

A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE 14TH MARINES



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



COVER: From an emplacement in a canefield on Tinian, a pack howitzer gun crew stands ready, awaiting firing instructions. The lightweight, easily transported 75mm pack howitzer served Marines throughout the island-hopping campaigns of World War II. Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 127-N-90945

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by
Lieutenant Colonel Ronald J. Brown
U.S. Marine Corps Reserve



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A Brief History of the 25th Marines, 1981

Foreword

This historical monograph is one of a series of active duty and Reserve regimental histories. When completed, this series will cover each regiment in the Fleet Marine Force. The narrative highlights the significant activities of the 14th Marines and offers a general history of the Marine Corps activities in which it participated. This particular monograph was assigned to a member of Mobilization Training Unit (History) DC-7, an organization composed entirely of Reservists tasked with augmenting the activities of the History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. These Reservists provide skills as historians, artists, and curators as part of their MTU duties and stand ready to be called to active duty if needed.

Lieutenant Colonel Ronald J. Brown, USMCR, holds a bachelor of arts (with honors) degree in history from Western Michigan University, and a master of arts degree from Eastern Michigan University. Lieutenant Colonel Brown is currently a high school history teacher and football coach in Southfield, Michigan. While on active duty from 1967 to 1971 he served as an infantry officer in the Republic of Vietnam and was stationed at Quantico, Camp Pendleton, and Camp Lejeune. His Reserve activities have taken him to Korea, Japan, Okinawa, Camp Pendleton, Twentynine Palms, Washington, and Quantico. Lieutenant Colonel Brown is the author of many feature articles and is a regular book reviewer for several professional journals.

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



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

Preface

The 14th Marines is the artillery regiment assigned to the 4th Marine Division, the ground combat arm of the select Marine Corps Reserve. As such the 14th Marines represents one-quarter of the direct support and almost all of the general support heavy artillery in the Marine Corps. *A Brief History of the 14th Marines* is a concise narrative of the regiment, including its brief service during the World War I era, its proud service in the Pacific during World War II, and its reactivation and reorganizations since 1962. Official records of the Marine Corps and appropriate historical works were used in compiling this short history. This monograph is published for the information of those interested in the 14th Marines and the events that shaped its history.

This monograph was produced under the general editorial guidance of Mr. Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Chief Historian of the History and Museums Division. Editorial contributions were made by Mr. Benis M. Frank, Dr. V. Keith Fleming, and Mr. Jack Shulimson. Final editing in preparation for publication was done by Mr. Charles R. Smith. Some of the research on Saipan and Tinian was provided by Major Jeremiah J. Ashcroft II, USMCR. Research assistance was provided by Miss Evelyn A. Englander and Mrs. Pat Morgan, Library Section; Mr. Danny J. Crawford of the Reference Section; and Mrs. Joyce E. Bonnett of the Archives Section. Photographic support was rendered by Mrs. Regina Strother of the Reference Section. The index was prepared by Mr. Benis M. Frank and Mrs. Meredith P. Hartley.

The various production phases this volume went through before publication were professionally handled by the head of the Publications Production Section, Mr. Robert E. Struder. The manuscript was typeset by Mrs. Catherine A. Kerns. The maps and charts were produced by Mr. W. Stephen Hill, who also designed the volume.

Special thanks are due to Lieutenant Colonel Cyril V. Moyher, USMCR, who offered patient advice, valuable guidance, and outstanding administrative support while attached to MTU(Hist) DC-7; and to Colonel Torrence W. Rogers and Sergeant Major Richard L. Butcher for their concern and support for this project. Finally, I wish to express my thanks to the current and former "cannoneers" of the 14th Marines who reviewed the comment draft.



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Introduction

The ultimate goal of any military force has always been to ensure victory by concentrating the maximum amount of combat power at the decisive point during the crucial time of the battle. In the early ages of warfare, this most often meant simply massing more troops than the enemy could muster, and then overpowering them with sheer force of numbers. As time passed, technology advanced and dramatically increased the commander's firepower and mobility. Eventually, armies grouped together soldiers who had mastered certain skills to form specialized "arms" to support the maneuver elements. One of the oldest, best known, and most common of these separate arms is the one associated with the science of gunnery, called the artillery.

The primary mission of the artillery always has been close combat support for the maneuver elements of an armed force. This has been true ever since the first unknown warrior picked up a rock and flung it at his enemy. Despite vast tactical and technological innovations, the fundamental task has remained unchanged, even with the passing of centuries. Modern field artillery still provides timely, accurate, long-range fire in support of the units at the forward edge of the battle zone. While the mission of the artillery has remained constant, the war machines themselves have undergone revolutionary changes. It hardly seems possible that today's ultrasophisticated weaponry like the Cannon-Launched, Guided Projectile, capable of striking a moving target 30 kilometers away with deadly certain accuracy, is a distant relative of the simple sling of Biblical days. Yet, it is true. Artillery weapons have simply kept pace with the sweeping technological advances of mankind.

Most field artillery weapons are bulky, complex machines that are extremely vulnerable to direct fire by enemy weapons; therefore, in all but the most unusual circumstances, they operate outside the range of small arms fire. As a result, their contributions to victory have sometimes been overlooked by historians more interested in the heroic actions of units or individuals engaged in close combat with enemy forces. Too frequently the fact that successful military operations in conventional war were the result of close coordination of all combat arms was forgotten. This has been particularly true of Marine Corps operations. Once ashore, one-half the ground-based firepower of a Marine division is furnished by its organic artillery regiment. This is the story of one such regiment, the 14th Marines.¹

Currently, the 14th Marines is one of the regiments assigned to the 4th Marine Division. The 14th Marines differs from the other numbered regiments in the division because it is an artillery unit.² The 14th Marines is organized, equipped, and trained to provide close and continuous indirect fire support for the division's maneuver elements. The 4th Marine Division is the ground force of the selected Marine Corps Reserve. Its members must be ready to mobilize and augment regular units in times of national emergency or at the direction of the President of the United States. The guns of the 14th Marines have always provided outstanding support for the units of the 4th Marine Division day and night, in all types of terrain, weather, and climate. Today, the Reserve cannoners of the 14th Marines stand always at the ready, prepared to resume firing whenever and wherever they may be needed.

CHAPTER 1

World War I Era

The heritage of the 14th Marines began just after the end of World War I. Earlier, on 6 April 1917, the United States declared war on Germany. The climate of opinion in America strongly supported this act of Congress and a wave of patriotism swept across the country. Young men, attracted by slogans such as "Be First To Fight" or "Tell It To The Marines," rushed to enlist in the United States Marine Corps in unprecedented numbers.¹ Soon, recruit depots at Parris Island, South Carolina, and Mare Island, California, were overloaded. Space for training remained limited despite the establishment of several more facilities. To alleviate this congestion, the Marine Corps leased six thousand acres of land just south of Washington, D.C. near the little town of Quantico, Virginia.² This beautiful spot, along the Potomac River in the rolling hills of Virginia, remains a key Marine Corps training center today.³

At Quantico, the 14th Regiment was formed to fill the vacuum left when the 10th Regiment departed for the Naval Proving Grounds at Indian Head, Maryland, to receive further gunnery instruction with its new 7-inch naval guns. The newly activated regiment

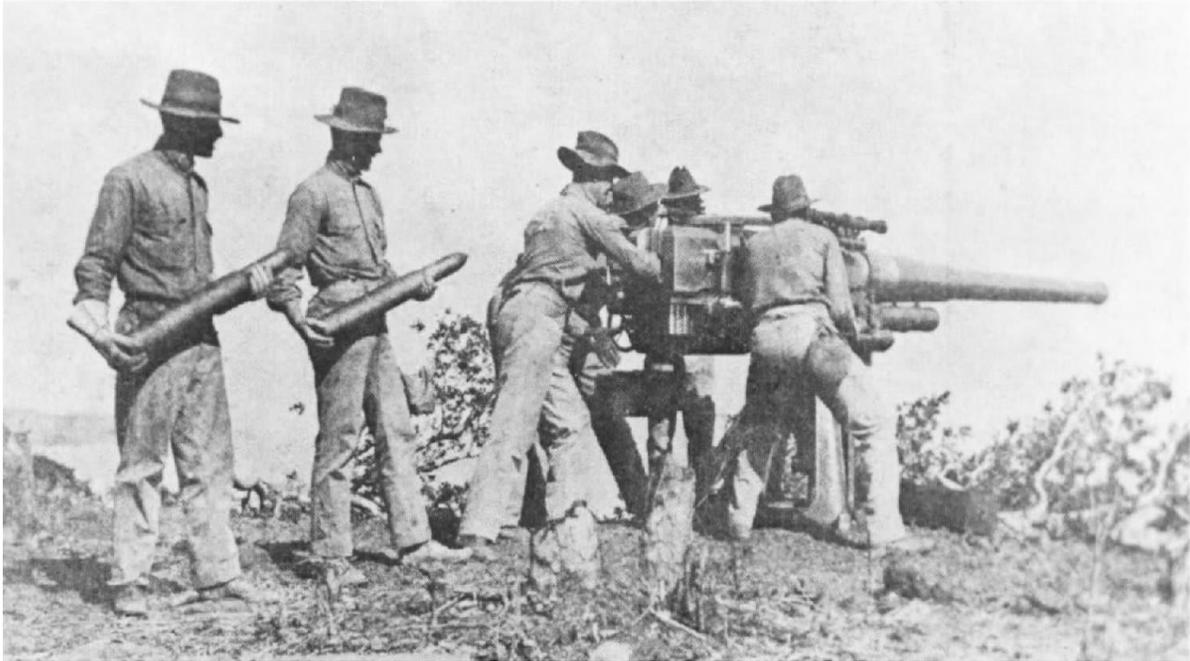
received its first colors on 26 November 1918.⁴ The officers and noncommissioned officers of the 14th Regiment were seasoned veterans. Some had seen service in Cuba in 1898, many had participated in one or more of the frequent American interventions in the Caribbean area, and a few were recently returned from France.⁵ The fledgling 14th Regiment took over much of the equipment left behind by the 10th Regiment. The 14th Regiment inherited many of its finest enlisted men from the 10th Regiment as well. They formed a tough and uncompromising cadre around which an outstanding new unit could be built. Colonel Richard M. Cutts, a preeminent Marine of the era, was selected to command the 14th Regiment.⁶ Colonel Cutts gained fame as the coinventor of the Cutts Compensator, a muzzle brake for the Thompson submachine gun. He also gained recognition for his outstanding performance as the commander of the *Policia Nacional Dominicana*, the national police force of the Dominican Republic.⁷

The new regiment mustered 28 officers and 1,027 enlisted men. It consisted of one headquarters detachment and three battalions. The headquarters detach-

Marine crew loads a 3-inch naval gun similar to those used by the regiment in training drills during the first six months of 1918 in preparation for possible duty in France.

Marine Corps Historical Collection





Marine Corps Historical Collection

Marine gun crew at field artillery drill at Quantico in 1918. These Marines were equipped with the 3-inch field gun rather than the French 75mm gun used by the Army in France.

ment was led by regimental adjutant Harry H. Courvette and contained nine officers and 53 enlisted Marines.⁸ This detachment was responsible for the regiment's administration, supply, signals, and operational planning. Captain Courvette wore many hats. In addition to his job as regimental administrative officer, he also functioned as the regimental executive officer, reconnaissance officer, and signal officer.

