Griner filled this post by calling in Col. Richard P. Ovenshine, who had filled the same post in the 98th Division. Also brought in during the last month on Saipan was Col. Walter S. Winn, who replaced Colonel Bishop as commander of the 105th Infantry. Colonel Bishop was returned to Oahu because of physical disability due to which he later retired from the Army.

Even before the Division was completely assembled at Espiritu Santo, more important changes were made. General Ross, who had been a member of the Division since its organization in World War I, was ordered to assume command of the important island base at Kwajalein. He left Espiritu on 4 September and was succeeded by Brig. Gen. William B. Bradford, formerly of the 25th Division. General Bradford was to become a beloved and respected figure in the Division during the days ahead. General Kernan was flown to Oahu late in August for a serious operation and did not return to duty. His place was taken by Col. Charles S. Ferrens, formerly commander of the Makin garrison.

In the various regiments, during October and November, there were many shifts in assignments and many old faces disappeared. Many members of the Division had long continued on duty with serious physical disabilities and now sought relief. Lt. Colonel Bradt of the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry, had finished Saipan almost totally deaf. He was now retired and his place taken by his executive, Major Charles E. DeGroff. Lt. Colonel Jensen was likewise sent home on physical disability and Lt. Col. William Brown, headquarters commandant, replaced him as executive of the 105th Infantry. Lt. Col. Rayburn Miller was brought in to replace the late Lt. Colonel O'Brien in command of the 1st Battalion, 105th Infantry, and Major McCarthy was moved up to a position on the Division staff, his place being taken by Major Grigsby, brought in from the 98th Division for the task.

In the 106th Infantry, Captain Waterson, formerly of E Company, was made executive of the 1st Battalion and Captain Hallden of L Company was made executive of the 3d Battalion, under Lt. Col. William Crocker, who was assigned from outside the Division to command that battalion.

Colonel Kelley returned to the 165th Infantry to resume command in October after being hospitalized for four months with his serious and painful wound. Lt. Colonel McDonough also returned to duty to command the 2d Battalion, Major Claire returning to the 3d Battalion to replace Major Foery who was forced by serious illness in his family to return to the mainland.

Whatever Espiritu Santo may have been to others, to the 27th Division it was a hellhole, ill suited for rehabilitation and poorly chosen as a home for troops fresh out of a great battle. Several circumstances combined to make the Division's stay there the worst single memory of the war. The physical aspects of the island were not the least of these conditions. Santo is a tropical island whose climate is hot and humid. Early in the war it had been one of the most important of all American bases in the Pacific, but even the intense activity of that earlier period had not served to transform the area from a malarial clearing on the edge of a vast and impenetrable jungle, populated by head hunters and pythons. The Division was not even furnished any housing facilities. As they arrived on the island, troops built their own camps in the great coconut plantations ten miles from the naval base. There was no place to go even if the men got a pass. The main base at Santo had a big Red Cross recreation center, an ice-cream parlor, and a beer garden, but it was inadequate for even the personnel on the island prior to arrival of the Division. Twelve open-air theaters were constructed by the Division where second-rate movies were shown. No first-class theatrical troupes ever visited the area. A recreation hall was built, and this was served by two or three girls twice a week. On those occasions it served coffee and doughnuts.

General Griner tried other methods to bolster morale. The famous Division patch was worn on cottons. An eight-page Division newspaper was published. Inter-regimental competitions were sponsored. Daily parades were held. General Richardson also tried to help. He even went so far as to personally order that fresh meat in shipload lots be delivered to Santo for the exclusive use of the Division. This was something that no other unit in the area had at the time.

Efforts to restore the Division's morale after Saipan went largely for naught, however, due to two things, each of which were inevitably associated by the rank and file with Santo and contributed to the unpleasantness of the stay there. The first of these was the furlough situation. Seventy-five per cent of the Division, by September 1944, had two and a half years overseas. Had there been a recognizable furlough policy within the area this might have been overcome. However, up until the

time the Division had arrived at Santo only fifty men had received furloughs, other than for emergencies. The Pacific Ocean Areas command had established a quota of fifty a month in May, but during June, July, and August, while the Division was in combat, even these fifty had been diverted elsewhere. In September and October, as the men arrived at Santo, the first subject of conversation on every tongue was furlough. A monthly lottery was held in each regiment to determine the lucky seven or eight men to go home. Grumbling and discontent were evident in letters. In October, General Richardson, who was the victim of furlough policies laid down from above, was finally able to increase the furlough allotment to 254 a month. One wag, when informed of the increase, said: "Good. In sixty months everyone will have had a furlough. That will make it 1949. My kid will be nine years old; my wife will have had her change of life; and my mortgage will be eight years overdue."

In the midst of the discouragement over the furlough situation there occurred another incident which caused an almost complete breakdown of morale within the Division. The issue of *Time* for 18 September 1944, which arrived at Santo on the 27th, carried an article written by Robert Sherrod, which purported to tell the true facts behind the relief of Maj. Gen. Ralph C. Smith during the battle for Saipan. Whether intentional or not, this article accused the Division of failure and its men of cowardice in the Saipan campaign. Upon being circulated within the Division it created resentment and anger. Meetings were held in every company street and committees called upon General Griner to ask for action in the matter. Almost without exception the men of the Division sat down and wrote letters of vehement denial to *Time* or their own families. Because these letters, in answering *Time* charges, contained classified information, they were virtually all returned to the senders by the censors. Letters from home, in the meantime, indicated that the families and friends of the Division had accepted the *Time* article at its face value. To the men at Santo it appeared that they had been branded cowards and that unless something were done at once, cowards they would remain.

No one not present at Santo during the last days of September will know the feeling of those men who read the article and the letters from home. It was a sickening sensation to be branded cowards by a magazine for whose rights the Division had fought at Saipan. General Griner was finally moved, on 12 October, to address a letter to the editor of *Time*. Inasmuch as he was bound by the same rules of censorship as those imposed upon the men of the Division, General Griner was

obliged to send this letter through channels with a covering letter. His letter met the immediate approval of General Richardson, and was forwarded to Admiral Nimitz who also approved. (All of these communications are reproduced in the Appendix.) Upon reaching Washington, however, the whole matter was pigeonholed by General Marshall in the interests of preserving harmony between the services and presenting a solid front to the enemy. Despite repeated attempts to have an official statement made by responsible parties since the war nothing has been done to refute the *Time* article. The magazine itself has taken no steps to retract. In the interests of its own journalistic prestige it has chosen to remain on record, condemning the action of men who fought to preserve its freedom.

In the middle of October, while the Division was engaged in the *Time* controversy, General Griner received intimations that the 27th would be employed in the coming invasion of Okinawa. From that time forward, all emphasis was placed on training and preparation for the coming operation. The training program was turned over to General Bradford and Colonel Ferrens. Physical conditioning was again emphasized, but specialized training was also taken up. Jungle training centers were established and amphibious training was renewed. Replacements, 2,793 of them, were received between November and February, and under the guidance of battle-trying troops were indoctrinated in the principles of warfare against the Japanese. Night fighting, a new departure in the Pacific War, was emphasized. New doctrines of infantry-artillery-tank cooperation were taught. The training continued into the rainy months of January, February, and March. The men marched along the jungle trails and sweated through the maneuvers in the almost unbearable heat. Disease, the enemy of troops in tropical climates, began to take its toll. Here and there key figures began to disappear. Captain Renner of C Company, 106th Infantry, who had fought for eight days with a broken elbow, was hospitalized with a tropical skin disease. Other members of the Division were sent home because of infection or respiratory diseases.

Early in January the Division was assigned to Tenth Army and planning began. Several units had been sent to the Philippines during October and November. The 294th Joint Assault Signal Company went to Luzon. Company C, 88th Chemical Battalion, departed for Leyte. They were not replaced. In February, however, the 1381st Engineer Group, including the 152d Engineers, arrived from Saipan, where they had been since the landings. In the same month the 193d Tank Battalion arrived from Oahu. This was the same unit that had accompanied

the 27th Infantry Division to Makin. One by one small detachments arrived.

Embarkation for Okinawa began during the first week in March. The nine infantry battalion landing teams held their dry runs at Turtle Bay during 15-22 March. The last elements of the Division boarded ship on 23 March in a driving rain that had continued for more than a week. The Division on that date was 1,793 men under strength, of whom 1,305 were shortages in the rifle companies. The average strength of line units within the Division was 152 men as compared with an authorized strength of 193 men.

Throughout 24 March the transports remained anchored in the roadstead at Santo while the landing craft plied back and forth, finishing last-minute preparations for departure. Early on the morning of 25 March 1945, a sunny Sunday morning, the convoy filed out through the narrows and swung north. The brief stay at Santo was over.

Chapter 49: The Landing on Okinawa

THE 27th Infantry Division had as early as October 1944 received information that it would be employed in the Okinawa campaign. At that time Lt. Col. William M. Van Antwerp, Division G-2, on a trip to Oahu, received intimations that plans were going ahead for the campaign and that in all probability, the Division would be employed. It was not until late in January 1945 when staff officers of Tenth Army visited Espiritu Santo that any definite word was received as to use of the 27th Infantry Division.

Tenth Army had planned to use the Division to garrison the island of Okinawa after using it to seize and occupy the six eastern islands at the mouth of Nakagusuku Wan (*Wan*=Bay). However, the Division was not advised of this function, but was ordered to draw up three alternate plans of employment which involved the eastern islands, the western island of Ie Shima, or a landing on the west coast of Okinawa in support of XXIV Corps.

These plans were drawn up as directed and on 16 March, Capt. Thew Wright, Jr., Assistant G-3, was ordered to Ulithi with the plans for presentation to higher authority. Beginning 15 March 1945 the Division combat-loaded at Espiritu Santo, still without any definite word other than that already received. This was the state of affairs when the task force containing the Division departed from the New Hebrides on the morning of 25 March 1945.

While still en route to Ulithi, the first port of call, the Division received a radiogram from Admiral Blandy that Captain Wright had not arrived aboard his ship in time to present the Division plans. This radio was received on the USS *Cecil* on the morning of 25 March 1945 and a message was sent forward on 26 March directing Captain Wright to proceed on to Kerama Retto (*Retto*=Group) as soon as that base was made available to seaplane transportation. No further word was heard from Captain Wright until the morning of 2 April 1945 when he radioed: "The Plan 3A of ours will be used with modifications. When it is definitely decided [that this is our operation] will send modifications." No indication was forthcoming as to just what the nature of the modifications were.

Meanwhile, the Division had been proceeding toward Ulithi where further instructions would be forthcoming. Between 25 March and 3 April, when the convoy anchored in Ulithi Lagoon, the Division plan had been changed to some extent. The change was mostly one of time, General Griner having decided that too much activity was being crammed into too short a time. The original Division operational plan had called for the completion of the entire Eastern Islands campaign in

three days. It was now decided to lengthen the time to five days. Intentions were to impart this plan to higher authorities at Ulithi, but upon arrival no communications could be established with Admiral Blandy. As a result, upon leaving Ulithi on 4 April 1945, the Division staff was still confused as to just what would finally develop. True, the Division had been alerted to carry out the Eastern Islands campaign by a radiogram received aboard ship at 0830 on 27 March. But at that time another radiogram had been received in which the 77th Division was alerted for the same job. The 77th's order was dated 26 March, the 27th's a day earlier. To add to this confusion was the fact that higher headquarters had no knowledge of the 27th Division's new plan, the 27th Division had no way of knowing what Tenth Army's "modifications" were. These were minor annoyances which could be ironed out without too much trouble, but definitely show that the 27th Division still had no knowledge of what its ultimate mission was to be.

Developments at Okinawa, however, were rapidly shaping the destiny of the Division. Information received regarding the Eastern Islands had convinced General Buckner that these areas were not heavily defended and might possibly be taken with a much smaller force than the whole Division. Accordingly, during the early morning of 4 April 1945, he ordered the amphibious reconnaissance battalion attached to Tenth Army to make a thorough reconnaissance in force no later than 6 April of all six of the Eastern Islands. This order was received aboard the USS *Cecil* at 1300 on 4 April, after leaving Ulithi.

No further information regarding the mission of the 27th Infantry Division was received until 1900 on 8 April 1945. Developments at Okinawa had shaped final plans for the use of the troops en route. The result of the reconnaissance of the Eastern Islands had been to show that, with the exception of Tsugen Shima (*Shima*—Island), all other islands in the group were unoccupied by enemy garrisons. Furthermore, XXIV Corps, in its advance to the south, had run into the strong enemy defense line which stretched from Oki on the east to Kakazu and Machinato on the west. Maj. Gen. John R. Hodge, in command of XXIV Corps, had asked General Buckner to permit him to use the 27th Infantry Division, which had originally been assigned the mission of garrisoning the island of Okinawa. In view of the information he had received regarding the Eastern Islands, General Buckner agreed to this and at 1900, on 8 April, the 27th Infantry Division received orders to land on Okinawa the next morning. The Division Commander was ordered to report to the USS *Eldorado*, upon arrival off Okinawa, for further orders. In the same order General Buckner instructed General Griner to detach one regimental combat team from the Division. This RCT was

to proceed directly to Kerama Retto and from there reload to capture Tsugen Shima guarding the entrance of Nakagusuku Wan.

During the night of 8-9 April, the transports bearing the 105th Infantry, commanded by Col. Walter S. Winn, were detached and proceeded to Kerama Retto. The rest of the 27th Infantry Division proceeded to the naval anchorage off the Haguchi beaches on the west coast of Okinawa. The USS *Cecil* dropped anchor at 0900 and fifteen minutes later General Griner, accompanied by Col. Richard P. Ovenshine, Division Chief of Staff, and Lt. Colonel Sheldon, G-3, left for the USS *Eldorado* to receive orders. Preparations were begun at once to debark troops and supplies of the Division.

At 1105 General Griner and his party returned to the *Cecil* with the information that the Division was assigned to XXIV Corps as of 1200, 9 April 1945, and would unload immediately over the Orange Beaches. Upon reporting to General Hodge ashore, shortly after noon on 9 April General Griner was given a brief orientation on the situation in the south and was told that for the rest of the day the Division would be mainly concerned with establishing itself on Okinawa. The Division forward command post was established east of Kadena Airfield at the junction of Route 5 and Route 13 at 1715 on 9 April. By nightfall all troops, except ships' parties and rear detachments, were ashore on Okinawa and established for the night. For over three years the Division had lived in the tropics, and now the men found themselves, shortly after dark, in the midst of a cold, drizzling rain.

Because the Division had not begun unloading until almost noon on 9 April, very little except the troops had come ashore that day. Light artillery battalions, preloaded in DUKWs, had managed to get their guns ashore but, with few exceptions, almost all the rest of the Division's equipment did not begin to assemble until the morning of 10 April. Consequently there was little activity in the Division except for preparations for future movement, assembling of equipment, and organization of command. The two infantry regiments ashore were both in bivouac in the area directly east of Kadena Airfield. Since it had reached the eastern shore of Okinawa on the night of 2 April 1945, the 17th Infantry Regiment of the 7th Division had patrolled and protected this area. Now on the morning of 10 April, acting on oral orders of General Hodge, the 165th Infantry prepared to assume responsibility for this mission at 1000 on the morning of 11 April. The only tactical development during the day was an oral warning to the 106th Infantry to be prepared for employment with the 96th Division. On 10 April no definite decision had been made by General Hodge as to just which flank on the corps' line the Division was to be used.

Chapter 50: Tsugen Shima

TSUGEN SHIMA is the fifth island from north to south of the Eastern Group lying off the coast of Okinawa. Tsugen, itself, is almost directly opposite the mouth of Nakagusuku Wan, the principal naval anchorage in Nansei Shoto (*Shoto*=Group). A little island, not more than three thousand yards from tip to tip, it was so strategically placed that while still in hands of enemy manning it it could deny American forces access to the splendid beaches on the east coast of Okinawa.

Upon being detached from the remainder of the transport squadron bearing the Division during the night of 8-9 April, the transports bearing RCT 105 proceeded directly to Kerama Retto, arriving there at 0840 on the morning of the 9th. Colonel Winn immediately proceeded to the USS *Estes* where he learned from Admiral Blandy that elements of the regiment were to assault and seize Tsugen Shima the next morning. Only one battalion was considered necessary for the task. Colonel Winn selected his 3d Battalion, commanded by Major Charles DeGroff, mainly because it had originally been assigned the task on the Division's plan for the Eastern Islands and had made a thorough study of the beaches and terrain. One battalion, the 1st, under Lt. Col. Rayburn H. Miller, was designated as reserve. However, only the 3d Battalion made the trip to Tsugen Shima, all other elements remaining behind at Kerama Retto.

Beginning at 1500 on the afternoon of 9 April, the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry was reembarked into three LSTs containing vehicles of the 780th Amphibian Tank Battalion and the 534th Amphibian Tractor Battalion. At 1840 the convoy, consisting of three LSTs, Admiral Blandy's flagship (the *Estes*), the regimental command ship (the *Rutland*), and escorting vessels, set sail from Kerama Retto for Tsugen. After cruising all night the group arrived off the target at 0630. Following a naval gunfire preparation which began at 0700, Major DeGroff landed his battalion, two companies abreast, the first wave hitting the beach with little opposition at 0840.

The terrain of Tsugen Shima is for the most part quite flat, but on the west side of the island rises a high ridge which has two knobs sticking out from it like warts. On the slope of this ridge was Tsugen Town, a small village which had been largely destroyed by air and naval bombardment. The Japanese garrison was centered around the two knobs and the village. The hills had been tunneled and several well constructed cave positions faced the landing beaches and overlooked the town. A triangular trench position was just at the north end of the village with pillboxes at each corner. Within the village itself there were

numerous dugouts covered with logs and dirt which served as machine-gun emplacements. In the fields just to the east of the town the Japanese had placed a rather extensive minefield, but this was poorly camouflaged in most places and caused only a small number of casualties, more through carelessness than because of its effectiveness. There were other enemy positions constructed throughout the island, notably two machine-gun positions just off the landing beaches and at least one large coast-defense gun at the north end of the island.

The garrison was a specially organized guard force which had been converted from a heavy artillery regiment of the Japanese 20th Division. Observers who saw the bodies testified that it was the most heavily decorated unit they had yet come across. Each Japanese soldier on Tsugen went to his death in full uniform and wearing his decorations.

The American landing force came ashore on the south beaches. Major DeGroff had bisected the island with the boundary between companies. Company L had the east half of the island and I Company the west. As a result of this division, most of the enemy strongpoints and opposition were in the I Company zone of action.

Landing almost without opposition, both companies plunged inland and by 0930 reported that they were on their first phase line, which ran east and west through the center of the town. Here, for the first time, I Company, under Lt. John J. Story, began running into serious trouble. Story had sent one platoon under Lt. Charles J. Stephani along the west rim of the island to clear out opposition there, and Stephani had almost at once come up against the hill positions on the ridge. Unable to advance, Stephani was recalled into the village and Story tried to circle the position. For the next three hours, I Company pressed on through the village streets in a driving rain. It was extremely difficult fighting with single enemy riflemen who suddenly appeared over the tops of walls to take a shot, or who tied themselves in bushes and trees and fired at the advancing troops from the rear. Throughout the period enemy mortar fire blanketed the whole town. By dogged perseverance, however, Lieutenant Story managed to get most of his company to the northern outskirts of Tsugen Town by noon.

Meanwhile, L Company had pushed on ahead and at 1209, Capt. Robert J. Spaulding, the company commander, reported to Major DeGroff that he had reached the second phase line, almost six hundred yards north of the village, without encountering any more opposition than the minefield at the eastern edge of the village. Until this time the entire advance had been made without benefit of any supporting weapons save 81mm mortar fire from M Company.

Company I, which had borne the brunt of the fighting, now moved

out of the cover of the village to the north and was immediately pinned down by heavy machine-gun fire from the mutually supporting positions of the triangular trench system. The left half of the company managed to get into the trenches themselves, but the right-flank platoon, under Lt. James M. Braly, could find no cover from the heavy fire. Lieutenant Braly decided to make a direct assault on the pillboxes at the north end of the triangle. He reached to within ten yards of the machine gun, but when he stood up to charge the pillbox, he was immediately cut down. The rest of his platoon was taken under fire at the same time, not only from the position in the trench system, but by enemy weapons on the two knobs on the west rim of the island. With I Company immobilized, Major DeGross ordered K Company to move around to the east, through the L Company zone of action, by-passing the resistance holding up Story, and take over the I Company zone of action at the second phase line. From that point, both K and L Companies were to move to the end of the island while Story mopped up the pocket.

Lieutenant Story now called up the amphibian tanks of the 780th Battalion, and they went to work on the trench positions and pillboxes north of town, later transferring their attention to the high ground on the west rim of the island. While the enemy was occupied with the tanks, K and L Companies swept on to the north of the island with little opposition and at 1805 reached the beaches at the opposite end.

Early on the morning of 11 April, Major DeGross began the task of mopping up random riflemen in the village, but by noon this "mop-up" had developed into a full-scale battle in which all four companies were used to try to dig out the Japanese atop the two hills. One of these two promontories was completely cleaned out, but the second had to be abandoned in the midst of the fighting when all troops were ordered to reembark aboard their ship and return to Kerama Retto. The "mop-up" on 11 April had been almost as costly as the "battle" on 10 April, DeGross losing over twenty men, including Lieutenant Story.

The reembarkation left an estimated fifteen enemy soldiers still loose on Tsugen Shima. Major DeGross, early on the morning of 11 April, had told Colonel Winn that he expected to complete mopping up by noon. This word had been passed to Admiral Blandy. He later found more opposition than he thought existed. At the time set for reembarkation he was still fighting and was ordered to return to his ships over his protests. The battalion, at the time it left the island, had killed 239 enemy soldiers, and had destroyed all known positions except for one on top of the hill on the southwest corner of the island. Casualty figures for the 3d Battalion, 105th Infantry were: 13 killed or died of wounds, and 79 wounded.

Chapter 51: The Division Prepares

THE DIVISION had received orders on 11 April 1945 that it would take over the right flank of the XXIV Corps line. On the morning of that day, General Griner attended a conference of division commanders at corps headquarters; at this conference plans were first laid down for the assault on the Japanese defense line north of Shuri.

At 1630 that afternoon General Griner called a meeting of all Division staff officers and went over the points of the corps meeting. The attack would definitely not take place for some days, since the corps commander wanted to build up a large enough supply of artillery ammunition to insure adequate support for the assault. In the interim, the Division was to concern itself with three main considerations.

The first task was to see that troops and equipment were unloaded. Concurrent with this work, elements of the Division were to move south and relieve the 96th Division elements within the 27th zone of action. No time limit was set for completion of the relief. The 106th Infantry, which on the afternoon of 11 April had moved into position south of Futema, was to begin relief of the right flank battalion of the 96th Division the next day with one of its own battalions. On subsequent days, another battalion of the 106th Infantry was to relieve a second battalion of the 96th Division, and upon completion of this movement, one regiment of the 96th Division, the 383d Infantry, was to be withdrawn to corps reserve. In this readjustment, the 383d Infantry was to relieve the 165th Infantry of its mission of patrolling the rear areas; the 165th would then move forward and fill in on the Division left. The 105th Infantry, which was expected ashore sometime during the period, would move into an assembly area near the village of Chatan as Division reserve. This plan was later changed and the 105th Infantry subsequently assumed responsibility for the Division left while the 165th Infantry became Division reserve. General Griner was of the opinion that this readjustment would take "several days."

Meanwhile, reconnaissance was to be made and the remainder of the Division was to move south. The right boundary was the west coast of Okinawa, the left boundary was roughly the road that ran between the villages of Futema-Kakazu-Nakama. Stipulation was made, however, that the 96th Division was to have the use of this road as a main supply route.

The 27th Division was to use Route 1, the west coast road, for the same purpose. All 96th Division installations were to be removed from points west of this boundary with the exception of an ordnance dump and repair point just west of Futema on Route 20.

These plans were carried out beginning 12 April 1945. The 106th Infantry began the relief of right flank elements of the 96th Division during the afternoon of that day. Col. Albert K. Stebbins, regimental commander, designated his 2d Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. Almerin C. O'Hara, as the first element to go into the line. By nightfall of 12 April, the relief had been completed and the 2d Battalion was in position on and behind the knob of ground overlooking Machinato Inlet, just west of Uchitomari Village. Two days later, on 14 April, the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, under Lt. Col. David R. Crocker, moved up into position behind Kakazu West Ridge and on the morning of 15 April relieved the 2d Battalion of the 381st Infantry on that hard-won hill.

Meanwhile, the 105th Infantry had begun landing on Okinawa on 12 April, and was all ashore the next day. The 165th Infantry, still occupied in the corps and service area, was therefore replaced by the 105th Infantry in the original plans. On the morning of 16 April the 1st Battalion of this regiment, commanded by Lt. Colonel Miller, moved in on the left of the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, facing Kakazu. During the same day, the 2d Battalion, under Major Holman Grigsby, moved into an assembly area in the rear of Lt. Colonel Miller's position. The next morning the 3d Battalion, conquerors of Tsugen Shima, moved into a position a thousand yards south of Route 20 as regimental reserve.

All other elements of the Division had moved to areas roughly adjacent to the village of Isa by this date. The CP had displaced forward on the morning of 13 April and the reserve regiment, the 165th Infantry, closed on its assembly area five hundred yards east of Isa by the night of the 15th.

With the plans for commitment of the Division under way, attention could be given to the second big task undertaken in the preparation phase. This task was broken down into two parts: first, the completion of unloading; and second, the accumulation of artillery ammunition.

The unloading of the Division was in the hands of the 1165th Engineer Group, commanded by Col. Horace L. Porter. This group, composed of three battalions, the 34th, 152nd and 1341st, had accompanied the Division to Saipan and had remained there until January 1945 when it rejoined the task force at Espiritu Santo and came north with the Division to Okinawa.

Within an hour after dropping anchor at Okinawa, Colonel Porter and his staff had gone ashore to complete arrangements for unloading. Although he was hit by a truck fifteen minutes after landing on the beach, Colonel Porter remained in command and his men began dis-

charging cargo over the Purple Beaches on the afternoon of 9 April. On the morning of 10 April a heavy rain set in, and by afternoon surf conditions had become so bad that unloading had to be discontinued until the morning of 11 April. When cargo had begun to come ashore slowly and the Division began its move south, vehicular transportation became a critical item. As a result, Colonel Porter arranged with Tenth Army to unload vehicles from LSMs on the sand spit at Bishi Gawa in the III Marine Amphibious Corps zone of action. Despite the unfavorable surf conditions which prevailed throughout the period as well as a decided lack of transportation, the Division was completely unloaded by the afternoon of 18 April.

The organic strength of Division Artillery was four battalions, three of 105mm howitzers and one of 155mm howitzers. Divided into three firing batteries of four guns each, there were thirty-six 105mm howitzers and twelve 155mm howitzers to a division. For the assault on the Shuri defense system, XXIV Corps had attached the 2d and 3d Battalions of the 11th Marine (Artillery) Regiment in support of the 27th Division, adding twenty-four more 105mm howitzers to the total and making seventy-two guns in all.

General Hodge's original plans, as expressed on 11 April, called for five units of fire to be supplied to each artillery battalion prior to the assault. For the artillery attached and assigned to the 27th Division, this amounted to 60,000 rounds of 105mm howitzer ammunition, a unit of fire being set at 200 rounds for that particular bore. In addition to this, five units of fire for the 155mm battalion amounted to 9,000 more rounds, a unit of fire for that bore being set at 150 rounds. Faced with the task of hauling 69,000 rounds of ammunition in one week, every available vehicle in the Division was on the job. Even ration trucks from Division headquarters were used to help build up the supply. By the night of 18 April, 28,000 rounds of 105mm howitzer ammunition had been delivered to the gun positions and 32,000 more rounds were in the battalion dumps. In addition to this, 6,300 rounds of 155mm ammunition had been delivered to the three firing batteries of the 106th Field Artillery Battalion and 2,700 more rounds were available at the dump.

The third of the tasks confronting the 27th Infantry Division during the period 11-18 April was planning the attack in the Division zone of action. Throughout the period, this part of the job was given careful consideration. Several factors had to be considered.

The terrain to the Division front was especially important. Beginning with the extreme right flank, the 106th Infantry was faced with Machinato Inlet, a small tidal basin approximately 150 yards across. On

the north side of this body of water, occupied by the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, was a small hill some sixty feet high. Sloping up gradually from the estuary, this knob of ground was covered with sparse growth and indented with approximately fifty Okinawan tombs. Running along the entire north shore of the estuary and bending back to the northeast of the mouth of the inlet was a ten-foot sea wall. Directly opposite this hill on the Machinato Village (south) side of the stream, were steep 75-foot bluffs, practically unscalable except by two or three ledge-like paths which ran up the sea side of the cliffs. From here to the south, the ground along the west coast was formed like a crouching lion. The bluffs were his shaggy head, the high ground between them and the hills to the south his back, and the hills themselves were his haunches. Nestled just behind the lion's head was the village of Machinato, hidden from view by the bluffs. Running down the lion's backbone, after emerging from the village, lay Route 1, the west coast road.

To the east of the terrain features along the coast lay Buzz Bomb Bowl, a vast, wide-open stretch of ground, so named because it seemed to be a practice range or impact area for the famed "flying freight cars" or 320mm spigot-mortar shells. This bowl was just what its name implied—a deep, flat, barren piece of terrain surrounded on all sides by high ground. The floor of the bowl was covered with rice paddies, which made movement across it almost impossible except on its southern edges where it sloped gradually up hill out of the water-logged bottom lands.

The third terrain feature on the Division front was the Kakazu Ridge area, the key to which was Kakazu Ridge itself. It was a part of a high hill mass, originally tree-covered. This area was actually a series of razor-back ridges which ran directly east and west. Kakazu Ridge itself was one of these razorbacks which stuck out into the bowl like the thumb of a large hand. The west end of it, occupied for four days by the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, was a barren, shell-pocked point of ground. Every tree had been shot off it, first by our own barrages and later by almost constant Japanese artillery and mortar fire. This hill became known first as Little Cassino Ridge and later as Crocker's Hill. To the left of this famous hill, in the area occupied by Lt. Colonel Miller's battalion, was the main Kakazu Hill mass, previously mentioned. This area consisted mainly of a maze of small, thirty- to forty-foot ridges, running east and west like the ridges of a washboard. Along each ridge was a line of tombs and between the ridges were areas that looked almost like well kept lawns. There seemed little doubt that this was an Okinawan cemetery area.

Probably the most important single terrain feature in the area, how-

ever, was the long, high, escarpment-like ridge that stretched across the entire Division front, from the lion's rump to the area known as Skyline Ridge in front of the 96th Division zone of action. Sometimes erroneously referred to as Kakazu Ridge, it could more properly be called Nakama Ridge. Actually, the name given to it by members of the 27th Infantry Division was Rotation Ridge.

Rotation Ridge was a dividing line between Japanese and American positions. A long, continuous cliff-like barrier, it stretched two thousand yards across the front and rose two hundred feet in the air. In its near sides were Japanese-occupied pillboxes and about halfway from the cut where Route 1 passed through it and Kakazu Village was a high tower of rock, later to become known as The Pinnacle. From this ridge, the Japanese commanded the American-held terrain to the north. From observation posts on top of it they directed fire on the area as far back as Isa. As long as the ridge was in enemy hands, he could observe troop movement along Route 1, shell CPs and other installations, and make Buzz Bomb Bowl a no-man's-land by bringing down murderous fire on any movement.

The only possible approaches to Rotation Ridge were along the lion's back at the west, or along the boundary road, over Kakazu Ridge, through Kakazu Village on the extreme left of the Division zone of action. Kakazu Village, itself, was nestled in a little valley between the Kakazu Hill mass and Rotation Ridge. Although it was marked plainly on all maps, the village could not be observed directly from Division positions before the attack. The road on the east ran along the border of the hill mass, then timidly sprinted across Kaham Creek, ducked over Kakazu Ridge, dipped into the village and then slowly wound its way to the top of Rotation Ridge in a cut-back that emerged on top of the hill about halfway between the villages of Nakama and Iso. This route of attack was considered decidedly less favorable than on the west because it was known that both Kakazu Ridge and Village were heavily defended and the whole attack would be exposed to enemy observation and direct enemy fire from the ridge at much closer range than it would be if directed along the lion's back on the west. The west route did indeed present some cover from enemy observation on the ridge if advancing units stayed along the coast below the crest line. However, such an approach offered no protection from observation by enemy units which might be stationed on Kazu-Saki (Point Kazu).

These terrain features had a decisive influence on the plan of attack adopted by the 27th Division. At a meeting on 15 April 1945, General Griner, in presenting the plan of attack, made the statement that he had never seen a situation in his military career where terrain governed

a tactical plan to such an extent. Actually, it had such bearing on the situation that he proposed to ignore basic doctrine of the Command and General Staff School.

In order better to study the terrain, the Division maintained constant patrols through the area. Units from the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, operating to the front of Crocker's Hill explored the ravines north and west of Kakazu Village. Patrols operating from the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, primarily at night, mapped and studied the floor of Buzz Bomb Bowl. Other patrols operating in the same area sought out every possible crossing of Machinato Inlet. There were three such crossings possible. One crossing was over the railroad bridge, well inland from the end of the basin, but this crossing was exposed and the bridge itself was blown out. Repair and use of this route was considered impractical because troops advancing across the bridge would have to move eight hundred yards over completely exposed ground. It amounted to the same thing as a direct attack up the Bowl itself, which was considered a suicidal move.

Route 1 was less exposed. The road ran around the extreme east end of the inlet on a high causeway. Two bridges had existed in this built-up roadway, but both were blown out. However, from the southern outskirts of Uchitomari to the south bank of the basin, where the road cut into the shelter of the high bluff, was a maximum of two hundred yards of exposed area. It was considered possible for vehicles to make a dash across this stretch of causeway, but the two blown bridges, which would have to be replaced, were under direct observation from Rotation Ridge and were undoubtedly spot registration points for enemy artillery.

Reconnaissance had shown one startling fact, however. The inlet itself, because of the bluff—the lion's head—was hidden from the enemy on the ridge a thousand yards away. Because the inlet was below the forward extensions of Kakazu Ridge, it was also hidden from Kakazu Town. The only possible place from which to observe *all* of Machinato Inlet was from the top of the bluff itself, directly overhead.

In addition to the patrols, observation posts were established from which minute inspection was made of the ground to the front to study terrain features and watch for troop movements. One observation post was maintained by the 27th Division Reconnaissance Troop in the Kakazu Hill mass near the right boundary, and another post was operated by the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, on the north shores of the inlet.

Although primarily concerned with the terrain to the immediate front, units gave some attention to the ground behind Rotation Ridge.

Photographic missions were flown by Division Artillery liaison planes throughout the period to supplement the photographic work already done by Tenth Army photo-intelligence teams. General Bradford, Assistant Division Commander, and representatives of all three infantry regiments made terrain inspection flights to investigate the ground for several thousand yards to the front in the Division zone of action. By the afternoon of 18 April every inch of terrain in front of the Division had been scouted.

On 10 April 1944, Lt. Col. W. M. Van Antwerp, G-2 of the 27th Infantry Division, received his first information of the strength of the enemy in front of the Division. During the first week of the campaign on Okinawa a captured Japanese map had revealed the defensive plan of the Japanese on the island. This map later proved correct almost in its entirety, showed the whole XXIV Corps front to be operating against the Japanese 62d Division. In addition, the Japanese 24th Infantry Division, and 44th Independent Mixed Brigade, with various naval and labor troops, brought the enemy total on this island to between 65 and 70 thousand men. This estimate differed from the original estimate of fifty-five to sixty thousand made by Tenth Army before the landing, and was under the final estimate by fifteen thousand. All of these major groups were under the control of the Japanese Thirty-second Army, an organization roughly equivalent to a United States Army corps.

The unit on the XXIV Corps' immediate front was the 62d Infantry Division. The organization of this unit differed considerably from the enemy's triangular 24th Division and from our own infantry divisions. The 62d was a brigaded force, made up of two infantry brigades, the 63d and 64th. Prior to the commitment of the 27th Infantry Division on the southern front, all opposition to the advance of XXIV Corps had been furnished by the 63d Brigade. This brigade was composed of four independent infantry battalions, the 11th, 12th, 13th and 14th. Each battalion was estimated to have a strength of approximately nine hundred men. Later information received indicated that in some cases the strength of these battalions had been raised to 1,200 men by adding to them Okinawans who were conscripted and inducted into the service between October 1944 and March 1945.

Japanese plans were relatively simple. Leaving the 12th Independent Infantry Battalion to fight a delaying action, the 63d Brigade had fallen back to the prepared defensive positions before Shuri. The 2d Company, 12th IIB, had withdrawn practically intact from Yontan Airfield the day of our landing, 1 April 1945, to the mountains of northern Okinawa, leaving only four companies to oppose our advance. By 12

April 1945 the strength of the 12th IIB had been reduced to less than three hundred men, some companies being virtually destroyed, so this battalion was withdrawn from the line to a rear area where it was rested and reorganized. At the time the 27th Infantry Division came onto the line, therefore, the corps was faced by the three remaining battalions of the 63d Brigade, plus two other battalions (the 11th and 14th IIB). The 11th IIB was generally located on the front of the 7th Infantry Division. The 14th was generally along the zone of the 96th Infantry Division in the center of the corps line, and the 13th IIB was directly on the 27th Division front. It was the 13th which faced the 383d Infantry when that regiment stormed Kakazu Ridge on 8-9 April. On 16 April, a prisoner captured by the 105th Infantry passed on the information that American artillery fire, American ground assaults and Japanese counterattacks had resulted in almost complete destruction of three of the five companies of the 13th IIB since the first assaults on the line. He estimated that one platoon of the 13th IIB occupied Machinato Village. Other elements of the battalion were purported to be in Kakazu Village.

The period between 11 and 18 April 1945 which saw the realignment of forces on the southern front, also saw a readjustment of Japanese forces facing the corps line. The 64th Brigade, inactive until now, began to come into the action. The brigade, the second of the 62d Division, was, like the 63d, composed of four independent infantry battalions—the 15th, 21st, 22d and 23d. During the early part of the period of readjustment the Japanese commander had moved the 13th Battalion back behind Nakama Village and reorganized it, replacing it primarily with the 15th Battalion. Between 15 and 18 April, the fresh 15th Battalion had launched a series of determined counterattacks and had been decimated. As a result, a new battalion, the 272d, was brought forward, the remnants of the 12th were returned and combined with the 14th IIB, and the 15th was left on the line. By 18 April 1945 the alignment of Japanese forces on the XXIV Corps front was, from west to east: 272d IIB, 15th IIB, 12th and 14th Combined Battalions, and the 11th Battalion. Directly behind and supporting the 272d IIB, was the 21st IIB. Each of these elements was supported by units from the 22d Independent Antitank Battalion, the 15th Independent Mortar Regiment and various small gun sections.

The 272d Independent Infantry Battalion, which was to be the primary concern of the 27th Infantry Division, posed a special problem. This enemy battalion was not listed as an organic part of any of the higher headquarters. During the period when identifications were coming in from this unit, it was considered to be a part of the 44th Independent

Mixed Brigade. Not until the battalion had ceased to exist did prisoner interrogation establish the fact that the 272d IIB and 273d IIB were independent units which did not belong to any higher headquarters. Shipped to Okinawa in the fall of 1944, these battalions had suffered heavy losses en route by our submarine action. Once arrived on the island, they had been filled up by Okinawan conscripts and at the time of American landings were attached directly to 62d Division headquarters and were not subject to orders by the brigades themselves. Only one of the battalions, the 272d, ever appeared on the front of the 27th Division and this was largely destroyed during the first day's heavy fighting on 19 April. Actually, one platoon of the battalion was occupying Machinato in place of the platoon of the 13th IIB when the 27th Division launched its attack on the afternoon of 18 April. This platoon maintained an observation post on the bluffs overlooking Machinato Inlet throughout the period 16-18 April. Before that, the OP had been manned by the 13th IIB. It is interesting to note that the 272d IIB was generally looked upon as an inferior unit because of the large number of Okinawans in its ranks.

In summary, it might be said that at the beginning of the American attack on 18 April, the 63d Brigade had ceased to be an effective combat unit. Its remnants formed a thin screen that stretched along the entire front. The main forces with which advancing American troops would have to contend were in place just to the rear. On the American left this bulwark was mainly composed of the 22d Infantry Regiment of the 24th Division; on our right, the fresh battalions of the 64th Brigade. In the 27th Division's zone of action, the main force was actually the 22d IIB, in the 105th's zone the 21st IIB on the right flank.

Planning for the attack of the 27th Division began as soon as Lt. Colonel O'Hara's battalion went into position on 12 April. The day before, the Division had received the translation of a captured Japanese document from the 7th Infantry Division. One paragraph of this paper struck home to the staff of the Division and was commented upon even by the men in the ranks who happened to read it. "At dusk the enemy will retire," this document read, "assemble for constructing positions, and prepare for bivouacking." To this was added the significant statement. "The enemy generally fires during the night, *but very seldom takes offensive action.*" Trained during its stay in Espiritu Santo in night maneuvers, the Division had an answer for this. If the Japanese were so certain that the Americans would not move at night, then every consideration would be given to such a move. The Japanese had furnished the Division the key to its attack.

The next question that confronted the Division was where the night attack could be made. From his observation post on the north bank of Machinato Inlet, Lt. Colonel O'Hara could see the greater part of the terrain to the Division front. By the night of 13 April he was aware that the nearest enemy to him was fully a thousand yards away, except for the rumored platoon in Machinato. Minute inspection of Rotation Ridge during these early days, through field glasses, indicated to the observers that the best possible chance of breaching the enemy position there was through the road cut on Route 1. This cut, however, was filled by a roadblock and was undoubtedly heavily defended. But further inspection revealed no trace of enemy movement or installations between Machinato and the cut. On the other hand, the ground in front of the Division left flank was extremely treacherous. Rugged terrain filled with tombs and caves occupied by enemy positions and infested by night patrols was not at all suitable for surprise movements. As early as 13 April, Lt. Colonel O'Hara and General Bradford, the Assistant Division Commander, had discussed the possibility of a night move on the right, and on 14 April General Griner had decided to go ahead with this idea. The next step was to work out details for the execution of the move.

The key to the whole Division attack now became the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, commanded by Lt. Colonel O'Hara. The focal point of his attention became the bluffs of Machinato and the inlet itself. Two questions had to be answered: What was the enemy situation on the opposite side? How could the battalion get across the inlet to make the night attack without being observed? During the afternoon of 14 April the battalion executive, Major William A. Foxen, accompanied by the company commanders and Lt. John J. Minett, brazenly poked along the north shore of the inlet, reached a water pipe fifty yards east of the blown bridges that had carried Route I across the inlet, and crossed this narrow pipe to the opposite side. These men then boldly walked up to the road and into Machinato, looking over the prominent terrain features. They met no opposition, were not fired on and brought back a description of the town.

The next day, 15 April, Colonel Stebbins, the regimental commander, ordered a strong combat patrol to proceed across the inlet and bring back the following information:

Enemy strength in Machinato.

Could the route along the coast west of Route 1 by way of the coastal plain be used by a force moving forward to capture the road cut through Rotation Ridge?

What opposition could be expected to such an advance?

Was the coast route covered by the escarpment [the lion's back] paralleling coast?

Was the Inlet fordable?

Could the high bluff immediately across inlet be used for an OP? Was such an OP advisable?

During the afternoon of that day, therefore, a patrol of platoon strength from G Company, 106th Infantry, under Lieutenant Minett, made its way across the inlet by means of the water pipe, assembled at a cave where the coastal road entered the bluff, and reorganized to continue the mission. Up until that time, it had encountered no opposition although the whole platoon had virtually to walk tight-rope across the pipe, one at a time and was completely exposed to view of all enemy positions. After reorganizing, Lieutenant Minett sent one squad up the road to look for enemy positions which might be interdicting that artery of approach and to look for possible minefields and enemy entrenchments. A second squad was to comb the village for sniper positions and pillboxes. The third was to move up on the north face of the bluff and work along the cliff to scout any Japanese positions there.

Minett's first squad moved all the way to the south limits of the village without encountering a single enemy soldier. There were no mines and the emplacements were empty. The third squad worked up onto the bluff, surprised two enemy soldiers manning the enemy observation post there, killed them and then moved on to the south and west toward the town and bluffs overlooking the coast. At this stage, the enemy first made known his presence. Both of Minett's two right squads were cautiously picking their way along the edge of the village when mortar shells began dropping among them. The men immediately spotted the source of this fire as being in two tree-covered hillocks on the extreme west edge of the bluff. Rifle and machine-gun fire accompanied the mortar barrage and in a few minutes Minett had lost four men killed and eight wounded. But from the amount of enemy fire Minett was able to determine that previous estimates of one platoon of enemy in Machinato was substantially correct. He called Lt. Colonel O'Hara on the radio, told him his situation and asked permission to stay and hold the village after cleaning out the enemy. Inasmuch as his mission had already been accomplished, however, O'Hara ordered him to evacuate his wounded and return. It was not yet time to engage in a full-scale battle.

Lieutenant Colonel O'Hara's report to higher headquarters that night was gloomy. He stated he "now know[s] there is enough [enemy] in woods and no chance to surprise enemy." However, the plan was not

abandoned. The next day, 16 April, a five-man patrol from H Company made the trip across the inlet by assault boat, scaled the cliffs and occupied the old Japanese observation post which had been knocked out the afternoon before by Lieutenant Minett's patrol. Here they had a good view of the whole lion's back, and a further advantage that as long as they occupied the ground, no Japanese could look directly at the inlet. During the night of 16-17 April, however, one lone Japanese soldier stumbled into the OP group and was killed. The firing gave away the fact that our forces were occupying the spot and so the patrol was withdrawn back to the north bank of the stream.

Throughout this period of activity by the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, the Division plan was taking definite form. On 15 April General Griner called a meeting of all staff officers and regimental commanders at which the scheme of maneuver was unfolded. By this time, the plan was almost complete. The 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, would attack under cover of darkness during the night of 18-19 April and by daylight on 19 April was to have seized the ridge at the road cut. The 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, was to follow the advance of Lt. Colonel O'Hara at a distance of four hundred yards. As soon as the road cut was secured, this battalion would pour through it, turn left, and advance down the ridge to the east, securing it, and cleaning out enemy positions which covered Buzz Bomb Bowl, Kakazu Ridge and Kakazu Village, and knocking out the enemy's observation on the high ground. Upon reaching a point halfway between the villages of Iso and Nakama, Lt. Col. Winslow Cornett's 1st Battalion was to face right again. Meanwhile, the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, under Lt. Colonel Crocker, was to move down off Kakazu Ridge by a covered route during the early morning hours of 19 April, pass through Ginowan Village and follow the 1st Battalion at a distance of four hundred yards. Upon reaching the road cut they, too, were to swing left, filling in on the line between the 1st and 2d Battalions. This move would bring the whole 106th Infantry Regiment on line without reserves. In order to give the attack some depth, General Griner ordered Col. Gerard W. Kelley, commanding officer of the 165th Infantry, to attach one battalion to Colonel Stebbins' regiment, this battalion to follow Lt. Colonel Crocker's battalion into position across the inlet.

The whole crossing was to be accomplished over a footbridge to be constructed after dark on 18 April. Some consideration had been given to the problem of transporting the troops across the inlet. Assault boats and amphtracs were considered, but it was finally decided to use a footbridge supported by engineer assault boats, a narrow emergency span.

The 102d Engineer Combat Battalion, the organic engineers of the

Division, were to play a key part in its opening move. Altogether they were to build four bridges in the 106th Infantry's zone of action. The bridge-building was to begin right after dark on 18 April and was to be completed prior to 2330, in time for Lt. Colonel O'Hara to begin moving at midnight. They were to begin setting up two Bailey bridges, one fifty feet long, the other sixty feet. These two bridges were to be built on the sites of the demolished spans along Route 1 at the east end of the inlet. Working concurrently with the men putting up the footbridge, the company assigned to the Baileys was to finish by daylight. The fourth bridge to be constructed was a vehicle bridge, supported by rubber pontoons and strong enough to carry $\frac{3}{4}$ -ton trucks with supplies. This was a much more difficult job of construction but it, too, was to be finished by daylight, if possible, by working all night. Its location was directly to the west of the proposed footbridge. A road also was to be built for this bridge.

The bridges and the road presented difficulties. To begin with, General Griner's desire for absolute surprise made it necessary that the activities of the engineers be kept to an absolute minimum until actual building began. Lt. Col. Harold F. Gormsen, the Division engineer, was left with the details of this task. Another difficulty was that the entire 102d Engineer Battalion was unfamiliar with the Bailey bridge. This type of span had been first used by the British in the North Africa campaign, after the Division had finished its training in the United States. During its previous operations in the Pacific, on islands that had no stream crossings, the 102d Engineers had never been called upon to use the bridge and, actually, had never seen one before, except for a brief inspection of one at Espiritu Santo. There had been received at Santo, however, a replacement officer, Lt. Irving S. Golden, a graduate of the Engineer OCS at Fort Belvoir, Virginia. In addition to his training at Belvoir, this officer had served as a noncommissioned officer of engineers in the Tunisia Campaign and had constructed several of the spans. Lt. Colonel Gormsen immediately detailed Lieutenant Golden to conduct a rigorous training period with the Bailey bridge in the period before 18 April. Company A spent almost the entire period of five days in building, tearing down, and rebuilding Bailey bridges in the Iso area, just out of sight of the Japanese observers.

The problem in the 106th Infantry zone of action was largely one of surprise and maneuver, to take the highly favorable Japanese positions without excessive loss of life. The task on the Division left was, on the other hand, to be a powerful push, steamrolling Japanese opposition before it. Colonel Winn was to move his regiment straight ahead, clean out Kakazu, and, get up on top of Rotation Ridge. "Nothing must be

allowed to stop the forward movement," General Griner ordered. Upon reaching the preliminary objective, the regiment, originally attacking in a column of battalions, would fan out to the right, putting a second battalion on the line, and make contact with the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, on the west. It was estimated that the contact would not be made until the second day, 20 April. It was thought that the action of the 106th Infantry in taking the ridge would eliminate a good share of the fire that could be put on the advancing 105th Infantry in its progress up the ridge. Colonel Stebbins had specific orders to support this advance by fire.

Once Rotation Ridge was captured, Colonel Stebbins of the 106th Infantry was to keep pushing south. It was generally considered probable that there would be nothing to stop the American advance beyond the ridge until the Naha-Shuri-Yonabaru line was reached, but Japanese heavy artillery fire was expected as soon as our troops appeared over the crest. Arrangements were made with our own air and artillery to keep a close watch on the enemy rear areas for artillery emplacements. Furthermore, all road junctions south of Rotation Ridge were carefully registered with the intention of breaking up the movement of reinforcements up to the line. All preliminary planning was based on the premise that once the ridge was taken, there would be a breakthrough all the way to a second enemy line.

In view of General Griner's feeling that a breakthrough might take place, he issued specific orders that if resistance in front of the 106th Infantry was light once it reached the top of the ridge, the 106th was to move south without regard to the 105th Infantry on its left. To the whole Division, he expressed the corollary of this order:

No matter what else happens, we must advance. We do not have time to wait for units on our flanks. If they cannot move, we will push forward anyway. I do not want to hear any unit commander calling me and telling me that he cannot advance because the unit on his flank cannot advance.

To insure the seizure of Machinato Airfield at the earliest possible moment, General Griner attached the 27th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop to the 106th Infantry. This unit was to protect the right flank of the 106th Infantry in the Kazu Saki area. Plans were also tentatively made for a landing below Kazu Saki, on the shores west of the airfield. At a meeting between General Griner, General Bradford, and Colonel Ovenshine, the Division Chief of Staff, it was proposed that Capt. Shaw Carter, the troop commander, be told to make this landing and sweep inland to capture the airfield. The plan was never carried out

although one amphibian tractor company was promised to the Division to carry out the maneuver. A landing of the troop in rubber boats south of Machinato was also contemplated, to come simultaneously with the original crossing of the inlet on the night of 18 April. If this plan were carried out, the troop would protect the advance of the regiment during the night.

The employment of the reserve regiment, the 165th Infantry, was also considered. General Bradford had suggested that, inasmuch as the deployment of the 106th Infantry was mostly to the left (east) of the cut, the 165th might be used on the second day, 20 April, to take over the right of the Division line. In preliminary planning, however, no definite order other than an alert was given.

Tanks were to operate on both prongs of the attack. However, due to the exposed nature of the two Bailey bridges east of the inlet the employment of tanks was questionable. General Griner fully expected that within a half hour after daylight both Bailey bridges would be blown out. He asked Lt. Colonel Gormsen to make preparations to rebuild them "as fast as they're blown out," but even this would not satisfactorily solve the problem of the tanks. Perhaps tanks would get across the bridge to the support of the 106th Infantry; perhaps they would not. They certainly could not use the ponton bridge across the inlet.

In the 105th Infantry's zone of action, there was also a bridge problem. The only road available here was the one which ran through the 96th Division zone of action north and east of Kakazu. At the road junction where the Kakazu road branched off from the main north-south highway, was a blown bridge. It was decided to move tanks from the 193d Tank Battalion from north of Uchitomari east to the center island highway (Route 5), down this highway to the branch, in through Kakazu, and in this move to support the attack of the 105th Infantry. In the event that the Bailey bridges at Machinato Inlet were blown early and their use denied to the tanks supporting the 106th, those tanks were to move over the 105th route, through Kakazu, turn west on the road to Machinato which ran below the ridge, and upon reaching Route 1, turn south to take up supporting positions. This plan made necessary the replacing of the blown bridge at the Kakazu road junction. Although this bridge was within the zone of action of the 96th Division, it was agreed that a by-pass would be built around it by a detachment of the 102d Engineer Battalion. Initial reconnaissance for the by-pass was carried out by Capt. Robert Crimmins, assistant division engineer, on 16 April. The by-pass was built on the morning of 19 April, beginning at daylight.

Such was the original Division plan as presented by the Division

Commander on 15 April 1945. Between that time and the issuance of 27th Division Field Order 62 on the afternoon of 17 April 1945, details were added and minor changes made. The most important of these changes had to do with the 106th Infantry.

It will be recalled that the action of the patrol led by Lieutenant Minett had taken place on 15 April. At the time of the Division meeting of that day reports on the results had not yet been sent to higher headquarters. On 16 April, therefore, after receiving reports, Lt. Colonel O'Hara and General Bradford collaborated in revising the initial scheme of maneuver. To make absolutely certain that surprise was accomplished, it was decided to send a company across the inlet in assault boats, hidden by smoke on the afternoon of 18 April. This company was to scale the bluffs, knock out the enemy in and around Machinato, build up a defensive line south of the town, and cut off any chance of the crossing of the inlet's being interrupted by enemy patrols, or discovered and reported to the main enemy forces on Rotation Ridge. The attack was to take place at 1600 on the afternoon of 18 April, almost ten hours before the main attack. Company F, 106th Infantry, was originally chosen for this mission, but because Lieutenant Minett was familiar with the ground on the south side of the stream, G Company was substituted and actually made the assault.

The engineer plan was also developed further. This phase of the action was one of the most interesting of the whole attack on the Shuri Line. General Griner repeatedly insisted that nothing be done to indicate that anything was afoot. Secrecy was difficult. Material for four bridges had to be carried into position and transportation was scarce. The appearance of any stock piles of bridge equipment on or near the bridge sites would most certainly alert the Japanese that something was pending. Consequently, Lt. Colonel Gormsen had to assemble all his equipment in rear areas, fully two to four miles behind the lines, and move it up to the sites after dark on the night of 18 April. By the afternoon of that day every nook and cranny north of the Isa-Futema road which offered concealment was filled with trucks loaded with bridge equipment. Pontons were inflated there, everything that could be assembled beforehand and still transported by truck was put together and loaded. By nightfall, an observer travelling along the roads in the 27th Division sector would have passed through a long line of trucks backed against banks, all ready to roll at a moment's notice.

One other engineer problem was surmounted cleverly. The supply route to the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, was a little jeep trail that had been built during the early days of the occupation of O'Hara's Knob

by the 381st Infantry. This trail wound tortuously across a mile and a half of open ground, taking the line of least resistance. Every night for over a week, promptly at 1900, this little road had been brought under enemy shell fire. It was full of holes, deep ruts, and entirely unsuitable for anything but jeeps. It had to be made ready to carry the traffic of the trucks loaded with bridge equipment but any attempt at repairing it would most certainly arouse the suspicion of the enemy. At the south terminus, the road stopped abruptly in the face of a rice paddy area, filled with water and impassable to anything, including amphibian vehicles. The road that would lead across the ponton bridges was, therefore, some 250 yards short of its objective, the edge of the inlet. The problem was attacked by Lt. Colonel Gormsen as early as 15 April. A bulldozer was sent forward as far as the swampland on that day. On succeeding days this vehicle puttered about in plain view of the enemy, obviously doing nothing. However, occasionally one of the supply vehicles of O'Hara's battalion would venture too near the rice paddies, bog down, and the bulldozer, unwillingly, would amble forward and pull the jeep out of the mud, after which the driver would putter around filling in the holes. By the morning of 16 April, a causeway had been built across the swamp in this manner. To those who might have been suspicious, it appeared that this was only an expedient to save carrying supplies by foot across the water-filled areas to the 2d Battalion. At night, however, as soon as it got dark, the bulldozer worked feverishly to improve this seemingly improvised causeway. On succeeding nights, also, the long supply route was improved to take the necessary traffic and a road was cut from the causeway, under cover, around O'Hara's Knob on the west and almost up to the edge of the inlet itself.

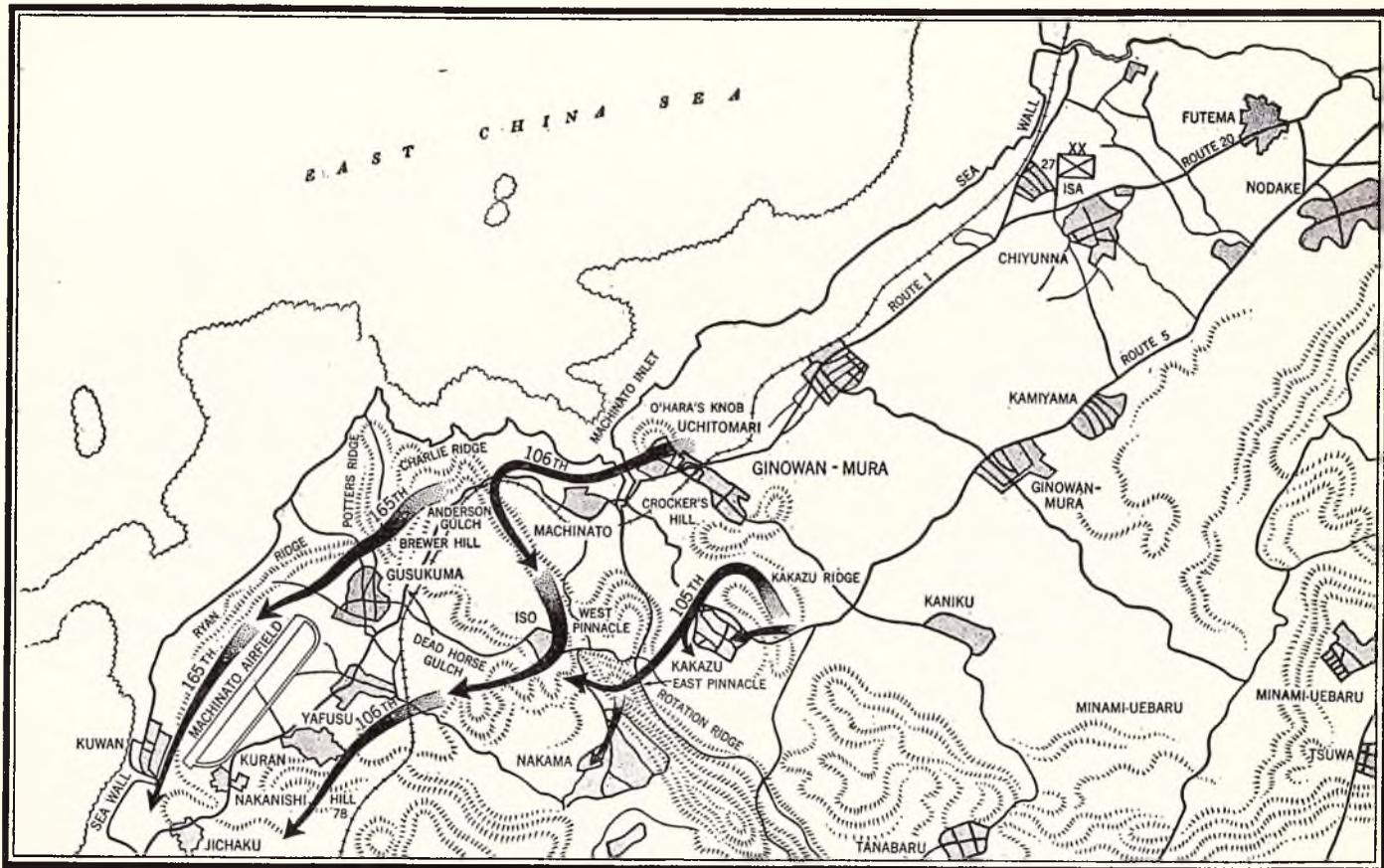
Everything was ready to move at darkness, or before, on 18 April. Tides had been studied, prevailing wind direction ascertained, units brought up into place. Even war dogs were leashed and waiting on the inlet's north shore, ready to move out in the night. On the afternoon of 17 April a final staff meeting was held. The plans were reviewed minutely, last-minute details were added. The Division was ready to move at 1600, 18 April, to put to the test all it had learned since Saipan.

The period of preparation for the attack cannot be passed over without some mention of the men of the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, who did yeoman service during the period. This battalion, the same unit that had fought so valiantly in Death Valley on Saipan between 23 and 28 June 1944, had become a problem child in the Division. During the short period in the line in the Marianas, this battalion had lost its battalion commander, and every line officer except Major Charles N.

Hallden, now battalion executive officer, later to become battalion commander. It had finished at Saipan with less than a hundred riflemen left. During the period after Saipan, General Griner had brought in Lt. Col. Crocker to take command, and this personable young officer, a West Point graduate of 1940, worked many hours in attempts to rebuild its shattered morale. However, in spite of his efforts, the battalion was considered so shaky that it was relegated to a place of relative unimportance on Okinawa. In the original plans it was to be given the task of garrisoning the Eastern Islands after their capture by the Division. When this whole plan was abandoned on the Division's arrival at the target, it was still not considered as anything but a unit to do odd jobs. When the 106th Infantry was ordered to take over the line from 96th Division units, the battalion was ordered to occupy the hot spot on top of Kakazu Ridge, the scene of the bitterest fighting thus far on Okinawa. Here the battalion was to sit and hold, taking no offensive action. By making this move, Colonel Stebbins hoped to save his two first-rate battalions fresh for the assault when it came. When the attack moved off, the 3d Battalion would come down off the hill, revert to regimental reserve and assume a passive role in the Okinawa campaign.

Taking over from the 96th Division on 15 April, this battalion sat on top of the hill for four days. During these four days they were practically helpless. Restrained from moving forward in force, the men were unable to do more than kill an occasional enemy soldier at long range, run patrols which at various times surprised small enemy parties, or observe the area around them. They had to hand-carry their supplies a thousand yards from their rear command post over the ridges and across the open ground to their rear, and their casualties had to be evacuated over the same difficult terrain by litter. Perched precariously on the steep slopes of a hill which demanded all the qualities of a mountain goat merely to maintain footing, these soldiers underwent constant mortar and artillery fire, repulsed innumerable small infiltration attempts, broke up at least two counterattacks in force, and "amused" themselves in the interim by taking pot shots at Japanese observers who popped up along Rotation Ridge to direct enemy fire. Haggard and worn by lack of sleep, their nerves on edge from the incessant mortar and artillery shells, awe-struck by the impressive sight of the spigot-mortar shells, which were dubbed "flying freight cars," and of which one man said, "We just see 'em coming, pick out where they're going to land, and then outrun 'em," the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, wanted only one thing, "a good solid shot at a good solid Jap." By the morning of 19 April, when the 3d Battalion moved off the hill, they had lost 9 men killed, 66 wounded, and had 34 more shell-shock and psycho-

neurotic cases. The name of the hill was changed from Kakazu Ridge to Crocker's Hill by the men of the 27th Division. Visitors who had passed by it had already named it Little Cassino Hill. Not a tree remained standing on it, and hardly a square foot of ground remained that had not been overturned or disturbed by shell bursts. Strangely enough, this battalion which had gone to Crocker's Hill a shaky, gloomy unit, came down on the morning of 19 April a determined, grim group of men, resolved to "get our licks in and kill a few Japs in return for the licking we've had to take up there." One dose of Kakazu Ridge had cured Lt. Colonel Crocker's morale problem. By chance, the battalion was put back into the line later the same day and by the time the Division was relieved on 30 April, despite even heavier losses than they suffered on Saipan, they were looked upon as one of the really fine battalions in the line.



Map 7: Okinawa: The 27th Division's area

Chapter 52: Machinato

WEDNESDAY, 18 April 1945, was a bright, clear day—a day more suited to picnics than to war. High, towering cumulus clouds drifted lazily overhead and a faint breeze blew in from the sea. Late in the afternoon this was to shift and blow back through the inlet from Kakazu, an important consideration because it meant that smoke thrown into the valley would cover the inlet from Japanese observation. There was little unusual activity during the morning. Between 0900 and 1145 an air strike was placed on Machinato. When it was over three-quarters of the village had been destroyed completely by the dropping of 2,500 pounds of bombs. Naval gunfire drummed intermittently on the two hillocks on top of the bluffs that had caused so much trouble to Lieutenant Minett's patrol on 15 April, and ships threw an occasional shell into suspected cave positions below the crest of the cliffs.

Naval guns had been picking away ever since 16 April, the day after Minett's return. The actors on the north side of the inlet continued with their duties unperturbed. Laundry was done and hung out to dry in the hot sun; the men puttered around, sitting in small groups talking; some stretched out in the shade of the trees and slept. The men simply took their ease in the midst of now familiar surroundings. They knew that during the day, as long as our planes were up, the enemy would not risk showing his artillery.

Shortly after noon the tempo had not changed, but the activity had. In nearly every foxhole the men bent over, cleaning weapons and then writing a last letter home. At 1500 that afternoon it looked as though every man in the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, had a V-mail form in his hand.

Farther back, in the Division CP, men had begun to buckle on their helmets and belts. They greeted each other with an almost standard question, "Going up to see the show?" Capt. Donald M. Neumann, Division public relations officer, came into the CP with six photographers and several newspapermen in tow, all on their way to the front to see the attack. It was more like the old-time exodus to the county fair. By 1630, Lt. Colonel O'Hara was moved to send the following message to regiment: "There are at least twenty observers in quarter-ton vehicles scattered around the area. Good artillery meat." At 1845 the Division had been forced to station provost guards at the entrance to the 2d Battalion's supply trail where it led off from Route 1 in the village north of Uchitomari. Their orders were to "prohibit movement of all but Peacepipe [102d Engineer Battalion] and Cowboy [193d Tank Battalion]. Observers, etc. will be prohibited."

Except for this one small breach of the etiquette of war there was still nothing out of the way when, at 1500, G Company, 106th Infantry, got out of their foxholes behind O'Hara's Knob, reluctantly and clumsily wrestled with their belts, harness, and ammunition bandoliers, took a last look around, and then slowly sauntered off toward Uchitomari in a long, slow-moving line. At 1540 a little group of six or seven H Company men, helmetless and coatless, walked up to the top of O'Hara's Knob, picked up a machine gun from its position on the old perimeter, carried it with its ammunition boxes lazily down the hill and out along the seawall to the point on the north shore of the inlet. There they set it up to cover the top of the bluff on the south side. Other little groups of soldiers, or sometimes just individuals, moved here and there, suddenly reaching some predetermined spot, and flopping down in it to look across the stream and wait. Lt. Colonel O'Hara occupied a foxhole facing the bluffs. With him was his radio man. A little later Colonel Stebbins came down to talk with him, and from time to time other visiting firemen came to his foxhole to call and pay their respects. A motion-picture cameraman, atop the knob in a foxhole, adjusted his camera. There was nothing hurried, no unusual movement that indicated our troops planned anything exceptional, unless it was the large number of observers.

Meanwhile, in Uchitomari, Lt. Clarence F. Stoeckley, in command of G Company, had organized his men. Attached to him for this mission was a platoon under Lt. Spencer M. Pitts of L Company, 106th Infantry. Stoeckley had affectionately named this his 5th Platoon. Pitts and his 5th were to lead the way, led in their turn by the veteran of the earlier crossing, the man who knew more about the other side than any other, Lieutenant Minett. With Minett in the lead, Pitts worked his men cautiously out of Uchitomari. One by one they infiltrated along the east side of the causeway, and upon reaching the edge of the stream, they waited. At precisely 1607, one lone smoke shell landed two hundred yards east of the inlet, like a tentative, mistaken shot. There were no more for two minutes. The changing wind picked up the smoke and wafted it toward the sea. In a matter of seconds there was a thin haze over the east end of the stream. Then another smoke shell landed, this time a little closer. Minett waited no longer. Sprinting from his cover beside the causeway he made the end of the pipeline, and in a few light tripping steps he was on the south side. About ten yards behind him was Pitts' leading scout, then Pitts himself. Not a shot had been fired. Minett made his way quickly up the slope to the cave where he had assembled his men on 15 April. Within a few minutes all of Pitts' platoon was assembled outside the cave or were already picking their way

toward the coast among the rocks below the bluffs. Pitts himself soon moved out toward the head of his widely dispersed column. Minett remained behind in the cave, waiting for his own platoon to come up. Pitts was on his own.

The mission of Stoeckley's company was to clean out the enemy in Machinato and cut off the entrance to the bluff area, thereby providing protection from surprise and interruption to the work of constructing the bridges across the inlet, and later insuring the undetected movement of our troops to the south during the night. He had elected to move his men along the base of the cliffs on the south shore of the inlet as far as the seashore side, then scale the bluffs almost directly under the two hill-ocks. In this way he would not have to cross the open fields toward the pinnacles in a frontal assault. By scaling the bluffs Stoeckley would advance under cover all the way and come up to the positions at close enough range so that the enemy's mortars would be of no aid to him.

Following Pitts' platoon was Stoeckley's 2d under Lt. Frederick W. H. Rothenberg, then Minett's platoon, then the 1st, followed by the Weapons Platoon and Company Headquarters. It was not until all the rifle platoons had reached the south shore that the Japanese woke up to what was going on. Then it was too late. A few rifle shots burrowed into the thick smoke covering the pipe but no one was hurt. Thirty minutes after it had started, B Company, 88th Chemical Mortar Battalion, ceased fire, the smoke lifted, and there was no sign of activity along the pipeline. Stoeckley's company was across without the loss of a single man.

Meanwhile Pitts' platoon had worked itself along the base of the cliffs, ducking from rock to rock. The men had still not fired a shot. About four hundred yards west of the road, where the cliffs cut back to the south from the shore of the inlet, Pitts' leading scout found a steeply rising ledge which would serve as a path to the top of the bluff. Within twenty minutes, followed by the rest of the platoon, he had made the ascent. Here the platoon spread out to the left, moving from bush to bush and rock to rock. Behind them was a sheer drop of seventy-five to a hundred feet; on their right were the two hillocks known to be occupied by the enemy. Operating smoothly and rapidly, Pitts' men skirted the entire north rim of the bluff, overlooking the inlet, making sure that no Japanese soldier was in a position to observe the night's activities.

It was only then that the enemy made his presence known. As Pitts' men moved around in the little pathway at the top of the cliff, a machine gun opened up from the hillocks on the right. Two men went down, seriously wounded. One of them was Lieutenant Pitts himself. Lieutenant Rothenberg called Stoeckley from the ground below on the radio

and informed the company commander that he was cut off from Pitts' platoon and could not get onto the high ground. Japanese fire was now steady and deadly from the two positions on the hill. Lieutenant Stoeckley ordered Rothenberg to attempt to find another route up the cliff. He then called for smoke from H Company's mortars which were still behind O'Hara's Knob. To expedite things still further, he took his 1st Platoon which was still assembled near the cave on the road and led it south on Route 1 and into the village that way. It was now only 1710.

Under cover of the smoke screen, Lieutenant Pitts and the other wounded men were evacuated. Then Pitts' platoon was withdrawn down to the coastal strip, and a heavy mortar barrage was laid on the hillocks. There was no more enemy fire. Stoeckley and the platoon accompanying him got through the town without trouble, then turned to the right and started for the hillocks from the opposite side, almost diametrically across from where Pitts had emerged from the low ground. As his men came into the open they were hit by heavy mortar fire, so Stoeckley resolved to move on to his objective without further dalliance, leaving the enemy to be mopped up later. He called Minett on the radio and told him to bring his platoon up the road, and this was done under cover of darkness shortly after 1900. Upon reaching the south edge of the village Minett moved his men out into the field facing the positions, built up a line surrounding them, and dug in for the night. Next morning Minett killed five Japanese at daylight as they attempted to emerge from the dugouts on top of the hills.

While Stoeckley and Minett had been working on the Japanese position from the roadside, Rothenberg and his platoon had been trying to get at them from the sea side. When ordered to seek another way up the hill he moved farther south and found another ledge-like path which he followed. Upon arriving at the top, however, he found himself directly between the two enemy positions and subject to heavy cross-fire from the machine guns. Rothenberg's leading scout, Pvt. John Vallerio, disappeared and was never seen again. Not even able to get a foothold on this spot, Rothenberg again pulled out onto the low ground and built up a line stretching from the bluffs to the sea wall and waited for further orders. He was now quite out of contact with everyone and it was getting dark. Just before they built up the line, however, Rothenberg's men had seen movements atop the ridge and fired, killing one Japanese and hitting others. Pitts' platoon meanwhile had pulled down off the ridge, leapfrogged around Rothenberg, trying to get up on the ridge, and moved south to where the high ground broadened out a little, there tying in with Stoeckley's right flank.

By 2130 Stoeckley had reported three of his four rifle platoons on the

objective line, and Machinato secured and cleaned out. Rothenberg was still below the bluffs and out of physical contact with everyone so Stoeckley radioed to him and told him to send out patrols to contact both the 1st Platoon and Minett. One of the patrols was ambushed trying to get over the bluffs south of the second hillock and one man was killed. Rothenberg then decided to sit below the bluffs and wait there to keep the Japanese above from coming down on the low ground and firing on the rest of the battalion as it came across the bridge. Almost immediately a small part of the enemy force attempted to do that very thing and Rothenberg's men caught and killed them trying to come north of the sea wall. There was no further activity in the Machinato area during the night. Stoeckley had accomplished his mission and the road was clear.

Company G had made the opening move. While Stoeckley and his men were still working through the village above the bluffs, the rest of the Division had begun to move. At dusk, 1930, the first truckload of Bailey bridge equipment moved out of a coral pit at Iso and began rolling south.

A half hour later, at 2000, the last truckload of Bailey bridge equipment was followed by the first full load of material for the footbridge. The ponton bridge was shuttled forward at 2030. Shortly after dark the bulldozer below O'Hara's Knob had begun to put the finishing touches on the approaches to the footbridge and the ponton bridge so that the trucks bearing the construction materials were able to move up to the water's edge and drop their loads.

Working in the darkness, quietly and without interruption, Lieutenant Golden and Company A, 102d Engineer Battalion, had completed the first of the two Bailey bridges by 2200. An hour later they had moved two hundred yards down the causeway and started work on the second bridge. This was finished by 0300. Vehicles of Cannon Company, 106th Infantry, and the 193d Tank Battalion immediately moved up and began to cross. This latter movement was slow and tedious, however, because mine-detector teams had to work over every foot of the road all the way up through the village. By full daylight not more than one platoon of Cannon Company was across the inlet. Then movement stopped when the bridges came under fire.

Only the ponton bridge caused trouble. Scheduled for completion before dawn, the first vehicle did not cross until 1245 on 19 April. Company B, 102d Engineers, worked steadily, but shortly after 0230 in the morning the receding tide carried away the anchor line on the pon-

tons. Part of them were carried out to sea and the work had to be largely redone.

Again, at 1055 on the morning of 19 April, just before the first truck moved out onto the bridge, enemy dual-purpose guns threw in three rounds of air burst which sank three pontoons and wounded six men, delaying traffic for two more hours. This, incidentally, was the only time when actual building operations came under enemy fire.

At 0200, roughly two hours after the completion of the footbridge, Lt. Colonel O'Hara gave the signal to his battalion to move out. All companies had moved up in the darkness from behind O'Hara's Knob and sat around beside the inlet, huddled together in silence. Lieutenant Stoeckley, his company securely holding the line six hundred yards southwest of Machinato across the lion's head, had come back to the south end of the footbridge shortly before 0200 and there met the battalion commander. He now guided the remainder of the unit along the low ground next to the sea and by 0330 the whole battalion was in an assembly area just in the rear of G Company. Here the men waited for daylight.

Lieutenant Colonel Cornett had moved out toward the bridges from his assembly area near Iso at 0317, and by 0435 reported that his first company, B, had crossed the footbridge and was closing on the 2d Battalion. The 3d Battalion did not come down off Crocker's Hill until daylight. Throughout the night a steady stream of men trudged across the footbridge. The enemy made no move to stop the crossing. Stoeckley and his men had done their work well.

Lieutenant Colonel O'Hara's plans did not call for his men to march up to the Japanese position in the darkness and assault it. Such a move would have been almost as costly as a daylight assault. The position that his men took up, however, was immediately north of the cut within easy marching distance of the enemy position. Reorganizing his men, the battalion commander moved F Company through Stoeckley's lines, beginning at 0535 just before daybreak. This company, commanded by Capt. Hubert N. Slate, moved silently up the road in single file, and then the leading platoon, under Lt. Robert J. Hyland, Jr., left the highway, moved through the brush to the right, and within half an hour was on top of the ridge in the thick growth of pine trees there. Hyland, at the head of his column, now swung his men back toward the road, a distance of seventy-five yards. This brought him, in the half light of dawn, into the enemy position from the rear. Inching forward cautiously, the platoon took the enemy completely by surprise. The Japa-

nese soldiers were sitting around small fires in little groups, singing and preparing breakfast. Their rifles were stacked neatly a few feet away. This first group amounted to ten or fifteen. Hyland's men immediately opened fire. Some of the enemy dropped, the others got to their feet and fled toward the cut along the ridge, abandoning their weapons and comrades. Hyland later found Jap bodies all along the crest as he moved down toward his objective. His men had accounted for almost the whole party. The fire from this platoon, however, alerted the rest of the enemy and within a few minutes mortar fire began dropping into the remainder of F Company where it was moving up the road. Lieutenant Hyland's platoon was now in position on the crest of the ridge, however, and began sweeping rapidly toward the cut, firing into the area across the road as it advanced. The enemy, outflanked, left his positions and began to flee south from the ridge. The mortar fire ceased. Lieutenant Hyland kept up an incessant fire on the opposite bank of the cut, and within a few minutes enemy riflemen from the ridge that branched out south along the road to his right flank, took him under fire. The platoon commander was forced to dig in his men without crossing the road and take up a continued fire from his dug-in position. Hyland picked a spot from which he could keep up a concentrated fire on the positions across the cut and at the same time get some protection from the withering fire being put on his right flank. For the next thirty minutes there ensued a wild fire fight during which the platoon eventually forced the enemy to pull back from the remainder of his positions guarding the road. The platoon leader estimated that at least a company of enemy was routed, of whom twenty-five were killed trying to get out of the fire. The platoon of F Company had two men killed and five wounded.

By 0700 the ridge had been cleared sufficiently to allow another platoon to come up on it, followed shortly by the rest of the company. An artillery forward observer accompanied the executive officer, Lt. James W. Russell, up to Hyland's position shortly after the enemy had begun to withdraw and with this observer calling fire, heavy artillery concentrations were laid all along the high ground that overshadowed Route 1 on the right, and much of the enemy rifle and machine-gun fire that was causing so much trouble was thus silenced. The first part of the Division advance was now completed. It was only 0710. A message from Major George H. Temme, Jr., S-3 of the 106th Infantry, who was with Lt. Colonel O'Hara at that time, was curt and to the point: "Japs on ridge are out of sight. Cannot see them if they are there."

The second phase of the 106th Infantry's action was already under way. It was that of consolidation and widening the breach along the

ridge. The 27th Reconnaissance Troop, which had been moving up the coast from Machinato during the night, had already begun the seizure of the ridge extension to the sea at the time Temme sent back his message. They occupied the ground just short of a group of houses north of the cut. Company E of the 106th Infantry had already moved up on Hyland's right and was filling in between there and the Reconnaissance Troop.

On the left, Lt. Colonel Cornett's battalion began moving into line almost at once. Headed by B Company under Capt. Arthur Klein, this battalion, meeting no opposition, climbed the ridge just southeast of the cut by 0700, turned left in column and began working toward Iso. This movement was difficult and slow. The ridge in this direction was a sharp razorback hump which stretched as far southeast as Nakama, rising sharply beyond Iso Village. Large rocks, scrub brush, and numerous caves made the advance difficult. Moving from bush to bush, and scrambling from rock to rock, Klein's men were under almost constant rifle fire, most of it at long range. Some of the caves were found to be filled with civilians, some with soldiers. At approximately 1600 Cornett ordered Klein to mop up in his area and prepare to dig in for the night. Then he passed his A Company around the reverse slope of the ridge, where it tied in with L Company, 105th Infantry, almost directly behind Iso to the north. This movement had been completed at 1830.

Following Lt. Colonel Cornett, the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, had moved down off Crocker's Hill shortly after 0600 in the morning and by 0900 was in the process of crossing the footbridge at the inlet. For the rest of the morning the battalion moved forward, and shortly after noon crossed the ridge and turned east. At 1330 Lt. Colonel Crocker reported to Colonel Stebbins that his leading company, K, was in contact with the 1st Battalion.

Some difficulty was experienced in tying in the 2d and 3d Battalions before dark. After F Company's seizure of the ridge line early in the morning, Lt. Colonel O'Hara had turned his attention to driving south. Immediately to his front stretched another long swaybacked ridge running perpendicular to Rotation Ridge. It was from this long ridge that Lieutenant Hyland had received fire early in the morning. Inasmuch as it was evident that this ridge commanded the ground on both sides of it to the south, it was decided to clean it out while the line was adjusting to the left. Company E was to hold. Another platoon from Company F was told to work along Route 1. This platoon, at first under the command of Tech. Sgt. Lucas J. Konefal, and later under command of the irrepressible Hyland, who was not content to remain

behind with his own platoon holding the cut, soon found it had a bear by the tail. The ridge was literally one big cave position. Working in small groups, Sergeant Konefal and an advance element of fifteen men and a demolition squad ran into several tombs from which they flushed several riflemen. Then they began to run into a series of tunnel positions. Working on these one by one the men inched forward and finally, about noon, called for tank support after having pushed approximately four hundred yards down the road. For three hours, from 1200 to 1500, Hyland and his men had to wait for tanks to come up. When they did come, Sergeant Konefal placed them in position to put heavy fire into the dugout positions all along the road side of the ridge. Later, as previously reported, difficulty was encountered in tying in the 2d and 3d Battalions, so Hyland was ordered to fall back approximately two hundred yards to complete the contact. This was done shortly after 1700, over his protest. Without knowing it, Hyland's platoon had run into Item Pocket.

The initial phase was now completed. The 106th Infantry by the night of 19 April held a long thin line along the crest of Rotation Ridge. The entire plan had gone through with hardly a hitch. However, the enemy's observation to the north was not yet knocked out. He still held two important points from which he could watch our movements to the north. One of these points was in front of the 96th Division where he still held the highest point of the escarpment and was to continue to hold it until he was knocked off by the 77th Division. The other point was a large steeple-like rock, called The Pinnacle, which remained in his hands until 24 April. Situated directly behind Iso Village on the crest of the ridge, The Pinnacle was dead in the center of the boundary between the 105th and 106th Infantry Regiments, and was honeycombed with tunnels, caves, and pillboxes. Lt. Colonel Cornett's and Lt. Colonel DeGross's battalions awoke on the morning of 20 April to find themselves involved in the "Battle of The Pinnacle" which started out to be a mild affair and ended in a bloody Banzai charge at midnight, 24 April. But on the night of 19 April, no matter how thinly held, Rotation Ridge was in the hands of the 27th Division. The enemy had been driven from it and could no longer put direct fire on the ground below it. Buzz-Bomb Bowl was no longer a no-man's-land. Route 1 was open as a supply route up to and through the cut in the ridge. Some sixteen thousand square yards of jealously guarded ground were in our hands, and our troops were in position to lash out toward Machinato Airfield. Most important of all, what had seemed to be an almost impregnable position, a cliff line that had repulsed attack after

attack between 6 and 10 April, was now reduced. The enemy must defend from less favorable ground.

But the Battle of Machinato Inlet was not yet over. It continued for four more days, even though the basin was now a rear area. The bridges across the stream were a vital soft spot in our armor. If they were to be destroyed, our effort to the south would be weakened, perhaps nullified. Beginning at dawn on 19 April the enemy turned his every effort on them.

General Griner had guessed exactly right when he told Lt. Colonel Gormsen that the enemy would start shooting at the bridges at dawn. Much of the trouble Lieutenant Hyland had in getting tanks to help him on the afternoon of the 19th was due to enemy effort on the bridge. Before daylight a few self-propelled guns of Cannon Company were across the bridge, but all O'Hara's tanks and most of the rest of Cannon Company were still waiting to move out across the causeway when the bridges were taken under fire by a British 8-inch naval gun which the Japanese evidently had captured on one of their conquests. This gun had been set up in a cave on the north slope of Rotation Ridge, which was part of the Pinnacle position. Enemy gun crews were looking right down at the bridges and could get a direct lay on the whole area. Beginning at the first clear light of dawn the Japanese artillerymen began running their piece out of the cave, firing a quick shot and then running it back in for reloading. Luckily not a round from this piece scored a hit on the bridge, but shells were landing throughout the area. Several near hits were scored on tanks and self-propelled guns, and shell holes pitted the causeway. All traffic stopped.

When this gun first opened up, General Griner and several of his staff officers, Colonel Kelley of the 165th Infantry, and artillery observers, were sitting in the observation post on O'Hara's Knob. The gun was firing almost directly on a line with them and the bridge. The flashes were plainly visible and General Griner personally spotted artillery fire on the cave. After several concentrations, the gun still had not been destroyed and the bridges remained in danger. General Griner then asked tanks and self-propelled guns, which had been waiting to cross the inlet, to take the cave under fire. One vehicle from the 106th's Cannon Company put its first shell directly into the mouth of the cave and then followed with three more direct hits in succession. There was no further trouble from this source and traffic was resumed across the inlet. All the rest of the day the tanks slowly inched forward along Route 1, while mine-detector teams swept along ahead of them. Through Machinato, up across the lion's back to the cut, they moved. At the cut

some little time was spent removing the roadblock which filled the defile. It was 1400 before the first tank emerged on the south side of the ridge, ready to go to work. No tanks at all got to the two left battalions of Colonel Stebbins' regiment on 19 April.

The struggle to keep the bridges intact continued. No sooner had the naval gun been destroyed than spigot-mortar shells began falling—one about every fifteen minutes—for the rest of the day. Some of these clumsy shells landed as close as fifty yards away, but luckily did no damage. Beginning at approximately 1530 the first of several severe artillery barrages landed in the area. By 1600 Division received the report that the No. 1 Bailey bridge had been destroyed and the ponton bridge put out of operation. The only means of communication and supply with the battalions on the south side of the inlet now was by the narrow footbridge, a fragile span that at best would accommodate a long thin line of foot traffic moving in single file. This was the beginning of an epic struggle to keep the chain of supply and line of communications open. Between 1530 on 19 April and the morning of the 20th the area between O'Hara's Knob and the road cut was under the constant fire of the heaviest Japanese artillery barrages of the Pacific war. Regimental CP groups of both the 106th and 165th Infantry Regiments, which were set up in the areas, suffered heavy casualties. By the end of the period the whole area came to be known as the Walled City, because of the fortifications constructed to ward off as much of the effect of these concentrations as possible. Foxholes were dug deep and the men burrowed in to sweat it out. But the work went forward and the supplies continued to roll.

As to the bridges, as fast as they were put out, they were put in again. Lieutenant Golden, the Bailey bridge expert, took his weary men, who had not slept the night before and who had worked during the day building the alternate supply road from the ponton bridge to the south along the sea wall, to begin the task of rebuilding the destroyed span on Route 1. At 2000 the same evening, 19 April, Lieutenant Golden reported the bridge again ready for traffic. Work also was begun on the floating span. Here the work of replacing the shore trestle and fourteen pontoons was completed at 0600 the next morning, 20 April. Shortly after 1100 this same day the floating bridge was damaged again and traffic stopped while two more floats were repaired. Finally, at 1800 that afternoon B Company, 102d Engineers, was sent to the site with instructions to remain for the sole purpose of keeping it in operation. Throughout 21 April the enemy continued his attempts to blow the bridges out with artillery fire, but it was not until 0300 on 22 April that the bridge was destroyed again. At almost the same time Bailey

Bridge No. 2 was blown out. By 0300 the same morning the ponton bridge was back in operation, but work was not begun on the Bailey bridge until 0845. It was open to traffic at noon.

It was while preparing to erect the new Bailey bridge on 22 April that the engineers discovered the span had not been blown by artillery but by enemy demolitions. That afternoon (22 April) at 1400, because of the lack of reserve strength, the engineer battalion was notified that it must be prepared to go into the line as infantry. It would become Division reserve. In preparation for future movement the whole battalion was assembled and dug in near the inlet. In addition to their position as reserve they were to guard the bridges. The night of 22-23 April saw the last act in the Battle of the Inlet. Beginning at dark the enemy resumed his tremendous artillery barrages. Before midnight the ponton bridge was completely destroyed again. Wearily, at 0930 the next morning, Captain Brennan, of B Company, 102d Engineers, set to work again. There were no more pontoons available so he pushed a coral causeway out from both sides of the inlet, then used the three undamaged floats he had left to bridge the gap between the ends of the causeway. This bridge still stands on the same site.