The requirements for entering the detachment's technical staff were stiff. Before being posted to it, each enlisted man had to pass a competency test administered by the regiment's officers. These few Marines performed all of the functions of a modern regimental staff, as well as the additional duty of caring for the horses and mules needed for headquarters transportation.⁹

Most of the regiment's manpower was in its three battalions, which were divided into companies. While actual manning levels fluctuated, each company was authorized 4 officers, 24 non-commissioned officers (NCOs), and 75 privates. Most companies mustered two or three officers and about 100 enlisted men during this period.¹⁰ Major, later Major General, Emile P. Moses commanded the 1st Battalion. The 1st Battalion had four companies: the 170th, 171st, 172d, and the 173d. Major Victor I. Morrison's 2d Battalion controlled the 174th, 175th, 176th, and 177th Companies. The 3d Battalion was a light battalion of only two companies, the 178th and 179th.¹¹

The new 14th Regiment had three primary tasks to accomplish during its rigorous training program. One major task involved basic military training. A second objective was to familiarize the neophyte Marines with the regiment's 3-inch naval guns. The last task was preparation for possible duty overseas.* The skills required to operate the complex artillery pieces were vastly different from the skills used by infantrymen; therefore, the men of the 14th Regiment faced a dual commitment.

To accomplish the first two goals, the companies conducted infantry drill with rifles during the morning, and artillery gun drill in the afternoon. The command considered infantry drill necessary for two reasons. First, rifle drill helped the gunners of the 14th Marines maintain a high state of discipline. It also trained them to act as an infantry force should their battery positions be threatened by an enemy assault.

Training with their artillery weapons involved learning the "mechanism of fire" for the unfamiliar guns. Instruction began in the classroom, followed by hands-on experience gained through the seemingly endless gun drills on the parade ground where men responded by the numbers, loading imaginary ammunition and

*After the armistice, the 4th Marine Brigade was sent to Germany for occupation duty. Other AEF units were posted to Russia to protect American lives and property. A small detachment of Marines landed at the Russian port of Vladivostok in 1919.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 525409
Col Richard M. Cutts assumed command of the 14th Regiment, activated at Quantico, Virginia, in 1918.

“firing” at imaginary targets. Then came live-fire exercises in the field. Once each gunner was an expert at his own craft, he was cross-trained to perform the duties of a technical NCO. This training allowed the unit to function smoothly should an NCO be transferred, absent, or disabled in combat. The men spent the evening hours with the care and feeding of the animals that made up the bulk of the regiment's transportation.¹²

During field firing, an officer commanded each platoon. The senior lieutenant supervised the advance to action, the establishment of a proper firing position, and the correct delivery of fire on targets designated by the company commander. Sergeants commanded specific guns. Corporals were in charge of gun crews, caissons, and limbers, or motor tractor operations. The gunnery sergeant and his technical NCOs functioned similarly to a modern fire direction center (FDC). They located targets, computed and relayed proper firing data to the guns, and helped supervise the conduct of fire. Each company had four guns, eight caissons, and sufficient mounts or motor tractors to transport its equipment.¹³ Then, as now, artillery support required the smooth incorporation of all hands into a well-knit team. The long hours and hard work put in by the Marines of the 14th Regiment ensured this degree of cooperation.

In early 1919 the expeditionary troops began returning to the United States from Europe, and America no longer needed its extensive wartime military establishment. Demobilization was the order of the day. In 18 months the total strength of the Marine Corps dropped from 75,101 in 1918 to only 17,047 in 1920.¹⁴ The 14th Regiment was not immune from these cutbacks and soon received orders to stand down and prepare for deactivation. Colonel Cutts departed in April to take command of the 10th Regiment. His replacement was Colonel Philip M. Bannon. The 14th Regiment officially deactivated on 19 June 1919.¹⁵ During the entire time of its initial activation, the 14th Regiment was at Marine Barracks, Quantico, Virginia. Although never called on for actual combat, the 14th Regiment of 1918-1919, like the modern 14th Marines, stood as a force in readiness, prepared to fight wherever and whenever needed.

CHAPTER 2

Reactivation, 1943

American dreams of peace and any lingering illusions of isolationism vanished 7 December 1941 with the surprise Japanese raid on Pearl Harbor. Huge numbers of infuriated Americans flocked to Armed Forces recruiting stations for the second time in the 20th century. Once again the ranks of the Marine Corps began to swell as they had in 1917. The Marine Corps instituted crash training programs and quickly formed new units to accommodate the growing number of volunteers. The 1st Marine Division and elements of the 2d Marine Division landed on Guadalcanal in 1942. The 3d Marine Division formed in September of that same year, and went to the South Pacific in mid-February of 1943. The 23d Marines, under the command of Colonel Louis R. Jones, detached from the latter division and remained behind to become the nucleus of the new 4th Marine Division. By 1 June 1943 the 14th Marines again was operational as a regiment under the command of Lieutenant Colonel, later Major General, Randall M. Victory.¹ Once again, after a quarter-century lapse, the 14th Marines joined the proud ranks of the Marine artillery and began preparing for the business at hand, the total defeat of the Japanese Empire in the Pacific Theatre.

The 14th Marines, like its parent organization, the 4th Marine Division, was formed in two echelons. One, on the east coast, trained at Camp Lejeune, New River, North Carolina. The other, on the west coast, served at Camp Pendleton, Oceanside, California. The 1st and 3d Battalions made up the East Coast Echelon. The 2d Battalion was the West Coast Echelon. The 4th Battalion was later activated at Camp Pendleton after the East and West Coast Echelons were united.²

The 1st Battalion, with firing batteries A, B, and C, was activated on 1 May 1943 at Camp Lejeune. The 2d Battalion did the same on 26 March at Camp Pendleton, with three firing batteries and a Headquarters and Service Battery. Battery D originally formed on 3 December 1942 at Training Camp (later Camp Lejeune), New River, North Carolina. Its initial designation was the Pack Howitzer Battery, 1st Separate Battalion (Reinforced). On 9 March this battery departed North Carolina for Camp Pendleton. Upon its arrival, the battery was attached to the 24th Marines for train-

ing. Battery E had been the Pack Howitzer Battery of the 2d Separate Battalion (Reinforced), also located at New River. It moved to Camp Pendleton on 16 March. It also was attached to the 24th Marines for training. Battery A, 3d Separate Battalion (Reinforced) entrained on 17 March for Camp Pendleton. It became Battery F, 14th Marines after it arrived in California. Although the 2d Battalion officially joined the 14th Marines on 26 March 1943, its firing batteries did not physically link up with the rest of the regiment until they returned from field exercises on 19 August 1943. The senior battalion of the 14th Marines was the 3d Battalion. It became operational on 22 July 1942 as the 3d Battalion, 12th Marines, 3d Marine Division. Its designation changed on 20 February, and it became a cadre for the 14th Marines. This battalion officially joined the 14th Marines on 1 June 1943. The 4th Battalion received its colors on 29 July 1943. From 9 August through 19 August the battalion reached its authorized strength when all its firing batteries joined their parent organization. The 4th Battalion entered the 14th Marines' muster book on 19 August 1943. The official reactivation of the 14th Marines was complete on 1 June 1943 with the activation of the Headquarters and Service Battery.³

The 1st, 2d, and 3d Battalions were the direct support battalions of the regiment. In combat, each of these battalions devoted its fire to a single rifle regiment, hence, the term "direct support." A direct support artillery battalion provided liaison officers to infantry regimental headquarters and assigned forward observation teams to different combat teams. A forward observation team consisted of the forward observer or "FO," an artillery officer who spotted and adjusted artillery fire, and a communications section charged with maintaining either radio or land-line telephone communications links with the artillery battalion. The purpose of direct support was to provide maneuver units with immediate fire support and required the artillery battalion to give its highest priority of fire to the supported regiment.⁴ This tactic allowed a close working relationship to develop between the infantry and artillery units. The direct support mission was one of the most effective, most



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A352190
Pictured as a brigadier general, LtCol Randall M. Victory, a former "Horse Marine" in China, assumed command of the reactivated 14th Marines in 1943.

demanding, and most decentralized of all artillery missions. A major liability of this tactic was that it prohibited the assignment of an artillery battalion's fire to more than one maneuver unit at a time, however, if all three infantry regiments were not actively involved in the scheme of maneuver (a common occurrence, as one of the three regiments was often in reserve) it was possible to use one of the direct support battalions to reinforce the fire of another unit. The direct support battalions were originally armed with the 75mm pack howitzer, M1 or M1A1.*

The pack howitzer concept originated from the requirement for a mobile cannon suitable for operations in rugged mountain terrain. The feature which made pack howitzers unique was that they could be easily broken down into their major components for transport. Although originally designed for mountain operations, its inherent mobility, its light weight, and its tough design made the pack howitzer a perfect weapon for amphibious operations as well. During the 1930s the United States did not have a landing craft with a front ramp, so all equipment had to be manhandled

*The difference in the two weapons was in the breechblock and breechblock rings, which were not interchangeable.

over the side, or offloaded at a docking facility. The M1 pack howitzer, which could be broken down into six components, fitted the bill perfectly. The weapon was compact. Its tube was extremely short, barely longer than its recoil mechanism. The major recognition factors of the cannon were the carrying handle welded to the front of the barrel and the holes drilled into the box trail to decrease its weight. The 75mm howitzer weighed only 1,379 pounds. It could fire a 14.7-pound high explosive (HE) projectile 9,600 yards with a muzzle velocity of 1,250 feet per second. There was no protective shield for the gunners. This fine cannon was nicknamed "Little Dynamite." It offered three advantages over the 105mm howitzer. It was much more accurate at short and medium ranges. The pack howitzer was easier to set up and camouflage because of its small size. In fact, the entire cannon was only 37 inches high when the barrel was at zero degrees elevation. Ammunition handling was much easier as well.⁵

The 4th Battalion was the regiment's general support battalion. This battalion was the only one originally armed with the 105mm howitzer. The 105mm howitzer (in 1943 designated the M2, but later redesignated the M101A1) was one of the finest artillery pieces ever made. From 1940 to 1953, 10,202 were produced and sent to 46 different armies in the world.**

The 105mm howitzer offered several advantages over the 75mm pack howitzer: it had a longer range, 11,000 meters as opposed to 8,800 meters with the 75mm; a heavier shell, 33 pounds as opposed to 14.7 pounds; and a larger explosive burst radius, 20 by 30 meters as opposed to 10 by 20 meters. The "105" featured a relatively short barrel over a conventional carriage with a box section, split trail legs, and built-in spades. It weighed 4,250 pounds and fired a high explosive projectile 12,250 yards with a muzzle velocity of 1,550 feet per second. A crew of eight manned the 105mm howitzer. It could fire a maximum of eight rounds per minute and keep up a sustained rate of four rounds per minute. The 105mm howitzer was able to shoot a more powerful shell much further than the 75mm pack howitzer, but at the cost of decreased mobility and increased complexity. The executive officer of the 4th Battalion, Major (later Colonel) Roland J. Spritzen, believed there were several reasons the 75mm pack

**The 105mm howitzer was the mainstay of the Marine Corps artillery direct support batteries in Korea and Vietnam, finally being replaced by the M198 in the mid-1980s. Marine Corps artillery battalions still retain the 105 to answer sticky tactical problems that require an airlift using CH-46 Sea Knight or CH-53D Sea Stallion helicopters. *Brassey's Artillery of the World* (London: Brassey's, 1977), pp. 44-45.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 57209

A 75mm pack howitzer crew sets up and readies the gun for action. The regiment's direct support battalions were armed with this lightweight, easily transportable artillery piece.

howitzer was first used as the direct support artillery weapon instead of the 105mm howitzer:

At this time . . . there weren't enough 105mm howitzers available and . . . there wasn't the know-how and means to land the 105mm howitzers, except from LCM's (Landing Craft, Mechanized—a large landing boat with a bow ramp designed to land trucks, tanks, and artillery prime movers directly onto the beach) and those were in short supply When the means to transport and land the . . . (105's) were available the direct support units would be 105mm and the general support would be 155mm.⁶

As the war progressed four of the five battalions assigned to the 14th Marines used the 105mm howitzer in combat.