The last chapter in the fight for the supply route was written by some unknown engineer soldier, wearied by four sleepless nights of building and digging, staying awake to fight off intruders, and the terrible nervous strain that accompanied the artillery barrages. The same night the ponton bridge was blown out for the last time, the night the engineer battalion was in reserve, two Japanese soldiers made their way down from The Pinnacle where the fight still raged. One of them carried a large demolition charge on his back, and had a grenade strapped to his belt. As they approached the bridge site, unaware that it was guarded on this night, one of the engineers opened fire. His first shot hit the grenade, killing the Japanese. The explosion left a gaping hole in his abdomen. The unnamed soldier stole out in the night and drove a stake through the hole. Next morning, for all the world to see, a note waved in the breeze, tacked to the stake. Written crudely, in beautiful prose, it read:

Warning! Don't nobody else fuck around with this bridge no more. Signed:
102d Engineer Battalion.

No one did.

Chapter 53: Item Pocket

BATTLEFIELDS receive curious names. Some are applied to terrain features that remind the soldiers of objects at home; some are given because of the events that happen there; and some names are derived by coincidence. Such a one was Item Pocket. It wasn't a pocket at all. It was a full-fledged Japanese position, more properly, a system of defenses. By its location and its manpower the enemy hoped to prevent American seizure of Machinato Airfield. It came by its name in a commonplace way. Our forces operating on Okinawa used a 1:25,000 gridded military map which had been constructed from aerial photographs taken during the great B-29 raid of October 1944. These gridded squares were a thousand yards on each side and were numbered, then divided into smaller 200-yard target area squares. When reporting a unit's position, or calling in artillery, the target area square was always given. The area around Gusukuma Village was in the middle of grid square 7777 and the place where fire was first received on 20 April was the Item square. Six days later this same position was still holding up our troops, along with other positions in the same area. At some time during this period the terrain bounded by the I square had come to be called Item Pocket.

The defense radiated from Item square like the spokes of a gigantic wheel. There were three main ridges, two minor ridges, one block-like hill and four gullies. All but one of these seemed to center in the Item square, using it as a hub. The Item square itself was a deep depression between the ridges. The main ridge was a long crook-shaped razorback which ran from a point about six hundred yards along the west edge of Machinato Airfield north to the Item square, there joining with a smaller ridge that hooked back to the east and south again around Gusukuma, tapering off at Route 1. For purposes of convenience, this long ridge will henceforth be called Ryan's Ridge, in honor of the man who eventually captured it. Its appendix is called Gusukuma Ridge. The second main ridge ran from the road cut in Rotation Ridge in a southwesterly direction toward Gusukuma, but stopped some distance short of it at the first little stream, or gulch, running out of Item Pocket. This ridge is generally called Charlie Ridge because C Company, 165th Infantry, worked on it for several days. The third main ridge has been dubbed Potter's Ridge. Capt. John Potter's I Company, 165th Infantry, eventually occupied this hill from 22 to 26 April. It ran from Item Pocket north to Kazu Saki.

Ryan's Ridge varied from 100 to 165 feet in height. Covered with dense vegetation at its southern end, and a grove of trees at its nearest approach to Item Pocket, it had very little foliage for four hundred yards

in between. The seaward (west) slopes of the ridge were dotted with tombs and at points had an extremely sharp gradient, although at no place could they be called sheer.

Charlie Ridge was also about 150 feet high and covered by medium vegetation, trees and bushes, for its entire length. Unlike Ryan's Ridge, however, its western slope was sheer for almost its entire distance, and its eastern slope formed a wall along the course of Route 1 to the south.

Potter's Ridge was not nearly as high as the other two, being no more than seventy-five feet in most places. Unlike the other two, it was covered with dense vegetation, and was almost rounded, like a locomotive boiler.

Between Charlie Ridge and Potter's Ridge was a large triangular-shaped section of bottom land filled with rice paddies, impassable to vehicles and passable to men only by use of the little paths that separated one paddy from another. This triangular patch of ground was perhaps a hundred yards across at the hub, and eight hundred at the rim. Enemy positions were so constructed in Item Pocket as to cover the whole open area with machine-gun fire, but enemy mortars and artillery were much more effective here than were the machine guns, and were used more extensively.

The ground between Potter's Ridge and Ryan's Ridge was also shaped like a huge piece of pie but, unlike the other open ground, it was not rice-paddied, and gently sloped upward from the sea wall along the coast. Moreover, this ground had certain features which the ground northeast of Potter's Ridge did not. One of these was the second of the two minor ridges already mentioned. This ridge we shall call Fox Ridge because of the fact that during most of the period of the battle for Item Pocket the ridge was almost the private property of F Company, 165th Infantry. Fox Ridge was never more than thirty feet high, had little or no vegetation, and was probably man-made to house a long line of tombs which nestled along both sides. Two minor roads cut through this ground to the sea from Gusukuma, according to the map, the southernmost using a deep road cut through Ryan's Ridge. No other roads or supply routes were available to troops operating west of Ryan's Ridge, and inasmuch as Gusukuma and Ryan's Ridge were in enemy hands throughout the seven days of fighting, an almost insurmountable supply problem presented itself. Not until 28 April were troops fighting in this area adequately supplied. Weasels and amphibian tractors were brought up to evacuate wounded and haul rations and ammunition by sea around Kazu Saki from a point as far back as Machinato Inlet, a procedure that was never satisfactory, vehicles upsetting time after time in the rough reefs stretching along the coast. Most of the time, too, the

seawall was under enemy fire, forcing the vehicles to hide under the wall while crews threw supplies up onto the high ground. From there they were carried to the line companies after dark.

The situation on the east side of Ryan's Ridge and Charlie Ridge, in the Gusukuma area, was even worse from a supply viewpoint. At the south end of Charlie Ridge began the series of gulches and hills previously mentioned. The first of these, subsequently named Anderson's Gulch, opened out from Item Pocket, wound east and crossed Route 1 approximately seven hundred yards south of Rotation Ridge. Perfect fire lanes from the nose of Ryan's Ridge and the Pocket itself covered this stream crossing. The bridge was blown before our advancing troops arrived at the point and vehicle traffic south of there was impossible until the bridge was restored, a task not completed until 27 April.

Another bridge was blown four hundred yards farther south along Route 1 where the main supply road crossed Dead Horse Gulch, the second of the two ravines mentioned. Like Anderson's Gulch, Dead Horse Gulch provided perfect lanes of fire for enemy positions dug into the north slopes of Gusukuma Ridge and the Pocket.

The one remaining terrain feature not mentioned thus far was the squat block-like hill which sat between Dead Horse Gulch and Anderson's Gulch. A grass-covered, treeless, iceberg of a hill, this rising ground also bordered directly on the Pocket. This was Brewer's Hill.

These, then, were the terrain features of the Pocket. It can readily be seen that it was not in reality an isolated strongpoint at all. Its meaning was never fully understood until after it had been cleaned out, and the sum total of enemy troops and weapons occupying it will probably never be known.

Item Pocket had been named the "Gusukuma Position" long before American troops arrived on the island of Okinawa. It was not originally designed to protect Machinato Airfield from attack to the north. It was constructed primarily to defend the area against amphibious landings and faced the sea. Whether by chance or by design, however, the organization of the position proved to be just as effective against troops coming from the north as it would have been against a seaborne landing.

Work had been carried out in the Gusukuma area for at least seven months previous to American landings. Prisoner interrogations indicated that the general Japanese preparations, certainly the digging of positions, had been going on since the summer of 1944. After going into the positions, during May 1945, investigators for the Joint Intelligence Center, Pacific Ocean Areas, under the auspices of the Tenth Army, estimated that the Gusukuma positions had been built or building for

at least a year. Tunnels were bored, narrow-gauge railroad systems threaded the inside of the hills, and elaborate living quarters and aid stations were found. If the Japanese used hand labor—and it is reasonable to assume that they did—the job was most certainly no fly-by-night operation.

The most extensive positions were in Ryan's Ridge. This long ridge was almost hollow. Tunnels ran every-which-way, emerging on both slopes, at the top, and on the nose of the hill. No accurate count has ever been made of the number of openings, but there were well over a hundred. In addition, eleven other hills in the area were undermined. All positions were mutually supporting and attempts to assault one position usually brought fire from another. Furthermore, the whole area had been registered very carefully by Japanese artillery farther south. The slightest movement in the area, particularly of vehicles, was sure to bring down accurate and heavy artillery fire.

In the position itself, the enemy had placed two companies of his 21st Independent Infantry Battalion of the 64th Brigade, 62d Division. It can be assumed that, at the time our troops first ran into these companies, they were fresh, not previously having been committed to combat, and up to full strength. The TO strength of one of these rifle companies was 150 men, but evidence has been found that Okinawan conscripts added to the battalions during the fall and winter of 1944 had brought the companies up to four hundred men.

In addition to these two units, at least one company of the 22d Independent Antitank Battalion was also present. The TO strength of one of these companies was 135 men. Added to this was at least one company of an unidentified machine-gun battalion, probably the 23d, with a total of 110 men. There were also scattered elements of the 81st Field Antiaircraft Artillery Battalion, which manned 12cm howitzers, and a few of the remnants of the 272d IIB, which had been badly scattered by the attack of 19 April. It is also thought that there were other elements of artillery and mortar units present, but the strength and identification of these units are not known. A conservative estimate of the total strength in this area, therefore, would indicate that there were at least 550 men opposing our forces and more probably about seven hundred.

This sizable force did not attempt to maneuver except within the tunnels of the position and except for a few counterattacks. They unquestionably had communication with rear areas and acted as artillery observers with telling effect. At no time during the period was there any indication that the enemy attempted to reinforce the garrison. The

orders were simply to stand, fight, and die. When the defenders were decimated and their numbers were thinned, American forces simply pushed on foot to the next Japanese strongpoint.

The Item Pocket was well supplied with weapons and ammunition. Besides the ordinary rifle, and probably about twenty-five machine guns, they had emplaced 47mm antitank guns covering both Anderson's and Dead Horse Gulches, Gusukuma, and the north end of Machinato Airfield. Coupled with their usual efficient use of 50-, 60-, and 81-mm mortars, they also used their 12cm howitzers with telling effect on more distant areas, particularly on the command post of the 165th Infantry and those of its 2d and 3d Battalions, and on F Company, 165th Infantry. Deep inside the tunnels were large storerooms full of ammunition, plenty of food and enough water to support them for some time.

The way in which these positions were used will unfold as the story of the battle progresses.

DEVELOPMENT BEGINS: 20 APRIL 1945

In accord with his previously considered plan announced during the period of 11-18 April, General Griner ordered the 165th Infantry to take over the right of the Division line on the morning of 20 April. This order was issued on the afternoon of 19 April. By H-hour the next morning, Col. Gerard W. Kelley had his command on the line with two battalions abreast. The 1st Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. James H. Mahoney, was on the left, and the 2d Battalion, commanded by Lt. Col. John McDonough, was on the right. The boundary between battalions ran straight down the crest of Charlie Ridge, angled a little to the west and proceeded straight down the east edge of Machinato Airfield. This put the village of Gusukuma entirely in the 1st Battalion zone. The original disposition of the troops put C Company on the east of Route 1 and Company A between Route 1 and the crest of the hill. One platoon of G Company, McDonough's left-flank company, was to work along the crest of Charlie Ridge with Company A while the rest of the battalion was to make its way across the bottom lands and rice paddies to Potter's Ridge, then pivot more to the southwest and continue. At the time these plans were laid, it was thought that the platoon from G Company would be able to knock out any enemy positions which might exist along the top of Charlie Ridge, thus preventing enfilade fire from being put on the 2d Battalion from the heights of the ridge. It was generally planned also that there would be only visual contact until the end of Charlie Ridge was reached, at which times both battalions would join and sweep to the south. There was no clear conception of the ter-

rain, and photos and maps of the area did not reveal any reason to believe that a juncture was impossible. On the morning of 20 April, Lt. Col. Joseph T. Hart, regimental executive officer, got out his bright green sign on which were printed the words "Conroy Field" and announced that by nightfall he expected to nail it up on Machinato Airfield. He further announced that the regiment would "hold a dance in Naha on Saturday night." The Saturday night dance in Naha was to become a will-o'-the-wisp hung before three separate divisions for over a month.

With this feeling of anticipated early success, both battalions moved off at H-hour, 0730, on the morning of 20 April, only to find themselves involved in a serious full-scale battle within an hour. It was 27 April before the two units joined again. Separated by the Pocket, the 165th Infantry now became involved in two separate actions.

The first unit to become involved in this battle was C Company. This rifle unit's zone of action lay down a corridor bordered by Charlie Ridge on the right and a low series of knobs on the left in the 106th Infantry zone of action. In the original plans, C Company's flanks were to be protected by the advance of the 106th on the left and Company A on the right, but it soon became apparent that the two flanking units, working through difficult terrain, were slower, and C Company, now under Lt. Thomas P. Fleming, moving against negligible opposition, pushed a deep salient forward and by 0745, fifteen minutes after H-hour, had reached a point almost opposite the south nose of Charlie Ridge. There, without warning, they were taken under intense machine-gun fire from the positions in Item Pocket, firing down predetermined fire lanes in Anderson's Gulch. The Japanese had pulled one of their oldest tricks, allowing Fleming's men to get into a pocket, cutting them off and pinning them down with machine-gun fire, and then laying in a heavy mortar barrage on the helpless troops. Within the space of a few minutes, Fleming had lost five men killed and twenty-two men wounded. Among those wounded was Fleming's executive officer, Lt. Henry E. McDonnell, Jr., leaving him with only one other officer in the company. At this point, Capt. Lawrence J. O'Brien, battalion S-3, came forward. With his steady influence and that of Lieutenant McDonnell, who lay wounded in the open field unable to move, but still giving orders, C Company began creeping forward again, using any little ditch or cover they could find. Working doggedly ahead, Fleming's men infiltrated by 1430 that afternoon to a point on a ridge almost directly east of Gusukuma. Throughout this whole period, no enemy opposition had been met at close quarters and no positions had been reduced. Company C had not killed a single enemy soldier. All the

fire had been coming at relatively long range, mostly from the Pocket positions on the right flank, with a little thrown in for good measure from the left-front area, the 106th zone of action. Company C had managed by sheer determination almost to outflank the Pocket by 1630 the first day!

Company A was not so fortunate. Moving down the crest of Charlie Ridge, this company, now commanded by Lt. Stephen R. Skuthan, was driving straight into the center of the pocket. With the C Company platoon struggling along as a spearhead, Skuthan had to move through a maze of pillboxes and tunnels, knocking out each one as he moved along. By 1330 in the afternoon, an hour before C Company reached its line of farthest advance, Company A was stalled, having reached the nose of Charlie Ridge, where it was pinned down by heavy enemy fire. Because the Pocket was obviously some sort of a strongpoint, and because contact between C Company's left and the 106th Infantry was nonexistent, Lt. Colonel Mahoney decided to commit his B Company and leave Company A to mop up the remaining resistance which faced it. B Company was already trying to form a connecting link between C and the 106th Infantry. This plan necessitated shifting the whole line a little to the right and C Company was told to move into position just behind the road junction, along the railroad tracks east of Gusukuma. This order was not received by Fleming until the ridge was gained at 1430, and when he tried to move to the right, off the ridge, in execution of the order, his company was again hit by heavy fire, and he suffered several more casualties. Despite this fire, C Company and B Company both managed to consolidate their lines for the night, generally along the road running east into Iso.

Company A, meanwhile, had moved down off Charlie Ridge to Route 1 and thence south, using the railroad cut in that area for cover. It had been Lieutenant Skuthan's intention to attack into the enemy strongpoint from the east, using either Anderson's Gulch or Brewer's Hill as a route of approach. Movement was so difficult along Route 1, however, due to the concentrated enemy fire, that it took all the rest of the afternoon to get the men into position. The attack was, therefore, not launched on 20 April and the enemy remained in firm possession of his Pocket position, scarcely touched from the east. However, at the close of 20 April, the crest of Charlie Ridge had been largely cleaned out and the area south from Rotation Ridge to Anderson's Gulch was largely free from fire and accessible to our troops without danger. The 1st Battalion, dug in on a line along the Gusukuma-Iso Road, and bent back facing the Pocket, looked forward the next day to a continued advance towards Machinato Airfield.

While the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, had pushed forward as far as the outskirts of Gusukuma against deadly flanking fire, the 2d Battalion, operating on the west side of the Charlie Ridge divide, had pushed forward to Potter's Ridge without opposition, but upon moving onto the ridge, G Company, on McDonough's left, adjacent to the Pocket itself, became engaged in a heavy fire fight with enemy dug in on the east nose of the Ridge. After working for two hours on these positions, Lt. Robert E. Little's company had cleaned them out, gained possession of an impressive system of dugouts and tunnels, reorganized, and, in conjunction with F Company on its right, began the pivoting movement designed to make contact with the 1st Battalion on the left. Almost at once, the whole battalion line came under intense flanking fire from the left rear, out of the Pocket. It soon became apparent that the enemy had constructed lanes of machine-gun fire which interdicted the whole area between Potter's Ridge and Fox Ridge. Little's company, particularly on his left, east, flank suffered heavily while trying to rush across the open ground towards Ryan's Ridge. When Little tried to lay down covering fire on the Japanese guns in the pocket with a platoon of heavy machine guns from H Company, other enemy, from the top of Ryan's Ridge, opened fire with mortars which very effectively knocked Little's guns out of action. For three hours G Company tried to work men across the 150 yards to the protection of Fox Ridge, but only succeeded in getting the extreme right flank elements to the objective. Finally, at 1530, it retired to Potter's Ridge after having suffered three men killed and nine wounded in the unsuccessful attempt to gain Fox Ridge, Ryan's Ridge, and gain physical contact with the 1st Battalion. The Pocket had still not been even remotely damaged.

Although G Company had encountered serious opposition while trying to execute its pivot, F Company, McDonough's right flank company, under Capt. Bernard F. Ryan, had pushed rapidly across the open ground to Fox Ridge without opposition and there held up and waited for G to come up and straighten the line. Ryan's men had been subjected to some long-range fire from the Pocket, but it had been high and ineffective, a fact which was soon noted and reported by the company commander to battalion. As the afternoon wore on and G Company continued unable to release themselves from their predicament, Lt. Colonel McDonough decided to commit E Company, his reserve. At 1350, the company commander, Capt. George R. J. Weigand, was ordered to move up on the right, cross the open area between the two ridges in the same zone used by Ryan, and then turn left, using Fox Ridge as cover, and move through F Company's left flank, attack-

ing and seizing the crest of Ryan's Ridge or the road cut west of Gusukuma. It was assumed that at that point he would reestablish contact with the 1st Battalion. Company G was to withdraw to battalion reserve.

Weigand carried out his maneuver successfully and at 1530 moved through Ryan's left flank and attacked east toward the crest of Ryan's Ridge. The company commander had surveyed the ground carefully and had picked out what he thought was a good covered route of approach to the top of the ridge. In an attempt to infiltrate by platoons, Weigand moved out at the head of his 3rd Platoon, under command of Tech. Sgt. Ernest L. Schoeff. Moving cautiously, this platoon had completely left the cover of Fox Ridge and was well on its way up the slopes of Ryan's Ridge, using trees and tombs as cover, when the enemy on top of the hill opened fire with mortars, machine guns, and artillery, cutting off the remainder of the company. In the extremely heavy fire, the trailing elements of the company lost three men killed, including one of Weigand's platoon leaders, Lt. Albert H. Andrews, and ten men wounded in a short time. Weigand, Schoeff, and two squads of Schoeff's platoon kept on going, having received orders to extend the line at all costs. Weigand and two men got into the shelter of the tombs on the hillside and immediately were discovered by the enemy, pinned down and separated from Schoeff and the main body. For the rest of the afternoon the company commander was under constant fire and out of communication with everyone. After dark that night he managed to make his way back to Fox Ridge and rejoin his company. His clothing was full of holes from enemy bullets, but he escaped injury.

Meanwhile, Schoeff moved doggedly ahead. Moving his men by rushes one at a time over the open hillside, by 1800 he had worked the first elements of his platoon to the point where the road cut into the ridge. In this difficult operation, he had two men wounded. One, a BAR man, decided to crawl back toward the company in search of aid. The other, Private First Class Robara, took over the BAR and continued with Schoeff. The tortuous advance continued, the men crawling, creeping, and dodging to get up to the road which the leading elements had reached. Throughout this period, the men were under constant mortar, rifle and machine-gun fire. At 1800 Schoeff suddenly regained communication with Weigand, explained his situation and was ordered to hold until the company commander could extricate himself from his own predicament and get back to the company and bring them up. Just at this point the radio went out again and every time Schoeff tried to get anyone, all he could raise was Japanese voices. The platoon leader ordered his men to lie quiet until dark. It was then that Schoeff dis-

covered that four of his men were missing. Three of them had been killed, but this was not discovered until two days later. The fourth man spent almost the entire night all alone playing dead and got back to G Company the next morning. Schoeff now had only nine men left.

For over an hour these nine men hugged the ground; then darkness gradually began to descend. It was no sooner dark than Schoeff began to notice movement around him. Within a few minutes there was a wild yell of "*Banzai!*" and the little group of men remaining found themselves set upon from three sides by at least a platoon of enemy. Schoeff, himself, estimated that there were fifty to sixty Japanese in the counter-attacking force. They had launched their raid from a distance of not more than forty yards, having crawled there under cover of darkness. They had machine guns and grenades, and were supported by mortars which they used to cut off Schoeff's retreat to the rear. In a wild melee of hand-to-hand fighting, the nine men beat off the attack. Pfc. Paul R. Cook stood in his foxhole and fired four cases of ammunition into the oncoming enemy, killing from ten to twenty of them, and then was killed himself. Fighting with grenades, rifle butts and anything else they could get their hands on, the remaining members of the squad killed between ten and fifteen more enemy, and then the Japanese withdrew. Thirty-five Japanese soldiers were later found dead on the spot, but Schoeff's little band was depleted. Besides Cook, one other man had been killed. Schoeff's radio man was missing, Robara had been wounded again, and later bayoneted. Another man was wounded by grenade fragments and Schoeff himself had lost the use of his weapon when he broke it over the head of a Japanese soldier. (He had then taken a rifle away from another Japanese soldier, bayoneted him with it, and then killed another raider with the same weapon.) With the four men he could find, Schoeff now decided he would be better off with the company in the protection of Fox Ridge, so he began a withdrawal back to that position. He finally reported back to Weigand at approximately 2330. Company E had by this time lost nine men killed, fifteen wounded, and three missing. Most of those losses were from Schoeff's platoon, and for all practical purposes it was no longer an effective fighting unit. Down to two platoons, E Company was relieved by G Company during the night. Lieutenant Little was again ordered to move up from reserve, take over E Company's position and occupy the ground given up by Schoeff before daylight. This was the situation at the close of the first day's fighting in Item Pocket.

The night of 20 April found the 165th Infantry in line on both sides of Item Pocket, but with a wide, vertical gap existing between the two

battalions. Efforts to close this gap by E Company had failed. Company F had not moved forward during most of the afternoon, after seizing Ridge Fox. This lack of forward movement was only due to a decision to hold until the two battalions had reestablished firm contact.

The position of the two assault battalions was extremely precarious at nightfall of 20 April, due mainly to problems of supply. The 2d Battalion, as already pointed out, was operating in an area without any supply roads. Evacuation and supply, until Gusukuma was captured, had to be carried out by weasel or carrying party. On the 1st Battalion front, the situation was equally difficult. The forward push of C Company during the day and subsequent readjustment of lines, put the whole 1st Battalion south of both Anderson's and Dead Horse Gulches. Both of these gulches had blown bridges, and after troops had pushed beyond those points it became necessary to replace the spans in order to use Route 1 as a supply road. Consequently, at 1650 the Division engineer was ordered to go forward to Anderson's Gulch and make a reconnaissance preparatory to constructing the bridge across this stream. Lt. Colonel Gormsen took his assistant, Captain Crimmins, and Lt. William M. Barbour, a platoon leader of B Company, 102d Engineers, to look over the site. Arriving at the bridge shortly before dark, this party was immediately taken under heavy fire. Barbour was killed, and it was after dark before the engineers could extricate themselves from the position. Lt. Colonel Gormsen transmitted this information to Division and told Lt. Colonel Sheldon that he thought the enemy had the bridge site covered by fire and that efforts to construct the span would result in heavy casualties. Division immediately ordered the 165th Infantry to furnish a detail for protection of the engineers, this detail to come from the reserve battalion, the 3d. Work was to begin at 0530 the next morning, 21 April. Meanwhile, the 1st Battalion was cut off from tank support, and supply and evacuation had to be conducted by carrying parties that were forced to run the gantlet of Japanese fire all the way from Gusukuma to the shelter of Charlie Ridge north of Anderson's Gulch.

THE ASSAULT ON GUSUKUMA

On 21 April, as on 20 April, the battle for Item Pocket was fought on two separate fronts. The western front—the 2d Battalion zone of action—however, was relatively inactive on this day. Company E, 165th Infantry, which had virtually lost one whole platoon during the action of the preceding afternoon, was replaced by G Company between midnight and dawn. This shift was accomplished without detection and Lieutenant Little extended his left flank all along the road that ran

from Fox Ridge to Ryan's Ridge. Colonel Kelley, in preparing for the attack of this morning, had asked Division to allot to him one platoon of amphibian tanks from the 780th Battalion which was attached to the Division at the time. It had been Colonel Kelley's intention to use these amphibians as tanks, moving them by sea around Kazu Saki to the first road inland, and down that unimproved road to a point opposite Item Pocket. From there he expected to lay direct fire on the machine-gun positions which had been inflicting heavy casualties on his 2d Battalion's left flank. In the absence of regular tanks, this seemed to be the only solution. However, there had been for some time a question as to just what uses were to be made of the amphibians and it had been decided that in no case would they be used as accompanying artillery. Colonel Kelley's request was turned down and his troops faced the prospect of moving without any direct support the next morning. In order to alleviate this condition somewhat, Colonel Kelley ordered one platoon of his Antitank Company to dismantle its guns, put them in amphibious tractors and move them around into the area along the south side of Fox Ridge. This was done, the men working feverishly all night at the task. By morning, aided by F Company, 165th Infantry, the crews had unloaded the guns at the seawall, hand-carried them almost a thousand yards, set them up and were ready to fire directly at the enemy.

Promptly at 0630, Lt. Colonel McDonough's battalion launched its attack. Within ten minutes murderous fire from Item Pocket and from Ryan's Ridge had effectively pinned down the whole left of the line. G Company was hit again. Unable to move in either direction, the men were forced to lie out in the open terrain and hug the ground. Between H-hour and the time Little finally withdrew the last of his company behind Potter's Ridge, after dark that night, he lost two men killed and five more wounded. The withdrawal was ordered at 1020 after all efforts to push forward in the face of interlocking lanes of machine-gun fire met with failure, and after the 3d Battalion had been committed on the regimental front.

While G Company had been meeting heavy fire, F Company had been having a much different experience on the coast. Captain Ryan had found, by nightfall on 20 April, that Fox Ridge protected his movements from the Pocket. During the day he and a small party had reconnoitered the whole area for six hundred to eight hundred yards along the coast without running into any enemy positions or receiving any enemy fire. He observed the attempt of E Company to get atop Ryan's Ridge and noted the fact that a good deal of the fire which Weigand had received came from the top of the ridge. He reasoned that the whole

top of the ridge must be honeycombed with positions and, in setting this against his own exploit of the day, figured that the Japanese had purposely allowed him to venture along the coast without opposition. He called Lt. Colonel McDonough on the night of 20 April and expressed his opinion that the enemy was inviting an advance in the coastal area, after which he intended to cut the attackers off with fire, counterattack and surround them. McDonough did not issue any orders to Captain Ryan for 21 April, therefore, leaving the decision to the company commander's judgment. As a result, while G Company was engaged in trying to get across the mouth of Item Pocket without success, Ryan continued his reconnaissance of the area to the south. During the morning he sent out a three-man patrol under Pvt. Willie Warren to see if they could find out anything about the enemy positions on the southern part of Ryan's Ridge. Warren moved down the sea wall without opposition, turned inland at the end of the wall and was soon in the heavy foliage on top of the ridge at a point opposite the north end of the airfield. He spent some time observing enemy movements in and around the airfield, located several enemy positions, and was then discovered and fired upon. Upon receiving fire, he decided he had better get back to his company, and did so without incurring any casualties. He reported to Captain Ryan, told him where the patrol had gone, what they had seen and described the route of approach used. However, he neglected to tell the company commander that he had been fired upon, not deeming it important. This proved to be a very important omission.

Captain Ryan, immediately upon receiving Warren's report, went to Lt. Colonel McDonough and proposed that he take F Company, move it along the seawall, cut inland on Warren's route, and get up on the hill. From there he could move back along Ryan's Ridge to the north, cleaning out the pocket from that direction, and support the advance of the regiment by fire from the high ground, at the same time denying this key vantage point to the enemy. Captain Ryan assumed that by using Warren's route he could attain the ridge top unobserved and take the enemy by surprise.

Lieutenant Colonel McDonough agreed to Captain Ryan's plan, gave him a platoon of amphibian tractors to move the company along the seawall, and attached a platoon of G Company to help. This was at 1105. At 1533 in the afternoon Ryan had succeeded in making his preliminary movement without receiving fire but he had no sooner popped up over the seawall than the whole top of the ridge blazed forth at him. The Japanese alerted by Warren had simply observed his movements along the wall and waited until the move inland was begun. Then they concentrated their fire, using at least three artillery pieces,

probably 47mm guns. Luckily, Ryan had not moved too many of his men over the wall. The opening rounds were wild and every man got back down over the edge safely. The amphibians scrambled for the cover of Kazu Saki and they also managed to escape harm. One of them, taking a parting shot for good measure, scored a direct hit on one of the enemy gun positions. However, Captain Ryan, feeling that his element of surprise was lost and that a direct assault on the position was unfeasible in face of the heavy fire, pulled his company back to the positions they had held the night before, along Fox Ridge.

This concluded the action on the west side of Item Pocket for 21 April. The whole 2d Battalion had failed to improve its positions from the day before. A patrol of E Company, sent to clean out the west cliffs of Charlie Ridge, found no enemy and accomplished little. At 1710 Colonel Kelley was ordered to withdraw the 2d Battalion to Division reserve near Machinato. Company F was now attached to the 3d Battalion and left to hold the right flank of the Division line west of Item Pocket. For the next three days Captain Ryan and his men held this area virtually alone, although on 23-24 April part of the 3d Battalion was operating on the south nose of Potter's Ridge, six hundred yards away.

On the left flank of the regimental zone of action, fighting during the day centered around Gusukuma and around the bridge site at Anderson's Gulch. One, of course, was tied up with the other. Any attempt to extend our lines to the south would only be as effective as the effort to get supplies forward.

As directed the night before, work began on the construction of the Bailey bridge at daylight, 0530, 21 April. Due to the death of Lieutenant Barbour the night before, Lieutenant Golden was moved up from Machinato to do the job. This young officer and his men, who had been working since darkness of 18 April almost without sleep, moved up during the night, made a thorough reconnaissance of the area and brought up ten truckloads of materials. In order to give Golden some protection, Lt. Col. Dennis D. Claire, commanding the 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, moved up a platoon from K Company to furnish fire support for the engineers. For forty minutes after the work began, Golden's men worked under a hail of fire which was laid directly down Anderson's Gulch. By 0635, Golden had lost one man killed and seven wounded and had completed approximately seventy-five per cent of the work. At that time, in spite of an especially heroic piece of work by Staff Sgt. John Magna of K Company, who brought up a tank to the edge of the bridge site, mounted to the top of the turret and from

there directed a steady stream of fire into Item Pocket for over thirty minutes, Golden was forced to stop work. All efforts to get at the source of enemy fire were unsuccessful and at 0737 Colonel Kelley ordered that a reconnaissance be made in an effort to find another stream crossing for vehicles, and in the 106th Infantry's zone of action if necessary. It was eventually decided to bring up a bulldozer and cut a by-pass around the gulch, using the railroad cut which paralleled Route 1 a little to the east. Work proceeded for a short time, hidden from the enemy by a shoulder of Charlie Ridge, but when about 1000, the bulldozer nosed out from the protection of the terrain, the operator was shot in the ear and fire became so furious that it was useless to continue. Throughout the morning, however, the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry, was burning up the wires looking for badly needed tanks. A party of men, including those who had been working on the bridge site all morning, came back to Colonel Kelley's OP to describe the situation and to see if some other way could not be found to bring up tanks. General Griner, who was in the OP at the time, issued a direct order to Lt. Col. Walter F. Anderson, commander of the 193d Tank Battalion, to push the by-pass through, no matter what the cost. At the time, Anderson had only one bulldozer tank left in his battalion and protested vigorously against using it, claiming that the enemy had large-caliber weapons zeroed in on the area and that he could not afford to lose this one remaining dozer. Upon receiving the general's direct order, however, Anderson himself went forward to the site, climbed into the tankdozer, and went to work to finish the by-pass. Working all alone, under intense fire, Lt. Colonel Anderson had finished pushing through a usable route by 1340. But upon its completion, when Anderson in the lead tank tried to take his vehicles through the pass, a 47mm antitank gun which up until this time had been silent, opened up from Item Pocket and scored a direct hit on the commander's tank, killing Anderson and a guide who had been sent back to lead them to the 1st Battalion. The by-pass was now blocked and useless again. It was now decided to cease attempts to build the bridge until such time as enemy resistance in the Pocket could be reduced.

The failure to get tanks through to Lt. Colonel Mahoney's battalion very seriously affected the operations of troops east of Gusukuma. The 1st Battalion attacked at 0630 with the rest of the regiment. It will be remembered that Mahoney had disposed his troops with all three companies on the line during the night of 20 April. At H-hour on 21 April his attack jumped off in a southwesterly direction, the two outside companies pinching out the center company, C, which reverted to battalion

reserve. Company B, on the left, pushed forward rapidly and by 0800 had moved four hundred yards and had reached a point four hundred yards north of Yafusu, where it was held up by a series of pillboxes and hill positions. Capt. Jose Gil, the company commander, held up there and called for tanks and Cannon Company vehicles, which were not forthcoming that day. Company A, on Gil's right, jumped off in an almost due westerly direction with orders to sweep through Gusukuma, pivot to the left, and extend Gil's line, at the same time tying in with the 2d Battalion on the right. Lieutenant Skuthan moved his company without any support whatsoever, except what he could scrape together with 60- and 80-mm mortars, but even this was restricted because of the impossibility of moving ammunition forward over the blocked supply route. From Route 1 west to Gusukuma was a short rise in ground absolutely open and exposed to fire from the village, from Gusukuma Ridge, from Ryan's Ridge and from the direction of Machinato Airfield. Almost as soon as Company A moved off, the men ventured out into this open ground and were immediately subjected to murderous fire. Skuthan later said that he knew of four machine guns laying down interlocking cross-fires from the village alone, and estimated there were several more. In addition, riflemen and the inevitable mortars took their toll. Skuthan would not allow his men to withdraw, but throughout the morning kept trying to inch individuals, squads, or platoons forward by crawling, running, or jumping. By noon he had still not gained the village although a few individuals had scrambled into its wreckage. In this time Company A had four men killed and three men wounded.

The developments of the morning had resulted in an impasse. This had become apparent very early, with the suspension of work on the bridge, the inability of B Company to move, and the immobility of G Company on the west side of the Pocket. The situation maps in regimental headquarters showed a wide vertical gap between the 1st Battalion and 2d Battalion. At 0830 on 21 April, therefore, Colonel Kelley decided to commit his reserve battalion, the 3d, under Lt. Colonel Claire. This battalion would attack with two companies abreast. The initial line of departure would be Route 1 and the assault would move directly west, pivoting on Company A's right flank after the Pocket had been cleaned out. At the conclusion of this maneuver, the 2d Battalion would be choked out of its zone of action, complete mopping up the enemy remnants in the Pocket and revert to regimental reserve. The 3d Battalion's line would move to the west from a point just south of Anderson's Gulch. Actually, it was planned to have Claire's right flank company, L, move up Dead Horse Gulch, catching the enemy positions

covering Anderson's Gulch from the flank. It was not realized at the time that the same positions covered both gulches.

The 3d Battalion began to move up immediately. In addition to L Company, Lt. Colonel Claire had committed his K Company on his left flank. The plan was not actually put into operation until 1515 that afternoon, largely because Capt. Howard E. Betts, Jr., commanding K Company, could not get his men up to the line of departure until that time. He was moving directly into the area occupied by the rear elements of Company A, which was engaged in a severe fire fight. Some estimate of the conditions under which Betts had to deploy his men can be had by the number of casualties suffered by all units involved in the area during the day. Betts had six casualties, including one of his platoon leaders. Company A had four more killed and five more wounded, and C Company, which was Mahoney's reserve, occupying well dug-in defensive positions, suffered several wounded. Even 3d Battalion Headquarters Company, which was north of Anderson's Gulch, suffered five men wounded. Fire was of all types. Mortars, artillery and spigot mortars added to the din of the numerous rifles and machine guns.

In spite of these difficulties Lt. Colonel Claire launched his attack. From 1515 on, there followed some of the bloodiest fighting of the whole battle for Item Pocket. L Company, on the right flank, moved up Dead Horse Gulch in the midst of a heavy smoke screen. Neither the smoke nor supporting mortar fire did any good. Forty-five minutes from the time they had left the road, the men of this company were pinned flat to the ground by rifle, machine-gun, and mortar fire. Visibility was so poor that no one could locate the source of all this trouble. Men could only find a hole and get into it. When the smoke cleared, the enemy picked out the hiding places and worked on them with mortars and machine guns. Capt. Joseph P. Stampher, the company commander, decided that his position was untenable and asked for smoke to cover his withdrawal. By 1800 he had pulled his company back behind the road. Before he could make another attempt to assault the Pocket, he was ordered to move his company into the line between B and A Companies, where a gap had opened due to Company A's inability to advance abreast of B Company. In the brief encounter, Stampher had lost one man killed and nine wounded.

The real action in the 3d Battalion on 21 April, however, occurred in the K Company zone of action. Here Captain Betts had some advantage over Stampher, not being restricted by low ground. Beginning at the prescribed time of attack, he worked his men forward along the Iso-Gusukuma road from Route 1 into Gusukuma, then skirting the east

edge under heavy fire, he attained the crest of Gusukuma Ridge. Here, after a short period of reorganization, during which time he brought two platoons into the assault, he launched an attack down into Dead Horse Gulch with one platoon and sent the other along the crest of the ridge to cover the men on the low ground. This movement began at 1700 and in one of the sharpest clashes of the whole battle, K Company pushed the platoon of men almost into the heart of the Pocket itself. Firing from caves, pillboxes, and spiderholes, the enemy put up a vicious struggle. Some of these positions were knocked out, but within an hour Captain Betts had lost six men killed, fifteen wounded, and three missing. His whole company was trapped and pinned down by fire of all types. In addition, it was becoming late, and so, rather than dig in within the gulch, Betts decided to withdraw his men to the crest of Gusukuma Ridge, where he would have the advantage of high ground. Under cover of smoke, this maneuver was accomplished by 1900, but Betts had been forced to leave several of his wounded in the gulch, where they had taken cover in holes and under bluffs. The enemy's perfect observation and deadly fire made it next to impossible to move them before dark. One attempt to move the wounded was made during the withdrawal, and one of Betts' squad leaders, who had been wounded twice in the trap, was wounded four more times, later dying. This led to the decision to leave the wounded until dark.

However, K Company had no sooner reached the crest of Gusukuma Ridge and started to dig in, than a force of about one platoon of enemy emerged from their positions along the gulch and launched a strong counterattack against the ridge. This counterattack was accompanied by an extremely heavy artillery concentration. Our own artillery was called down into the gulch to break up this attack and for the moment succeeded, but in the fight all of the K Company men who were left in the gulch were killed by the raiding Japanese.

For the next four hours, from 1900 to 2300, K Company sat atop Gusukuma Ridge in a nightmare of war seldom equalled. Inadequately dug in because of rocky terrain, the enemy counterattack of 1900, approaching darkness, and lack of adequate reconnaissance of the position, this company was subjected to constant and deadly artillery and mortar fire, and incessant sniping by riflemen and machine gunners. Burdened by a large number of wounded men who couldn't be evacuated because of the darkness and because the evacuation route along Route 1 was covered by fire, and suffering from a lack of ammunition for the same reasons, Betts and his men nevertheless decided to stay. The wounded were moved back onto the village side of the ridge and placed in a deep cave where they were sheltered from the artillery fire, and the men

improved their holes where they could. Then, at 2300, the Japanese launched an all-out counterattack. This effort was two-pronged, one arm hitting Betts' position from the village, the other from Dead Horse Gulch. The main strength of this drive was aimed directly at two heavy machine guns from M Company, attached to K Company. After thirty minutes of relentless pounding and hand-to-hand fighting, and despite the heroism of two members of the machine-gun crews, both machine guns were overrun and captured, then turned on the rest of Betts' line. Outnumbered and outflanked, out of ammunition, and disorganized, Betts decided to allow his men to pull back to the 1st Battalion line, two hundred yards to the south. Shortly after 2330, therefore, leaving a guard at the cave containing the wounded men, he pulled his company back inside the fold of Company A's line. The whole attempt of the 3d Battalion to clean out the Pocket had failed, K Company had lost forty-seven percent of its effective strength, and the situation remained the same as it was on the morning of 21 April, with the bridges still covered by fire, and the 1st Battalion unable to move because of no tank support, with the added difficulty of a precarious and uncertain supply line.

The battle of Gusukuma Ridge ended early next morning when marauding Japanese, now in possession of the high ground, discovered and attacked the caves in which the wounded men had been hidden. Using grenades, white phosphorus, and bonfires, the enemy either forced the wounded into the open where they were shot, or smothered them inside the opening. As a result of the fight on the ridge, K Company and the supporting platoon of M reported a total of 25 men killed in action and 31 wounded. No accurate estimate of Japanese casualties is available, but Captain Betts himself later estimated that between 100 and 150 enemy were killed throughout the period.

SUMMARY OF SITUATION ON 21 APRIL

Before moving on to the action of 22-24 April, it would be well to review and summarize the situation at the beginning of that period. For the first time, on the morning of 22 April, the term "Item Pocket" had come into use. The position had been almost fully developed and four recognized problems had presented themselves. Of prime importance, of course, was the reduction of the positions in the Pocket itself, followed in order by the necessity of constructing the bridge across Anderson's Gulch, the elimination of the enemy in Gusukuma, and the liquidation of the positions on Ryan's Ridge. To do this job, Colonel Kelley now had only two battalions, the 2d Battalion less F Company having

been earmarked as Division reserve. On the morning of the 22d, due to the chain of events on 21 April, the alignment of the two remaining battalions was muddled. The 1st Battalion actually consisted of four rifle companies, L Company having been detached from the 3d Battalion to fill in the gap on the line between A and B Companies. The 3d Battalion consisted of three rifle companies, I, K, and F Companies; F Company had been attached when it was left behind by Lt. Colonel McDonough. On the morning of 22 April, the situation was further confused when C Company was detached from the 1st Battalion and made regimental reserve. As the days passed, this situation was to become even more complicated, but it is well to bear in mind that alignments were dictated by necessity. During the period 22-24 April, the actions of the 165th Infantry were to resemble those of a man working on a wired puzzle. Everything was tried. Attempts to reduce the Pocket were made from all directions with whatever tools were at hand and never was the puzzle completely solved. But out of the maneuvering came the knowledge of what had to be done and on 25 April the key was put into the lock.

THE PERIOD OF ADJUSTMENT

Beginning on 22 April, the attention of the 27th Division was centered on its left flank where efforts were to be made to coordinate the movements of the 105th Infantry and the 96th Division. In the remainder of the Division zone of action, the lines were to hold and adjust. Orders to the 165th Infantry were to adjust their lines, improve their defensive positions and mop up any enemy within their zone of action. In line with this order, Colonel Kelley gave his first attention to trying to straighten out the situation on his front. Since he had only one company holding the ground west of Ryan's Ridge, Colonel Kelley's first order was to move the rest of the 3d Battalion to that area to bolster the defense. Companies I and K, therefore, gave up the attempt to break the Pocket from the east and trudged clear back around the road cut through Rotation Ridge and up through the rice paddies to Potter's Ridge, where I Company took up the left flank. Company K went into battalion reserve, spending most of 22 April in licking the wounds suffered during the bitter fighting of the night before. Weapons had to be replaced, stray men had to be found, and the company generally re-organized.

While this was going on, Colonel Kelley, in conjunction with the 106th Infantry on his left, drew back his lines to conform with the 105th on the extreme Division left and present a much more compact front. This adjustment resulted in a general shortening of the 1st Bat-

talion line, and L Company was withdrawn from the front and became regimental reserve, stationed to the east of the bridge over Anderson's Gulch. Company C was then pulled all the way back behind Anderson's Gulch, sent up on Charlie Ridge and ordered to attack the Pocket from that direction while I Company made a simultaneous attack to the south and over the nose of Potter's Ridge. Preceding these two directional attacks, a heavy air strike was to be placed on the Pocket itself. It is interesting to note that the operations of both C and I Companies were characterized as "mopping up" at this time.