The 14th Marines received a new commanding officer on 7 June 1943 when Colonel Louis G. DeHaven assumed command, and Lieutenant Colonel Victory became the regimental executive officer. A veteran artillery officer, Colonel DeHaven served in combat in World War I and later in the Dominican Republic prior to joining the 14th Marines. He received his promotion to colonel in 1942, and commanded the 14th Marines in all of its combat actions in World War II.⁷

On 1 June 1943 the 14th Marines became part of the East Coast Echelon, 4th Marine Division, under the command of Brigadier General, later Lieutenant General, James L. Underhill. On 5 August 1943 the 1st Battalion, the 3d Battalion, and Headquarters and

Service Battery left North Carolina by train. They arrived at Camp Pendleton on 14 August. On 16 August the 4th Marine Division, including the 14th Marines, became operational. The acting division commander was Brigadier General Underhill. Two days later, 18 August 1943, Major General Harry Schmidt assumed command, and Brigadier General Underhill became the assistant division commander. By 10 September, the last of the East Coast Echelon had arrived. At the end of September, the division was at full combat strength with 17,831 officers and men.⁸ Time was short, and training intensified as the division prepared for combat.

The 14th Marines did not have much time to sharpen its combat skills after arriving in California. The tentative date for deployment to the Pacific was 1 December 1943. With this in mind, the 14th Marines devoted the month of September to individual training and gun crew familiarization.

In 1943 Camp Pendleton was still a new base and suffered many growing pains. The largest problems facing the 14th Marines were the lack of suitable live-fire impact areas and a limited road network. Whenever a live-fire problem was conducted, a good part of the training time was spent putting out fires started by the shell bursts. While the batteries and battalions were able to conduct some combat train-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A19541

Arming the regiment's general support battalion was the 105mm howitzer, which was to become the mainstay of Marine direct support artillery batteries in later years.

Col Louis G. DeHaven, pictured here as a lieutenant colonel, assumed command of the regiment in 1943 and continued in command throughout World War II.

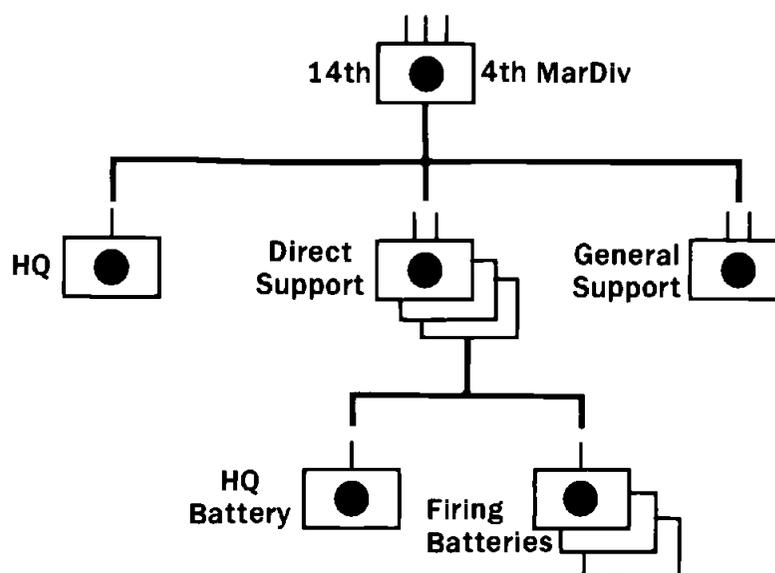
Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A401391



ing, the regiment had no opportunity to train, test, or communicate as a unit while at Camp Pendleton. Therefore, in November 1943 the 14th Marines moved to Camp Dunlap, Niland, California, for extensive practice at the regimental level. At Camp Dunlap, the 14th Marines became the smooth team that would operate so well at Roi-Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima. The forward observer teams manned their observation posts (OPs) at the edge of the impact area. The communications technicians worked out the bugs in their radio and telephone procedures. The fire direction centers (FDC) practiced solving difficult gunnery problems under simulated combat conditions. Along the firing line, gun captains supervised their sections. Marines practiced giving and repeating fire commands and setting chart data on the howitzers. Ammunition handlers set fuzes and tore off charge increments. Shells were slammed into their breeches, breechblocks locked in place, and lanyards pulled. Time and time again the shells of the 14th Marines whistled overhead and exploded in the target area. After a live-fire problem ended, Marines cleaned each gun with care, and then lubricated it for its next firing. The 14th Marines was well prepared when it returned from Camp Dunlap and rejoined the 4th Marine Division.⁹

While the 14th Marines were at Camp Dunlap, the

Organization of 14th Marines, Roi-Namur, February 1944

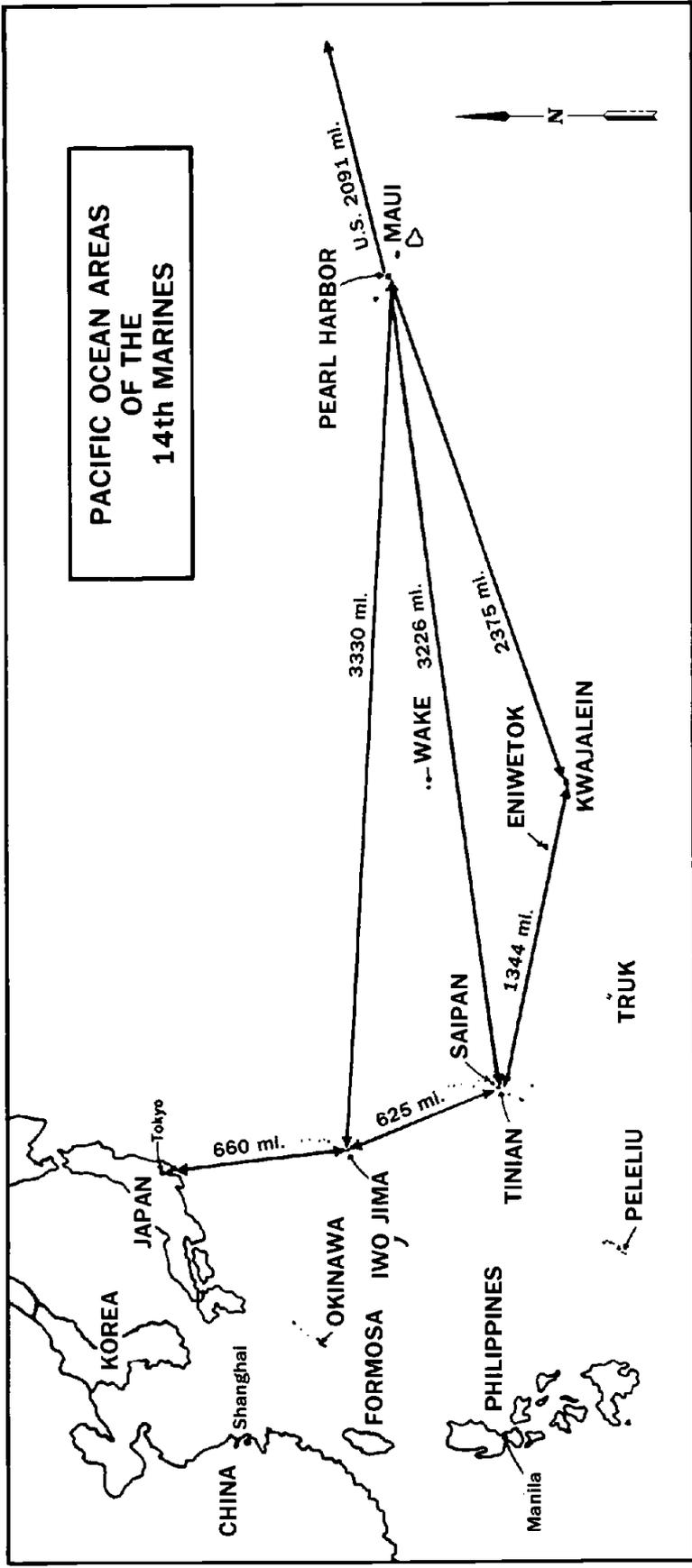


The 1st, 2d, and 3d (Direct Support) Battalions were armed with 75mm Pack Howitzers. The 4th (General Support) Battalion was armed with 105mm Howitzers.

rest of the division conducted a field problem at Aliso Canyon on 14-15 December 1943. At this same time, the division staff was finishing up work on Operation Plan 3-43, the plan for the upcoming assault on the Marshall Islands. Operation Plan 3-43 went out to all units on 31 December. The division's training carried over into an actual rehearsal for combat. The 14th Marines boarded assigned shipping on 1 January 1944, and participated in the final practice landing at San Clemente Island on 2-3 January. The 14th Marines reembarked on 6 January and left on the longest shore-to-shore operation in Marine Corps history.¹⁰

The voyage to Kwajalein Atoll in the Marshalls was the first extended sea voyage for most of the men of

the 14th Marines. It was quite an initiation. The convoy traveled more than 4,400 miles from embarkation point to landing, and the 14th Marines was on board its transports for 25 days. The conditions on board ship were not what some of the Marines expected. Soon after the hazy coast of California slipped over the horizon, many Marines discovered that the rolling and pitching deck of a troop ship did little to improve an upset stomach. The holds were sweltering, and the salt water showers offered little refreshment. The Marines lay in racks stacked eight tiers high. Each man had so little space that he could not turn over without disturbing all the others. The Marines' days were filled with abandon ship and debarkation drills plus lectures



on various military skills. After the convoy left its rendezvous point at Hawaii, the men of the 14th Marines learned their destination. Officers briefed the men on planned unit locations, missions, phase lines, call signs, and other necessary details. Slowly, the convoy plowed through the Pacific waters. On the fringes of

the convoy, destroyers raced to and fro, ever vigilant for the enemy. Finally, on the night of 30 January 1944, the convoy arrived at its destination, Kwajalein Atoll in the center of the Marshall Island chain. The 14th Marines was about to earn its first streamer for combat action.¹¹

CHAPTER 3

Roi-Namur

While the 4th Marine Division trained in the United States, Admiral Chester W. Nimitz, Commander in Chief Pacific Fleet/Commander in Chief Pacific Ocean Areas, directed Vice Admiral Raymond A. Spruance, Commander, Fifth Fleet and Central Pacific Force, to assault the Marshall Islands on 1 April 1944. The V Amphibious Corps (VAC) would provide the expeditionary troops for this operation, with the 4th Marine Division slated to land at Roi-Namur.¹ The Marshalls offensive was initially codenamed "Bank-rate," but this was later changed to "Flintlock." Operation Flintlock initially involved an amphibious assault on the large islands located along the southern and eastern approaches to the Marshalls.*

As the 14th Marines trained at Camp Pendleton and Camp Dunlap, their comrades-in-arms of the 2d Marine Division were storming the beaches of Betio, Tarawa Atoll, in the Gilbert Islands. Tarawa was one of the most viciously concentrated battles in the history of the Marine Corps. It marked the beginning of a new type of warfare in the Pacific. The previous Marine campaigns at Guadalcanal, Bougainville, and Cape Gloucester were all prolonged struggles of endurance and maneuver to seize large islands covered by dense tropical rain forest. In this jungle-covered terrain, stealth, surprise, and swiftness of movement characterized the fierce fighting. In the Central Pacific, however, the islands were coral atolls, small islets ringed by sharp coral reefs. Their small size and almost total lack of cover and concealment offered tactical planners very few options. Every island large enough to hold an airfield was a Japanese fortress protected by underwater obstacles to break up a landing, a series of mutually supporting machine gun positions, and heavy coastal artillery in reinforced concrete pillboxes. There was no room to maneuver, and little opportunity to surprise the vigilant defenders. Therefore, the tactical keys to conquering the Japanese holdings in the Central Pacific became the proper use of mass and effective use of supporting arms.** The guns of

*These included the heavily fortified islands of Wotje, Maloe-lap, and Mille.

**Tarawa's 3,000-plus casualties in 76 hours shocked the military planners of Flintlock. Among the casualties were two of the

14th Marines would play an important role in the upcoming operation.

The lessons learned at Tarawa influenced the planning for Operation Flintlock in all areas. At the strategic level, Admiral Nimitz made the sweeping decision to bypass the outer islands of the Marshalls and to strike directly at their heart, Kwajalein Atoll. Major General Holland M. Smith, commanding general of the VAC, changed his operational plans to include more amphibian tractors, known as LVTs, and significantly increased the use of all supporting arms.*** The staff planners of the 4th Marine Division and the 14th Marines arrived at a tactical concept of artillery support that ensured the maximum effectiveness of the howitzers. They decided to land the guns on four small adjacent islands prior to the main assault on Roi-Namur proper. This tactic, a direct legacy of Tarawa, reduced the casualty rate of Operation Flintlock, and was instrumental in the successful amphibious operations at Kwajalein Atoll.²

With the lessons of Tarawa fresh in their minds, a new plan for Operation Flintlock quickly took shape.³ The basic elements of the plan were for the invasion forces to mount out from the United States and Hawaii, bypass and neutralize the outer islands of the Marshalls, and strike directly at Kwajalein with simultaneous assaults miles apart. The attacking force consisted of a major naval fleet and the 53,000 troops of the VAC. The U.S. Army's 7th Infantry Division was to land at Kwajalein Island in the south, while the 4th Marine Division was to strike at the twin islets of Roi and Namur in the north. Two separate rifle regiments, the 22d Marines and the 106th Infantry Regiment (U.S. Army), were the VAC reserve forces.

The Marshall Islands offered an excellent stepping stone from the Gilberts to the Marianas, the next target on the road to Japan. Kwajalein was the largest

four 4th Marine Division observers, one of whom died of wounds. For further information see Henry I. Shaw, Jr., Bernard C. Nalty, and Edwin T. Turnbladh, *Central Pacific Drive — History of U.S. Marine Corps Operations in World War II* (Washington: HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, 1966).

***The amphibian tractor's official designation was Landing Vehicle, Tracked, hence "LVT."

atoll in the world. It was approximately 65 miles long and about 18 miles across. Kwajalein Lagoon, an outstanding potential fleet anchorage, was ringed by 240 miles of coral reef with at least 88 islands which varied in size from Kwajalein Island to pinpoint coral dots. Most of the Japanese facilities and both airfields were located on the two major land masses, Roi-Namur and Kwajalein Island.

The major objectives of the 4th Marine Division's assault were the twin islands of Roi and Namur. Viewed from above, they resembled a pair of water wings joined by a sand spit about 400 yards long on the lagoon side, and further linked by a 500-yard, man-made causeway. Roi was the larger of the two islands, and was the site of the largest Japanese airfield on the atoll. It was roughly three-quarters of a mile square. There was little vegetation as its airfield had three runways that formed a large figure "4," two service aprons, two hangars, assorted service buildings, a control tower, and 30 aircraft revetments. This barren island was codenamed "Burlesque."

Namur, located to the east of Roi, was about one-half square mile. Unlike Roi, it was covered by heavy vegetation and dotted with many palm trees. Numerous buildings lined its crushed coral streets. The heavy surf which pounded its oceanside coral reef discouraged landing operations and dictated a lagoon approach by small craft.⁴ Namur was codenamed "Camouflage."

The defenses of Roi-Namur were typical of those found in the Central Pacific area. There were two strong points, Wendy Point on Roi and Sally Point on Namur, each equipped with Japan's most modern dual-purpose guns. A series of 19 concrete pillboxes containing 28 heavy machine guns protected the strong points. Antitank ditches zigzagged across Roi and Namur just behind the beachline to halt the inland progress of American amphibian tractors and tanks. Four major reinforced concrete structures served as command posts and ammunition storage areas. The Japanese defenders planned to launch a counterattack with all available forces if these defensive preparations failed to stop the landing forces (Americans called such efforts "*Banzai* attacks" because of the patriotic slogans chanted by the Japanese during the attack).⁵

The defenders of Roi-Namur were under the titular command of Vice Admiral Mashi Kobayashi, commander in chief of the *Fourth Fleet* at Truk Island. The Japanese garrison forces were members of special naval guard units attached to the *6th Base Force* under Rear Admiral Monzo Ajiyama whose headquarters was on Kwajalein Island. The actual forces on Roi-Namur totaled about 3,000 men. Most of these belonged to

the *24th Naval Air Flotilla*. There was also a *Provisional Defense Battalion*, *Soyonama Unit*, *61st Naval Guard Force*, with about 500 men. In addition, there were about 1,000 or so workers from the *Naval Air Construction and Service Corps*. All of these men were under the immediate command of Vice Admiral Michiyuki Yamada's headquarters on Namur. American intelligence estimated a like number of Japanese troops on Kwajalein Island, with about 2,000 more scattered throughout the smaller islets of Kwajalein Atoll.⁶

The 14th Marines, along with the rest of the 4th Marine Division, was assigned to the Northern Landing Force by VAC. The ground elements of the Northern Landing Force were commanded by Major General Schmidt, and the Northern Attack Force was commanded by Rear Admiral Richard L. Conolly, commander of Task Force 53.* The general plan called for a three-part operation. Phase I was the seizure of several off-shore islands which controlled the lagoon passages and dominated the area around Roi-Namur. Marine artillery would use these islands for providing fire support for the main landings. Phase II was the actual assault on Roi-Namur, the tactical and logistical center of air activity at Kwajalein Atoll. The final phase was the capture of 11 other small islands in the general proximity of Roi-Namur. Because of the complexity and importance of Phase I, a special landing force, Group Ivan, was formed to accomplish this task. This group included the entire 14th Marines, along with infantry battalion landing teams in assault and supporting units, such as the 4th Special Weapons Battalion (Lieutenant Colonel Alexander A. Vandegrift, Jr.) armed with 37mm towed antitank guns and half-tracks mounting 75mm howitzers.⁷

While the infantry assault was a traditional "two up and one back" attack, the artillery played a unique role in the capture of Roi-Namur. The tactical planners of Operation Flintlock quickly recognized the value of placing artillery on the small islets which had to be seized to ensure a safe entrance into the lagoon. One of the greatest limiting factors of Marine Corps artillery was its inability to fire during the initial stage of most amphibious landings. Unless Marines captured off-shore islands or convenient promontories before the main landings, the artillery had to circle in "on call" waves of landing craft until the assault force moved far enough inland to secure adequate areas to serve as firing positions. Since this sometimes happened late

*After Roi-Namur he became known as "Close-in Conolly" because of his orders to his naval gunfire ships to close in to the beach until their bottoms scraped sand.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 70547

MajGen Harry Schmidt, right, commanding the 4th Marine Division, and RAdm Richard L. Conolly, commander of the Northern Task Force, review a map of Roi-Namur prior to attacking the heavily-fortified Japanese-held island in the northern part of Kwajalein Atoll.

in the day, Marine artillerymen occasionally had to conduct difficult night landings. Another disadvantage was that selection of available firing positions was limited to those in the beachhead area, thus, the artillery often had to use less than desirable positions due to the combat situation. The artillery also was most vulnerable during this period. Any extensive damage to the landing craft during the transportation phase usually resulted in the loss of the artillery piece as well.⁸ Colonel DeHaven and his operations officer, Major Frederick J. Karch, realized that the use of these neighboring islands would offer the 14th Marines many advantages and minimize the factors which hampered the proper use of their guns.*

Naval gunfire, close air support, and armored amphibian tractors usually took up the slack for artillery fire during the opening stages of an amphibious assault, but sometimes lost their effectiveness as time passed and the landing force moved inland. Artillery offered several very real advantages over the other supporting arms available to the VAC. The guns of the 14th Marines would be mounted on a stationary land

*Major Karch, a brigadier general in 1965, led the first Marine air-ground team to be committed to South Vietnam, the 9th Marine Expeditionary Brigade.

platform, not on a rolling or pitching deck, ensuring much greater accuracy. The location of the guns, close to the using units, ensured good communications and quicker reaction time to calls for fire. The shore-based howitzers were not subject to limited time on station, as was aviation, nor were they forced to alter course to avoid navigational hazards. Once Marines captured the small, outlying islands on D-Day, the field pieces of the 14th Marines could be brought ashore to support the landing and exploitation phases of the operation. These guns would provide round-the-clock, close fire support for Regimental Combat Team (RCT) 23 and RCT 24 when they stormed Roi-Namur's beaches.**

Four islets were large enough to accommodate artillery emplacements, and became key targets of the D-Day assault by Group Ivan. Mellu and Ennuebing, codenamed "Ivan" and "Jacob" respectively, were southwest of Roi, and dominated the passages through the coral reef. After they secured these two islands, Marines would capture more islands southeast of Namur.

**A similar plan calling for the capture of Bairiki Island at Tarawa was rejected due to time limitations and the anticipated loss of surprise. For Operation Flintlock, fire superiority was deemed more important than the element of surprise.

These were Ennument (Albert), Ennubirr (Allen), and several others. Each was small in size, within artillery range of the landing zones, and lightly defended. The planning staff anticipated a quick capture of each. This allowed sufficient time to land, set up, and register the howitzers of the 14th Marines so they could provide proper fire support for the main landings the next morning.⁹

The dawn which broke over Kwajalein Atoll on D-Day (31 January 1944) revealed a colorful panorama. The lush green of the island vegetation outlined the bright white sand which ringed every islet, and provided a sharp contrast with the blue-green colors of the surrounding waters. Shortly, bright orange flashes from the guns of the fire support ships of Admiral "Close-in" Conolly's Task Force 53 engulfed those islands. A dull grey overcast covered the sky, and choppy swells broke over the reefs. The choppy water caused some problems for the landing force. A strong Force 7 wind (19 knots) blew in from the east, and weather forecasters predicted intermittent rain squalls throughout the day. At 0530 the Marines of Group Ivan went over the side of their ships, and scrambled down the cargo nets into the landing craft below. Among the members of the 2d Battalion's Battery E were brothers Clayton B. and Auden B. Ponder, both of whom would participate in all of the combat operations of the 14th Marines.¹⁰

Brigadier General James L. Underhill, the assistant division commander and a veteran artilleryman, commanded the Ivan group.* It consisted of landing teams from the 25th Marines, the firing batteries of the 14th Marines, some of the new LVT(A)s assigned to the 1st Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion, and the amtracs of the 10th Amphibian Tractor Battalion.**¹¹ This was the first time in history that a landing operation relied on large-scale use of LVTs as the primary transport ashore.*** The LVTs were not selected because they were swift or graceful on either land or water, but because they could operate in both environments.**** The planners of Operation Flintlock did

*Brigadier General Underhill commanded the 10th Marines from 19 December 1928 to 13 November 1930.