The air strike definitely had some effect on the Pocket, but probably not nearly as much as that recorded by the regiment. "Estimate 300 Japs killed, 3 pillboxes knocked out. One high velocity 47mm dual purpose gun [also knocked out]" was the report that went back. No matter how much damage was done, the enemy fought on just as effectively and just as tenaciously as though the planes had been dropping rocks.

By the close of 22 April, C Company had worked patrols all along Charlie Ridge to its nose. Small numbers of Japanese were dug out of caves and tunnels and late in the afternoon Lt. Myron L. Brewer, now in command of C Company, had worked platoons across Anderson's Gulch to Brewer's Hill where they had spent some time in observing enemy positions in the middle of the Pocket itself. Working carefully, Brewer's men had completely cleaned off Charlie Ridge and had located several of the troublesome positions in the Pocket, but had not been able to take any steps to eliminate these latter sore spots due to constant heavy fire. At nightfall Brewer pulled his patrols back across Anderson's Gulch and dug in firmly on Charlie Ridge, where his outposts could keep close track of enemy movements within the Pocket. Shortly after dark, the Japanese began to marshal for another counterattack, but Brewer and Captain Potter across the Pocket had so thoroughly done their job of reconnaissance that accurate artillery fire was called in and the threat was ended.

Company I had spent the afternoon in much the same manner as C Company, and by nightfall had thoroughly cleaned out all remaining positions on Potter's Ridge. The only other activity during the day was the intensive patrolling carried on by F Company on the south side of Ryan's Ridge. Here Captain Ryan determined to know every foot of ground on his immediate area, and throughout the day he personally explored each clump of bushes, trail and ditch, sizing them up for possibilities of cover, measuring distances and estimating fields of fire.

At the close of the day on 22 April, Colonel Kelley and his battalion commanders knew considerably more about what they had to contend with than they had previously. As a result of the information brought

in during the day, it was decided that the best possible way to eliminate the Pocket was to send I Company across the mouth of the position and secure the nose of Ryan's Ridge. At the same time, Lieutenant Brewer would send a reinforced platoon to the top of Brewer's Hill. From the tops of these two pieces of high ground, and from the top of Charlie Ridge, demolition squads would then start working downward, blowing the caves and tunnel openings from above. The time of attack was set at 0945 the next morning, following another air strike.

The key to the action on 23 April lay with I Company of the 3d Battalion. It was Captain Potter's mission to attack from the nose of Potter's Ridge across the Pocket itself and to seize the nose of Ryan's Ridge. From there, Potter was to widen his hold, mop up the cave and tunnel positions on the nose, and then, aided by K Company, he was to push on south along Ryan's Ridge to the airfield. Captain Potter decided to carry out the mission by sending one platoon across the gulch to form a "beachhead" on the nose of the ridge. After positions had been cleaned out and room gained to maneuver, the remainder of the company was to move across from Potter's Ridge. To establish this original beachhead, the company commander constituted a special assault squad under Staff Sgt. Howard Lewis, acting platoon leader of the 2d Platoon. Based on heavy fire power, this squad consisted of twelve men, armed with BARs, rifles, bazookas and demolitions. One of the twelve had a flamethrower. To this group, at the last minute, was added an aid man, and when Lewis reached the nose of the hill he found an unheralded addition in the person of Pfc. William F. (Uncle Bill) Susoeff, affectionately known as the "Mad Russian" among his intimates. Susoeff had come along on his own volition to "G-2 the situation." This gave Lewis a total strength of fourteen men, literally armed to the teeth.

The morning of 23 April was heavily overcast and visibility was not too good. Potter's company, which had been holding the nose of the ridge, was strung out for two hundred yards along the hump, hiding under every bush and in every depression in the ground. Behind it was K Company. The company commander had brought up a platoon of heavy machine guns from M Company and these, together with his own lights, were hidden among the ferns along the top of the ridge where they could deliver fire across the gulch and onto any enemy who might appear on the ridge. Lt. Colonel Claire and Captain Potter themselves occupied positions on the nose of the ridge where they could hold the whole area in observation.

Sergeant Lewis' task was a difficult one. The forward nose of Potter's Ridge was dented with tombs decorated with the inevitable fern plants.

On the floor of the Pocket there was a fifty-yard stretch of flat ground between the jumping off point and the base of Ryan's Ridge. From there the ground climbed rapidly upward. There was no vegetation left on the north nose of Ryan's Ridge. The little grove of trees had been stripped and destroyed by almost constant artillery fire. This fire had also scattered most of the loose dirt, leaving a few sharp coral pinnacles jutting out from the hillside.

All was quiet while Lewis worked his squad down around the ferns and tombs to the floor of the gulch. There the sergeant halted his men to reorganize. A Japanese mortar opened fire from the top of Ryan's Ridge just at the nose and Lewis immediately spotted the position. Pointing it out to his men, he picked that out as his first objective and then began sending his men sprinting across the open space one by one. The leading scout got across all right, then another man, and finally only Lewis, his aid man and the flamethrower remained. The aid man started out, got almost across and a machine gun opened up from the Pocket itself, followed by another from farther down Ryan's Ridge, almost a thousand yards away. The aid man, somehow, managed to make the bottom of the nose, but the flamethrower man was hit and went down. Lewis, who was following him, stopped in the middle of the fire, grabbed the wounded man by the collar and dragged him to the base of the nose and into a shell hole there. Leaving the aid man to take care of him, Lewis began climbing the hill and was soon at the head of his column. Below him, on the floor of the gulch, other machine guns had opened fire and to all intents and purposes, the men were trapped on the hillside. Lewis kept pushing ahead, however, trying to get at the mortar position and clean it out, thus freeing the rest of the company behind him for movement.

As the squad, climbing from rock to rock, reached a point approximately forty yards away from the position, the Japanese rained down a shower of potato-masher grenades amongst his men. Lewis stopped and began deploying the squad. Sending four men to the right, and two to the left, he brought up his bazooka man and tried to put direct fire into the position. At that point, rifle fire began to be directed into the squad. Lewis' assistant squad leader went down with a round in his shoulder. Lewis himself now moved up and down his little line and soon determined that the enemy were moving up riflemen among the rocks ahead of him. Their intention was plain. They were trying to pinch him in between themselves and the machine gun at his back. This was the beginning of a long and tedious fire fight. Both sides tried every trick they could think of. The enemy threw in grenades, mortars and rifle fire in increasing volume. Moving from rock to rock in Indian

fashion, Lewis and his men fought off increasing numbers of Japanese soldiers who tried to get in close enough to finish them off. At one time he called Captain Potter and asked for artillery fire to be put in close to his lines. When the concentration began falling, Lewis kept calling it in closer until it was landing within forty yards of his men. Throughout this period the rest of the company, still waiting on Potter's Ridge, was carrying on a long-range fire fight trying to keep Japanese soldiers from moving up to help in the elimination of the squad on the nose. The enemy, in return, was throwing intensely accurate machine-gun and mortar fire back at the soldiers on Potter's Ridge. In the best movie tradition, the whole area was one big field of bursting shells, and the hum of rifle bullets was almost incessant. For three hours this fight went on. At a little before 1300, Lewis called Captain Potter on the radio and told him that he had three men left capable of fighting. He had suffered three killed and seven wounded. Potter's 2d Platoon, which had been trying vainly to get across the gulch to help, was still pinned down by the intense fire, part of it in the bottom of the gulch, part on the nose of Potter's Ridge. It had lost one man killed and one man wounded and any attempt to move only brought down more fire. Taking all these things into consideration, the company commander called Lewis and told him to withdraw his men and try to get his wounded out. While the squad leader and Susoeff manned all the remaining weapons available, the other able-bodied man helped drag and carry the wounded down the hill and then the remaining two scrambled down after them. They then set to work getting the injured men back across Potter's Ridge. Running the gantlet of enemy machine-gun fire, trying to outguess the enemy gunners, the three able-bodied members and the aid man carried four of the wounded back to safety. Both Susoeff and the aid man were hit while engaged in this maneuver, but there were no other casualties. By 1330 Lewis was back with Potter, and the attempt to clean out the Pocket had again failed. Of all the men who got across to Ryan's Ridge that morning, fourteen in all, only Lewis and one man had come back unmarked. The enemy had suffered casualties, but the defense of the position had not been notably impaired.

While Lewis and his men were fighting on the nose of Ryan's Ridge, Lieutenant Brewer had again sent a platoon under Lt. James Lawlor across Anderson's Gulch and onto Brewer's Hill. Working cautiously, Lawlor reached the edge of the bluff overlooking the Pocket. In front of him he could see Lewis' men fighting on the hillside and from caves directly below him he could hear the sound of the machine guns which were firing along the bottom of the nose. Lawlor had an extremely dif-

difficult task. Below him the ground dropped almost straight down. He couldn't work men down over the edge of the bluff and he couldn't reach the caves from the top. He called back from his forward position, and had ropes brought up. To these he tied demolition charges and lowered them over the bluffs. The charges made absolutely no impression on the cave openings. Meanwhile, the force had been under heavy mortar and rifle fire which restricted movement considerably. By the time the demolitions were finally set off it was already late afternoon and Lewis had already withdrawn from the nose of Ryan's Ridge. Lawlor was again ordered to pull back across Anderson's Gulch and tie in with the rest of C Company.

The whole operation of 23 April had resulted in no appreciable progress in the reduction of the position. No other attempts had been made during the day. The 1st Battalion line had remained stationary on the left and the main part of I and K Companies had been immobile on Potter's Ridge waiting for Lewis to clean out the ground ahead. Captain Ryan continued his patrolling on the extreme right flank.

At the conclusion of Sergeant Lewis' patrol, Lt. Colonel Claire had decided upon a night attack on Ryan's Ridge to take place during the night of 23-24 April, and had spent the remainder of the afternoon organizing it. Late in the evening, however, this was called off and it was planned that the attack would be renewed next day after an air strike with Napalm bombs. It was thought that the only way to destroy the Japanese in the Pocket was by burning them out. And until the Pocket was cleaned out there was little hope of continuing the attack south.

For the first time, on 24 April, the weather had definite bearing on the attack. Colonel Kelley had asked that the Napalm strike be delivered at 0900, the attack to follow shortly after. The morning dawned cold and rainy, however, and the ceiling was so low that the strike was first postponed and later cancelled. The word of final cancellation, however, did not come until after 1300 with the result that most of the day had been wasted. The only movement that took place in the whole Item Pocket area occurred on the left flank of the regimental zone of action where B Company adjusted their lines by moving two hundred yards south, back into the area from which they had moved on 22 April. Company F, in the flats near Fox Ridge, had again continued their extensive patrolling.

The relatively inactive period had now come to an end. The Japanese appeared to be as strongly entrenched as when the Pocket had first been encountered. It is true that up until the evening of 24 April, it was estimated that the 165th had killed 542 enemy soldiers, but it is doubtful that this figure was anywhere near accurate.

Chapter 54: The Capture of Ryan's Ridge

THE MAN WHO, on 24 April, held the key to Item Pocket was Capt. Bernard Ryan, commanding F Company, 165th Infantry. For four days his unit had almost been forgotten. Operating on the Division extreme right flank, almost isolated from the rest of his regiment and battalion, Captain Ryan and his men were something of a mystery to everyone. Ordered to hold until the situation farther to the left was straightened out, Captain Ryan had concentrated on intensive patrolling. Reports were continually coming back from F Company that patrols were located in various places: on Ryan's Ridge, near the airport, among the tombs to the front or along the seawall. Inasmuch as all attention was centered on the Pocket itself, however, F Company was left more or less to its own devices. Forced to evacuate his wounded by water around Kazu Saki and to bring in his supplies by the same method, subjected nightly to intense artillery concentrations which seriously disrupted his communications, harassed by countless enemy patrols in force, with no direct fire support save his own mortars, Captain Ryan had operated more or less on his own initiative. He had hand-carried the 37mm antitank guns brought in on the night of 20 April, and on the next night, when it became apparent to him that tanks, amphibian and land, would not be available to him, he further bolstered his fire power by working his men most of the night hand-carrying in additional antitank guns, this time 57mm, which he placed in position south of Fox Ridge where they could fire directly into the tombs and caves on the slopes of Ryan's Ridge which faced him.

Between 20-24 April, Captain Ryan had watched E, G, K, and I companies assault the Pocket positions from different directions. He reasoned on 24 April, and correctly, that his turn would be next. He had already conducted about as thorough a reconnaissance as anyone could, but on 24 April he rechecked. When, in the afternoon of that day, he was called by Lt. Colonel Claire and informed that he would be expected to attack and secure the Pocket the next day, he presented an alternate plan. Because he knew the ground so well, he thought that he could attack that night and be on top of the ridge and in contact with the 1st Battalion by dawn. Lt. Colonel Claire, after rechecking Ryan's estimate of the situation, asked what time the company commander wanted to attack. Ryan stipulated 0200.

This was the plan which Lt. Colonel Claire carried to regiment that afternoon. General Griner had already issued his Field Message No. 23 which called for a renewal of the attack in the 165th Infantry zone of action, "to advance and shorten its line." In order to carry out this command, Colonel Kelley issued his own field order, No. 23A, which

called for a general attack by the regiment on the morning of 25 April at 0630. However, he included in the order a provision for the night attack to be executed by F Company according to the plan advanced by Captain Ryan. The seizure of Ryan's Ridge was to be followed by the attack to the southwest at H-hour. There was no time set for the 3d Battalion's night movement, nor was the manner in which it was to be executed stipulated. Colonel Kelley was adamant later when asked about the time Captain Ryan was to move off. He understood that F Company was to move off at 0200 and said Lt. Colonel Claire had stipulated this time.

It was with some astonishment, therefore, that Captain Ryan received a telephone call shortly after 1900 in which he was ordered to launch his attack at 2000 instead of at 0200. Furthermore, Lt. Colonel Claire, in issuing his orders, had changed the entire plan of attack. Captain Ryan, as a result of his reconnaissance, had decided to follow Weigand's general route of 20 April, moving up along Fox Ridge to its end, then moving straight on up through the tombs, branching off a little to the left, and landing on top of the ridge in the general vicinity of the road cut. Claire's orders to him, on the evening of 24 April, directed him to proceed via the route used by Sergeant Lewis on 23 April, down over the nose of Potter's Ridge and across the Pocket itself to the north end of Ryan's Ridge. No explanation has ever been forthcoming for this abrupt change of plans on the part of the battalion commander. However, it did result in the utter failure of the whole plan.

Captain Ryan, who had his men all briefed on what they were to do and who had them all in place for the attack, was now faced with a complete change of plans which had to be executed in darkness over ground which was entirely unfamiliar, and on less than an hour's notice. He asked for more time to execute the reorganization now necessary and was given an extra half hour. He was just in the act of calling his platoon leaders to give them the new plan when the regular evening artillery barrage began landing in the midst of his company. This was the heaviest concentration that F Company had yet received. Within a few minutes all of Ryan's communications were out, his men pinned in their foxholes or in the openings of tombs. Company F was completely disorganized and Ryan was able neither to transmit nor receive orders to and from battalion or his platoon leaders. The artillery fire lasted for more than an hour and at the end of that time, the company commander managed to get his platoon leaders together, issue the new order to them and make ready to attack. Permission was received from battalion to delay the assault until 2230, but before that hour the enemy began to send a series of patrols in force against the extreme

right flank and now Ryan was faced with not only getting ready to attack, but also defending his position. After losing one man killed and two wounded in dealing with these threats, Captain Ryan called Lt. Colonel Claire and told him that he thought the attack should go in the direction he had originally planned because, if he pulled back to move along Potter's Ridge, he would leave the whole Division right flank uncovered to enemy movement in force along the coast. If he attacked along Fox Ridge he would always have some protection because he could cover this area with fire from the high ground, once it was captured, and until then, his rear elements could do the protecting. Claire again gave him his approval and the time of attack was set at 0200. But when 0200 arrived, Ryan was still fighting off marauding Japanese patrols. All night long this continued. The enemy was operating with strong combat formations of between twenty-five and thirty men. Every time F Company's men got up out of foxholes to launch the attack they ran into one of these roving parties. When 0200 came, Ryan's men were still heavily engaged, and finally, at 0400, when the fighting still continued, Ryan decided to give up the attempt until he could clean out the area to his front. By daylight, F Company had fought all night and had not yet moved out of the original positions. Lt. Colonel Claire had called regiment during the night to inform Colonel Kelley of the events in front of F Company, but the duty officer at regimental headquarters had not deemed it important enough to awaken the commanding officer. At 0515, therefore, when Colonel Kelley awoke to call Claire, he was astounded to find that the ridge was still not in our possession. Inasmuch as the whole regimental attack had depended on the securing of this objective, Colonel Kelley immediately ordered Claire to attack with his battalion at 0630 and secure the ridge. Lt. Colonel Claire demurred. In the first place, he had been trying to take the hill for three days without success. He did not feel that the casualties to be incurred by a direct frontal assault on the position in broad daylight were commensurate with the task involved. Furthermore, his main assault company, F, had been fighting all night, had very little ammunition left, and were dog-tired. Lastly, even had he decided to replace his one "full-strength" company with the relatively fresh K Company, he did not have time to make the switch and still attack at 0630.

Lt. Colonel Claire gave Colonel Kelley these reasons and asked to be allowed to delay the attack until "later." Colonel Kelley then asked the battalion commander if he would attack at 0630. The answer was, "No." The situation was impossible. Colonel Kelley thereupon replaced Lt. Colonel Claire with Major Herman M. Lutz, who had been

battalion executive officer. Colonel Kelley then ordered Major Lutz to attack at 0630.

The new battalion commander immediately called Captain Ryan and gave him the situation and asked him what he thought the possibilities were. Captain Ryan said that he thought he could take the ridge all right, but that he would need more than an hour to get ready. Upon being pressed, he said that he would be ready to move no later than 0900. Major Lutz called regiment with this information and Colonel Kelley agreed to the new time.

Captain Ryan had begun to get ready to attack as soon as he received the order from battalion. He had been given complete freedom to make all arrangements by Major Lutz and acted more or less independently of battalion control. Company I was to attack on F Company's left at 0900, but until the crest of the ridge was secured, each company was to fit its own advance in conformity to local terrain in their front. However, Captains Ryan and Potter did confer on one another's plans and coordinated, as much as possible, all preparatory and supporting fires.

Captain Ryan knew enough about the terrain in his immediate front to do away with the need for any further reconnaissance. He had, as already noted, decided on his route of attack. It was to be that followed by Weigand on 20 April. The company commander knew that he would be subjected to two main sources of fire. Most certainly he would be hit from the tombs, caves and tunnels which honeycombed Ryan's Ridge to his front with mortar, machine-gun and rifle fire. In addition, he could expect to be hit by the lanes of machine-gun fire which played out of the Pocket and along the west slopes of the ridge. The whole area between the end of Fox Ridge and Ryan's Ridge was known to be swept by this fire. It was in eliminating the effectiveness of these two sources of fire that Captain Ryan demonstrated his astuteness. He called in his artillery forward observer and learned from him exactly where the supporting firing batteries were. At that time, the 105th Field Artillery Battalion, part of RCT 165, was located just east of the 27th Division command post. The firing azimuth was such that artillery fire crossed Ryan's front perpendicularly to his line of advance. Range tables indicated that the greatest probable lateral deviation would amount to about 12-15 yards. With the prospect that he would not have to worry about overs and shorts, Captain Ryan felt that he could push his men right up into the supporting fire without too much danger. He therefore ordered a twenty-minute artillery preparation on the bottom of slopes of the hill. At the conclusion of this time, the fire would switch slowly to the left (that is, up the hill) until it played along the crest. Upon reaching that point, it would suddenly lift and move down the

ridge toward the airport. In addition to the artillery, Ryan instructed his antitank guns, now spotted along the south slopes of Fox Ridge, to lay direct fire into every known position facing him. His company's mortars were to lay smoke directly into the Pocket to obscure enemy observation.

With these preparations complete, Ryan briefed his men carefully on just exactly what they were to do. Prior to 0830 (later changed to 0845) they were to move along Fox Ridge as far as they could go without drawing down heavy fire. From that point, as soon as the preparation opened, the men were to move across the open ground to the bottom of Ryan's Ridge as close in to the artillery as possible. When the fire began moving up the hill, they were to move with it. Captain Ryan emphasized two things. The need for speed was essential. The men must move out from Fox Ridge with alacrity. It was almost four hundred yards between the line of departure and the west border of the artillery lane of fire. This ground must be covered prior to the end of the preparation because as soon as the fire began to move up the hill, it would release the enemy machine gunners within the Pocket, who would undoubtedly interdict the whole area. His second point was to call the attention of his entire company to the direction of artillery fire and the small probability of error. He underlined the necessity of advancing right up into the artillery in order to secure the maximum effectiveness from it.

Once his own company had been briefed, Captain Ryan informed Captain Potter of I Company, on his left, and battalion headquarters exactly what he intended to do. There are one or two points in connection with the entire plan which must be noted. One was the difference in the situation between I and F Companies. Company I was to attack virtually through the same area in which G Company had been so badly cut up on 20 April. From the time they moved off, Potter's men were in the open ground directly in front of the Pocket to the west. Where Ryan was protected from this fire by Ridge Fox and had only six hundred yards at the most to progress across open ground, Potter had well over a thousand yards. This had a very definite bearing on the subsequent action.

Another thing that makes the plan even more remarkable was that F Company, as already noted, had spent a particularly miserable night. Suffering first a heavy artillery barrage, they had then tried to move in three different directions only to run into what amounted to enemy counterattacks. A good deal of their ammunition had been used up, they had not eaten since the late afternoon of 24 April nor slept since 23 April, and in the hustle and bustle of getting into position to at-

tack they had no time to draw a resupply of either water, food or ammunition.

In the reorganization which was to accompany the general attack, Colonel Kelley was once again able to make use of the 2d Battalion. Acting on the assumption that both the 1st and 3d Battalions would accomplish their missions, make contact, and continue to the south, he instructed Lt. Colonel McDonough to take over the task of mopping up Japanese remnants in the Pocket. Company C was to move back up Potter's Ridge, E Company was to operate out of Gusukuma in the same area where K Company had suffered so heavily on 21 April, and C Company was to revert to control of the 2d Battalion and continue operations in the Charlie Ridge-Brewer Hill area. Company L, the regimental reserve, was given to the 1st Battalion to take the place of C Company. The maneuvering had resulted in a strange alignment of the 165th Infantry at this point. The 1st Battalion was composed of A, B, and L Companies, the 2d had E, G, and C, while the 3d was composed of K, I, and F. The events of 25 April were to scramble these companies even more.

The action of F Company was carefully planned. Captain Ryan had put two platoons in the assault. The left platoon, the 1st, was commanded by Lt. Martin L. Pinson, who had been commissioned in the field for outstanding work on Saipan. The 2d Platoon on the right was commanded by Lt. John M. Flesche, Jr., the only surviving officer to come through Saipan with the company. Ryan had placed his 3d Platoon in reserve and expected to follow with his Weapons Platoon and company headquarters. The reorganization took slightly longer than the company commander had planned so that the artillery was not called in until 0845 instead of 0830.

After a few rounds of smoke were laid directly into the Pocket, both I and F Companies moved off. In the F Company zone of action, Captain Ryan was lying with his front-line assault elements. The minute the first shell landed to his front, he signalled his antitank and machine guns and his mortars to open up. Under this terrific concentration of fire, Ryan pushed Flesche and Pinson off on a dead run. Scrambling forward over the gradually roughening terrain, both assault platoons were well into the outer fringe of the artillery impact area before the fire began to shift up the slope of the ridge. At this point, by the very nature of the action, F Company began to thin out. It was as though a feathered stick was moved through the air at a high rate of speed. In spite of anything anyone can do, some feathers are bound to become detached. If the stick is brought down over a rock it cannot help but

break. Company F, the stick in question, did just exactly these things. The rock across which the stick broke was the enemy defensive position in the Pocket. The moment the artillery began to shift, the machine guns opened up along the same lanes of fire. Company F broke in two over this fire just behind the assault platoons. Pinson and Flesche kept going. Ryan, his reserve platoon, his Weapons Platoon and his company headquarters remained behind, cut off by the fire. The 1st and 2d Platoons lost a man here and a man there. One was killed and two wounded by random fire that came from somewhere above and to the right. Two men were wounded by artillery fragments from our own shells. A squad became involved with a steep bank trying to get up the hill and by the time they had surmounted the obstacle, the supporting fire had moved on ahead and they were forced to climb back down into the shelter of a tomb for protection from the heavy fire now aimed at them.

But Pinson and Flesche, with the bare stick of the assault, kept going. Plunging, scrambling, running when they could, thirty-one men got to the top of the ridge within a few minutes. Then the artillery suddenly switched and moved southwest down Ryan's Ridge, forming a wall of steel to prevent Japanese reinforcements coming up from Machinato Airfield.

Pinson, Flesche and their twenty-nine companions found themselves perched atop a rugged razorback, dotted by rocks, holes and blasted stubs of vegetation. At first there wasn't a sign of an enemy soldier, just for a moment, and then as the sound of the artillery began to recede, the Japanese began popping out of spiderholes, pillboxes, caves and tunnels. The thirty-one men were waiting for them. There was little question that the enemy was surprised to find Americans in their positions, but the surprise did not last for long. Within seconds, the whole top of the ridge short of the artillery impact area was a howling, fighting mass of humanity. In a free-for-all fight reminiscent of the old knock-down, drag-out brawls of movie Westerns, the little group from F Company waded into the enemy with guns blazing, bayonets flashing, and fists flying. When they ran out of ammunition, they used their rifles as clubs. One man, Pfc. Carl Denis, an assistant squad leader, moved from rock to rock looking for the enemy in groups of more than one. He fired all of his ammunition, killing at least seven Japs with his first clip, then charged another group of eight with his rifle as a club. The enemy turned and ran helter-skelter down the reverse slope of the ridge toward Gusukuma. Denis calmly reloaded and picked them off as they ran. He then turned and went from hole to hole, lifting the covers and firing in. By the end of ten minutes, Denis was

the only man left on the right flank, but he kept on fighting until the area was completely devoid of Japanese soldiers. Altogether, Pinson and Flesche and their men accounted for thirty-five enemy counted killed, had chased at least forty-five more down off the ridge, and had killed an unestimated number in the caves and spiderholes. Of the thirty-one men who had landed atop the hill, twenty-four remained able to fight, five having been killed and two seriously wounded. The whole action had not lasted more than twenty minutes. For the time being, at least, this little band of men were in firm possession of the top of Ryan's Ridge. They had succeeded where others had failed for five bitter days.

The position of Flesche and Pinson had both advantages and disadvantages, however. The first consideration, of course, was the strength of the command. Twenty-four men were a small force with which to fight off the large enemy garrison known to be within positions inside the hill. Furthermore, these twenty-four men were not well armed. They had used up almost all of the ammunition they had left. By late that afternoon, before help arrived, by actual count each man had six rounds of rifle ammunition left, despite the fact that even the dead had been stripped of their bandoleers. The men had only the water still left in their two canteens which they had last filled on the afternoon of the day before. They had had no breakfast and they had carried no rations up the hill. To make matters even worse, they had two seriously wounded men, but no medical supplies and no aid man, the aid men all having been killed or wounded on the way up the hill and in the fight that followed. Radio communication with the outside world was cut and the slopes of the hill underneath them, on both sides, were still held by Japanese who had not been touched by the rush up the ridge. As long as these enemy were there and as long as the machine guns still chattered from the Pocket, there was no hope for assistance.

The attack had carried to the left because of terrain and the necessity for by-passing points of resistance. This shift left Pinson and Flesche almost astride the road cut through the ridge. Both officers had met at the conclusion of the first sharp clash and together had tried to reach Ryan by radio to advise him of their situation. With the failure of this attempt, both officers set off smoke flares marking their positions. This was at 0925. Then the twenty-four men were drawn in and organized into a strong defensive position to beat off the Japanese counterattacks which were sure to come. The offensive part of Pinson's and Flesche's job was done for the time being. The initiative now lay again with Captain Ryan on the ground below. Neither platoon leader, strangely enough, even had the slightest worry about his precarious isolated po-

sition, and neither doubted for a minute that his company commander would come through with some help.

From below, however, the situation was not so easily tossed off. Captain Ryan had immediately pulled back his reserve platoon and other company elements as soon as it became evident that they were cut off by the renewed enemy fire. At the same time, I Company, with farther to go across open ground, was caught midway by the Japanese guns and was pinned down by the fire. Unable to move in either direction, Captain Potter's men, particularly his left assault platoon, began sustaining heavy casualties. When it became apparent that he could move no farther forward, he tried to withdraw his men to safety. By using smoke shells, he was able to get some of his men out, but almost a whole platoon remained pinned in holes and behind rocks for the rest of the day. This attempt had cost Captain Potter one man killed and seven wounded and had lost him the services of one platoon for the time being.

Captain Ryan had no sooner been cut off than he began reorganization for another attempt to take the hill. He called battalion and told them that part of his company had achieved the crest of the ridge, but that they would need help at once to hold it. He knew almost exactly what the status of their ammunition supply was, that there were only a very few men up on the hill and that what men there were must be greatly weakened by their effort. At first, Major Lutz would not believe that anyone had been able to reach the top, but upon being told of the smoke signals and after Ryan pointed out exactly where the men were, he agreed to do what he could to help. The presence of American troops on the ridge was not accepted by Division until 1305. This was almost four hours after they had reached their objective.

Despite Ryan's insistence that he be allowed to attack the ridge again, it was 1550 before this move took place. In the six hours that elapsed, every attempt was made to eliminate the Pocket itself, using G, E and C Companies, then to get permission to use amphibian tanks to fire into the area and finally to extricate I Company from the open ground where they were pinned down. After making a general nuisance of himself for the whole period, Captain Ryan was finally given permission to go ahead with his plans. There was some reason, however, for hesitation in acceding to the company commander's request. All day long, positions of both I and F Company had been given as in the area where Ryan wanted his artillery placed and for this reason Division Artillery refused time and again to put concentrations in that locality. It was not until Captain Ryan brought artillery liaison officers from regiment that they finally agreed to give him what he wanted, and only then on the understanding that he "accept full responsibility" in case his own men

on top of the ridge were hit by the fire which would land along the slopes.

Permission was granted for the attack at 1510. Because it was felt that another attempt by I Company to cross the open ground in front of the Pocket would result in useless casualties, Captain Potter was ordered to move his company around on Ryan's right flank. It was felt that such a move would take him farther away from the main source of the fire and that he would be able to make the crest of the hill. In order to help him, Captain Ryan ordered his antitank gun battery to put direct fire on his front among the tombs.

With these arrangements made, the artillery barrage once more was laid down, beginning at 1550. Captain Ryan followed exactly the same plan as he had used in the morning. It worked perfectly. This time Ryan, his executive officer, his reserve platoon, and his company headquarters jumped off. Within fifteen minutes the company commander, Lt. Robert A. Elliot, his executive officer, and twenty men had reached the crest of the hill and joined Pinson and Flesche. On the way up the hill, Ryan had lost two men killed and three men wounded. These latter three men had been left among the tombs on the hillside and were evacuated that night under cover of darkness.

The situation which Captain Ryan found on the hill was anything but favorable. Pinson and Flesche had been forced by their lack of manpower to draw themselves up into a more or less compact position. For six hours they had lain beneath rocks, scrub bushes—anything that would give them cover. Throughout the period they had been under almost constant rifle, grenade and mortar fire. Due to the scarcity of ammunition, Lieutenant Flesche had told his men to fire at sure targets only. As a result of this order and general conditions, the Japanese had rigged a noose around the little perimeter and were gradually drawing it tighter. They had contracted the ring in so close that fire landing among the group could hardly help but wound someone. Shortly before Ryan arrived, four men were badly burned by white phosphorus shells which the enemy lobbed into the area. (One of the men hit had been previously hit that morning.) In return for these casualties, Pinson's men had knocked out one heavy machine-gun position.

Taking inventory with his three officers, Captain Ryan found that he had a total of forty-five men now on the ridge. Of these, five were casualties and could probably not be depended upon to give much help. Neither the Weapons Platoon, nor the Heavy Machine-Gun Platoon from H Company, had tried to make the push at 1550. Ryan had felt that the heavy equipment they were carrying would hold them up just enough to lose them the advantage of the artillery. Company I had again failed to get to the top of the ridge and was now cut off on the

slopes of the hill, where they again suffered heavy casualties. One of Captain Potter's platoons was cut off here and did not rejoin the company until after dark. This was almost an exact duplication of what had happened in the morning. Captain Ryan's first job was to redistribute the ammunition of his men. He had not been able to bring any resupply with him, but he had seen to it that every man who made the second assault had brought full bandoleers with him along with plenty of grenades. Upon completion of this task he ordered Lieutenant Elliot to take half of the men and attack south along the ridge. Elliot did so, cleaning out three or four Japanese positions and widening F Company's hold to about 150 yards along the crest. This had the main value of allowing a wider dispersal of the men and cutting down of casualties. By 1900, just before dark, all forty-five men were well entrenched and in rather shaky possession of the ground they had fought all day to capture.

Captain Ryan now turned his attention to getting help. He was still without radio communication with battalion because he had left his -300 radio behind due to the necessity for speed. He was extremely short on ammunition and had no supporting or automatic fire except his BARs. Furthermore, he felt that he needed more men worse than anything else. It was only a question of time before the enemy would counterattack, and forty-five were no match for the forces which would undoubtedly be thrown against him. It was at this point that he organized a three-man party to go for help. He asked for two volunteers, and Pfc. Cecil R. Harper and Staff Sgt. Douglas G. Rasmussen agreed to go with him. Before starting out Ryan gave each man explicit instructions as to what he was to do. Harper was to proceed at once to the Weapons Platoon, gather it and the H Company machine guns together, lead them to the east end of Fox Ridge and wait there for the company commander. Rasmussen had by far the most difficult task. To him fell the lot of rounding up all the stragglers, leading them to Harper, and then gathering together all the ammunition he could get. It did not matter *where* he got it as long as he got it. Ryan himself was to see Captain Potter and get in touch with battalion, explain his situation, and then to lead I Company back up to the top of the ridge, Harper, Rasmussen and their men falling in behind.

This was a particularly dangerous mission. In the first place, it was all to be conducted after dark. Although there would probably be a bright moon later, it was not out at that time and the sky was overcast. Everything depended upon being quiet. Secondly, although Ryan held the crest of the hill, Japanese still occupied the slopes between him and Fox Ridge. Literally tens of caves and tunnels were still to be cleaned

out. There was not only a possibility, but a very definite probability that the men would stumble into enemy positions. Finally, although it seems relatively insignificant, there was always the imminent possibility that our own troops would fire on anything that moved. No one is more aware of the danger of night movement by friendly troops than men who have fought the Japanese in the Pacific for two or three years. To make matters more complicated, neither Ryan nor his men knew the password for the day, preparations during the morning having precluded its delivery.

The three men started out as soon as it got dark. Moving quietly down the steep slope, they passed Japanese positions on several occasions, sometimes as close as five feet away, but managed to reach the lowland without mishap. Each man then branched off to complete his mission. Only Captain Ryan had any trouble. When he reached Captain Potter and explained his situation and asked Potter to move his company up on the hill, Potter refused. At that time, the commander of I Company still hadn't assembled all his company. At least one and a half platoons were missing, his men were low on ammunition, and were extremely tired from the beating they had taken during the day. Ryan, without trying to press his point, then moved back along Fox Ridge to where K Company had occupied his old positions. He proceeded at once to explain his situation to Captain Betts, who, without waiting to hear the story out, jumped at the chance to help. Both Betts and Ryan then got on the radio, told Major Lutz what they proposed to do and, after receiving his permission, set out. By 2330, all of Ryan's remaining company elements and all of Betts' company were on the ridge. This whole move had been completed with the loss of only two men, one of them being Lieutenant Elliot, Ryan's executive officer. Elliot had been killed just as the forward elements of the reinforcements reached the top of the ridge. Undiscovered until that moment, someone made a noise that brought down enemy rifle fire. Elliot spotted the rifleman by his gun flash and left his position to silence him. He had just knocked out the Japanese soldier when a burst of machine-gun fire along the ridge felled him.

Ryan and Betts now had well over a hundred men on the ridge, but the original group still was without food or water and had not eaten since the afternoon of 24 April nor slept since the night of 23 April. Ammunition was still very low, despite Rasmussen's efforts, so Ryan ordered all cartridges removed from machine-gun belts and redistributed to each man. He then organized a perimeter defense for the rest of the night, but before it was finished he was forced to beat off the first of a series of the inevitable counterattacks. When dawn finally broke

on 26 April his tired, hungry men had still not slept, but the crest of Ryan's Ridge was now firmly in their hands.

The first consideration on the morning of 26 April, as Captain Ryan saw it, was to expand his hold on the ridge. Early in the morning he and Betts got together and worked out a plan to sweep down the crest in both directions. Inasmuch as Betts was in position on Ryan's left (north) flank, he was to push forward toward the Pocket itself while F Company was to move on down toward Machinato Airfield. Promptly at 0800, therefore, both companies moved off from a back to back position.

Betts had about eight hundred yards to move along the narrow table-like path that marked the crest. Due to the narrowness of the route, he could only move small numbers of troops ahead, so he ordered his assault platoon commander, Lieutenant Grale, to move as far as he could, establish contact with the enemy, and hold until further orders came through. Grale had not moved more than two hundred yards when he ran into determined opposition in the form of machine-gun, rifle, and grenade fire. In rapid succession he lost two men killed and three wounded. After making a short reconnaissance to locate the source of enemy fire, he withdrew his platoon back almost to his starting point, built up a strong defensive line and reported his findings to Captain Betts. Betts then began trying to get hold of battalion to get some fire support in an effort to knock out the position.

Meanwhile, Captain Ryan and F Company had pushed rapidly south down the top of the ridge. One assault platoon was organized into a series of patrols which by 1000 had reached a point just opposite the north end of the airstrip, almost eight hundred yards from where they had jumped off. They were followed by the rest of the company, who burned out and blew up caves and tunnels as they moved forward. This work had been left to Pinson and Flesche by Captain Ryan. The company commander himself had turned his attention to the supply problem. Company F still had not eaten since late in the afternoon of 24 April, forty-two hours before, their water was low, they were almost out of grenades and had been so hard pressed for ammunition that machine guns had been temporarily abandoned in favor of the more mobile rifle and BAR.

Shortly after his company had attacked, Ryan again took Rasmussen and Harper and duplicated his trip of the night before, an exceedingly daring mission in broad daylight through the caves and tombs in the hillside. Not content with just getting down the hillside, however, Captain Ryan explored every foot of it trying to find a carrying route from the seawall to the top of the ridge. Although fired on intermit-

tently, he eventually reached the coast opposite the point of his company's advance, and then made his way back as far as Kazu Saki (*Saki* = Point) where he met the commanding officer of the amphibian tractor company which had been hauling his supplies. There he made arrangements for the amphtracs to haul him in a load of supplies at darkness that night. These supplies were to be dumped ashore at the base of the unimproved trail that ran down to the coast from Gusukuma. Captain Ryan then returned to his company, arriving there around noon.

Meanwhile, regiment had been frantically trying to get hold of both Ryan and Betts by radio. When Colonel Kelley had heard that both F and K Companies were on the ridge, he decided to push his attack on south toward Machinato Airfield. Using his 1st Battalion, which had cleaned out Gusukuma during 25 April, and his 3d to carry out this push, he left the 2d Battalion to carry out the mopping up of the Pocket. This necessitated some more maneuvering of units within the regiment. Division had ordered that one company of the 165th Infantry be designated as Division reserve. Company C was named. This left B, L, A and D Companies in the 1st Battalion. Colonel Kelley left this arrangement as it was. The 3d Battalion was composed of F, I and E Companies. Company I, which was battalion reserve, had been unsuccessful in two attempts to get on the ridge during 25 April and it was obvious that any attempt to move it along the west side of the ridge to the south would result in heavy casualties. In order to present a two-company front and make contact with the 1st Battalion, Major Lutz ordered Captain Potter to move his company all the way back around the regimental CP, up along Route 1, through Gusukuma and into line on the battalion left, between L Company and K Company. Both units were then to move south in conjunction with the 1st Battalion. It was planned to pass K Company through F Company at this time. However, neither Ryan nor Betts had received this order and had proceeded early on 26 April to mop up the ridge. At 1018, it was suddenly discovered that F Company had pushed its patrols much farther south than had been expected and that they were in the impact area where artillery fire was to be placed in preparation for the attack. Lutz tried to get hold of Ryan, who at the time was on his patrol and could not be reached. It was 1145 before the advance was stopped and by that time F Company had gone so far that K Company had to move over 1,200 yards to pass through its lines. This meant that Captain Betts would move south, leaving 1,200 yards of hard-won ridge line to be reoccupied by the Japanese. Rather than have F Company just hold and risk this reoccupation, Ryan was ordered to "change places" with Betts. Ryan protested that this was foolish, that he should be allowed to attack with I Company. To further complicate

the question, it had become evident that the company left behind after the attack moved on south would be engaged primarily in mopping up the Pocket. As this mission was already assigned to the 2d Battalion, the company left on the ridge would logically revert to the control of Lt. Colonel McDonough. Rather than further mix up his battalions by putting K Company in the 2d, Colonel Kelley ordered that the switch between F and K be made. It was accomplished by 1550 and at that time F Company again reverted to the 2d Battalion. For the first time since 20 April, the 165th Infantry was ready to resume its advance toward Machinato Airfield. But it did not move off on 26 April. Company I did not fulfill its part and get up on line with K that day.

Captain Ryan and F Company did not quit Ryan's Ridge until the morning of 28 April, but their main role in its capture was nearly over. After changing places with K Company, the men spent a good deal of their time in blowing up caves and destroying positions facing the sea. As soon as they had consolidated their new positions they were ordered to take up firing stations in support of a general attack launched on the nose of Ryan's Ridge, above Item Pocket, at 1800. This attack was not successful, and on the night of 26 April Ryan's tired, hungry men were still atop the ridge almost alone. To assure himself that no Japanese would reoccupy the hill between himself and K Company, Captain Ryan moved down the 1,200 yards to Captain Betts and both agreed to tie in a series of outposts to close the gap for the night. Betts then furnished Ryan with a carrying party which was augmented by men from F Company. Led by Ryan, this carrying party moved down to the beach and there met the LVTs with supplies. Working from shortly after 2000 until past midnight under constant harassment from enemy artillery and small arms, this party gave most of the men on the ridge their first resupply since they had arrived there. For F Company, this was the first food they had received since late on 24 April, almost fifty-four hours. At that, they had to wait until daylight to eat it.

On the morning of 27 April, K Company moved on south, but F Company remained on the ridge for another twenty-four hours. During most of this day, Ryan and his men made no attempt to move farther toward the Pocket, but did engage in a systematic elimination of caves on the sea side of the ridge. Working from above, they had little trouble and by nightfall on that day the enemy, save for a few stragglers, was completely eliminated from the west side of Ryan's Ridge, and except in the close vicinity of the Pocket itself, the whole western coastal plain was safe to use.

On the morning of 28 April, F Company was finally relieved by Company A and moved into the line near Yafusu.

GUSUKUMA AND THE END OF ITEM POCKET

The capture of Ryan's Ridge by F Company had not completely solved the puzzle of Item Pocket. It had, it is true, resulted in finally placing troops at a point where they could reestablish an unbroken regimental line and resume the advance south. But the Item Pocket position was not just a local pocket; it was a series of mutually supporting positions which commanded surrounding terrain. With the fall of Ryan's Ridge one of them was eliminated, but fire still came from the Pocket itself, and it was soon discovered the enemy still had positions on the east slopes of Ryan's Ridge and in Gusukuma. The Division could, if necessary, funnel troops and supplies by the sea route around Kazu Saki, but the obvious and easy road, via Route 1, was still closed until the last Japanese was eliminated.

It is difficult to imagine or to estimate how many of the enemy still remained in the Item Pocket position on 25 April. In spite of the very heavy fighting there our troops had actually seen very little of the defenders. Company F, by their sudden charge on the morning of that day, had very definitely eliminated over a hundred of the enemy, and during the days that followed probably sealed as many more in caves. The gallant effort of Staff Sergeant Lewis on 23 April is an excellent example of the difficulty of estimating enemy losses. Lewis said later that he actually only saw two or three Japanese soldiers. He fired at them, and at positions, but he could not definitely state that he had killed anyone. The counterattack on K Company during the night of 21 April had very definitely cost the defending forces large losses, but how many actually were killed would be hard to determine. A general estimate might run something as follows:

| <i>Events</i> | <i>Enemy Eliminated</i> |
|---|-------------------------|
| Counterattack on E Company (Technical Sergeant Schoeff), 20 April | 35 |
| K Company, 165th Infantry, 21 April | 100 |
| Sergeant Lewis, I Company, 25 April | 25 |
| C Company on Charlie Ridge and Brewer's Hill, 22-24 April..... | 75 |
| Captain Ryan and F Company, 20-24 April | 60 |
| Captain Ryan and F Company, Ryan's Ridge, 25-27 April..... | 200 |
| Miscellaneous, air strikes, artillery, random enemy, whole period.. | 100 |
| Total | 595 |

This total of 595 is probably high, yet the 27th Division G-2 periodic report for 26 April credits the 165th Infantry with 612 enemy killed, and at that time returns from Captain Ryan had not yet been received.

The attack on Ryan's Ridge was the first breach driven into the defenses of the Pocket, but it should be remembered that the east side, along Route 1, had not been even faintly scratched. Captain Ryan's achievement on 25 April was part of a general regimental attack. The other half was executed by the 1st Battalion in the Gusukuma area, where, up until this time, no one had been able to do any more than get a few scouts into the outskirts of the town.

The plan for 25 April in the 1st Battalion zone of action called for a general attack on the whole battalion front. B Company on the left was to advance as far as possible, tie in firmly with the right of the 106th Infantry near Yafusu and hold as a pivot. Meanwhile, L Company was to attack to the east, swinging like a gate to the south, clean out the part of the village which they passed through, and come onto a line with both B and I Companies, which, according to the original plan, would have swept up over the top of Ryan's Ridge. Once these companies were in line, the whole regiment would move south to capture Machinato Airfield. Company A, Mahoney's reserve, was to protect L Company's rear by mopping up the rest of the village.

The attack jumped off on schedule, with both L and A Companies advancing into the village. In the bitterest kind of fighting, which lasted all day, both of these units moved through the debris of the town, fighting from wall to wall and tree to tree. Typical of the fighting was the action of Pfc. Richard King of Company A. King was a rifleman, and as his platoon pushed into the little paths and through the ruins of houses, they were subjected to increasingly heavy rifle and grenade fire, with a burst from machine guns thrown in now and then. After fighting for two hours against this hidden enemy, King spied a Japanese sniper tied in the crotch of a small tree. Taking one well aimed shot, he finished off the enemy, and when his victim did not fall to the ground, he crawled up into the crotch and took a seat beside the dead sniper. He remained there all day long and by nightfall had killed ten enemy soldiers walking beneath his position or popping over walls a few yards away. He himself was never bothered.

Shortly after noon, when the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, officially took over the job of mopping up Item Pocket, E Company was marched down to the village and was added to the force fighting there. By nightfall, Gusukuma itself was completely in our hands, but little else. L Company held a line all along the south edge of the town, Company A along the west edge, and E Company along the north. But all attempts to advance beyond the village in any direction resulted in failure. Gusukuma Ridge was still strongly held and E Company had been unable to

clean it off although they had destroyed some of the emplacements near them on the town side of the hill. Company A had tried to venture out into the open ground west of the village late in the afternoon, only to find itself in the midst of crossfire. The Japanese had constructed caves and pillboxes on the northwest corner of town and had burrowed into the east slopes of Ryan's Ridge. At one time eight different machine guns were firing directly into Company A's front and these guns were supported by the inevitable mortars and at least one 47mm AT gun. Company L received fire from the same positions each time it tried to move away from the protection of the village walls to the south. The fire from Ryan's Ridge swept the whole area south of the village and caught L Company from the right rear. The combined efforts of L, A and E Companies during the day cost five men killed and fifteen wounded. In exchange, they had killed at least twenty-nine enemy, counted, and completely destroyed the Japanese positions in and around the town.

Company C had continued its more or less private war on the Pocket itself, still working patrols from Charlie Ridge up onto Brewer's Hill, but as on previous days this was accomplished under a fusillade of fire of all types. Although Brewer's men managed to get right to the edge of the Pocket, they were not able to get suitable weapons into position to put effective fire into the caves which housed the enemy fire power. Late in the afternoon of 25 April, Lieutenant Brewer was able to work tanks along Route 1 to the end of Charlie Ridge and then nose them into the small open patch on the west of the road. After firing one or two rounds up the gulch, they were brought under an intense mortar and artillery barrage. Rather than risk the loss of the tanks, Brewer withdrew them from the impact area. The Pocket was still undented.

During the night 25-26 April, plans were again changed. Beginning at 0415, Captain Potter had begun the movement of I Company by a circuitous route around the whole Item Pocket area. He was to push through the village, form a skirmish line and attach himself as an extension to the gate, still hinged on B Company, and swing into position between L and E. Although F and K Companies on the ridge continued to work along its top, activity in and around the village was largely suspended until Potter got into position. Company B did move forward on the extreme left, feeling out enemy positions in Yafusu, but it was shortly after 1100 before I Company reached the west end of Gusukuma. Almost immediately they came under the same heavy fire that had greeted L and A Companies the previous day. After working for over an hour trying to get forward to straighten the line, Captain Potter was ordered to attack in conjunction with the rest of the regimental

line at 1245. Promptly at that hour all companies moved off, and almost at once ran into serious opposition. Company B on the extreme left of the line became involved in a bitter struggle to capture Yafusu which cost them eight men killed and nineteen men wounded, including the company commander, Capt. Jose H. Gil. Company L also became involved in the same fight on its left flank, and when I Company tried to move up on line two hundred yards southwest of Gusukuma it, too, was taken under fire from the machine guns in the ridge to the right rear and eventually, by an antitank gun from the same place. This 47mm fire spilled over into L Company's right flank. By 1430 all of the right flank of the line below the ridge was pinned down by the fire from the ridge and couldn't move. The left flank was pinned down by fire from Yafusu. It is important to note that on this day, 26 April—seven days after they had taken over the right flank of the Division line—the 165th Infantry still had absolutely no fire support from tanks or self-propelled guns. Route 1, particularly where it crossed Anderson's Gulch and Dead Horse Gulch, was still a hot spot, and until the Pocket was cleaned out it was not likely that either bridge could be used.

Company C, which had been working in the area since 22 April was, on this day, withdrawn to Division reserve, and little or no work was done on the Pocket from the east. However, G Company did work a platoon down through the west mouth from the nose of Potter's Ridge. Beginning shortly after 1000, this platoon under Lt. Leland E. Damon was given almost a duplicate mission of that assigned to Sergeant Lewis of I Company on 23 April. Damon and his men ran into a heavy screen of rifle, mortar and machine-gun fire almost as soon as they moved away from the base of Potter's Ridge. As on previous occasions, no one could locate the source of this fire and no covering fire could be delivered to neutralize it. It just came from the Pocket—that was all anyone knew. Damon therefore decided to push ahead in spite of his casualties and eventually got to the slope of the nose of Ryan's Ridge, but by the time his platoon was assembled there he had lost seven men wounded, and three more were pinned down on the open ground, unable to move. This cut down the strength of the patrol very seriously, but the platoon leader resolved to keep going and clean off the nose. With himself in the lead, he moved on up toward the top, climbing from rock to rock in much the same fashion as Lewis had done before him. This time, however, there was one difference. The presence of K and F Companies beyond the road cut through the ridge prohibited the Japanese from building up any line of resistance to Damon's men as they had done against Lewis. On 25 April the enemy had been free to come out in the open to fight, but now he had to use his network of tunnels and do all

the work from there. This eased Damon's work, to some extent, because the nature of the cave openings themselves restricted Japanese fields of fire and observation. For this reason, the G Company patrol was able to get to the crest of the nose and in among the positions. Damon skillfully worked himself and his men under and around the enemy fire lanes and soon came up beside a cave containing five Japanese soldiers, whom Damon killed. While he was engaged, a sixth Japanese came out of a hole behind him and seriously wounded him. Tech. Sgt. Thomas J. Davis now took command of the platoon, brought up all the remaining men, a total of nine altogether, and continued trying to blow up and destroy the enemy positions on the Item Pocket face of the ridge. It was now close to 1500 in the afternoon and Davis continued his slow, tedious job for the rest of the afternoon, managing to blow up three or four more positions before 1700. It is difficult for persons not acquainted with these operations to understand the seemingly rapid passage of time, but an infantry group working along a hillside as Davis' was, is a painstaking group of workmen who have a wide variety of tools to use. Caution is the rule. The men crouch behind rocks, looking here and there for what might be a cave position. One man will then slowly crawl forward to a point opposite the opening, survey it for a few minutes, and then bring up other men to cover him. Then he will work himself forward, put a few bursts of fire into the hole and then throw in a grenade, after which he will get out of there to a safe distance. After the smoke and debris clear away he will lie and watch the opening for a few minutes to see if there is any change in the situation. Then he will crawl forward again, investigate the opening, and then bring forward his engineers to place a charge in the cave mouth. After this goes off he must again go up and investigate to see that the job is done right. By this time, anywhere from a half hour to an hour has passed. All movement is slow and there are long periods in between when the men must lie flat on the ground just watching. Observers will sometimes not even be aware that an operation is going on.

It was while working on the cave positions on the hill at 1700 that Davis received word that a general attack would be made at 1800 to clean out the position once and for all. Company E, which had been working in and around Gusukuma all day in an effort to mop up remaining enemy elements, was to attack at the same time to clean out the eastern slope of Ryan's Ridge directly west of the village itself. The decision to make this attack was made by Colonel Kelley because of the effect of fire from the ridge upon I and L Companies. They had suffered all afternoon from fire directed at their rear from the inner

slopes of this ridge. It came from a point north of where F Company held the hill, and was on the reverse slope from where Davis was working. It was reasonable to believe that with Davis coming down on the positions from above, E Company working up from below, and F Company sweeping the area with enfilade fire, that such an attack would be successful. That it did not work was mainly due to the fact that Davis simply did not have enough strength to carry out such an attack. As previously noted, he had only ten men left in his platoon, one of his wounded men, Sgt. George J. Webster, having returned to help out. G Company's 2d Platoon was supposed to come up on the nose to help him, but at 1800 these reinforcements had not been able to get forward to him. Despite this fact, Davis launched his attack on schedule, but had not moved more than twenty-five yards when he and Webster were both killed and three others were wounded. The other five men were unable to move farther in the face of concentrated fire from positions to their left (east) and front (south) nor were they able to locate the source of the fire which was causing them so much trouble. It was 1900 before the 2d Platoon arrived on the nose to help and by that time the whole attack had been called off.

The whole attack was short-lived. E Company's assault from Gusukuma had been practically a charge in the best movie style. This charge had swept out of the edge of Gusukuma and across the open ground to the ridge. Due mainly to the great efforts of one man, Pfc. Wilbur V. Wright, who charged directly into the face of a machine gun despite a serious wound, the attack almost carried the hill. However, when Davis' men failed to come over on the Japanese from the rear, there was no diversion and the full strength of the enemy's fire fell directly across E Company's front. The attack lost momentum and petered out, three-quarters of the way up the hill. Out of at least eight machine guns firing directly at Captain Weigand's troops, four were knocked out, one by Wright and three more by Staff Sgt. Robert J. Sherman of G Company, who was in charge of Lieutenant Little's 3d Platoon, attached to E Company for the attack. Sherman had borrowed a bazooka and stood just inside the village walls of Gusukuma. With three shots he knocked out three guns.

Item Pocket still held out. The attrition had continued during the day. By nightfall of 26 April, the enemy still held the nose of Ryan's Ridge, although in a very constricted area, and he still held the positions that controlled the approaches to Machinato Airfield from the rear. However, he had been cleaned out of Gusukuma, Ryan's Ridge from the road cut south, and from all the area west of the Pocket. The action of Damon and Davis on this afternoon had thoroughly cleaned

out the caves which supported the main Pocket positions and, most important of all, it was discovered later, had sealed the most important cave which could lay direct fire on the bridges across Anderson's Gulch and Dead Horse Gulch. Under these conditions work on both bridges was resumed at once. However, despite this improvement and the evidence that the strength of the position was waning, the little core of determined resistance, as long as it existed, made our advance to the south extremely insecure.

The advance of the 165th Infantry was resumed to the south at 1000 on the morning of 27 April with the 2d and 3d Battalions in the assault. Two companies, F and A, were left to finish mopping up the Pocket. Company F was to move in along the top of the ridge, cleaning off the positions on the crest, while Company A made a direct assault along the inner slopes of the ridge. The whole operation was organized under the command of Major Edward J. Strong, executive officer of the 1st Battalion, and was to begin at 0730 in the morning. However, before Lieutenant Skuthan was even able to get his men into position on the edge of the village, remaining Japanese on the side of the hill blanketed the area with heavy fire, particularly from machine guns, and Company A was unable to move forward. Company F met similar resistance from the ridge top and was unable to move. Word had come through, however, that on this day, for the first time, tanks would be able to get forward, so Major Strong elected to continue cleaning out positions behind his lines until he got this support. However, the Japanese kept both companies pinned close to the ground throughout the day. It was evident that during the night of 26-27 April the Japanese commander had moved all his remaining strength into this one defensive position.

The first two tanks to arrive on the scene were earmarked for the 3d Battalion, fighting farther south along the airfield. They stopped momentarily to talk with Strong, and standing at the southern edge of Gusukuma in some defilade, threw a few rounds toward the slopes of the hill without much effect. At that point they decided to move on down to the 3d Battalion. Lieutenant Skuthan and Major Strong both told the tankers that before they moved out into the open ground south of the village they should wait until the 47mm antitank gun in the ridge was knocked out. The tankers, however, disregarded the advice, partly because the 3d Battalion was badly in need of tanks and partly because they did not take the danger too seriously. Within seconds after they had moved out into the open ground, both had received direct hits and were knocked out of action. It was now shortly after 1400. A short time later, three more tanks came up the road to Gusukuma, and Major

Strong had little trouble getting them to go to work on the positions in the ridge. That they succeeded was largely due to the work of one man, Sergeant Rasmussen of F Company, who on the night of 25 April had accompanied Captain Ryan on his mission to bring reinforcements to the ridge. Rasmussen was nearing the end of his third day on the ridge at this time. By chance, on 27 April, he had noticed that some of the Japanese machine guns were producing a muzzle blast. Later investigation revealed that these two guns were captured from M Company at the time of the counterattack on K Company on 21 April. They did reveal to Rasmussen the exact location of two of the Japanese positions, however, and after studying the terrain around them he located most of the camouflaged positions which supported them, or which they supported. Some of Rasmussen's information was obtained in a daring reconnaissance that brought him within yards of the cave and tunnel openings.

When the second group of tanks moved up behind the village to fire into the hill, they were not very successful because they had no accurate idea of just where to fire, and there was no means of fire correction. After thirty minutes, with little success, Rasmussen took a light SCR-536 radio, stood up, and ran pell-mell down the hill, directly across the area which had been swept by fire on previous days, and guided the tanks into a better firing position at the southwest corner of the town. He then stood beside the vehicles with his radio, although he was immediately taken under heavy fire, and from this point coolly and accurately directed the tank fire. He did his job so well that by the end of the afternoon, it was definitely known that all of the caves facing Gusu-kuma had been destroyed and the troublesome 47mm gun had been definitely put out of action.

Early next afternoon, F Company reverted to 2d Battalion control and left the Pocket, but all through the 28 April, Company A continued to work on the position. By nightfall, Ryan's Ridge and the Pocket were secure, the entire remaining area of the ridge having been cleaned off by a platoon of Company A under Lt. Matthew C. Masem. One of Masem's men, Pfc. Alejandro C. Ruiz, had knocked out singlehanded the entire position during the early afternoon when he became exasperated at continued fire which came from it. Ruiz had been working with a squad just north of the road cut, trying to push on up to the nose overlooking the Pocket. Working from rock to rock, as usual, the squad had been allowed to get itself into a trap between the road cut and a rocky pinnacle about thirty yards away. There they were taken under intense machine-gun fire and showered with grenades. Ruiz stood it as long as he could, and after seven of his comrades had been wounded,

he picked up a BAR and charged the pinnacle pillbox head-on, getting up on top of it where he found that his weapon was damaged and would not work. He used it as a club to kill one enemy soldier, then turned and ran back some thirty-five yards where he procured a new weapon. He charged the pillbox again, this time killing all the enemy in it, and then led a headlong dash from cave to cave and position to position, destroying each one as he came to it. At 1637, Major Strong passed the word back that he had secured the Pocket.

Item Pocket still had some enemy in it. Companies worked around through its caves and gullies all during 29 and 30 April. Japanese were killed on both days, but the pattern was changed. These enemy were killed trying to escape from the Pocket, not trying to defend it. As late as 5 May the 1st Marine Division killed 137 soldiers in the area, and on 14 May, two weeks after the 27th Division had left the line, prisoners were still emerging from the deep caves and tunnels.

THE CAPTURE OF MACHINATO AIRFIELD

On 25 April 1945, at a staff meeting at Division headquarters, General Griner had made the following statement: "The failure of the 165th Infantry to advance in their zone of action is increasingly embarrassing." The utter confusion within the regiment, as has already been remarked, was also a matter of concern. This disorganization had begun as early as 21 April when Colonel Kelley in a perfectly logical move had detached F Company from the 2d Battalion and left it to hold the west coast positions until the 3d Battalion could sweep through the Pocket and take over the responsibility for this area. During the next few days, companies were moved about in all directions while the regimental commander looked for a soft spot which would give him the key to the defense. On the morning of 27 April the 1st Battalion was composed of B, L, and D Companies. Company C was in Division reserve. The 2d Battalion was composed of E, G and H Companies, which were split on both sides of the Pocket. The 3d Battalion was composed of I, K and M Companies. In addition, there was a special task force under the command of Major Strong composed of F and A Companies. The evolution of this organization has already been seen. General Griner had expressed his dissatisfaction with the manipulation of companies in this manner, maintaining that it was the function of the regimental commander to deal only with battalions. There is no doubt that the situation did present a picture of confusion.

Taking these two things into consideration, one must look at another

picture—that of the action on 26 April. On that day the left-flank company of the 1st Battalion (B Company) had been badly mauled by the enemy in the approaches to Yafusu. L Company had been similarly hard hit by fire from both front and rear, while I Company had not been able to get into line between L and K. It was evident that the regiment was confronted by a strong point in Yafusu and so Colonel Kelley wanted to replace his B Company with fresh troops, at the same time returning L Company to the 3d Battalion. He therefore asked permission to replace the 1st Battalion in the line with the 2d Battalion. Permission was granted, but when he asked for a delay of H-hour from 0700 to 1000 so that the transfer could be effected, General Griner had to call General Hodge since the delay affected a Corps order. General Hodge agreed, but expressed dissatisfaction. This was the background for the action of 27 April.

For the first time since the action had started on 20 April, the 165th Infantry on the morning of 27 April presented a solid line facing the enemy. Following the failure of I Company to get in line on the day before, Major Lutz had ordered Captain Potter to move under cover of darkness to take position. This was accomplished without difficulty, and by daylight the 3d Battalion was already on the airfield. During the forenoon, Lt. Colonel McDonough successfully completed the relief of the 1st Battalion and at 1000 the whole line moved off to the south. Almost at once, E Company, on the left flank, ran into determined opposition from Yafusu. For two hours, this company fought to get the village under control, then reorganized and, during the afternoon, circled the village to the west and entered from that direction. By nightfall, working with tanks for the first time, the 2d Battalion held a line just south of the town. However, the operation had cost Lt. Aloysius T. Rolfe, now in command of E Company, a total of eight men killed, ten wounded, and four others lost by concussion from shell bursts.

The fight for Yafusu had taken almost the whole day, and until it was secured, the enemy operating from high ground south of the town and from the village itself continued to put flanking fire on our troops to the west and they had to hold up. The result was that the whole 165th Infantry line showed an advance of only about six hundred yards for the day. At 1700, General Griner, on authority from General Hodge, replaced Colonel Kelley with Lt. Col. Joseph T. Hart, regimental executive officer.

There was little more to the action of the 165th Infantry on Okinawa. On 28 April, against negligible opposition, the 3d Battalion completed the occupation of Machinato Airfield and on the 29th was relieved by

the 1st Battalion, which pushed patrols across the Kuwan Inlet. On 30 April, the regiment was relieved by the 1st Marine Regiment of the 1st Marine Division.

The action during and after 28 April was dependent upon movements of left-flank elements. It is worthy of note that for the first time during the entire commitment of the Division, on 28 April the actions of the left and right flanks of the Division were dependent upon each other. Until that time, the 105th and 165th Infantry, the two flank regiments, had been fighting almost independent wars. Not until the 165th Infantry broke out of Item Pocket on 27 April and the 105th Infantry cleaned up Kakazu and The Pinnacle on 24-26 April was it necessary to give attention to the Division line as a whole. The 106th Infantry, in the middle of the line, had no Item Pocket, nor any Kakazu, although it was involved with The Pinnacle. Therefore, it was the gauge of the Division advance. When the 165th Infantry broke out of Item Pocket and pushed south, the 106th Infantry moved with it, from hill to hill, fighting a sharp engagement at Hill 58, east of Yafusu, on the same day Rolfe ran into trouble. The 105th remained anchored on Nakama and when the 106th stretched beyond its power of extension, the whole advance stopped.

Chapter 55: The Kakazu Pocket

ATTENTION SO FAR has been given to the action on the right front of the 27th Division. While the 106th Infantry was establishing and securing its Machinato bridgehead and breaching the enemy's line on Rotation Ridge, the 105th Infantry was engaged in an operation some 2,200 yards to the east with the same objective—reaching and seizing the crest of the main ridge. The assault on this flank of the Division had different results and was accomplished by different means from that on the west. As originally conceived, the action of the 106th Infantry was to have definite bearing on the success of the 105th's advance, it being generally thought that Lt. Colonel Cornett's battalion would support the advance of Colonel Winn's regiment by fire. As it turned out, the action of neither regiment had any bearing on that of the other during the first day and, in subsequent days, the course of the battle was such as to make the entire Division picture one of two separate but related actions.

The 105th Infantry had taken over positions of the 96th Infantry Division on the morning of 15 April with one battalion, the 1st, under Lt. Colonel Rayburn H. Miller. Original plans called for an attack in a column of battalions, Lt. Colonel Miller's men in the lead. In the event that this leading battalion ran into strong resistance, it was to contain it and mop it up, the other battalions by-passing it and continuing on to the objective.

One important set of instructions must be repeated to understand the action of the 27th Division in the Kakazu area. On 15 April, and again on 17 April, at the Division command and staff conferences, General Griner had underlined his instructions to his regimental commanders. No matter what else happened, the Division must advance. "Of course," he said, "we will take heavy casualties. Some of us here will possibly be killed, but that is the cost of war and there is no help for it." It is significant to note that he aimed this remark specifically at Colonel Winn, the commanding officer of the 105th Infantry. In addition to these comments, General Griner had also very specifically, on 15 April, ordered the regimental commander to by-pass all enemy strongpoints and leave them to be mopped up later. At a press conference on 20 April, General Griner again repeated these orders for the benefit of correspondents. He added that he expected to see his own CP filled with stray Japanese on more than one occasion before it was all over. The principle of movement thus was firmly impressed on everyone's mind before the attack moved off. It might be well to contrast this doctrine with that expressed on the morning of 5 July 1945 by Col. Michael E. Halloran, commanding officer of the 381st Infantry (96th Division),

the unit on Colonel Winn's immediate left. "You cannot by-pass a Jap," Colonel Halloran said, "because a Jap does not know when he is by-passed." This difference of opinion on how to handle Japanese strong-points holds the answer to what happened at Kakazu on 19-24 April.

Lieutenant Colonel Miller had placed his battalion along a deep winding ravine that made its way west from Route 5 toward the coast. A little stream, plainly indicated on the map, followed this steep, walled gulch all the way. Almost two hundred yards to the front (south) was Kakazu Ridge. Troops who assaulted the high hill would have to come out of the ravine, cross a smaller ridge and sweep across a saddle to the base of the hill. At points on the first knoll there was foliage which offered some concealment from the enemy, but once in the swale, there was absolutely no cover at all.

Kakazu Ridge itself is a high steep camel's hump that stood directly between Miller's troops and the village of Kakazu. There had once been woods on the hill, but on 19 April these had been stripped and shattered by artillery. On the rump (east) end of the hump, the Japanese had rather extensive cave and tunnel positions with concrete pill-boxes. Most of the weapons were emplaced to interdict Route 5 as it ran south. They included several machine guns and at least two heavy-caliber guns. Route 5 had to cross a stretch of almost two hundred yards between the ridge just in front of the 1st Battalion and Kakazu Ridge itself. This stretch of road was completely exposed for the whole distance. Once *through* Kakazu Ridge, the main road was again exposed all the way to Rotation Ridge. However, just beyond Kakazu Ridge, a branch road, which does not show on the map, angled off sharply downhill and into the village. It might be mentioned here in connection with these terrain features that Route 5 formed a definitive natural line between the 96th and 27th Division zones of action at this point. The ravine continued east beyond the road as did Kakazu Ridge, but in the 96th Division zone of action it became Nishibaru Ridge instead of Kakazu.

The west end of Kakazu Ridge sloped downward from the hump into a low saddle and then moved uphill again to another hump, comparable to the camel's neck, which is the same Crocker's Hill occupied by the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, in the pre-attack period. The enemy atop Kakazu Ridge commanded this saddle between Kakazu and Crocker's Hill and had been placing some fire on Crocker's Hill itself throughout the period. However, due to folds in the terrain of the Kakazu hill mass, these same positions had no fields of fire on the ground to their rear, the west and south, until the Japanese later remedied the situation.

During the period between 15-19 April, Lt. Colonel Miller had disposed his entire battalion along a line formed by the ravine and the tomb ridges behind Kakazu Ridge. This line stopped just short of the saddle on the west, but the saddle was covered by fire from both Company A, and the men of Crocker's battalion so that no enemy breakthrough via that route could be engineered. Miller's left flank, held by C Company under Capt. John F. Mulhearn, was anchored on Route 5 at the point where it crossed the ravine.

Lieutenant Colonel Miller had two immediate missions. He had to capture the village of Kakazu with the greatest speed and get to the top of Rotation Ridge before nightfall. Between him and the village his first objective was the obstacle of Kakazu Ridge. There was no road over this hump that would serve as a practical approach for tanks, since the road which appeared on the map between Kakazu and Route 5 ran directly over the ridge itself, making it impassable because it ran through the enemy positions. Miller decided to send his rifle companies directly over the top of the hump and into the village from above. While these troops were moving by the direct route, his supporting tanks would move down Route 5, through the gap between Kakazu and Nishibaru and swing down the unimproved road into the village where they would meet the infantry coming over the ridge. Because Route 5 was within the 96th Division zone of action, permission was obtained from that division to make the move. At the same time, General Griner asked for, and received, permission to send troops down the road and around into Kakazu by the same route if this became necessary. At the time this particular arrangement was made, Colonel Winn was thinking of his 2d Battalion, which would by-pass the pocket to the left if Lt. Colonel Miller was held up.

The boundary between divisions bisected the angle formed by the junction of Route 5 and the Kakazu branch. This meant that the eastern end of the hump lay in the 96th Division zone of action and it was in this eastern nose that the main Japanese positions interdicting Route 5 were placed. This should be borne in mind, together with the fact that *permission for one unit to pass through another's zone of action does not obligate that unit to clean out the area passed through.*

The basic plan of deployment in the assault battalion called for an attack with two companies, B and C, abreast. Lt. Colonel Miller ordered Capt. Louis P. Ackerman of A Company, the reserve, to move from his right flank holding position to a position behind Mulhearn's C Company on the left as soon as the attack moved off. This was done.

The attack jumped off without incident on the morning of 19 April. The move of the 96th Division on the left was made at 0640, preceded

by a forty-minute artillery preparation from 96th Division and corps artillery. The 7th Division, which moved at the same time along the east coast, was supported by its own organic artillery, plus the 27th Division Artillery. At the close of the 0600-0640 preparation, all artillery, with the exception of units reserved for call fire, adjusted their fire and laid down another forty-minute preparation in the zone of action of the 27th Division, principally within the area to the front of the 105th Infantry. At 0730, Lt. Colonel Miller moved off in the attack in the wake of this terrific artillery fire. By 0825, he reported that his two companies were safely out of the ravine and over the small ridge to their front. About ten minutes later, all the tanks supporting Colonel Winn's advance had negotiated the by-pass across the stream and were safely through the cut in Kakazu Ridge, on their way to the village. Three of the vehicles had been lost by road mishaps and mines, but none by enemy fire. This was the last of the good news received by anyone from Lt. Colonel Miller for the rest of that day. The enemy had waited until his assault companies made their way into the open ground of the swale and then opened fire with all their weapons. At 0840, twenty minutes after the report that he had safely crossed the first ridge, Miller reported that he was faced by heavy resistance, particularly on the left flank, and asked for self-propelled guns of Cannon Company to come up and lay fire on the hump.

Both Mulhearn and Capt. Luther C. Hammond of B Company now began an all-day struggle to get their companies onto the ridge and over it into the village of Kakazu. Fighting under intense fire of all types, they both tried to work their men forward by rushing, by crawling, by moving from rock to rock, but every man who moved was shot down or drew several mortar shells. The resourceful Mulhearn finally tried to work his reserve platoon over to Route 5 and around into the village by the proposed route of the 2d Battalion, but before his men had even reached the road they were hit heavily. Major Grigsby, commanding officer of the 2d Battalion, and his S-3, Capt. William Evans-Smith, moved up behind Mulhearn to look over the ground and stepped into a lane of fire from one enemy machine gun. Grigsby was hit four times and given up for dead, although he was later rescued. Evans-Smith was pinned to the ground for the rest of the day, unable to move or to communicate with anyone to tell them what had happened. All this occurred within two hours of the jump-off.

With Mulhearn immobilized, and his company heavily hit by casualties by 0930, Lt. Colonel Miller ordered Captain Ackerman to commit Company A on the line between C and B Companies and continue the attack. As soon as he was able to extricate his men, Captain Mulhearn

was to pull back and become battalion reserve. Ackerman and Hammond continued the fight, but made little or no progress. Moving ahead, inch by inch, they fought their way toward the crest of the hump, but by late afternoon they had still not reached the top. Two interesting things did happen to the battalion during the remainder of the day. Mulhearn's right platoon, comprised of thirty-four men, found a path which seemed to be free from fire and worked along it, up and over the ridge and by noon were down into the north edge of Kakazu. It was only then that they discovered they had been allowed to do this by the enemy so that they could be dealt with separately. Breaking up into small groups, however, the men managed to escape annihilation. By nightfall, six of the men had managed to dribble back to the company across the ridge. Seventeen more came back the next day. Five were out behind enemy lines for two days, two were found badly wounded much later, two were picked up safely on 25 April, and eight were killed.

The failure of Miller's battalion to get over Kakazu Ridge had two consequences. The most immediate, and disastrous, was the loss of almost the complete strength of one company of the 193d Tank Battalion. Company A, reinforced, had moved without important incident south along Route 5 according to plan. The strength of this command, as it passed through the gap between Kakazu and Nishibaru Ridge, was approximately thirty tanks of various types, including assault guns and flamethrowers. The plan had originally called for the tanks to move down the Route 5-Kakazu branch road into the village, but when tank commanders surveyed the ground previous to the attack, it was readily apparent that tanks could not possibly use this road. As an alternate, therefore, it was decided to send the vehicles down Route 5 beyond the ridge and to cut right into the village on an unimproved road which was known from air observation to exist there although it did not appear on the map.

When the tanks broke through on Route 5 shortly after 0830, they were looking for this road. As might have been expected, the leading tanks missed it completely, there being only a trail, and proceeded on south. Almost at once, they were taken under fire by antitank guns from the east side of the road, in the 96th Division's zone of action. Within a few minutes, five of the tanks had been put out of action. The others scurried on down the road toward Rotation Ridge, taking suspected enemy positions under fire as they went. Finally they came to a road branching off to the west, and Capt. Harry R. McAmick, the company commander, guided his vehicles into this road, thinking that it was the one for which he was looking. For over an hour these vehicles roamed at will in this area in the first strictly armored warfare prac-

ticed thus far in the small-island warfare in the Pacific. After knocking out several enemy positions and causing Japanese forces to seek new positions, McAmick discovered that he could not get into Kakazu by the road he was on, so he retraced his steps back to Route 5 and moved north again toward our own lines. Within a few minutes, he had found the trail he was looking for and led his vehicles down into Kakazu. There, from shortly after 1000 until 1330, Captain McAmick's tanks occupied the village, moving up and down the streets and blasting everything in sight while waiting for the infantry units to come over the ridge and join them. In this absolutely unsupported tank action, the whole village of Kakazu was utterly destroyed and the remnants of Japanese forces were either killed or fled. But the action was costly to McAmick's vehicles. During the time they were in the village, eight more tanks were disabled by running over mines which were liberally sown throughout the area, one more bogged down in the heavy going, one was destroyed by the action of enemy foot soldiers who attacked it with box mines, and four others were hit by either artillery or mortar fire and had to be abandoned. Finally, at shortly after 1330, when it became apparent that the infantry would not get over Kakazu Ridge to help, Colonel Winn approved the withdrawal of the tanks. This was accomplished by 1530, but of the thirty vehicles that had left the assembly area that morning, only eight returned. Of the twenty-two disabled tanks, all but five were eventually salvaged, but it was not until 24 April that maintenance men were able to begin the reclamation.

Throughout the morning, meanwhile, the whole 1st Battalion was still trying unsuccessfully to push men over Kakazu Ridge into the village. Captains Hammond and Ackerman were a little more successful than Mulhearn had been, having the advantage of more cover than was available on the left flank, and got within fifty yards of the crest. However, when it became apparent, as early as 0900, that Miller's battalion would not get over the hill and to the objective line by dark, unaided, Colonel Winn alerted Lt. Colonel DeGroff's battalion. At 0907 he ordered DeGroff to move his men up onto Crocker's Hill and protect the right flank against the possibility of a Japanese counterattack. At the same time, he was to attempt to put enough fire on the crest of Kakazu Ridge to support Miller and permit his advance.

Simultaneously, he ordered his 2d Battalion to move up on Miller's left and maintain physical contact between Mulhearn's men and the 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry, which had still not been able to move out of the ravine. It was while completing this movement that Major Grigsby was wounded. Captain Ernest A. Fleming, the executive officer, then

took command of the battalion. Here, as a result, there occurred one of those events that cloud the pages of military history with confusion. At 1000, Colonel Winn decided to commit the 2d Battalion on Miller's left, but when he tried to issue the order to Grigsby, he could not find the battalion commander, who at that time was lying in the middle of the saddle unconscious, his radio destroyed, and his S-3 with him. For almost two hours, Colonel Winn endeavored to locate Grigsby, but no one had seen the battalion commander hit and no one knew what had happened to him. Eventually, about 1130, Winn was told what had happened by the 1st Battalion, and then sought Captain Fleming, but the new battalion commander had gone to the front lines looking for Grigsby and could not be located. It was not until 1225 that Winn finally reached Fleming and ordered him to by-pass Kakazu on the left as originally planned.

In the meantime, unable to reach Grigsby or Fleming, the regimental commander had also issued an order to Lieutenant Colonel DeGross at 1105 to jump off from Crocker's Hill at 1200 and attempt to by-pass the opposition on the right (west). The 3d Battalion immediately moved to carry out this order and moved off in the attack on time. Inasmuch as Fleming's battalion was already in position when the order reached him, the 105th Infantry was in process of a double envelopment by 1230. The story of what happened to these two battalions is entirely different, however.

Lieutenant Colonel DeGross had demonstrated his determination to move during the action on Tsugen Shima. During that short battle, he had received word from one of his company commanders that his unit was being badly mauled by mortar fire and was told the company could not move. It is reported that his answer was: "The hell you can't. If you're going to lose men, you might just as well lose them advancing as standing still. The mortar fire isn't any worse ahead of you than it is where you are. Now get moving!" He carried this same determination into his move during the afternoon of 19 April. Pushing his battalion on with two companies abreast, I on the left, and L on the right, he was able to move along the west edge of the hill mass without too much trouble. Only at one point did he run into anything that looked like determined opposition. Twenty minutes after his companies were on the move, they were almost directly opposite the west walls of Kakazu and at that point came under fire from a machine-gun position. Lieutenant Spreeman, who was still in command of I Company, next to this fire, watched six of his men wounded in quick succession, and then asked Tech. Sgt. Richard J. Bean if he thought he could get rid of the enemy position. The platoon sergeant took an eight-man patrol armed with

bazookas, BARs, and rifles and tried to shove forward toward the Japanese. Within a few yards, the grazing fire had restricted any further movement. Bean, himself, at that point became exasperated, and in one of those unexplainable actions that dot battlefields, stood up in full view of the enemy, surrounded by fire and methodically fired eight straight rounds from a borrowed bazooka. He followed this by borrowing a BAR from another of his men and charging 150 yards straight across the open ground and completely destroying the positions with close-in fire.

DeGross's battalion was again free to move. For the next three hours the men worked their way forward through fire of all types, sometimes crawling, sometimes diving for shelter in tombs and ditches, usually running in short sprints. Spigot-mortar shells and artillery fire were heavy and incessant, but there were no machine guns, only rifle fire. At 1520, DeGross notified Colonel Winn that I Company was on the objective line on top of Rotation Ridge; fifteen minutes later, L Company was also on the O-1 line. The first elements of the 105th Infantry had accomplished their mission.

The 2d Battalion, however, was no luckier than the 1st. When Fleming moved out at 1225, he ordered F and G Companies to move abreast, assault the east nose of Kakazu Ridge, and pivot to the southwest, by-passing the village on the east. The enemy on the nose of Kakazu Ridge was still in firm possession of his position, however, and C Company was still pinned down in the saddle across which the battalion would have to move. When F Company tried to get across this field, it, too, was pinned down by the same deadly fire that caused Mulhearn so much trouble. Although one full platoon under Lt. Charles C. Magyar managed to scamper into the protection of the tombs at the base of the ridge, the whole company was able to do little about destroying or reducing the positions. Magyar exposed himself on several occasions in an effort to bring self-propelled-gun fire onto the positions, but little damage was done.

Part of G Company, however, did manage to get beyond the ridge by the simple method of sneaking along Route 5 where they could get some cover from the enemy fire. Within a half hour after moving off, the leading platoon, under Lt. Charles C. Thompson, was through the road cut and had begun moving toward the west where the men could see the tanks in the village. This change in direction had just taken place when the enemy opened fire on the platoon from his emplacement on the nose of the ridge, this time firing toward the south, or rear. Thompson was killed while trying to locate this fire and the whole pla-

toon now discovered they were cut off from either advance or withdrawal. Having separated the elements of G Company, one from another, the Japanese now took the whole length of Route 5 under intense artillery fire and the rest of the company was forced to pull back into the ravine which marked the morning's line of departure, leaving Thompson's platoon, now under Tech. Sgt. Edward Wojcicki, out beyond the cut. Wojcicki had been continuing his efforts to advance, but when the artillery fire became intense he tried to get hold of the company commander, Capt. Louis F. Cudlin, by radio for instructions, and could not raise him. Wojcicki then decided he would personally try to reach Cudlin, but when he had scrambled back toward the road cut in search of the rest of the company, he found them gone. Alone and cut off, Wojcicki decided that he could do little good with what he had and that the wisest thing to do was to get back out of his exposed position. He then made his way over to the nearest tank and arranged for his men to move back with the vehicles which were then preparing to withdraw. This operation was completed successfully, but when Wojcicki returned to his company, it left the whole left flank of the 105th Infantry practically where it had been when the attack jumped off that morning. Furthermore, the 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry, on Colonel Winn's left, was still unable to move, mainly due to the heavy fire which it was receiving from the east nose of Kakazu Ridge, which was actually within the zone of action of the 96th Division, but which, until this time, had been the objective of an outflanking movement by the 105th Infantry. All indications seem to prove that the efforts of Mulhearn's company, Fleming's battalion, the tanks, and artillery had made little or no appreciable impression on the enemy emplacements, and it was now well after 1500.

Captain Fleming had immediately begun the reorganization of his battalion, and at 1530 when he learned that Lt. Colonel DeGroff had successfully reached his objective line, he called Colonel Winn and asked permission to move by the same route used by the 3d Battalion. This permission was granted at 1610 and Fleming moved out at once. By 1800 the whole 2d Battalion had moved, almost without incident all the way around Kakazu Ridge and had tied in with DeGroff's left flank on the slopes of Rotation Ridge.

Fleming's request, DeGroff's move and the continued opposition in front of Miller had convinced Colonel Winn that there was little or no chance of taking the village by a direct frontal attack over the ridge. By 1600 in the afternoon, all three of Miller's companies in an inch-by-inch struggle had managed to climb the slopes of the ridge. In some places they were actually on the crest, particularly in B Company's zone

of action, where Captain Hammond had captured the highest point, but the whole general area was still very definitely in enemy hands and casualties were mounting. The 1st Battalion had a total of seven men killed, 82 wounded and 16 missing. The 2d Battalion had added two killed and 51 wounded to this total, which brought the casualties expended in the assault on the enemy stronghold to 158 men. In addition to this consideration, there was the fact that Lt. Colonel DeGroff had made his movement to Rotation Ridge with no fire from his left rear which led Colonel Winn to believe that perhaps the enemy had no positions which would control the approach to the strongpoint from the southwest.

In view of these points, Colonel Winn decided to have Lt. Colonel Miller move his battalion around south and west of the village, following the 2d Battalion, and using the same route. This order was issued at the same time as the one given to Captain Fleming. The movement was begun at once and by darkness the battalion had reached its new position.

The 105th Infantry had reached its objective on 19 April, but it is significant to note that they had done so by the simple method of side-stepping the opposition. The strongpoint atop Kakazu Ridge was still more or less intact and from here the enemy could do several things. He could continue to put fire on the 96th Division; he could move back down and reoccupy his positions in Kakazu Village; he could even reoccupy his positions on Crocker's Hill; and, worst of all, if he still had sufficient strength, he could launch an attack against the rear installations of both the 27th and 96th Divisions. He did take the first two courses, attempted to follow the third, but evidently did not have the strength to try the last.

General Griner did not accept this danger without some concern. At 1930 he moved B Company of the 165th Infantry into position in front (north) of Kakazu Ridge, and the presence of this force undoubtedly added some deterrent to the enemy's ability to launch an attack in force.

More serious, however, than the presence of an enemy force behind our lines was the existence of an exposed flank on the Division left. The analysis of what had happened on 19 April reveals that the action had advanced the American front lines almost 1,600 yards on the 27th Division zone while they had remained stationary on the front of the 96th. This left a 1,600-yard vertical gap between the two divisions through which Japanese could and evidently did infiltrate at will. The gap was closed to some extent west of the village of Kakazu by the insertion of the 1st Battalion in the area. Furthermore, the 2d Battalion, after it

tied in with DeGross, also bent back to the north, facing east. The next day, in closing this gate and extending the line to the Division boundary, the presence of the gap was even more evident.

Fortunately, nothing serious developed during the night of 19-20 April. The enemy either was not aware of the situation or was not in position to take advantage of his knowledge. But the consequences of this day's action were to be felt until 24 April. On the morning of 20 April, the main effort of the 105th Infantry had passed by the Kakazu area. Beginning early that day the 2d and 3d Battalions plunged into the Battle of the Pinnacles, a bitter struggle that was to decimate the 2d Battalion. The 1st Battalion, meanwhile, was to mop up the Kakazu area. To help them, the 27th Reconnaissance Troop was ordered to move over from the right flank of the Division as soon as it was passed through by the 165th Infantry. Although plans were laid for this move as early as 0630, through a failure of communications explicit orders never reached the troop commander until after 1300 in the afternoon, so that the troops did not actually move into position until 1400. Company E, 106th Infantry, which also had been alerted for the mop-up, was later notified that it would not be needed.

Beginning at 0700, meanwhile, Lt. Colonel Miller had formed his battalion and moved off to mop up the Kakazu area. Due to the negligible activity during the night, this was not considered to be a difficult task when it was first started. By 1145, however, all three companies had become engaged in a full-scale battle for the village. The enemy still held his positions in force and showered mortar and machine-gun fire onto the troops advancing into the town. Miller had sent Captain Mulhearn with C Company up on top of the ridge to clean it off. Captain Ackerman and Company A attacked straight into the debris from the west, and Captain Hammond and B Company cleaned out the ravines and gullies to the south. Colonel Winn also ordered his Cannon Company to support this action by fire. In a long, bitter action that cost Lt. Colonel Miller thirty-six casualties, he had thoroughly cleaned out all the area west of Kakazu and had eliminated all enemy positions on the top of the camel's hump by 1635. He then called Colonel Winn to tell him that he was ready to enter the village itself. At that time, it must be noted, the enemy continued to hold his positions in the extreme end of the ridge from which he could put the same heavy fire on the 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry, that he had directed along their front on 19 April. This battalion had again been unable to move forward during the day and Maj. Gen. James L. Bradley, commander of the 96th Division, called the corps commander to complain bitterly of the fact that the 27th Division had not cleaned out the area on his flank so that he could

advance. General Hodge called General Griner and ordered him to have the ridge cleaned off by nightfall. This message was passed on to Capt. H. Shaw Carter, commander of the Reconnaissance Troop, at 1322 while the troop was still moving into position. The situation on the left flank of the 27th Division was becoming serious, but by nightfall it had become critical.