**These tractors mounted a 37mm gun and several machine guns. Their purpose was to provide close support for the landing forces as they crossed the beach.

***LVTs were used as supplementary transportation at Tarawa. After the assault waves landed, they were pressed into heavy usage when the regular landing craft could not cross the coral reef around the atoll.

****LVTs, originally nicknamed "amphtracs" and then "amtracs," were bulky, poorly armored vehicles with very high silhouettes. They had poor cross-country performance, a maximum speed of 14 miles per hour on land, and they could waddle through the water no faster than 7.5 miles per hour.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A556710
Maj Frederick J. Karch, here shown as a brigadier general, served with the regiment throughout World War II, first as battery commander, then as battalion commander, and finally as the operations officer.

not realize that the principles and standards used for landing boats were not applicable to amtracs. The LVTs used far more fuel, had very little freeboard space above the water, and depended upon their moving tracks for propulsion. Because of the high winds, heavy surf, hidden coral reefs, and their slow speed, many amtracs floundered in the pounding surf, lost power, and sank. These unfortunate circumstances affected all elements of the Flintlock landing plans, and were particularly troublesome to the 14th Marines' landings later in the day.***** H-Hour, scheduled for 0900, had to be postponed due to the high winds and heavy surf. Group Ivan's landing operation took much longer than expected, which interrupted the entire landing schedule.

The initial objectives of the Ivan landing group were Mellu and Ennuebing Islands. The seizure of these two islands gained a passage into Kwajalein Lagoon

*****This poor performance stemmed from inherent design flaws in the LVTs, the inexperienced crews operating them, and poor coordination among Marine LVT crews and the Navy crews on board ship. Only one practice landing took place at San Clemente and showed many of these problems; however, the transports embarked before a critique was held and the problems worked out.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 70364

Marines of the 4th Division hug the beach soon after their assault on Roi-Namur.

for the follow-up forces and allowed two battalions of the 14th Marines to land and support the rest of the operation. Despite problems in transferring from LCVPs to LVTs, Marines quickly secured both islands.* Ennuebing fell to Company B, 25th Marines in less than one hour. The Marines killed 13 enemy soldiers and captured three prisoners of war. Mellu took a little longer, but showed similar results: 17 enemy dead and two captured. Immediately after Brigadier General Underhill received word of the successful landings at about 1145, he flashed the order to land the artillery. The 14th Marines' first combat action was underway.¹²

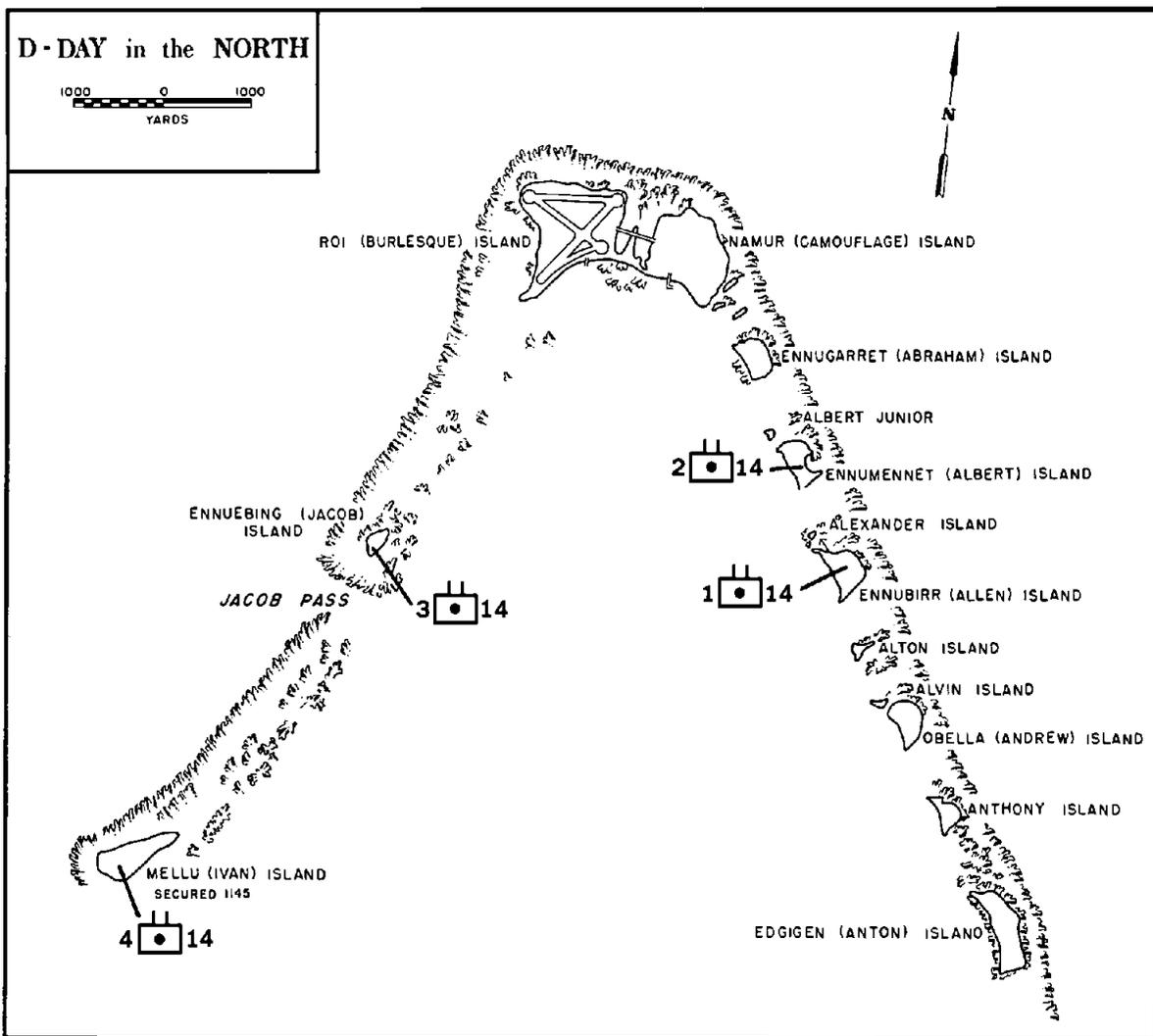
The structure of the 14th Marines landing groups at Roi-Namur was the same as that used in all subsequent campaigns. Due to the limited space on board the assault transports, only skeleton firing crews were landed at first. A firing battery's first days and nights ashore were busy times for these individuals, as they had to fire missions and stand watch in addition to the burden of unloading the weapons, supplies, and ammunition until the rest of the battery was able to come ashore. The headquarters section was to maintain command and control of the firing sections. This group was usually made up of the commanding officer, the executive officer, the first sergeant, a clerk, a runner, and a survey team. Each of the four guns

*The LCVP, or "landing craft, vehicle, personnel," was a small, shallow draft vessel with a bow ramp. It could carry approximately 36 persons.

was assigned a skeleton firing section to operate the howitzers. A motor transport section was charged with pulling the howitzers and hauling ammunition and supplies. These men were expected to fill in as necessary when not transporting guns, ammunition, or supplies. A communications section was needed to maintain open lines of communication, string telephone wire, and keep radio contact. The ammunition section was responsible for handling and distributing ammunition and supplies. Forward observation teams were attached to the maneuver battalions before the landings. A machine gun section, armed with two .50-caliber heavy machine guns, was responsible for ground and air defense of the battery. These Marines were often required to haul supplies, unload ammunition, or act as gun crewmen when first ashore. As the battle progressed and more ship-to-shore transport became available the batteries were fleshed out with the arrival of more cannoners. The first days ashore were tiring and hectic for the members of these skeleton crews.

The early morning hours of D-Day found the 14th Marines on board the *Epping Forest* (LSD 4) and several LSTs in the transport area about 3,000 yards from shore.** The 75mm pack howitzers had been prepacked at San Diego, one per LVT, with a small amount

**An LSD (landing ship dock) was a large attack transport with a stern ramp and a well deck which could be flooded for use by boats and LVTs. An LST (landing ship, tank) had two bow doors and a ramp for discharging LVTs at sea, or vehicles directly on the beach.



of ammunition and some necessary tools and equipment. Unfortunately, the small LVTs could not carry a full howitzer crew nor a complete unit of fire. The shortage of LVTs required the gun crews and ammunition stocks to land in separate supply waves. The bulky 105mm howitzers of the 4th Battalion had to be loaded in 14 larger LCMs (landing craft, mechanized).

On order, Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. MacFarlane's 3d Battalion, 14th Marines began moving toward Ennuebing's sandy shores. The pounding surf and heavy loads proved too much for two of the LVTs. They floundered and sank, causing the loss of two 75mm howitzers and four lives. These were the first combat casualties suffered by the 14th Marines. Several Marines were saved by the heroic efforts of the 3d Battalion's surgeon, Lieutenant Ira D. Hardy, MC, USN, a former football star at Harvard University. Doctor Hardy repeatedly swam out to assist swimmers in trou-

ble. He later received a Bronze Star Medal for his actions.¹³

Major, later Major General, Carl A. Youngdale's 4th Battalion made it ashore without losing any guns, but arrived too late to support Lieutenant Colonel Justice M. Chambers' 3d Battalion, 25th Marines' landing on the far side of the lagoon as originally planned. The Marines of Battery K (First Lieutenant Russell F. Schoenbeck), Battery L (Captain Martin R. Burdett), and Battery M (First Lieutenant, later Lieutenant General, Joseph C. Fegan, Jr.) struggled to move their heavy field pieces across the island and into selected positions along the northern shore. As the Marines hauled the guns of the six batteries of the 3d and 4th Battalions into position, the command group under Lieutenant Colonel Randall M. Victory moved ashore. The regimental command post quickly took steps to establish centralized control over the widely spread firing batteries. The major task of both battalions was

to fire registration rounds before dark and then to stockpile ammunition needed to support the main landings the next morning.¹⁴

The landings on Ennubirr, Ennumennet, and Ennugarret did not go well. Unexpected high waves, insufficient numbers of LVTs, and poor communications delayed H-Hour for the members of Landing Team 2 who had to capture the islands southeast of Namur. Luckily, they encountered little opposition, and the islands fell quickly. Once these were secured, landing the remaining artillery units before dark became the highest priority. The 1st Battalion, 14th Marines, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Harry J. Zimmer, landed across Blue Beach 4 on Ennubirr just before 1700 that evening. Lieutenant Colonel George B. Wilson's 2d Battalion crossed at Blue Beach 3 on Ennumennet at about the same time. Amtracs carried the pack howitzers of both battalions directly to their firing positions. This procedure saved precious time in getting the guns ready to fire. The major problem was getting the gunners ashore and unloading sufficient ammunition. The cannoneers and ammunition of the 14th Marines were scheduled to be brought ashore by LVTs and LCVPs making supply runs after they had landed the first wave. However, the leaders of the assault waves commandeered all of the LVTs and many of the LCVPs to replace transportation lost during the initial phase of the landing. Anxious Marines on board the *Epping Forest* waited as the situation became more confused. One skeptic named the landing procedure "Operation Fubar" and the irreverent title stuck.*

The resulting delays forced many of the gun crews to land well after dark. In fact, it was not possible to land some of the howitzers until the afternoon of D plus 1.¹⁵ Most of the guns were set up by 2000 but darkness prevented their registration until after dawn on D plus 1.¹⁶ The 14th Marines' first day of combat ended in a flurry of activity, as most of its men spent the entire night unloading ammunition.