At almost the precise moment when the whole problem seemed solved, when the 1st Battalion was poised on the edge of the village, developments on the top of Rotation Ridge demanded the commitment of the 1st Battalion in that area at once and the whole project was abandoned. The 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, fighting on the heights above, had received a disastrous counterattack that tumbled the two assault companies down over the cliffs with heavy casualties, and Lt. Colonel Miller was ordered up at once to reinforce the line. He left Captain Ackerman with Company A to clean out the village and moved his other two companies south to prevent the enemy from breaking all the way through our lines and into our rear areas. This set the stage for one of the weirdest episodes of the whole battle.

Captain Ackerman, left alone, had orders to clean out the village and then move south in battalion reserve. Without hesitation, he took a sixteen-man patrol and walked straight through the streets of the town without drawing a single shot. Puzzled, he retraced his steps with the same results. For the third time he swept through the village without drawing fire and then kept on going, veering to the south, and at 1700 reported with his men to Colonel Winn that Kakazu was cleaned out. The regimental commander, who had gone forward to the base of Rotation Ridge to try and straighten out the badly mauled 2d Battalion, listened to Ackerman. He was suspicious of the company commander's story because he could hear what seemed to be small-arms fire coming from the town as he questioned the captain carefully. Ackerman described just what he had done, and Colonel Winn asked where the fire was coming from. The company commander was sure that it was from in front of the 96th Division and expressed this opinion. Colonel Winn was not satisfied. He told Ackerman to go back and check again and if he was convinced then, to bring his company up into a position of close support. Captain Ackerman took his patrol and retraced his steps. As he approached the village not a single shot was fired, but he had not taken more than a dozen steps down the main street when he went down with a shot in the back. In rapid succession, four other men were hit and killed and then the whole patrol was taken under intense fire and scattered. Only four men returned to their lines alive. One man got back to Colonel Winn with the story somehow, two others wandered behind

enemy lines for days and finally were rescued by our advancing troops on 24 April. Another soldier picked his way over to Route 5 to one of our tanks which had been knocked out the day before. There he was surprised to find some of the tank crews still hiding. He stayed with them until the 24th when he too was rescued along with one of the tankers. The others were killed by a direct shell hit sometime during the period.

One other event of the afternoon of 20 April seems to point to the fact that the area in and around Kakazu was definitely cleaned out before Captain Ackerman's unfortunate experience. During the forenoon, while his battalion was moving slowly forward against negligible opposition, Lt. Colonel Miller had ordered the executive officer of Headquarters Company, Lt. John F. Armstrong, and the battalion S-4, Lt. Edward J. Opalacz, to meet him in Kakazu at 1600 with the battalion field train. Both officers had blithely followed instructions and had driven the complete supply train consisting of several trucks up Route 5 and right into the town. There they stopped and dismounted and looked around. Opalacz looked at his watch and discovered he was right on time. Armstrong was suspicious, however, at not seeing the troops he expected to find there, and when a few shots sailed over their heads from the south, both men decided they were in too exposed a position with their equipment, so they turned around and went back past the 96th Division's front lines.

Another piece of evidence supporting the thesis that the enemy was completely cleaned out of the pocket by the afternoon of 20 April can be had by investigating the action of the Reconnaissance Troop on that afternoon. Although it arrived on the scene at approximately 1400, the troop had by 1800, four hours later, combed practically the entire ridge without finding any opposition to speak of.

It is true, however, that there were enemy still remaining on the eastern nose of the ridge. None of the elements of the 27th Division had reached a point as far east as this and the enemy, still firmly entrenched, continued to lay down fire on the front of Lt. Col. Daniel A. Nolan's 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry, throughout the day. Had the situation remained unchanged on the afternoon and evening of 20 April, it seems reasonable to believe that this last pocket of resistance could have been eliminated without too much trouble the next morning. But the action of the enemy in turning the flank of the 105th Infantry atop Rotation Ridge on the afternoon of 20 April enabled him to push a strong force back into the pocket, reoccupy the village positions, and push outposts as far west and north as Crocker's Hill. There was unmistakable evidence that on this night the Japanese again had a sizable force in the pocket.

This was the situation on the morning of 21 April when the 27th Reconnaissance Troop resumed the task of cleaning out what they thought to be a small centralized pocket of positions on the nose of the camel's hump facing the 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry. The failure of the Division to clean out the enemy in this position on the day before was bringing repeated requests from the 96th Division for action and these requests were passed on to Captain Carter. In all this hue and cry, however, everyone seems to have lost sight of one fact: The positions causing so much trouble to the 381st Infantry were still undoubtedly within the 96th Division zone of action!

Captain Carter began his operations early, and almost at once ran into opposition in areas where there had been none the day before. Kakazu Ridge, the saddle between it and Crocker's Hill, and the town, were all occupied by enemy riflemen, supported by mortars. The Japanese in the village had machine guns and were occupying pillboxes and dugouts beneath the rubble. The fire was intense. Working slowly forward with self-propelled guns, organic equipment of the troop, the men had pushed up to the edge of the village by 1145 and had killed approximately fourteen enemy soldiers. The troop had lost three men wounded, including the commander, Captain Carter. Fire had now become so intense that the whole troop was pinned down. Fire support from the 96th Division, which had been promised, was not forthcoming and so Lt. Vincent D. Britt, who was now in command of the troop, called Division and requested a platoon of tanks. These were made available at 1245, and Lieutenant Britt again moved forward. In three hours of crawling, and dodging almost constant sniping, machine-gun and mortar fire, the troop had only been able to get fifty yards into the town and had suffered seven more casualties. At 1509 Britt ordered his men to pull back to the west and then called Division and asked for artillery, an extremely dangerous step due to the fact that it meant placing fire directly behind our troops who were fighting above and below Rotation Ridge. General Griner approved the request, however, after receiving assurance from Colonel Winn that such a step would not unduly endanger his troops. General Griner's orders to Division Artillery were for massed fires of all available battalions. At 1600 a terrific artillery concentration was placed directly on the town. This ended the action for this day in the Kakazu area. It was immediately apparent that the enemy had simply holed up in their dugouts until the artillery stopped and they had again resumed. When Lieutenant Britt tried to advance his troop into the village again, it was met by the same inflexible wall of fire.

The action of 21 April had again failed to eliminate the enemy po-

sitions overlooking the 96th Division front and had proved conclusively that the enemy occupied the Kakazu area in some force. Consequently, it was deemed necessary to put a larger unit into the field to mop up the area. This brought up a new problem. The 105th Infantry had no reserves. The action of 20 April had all but eliminated the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, as an effective fighting unit. Company F of that battalion was down to forty-eight men, including cooks, bakers and supply personnel, and G Company was not much better off. All but two of the line company officers had been killed or wounded. Colonel Winn had spent the evening of 20 April and morning of 21 April in completely reorganizing and straightening out this demoralized and decimated unit. In order to hold his line firm, however, he was forced to commit his 1st Battalion, which had lost considerable of its strength during the first two days of fighting. This left him with no available reserves to put into the fighting around Kakazu. The 165th Infantry also had all three battalions committed on this afternoon in the Item Pocket area. This left only the 106th Infantry to draw on and, at the moment, the 2d Battalion, which had rested during the 20th and morning of the 21st, was in the act of relieving the 3d Battalion under Lt. Colonel Crocker which, consequently, was suddenly ordered, while marching back to Machinato, to go back into the line in the Kakazu area to help in the mop-up there. Wearily, the men trudged on back to "that damned hill." By nighfall the three companies were once again in position on Crocker's Hill and ready to start all over again.

This move was just one of a series of developments during 21 April, which included the realization that the enemy had reoccupied the pocket. Probably the most significant were the recriminations that were beginning to be cast between the 96th and 27th Division. General Bradley, the 96th Division commander, had been complaining bitterly that the 27th Division had failed to clean out the enemy positions which were pinning him down, while General Griner was almost as much concerned over the failure of the 96th Division to advance and protect his exposed flank. This reached a climax on the afternoon of 21 April during a visit of General Griner and Lt. Colonel Sheldon, 27th Division G-3, to the command post of the 96th Division. In a conversation at that time, both generals reportedly accused each other's division of failure to accomplish their jobs and, after a heated discussion, parted in a distinctly bad humor. What actually passed in this meeting cannot be accurately pictured, but whatever it was, word reached the corps commander's ear, and during the early evening General Hodge called Brig. General Bradford, the Assistant Division Commander of the 27th Di-

vision, discussed the situation in the pocket with him and then ordered him to

[take] charge of the Kakazu operation along the boundary between divisions, effective immediately, with full authority to coordinate the action of units adjacent to the boundary as required by the situation . . . Commanding General, 96th Infantry Division, will direct his troops to furnish any possible assistance by fire and movement within their zone of action. Units of the 96th Infantry Division will not be moved out of their own zone except by agreement with Commanding General, 96th Infantry Division, or specific orders from this headquarters. Close liaison and wholehearted cooperation between the two divisions is directed.

This was the situation on the morning of 22 April 1945. General Bradford, with the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, and the 27th Reconnaissance Troop under his command, was specifically ordered to clean up the pocket and allow the 96th Division to advance. The 27th Reconnaissance Troop had moved back around Kakazu Ridge to the original positions of Lt. Colonel Miller's battalion on the night of the 21st after the troop's failure to take the town and after Lt. Colonel Crocker's battalion had moved into position on Crocker's Hill. General Bradford now ordered Lieutenant Britt to line up all his self-propelled guns facing Kakazu Ridge and then ordered Crocker to attack to the east. He had placed a forward artillery observer with the troop and with this heavy fire support, he intended to put flanking fire on the enemy, who would be facing the main threat from the west. In addition to this mission, the Reconnaissance Troop was to furnish contact between the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, and the 96th Division's right flank.

General Bradford moved out to Lt. Colonel Crocker's command post at 0630 on the morning of 22 April and after carefully getting his troops into position with supporting weapons he launched his attack at 0930. Almost at once, the assault companies began running into heavy rifle and machine-gun fire. The enemy had again occupied the hill north and west of the village of Kakazu during the night. For six hours I and K Companies engaged in a methodical foot-by-foot advance against strong enemy opposition and by 1515 had again reached the edge of the town. There the action stopped for the day. The work had cost the 3d Battalion seven men killed and thirty-seven wounded, including Capt. Robert T. Bates, commander of K Company, who was shot through the heart. Despite those heavy casualties and a determined effort of a whole battalion, the pocket was still in enemy hands. General Bradford did not think that there were too many enemy in the general Kakazu area, however, and thought that tactics he had pursued on 22 April would be adequate to deal with the enemy. In the face of General Bradford's opti-

mism, however, the over-all situation had taken a general turn for the worse.

The first disturbing factor to be faced on the night of 22 April was the continued enemy infiltration around the left flank of the 105th Infantry line. Early on the morning of that day, another large counter-attack, similar to that launched against the 2d Battalion on the afternoon of 20 April, was thrown at the extreme left flank of Miller's battalion. Concentrated prearranged artillery fire by Division Artillery was promptly called in on this Japanese effort and it was broken up. Sixty-eight enemy dead were counted in the area. This clearly demonstrated that the enemy was well aware of the exposed flank and that he would undoubtedly launch another attempt on the night of 22-23 April.

In addition to this feature was a second and even more dangerous point to be considered. Due to the depleted manpower in both his 1st and 2d Battalions, Colonel Winn, in order to maintain his hold on the ridge which he could only win again at heavy cost, had committed every available man to the line. In spite of his attempts to bend this line back, it would not reach the right flank of Crocker's battalion. There existed at darkness on 22 April a considerable gap between these two units. With the prospect that the enemy would counterattack again during the night, there was the ever-present fear that he might have knowledge of this second hole in our lines, or that he might stumble into it. If this happened there was nothing to stop him short of the bridges at Machinato, and, worse yet, there was no force between him and the service installations along the west coast.

To meet this possibility, despite General Bradford's optimism, the division and corps commanders could take no chances. Lt. Colonel McDonough with the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, less F Company, which had been left behind to guard the coast west of Item Pocket, was in position near Machinato. At 2000, General Griner called McDonough and ordered him to report to Colonel Winn for orders. He was to take up his defensive position across the gap between the 105th Infantry and the 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry. In order to present a solid front, Lt. Colonel Crocker was authorized to pull his exposed flank back to a point where physical contact could be firmly established. This was accomplished and the gap filled by 2110.

A look at the Division situation at the completion of this move reveals one fact, however. At 2130 on the night of 22 April every available company in the 27th Infantry Division was committed to manning a defensive line that stretched from behind Kakazu Ridge to the coast west of Gusukuma. This was a thin line at best and behind it the whole right flank of the corps line would have nothing to stop a break-

through. General Griner, however, had anticipated this as best he could, as early as 1315 in the afternoon when he had called in Lt. Colonel Gormsen of the 102d Engineer Battalion and ordered him to assemble his battalion in defensive positions near Machinato Inlet as a Division reserve. The engineers were to be prepared to take over as infantrymen in addition to their bridge-building.

To further bolster the line, General Hodge authorized the use of one battalion of the 17th Infantry (7th Division) and Lt. Colonel Wallace, the battalion commander, reported in to Division at 1410. With this help, the generally bad situation was relieved to some extent, particularly on the extreme left flank where Lt. Colonel Wallace had placed his battalion by darkness. The enemy, however, made no move during the night and at daylight on the morning of 23 April the whole line was held solid without moving.

General Bradford late on the evening of 22 April had discussed the situation in the pocket with General Hodge at some length and the discussions were continued on the morning of the 23d. As a result of those discussions, General Hodge authorized General Bradford to organize a special task force which would be given the primary mission of cleaning out the whole pocket once and for all, with the secondary mission of advancing the right flank of the 96th Division to cover the exposed flank of the 105th Infantry. The units which comprised this force were to be all those then in the immediate area. General Bradford, therefore, had the use of four battalions—the 3d of the 17th Infantry, the 3d of the 106th Infantry, the 2d of the 165th Infantry, and the 3d of the 381st Infantry. In addition, he had the 27th Reconnaissance Troop, Cannon Company of the 105th Infantry, and a detachment of tanks from the 193d Tank Battalion.

All activity was suspended on 23 April except mopping up in the caves and ravines behind the defensive line then held. At 1200 General Bradford assembled the commanders of all units at the 27th Division command post and issued his order. The attack was to move off at 0730 the next morning with the two assault battalions—the 3d of the 17th Infantry and the 2d of the 165th Infantry—moving to the southeast. Lt. Colonel Wallace was to move through Kakazu and along Kakazu ridge while Lt. Colonel McDonough was to clean out the area south of the town and below Rotation Ridge in rear of the 105th Infantry's front line. The 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, was to follow closely behind Wallace and mop up any by-passed enemy. The 27th Reconnaissance Troop was to hold a line along the ravine behind Kakazu Ridge and, with a platoon of tanks attached, to support the advance of the 3d Battalion, 17th Infantry, by fire, at the same time blocking any enemy at-

tempt to escape from the pocket to the north. Lt. Colonel Nolan's battalion, the 3d of the 381st Infantry, was to hold until Wallace reached Route 5 in his advance, and then, on signal, move forward across Wallace's front, pinching out his battalion and tying in with McDonough who was pivoting to the right. The 105th Infantry was to coordinate its movements on the right.

The general attack of the task force was to be preceded by an air strike in which Napalm bombs without fuzes were dropped. At 0700, Division Artillery was to set these bombs off with white phosphorus shells, and follow with regular preparation.

General Bradford went over these plans carefully with each of the units and, at the end of the meeting, transmitted them to General Hodge, who approved them in full. General Bradford then chose a staff from the 27th Division and prepared to move at 0530 the next morning and set up a task force CP on the bluffs overlooking Machinato Inlet.

The story of Bradford Task Force and the end of the Kakazu pocket on 24 April is anticlimactic. The day dawned dark and rainy. Because of poor flying conditions the air strike was cancelled. Notwithstanding, the attack moved off as scheduled behind an artillery preparation. By 0845 all battalions were almost on the objective line. From every unit came back the report, "No enemy contact," or "Resistance practically nil." By 0925 the 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry, had reached its objective and the battalion from the 17th Infantry had been pinched out. The enemy just wasn't there. By 1530, General Hodge sent the following message to the 27th Division: "Operations indicate that the enemy has withdrawn his forces from the strong position he has fought so desperately to hold." The fight for Kakazu pocket was over and at 1525 Lt. Colonels McDonough and Nolan dug in for the night at the base of Rotation Ridge.

The remnants of the struggle which ended so abruptly were in evidence long afterward. Investigators who moved into the area on 24-25 April found approximately six hundred Japanese in the area, along with "evidence of mass burial spots and that many bodies had been sealed in caves." Unseen and unnoticed, the Japanese had slipped away at the very moment when they seemed strongest, but the dead left behind testified to the terrific struggle they had made in previous days.

Chapter 56: The Battle of the Pinnacles

CLOSELY ASSOCIATED with the struggle for the Kakazu pocket, and sometimes confused with it, is the fighting which took place atop Rotation Ridge between 20-24 April. This long, high escarpment, the objective in the attack on the 19th, was a natural defensive position that became progressively more difficult to breach as one moved eastward from Route 1. For one thing, it was higher in the center of the island, and for another, it became almost sheer cliff on its north face, as it neared the 96th Division's zone of action. On the west, the fringe of this defensive line had been captured by Lt. Colonel O'Hara's night move, and in the Kakazu area, the determined effort of Lt. Colonel DeGroff had placed our troops on the crest of the ridge before nightfall of 19 April. The hold of the 106th Infantry had been broadened by the work of the 1st Battalion during the day following O'Hara's maneuver until the Division held the entire ridge line from the village of Iso to the west coast at darkness.

It is well to emphasize however that, at best, our hold on this ridge was nothing more than the sheerest kind of toehold. At no place had we been able to expand or strengthen our positions. Every effort had been exerted to the accomplishment of the primary mission, and with its completion, the Division could turn its attention to consolidating and expanding its gains on the 20th.

Two key points on the ridge were to make this extremely difficult. By chance, the boundary between the 105th and 106th Infantry Regiments passed directly through the village of Iso. This town was a key Japanese defensive position. Occupied by one company of the 21st Independent Infantry Battalion and elements of the 1st Heavy Mortar Regiment, armed with the famous spigot mortars, it was organized with the same labyrinth of caves and tunnels that confronted the 165th Infantry in Item Pocket. The naval gun which had been knocked out by the 106th Infantry's Cannon Company on the morning of 19 April was a part of this defensive position. The focal point of the whole area was a high, rocky pinnacle which rose forty to fifty feet above the ridge itself, just north of Iso Village. Filled with caves, crevasses, and literally hundreds of little nooks and crannies, this pinnacle was hard to approach from any direction and impervious to artillery and mortar fire. When heavy demolition charges were tossed into the openings of the caves, they made no impression at all. Underground from The Pinnacle, tunnels branched out in all directions, some emerging in Iso, some as far west as two hundred yards away. Japanese soldiers, if attacked at one tunnel entrance, could duck down inside, make their way to another and take our troops under fire from the rear.

The other outstanding terrain feature was not so much a pinnacle as one of the summits of the ridge. This towering point of ground was located approximately 450 to 500 yards southeast of the West Pinnacle. Its main defensive advantage was its height. Any assault on it had to be made uphill, no matter from which direction the attack came. What it lacked in caves it made up for in tombs. The crest of the ridge in this area was literally hollowed out with burial vaults and most of them had courtyards in which the Japanese had carefully placed machine guns that effectively interdicted all approaches. This position was manned by elements of the 14th and 15th Independent Infantry Battalions.

Midway between the two pinnacles, a road cut through the ridge in a sharp S-turn. This cut had been filled with a well constructed road-block and covered with long-range machine-gun and rifle fire. The whole area was heavily mined, particularly the section of the road between Machinato and the turn into the cut.

Our situation on the night of 19 April was a peculiar one. Emphasis on that day had been placed on the speed with which the mission was accomplished. Lt. Colonel Cornett's battalion, working from west to east along the top of the ridge, had just reached the West Pinnacle at the close of the day's operations and Lt. Colonel DeGross, coming up the hill from the north, had anchored his right flank on it. In order to make physical contact, troops from the two battalions had to work their way around the base of the rock and in doing so, encountered and blew up some caves. Company L, 105th Infantry, DeGross's right-flank company, had received considerable harassing fire as it approached the crest of the hill. After the men were dug in, Captain Spaulding, the company commander, sent out a patrol to clean out what he thought were snipers on top of the big rock. This patrol became engaged in a game of hide-and-seek among the caves and along the ledges of The Pinnacle, but killed no enemy soldiers and suffered several casualties from grenades and from stray bullets which always seemed to fill the area. Still thinking the position was more of a nuisance than anything else, Company B, 106th Infantry, which had spearheaded Lt. Colonel Cornett's move down the ridge, had become involved late in the afternoon in mopping up caves of the positions, and finally Cornett had to pass Company A around Klein to take up positions on the left flank, just before dark.

The East Pinnacle also caused trouble on this first night. Company I, 105th, which had begun to dig in as soon as it reached the ridge line at 1530, began receiving rifle, machine-gun and mortar fire the minute the men tried to set up their line. The same Sergeant Bean who had done so

much to enable the company to advance during the afternoon, tried to knock out the source of this fire by bringing up a section of machine guns, but after four members of the crew were wounded, this was abandoned and Lieutenant Spreeman sent out a patrol under Sgt. Walter M. Pimentel to see if he could knock out the guns. Pimentel's patrol worked doggedly toward the high ground, killed several Japanese and chased others away but he could not reach the main position. But his work did stop most of the rifle and machine-gun fire in this area.

As previously noted, the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, was moved up on DeGross's left just before dark, ostensibly to extend Spreeman's line on up the cliff to the Division boundary, just east of the village of Nakama. Two things prevented the completion of this move. One was the fact that, in spite of Pimentel's work, the enemy still held The Pinnacle in force, and secondly, the lateness of the hour made an assault on the position impractical. For these reasons, instead of tying in on a direct line to the southeast, Captain Fleming bent his line back to the northeast, joining Spreeman at the road cut through the ridge and digging in along it back toward the 1st Battalion. This put him on the reverse slope of the hill, protected him somewhat from the enemy artillery fire which began falling just before dark, and at the same time left his troops facing more or less east, furnishing some protection for the exposed flank. It should be noted that Fleming's battalion was not in possession of the ridge and had never been on top of it. Although the 27th surrounded the West Pinnacle on 19 April, it had only made a gesture toward seizing the East Pinnacle, which was still a bulwark of Japanese defensive positions.

The plan for the morning of 20 April called for a continuation of the attack to the south with three regiments abreast. On the Division's left flank the action became involved almost immediately in heavy fighting around the two pinnacles. Colonel Winn of the 105th Infantry had ordered his 2d and 3d Battalions to move off abreast after straightening the bent back line of the night before. In the 2d Battalion's zone of action, this meant getting all three companies up onto the ridge. Captain Fleming ordered his company commanders to move in column from their night positions, and seize the road cut through the hill. The second company in line would then fan out to the left as far as the Division boundary, and at that point the battalion advance would be resumed. Company E which had spent the night on Fleming's right flank, tied in with I Company, was to move up onto the crest of the ridge, deploy and then hold while E Company extended the flank. Jumping off promptly at 0730, the lead company moved hardly a foot. The Japanese, who had harassed all the units along the crest of the

ridge incessantly all night, had very carefully placed interdiction fire from the pinnacles on the very point where Capt. William McKenna's company was to come over the brow of the hill and the whole assault platoon was pinned down almost immediately. When another platoon tried to move into line, it too was taken under fire and could not move. For the rest of the morning Captains Fleming and McKenna tried to find some way to get their men up to the crest of the hill, but there was no way to get at the source of fire, and no route of approach that the enemy didn't seem to have covered. Colonel Winn finally came forward and, after looking over the situation, ordered both Lt. Colonel DeGroff and Captain Fleming to attack within half an hour, or at 1230, no matter what the fire conditions were. DeGroff's battalion moved on time, but Fleming's did not move. He had assembled his company commanders to issue orders. Colonel Winn again came forward to the battalion, replaced Captain Fleming with Major John J. Purcell, the regimental supply officer. While waiting for Purcell to come up Colonel Winn personally organized the battalion and launched an attack by a new route. Company E was to carry out its original mission, but G and F Companies were to move in column along the base of the ridge, well beyond the East Pinnacle, and then cut straight up the steep cliffs and into the north end of Nakama. There they were to tie in with McKenna, sweep the town, and wait for further orders.

With astonishing ease, both Capt. Louis F. Cudlin of G Company and Capt. Edward C. Kidd of F Company carried out their part of the plan. Advancing rapidly along a little trail, they surprised and killed one Japanese rifleman before starting up over the cliffs. Within an hour, both companies were on top of the ridge and deployed with Kidd on the left and Cudlin on the right. Without waiting, they both pushed down the more gradual south slope of the hill as far as the road, which ran from McKenna's cut into Nakama, surprising and knocking out eight or ten enemy positions on the way down. In every case, the Japanese were facing the road, waiting for our troops to come along it and in every case they were taken from the rear and killed.

Upon reaching the road, both companies held up, for two reasons. First, McKenna had still not been able to get his men through the road cut. As a result, Cudlin's right flank was completely exposed with the nearest friendly troops a hundred yards away, and with the strongly held East Pinnacle between him and the rest of the regiment. Secondly, upon reaching the road, both Kidd and Cudlin found that their maps were wrong. They had cut up over the cliffs expecting to find themselves directly north of Nakama. Instead, they were west of the town

by at least four hundred yards. In order to take the village, they would have to change the direction of the attack.

These two elements caused some hesitation on the part of both company commanders. Their situation was extremely precarious, not only because of Cudlin's right-flank situation, but because of Kidd's exposed left flank. Not more than an hour before, air observers had reported a large concentration of enemy troops on the Urasoe Hill mass which was now behind Kidd. To make the men even more dubious, they could actually see large numbers of enemy in Nakama. Nevertheless, upon calling Colonel Winn for further orders, both Cudlin and Kidd were ordered to continue their attack and to capture the town. It was while the two company commanders were discussing by radio the methods to be used in the new attack that F Company received the first counterblow, an intense mortar barrage which fell in its greatest strength on the flank nearest the village. After five minutes, Kidd told Cudlin that he would have to sign off for the time being and give his attention to a counterattack which he thought was forming in the town. For thirty minutes, Cudlin heard no more from F Company. During this period, the mortar fire in that area was intense and the enemy could plainly be seen swarming through Nakama. Kidd's company suffered several casualties and all were evacuated. Then at approximately 1700 Kidd called G Company and told Cudlin that he was worried about his situation. The enemy was definitely working around his exposed flank, through a little village in his rear and were getting in close. Both company commanders discussed the situation and decided to pivot on G Company's right flank and swing the whole line like a gate, pulling it back until it faced directly east. By doing this, they hoped to present a front to the threat, rather than a flank. Until this time, G Company had received very little of the enemy fire and had not been affected.

Captain Cudlin now issued orders to his platoon leaders to execute the movement just as soon as Captain Kidd had begun to swing his line back. For forty-five minutes he waited for some word or action from F Company. Cudlin could see part of one platoon in positions to his left front, on a little shrub-covered nose of ground to the south of the road and he decided to move when this group moved rather than wait for Captain Kidd to tell him.

Meanwhile, in F Company, a few seconds after he had finished talking with Cudlin, Kidd had been wounded and his radio destroyed so that he was out of touch with everyone. Shortly afterward, he was carried back down over the cliff and evacuated. By this time, the Japanese were definitely working their way around the rear. The company began receiving mortar and machine-gun fire from almost directly behind it.

Within the space of a few minutes, all the remaining officers and most of the noncommissioned officers were killed or wounded in a fight that was reminiscent of Custer's Last Stand. Without leaders, pinned into an area of which hardly a square inch of ground was not covered by fire, all organization was lost. The men began trying to get back down over the ridge behind them to cover. As they turned to move back, some of them were killed and others dropped, wounded. The whole company, with the exception of the part of one platoon which Cudlin could see, began running pell-mell to the rear. It was every man for himself and devil take the hindmost. The men out on the nose of ground to the front fought on, oblivious to the disaster that was building up behind them. The Japanese first gave their attention to the men fleeing over the cliff, but it was not long before the solitary little group began receiving heavy fire, too. At approximately 1745, one of these men began looking for the company to get instructions and it was then he discovered they were all alone. He came running over to Cudlin yelling, "Where the hell is F Company?" This was the first inkling that the G Company commander had that anything was amiss. He was still waiting for F Company to notify him that they were pulling back.

Cudlin lost no time. He called his two assault-platoon leaders, who were already beside him, and told them to execute the swinging movement he had given them. He still intended at that time to follow the original plan which he and Kidd had discussed and he was still under the impression that the F Company commander was conducting an orderly withdrawal as planned.

The G Company move was too late. Enemy soldiers from the East Pinnacle were already closing in on his right rear and the counterattacking force which had finished off F Company was also closing in on him. The two assault platoons were deployed along the forward (south) edge of the road, which was cut into the side of the hill. The north edge of the road was a six-foot-high bank, and in order to pull back the members of the assault elements had to run back across the trail, scramble up onto the bank, and then make their way on up a hundred-yard slope, which ran at a fifty-degree angle from the horizontal to the top of the cliff. Cudlin had left his reserve platoon and his weapons sitting on the very crest where they could sweep the low ground to the south with fire, if necessary. Almost as soon as the first man began to move back, the enemy, as if on signal, opened fire. Machine guns had been placed on each flank and swept the open slope with deadly cross-fire. Mortars and grenades blanketed the area with flying shrapnel and riflemen fired as fast as they could reload. Some of them were cut down, others went into hiding behind rocks and bushes.

By the time the bulk of these men had raced to the crest of the ridge, there was little or no organization left in either platoon.

This condition was furthered by the fact that Captain Cudlin and his entire company headquarters were cut off from the men on the hill. At about the same moment the man from F Company had arrived on the scene with his bombshell, the whole road had been taken under fire by machine guns and the messenger at once went down with bullet wounds. In trying to get this man up over the ledge and to safety, Cudlin used just enough time to eliminate any chance of either he or his men climbing back up over the little bluff. The Japanese zeroed a machine gun in on the area and when the company first sergeant was mortally wounded trying to climb off the road, Cudlin decided he had better look for a new way out. He and his headquarters group therefore struck out down the road toward Nakama and then cut to the left (north) where the bluff flattened out in its ascent to the cliff. As they moved off the road, Lt. Donald P. Speiring, Cudlin's executive officer, was hit in the knees. After the group reached the buildings of the town, he dropped out and hid in the rubble. He later wandered around behind enemy lines until 23 April, when he was rescued by our troops. During that period he was seriously wounded several times and escaped capture miraculously on two occasions. At the time of his rescue he was delirious from the pain of his wounds and lack of food and water.

Shortly after leaving Speiring, Cudlin and his men found themselves hemmed in and surrounded by about one platoon of enemy. Facing annihilation, they decided to make one final effort to break through to safety. In one mad rush the eleven men ran toward the cliff. All of them, by the suddenness of their move, surprised the Japanese just long enough to permit a complete infiltration of the ring, but, in his haste, Captain Cudlin could not stop and fell over the cliff and dropped about thirty feet to a small ledge below where he landed at the mouth of a cave. He crawled into this and remained until late the next afternoon, when he was found by a friendly patrol. The others also scrambled and tumbled down the cliff side and there found their way cut off by infiltrating enemy troops. All the rest of the day and through the night they remained hiding among bushes and on small ledges. The next morning, by accident, they stumbled into Captain Cudlin's cave. They were rescued with him on 21 April.

These experiences are typical of those of a great many of the men in both F and G Companies on 20 April.

One contributing factor that has not been mentioned added to the confusion of the moment. At 1730 the 2d Battalion command post,

which had moved up in rear of the front-line troops, just below the ridge, was blanketed with mortar fire, probably from the same barrage that fell on F Company. Major Purcell called regiment and notified them of this fact and Colonel Winn, concerned lest the headquarters equipment be destroyed as it had been on Saipan, ordered Purcell to move his CP farther to the rear, to a safer area. Purcell relayed this information to his headquarters company. This message went on the radio at almost the precise moment that Cudlin was ordering his two assault platoons to make their withdrawal to the top of the cliff. Cudlin's radio operator picked up the message and told the company commander. The platoon was already withdrawing and fire was becoming extremely heavy all around. Cudlin says that his company was ordered to withdraw. Purcell says that he only ordered his CP group to pull back. The message listed in the journal supports Purcell, but there is no actual message to support the journal. Whatever order was actually issued, Cudlin assumed that he had been ordered all the way back over the cliff to the positions held the night before. He told his radio operator to transmit the orders to the men atop the hill and that he would be along shortly to supervise the withdrawal. Cudlin, as shown, never did get back to the rest of his company.

The 3d Platoon and Weapons Platoon on the top of the hill all afternoon, had built up a firing line to deliver fire support for the two assault platoons. These men had first received Captain Cudlin's orders that the company would withdraw to a line facing east and that they were to support the movement. A few minutes later they were assailed by a disorganized F Company falling back upon them, and a short time after that, just at the time when they were trying to lay down enough fire to support the reorganization of the various elements of F Company and while their own two assault platoons were falling back into their positions, the radio operator came up the hill with the message to drop back to the positions of the night before. All attempts at organization were momentarily stopped in confusion over the new order. When, on top of all this, it was discovered that the enemy had worked around their flank and were in force on the ground below, both companies were completely disintegrated. The men, with no officers to lead them, with very few noncommissioned officers left, simply broke and ran pell-mell down the cliff behind them. The Japanese, who had broken around the flank in some strength, were by this time in good positions and took up a merciless fire on the men stampeding down the cliff. Men were hit and tumbled down to the ground below to lie still, other stumbled and went sprawling headlong down to the low ground. Still others, miraculously escaping the enemy fire, ran as fast as they could

back toward our lines where Lt. Colonel Miller was already moving up his B and C Companies. The noise was terrific and fire was coming from all directions. There is no question that both G and F Companies had been completely surrounded by the enemy who had been by-passed on the East Pinnacle, and by at least two companies who had found Kidd's exposed flank and turned it. There is also no question that both companies had broken in panic and utter disorganization when, with no leaders, they found themselves with a succession of confusing orders and a breakdown of communications. Both Colonel Winn and Major Purcell crawled up the cliffs in the face of the stampeding troops that afternoon, grabbing a man here and there and trying to turn them around, but it was to little avail. The men kept on going back until they reached Lt. Colonel Miller's lines and only then did they stop running. The damage had been done and it would be the work of the next three days to undo it. The 2d Battalion suffered 50 men killed and 45 wounded, most of them from F and G Companies. None of the original officers were left in these two units although Captain Cudlin returned to duty two days later. Company F was particularly hard hit, having only 55 men available for duty. Company G was less hard hit, but was not an effective fighting unit again for several days.

While the 2d Battalion had run into disaster near the East Pinnacle, the 3d was faring better on the west. Due to the heavy casualties suffered by I Company during the battle for Tsugen Shima on 19 April, and due to the fact that this unit had suffered the loss of its second company commander, Lieutenant Spreeman, during the night, Lt. Colonel DeGross replaced it in the line with K Company on the morning of 20 April. Ordered to attack at 0730, the 3d Battalion did not move off because E Company failed to gain the crest on the left and protect its flank. Throughout the morning, the whole battalion was constantly harassed by mortar and machine-gun fire. Company L men busied themselves by trying to blow up the caves and destroy the enemy in the west pinnacle. By noon this had developed into a grim game of hide-and-seek which cost L Company casualties one by one, including the company commander, Capt. Robert J. Spaulding, who was hit by mortar fragments while trying to observe enemy fire. Finally, at 1230, the battalion, under orders from Colonel Winn, moved forward off the crest of the ridge and by 1500 had pushed some 200 yards southwest of Iso. By necessity, in order to escape the full effect of the enemy fire, Lt. Colonel DeGross instructed his men to use as much cover as possible with the result that they veered well into the zone of action of the 106th Infantry. Upon reaching the road junction south of the village, therefore, DeGross

had to hold up because his columns had begun to intermingle with the 1st Battalion, 106th. After some little delay, this mix-up was straightened out, but because it was late neither DeGroff nor Major David Waterson, now in command of the 1st Battalion, 106th, pushed forward any farther that day. Both DeGroff and Waterson were constantly harassed all through 20 April by heavy machine-gun, rifle, and grenade fire on their rear. There was even a spigot-mortar launching site behind our lines, but in spite of the efforts of patrols to locate it and destroy it, the enemy was still able to get off a round now and then, even after darkness on that night. Most serious was the fact that although he was effectively surrounded and cut off from help, the enemy within the West Pinnacle positions refused to withdraw or give up the fight. Supply parties who were sent back for rations and ammunition on the night of 20 April found themselves cut off and unable to get back down over the ridge to supply points. Four companies, two from each battalion, settled down for the night on 20 April with only the most precarious of communications to the rear.

The morning of 21 April saw the fight for Rotation Ridge resolving itself into two battles. On the left of the 105th Infantry's zone of action the 1st and 2d Battalions began the struggle for the possession of the East Pinnacle, and on the right, Lt. Colonel DeGroff's and the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, had to turn around and fight a battle with the enemy holed up in the West Pinnacle.

The immediate concern of Colonel Winn on this morning was to get his two left battalions straightened out. Late in the evening of 20 April, after the debacle of Nakama, he had replaced Major Purcell in command of the 2d Battalion with Capt. Carl E. Rohner, executive officer of the 3d Battalion. Captain Rohner at once set about reorganizing his battalion. One company was still largely intact. This was E Company under Captain McKenna. To him Captain Rohner gave the task of finishing the job of the day before, pushing on over the crest of the ridge at the road cut and extending the flank of DeGroff's battalion. McKenna went to work at once and by early afternoon, after hard fighting, had pushed out to K Company and built up a line which bent back toward the ridge.

Early in the morning, after getting McKenna started, Rohner reorganized G Company and placed the former battalion commander, Captain Fleming, in charge. Fleming was then ordered to attack and seize the East Pinnacle, moving up to the crest of the ridge behind McKenna and then attacking straight along the top toward the objective. Company F was placed under the command of Capt. Walter C.

Sluzac, regimental communications officer, and spent most of the day reorganizing and holding a line facing east at the base of the cliff.

Late in the afternoon, Lt. Colonel Miller, whose battalion was still holding a line facing the enemy group which had outflanked the 2d Battalion the night before, shifted his C Company under Captain Mulhearn into the fight for the East Pinnacle, helping G Company which had made little or no progress all day. It was in this attempt on the part of C Company that the day's heaviest fighting took place, but at darkness Colonel Winn was no nearer to taking the East Pinnacle than he had been in the morning. However, he did have troops on the ridge for some hundred yards east of the road cut.

The line that the 105th Infantry presented on the evening of 21 June was a conglomerate one. Except for the 3d Battalion, the companies were pretty much mixed together, Company E being between K and C, followed by G. Farther to the left were B, F and A, in that order. With this arrangement Colonel Winn again presented a solid front, facing southeast. However shaky, it was some insurance against another outflanking movement as demonstrated early next morning when an enemy counterattack was broken up.

The battle for the West Pinnacle was a much less spectacular one, devolving into a now-you-see-him-now-you-don't type of fight during the day. Both battalions involved tried to use the road running north-east out of the village as a supply route. On 20 April a Japanese officer had been killed, and a map taken from his body revealed the location of all minefields on the road running east out of Machinato. Acting on this information Colonel Stebbins, who was anxious to use the road through Iso as a supply route and a means of approach for his tanks and SP guns, sent the Mine Platoon of his Antitank Company to clean out the mines marked on the map. The particular stroke of luck in capturing the mine map was even more valuable than at first expected. So accurate was the plotting of the fields that Stebbins' men had cleared the entire road to the east as far as the road cut before 0900 that morning. At last the 105th Infantry had a direct supply road leading right into their front lines. Trucks, tanks and bulldozers waddled their way up this trail and considerably strengthened the effort of Colonel Winn to straighten one of his two left-flank battalions. Without hesitation, the Antitank Platoon went to work demining the roadblock and by noon a bulldozer had all but cleared the debris which blocked the access of tanks to the south side of the ridge.

In spite of this gain, however, the situation of the two battalions beyond Iso Village did not improve appreciably. Since late afternoon of the day before all efforts to supply them and evacuate their wounded

had been only about ten per cent effective. During the morning, while waiting for the Mine Platoon to finish its work, Major Waterson had ordered his reserve company, B, to organize carrying parties to get supplies out to A and C Companies. These carrying parties ran into a very heavy cross-fire from Japanese machine guns in the West Pinnacle and to the right-front of the cut-off battalions, and had to give up the attempt. Late in the morning, the battalion commander ordered Captain Klein to take his company, beginning at 1200, and clean out The Pinnacle and the village once and for all. Within half an hour after the move was made, B Company had become engaged in a full-scale battle which cost several men killed and wounded, including the company commander, one of the great heroes of the Pacific War. Klein was killed in characteristic fashion, trying to lead his men forward against an enemy machine gun in utter contempt of what it might do to him.

With the failure of this attempt, all attention was focused on the progress of the road, which was pushing forward into Iso. At 1400 tanks finally poked their noses through the cut and lumbered down into town, only to find that once again they had been balked. A bridge had been blown across a stream that ran through the village and until a new one was constructed no vehicles could get through to the front-line units. And until the enemy was knocked out of his Pinnacle positions, the engineers could do little to construct the bridge.

Nightfall of 21 April, therefore, saw little improvement over the day before. True, the situation on the extreme left was much more stable than previously, but it was a makeshift line that held there and the East Pinnacle was still strongly held and able to put harassing fire on the whole area. The West Pinnacle situation was practically the same as the night before. Patrols continued to probe in and around this position trying to unlock the secret of its tunnel system. At one time on the afternoon of 21 April four different patrols were working on The Pinnacle at once. They employed bazookas, demolitions, grenades and flame throwers, but even in the midst of this an impertinent Japanese sniper sat somewhere up in the rock folds and picked off men one by one in the road below the ridge. When one of the tanks was exploring Iso Village trying to find a way through, the gunner fired one or two rounds at a cave opening in the rock tower, only to receive a hail of mortar fire in return. Artillery and mortars were very active throughout the day, the enemy seeming to use the mortars as a sniper might use a rifle. All units working on and around the crest of Rotation Ridge suffered continuous attrition from this fire. A steady procession of wounded poured through the aid stations in the area, yet to all appearances there did not seem to be any tremendous amount of fighting.

Eventually, when all else had failed, supplies were dropped to DeGroff and Waterson by plane just before darkness. During the night carrying parties sneaked their way through the haunted streets of Iso with the wounded. A Japanese within The Pinnacle spent the night blowing bugle call after bugle call. There were several counterattacks, artillery barrages, and fire fights, but on the morning of 22 April, both sides held out in their respective positions and the war continued as on the day before.

Activity on 22 April was centered on the problem of mopping up the areas that had caused so much trouble. In the West Pinnacle area, Major William Foxen, who had taken command of the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, late on the evening of 21 April, decided to tackle his supply problem from a different direction. Having failed to solve this by sending in vehicles through the 105th Infantry's zone of action, he borrowed F Company from the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry, and sent his own B Company all the way back down to Route 1 to join it. Beginning at 0930, these two companies, accompanied by self-propelled guns from the 106th's Cannon Company, launched a concerted attack to the southeast along the ridge. They were followed by engineers with bulldozers who cut a supply trail behind them as they advanced. By the middle of the afternoon this mopping up had thoroughly cleaned out all enemy positions along the ridge and as far south as the 1st Battalion front lines. The spigot-mortar launching sites were definitely captured and the enemy machine guns that had been causing so much trouble in our rear were destroyed. Estimates as to the number of enemy soldiers killed vary, but it was between fifty and a hundred. At the same time this work was going forward, the battalion antitank platoon again climbed up on The Pinnacle, but they had about the same success that previous patrols had encountered. When it was all over, the enemy within The Pinnacle still continued to fire. However, it should be noted that all of his supporting positions had been knocked out, particularly his machine guns, and for the first time the line companies south of Iso had a supply route free from serious harassing fire.

Meanwhile, in the same area, near the West Pinnacle, Colonel Winn had made a major adjustment of his lines. It will be remembered that throughout the period 20-21 April, the 3d Battalion had been sitting south of Iso Village, within the zone of action of the 106th Infantry. On the morning of 22 April Lt. Colonel DeGroff received orders to withdraw one company back to the crest of the ridge to a point just east of The Pinnacle, and this was followed at 1340 by further orders to pull back the rest of the battalion. In this readjustment, Colonel Winn

was enabled to put one more company in support of his bent-back left flank and at the same time eliminate the supply problem for DeGross's front line and correct the dislocation of boundaries. To offset this move, Major Foxen inserted B Company into his line on the left of his battalion to fill the gap between DeGross and Company A which now existed as a result of Winn's move. This change was completed when B Company finished the mop-up mission down the ridge.

In the 1st and 2d Battalion areas, Colonel Winn used the day to further straighten out his two battalions. Companies were moved during the morning so that all 2d Battalion units and 1st Battalion companies occupied definite sectors of responsibility together instead of the mixed-up line that existed on 21 April. Harassment of defensive positions continued to be serious from the East Pinnacle and during the day patrols from both F and G Companies again tried to penetrate the defenses of the position. In successive actions, both of these companies suffered extremely heavy casualties, F Company suffering the loss of Captain Sluzas, who was riddled by machine-gun bullets. At nightfall, the East Pinnacle was still just as firmly held as ever.