The howitzers of the 14th Marines joined the massive air and naval bombardment of Roi-Namur at 0658 on 1 February 1944 (D plus 1). At 0700 Group Ivan was dissolved, and the 14th Marines again became the Division Artillery Group with Colonel DeHaven in command. The barren Roi received the concentrated fire of the cannoneers of Captain Alfred T. Brown's Battery G, Captain Guido A. Morengo's Battery H, and Captain Earl F. Ziegler's Battery I. Their targets were located along Red Beach 3, east of Tokyo Pier. The 105mm howitzers of the 4th Battalion focused

their attention on Red Beach 2, west of Tokyo Pier. For more than three hours the two battalions peppered Roi's beaches, stopping only to allow close air strikes. At about 1010 the artillery's fires shifted inland to make room for the first assault waves of Colonel Louis R. Jones' RCT 23.

The 23d Marines struck Roi with two battalions abreast. They moved across an antitank ditch toward their first objective, Phase Line O-1. The guns of the 3d Battalion were in direct support of Lieutenant Colonel Edward J. Dillon's 2d Battalion, 23d Marines on the right flank. Although usually designated the general support battalion of the 14th Marines, the 4th Battalion assigned its highest priority of fire to the 1st Battalion, 23d Marines during the landings because its 105mm howitzers were the only artillery pieces in the regiment with sufficient range to reach the eastern portion of Roi Island.

In spite of some initial confusion, the attack went well. The 23d Marines encountered little organized resistance, a tribute to the effectiveness of all supporting arms. At 1158 Colonel Jones radioed: "This is a pip . . . no opposition." The 14th Marines, working in concert with air strikes, naval gunfire, and the weapons of the new LVT(A)s, did their job with deadly efficiency. In Company F's sector, not a single Japanese pillbox was still manned when the Marines' supporting fires lifted. After action reports estimated that supporting arms killed 60 percent of the enemy. The remaining Japanese on Roi were too shell-shocked to put up any effective resistance.¹⁷ The island was declared secure at 1802, with mop-up operations scheduled for the following morning. The swiftness of the battle allowed the 3d and 4th Battalions to stand down on the morning of 2 February 1944.¹⁸

Namur was the tougher nut to crack. The 1st and 2d Battalions began registration fires at about 0650 on D plus 1. Once registered, they fired for effect until ordered to shift their fires at mid-morning. Sally Point on Namur's east side was the target of Batteries A, B, and C. The area around Yokohama Pier shook under the fires of the gunners of D, E, and F Batteries of the 2d Battalion. As the landing progressed inland, the guns of the 1st Battalion fired missions requested by the forward observers attached to Landing Team 2 (2d Battalion, 24th Marines [Reinforced]). The 2d Battalion fired in direct support of Landing Team 3 (3d Battalion, 24th Marines).

Again, as at Roi, the landings were very confused. Supporting fires were so intense that they obliterated the streets designated as phase lines to control RCT 24's advance. The debris created by the heavy bombardment and the dense vegetation slowed movement

*Bowdlerized as "Fouled Up Beyond All Redress."



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 70694

LVTs with rocket launchers support the 14th Marines' landings and occupation of the four smaller islands flanking the main objective, Roi-Namur in the Marshall Islands.

and provided excellent cover for numerous Japanese snipers. Reports to Colonel Franklin A. Hart, commanding officer of RCT 24, indicated no organized resistance in the area of Green Beach 2, and only "punch drunk" enemy soldiers were present at Green Beach 1.

A spectacular explosion at about 1305 halted the Marine advance inland. Satchel charges tossed into a concrete blockhouse detonated the torpedo warheads stored inside. The resulting explosion shook the entire island and awed everyone involved in the attack. A column of black smoke rose about 1,000 feet over Namur as debris showered the entire island and much of the lagoon. This tragic event took the lives of 20 Marines and wounded over 100 others. The force of the blast was such that a spotter aircraft carrying an aerial observer from the 4th Battalion, 14th Marines was caught in the explosion and knocked from the sky. The shock of the explosion and its aftermath severely disorganized Colonel Hart's attack plans.¹⁹

Before dark the 14th Marines fired a series of registration rounds all along the frontline to protect the Marines on Namur in case of a Japanese night counter-attack, but the evening hours passed with very little enemy action. The next morning, however, found the cannoners of the 14th Marines shooting defensive fires to support Companies I and L, 24th Marines. The Japanese mounted an attack which the Marine infantrymen repelled by hand-to-hand combat. Later that day, the 24th Marines overran the rest of Namur, and

the island was declared secure at 1418 on 2 February 1944. The members of the 14th Marines, except for the 1st Battalion which would serve as a garrison unit, stood down and prepared to reembark for their new home at Maui, Territory of Hawaii.²⁰

The third and final phase of Operation Flintlock began on D plus 2 when Major General Schmidt ordered Colonel Samuel C. Cumming's RCT 25 to complete the capture of all the islands near Roi-Namur. Landing Team 2, Lieutenant Colonel Lewis C. Hudson's 2d Battalion, 25th Marines (Reinforced), moved out under the cover of an artillery barrage provided by the 1st Battalion, 14th Marines. The infantrymen soon discovered that the islands were unoccupied. The 1st Battalion's 75mm howitzers remained silent the rest of the day. On D plus 4, First Lieutenant Curtis P. Irwin, Jr.'s Battery C accompanied Lieutenant Colonel Chambers' Landing Team 3 on the last leg of Operation Flintlock. By the afternoon of D plus 7 the force had captured 39 islets, made friends with 250 natives, and found no Japanese. The next day, 8 February 1944, was declared the last day of the Roi-Namur campaign.²¹

When the battle of Roi-Namur ended, most of the men of the 14th Marines were busy crating, packing, and loading gear on board the ships which would carry them to their new base camp. The 4th Battalion, loaded on board the *Bolivar* (APA 34), the *Alcyone* (AKA 7), and the *Calvert* (APA 32) on 5 February, departed on 8 February, and arrived at Maui on the evening of

16 February 1944.* The 3d Battalion boarded the *LaSalle* (APA 102), the *Sheridan* (APA 151), and the *Calvert*, and travelled in the same convoy as the 4th Battalion. Most members of the 2d Battalion also boarded the *LaSalle*, but some elements of Battery D embarked on board the *Santa Monica* and the *Calvert*. The 1st Battalion remained on Ennubirr Island as part of the garrison force until 29 February, when it departed for Hawaii on board the *Neville* (APA 9) and the *Electra* (AKA 4).²² Before their departure the men of the 1st Battalion saw another spectacular explosion on 13 February when Japanese incendiary bombs struck an ammunition dump on Roi. The ensuing fire destroyed an estimated one million dollars worth of ammunition and other supplies being stored there.²³

The departure from Kwajalein Atoll marked the end of the 14th Marines' first combat action. The regiment performed its duties well, and helped the 4th Marine Division inflict 3,376 casualties on the enemy, while incurring only minimal losses.** The 14th Marines

*APA was the hull designation for attack transports; AKA indicated attack cargo ships. The current designations are LPA and LKA, respectively.

**The 14th Marines' losses were six killed and 11 wounded. MRoll, 14th Marines, February 1944.

proved the validity of the tactics and techniques of off-shore artillery support which would be used successfully in later Pacific campaigns. After-action reports credited the use of artillery against Roi-Namur as a major factor in the success of the landing operations. These fires kept the enemy groggy throughout the night of 31 January - 1 February. The ability of the 14th Marines' howitzers to lift their observed fires just ahead of the actual assault waves, instead of at some arbitrary point, gave the landing force constant supporting arms fire.²⁴

The battle for Roi-Naumur was a well planned operation where naval gunfire, artillery, and aerial bombing played a major role in neutralizing Japanese positions. It involved the longest distance ever covered in one shore-to-shore operation. It was the only major combat operation staged from a stateside training base directly into a combat zone. The capture of Kwajalein Atoll marked the first American penetration of prewar Japanese mandated territory. It provided an excellent fleet anchorage and staging base for naval operations. Its airfields extended the range of American land-based airpower enormously. Finally, it virtually eliminated the threat of any Japanese operation toward Pearl Harbor, the United States, or the Panama Canal.²⁵

CHAPTER 4

Maui, 1944

The first ships carrying the 14th Marines back from Roi-Namur arrived at Maui, Territory of Hawaii, on 17 February 1944. Actually, some members of the 14th Marines had their first glimpse of Maui just over a month earlier when the Kwajalein-bound convoy stopped at Lahaiana Roads to take on fuel and provisions. Maui looked just as beautiful in February as it had before. The Marines were struck by the colorful contrasts of the gleaming white sands, the light green of the sugar cane fields, the darker green of the background vegetation, and the majestic dark purple of Mount Haleakala, the world's largest extinct volcano. The regiment boarded trucks near the Kahului docks and began the slow trek to Camp Maui, the home base for the 4th Marine Division for the rest of World War II. The convoy passed through the towns of Paia and Makawao. It snaked along narrow roads lined with elegant palm trees and dotted with colorful flowering plants, flame trees, hibiscus, and wild roses. Gradually the trucks worked their way up about 1,500 of Haleakala's 10,000 feet above sea level. When the convoy arrived at Camp Maui the island seemed to lose much of its beauty.