With the formation of Bradford Task Force to mop up the Kakazu area, the 23d was spent quietly waiting for the general move to bring up the right flank of the 96th Division. Patrols of both B Company, 106th Infantry, and K Company, 105th Infantry, continued to work on the West Pinnacle, and despite B Company's success on the previous day they continued to flush out and kill random Japanese.

The 105th Infantry had been ordered to coordinate its movements with Bradford Task Force on 24 April. During the night, the 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had been attached to the task force and was tied in on Lt. Colonel Miller's left flank. Colonel Winn now ordered the 1st Battalion to advance along the ground below the East Pinnacle and when the pivoting movement of Lt. Colonel McDonough threatened to pinch the battalion against the cliff they were to climb it and attack The Pinnacle positions from that side. This was an extremely difficult assignment, but Colonel Winn guessed rightly that the Japanese, in spite of their experience on 20 April, would not expect an attack from that direction.

Lieutenant Colonel Miller moved off with the task force at 0730 and by noon his two assault companies had already begun to climb the Escarpment. Captain Mulhearn and C Company emerged on top of the ridge about thirty-five yards directly east of the East Pinnacle position and found himself almost in the midst of the whole Japanese strong-point. In a wild fight which was hand-to-hand in many cases, and in

which bayonets, clubs and grenades were used extensively, Mulhearn's men, led by Staff Sgt. Nathan Johnston, killed well over a hundred Japanese in the course of an hour's time. Johnston himself is credited with over thirty of the enemy. At one time he jumped over a small mound of earth and found himself rubbing elbows with a group of Japanese. He killed eight with his rifle and clubbed four to death.

Company C's action during the remainder of the afternoon wrote a surprisingly fast finish to the East Pinnacle position which had caused so much trouble in the preceding days. Due mostly to Sergeant Johnston's superb leadership and personal heroism, the 105th Infantry finally held the entire ridge line as far east as the very outskirts of Nakama. By the end of the day Colonel Winn had tied in his 3d Battalion with Miller and consolidated the position.

The end of the West Pinnacle came the same night in almost as abrupt a finish. Precisely on the stroke of midnight, the enemy bugler within this position blew what was evidently a charge, and thirty Japanese soldiers made a wild, yelling Banzai charge straight into the lines of the 1st Battalion, 106th Infantry, which was still dug in south of Iso. With the suicide charge the last remnants of the Iso garrison were eliminated. The 27th Division's left flank was free to continue to the south.

Chapter 57: Relief and Inactivation

WITH THE COMPLETION of the fight for Rotation Ridge and the breakthrough at Item Pocket, the action of the 27th Division was largely over. On the right, the period between 27-30 April was spent by the 165th Infantry in patrolling across the inlet at Kuwan. Some enemy were encountered and destroyed, but no attempt was made to push farther south. This was mainly due to the over-extension of the Division's entire line.

The 105th Infantry, on the Division left, after the seizure of the East Pinnacle on 24 April, regrouped and pushed through Nakama on 26 April. Building a line there, around the southern limits of the town, Colonel Winn held until his relief on 1 May by elements of the 1st Marine Division. This failure to advance farther was caused by the necessity of waiting for the 96th Division to come up on the left. General Bradley's men had followed the action of Bradford Task Force by an assault on the east end of the Escarpment Ridge on 26 April and during the next three days were engaged in bitter fighting to the left rear of Winn's regiment. On 29 April the relief of the 96th Division by the 77th was begun, precluding any further advance. As a result, the 105th Infantry did not move between 27 April and 1 May. Like the 165th Infantry, the men of this regiment engaged in active patrolling to their front.

Little has been said about the 106th Infantry, the center regiment of the Division. Except for the fighting of the 1st Battalion in and around Iso, already described, the 106th had taken little part in the reduction of the key strongpoints of the enemy. The function of this unit was almost entirely one of a connecting link between the two flank regiments. When the 165th Infantry pushed forward on the right, Stebins' 2d Battalion kept in touch with it, and during all the fighting in and around The Pinnacle the 1st Battalion maintained firm contact there. When it became necessary to advance to maintain the link, the 106th advanced. Not all the action was as simple as that. The 2d Battalion, adjacent to the 165th after 21 April, engaged in bitter fighting around Yafusu on 27-28 April and culminated its effort with the capture of Hill 58 on the afternoon of the 28th. This strongpoint was finally reduced by F Company, now under command of the same Lieutenant Hyland who had done such a fine job on 19 April at the road cut through the ridge. After two previous assaults by G Company had failed, Lieutenant Hyland, at the head of his troops, carried the hill.

The 1st Battalion, in its latter days in the line, also took part in some bitter minor actions, but it is a tribute to this fine regiment that it never once, during the entire campaign, failed to accomplish a mission.

With all three regiments committed to the line and with all elements of the regiments either occupying a zone of action or engaged in mopping-up activities, it was a physical impossibility for General Griner to stretch his line farther as long as he had to keep his left flank anchored in Nakama.

Arrangements for the relief of the 27th Division were made as early as 26 April, at which time it was decided to commit the III Amphibious Corps on the right of the southern front. At that time, plans had already been made for the relief of the 96th Division by the 77th, which came ashore beginning on 25 April. With the decision to bring the two Marine divisions into the line, it became necessary to station at least one Army division in the north of the island. The 27th was not a part of XXIV Corps and had originally been designated as garrison force troops. With this in mind, orders were issued to them that they should take over the northern mission, with headquarters in Nago, beginning on 10 May 1945. In order to accomplish this change, relief of the 165th Infantry was begun on 30 April 1945, and the remainder of the Division troops were relieved on 1 May.

On 2 May, the Division moved north to Nago and took over the task of mopping up the enemy remnants in the north end of the island on 10 May. Between 2-15 May, however, guerrilla elements had become so active that it became necessary to pull the whole Division south to Ishikawa and begin a thorough combing of the whole north end of the island. This operation began on 19 May 1945 and ended on 4 August. In the nearly three months that ensued, the Division killed over a thousand enemy soldiers and captured five hundred more. One pitched battle was fought between 27 May and 7 June at Onna Take, a 1,200-foot mountain east of the village of Onna. Here over seven hundred enemy troops engaged the 1st and 3d Battalions, 106th Infantry, in the "Battle of the Clouds." For ten days the men of these two battalions literally lived and fought surrounded by clouds. At the end of the period, the whole enemy force had either been killed or driven northward.

On 4 August 1945, the Division completed its mop-up, having reached Hedi Saki at the north tip of the island, and on 8 August returned to Onna to enter upon its routine garrison duty.

The end of the Okinawa mop-up and the move to Onna came less than a week before the end of the war with Japan. Since the middle of April the Division had been advised of a constant stream of first, rotation, and then, discharge plans. During the midst of the rain and the fighting for Onna Take it was announced that all men with over 85

points were eligible for discharge. General Griner discovered that if this policy were carried out, only 2,500 men would be left in the Division. These were mostly combat replacements received after Saipan or during the Kakazu-Item Pocket fighting.

Due to the lack of replacements, however, the 85-point policy was not immediately put into effect in the Pacific. In May a small number of men were returned to the States under the rotation system. These included, for the most part, all of the survivors of the advance party that had landed in the Hawaiian Islands on 10 March 1942. Seventeen men from Company C, 165th Infantry, for instance, made up the list to go home at this time.

It was not until the Division reached Onna in August, however, that large groups began going back to the States. As soon as the regiments moved to their new areas in the training sites set up near Onna, all men with 105 points or more were detached for return home. Almost daily from that time on new groups were sent to redeployment centers on the island.

In the midst of this activity and while the Division staff was setting up preparatory training plans for the forthcoming invasion of Japan, came the end of the war. For the time being all separations were discontinued. Activity now centered around the role the Division was to play in the occupation of Japan.

General Griner was alerted to the fact that the 27th would move into Japan with the first contingent as early as 20 August. During the next week he visited Manila where he was informed by General MacArthur's headquarters that the 27th would be flown into Atsugi Airfield from Okinawa on or about 7 September. It was to be the third division to land in Japan. Only the 11th Airborne and 1st Cavalry Divisions were to precede it. In the Manila discussions it was decided to complete the separation of all high-point men before the Division made the move north. By 2 September all men in the Division with over 85 points had been sent to replacement depots unless they volunteered to go to Japan. Approximately 1,200 of the older men voted to remain until the actual occupation had been completed.

The 27th Division that moved to Japan was, therefore, practically a new unit. In the 105th Infantry, Colonel Winn remained, but his three experienced battalion commanders were gone. Colonel Stebbins remained in command of the 106th Infantry and Lt. Colonel Crocker now commanded the 1st Battalion, but the other battalion and company commanders who had fought through Eniwetok, Saipan and Okinawa were on their way back to the United States. In the 165th Infantry, Lt.

Colonel Hart relinquished command to Colonel Ovenshine, who moved down from Chief of Staff. Lt. Colonels Mahoney, McDonough, and Lutz were separated and sent home. So also were the company commanders who had led their men from Makin on. Captains O'Brien, Ryan, Betts and Kiley all left after the mop-up. On the Division staff the men who remained were more numerous. Colonel Grier was now G-1, and Lt. Colonel Van Antwerp remained as G-2. Of the special staff, Major McLaughlin continued as Division signal officer.

On 4 September the Division moved to the vicinity of Yontan Airfield to await transportation. The first regiment to board the transports was the 105th Infantry, which landed at Atsugi Airfield on 7 September. The others followed, the last element of the 165th Infantry arriving on 11 September. During the first week the 27th was stationed in the Sasebo area of Honshu, south of Tokyo. On 15 September Lt. Colonels Van Antwerp, Noch, Bendixen, and other staff officers began a two-week reconnaissance of northern Japan. Upon their return to Division headquarters on 29 September, the Division entrained for the north. All units moved by rail, except for the 105th Infantry, elements of which moved by motor convoy beginning on 25 September. Division headquarters was established at Niigata.

The last of the original Division were separated in October and November 1945, as fast as the respective units completed the organization of their occupational duties. By 1 December only twelve men remained of the Division that had been called into federal service in the fall of 1940. These twelve were to come home with it.

Orders for the inactivation of the 27th Infantry Division were issued early in December. Almost immediately all low-point men were transferred to other units and the ranks of the Division were filled by troops who had over seventy points. On 12 December General Griner led the remnants of the 27th aboard ships at Yokohama. They sailed for home the same day, arriving at Seattle on the morning of 26 December 1945. That afternoon, as the colors were carried ashore, General Griner in a brief ceremony inactivated the Division.

The great adventure that had begun in 1940 was over. McClellan, Haan, Ord, the Big Island, Oahu, Schofield, and Espiritu were stops on the way. Makin, Majuro, Eniwetok, Saipan, and Okinawa joined the other names on the 27th's battle roll. Some of the men are home. Others will never come home; their souls guard the strange-sounding islands they paid to capture. In the years to come there will be many changes in the places that knew the 27th, but its red-and-black shield will remain as the marshalling banner of those men left behind.

Appendix I: Brief Résumé of the Saipan Incident

During the war a number of generals of the United States Army were relieved of their commands in the field. Five of these reliefs took place in the Pacific theaters. All except one of these command shifts were accomplished with a minimum of attention and virtually no effect on anyone except the officers concerned. The relief of Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith, commander of the 27th Infantry Division, by Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, USMC, commander of V Amphibious Corps,¹ in the midst of the battle for Saipan, did result in a furor far out of proportion to its importance, and brought virtual demoralization to the 27th Division, and caused Gen. George C. Marshall to issue orders from Washington that there would be no further discussion of the matter. General Marshall's order was issued when interservice bickering had reached a point that he thought endangered the war effort in the Pacific.

The Smith *versus* Smith controversy had simple beginnings. On the 2d of July, 1944, while the battle for Saipan was still raging, a San Francisco newspaper appeared with a front-page story which described a dispute between two generals. As a result of the quarrel, the Marine commander had relieved the Army general in the middle of the fight and had then sent him back to Pearl Harbor.

The newspaper story was immediately picked up by other papers. The War Department was queried and admitted that a general had been relieved on Saipan, but would give no details. The press, scenting news, accepted the San Francisco version, or quoted "authoritative" sources. One writer, in September, even went so far as to quote a "high Congressional source thoroughly familiar with the Saipan situation." There were no Congressmen on the island of Saipan during the battle and the full details of the case were known only to General Marshall in the United States. He labeled the information as top secret and buried it in his files. The Congressional source, incidentally, gave the most completely inaccurate picture of the incident that has yet appeared.

Editorial comment appeared in virtually all large newspapers. Some papers kept the story going and demanded editorially that extensive changes be made in the top command of our whole Pacific sea, air and ground forces. During the subsequent months several bills were introduced into Congress asking for an official investigation. These were all eventually dropped. By the last of September the tumult and the furor in the United States had died down. In all the words that have been written about the affair, then and since, there has not been any official explanation from either the War or Navy Department and the bulk of information is still factually misleading. For instance, an article appearing in *Harper's* in August, 1946, stated that Admiral Spruance had been influenced in one of his decisions on 16 June, 1944, by the fact that the 27th Division was looking bad. Although it was called to *Harper's* attention that no unit of the 27th was ashore on Saipan at that time, and the Division was, therefore, innocent of the accusation, the magazine has never corrected this statement although requested to by the present writer.

¹The command setup for the invasion of the Marianas was as follows: Adm. Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief, U.S. Forces, Pacific; Adm. Raymond A. Spruance, Commander, Fifth Fleet; Adm. Richmond K. Turner, Commander, Joint Task Expeditionary Forces; Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith, Commanding General, Expeditionary Troops and also commander of the Northern Troops and Landing Forces (V Amphibious Corps); and Lt. Gen. Roy S. Geiger, Commanding General Southern Troops and Landing Forces (III Amphibious Corps). The NTLF invaded Saipan and Tinian, and the STLF invaded Guam.

Most public discussions of the case have indicated that the relief of Maj. Gen. Ralph Smith was caused by one of three things. There was a sharp difference in Marine and Army tactics, there was a bitter personal antipathy between the two men, or the 27th Division failed to function in a satisfactory manner, showing a decided lack of aggressiveness in combat. Up to the time of Ralph Smith's relief, there had been no question of a difference in Army and Marine tactics on Saipan. Nor was there any personal antipathy expressed by the two generals, either before or after the incident. On the third score, however, there was a decided difference of opinion. Holland M. Smith made the statement three days after the relief, that "the 27th Division won't fight and Ralph Smith will not make them fight." This was the feeling that seems to have been an underlying factor in the relief of the Division commander, and the charges made by the relieving general, when boiled down, amount to just this.

Much that was brought out officially later does indicate, however, that some feeling had been developing on both sides. Members of Holland Smith's staff, including Army officer members, had, prior to the relief of Ralph Smith on June 24, concurred with their commander to the effect that the 27th Division had not been fighting as well as it might have. Against these opinions, however, must be balanced the later statements of one Army general that "Corps intelligence was practically nonexistent;" and the statement of not one but several Army major generals and brigadier generals who had been on Saipan that under no circumstances would they serve under Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith again. The official records appear to indicate, as will be shown in some detail below, that Holland Smith's headquarters was sometimes badly lacking in information of the front-line situation. They also indicate clearly that the Marine general made severe demands upon the 27th Division on the basis of the incorrect information available to him at his headquarters.

From the complete records, at least, it appears that no great part of this feeling had developed prior to June 21, three days before the actual relief of Ralph Smith by Holland Smith. On the 18th Holland Smith had sent a personal message to one of the regiments of the Division, complimenting it on the capture of Aslito Airfield. On 19 June, the action of the Division was characterized as satisfactory and on 20 June long gains were made. At noon on the 21st the 27th Division was engaged in a fight to clean up Nafutan Point, a small peninsula that juts out from the extreme southeast corner of Saipan. The fight here had little relation to the action on the rest of the island. With the capture of the airfield and the subsequent drive to the shores of Magicienne Bay on the same day, 18 June, Gen. Holland M. Smith had directed his attention to the northern part of the island where the main force of the enemy had concentrated. During the 20th and 21st he swung the 2d and 4th Marine Divisions to the north. From the south he intended to launch an attack with these units which would end in the capture of Mount Tapotchau, the 1,554-foot peak which dominates the entire island. The 27th Division, therefore, had been left more or less to itself at Nafutan. The enemy defenders of Aslito had withdrawn into this incredibly tangled terrain to fight to the end. At the time no one knew just how many Japanese had elected to stand and die in this area. Estimates varied all the way from 300 to 1,500 troops. Documents found since that time have established the presence of the 3d Battalion, 89th Infantry Regiment, the major part of the 25th Antiaircraft Artillery Regiment, and a conglomeration of airfield construction and operating personnel. Army garrison forces on the island later

found a total of 850 enemy bodies in the area and 387 prisoners were taken during the fighting, all after 23 June. This means that there were close to 1,200 defenders in the sector at the beginning of the campaign.

On 20 June, when the 27th Division launched its first determined drive on these troops, an attack by four battalions of infantry had carried rapidly to the south against almost no opposition, the enemy having pulled back into a prepared defensive position where he chose to wait until the Americans were close in. It is understandable that the staff at Holland Smith's headquarters could have arrived at the erroneous and dangerous assumption that the number of enemy was negligible after the rapid advances made during the day. Reports from the Division to corps headquarters were all filed prior to 1830 hours and these reports all show no enemy resistance, although no staff in war can ever afford to accept such negative indications as positive, without supporting positive evidence. Between darkness and dawn on the 21st, however, the whole character of the fighting changed. The infantrymen dug in for the night on the 20th directly in front of the main Japanese line and as soon as the sun went down the enemy began to counterattack. At daylight a deadly battle was in progress and every weapon in the American lines had been brought into play. By noon the Japanese offensive had died out and the 27th Division had resumed its advance, but it was a slow, tortuous movement where every yard was contested in contrast to the rapid surge of the day before. It was evident that there were still plenty of enemy left and that they were well armed and superbly organized. I personally covered the front line that morning to obtain a firsthand and immediate historical record of losses and resistance.

Holland Smith had planned his drive in the north with great care. It promised to be the decisive action on the island. The orders for the attack were drawn up and issued before 0900 hours on the 21st and a copy reached the 27th Division headquarters at noon. Upon looking at the order, Ralph Smith discovered that the 27th Division was to withdraw all its troops, except one battalion, from the south part of the island and assemble them in an area nearer the front lines. Holland Smith wanted all the power he could get and he wanted it readily available. The one infantry battalion, excepted in the order, was to clean up the remaining enemy at Nafutan Point, the strength of the enemy there being then unknown to corps headquarters, and apparently arrived at faultily through negative evidence alone.

At 1430 hours that afternoon, acting on further reports of hard fighting in the Division front, Col. Albert K. Stebbins, 27th Division Chief of Staff, called the operations officer at Holland Smith's headquarters and advised him that two battalions might be needed the next day instead of the one allotted. No decision was made, or asked for, at the time.

Two and a half hours later, at 1700, Ralph Smith returned to his command post from the front lines at Nafutan and called Holland Smith on the telephone. In a cordial conversation the two generals went over the situation and Ralph Smith asked for permission to leave an entire regiment at Nafutan Point. Holland Smith agreed to this, asking, however, that the 27th Division employ only two of the regiment's three battalions, saving the other so that it could be employed in the north, if necessary. Written affirmation of this agreement was not received at 27th Division headquarters until 0830 the next morning. No orders were ever passed down by Holland Smith to the regimental commander. As a matter of record Holland Smith never named the regiment that would be left at Nafutan

Point. It was left up to Ralph Smith to select one and he chose the 105th Infantry.

In his orders to Col. Leonard Bishop, the regimental commander, issued at 2000 hours on the 21st, the Division Commander did order his colonel to hold his line with two battalions and keep one in reserve. He further ordered the 105th Infantry to relieve all elements of the 165th Infantry then on the line before 0600 the next morning. Then after reorganizing his troops, Colonel Bishop was to resume offensive operations, and clean out the remaining enemy in the point. In no case was this renewed attack to be delayed after 1100 on 22 June.

When Holland Smith relieved Ralph Smith he presented several charges in writing to his own immediate superior, Admiral Spruance. The first of these said that the Army general had contravened his orders in this instance. According to Holland Smith, the 105th Infantry had been removed from Ralph Smith's jurisdiction and under this prevailing condition, the 27th Division commander had no right to issue any orders to Colonel Bishop at all. As if this were not enough, the corps commander had ordered the 105th Infantry to attack. Ralph Smith had ordered them to hold. In supporting his action later, the deposed general pointed out that Colonel Bishop had been instructed to attack in the Division order, but *only after he had had time to reorganize his lines*. This time allowance was deemed necessary because the 105th Infantry was using two battalions to take over a line formerly held by four. In response to the charge that he had issued orders when he had no right to do so, the Army general presented evidence that Holland Smith had never indicated at any time that the 105th Infantry was removed from his control. If Ralph Smith had not issued orders to Colonel Bishop, the regimental commander would never have received any orders at all. It is a military axiom that when a commander assumes control over a fighting unit, he issues orders to that unit. Holland Smith neglected to do this, leaving the 105th without orders of any kind.

This incident was only a small part of the whole Smith *versus* Smith controversy. The 22d of June saw the bulk of the 27th Division moving into a reserve area a short distance north of Aslito airfield. From this area they were in a position to move quickly to aid either the 2d or 4th Division, if needed. At approximately 1230, Ralph Smith set out in a jeep, accompanied by his own operations officer and an observer from the War Department. They visited the 4th Marine Division and then the 2d. At both headquarters they received accurate reports on the situation. Then they proceeded to Holland Smith's command post. After sitting in on the corps commander's regular afternoon staff conference, Ralph Smith stopped briefly to talk with his superior. The discussion concerned the situation at Nafutan Point and Holland Smith expressed some dissatisfaction with the progress there. The corps commander also said that Colonel Bishop had told one of his staff members that "we'll starve them out if necessary." This attitude was not one which the Marine general liked, for the official records indicate that Holland Smith generally preferred faster and more costly methods of dealing with the enemy, and this moreover, was the opinion, expressed officially later, and in no uncertain terms by several Army generals who had served under Holland Smith's command. Ralph Smith admitted that if Bishop had made the statement attributed to him, it was not the right attitude and that he would take steps to correct it. Colonel Bishop later testified under oath that he had made no such statement.

At the conference during the afternoon there was no other subject of discussion between the two generals. The meeting had been quite brief and routine. There was no heated argument and the Bishop matter had been discussed with complete agreement between the two men. This was the last time the two generals met before Ralph Smith's relief. They have not seen each other since.

Upon leaving Holland Smith, the 27th Division commander went at once to the house in which Brig. Gen. G. B. Erskine, corps chief of staff, had set up his headquarters. It was then shortly after 1600 hours on 22 June. General Erskine took Ralph Smith to a large wall map in his headquarters and described the day's action. Things had been going exceptionally well, General Erskine said, but the 4th Division was very weary. It had taken heavy casualties in the landings and later at Hill 500, a prominence attacked a few days previously. He was considering the use of the 27th Division in place of the 4th the next day. Ralph Smith, whose men were still relatively fresh and free from casualties, agreed to this proposal. While still at the map, he pointed out that by the time the 27th got into line the attack would be opposite the Kagman Peninsula, and that this would increase the frontage to such an extent that the Division could not adequately cover it. In view of this fact, General Erskine and Ralph Smith reached a decision to pass the 27th through the two left regiments of the 4th Division, leaving the right regiment, the 23d Marines, in line to cover the 27th's flank as it advanced across the base of Kagman Peninsula. This, in effect, sandwiched the 27th Division between the two Marine divisions.

Immediately the decision was made, Ralph Smith turned to a telephone and called his artillery commander, Brig. Gen. Redmond F. Kernan, and ordered him to begin reconnaissance for new positions from which to support the attack the next morning. At almost the same time he ordered Col. Gerard W. Kelley, commander of the 165th Infantry Regiment, and Col. Russell G. Ayers, of the 106th Infantry, to report to his command post for orders. Thus, at approximately 1700 hours on 22 June, the 27th Division was alerted for movement.

While Ralph Smith had been busy on the phone, his operations officer, Lt. Col. Frederic Sheldon, had been busy copying the situation map at General Erskine's headquarters. Generals Smith and Erskine again checked the situation and agreed upon 1000 hours the next morning as the time of the attack. There was some discussion as to whether the Division would be able to meet this hour. Ralph Smith told General Erskine that it was likely to be close, but no point was made of the matter and when the 27th Division commander left the corps headquarters he was told by the chief of staff to keep corps informed of the movement of his troops.

Another matter brought up at the conference between Generals Smith and Erskine was the subject of Nafutan Point. As a result of the decision to commit the 27th Division in the north, it became imperative that the 105th Infantry be released for use as Ralph Smith's reserve. Consequently, General Erskine told the Division Commander to withdraw Colonel Bishop's forces, leaving only one infantry battalion to mop up remaining resistance. Ralph Smith immediately protested this decision, stating that one battalion was not sufficient to clean up the Point. General Erskine replied that the job in the north was the important one and that all strength was needed there. If one battalion was insufficient to do the job at Nafutan, the enemy could be contained and a larger force sent back into the area later to do the job. This order left one battalion to cover a frontage of three thousand yards, against a strongly entrenched enemy,

in almost impassable terrain. No artillery support was furnished. Military tacticians agree that the maximum frontage which can safely be assigned to a rifle battalion, even with favorable conditions, is eight hundred yards. When Ralph Smith left the meeting with General Erskine he felt so strongly about the dangerous situation at Nafutan that he felt impelled to write a letter the next afternoon, asking the corps commander to alert the service forces and air personnel in the vicinity of Aslito airfield. They were to be advised that it was entirely within the realm of possibility that groups of enemy could infiltrate through the lines at night and damage installations on the field. This warning letter, written on 23 June, should be borne in mind in view of the events that occurred on the morning of 27 June.

It was approximately 1700 hours when Ralph Smith and his party left the corps command post to return to 27th Division headquarters on 22 June. In addition to the sketches carried by Colonel Sheldon, they brought a preliminary copy of the corps field order for the next day. When they arrived at Division headquarters, it was still an hour and a half before dark, the artillery reconnaissance was already under way, and the two regimental commanders were waiting. The whole Division was alerted and waiting for orders.

Ralph Smith did not spend more than half an hour with Colonels Ayers and Kelley. He went over his notes of the Erskine meeting and then assigned the 106th Infantry to the left zone of action and the 165th to the right. A careful study of the map was made and routes of approach laid out. It might be well to emphasize this delineation of approach roads. Both regiments had already carried out a reconnaissance of these routes as part of their mission as reserve. The writer was present at the conferences and saw the care with which the road system was apportioned.

Upon conclusion of this conference both regimental commanders returned to their own headquarters for talks with their battalion commanders. Colonel Ayers had decided to move with one battalion in the attack, while Colonel Kelley put two battalions abreast. Both decisions were based upon routine terrain and frontage considerations. After briefing his battalion leaders, Colonel Ayers and his assault battalion commander, Lt. Col. H. I. Mizony, got into a jeep and carried out an exceedingly dangerous road reconnaissance that lasted until an hour after dark. Colonel Kelley, who had been running hourly patrols through the area, left his reconnaissance until daylight the next morning. The whole Division was to move out at 0530. The distance to be traveled was a little over three miles.

Until this time all orders within the Division had been verbal. Lt. Colonel Sheldon had set to work immediately upon his return from the Erskine conference to issue a Division field order, based on the preliminary copy of the corps order that he had brought back with him. The 27th Division order, number 46, was finally sent by courier to the various regimental commanders at approximately 2130 in the evening. A copy was also sent to the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, which was the unit selected to stay at Nafutan Point. In the case of the two assault regiments, this written order simply confirmed what had been said at the earlier conference. With reference to Nafutan, the Division order read:

"2nd Battalion, 105th Infantry . . . continue operations to mop up the remaining enemy detachments in Nafutan Point area. On conclusion of this mission revert to Corps Control. . . ."

ADVANCE COPY

REH/198

Headquarters,
NORTHERN Troops and Landing Force,
In the Field.

TOP SECRET

22 June 1944.

NORTHERN TROOPS AND LANDING FORCE)

OPERATION ORDER NUMBER.....10-44)

1. a. Enemy situation as furnished by G-2.
b. Northern Naval Attack Force will support NORTHERN Troops and Landing Force by aircraft and naval gunfire.
2. NORTHERN Troops and Landing Force will continue the attack at KING-Hour with Divisions abreast making the main effort in its center in order to gain positions from which to destroy Japanese garrison.

KING-Hour 1000.

LD Front lines at KING-Hour.

Zones of action, boundaries, objectives:
See Annex ABLE (Operation Overlay).

3. a. 4th MarDiv at KING-Hour attack in assigned zone of action with main effort on its right and seize the O-6 line within its zone. It will assemble 1 infantry regiment after being passed through by 27th Division in the vicinity of 150 SUGAR in Corps reserve.
b. The 27th Division, less one battalion and one light tank platoon, passing through elements of the 4thMarDiv within its zone of action will attack at KING-Hour making its main effort on its right. Seize objective O-5 and on Division order advance and seize objective O-6. It will assist the 2dMarDiv by rapid advance and by fire and maneuver on call in the vicinity of the boundary between these divisions. RCT 106 will pass to control of the 27th Division at 0600, 23 June.
c. The 2dMarDiv (Reinf) at KING-Hour attack within its assigned zone of action, seize objective O-5, then on Division order advance rapidly and seize objective O-6. It will retain not less than one infantry battalion in Division reserve which will not be employed without authority of CG, NT&LF.
d. _____ Battalion, 27th Division continue operations to mop up remaining enemy detachments in NAUTAN POINT area. Upon completion this mission revert to Corps control as Corps reserve at TA 130 DOG.

e. XXIV Corps Artillery _____

- 1 -

TOP SECRET

Preliminary copy of the field order furnished the Division by Corps on the afternoon of 22 June. The final Corps' order of the day, with the important addition of the two words "at daylight" inserted in paragraph 3d is reproduced on the opposite page. The unit designation left blank in this order was filled in by Division after General Ralph Smith had selected the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry.

REE/219
Ser. 00051-3

NORTHERN Troops and Landing Force
In the Field.

TOP SECRET

22 June, 1944, 2200.

NORTHERN TROOPS AND LANDING FORCE)
OPERATION ORDER NUMBER.....10-44)

1. a. Enemy situation as furnished by G-2.

b. NORTHERN Naval Attack Force will support
NORTHERN Troops and Landing Force by aircraft and naval gunfire. ✓

2. NORTHERN Troops and Landing Force will continue
the attack on 23 June at KING-Hour with divisions abreast, (4th
MarDiv on right, 27thInfDiv in center and 2dMarDiv on left), making
main effort in center of Force Zone in order to extend the beach-
head and destroy the opposing Japanese.

KING-Hour: 1000. ✓

LD: Front Lines at KING-Hour. ✓

Zones of Action, Boundaries, Objectives: ✓
See Annex ABLE (Operation Overlay).

3. a. 4thMarDiv, at KING-Hour, attack in assigned
zone of action with main effort on its right and seize the O-6
line within its zone. After being passed through by 27thInfDiv
it will assemble one (1) infantry regiment in the vicinity of
TA ~~130 SUGAR~~ ^{131 MARE}, in Corps reserve.

b. The 27thInfDiv, less one battalion and one light
tank platoon, passing through elements of the 4thMarDiv within its
zone of action, will attack at KING-Hour, making its main effort
initially on its right. Seize Objective O-5 and, on Division
order, advance and seize Objective O-6. It will assist the 2dMar
Div by rapid advance and by fire and maneuver, on call, in the
vicinity of the boundary between these divisions. RCT 106 reverts
to control of the 27thInfDiv at 0600, 23 June. ✓

c. The 2dMarDiv (Reinf) at KING-Hour attack within
its assigned zone of action, seize objective O-5; then, on Divi-
sion order, advance rapidly to seize objective O-6. It will
retain not less than one infantry battalion in Division reserve
which will not be employed without authority of CG NT&LF.

d. 2d Bn 105th Inf (with one light tank platoon
attached) continue operations ~~at daylight~~ to mop up remaining
enemy detachments in NAFUTAN POINT area. Upon completion this
mission revert to ~~Corps control~~ as Corps reserve in the vicinity
TA 130 DOG. Report location

- 1 -

TOP SECRET

The Corps' final order of 22 June with the important addition of the words "at daylight" inserted in paragraph 3d. The handwriting on this order was made by Colonel Albert K. Stebbins, Chief of Staff of the 27th Division.

This was, word for word, the paragraph contained in the preliminary order, except that corps had left the unit designation blank.

At 2330, two hours after the Division order had been distributed, Colonel Sheldon received, by courier, two copies of the corps final order for the next day. One of these orders was designated for the 27th Division, the other for the 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry. On reading through this order Colonel Sheldon was startled to find that a change had been made. The Corps order read:

"2nd Battalion, 105th Infantry . . . continue operations *at daylight* to mop up remaining enemy detachments in Nafutan Pont area. . . ."

It will be noted that the words "at daylight" had been added. They were contained in neither the corps preliminary order nor the Division order. Ralph Smith was immediately notified and Division headquarters set about letting Lt. Col. Leslie Jensen, commander of the battalion, know of the change. These efforts were fruitless until after daylight the next morning. The 2d Battalion did not launch its attack until 1300 the next afternoon. It is doubtful whether early receipt of the order would have materially changed Lt. Colonel Jensen's subsequent action. It must be remembered that his command was taking over a line held by four battalions only thirty-six hours before and the task required an extensive reorganization, something that most certainly could not have been accomplished under cover of darkness and in a short space of time.

This was the basis of Holland Smith's second charge of direct contravention of orders. Again, he insisted, Ralph Smith had issued orders to a unit not under his control and his failure to include the daylight hour of attack was evidence of the contravention. Ralph Smith later pointed out that nothing had been said to him at General Erskine's conference about the battalion being removed from his control. Furthermore, at the time Division order 46 was issued, Lt. Colonel Jensen had not received any word from corps as to what he was to do. It was not until the second copy of the corps order was received at Division headquarters that the Division Commander had any idea that the battalion was removed from his jurisdiction. And that was two hours after he had issued his instructions.

The movements and action of the 27th Division on the morning of 23 June are described in the text. Three things did happen, however, which directly affected the action on that morning and which can be described without undue confusion to the reader.

At 1655 hours on 22 June, while the Erskine conference was still going on, the 4th Marine Division reported a heavy counterattack along its front. This was beaten off with heavy casualties inflicted on the Japanese, but in the process the Marines were forced back from the ground which they had occupied in the waning hours of the day. On the night of 22 June the 4th Marine Division occupied foxholes from four hundred to six hundred yards in rear of the positions shown on the situation map at General Erskine's headquarters. This created a situation that was not considered at the Ralph Smith-Erskine conference because Erskine had not yet heard of this loss of ground. When the 27th Division took over the line next morning they had to fight for the line of departure from which they were ordered to launch their attack. The fight took all day and in the process the Division took heavy casualties. When the day's action concluded, Ralph Smith's men were in possession of the line from which they were supposed to have moved at 1000 that day, but they were not an inch farther.

The second incident occurred during the approach march. Despite the careful

precautions taken the night before, the 165th Infantry crossed the line of march of the 106th Infantry, cutting it just behind the leading unit in the column. As a result, only one company of the 106th Infantry reached the Marine line before 1000. Both battalions of the 165th were in place before the appointed time. This left a gap, one company wide. Both Colonel Kelley and Colonel Ayers ordered their units to move out at King hour (1000) without waiting for K Company, which did not reach the relief point until 1055. As it so happened K Company had the hardest fight to reach the theoretical line of departure and the whole Division action during the day hinged on the difficulties encountered by Capt. William Heminway and his men.

The third and last incident involving the 27th Division on this day was a combination of three factors. It began with the fast advance made by the 4th Marine Division early on 22 June. This rapid advance carried it squarely up against the main defenses of the enemy on Saipan. Lt. General Saito, the Japanese commander on the island, had set up his headquarters at the north end of a long corridor that ran between Mount Tapotchau on the west and a lower range of hills on the east. Facing the Americans down this corridor, General Saito had drawn up a reenforced regiment of four thousand men and ordered them to fight to the death. This combination, the incident of terrain, the determination of the Japanese, and the accident of a rapid advance against negligible opposition on the previous day, served to cause corps headquarters to underrate the situation on 23 June. For some reason the corps intelligence officer continued to minimize this resistance long after Ralph Smith had been relieved, characterizing it as consisting of a few scattered riflemen, despite the fact that on 24 June the 27th Division reported among other details that in one short period, fourteen out of sixteen medium tanks supporting the Division had been knocked out.

The battle on 23 and 24 June was vicious. In the twenty-four hours after it assumed responsibility for the line, the 27th Division incurred six hundred casualties. At dark on 23 June the Japanese launched a counterattack down the corridor that hit the 27th Division all along its front. This attack, supported by at least a company of tanks, was composed of enough infantry strength to constitute a major threat.

Early on the morning of 24 June, Holland Smith sent a telegram to Ralph Smith. In it he expressed his extreme dissatisfaction with the failure of the 27th Division to advance on the previous day. He took into account, neither the fact that the Division had started five hundred yards behind the supposed line of departure, nor the heavy fighting that had raged throughout the day and night.

The situation did not improve after the telegram was received. Ralph Smith and his assistant division commander, Brig. Gen. Ogden J. Ross, left Division headquarters at 0630 hours on the 24th and went up to the front lines. This writer saw Ralph Smith several times during the forenoon with his front-line companies. He went over every foot of ground with the men who were fighting and made a complete survey of the situation. By noon he had worked out a plan of maneuver by which he hoped to outflank the Japanese stronghold. During the same period there is no record of any member of the corps staff having visited this zone of action. The only officer remotely connected with this group who made the trip was a major of artillery who was attached to the corps operations section as an observer. This officer later testified with some awe as to the amount of opposition being encountered by the two assault regiments of Ralph Smith's division.

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FOR 27TH DIVISION

Released By G B ERSKINE C/S

240836K

O.P.

DATE

PRECEDENCE

COMMANDING GENERAL IS HIGHLY DISPLEASED WITH THE FAILURE OF THE 27TH DIVISION ON JUNE 23RD TO LAUNCH ITS ATTACK AS ORDERED AT K HOUR AND THE LACK OF OFFENSIVE ACTION DISPLAYED BY THE DIVISION IN ITS FAILURE TO ADVANCE AND SEIZE OBJECTIVE O-5 WHEN OPPOSED ONLY BY SMALL ARMS AND MORTAR FIRE X THE FAILURE OF THE 27TH DIVISION TO ADVANCE IN ITS

ZONE OF ACTION RESULTED IN THE HALTING OF ATTACKS BY THE 4TH AND 2ND MARINE DIVISIONS ON THE FLANKS OF THE 27TH IN ORDER TO PREVENT DANGEROUS EXPOSURE OF THEIR INTERIOR FLANKS X IT IS DIRECTED THAT IMMEDIATE STEPS BE TAKEN TO CAUSE THE 27TH DIVISION TO ADVANCE AND SEIZE OBJECTIVES AS ORDERED

176

103

*Recd 1030
24 June*

24 JUNE 44

| | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
|----------------------------|------|--|-------|------|------|-----|-------|---------------------|----------|--------|--------|---------|---------|--------|
| FROM: | | TO: | | | | | | INFO: | | | | | | |
| CTF 56 | | CG 27TH INFANTRY DIVISION (BY HAND) | | | | | | CTF 52 (OM AT 1045) | | | | | | |
| D/T Group: 240836K | | | | | | | | | | | | | | |
| V C O R P S | CG | CS | G-1 | G-2 | G-3 | G-4 | TQM | Slg O | Comm. O. | 2 Div. | 4 Div. | 27 Div. | 77 Div. | InCmdr |
| | Arty | NGFO | Surg. | Chem | Engr | Adj | Air O | | | | | | | |

The telegram sent by Corps' headquarters to General Ralph Smith expressing dissatisfaction with the advance of the 27th Division on the 23d.

Before Ralph Smith had even presented his new plan to his subordinates, events were already under way leading to his relief. At 1130 on the morning of 24 June Holland Smith visited the flagship of Admiral Turner, the over-all commander of the operations then being conducted in the Marianas. At this time he asked for authority to relieve Ralph Smith of his command. He based his request on the grounds that Ralph Smith had contravened his orders relating to Nafutan Point and on the fact that the 27th Division's late and uncoordinated attack on the morning of 23 June had jeopardized the success of the whole operation. General Smith and Admiral Turner then went to the flagship of Admiral Spruance for a conference. What other oral charges Holland Smith made on that morning to Admiral Spruance and to Admiral Turner have never been revealed, but Admiral Spruance authorized the relief and the corps commander returned to his headquarters and wrote out the orders relieving the Army commander from his post. They were delivered to Ralph Smith by courier while he was still at his front-line post at three o'clock in the afternoon.

In the meantime, Ralph Smith had begun the execution of his plan to outmaneuver the Japanese position. The 3d Battalion, 165th Infantry, had moved into position and launched its attack at 1335 hours. It might be added that, never, for a moment, did the frontal assault slacken its effort to push into the enemy defenses and it should be noted that the flanking movement began two hours after Holland Smith applied for authority to relieve Ralph Smith and that during the

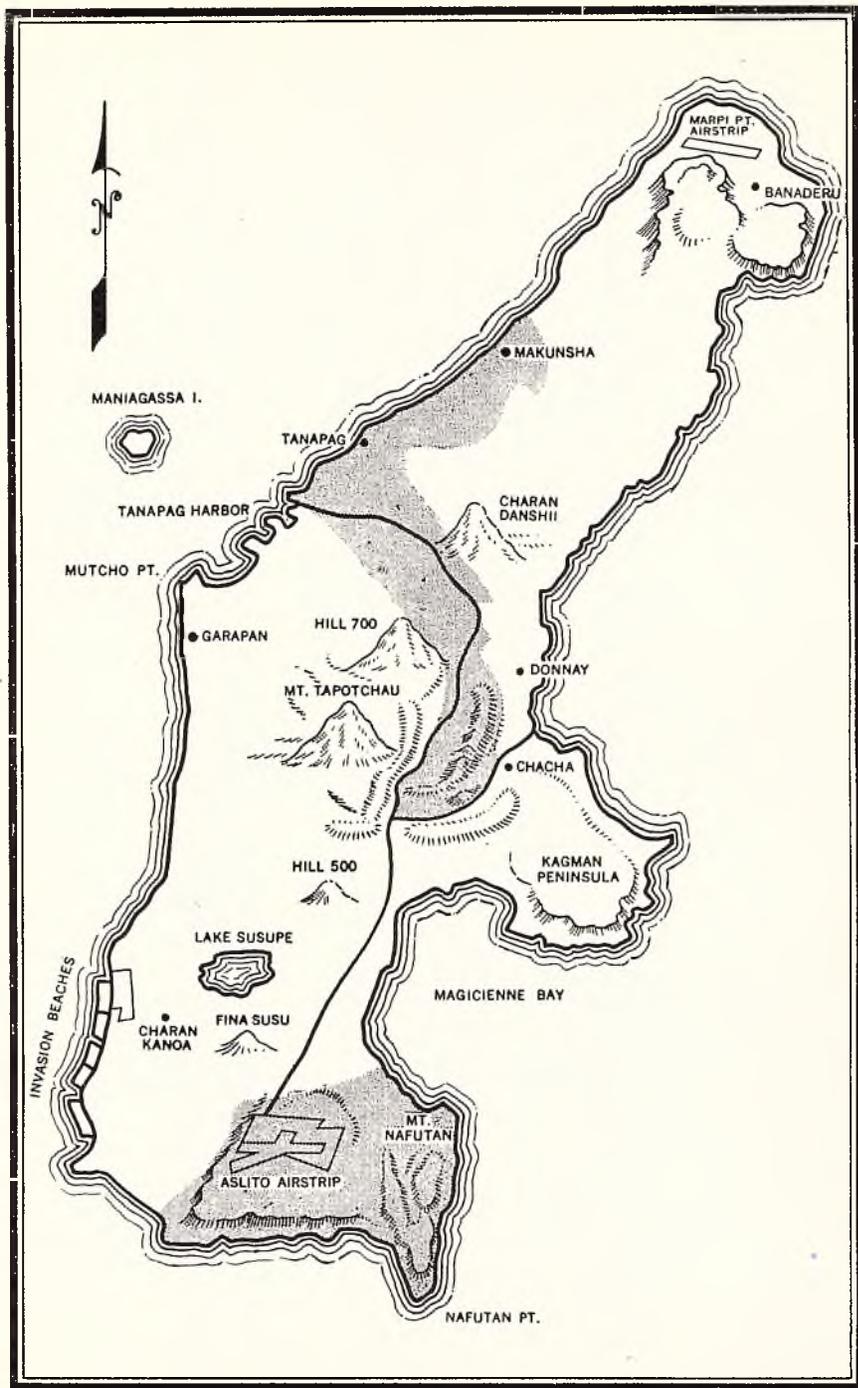
very hours Holland Smith was complaining to his superiors and seeking Ralph Smith's relief, Ralph Smith himself—without any specific knowledge of his efforts being known to Holland Smith or his staff—was continually up with his forward units, giving them encouragement and support.