Camp Maui was primitive, to say the least. There was no electricity. The mud was ankle deep everywhere. Tents provided the only shelter from the elements. Only open-air showers were available. To make matters worse, it was raining. Immediately after leaving the trucks, the men of the 14th Marines learned there would be no liberty for at least one week; the entire division was quarantined because of the possibility of exposure to communicable diseases during Operation Flintlock. About this time the Marines also discovered a freak meteorological phenomenon. The lovely clouds that moved over the crest of Haleakala turned into threatening rain clouds as they descended on Camp Maui's side of the mountain, and it did not take them long to release their pent-up moisture. The result was daily rain. At this point, many of the regiment's cynics considered the title "rest camp" a misnomer.¹

Gradually Camp Maui took on the appearance of a Marine base, in spite of the incessant rain, sticky mud, and gusting winds. Marines plowed roads through the mud, constructed some wooden frame office build-

ings and messhalls, then strung electric wires across the camp. A post exchange offered candy, tobacco, and soft drinks. Public address systems blared announcements and popular music. The Marines took advantage of entertainment provided by nightly movies, touring USO shows, hula girls, and Sergeant Lee Cohen's "Fubar Follies," a popular amateur night organized by the outgoing Special Services NCO.²

On 1 April 1944, Major General Harry Schmidt presented Purple Heart Medals to members of the 14th Marines wounded during Operation Flintlock. A more extensive awards ceremony occurred on 26 April when Admiral Nimitz presented personal decorations to deserving Marines. Among the recipients was Lieutenant Colonel Harry J. Zimmer, commanding officer of the 1st Battalion, who received a Legion of Merit medal. Additionally, the regiment affixed its first battle star to the Asiatic-Pacific Campaign streamer on its colors.³

Several organizational changes took place at Camp Maui. First, the regiment absorbed newly-arrived Marines to replace those transferred or lost during Operation Flintlock. It activated a new battalion, armed with 105mm howitzers and carrying the designation 5th Battalion, 14th Marines. This unit was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Douglas E. Reeve who had served as the naval gunfire officer of the D-3 Section, 4th Marine Division at Roi-Namur. The 5th Battalion, however, soon shifted to Corps Artillery, but remained attached to the 14th Marines during the next combat action, Operation Forager. On 30 April 1944 Marine Observation Squadron 4 (VMO-4) opened its own airstrip and joined the 4th Marine Division. The 4th Battalion provided two aerial observers who continually spotted for all types of fire (artillery, naval gunfire, close air support) missions while flying in the light planes of VMO-4. The aviators of VMO-4 operated closely with the 14th Marines throughout the rest of World War II.⁴

Implementing the lessons learned at Roi-Namur, the 14th Marines spent most of its time training to improve its combat efficiency. The regiment spent many of its long training days on the far side of Maui, away from the few comforts of the base camp, firing



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 146368



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 146359

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 146360

Upon its return from Roi-Namur, the 14th Marines, along with the division, took up residence at Camp Maui, Hawaii. Despite the incessant rain, ankle-deep mud, and little initial liberty, the camp gradually took on the appearance of a more permanent base with all the amenities of a stateside post. When not engaged in softball playoffs, boxing matches, or watching USO shows, the men of the 14th were either servicing their howitzers or training at one of the division's 47 training areas near the camp. Command post exercises, overnight problems, and hikes became a weekly routine. Implementing the lessons learned at Roi-Namur, the regiment's artillerymen also took part in several field problems at the division's artillery range near Maalaea Bay. These problems involved transporting the gun, in this case a 75mm pack howitzer, swinging it into position, correctly sighting the weapon, and then firing at specific targets. This training prepared the regiment for its next objectives, Saipan and Tinian.



various types of gunnery problems and making sure its communications was letter perfect. The 3d Battalion was rearmed with 105mm howitzers and required additional training to be able to load efficiently, unload, fire, and service its new weapons. The cannoneers of the 14th Marines could only infrequently enjoy the cold beer and hot showers of local liberty towns like Haiko, Makawao, Kahului, and Wailuku. While on liberty, they enjoyed traditional American dishes of steak, hamburgers, and banana splits. Many also became accustomed to typical Hawaiian dishes such as fresh pineapple and poi. Marines danced to the beat of native drums and the twang of steel guitars with

carnation leis around their necks. Despite their homesickness, the men of the 14th Marines became very fond of Maui and its friendly population.⁵

Late April and early May brought the final preparations for further combat. The 14th Marines moved down the slopes of Haleakala to the tent camp bivouac near Maalaea Bay. Once there, the 14th Marines participated in live-firing exercises. It fired in support of the 4th Marine Division's regimental combat teams as they rehearsed for the next assault. Finally, the 14th Marines embarked on board the *Leonard Wood* (AP 25), and departed on 12 May 1944 for Pearl Harbor, a stop on the way to Saipan.⁶

CHAPTER 5

Saipan, 1944

On 12 March 1944, the Joint Chiefs of Staff directed Admiral Nimitz to continue the Central Pacific drive. Buoyed by the swift and easy conquest of the Marshall Islands, they decided to bypass the Japanese fortress island of Truk and strike at the Mariana Islands. One of the major deciding factors was the proximity of the Marianas to Japan, well within the 1,500 mile range necessary for successful operations by the U.S. Army Air Force's new Boeing B-29 Superfortress long range, heavy bombers.¹ The attack plan, Operation Forager, was divided into three phases: the capture of Saipan, the seizure of Tinian, and the recapture of Guam. The 14th Marines, fresh from its successful operations at Roi-Namur, prepared to participate in two of the three upcoming combat actions.

Saipan was located about 1,250 nautical miles from Tokyo. The island resembled an inverted pipe wrench, with Marpi Point the tip of its northern handle and Magicienne Bay as the gap between the jaws formed by the Kagman Peninsula and Nafutan Point. Saipan was much larger than the miniscule coral islets of Roi and Namur; hence, its capture presented many different problems for the planners of Operation Forager. Saipan covered about 72 square miles; it was over 14 miles long on its north-south axis, and about 6.5 miles across at its widest point. Its terrain was very rugged and heavily vegetated. Mount Tapotchau rose 1,554 feet above the numerous cliffs, ravines, ridges, and valleys which crisscrossed the island's waist. Lake Susupe and its surrounding swamps formed a barrier to inland movement near the beaches selected for landings by the assault forces. Unlike the previous objectives in the Central Pacific, Saipan had a relatively large civilian population. These civilians, Japanese and Chamorros, primarily lived in Garapan and Charan Kanoa, the urban centers on the west coast. The major military centers on the island were Aslito Airfield in the south and Marpi Point Airfield in the north. Saipan was a formidable target which required the proper balance of fire and maneuver in an extended campaign.²

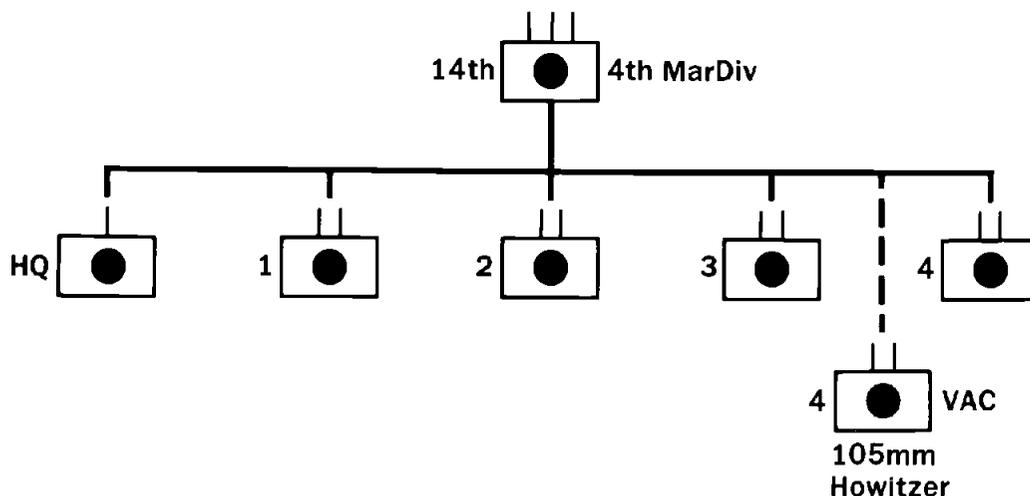
Saipan was the home of the headquarters of Japan's *Thirty-First Army* and of the Imperial Navy's *Central Pacific Fleet*. The commander of the *Central Pacific Fleet* was Vice Admiral Chuichi Nagumo, the leader

of the carrier task force which smashed the American fleet at Pearl Harbor on 7 December 1941. More than 31,000 Japanese defenders were located on Saipan. Many were members of organized units such as the crack *43d Division*, the *47th Independent Mixed Brigade*, the *3d Mountain Artillery Regiment*, the *9th Tank Regiment*, and the *55th Naval Guard Force*, or the elite *1st Yokosuka Special Naval Landing Force*; the remainder were survivors of American submarine and air attacks which had isolated the Marianas. Lieutenant General Yoshitsugu Saito planned his defenses with great care. He sited his artillery to cover all potential landing areas. Range flags and off-shore markers aided fire direction. Mechanized reserves had positions near Magicienne Bay, and stood ready to mount a counterattack. Each of the resolute defenders of Saipan took a vow to take seven enemy lives for his country. Both the Japanese and the Americans realized the vital importance of Saipan, and the upcoming battle promised to be a desperate struggle for supremacy in the Central Pacific.³

Holland M. Smith was Commanding General, Northern Troops and Landing Force (NTLF) as part of his duties in Operation Forager.* The NTLF consisted of the 4th Marine Division and the 2d Marine Division (Major General Thomas E. Watson). The NTLF reserve was the U.S. Army's 27th Infantry Division, commanded by Major General Ralph C. Smith. A special unit, XXIV Corps Artillery, commanded by Brigadier General Arthur M. Harper, USA, was attached to the NTLF to provide additional fire support. Major General Schmidt commanded the 4th Marine Division. Colonel DeHaven retained command of the 14th Marines, with Lieutenant Colonel Victory as executive officer. The regimental staff officers were: First Lieutenant Cecil D. Snyder, R-1; Captain Harrison L. Rogers, R-2; Major Frederick J. Karch, R-3; and Major Richard J. Winsborough, R-4.⁴ On Maui, the 3d Battalion rearmed with 105mm howitzers to replace the 75mm pack howitzers which served it so well at Roi-Namur. These cannon added range and explosive power to the punch of the 14th Marines. Lieutenant

*General Smith actually had three jobs at Saipan: CG NTLF; CG, Expeditionary Troops; and CG, VAC.

14th Marines at Saipan, 1944



The 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion was designated from the 5th Battalion, 14th Marines just prior to the Marianas assault, but was still referred to as 5/14 in 14th Marines action reports until after the Tinian operation. Officially, the 4th 105mm Battalion was part of V Amphibious Corps Artillery, but was attached to the 14th Marines for the entire Marianas Campaign.

Colonel Douglas E. Reeve led the separate 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion, which VAC created by redesignating the 5th Battalion, 14th Marines on 16 April 1944. The new battalion, however, was attached to the 14th Marines for Operation Forager, so its title was an official name change only, and it did not affect the tactical direction of the unit.* In all, the 14th Marines mustered two battalions of 75mm pack howitzers, three battalions of 105mm, and could call on the support of the 155mm guns and howitzers of XXIV Corps Artillery for reinforcement or deep support.