In addition to the flanking movement of the afternoon of 24 June, the 27th Division commander had outlined an even more ambitious project for the next day which involved the whole 106th and 165th Infantry regiments. Upon reading his relief orders Ralph Smith went over these plans again with the regimental commanders, without informing them of his relief, and then returned to 27th Division headquarters, arriving there at a little after 1700 hours. There he found Maj. Gen. Sanderford Jarman already in command. General Jarman asked Ralph Smith for a detailed description of the situation. He was unfamiliar with the problem and the past attempts to solve it. The retiring commander outlined the job ahead and described the plans for the next day. General Jarman then called Colonels Kelley and Ayers, informed them of the relief, and ordered them to carry out the plans already laid down.

After the two regimental commanders had left Division headquarters, the two generals continued their conversations. At about 2300 hours a message was handed to the deposed general, informing him that he must leave the island before daylight. A seaplane was waiting to carry him back to the Hawaiian Islands. Ralph Smith left Saipan at 0530 hours, 25 June, accompanied by one aide, Capt. Warner McCabe, very few of his personal belongings, and no records.

The 27th Division went on in the battle for Saipan to the bitter end. At Nafutan Point, at 0100 hours on 27 June, the outnumbered and overextended 2d Battalion, 105th Infantry, after pinching the defenders back into the extremities of the peninsula, lost their quarry when the Japanese, some 450 in number, infiltrated out of their prison and attacked Aslito Airfield and other rear area installations. In his letter of 23 June Ralph Smith had predicted this very thing.

In the north the 27th Division executed Ralph Smith's maneuver. Some of it was successful and by 26 June the 165th Infantry had slipped by the strong-point and continued its advance to the north. Colonel Ayers allowed his 106th Infantry to swing too wide in its attempt and his part of the maneuver was doomed to failure. On the morning of 26 June, when he was slow in swinging his regiment back into line, General Jarman relieved him. This was the only officer in the 27th Division relieved, then, or subsequently, in the Saipan battle itself, by General Jarman, or his successor, Maj. Gen. George W. Griner. There was no general reorganization, no drastic change of plans, or pronounced change of policy within the Division though it is true that nineteen other officers were relieved when the campaign was over, only one of whom had commanded a unit in the battle. There was only one explanation for the progress in the next few days. The men were out fighting the enemy, killing him, and reducing his positions, thereby cutting his ability to resist. The final act of the 27th Division in the Saipan campaign was the great stand made by the 105th Infantry against the last frenzied attack of the Japanese on the morning of 7 July, in which 1,100 men of two battalions killed 2,295 enemy at a cost of 918 casualties to themselves. (The total number of enemy killed that morning by the 27th as a whole was 4,311.) The 27th Division suffered a total of 1,053 men killed and 2,617 men wounded in the 25-day battle. No regiment of the Division was in line less



than seventeen days and one, the 165th, was never out of the line once it went into action, except when moving from one front to another.

The relief of Ralph Smith would have ended there and should have, had it not been for unfortunate publicity given the case. Certain circles have accused Ralph Smith of starting the ball rolling. Actually, the deposed general had nothing to do with it. He did not return to the United States. He returned to the Hawaiian Islands where he was still subject to censorship regulations. He talked to no one. The man who did break the story was an Army officer, who did so entirely at his own volition. A War Department observer on Saipan, this officer returned to San Francisco on 1 July and either intentionally, or without realizing it, touched the match to the powder train. As already noted, there was no official comment on the story by the War Department, nor has there been since. Both the War and Navy Departments were bound to keep a closed mouth. Here was prime fodder for enemy propaganda machines. Had there been any acknowledgment of a breach on Saipan from official sources, it could have resulted in serious damage. So both departments kept their spokesmen under wraps, sat tight and waited for the affair to blow over. The press of the country continued to speculate.

Meanwhile, on 4 July, Ralph Smith was ordered to face an official board of inquiry. He did not ask for this investigation. It was designed to look into the circumstances of his relief. The theater commander, Lt. Gen. Robert C. Richardson, Jr., adopted the attitude that no general officer could be relieved in the midst of a battle without a serious inquiry into the circumstances and into the fitness of the officer in question. This board included Lt. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, commander of Tenth Army; Lieut. Gen. (then Maj. Gen.) John R. Hodge, who commanded XXIV Corps so brilliantly on Okinawa and who later commanded the U. S. Army Forces in Korea; and two other general officers. The board handed down its findings on 4 August 1944, after a month of hearings and investigation of documents. It investigated the relief of Ralph Smith on the basis of charges made to Admiral Spruance by Holland Smith on the morning of 24 June. These charges were included in a letter handed to the Admiral on that morning. Also introduced into evidence was a supplementary letter, written by the Marine general on 27 June at the request of General Richardson. The board accepted this as a fuller statement of the case against Ralph Smith.

The board of inquiry's conclusions were simple. In regard to the charges of contravention of orders, the board reported:

"No part of the evidence points toward any attempt on the part of Major General Ralph C. Smith to 'contravene' orders relative to the action on Nafutan Point. Inasmuch as the 105th Infantry did not [receive any orders directly from Corps headquarters], it was logical and appropriate that the commanding general, 27th Division, take the necessary steps to insure that the 105th Infantry had a directive. [General Smith's order] directed the 105th to 'hold' only long enough to effect the relief of the 165th Infantry, and then resume the offensive."

← *The island of Saipan. Shaded area shows the sectors of the 27th Infantry Division. After landing on the invasion beaches the Division drove across Aslito Airfield and contained the Japanese on Nafutan Point. Later all but one battalion was moved to the north for the main effort. The 2d Marine Division was on the left of the 27th and the 4th Marine Division on the right in the drive to the north.*

COMMAND

The Generals Smith

At a Washington press conference, after his return last week from the Marianas, tough Lieut. General Holland M. Smith, commander of all the Marines in the Pacific,* was asked an embarrassing question. Was it true that he had fired one of his division commanders, the Army's Major General Ralph Smith, during the battle of Saipan?

Snorted "Howlin' Mad" Smith: "I knew someone would ask that question. One of the many prerogatives and responsibilities of a commanding officer . . . is the assignment and transfer of officers commanding subordinate elements. . . . Unfortunately, circumstances forced me to exercise one of these prerogatives. I did relieve General Ralph Smith."

For further details Howlin' Mad Smith referred reporters to the War Department (because Ralph Smith is an Army General). The War Department referred them back to Holland Smith (because he had made the change in command). But a long hushed-up fact had been officially admitted. The story—still unofficial:

Army Version. Ralph C. Smith, 50, handsome and soft-voiced, commanded the 27th (New York National Guard) Army Division, until Howlin' Mad relieved him on the ninth day of the 25-day battle of Saipan. Ralph Smith was relieved, according to the Army version, because of a difference over tactics: Marines tear into battle, trying to win it quickly; soldiers proceed cautiously, to save lives.

When he was relieved, Ralph Smith flew 4,000 miles back to Pearl Harbor. There the Army's Lieut. General Robert C. Richardson, Jr. promptly gave him command of another division—an obvious note of confidence in Ralph Smith and in the Army *v.* the Marines.

Marine Version. The Marines believe that their forge-ahead tactics cost

less in lives than trying to cut off the enemy's tail by inches. (High Marine casualties are due to the fact that Marines are beachhead assault troops, always given the toughest assignments.) But the relief of Ralph Smith, according to the Marine version, had nothing to do with tactics.

By the eighth day of the Saipan battle the Second and Fourth Marine Divisions had advanced rapidly on each side of the island. Then they had to wait, because two regiments of the 27th Army Division—with battalions faced in three directions, unable even to form a line—were hopelessly bogged down in the center. The third regiment of the 27th meanwhile had failed dismally to clean out a pocket of Japs in the southeast corner of the island.

Although terrific artillery barrages were laid down in front of them, Ralph Smith's men froze in their foxholes. For days these men, who lacked confidence in their officers, were held up by handfuls of Japs in caves. When it began to look as if what had been gained might be lost, Fourth Marine Division troops even moved in front of a sector of the 27th's line to save it. From the Marine point of view, General Ralph Smith's chief fault was that he had long ago failed to get tough enough to remove incompetent subordinate officers.

On the ninth day Ralph Smith was relieved (technically, for disobeying an order to attack), and Major General Sanderford Jarman, who had come along as Saipan's post-battle commander, took over the 27th temporarily, fired several officers, including a regimental colonel. Thereafter, the 27th performed fairly well until its greenest regiment broke and let some 3,000 Japs through in a suicide charge which a Marine artillery battalion finally stopped, at great cost to itself.

Between these versions one thing was clear: when field commanders hesitate to remove subordinates for fear of inter-service contention, battles and lives will be needlessly lost.

*And one of the three three-star generals in Marine Corps history. The others: ex-Commandant (now Minister to South Africa) Thomas Holcomb, and present Commandant Alexander Archer Vandegrift.

The board then went on to review the question of the 27th Division's attack on the morning of 23 June. It said, in reference to this charge:

"The bulk of the 27th Division was opposed by the enemy's main defensive position, on a difficult piece of terrain, naturally adapted to defense, artificially strengthened, well manned, and heavily covered by fire. Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith was not aware of the strength of this position and expected the 27th Division to overrun it rapidly. The 27th Division, instead of massing its personnel in a frontal attack against the strongest part of the enemy's position, initiated a maneuver to contain and outflank the enemy's resistance. The delay incident to this situation was mistaken by Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith as an indication that the 27th Division was lacking in aggressiveness and that its commander was inefficient."

With these two findings, the board issued its conclusions. They were: (1) that Holland Smith had full authority to relieve Ralph Smith from his command. (2) That Holland Smith was not fully informed regarding conditions in the zone of the 27th Division when he issued orders relieving Ralph Smith. (3) The relief of Ralph Smith was not justified by facts. (4) That Ralph Smith's official record or future commands should not be adversely affected by his relief.

These findings were never released to the press. However, General Richardson immediately placed Ralph Smith in command of the 98th Infantry Division, then in the Hawaiian Islands. Approximately a month later he was returned to the United States and subsequently served in the European Theater of Operations with distinction.

Officially this was the end of the Smith case. Early in September 1944, Lt. Gen. Holland M. Smith returned to the United States. His was undoubtedly a peculiar position. He had acted in a manner that he undoubtedly felt justified at the time and, no matter what the findings of the Buckner board, he had been placed in a difficult position by the decision of the board, the subsequent action of General Richardson in giving the deposed general a new command, and the enforced silence of both the War and Navy Departments. He had been preceded by reports of differences in tactics and bitter personal quarrels. Almost the first question asked of him was, "What really happened?" Holland Smith kept his mouth shut. Officially, as far as he was concerned, the case was still closed. He evidenced this on two separate occasions.

Almost immediately after Holland Smith's press conference there appeared on the newsstands of the United States two articles dealing with the controversy. Both were factually misleading and one of them was termed "libelous" by the commanding general of the 27th Division. This last appeared in the 18 September issue of *Time*. "Ralph Smith was relieved, according to the Army version," said the article, "because of a difference over tactics. . . . But the Marine version had nothing to do with tactics." It went on to say that the 27th Division was hopelessly bogged down in the center of the corps line "with battalions faced in three directions, unable to form a line." A third regiment of the Division "had failed dismally" to clean out the pocket of Japanese at Nafutan

← *The controversial story that appeared in Time magazine on 18 September 1944. Reproduced by permission of Time, Inc. Copyright, 1944, by Time, Inc.*

Point. Despite the fact that "terrific artillery barrages were laid down in front of them, the men of the 27th Division froze in their foxholes." The men lacked confidence in their officers. Handfuls of the enemy in caves were holding up the whole Division and eventually the 4th Marine Division had to move to save the 27th Division's holds on previous gains.

The article implied that all of these factors had entered into the relief of Ralph Smith. But not one of those charges had been made before the Buckner board by Holland Smith. Had they been they most certainly would have been investigated. The charges presented by Holland Smith, at the board's request, had been gone into fully and found wanting. *Time* had, in effect, presented new charges which needed answering, none of which had been presented before.

The *Time* article went on to say that General Jarman "fired several officers, including a regimental colonel." From then on the Division had performed satisfactorily until one regiment broke and let some three thousand Japanese through in a suicide charge. No mention, whatsoever, was made of the report of a board appointed by Admiral Spruance to investigate the action of 7 July, with which this latter statement is concerned. This board had not only absolved the 105th Infantry Regiment of the charge which the article made, but it highly commended the bravery of the men involved.

Time did not give its story a big play. Yet the fact that *Time* has a tremendous circulation and the article was read by most of its readers certainly had some effect. Many people reading it seem to have accepted it as the true story of the Saipan controversy. From the first sentence, however, the whole article is highly erroneous. The 27th Division *was* bogged down on the morning of 23 June, but there were considerably more than handfuls of Japanese on their front, as was brought out by the Buckner board and in an official report later handed down by Amphibious Corps headquarters itself. That the men of the 27th Division could not form a line is untrue, but that they had three battalions faced in different directions is correct. However, readers should have been informed that this situation was a planned one, perfectly logical on the terrain, and not the result of hopeless confusion as the article implied. It would also have been well if *Time* had mentioned that a board of general officers had examined this very situation and approved it. The statement was made as though it bore directly on the relief of Ralph Smith. Actually, the battalions in question had not begun their movement into that position until after 1330 in the afternoon. Holland Smith had asked for authority to relieve the Army general two hours before.

The remark about the men of the 27th Division "freezing" in their foxholes is belied by the fact that approximately six hundred of them were killed or wounded in this one 24-hour period. Although the word itself had not been used, these men were branded cowards in this one sentence. *Time* also neglected to state that the force in the south, at Nafutan, was one battalion and not a regiment and that the campaign there was not labeled a failure until 27 June, two full days after Ralph Smith left the island.

The issue of *Time* containing the article first appeared in the New Hebrides Islands, where the 27th Division was rehabilitating, on Sunday, 24 September 1944. Whatever the reaction to it in the United States, the impact at Espiritu Santo was indescribable. By nightfall the soldiers had gathered in small groups to discuss it and that night, until midnight, every company and every battery in the Division had held some sort of meeting, either official or unofficial, to pro-

test. Most of the men were indignant, some were hopping mad, others just stunned to think that anyone could allow such an article to be published about men who had recently gone through hell for their country. On 28 September, General Griner, the Division Commander, was moved to send a radio to General Richardson in which he stated that he could no longer assume the responsibility for leading the Division into combat unless some effort was made at once to clear the name of the Division.

"Upon being circulated within this Division [he later wrote] these articles produced the deepest resentment. The *Time* article is grossly inaccurate and studiously misleading and adds to these faults a base and unwarranted reflection upon the courage of the men of this Division, 1,053 of whom made the supreme sacrifice during the Saipan operation.

"Shortly after the publication of this article the personnel of this Division received numerous letters from their families and friends expressing the gravest concern. In addition, commanding officers and chaplains are receiving frantic inquiries from the families of the dead and wounded. The widow of an officer who was killed in action on 7 July has written that her concern over the charge of cowardice in the *Time* article approaches the poignancy of her grief at her husband's death.

"The effect of the *Time* article has been felt in still another way. On 4 October, the Division, at the request of the Island commander, conducted for local military and naval personnel a demonstration of the weapons with which the Division is armed. During the demonstration an unknown person placed the *Time* clipping on one of the guns being displayed, the objectionable sentences underlined in red.

"The rules of military censorship prevent a detailed presentation of the facts by the individuals concerned. Yet they are deeply conscious that it is the responsibility of someone to repair, insofar as possible, the unwarranted damage already done to their reputation, pride, and morale. To accomplish this, it is necessary that the falsities in these articles be established and published officially by higher authority. The undersigned feels strongly that higher authority has a definite responsibility to protect its personnel against slander."

General Richardson, upon receipt of this letter, initiated an investigation of the truth or falsity of the *Time* statements. It should be borne in mind that this was not an investigation of the relief of Ralph Smith. That investigation had already been carried out on the basis of charges officially made by Holland Smith. Late in October, as a result of this new charge, General Richardson forwarded to Admiral Nimitz a complete refutation, accompanied by documents that proved the *Time* article had no basis in fact. He recommended to the Admiral that the War or Navy Department take action to officially remove the stigma attached to the name of the 27th Division, that a letter written by General Griner to the editor of *Time* be given a full release to the press of the United States, and that the credentials of *Time's* correspondent who had sent in the story be withdrawn.

Admiral Nimitz forwarded these documents to naval headquarters in Washington with a recommendation for favorable action. The Navy Department forwarded them to General Marshall after seconding Admiral Nimitz's recommendation. Here the matter ended, with no action being taken. General Marshall apparently felt that a dispute which could cause open disunity in the services should

have no further hearing in public view. Admiral Nimitz, however, wrote a personal letter to General Griner in which he expressed his wish that the general would communicate to the Division the Admiral's confidence in the Division's action, past and future.

There were good reasons, perhaps, at the time for not having released the full story of this incident. The action of Holland Smith in relieving Ralph Smith was a routine, hasty and erroneous military incident, paralleled many times in the past war. Out of it grew a dispute out of all proportion to its importance. Although no official statement was ever made on the matter until long afterwards, the men of the Division who fought on Saipan were made to suffer unjustly. In the light of facts which now can be disclosed it is therefore only right that the names of the men who fought on Saipan, far from the generals' command posts, be cleared.

Appendix II: Report of Commander in Chief, Pacific Fleet

Cinpac File
A7-1
Serial 003506

Oct. 27, 1944

SECRET

From: Commander in Chief, U. S. Pacific Fleet and Pacific Ocean Areas.
To: Commander in Chief, United States Fleet.
Subject: Articles in TIME Magazine 12 September 1944, and LIFE Magazine 28 August 1944.
Reference: (a) Letter from Commanding General, United States Army Forces, Pacific Ocean Areas, AG 014.13/41 of 14 October 1944.
Enclosure: (A) Reference (a).

1. Forwarded.

2. I am in complete accord with the objections raised by Lt. Gen. Robert C. Richardson, Jr., U. S. Army, to the publication of the subject articles which, in my opinion, are contrary to the best interests of the nation.

3. (a) With respect to the recommendation contained in paragraph 5a, I am anxious to remove the stigma from the 27th Division which has resulted from the publication of the articles in question. To this end, it is recommended that a statement be issued by the Navy Department, or by me, which will indicate the Navy's continued confidence in the courage and battle efficiency of the 27th Division.

(b) It is recommended that Maj. Gen. Griner's proposed letter, enclosure 1 to enclosure (A), to the Editor of TIME be forwarded to him with the Navy Department's request that it be published.

(c) Since the articles in question are highly prejudicial to the maintenance of good relations between the Army and Navy in this theater of war, the dissemination of information of this kind is a distinct disservice not only to the public but to the armed forces. I recommend, therefore, that steps be taken to identify the author, or authors, and to establish the responsibility for the publication of these articles. In the event that any of these Persons are War Correspondents accredited to the Army and Navy, it is further recommended that their accreditation be rescinded in order that they may not again have an opportunity to publish articles of this nature.

C. W. NIMITZ.

Copy to:

ComGenPOA

CERTIFIED: True Copy of carbon
copy of CinCPOA Serial 003506.

CLARK L. RUFFNER,
Brigadier General, G.S.C.

Appendix III: Division Commander's Letter to Time

The Editor, TIME Magazine
TIME & LIFE Building
Rockefeller Center
New York 20, New York

28 September 1944

Dear Sir:

Reference is made to the article published in the September 18th issue of Time under the title of "Generals Smith."

The article contains but one sentence referring to the period of operations of the 27th Infantry Division during the period of my service as Division Commander. Inasmuch as this sentence is so unfounded in fact and misleading to the public mind, I am impelled to protest its implication in the interest of the war effort and the officers and men concerned.

The sentence in question follows: "Thereafter, the 27th performed fairly well until its greenest regiment broke and let some 3000 Japs through in a suicide charge which a Marine Artillery Battalion finally stopped, at great cost to itself."

The essential facts are as follows: The position of a regiment of this division was attacked at dawn 7 July by an enemy force of superior numbers, which force was charged with a mission of breaking through to the south end of the island. The total number of enemy involved can never be established, and by actual count 4311 dead Japs subsequently were buried in the zone of this regiment. Of this number 2295 were found in the actual position defended by it. This regiment fought valiantly. On this day it suffered 918 casualties, of which number more than half were killed in action. In the interest of historical accuracy, I quote from a signed statement of Admiral Spruance, Commander of the fleet conducting the operation: "There is no question but that our troops fought courageously in this action. The 1st and 2d Battalions and Headquarters Company, —Infantry and the 3d (Artillery) Battalion, —Marines deserve particular mention."

The Marine Artillery Battalion did not stop the attack. It fought very courageously and suffered 136 casualties. But it was likewise overrun.

The attack was stopped by a second infantry regiment of the 27th Division which also advanced and relieved the Marine Battalion in question. The number of enemy dead found in the position area of the Marine Battalion was 322. In the remaining area of the advance of the relieving infantry regiment, an additional 1694 enemy dead were counted and buried.

This largest counterattack launched against American troops by the Japanese during this war penetrated the forward positions to a depth of 1000 to 1500 yards, but this penetration was always firmly contained by the 27th Division.

The distortion of the facts of this special event and the circulation of an unwarranted reflection upon the valor of the hundreds of American soldiers who gave their lives in the defense of our country deserves the condemnation of all fair minded people.

Out of fairness to all concerned it is requested that you give full publicity to this letter in the columns of your magazine.

Very truly yours,

GEO. W. GRINER
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

Appendix IV: Letter from Secretary of the Navy

10 October 1944

My Dear Coudert:

I appreciate your letter of September 28th.

I join you in deprecating the Time article, as well as other public references to the fighting on Saipan. For your own information, the top command of the Navy, including Admiral Nimitz, and of the Marines made every effort to prevent this article being published. My own feeling is that we have plenty to do to fight the Japanese without promoting such controversies among ourselves.

However, I question whether anything can be accomplished by further public discussion. I think the best course is to try to see to it that on both sides full measure of recognition is given to each other's accomplishments. To finish this war and to handle the problems that arise afterward we are going to need all of the national unity we can get, and I agree with you that the publication of such critical articles is not the way to achieve that result.

I hope sometime in the near future I will be out your way and I will have a chance to see you and talk with you in person. In the meantime, I congratulate you on your own service.

Sincerely yours,

JIM

[James Forrestal]

Lt. Col. Charles C. Nast,
Hdqrs., 27th Inf. Div.,
A.P.O. 27, c/o Postmaster
San Francisco, California.

Appendix V: Medal of Honor Citations

By direction of the President, under the provisions of the act of Congress approved 9 July 1918 (W. D. Bul. 43, 1918), a Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty was awarded posthumously by the War Department in the name of Congress to the following-named officers and enlisted men:

Sergeant *Thomas A. Baker* (Army serial No. 20,201,130), Company A, 105th Infantry, United States Army, at Saipan, Marianas Islands, 19 June to 7 July 1944. When his entire company was held up by fire from automatic weapons and small arms from strongly fortified enemy positions that commanded a view of the company, Sergeant *Baker* voluntarily took a bazooka and dashed alone to within 100 yards of the enemy. Though heavy rifle and machine-gun fire was directed at him by the enemy he knocked out the strong point, enabling his company to assault the ridge. Some days later, while his company advanced across an open field flanked with obstructions and places of concealment for the enemy, Sergeant *Baker* again voluntarily took up a position in the rear to protect the company against surprise attack and came upon two heavily fortified enemy pockets manned by 2 officers and 10 enlisted men which had been by-passed. Without regard for such superior numbers he unhesitatingly attacked and killed all of them. Five hundred yards farther, he discovered six more of the enemy who had concealed themselves behind our lines and destroyed all of them. On 7 July 1944 the perimeter of which Sergeant *Baker* was a part was attacked from three sides by from three to five thousand Japanese. During the early stages of this attack Sergeant *Baker* was seriously wounded but he insisted on remaining in the line and fired at the enemy at ranges sometimes as close as 5 yards until his ammunition ran out. Without ammunition and with his own weapon battered to uselessness from hand-to-hand combat, he was carried about 50 yards to the rear by a comrade who then was himself wounded. At this point Sergeant *Baker* refused to be moved any farther, stating that he preferred to be left to die rather than risk the lives of any more of his friends. A short time later, at his request, he was placed in a sitting position against a small tree. Another comrade, withdrawing, offered assistance, but Sergeant *Baker* refused, insisting that he be left alone and be given the soldier's pistol with its remaining eight rounds of ammunition. When last seen alive Sergeant *Baker* was propped against the tree, pistol in hand, calmly facing the foe. Later, Sergeant *Baker's* body was found in this same position, gun empty, with eight Japanese lying dead before him. His deeds were in keeping with the highest traditions of the United States Army.

* * *

Lieutenant Colonel *William J. O'Brien*, 0243,758, Infantry, Army of the United States, at Saipan, Marianas Islands, from 20 June through 7 July 1944. When assault elements of his battalion were held up by intense enemy fire Colonel *O'Brien* ordered three tanks to precede the assault companies in an attempt to knock out the strong point. Because of direct enemy fire the tanks' turrets were closed, causing the tanks to lose direction and to fire into our own troops. Colonel *O'Brien*, with complete disregard for his own safety, dashed into full view of the enemy and ran to the leader's tank. By pounding on the tank with his pistol butt to attract the attention of the tank crew and mounting the tank fully exposed to enemy fire Colonel *O'Brien* personally directed the assault until the enemy strong point was liquidated. On 28 June 1944, while his battalion was at-

tempting to take a bitterly defended high ridge in the vicinity of Donnay, Colonel *O'Brien* arranged to capture the ridge by a double envelopment movement of two large combat patrols, he personally to control the maneuver. Colonel *O'Brien* crossed 1,200 yards of sniper-infested underbrush alone to arrive at a point where one of his patrols was being held up by the enemy. Leaving some men to contain the enemy, he led four men into a narrow ravine behind and killed or drove off all the Japanese manning that strong point. In this action he captured five machine guns and one 77mm field piece. Colonel *O'Brien* then organized the two patrols for night defense and against repeated counterattacks throughout the night he managed to hold ground. On 7 July 1944 his battalion and another battalion were attacked by an overwhelming enemy force, estimated at between three and five thousand Japanese. With bloody hand-to-hand fighting in progress everywhere, their forward positions were finally overrun by the sheer weight of the numbers. With many casualties, and ammunition running low, Colonel *O'Brien* refused to leave the front lines. Striding up and down the lines he fired at the enemy with a pistol in each hand, and his presence there bolstered the spirits of the men, encouraged them in their fight, and sustained them in their heroic stand. Even after he was seriously wounded Colonel *O'Brien* refused to be evacuated and, after his pistol ammunition was exhausted, he manned a caliber .50 machine gun mounted on a jeep and continued firing. When last seen alive he was standing upright, firing into the Japanese hordes that were then enveloping him. Some time later his body was found surrounded by the enemy he had killed. His valor was consistent with the highest traditions of the service. [*General Orders No. 35, War Department, Washington, D. C., 9 May 1945.*]

By direction of the President, under the provisions of the act of Congress approved 9 July 1918 (WD Bul. 43, 1918), a Medal of Honor for conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity at the risk of life above and beyond the call of duty was awarded by the War Department in the name of Congress to the following-named enlisted men:

* * *

Sergeant *Alejandro Renteria Ruiz* (Army serial No. 38,442,412) (then Private First Class), Company A, 165th Infantry Regiment, Army of the United States, on 28 April 1945 at Okinawa, when his unit was stopped by a skillfully camouflaged enemy pillbox, displayed conspicuous gallantry and intrepidity above and beyond the call of duty. His squad, suddenly brought under a hail of machine-gun fire and a vicious grenade attack, was pinned down. Jumping to his feet, Private *Ruiz* seized an automatic rifle and lunged through the flying grenades, rifle and automatic fire, for the top of the emplacement. An enemy soldier charged him and his rifle jammed. Undaunted, he whirled on the assailant and clubbed him down. He then ran back through bullets and grenades, seized more ammunition and another automatic rifle, and again made for the pillbox. Enemy fire was now concentrated on him, but he charged on, miraculously reaching the position and, in plain view, climbed to the top. Leaping from one opening to another, he sent burst after burst into the pillbox, killing 12 of the enemy and completely destroying the position. Private *Ruiz'* heroic conduct, in the face of overwhelming odds, saved the lives of many comrades and eliminated an obstacle which would have long checked his unit's advance. [*General Orders No. 60, War Department, Washington, D. C., 26 June 1946.*]

Appendix VI: Distinguished Unit Citations

Company F, 165th Infantry Regiment, is cited for conspicuous valor and outstanding performance of a combat mission against the Japanese military forces in the Okinawan phase of the Nansei Shoto Operation during the period 20-25 April 1945. On 20 April, during the drive south toward Machinato Airfield, *Company F* held an isolated position along the west coast. All supplies had to be brought by amphibious cargo carrier M29c (known as the "weasel") for a distance of almost 2,000 yards, and it was necessary to evacuate wounded by the same method. When tide conditions were unfavorable, rations had to be carried in and wounded evacuated by hand for over 2,000 yards. During the night of 20-21 April, men not engaged on the outpost line voluntarily sacrificed their sleep in order to hand carry five antitank guns, broken down, which they assembled in the darkness and used against the enemy the following day with devastating effect. On 24 April, *Company F* was ordered to conduct a night attack on Mike Ridge, west of Gusukuma Village. They ate a meal at 1700, filled their canteens, and drew ammunition. This was the last food, water, or ammunition they were to have until the morning of 27 April. At 1920, the enemy laid an intense artillery barrage on the company's positions, but at 2230 the attack was launched toward the ridge. Hardly had it got under way before the company ran headlong into a Japanese counterattack. This they beat off, reorganized, and at 250200 launched another attack. Again they ran into a counterattack, which they beat off. After engaging in a heavy fire fight for the remainder of the night, the company assaulted at 1900 the ridge which four other companies had previously failed to capture in their turn. The company commander pushed his men to within 40 yards of the impact area of his supporting artillery, whose axis of fire was parallel to his front line, and, by following the fire at that distance, placed his two assault platoons atop the ridge within 20 minutes. When they reached this point, there were only 31 men left in the two platoons and, within 10 minutes, 5 of these were killed and 2 wounded. However, in gaining this objective, this small group had killed or dispersed an enemy force estimated at 150. Their medical supplies exhausted and with little ammunition and water left, these men held off, without food, a series of four enemy counterattacks in force, during the ensuing 6 hours. At 1600, the company commander again took up the attack. He called for supporting artillery fire between the remnants of his two platoons atop the ridge and the support platoon at the bottom. Following the friendly artillery fire closely, he succeeded in getting 20 men of his support platoon and company headquarters to the top of the ridge, bringing his strength at that point to 46 men. Again, he launched an attack, which increased his foothold on the hill to a width of 150 yards. After darkness, the remainder of the company joined those on the crest of the ridge. Stripping machine-gun belts of ammunition, the company commander had it redistributed among the riflemen, and, at dawn, launched a determined attack, which by 261000 eliminated all enemy resistance for a distance of 1,200 yards to the south. When he reported the success of his mission, he was ordered to return to his starting point of the morning and to eliminate the enemy still to his flanks on the ridge. At this time the men of *Company F* had slept for only 2 nights out of 6 and had not eaten for over 48 hours. Intelligence estimates place the number of well-armed and determined enemy soldiers manning the defense sector which *Company F* breached at being over 500. The area captured by this greatly outnumbered force was considered such a skillful piece of enemy defensive engineering that the methods of

construction and defense became the subject for study by Headquarters Tenth Army. *Company F, 165th Infantry Regiment*, overcame this elaborate system of enemy defenses through dogged determination, disregard for the privations suffered by lack of food and water, and individual heroism on the part of every member of the command. (General Orders 53, Headquarters 27th Infantry Division, 20 July 1945, as approved by the Commander in Chief, United States Army Forces, Pacific.) [*General Orders No. 100, War Department, Washington, D. C., 7 November 1945.*]

The *105th Infantry Regiment* (less 3d Battalion and Company G) and the *Spears Detachment, 762d Provisional Tank Battalion*, attached, are cited for exceptionally outstanding performance of duty in combat against the enemy at Saipan, Marianas Islands, on 7 July 1944. The regiment attacked north toward the village of Makunsha on the west coast of Saipan, against increasing enemy resistance. At dawn on 7 July, this unit was subjected to one of the greatest Japanese mass attacks attempted in the Pacific Theater. The 1st and 2d Battalions fought furiously, as the enemy, attacking in great numbers and with fanatical fury, penetrated the combined perimeter defense and inflicted overwhelming casualties on the units. Forced to yield, the survivors of that fierce assault formed successive defensive positions and continued to engage the attacking forces. These units, faced with a dwindling supply of ammunition, water, and medical supplies, fought off incessant enemy attacks throughout the day. Meanwhile, the Japanese drive had carried on to the regimental command post where it was completely stopped and contained by the determined stand of Regimental Headquarters and Special Units. Every available man engaged in the action. Through the courage, tenacity, and endurance displayed by all ranks, this unit and its attachment, suffering severe casualties, repulsed the powerful assault launched by a numerically superior enemy and contributed materially to the defeat and destruction of the Japanese forces at Saipan. The conduct of the *105th Infantry Regiment* (less 3d Battalion and Company G) and the *Spears Detachment, 762d Provisional Tank Battalion*, attached, throughout the battle reflects great credit on itself and is in keeping with the highest traditions of the armed forces of the United States. (The foregoing citation supersedes the citation made previously to a subordinate unit for action included in the above-cited period, and does not constitute an additional citation authorizing the wearing of an Oak-Leaf Cluster to the Distinguished Unit Emblem to personnel of Headquarters Company, 105th Infantry Regiment, cited in paragraph 4, section VII, General Orders 45, War Department, 1946, which is rescinded.) [*General Orders No. 49, Department of the Army, 14 July 1948.*]

A NOTE ON THIS BOOK

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The 165th Infantry crosses the Equator, 16 November 1943



The rocks at Red Beach 1 on Makin, 20 November 1943



Top: The 165th Infantry landing at Red Beach 2 on Makin, 20 November 1943. **Center:** A view of Red Beach 1 on 20 November 1943. **Lower:** The famous hulks on Yellow Beach, 21 November 1943.



Top: Signal communication on Red Beach, Makin, 20 November 1943. Lower: Demolition of enemy position on Yellow Beach, 20 November 1943.



Top: Impromptu tank roadblock on Red Beach, Makin, 20 November 1943. Lower: Native inspection, Red Beach, 20 November 1943.



Top: Briefing en route to Makin, 20 November 1943. **Lower:** The 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, landing at Yellow Beach, 20 November 1943.



Top: Landing at Yellow Beach on Makin, 20 November 1943. Center: Beached landing craft on Red Beach 1, 20 November 1943. Lower: The Stone Pier on Makin, 24 November 1943.



Top: Equipment at Yellow Beach on Makin, 20 November 1943. Lower: Moving across Makin, 20 November 1943.



Makin Mary. Need we say more?



A tank goes over the side at Saipan, 16 June 1944



Top: The 27th Division landing at Charan Kanoa, 17 June 1944. Lower: Division supplies on the beach at Saipan, 18 June 1944.



Top: The control tower at Aslito, 18 June 1944. Lower: A ten-minute break on Saipan.



Top: *Everyone remembers when this Jap dump exploded on Saipan, 22 June 1944.*
Lower: *A ship burns at Tanapag Harbor, 4 July 1944.*



An infantryman at Nafutan



Top: *The advance to Magicienne Bay, 18 June 1944. Lower: Troops of the 106th Infantry moving to Mt. Tapotchau, 23 June 1944.*



The 106th Infantry landing at Saipan, 20 June 1944



Lt. Colonel O'Brien issuing orders to his battalion staff on Saipan, 6 July 1944



Dedication of the Division Cemetery on Saipan, 23 July 1944



Top: General Griner, Captain Carter, CO of 27th Reconnaissance Troop, General Richardson, and General Ross, on Saipan, 12 July 1944. Lower: General Jarman and General Richardson talk to a Saipan native.



Trophies of Saipan, 8 July 1944



Top: A show at Espiritu Santo in January 1945. Lower: One of the Pacific's famous goats.



Top: Flushing a pillbox at Eniwetok, 19 February 1944. Lower: The advance inland on Eniwetok, 19 February 1944.



Top: The attack on Kakazu, Okinawa, 19 April 1945. Lower: General Bradford at the forward OP, Okinawa, 23 April 1945.



Top: The 106th Infantry moves into line on Okinawa, 12 April 1945. Lower: Tanks of the 193d Tank Battalion behind Kakazu, 19 April 1945.



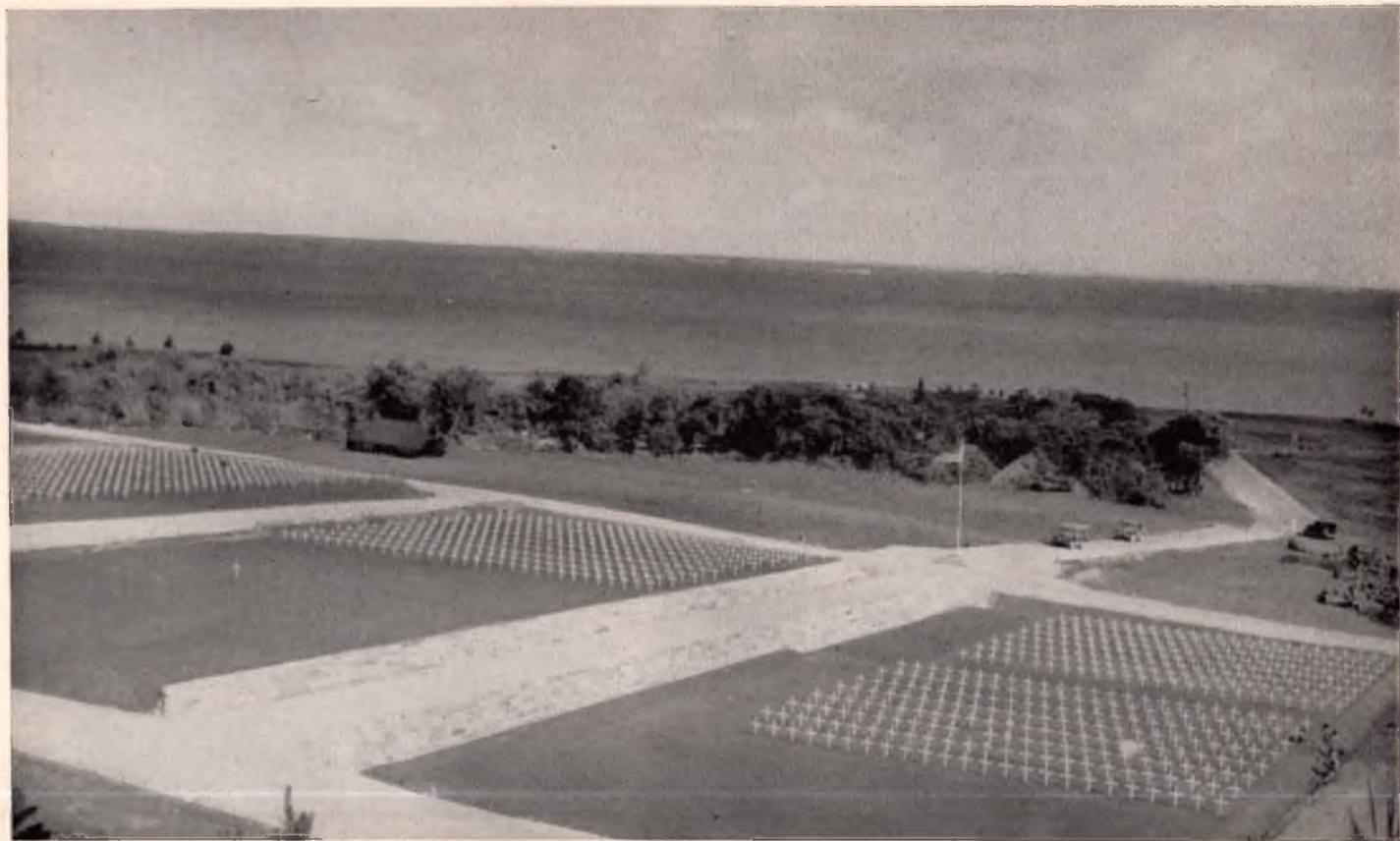
Top: Building the ponton bridge at Machinato, 19 April 1945. Lower: The last section of the bridge at Machinato, 19 April 1945.



Top: The 165th Infantry at Item Pocket, 21 April 1945. Lower: The 3d Battalion, 106th Infantry, destroys a tomb position, 19 April 1945.



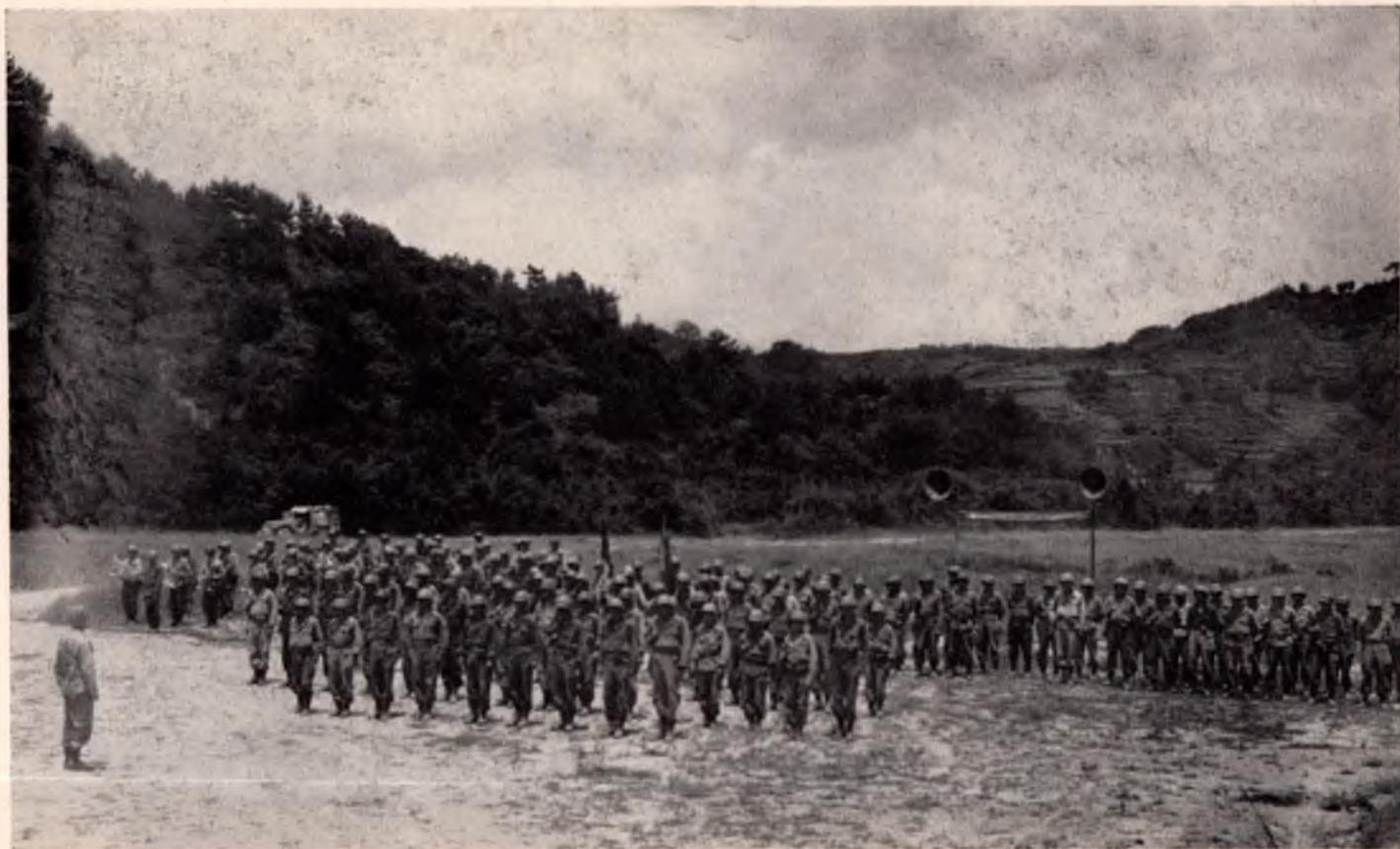
Top: Air drop to the 106th Infantry on Okinawa, 22 April 1945. Lower: Bivouac of the 102d Engineers on Okinawa, April 1945.



The Division Cemetery on Okinawa



A 27th Division Nisei interpreter meets his father on Okinawa



In the hills below Nago, on Okinawa, July 1945



Top: Father Yarwood says Mass on Okinawa, April 1945. Lower: Hebrew services conducted by Rabbi Rosenbaum at Nago, June 1945.



**Top: The 27th Division in Japan, October 1945. Inset: Entrance to Division Headquarters.
Lower: Getting acquainted with the younger set, Japan, October 1945.**