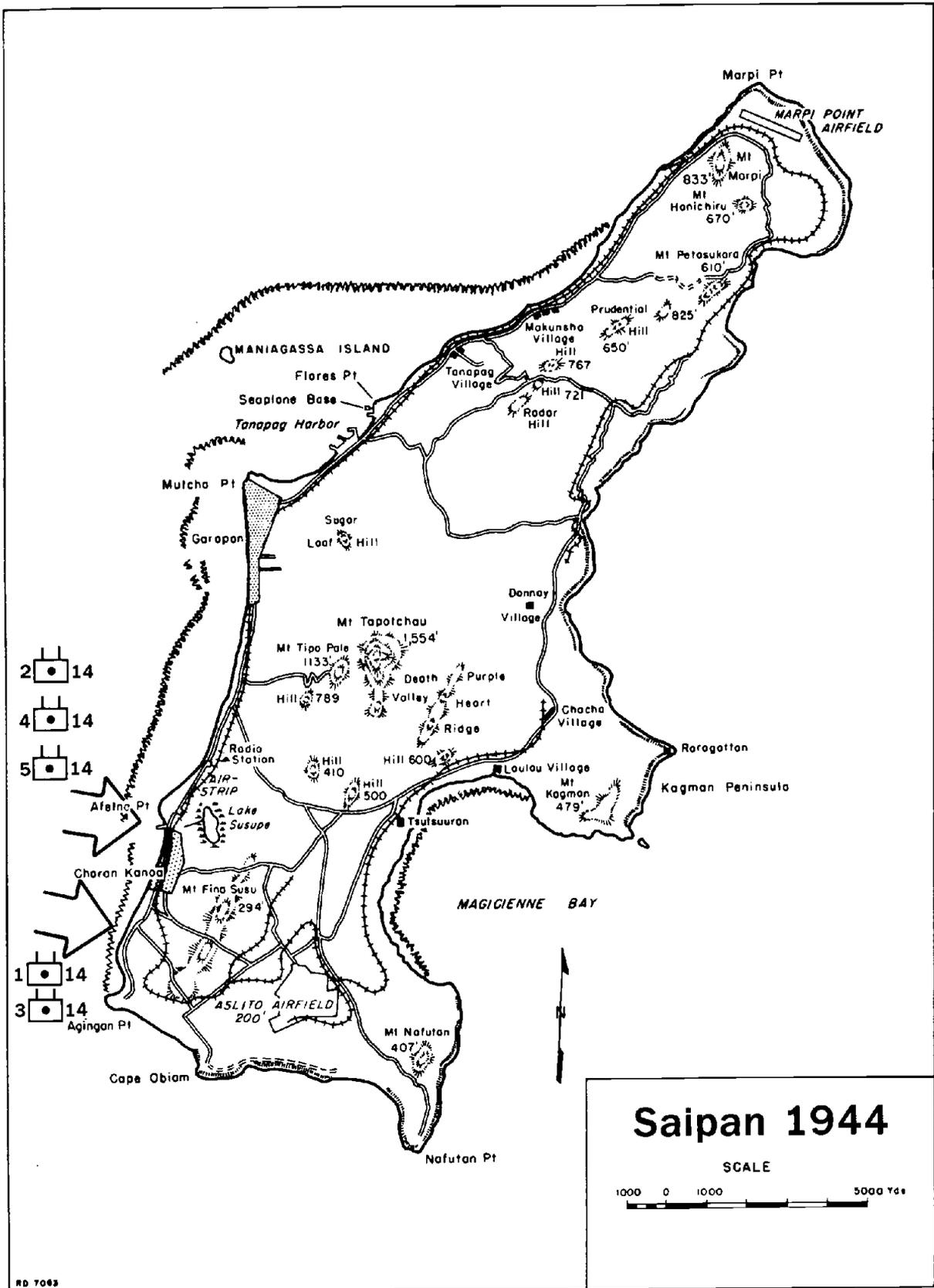
At Saipan, unlike Roi-Namur, there were no convenient off-shore islands, thus forcing the planners to develop other tactics. Instead of landing first and supporting the combat teams during their ship-to-shore movement as at Roi-Namur, the 14th Marines would wait in the transport area during this part of the landing operation. Rather than coming ashore as part of a regularly scheduled assault wave, the 14th Marines was to land "on order"; that is, it would send its guns ashore when the situation on the beach dictated, not at a specific time. This plan was the most flexible; it was also the most complex. The gunners had to stand at their debarkation stations for long hours, nervously waiting for the order to move ashore. Because of the demands of this mission, the regiment instituted special landing procedures. The 105mm howitzers were

*In fact the 14th Marines After Action Reports referred to the 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion as "5/14."

preloaded on board specially modified two and one-half ton amphibian cargo trucks, officially labeled DUKWs but tabbed "ducks" by the troops using them. The DUKWs used for this purpose required structural reinforcement of the cargo compartment and some mounted an "A" frame lift on the back. Each howitzer's wheels needed modification to reduce its width. The 105mm howitzers were too large to be loaded in LVTs, and the LCPV landing craft were unable to carry the unwieldy howitzers across the beach. The use of DUKWs allowed the howitzers to be carried directly to their firing positions, and simplified the unloading by using the "A" frame. The loading and unloading procedures required hours of practice before the crew became proficient at this operation.** To facilitate this technique, the three 105mm howitzer battalions embarked on board tank landing ships (LST 340, LST 354, and LST 40) at Eniwetok. A fourth, LST 23, carried ammunition. The 1st and 2d Battalions embarked on attack transports *James O'Hara* (APA 90) and *Leon* (APA 48). The landing plans called for those two battalions to disembark in LCPVs, then change to the same DUKWs used by the 3d and 4th Battalion for the final leg of the movement to shore.***

**The DUKWs and these unloading techniques were developed by the U.S. Army, particularly the 7th Infantry Division, during Operation Flintlock.

***This was possible because the pack howitzer was small enough to be manhandled over the side.





National Archives Photo 127-N-84353

A 105mm howitzer section from the 3d Battalion, 14th Marines pauses while in support of the embattled 25th Marines, shortly after landing on Saipan on 15 June 1944.

The American armada assembled off Saipan's coast on the night of 14-15 June 1944. The naval support group and carrier aircraft began pounding Saipan at dawn. At 0542 Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner, Commander Expeditionary Forces, gave the order to "Land the Landing Force." The LSTs and APAs carrying the 14th Marines moved into position about 1,200 yards from the beaches designated Yellow and Blue by the VAC staff. At 0843 the first Marine infantry units crossed the beach into a steel curtain of Japanese fire. Following waves suffered under the mortar and artillery fire as well. The progress of the landing force was spotty and uneven. In places the attack moved across the beach and penetrated to the O-1 line; at other places the assault mired in the sand along the beach. In the center, units of RCT 23 moved as far as the base of the cliff which overlooked the beachhead, while other elements around Charan Kanoa could not maneuver. The combat teams of the 25th Marines suffered a similar fate. In the center they moved inland quickly. On the extreme right flank, the attack gained only a few yards as frontal, enfilade, and indirect fires poured into that area of the beachhead. The situation on shore was desperate. Casualties were high and many units lost leaders. Enemy fire swept the entire landing area. The attack plan broke down in the face of devastating fire

from the *3d Mountain Artillery Regiment* located near Hill 500. The American attack slowed to a crawl as more and more Marines fell on Saipan's sandy beach. At about noon, Colonel Louis R. Jones, Commanding Officer of the 23d Marines, radioed General Schmidt's command post and requested that the artillery be sent ashore. The division relayed this request to Colonel DeHaven, and he ordered the 14th Marines to begin landing at about 1315 that afternoon.⁵

The first unit to head for the beach was Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. MacFarlane's 3d Battalion. Its DUKWs churned into the water as soon as the LST opened its doors and lowered the ramp. As the DUKWs paddled toward the shore, one suffered a mechanical failure and sank, taking a 105mm howitzer with it. The rest of the small flotilla made the beach with the remaining 11 howitzers on board. They crossed Yellow Beach 2 and followed guides from the reconnaissance party to the firing positions about 50 yards east of Yellow 2. The 3d Battalion began firing in support of RCT 25 around 1445.

The next unit ashore was the 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion, VAC (commonly called the 5th Battalion, 14th Marines). Lieutenant Colonel Reeve's battalion made it to the firing positions on Yellow Beach 2 at about 1600 without losing a gun. Unfortunately, this

luck didn't hold, and the battalion suffered heavy losses the next morning. The unloading process slowed considerably after a Japanese dual-purpose gun destroyed one of the "A" frame DUKWs with a direct hit. The battalion gained a measure of revenge when it knocked out that particular gun immediately after firing its registration rounds just after 1800.⁶

The order to land sent Lieutenant Colonel Carl A. Youngdale's battalion in over Blue 2 at about 1700. Earlier in the day, the reconnaissance party of the 4th Battalion was assigned to a "free boat" (an LVT not placed in a specific wave) and landed between the 3d and 4th waves on Blue Beach 1. The beach, like all the others on Saipan that June day, was under very heavy fire. Colonel Youngdale split up the reconnaissance party, and led a small group inland. This scout group moved forward through a Japanese fuel dump, over the sugar mill railway tracks, and into a cleared area located near a vacated Japanese store on the outskirts of Charan Kanoa. The group occupied a number of Japanese dugouts and established the 4th Battalion command post. Colonel Youngdale moved about 200 yards further and established contact with an infantry battalion dug in along Lake Susepe (actually a semi-dry marsh). After his return to the artillery command post, Colonel Youngdale ordered the rest of the reconnaissance party forward and asked that the battalion be sent ashore. Unfortunately, some of the members of the reconnaissance party left on the beach had been wounded by artillery and mortar fire that rained down on the landing area. The order to go ashore was given at about 1700. The battalion lost one howitzer when the DUKW carrying it ran out of fuel and sank while attempting to reenter the ship. Hard luck continued to dog the 4th Battalion when enemy fire damaged four more howitzers at the beachhead. The battalion finally set up about 350 yards inland from Blue Beach, just east of the coastal road. Although not completely dug in, the determined cannoneers of the 4th Battalion began shooting that evening. The hard working ordnance men were able to put all four damaged guns back on the firing line the next day.⁷

D-Day on Saipan was tough for everyone, but the experiences of one member of the 14th Marines typified what the forward observers went through during an amphibious assault. First Lieutenant Daniel M. Manfull, a former football and basketball coach at an Ohio high school, was a forward observer assigned to land with the fifth wave. His mission was to lead a five-man forward observation team inland about 1,500 yards, and establish communications with the 1st Bat-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 05454
LtCol Carl A. Youngdale served as commanding officer of the 4th Battalion during all combat actions the battalion was involved in during World War II.

talion, 14th Marines. Despite massive preparatory bombardment the Japanese defenses were still effective as the landing waves went ashore. Because of the confusion on the beach due to intense Japanese shelling, Manfull's team had to jump out of their LVT into chest-deep water and wade ashore. While moving inland, a shell exploded about 25 feet from Manfull, wounding all the other members of the team and destroying both radios. Manfull evacuated his team, then continued to move forward where he was able to link up with another forward observation team. Using borrowed radios, he was able to adjust preplanned defensive fires. Finally, at about midnight, all the protective fires were properly registered in front of the Marine lines. This was an important task because preplanned fires allowed the artillery to shift its concentrations quickly. A forward observer could call for accurate artillery fire by giving a simple command such as "Fire concentration 110," rather than having to rely on a lengthy period of adjustment by bracket or creeping fire. At about 0400 on 16 June 1944 the Japanese launched a fierce counterattack. Manfull, stationed at the infantry command post, called for fire. The Japanese were repulsed with heavy losses, primarily the result of artillery fire. When a second attack began, Manfull skillfully shifted the artillery and once

again inflicted heavy casualties on the attackers. For his action Lieutenant Daniel M. Manfull was awarded the Bronze Star Medal.⁹

A major weakness in the landing plan became evident when the 1st and 2d Battalions tried to land. The DUKWs which were supposed to carry these two battalions to shore never showed up; they were either lost at the beach or sent on other missions. Lieutenant Colonel Harry J. Zimmer's 1st Battalion circled in LCVPs until told to move to the assembly area where they would link up with LVTs. At this point, just short of the line of departure, Marines heaved the pack howitzers over the rails and into the bobbing tractors without the loss of a single one. The amtracs carried the guns across Yellow 1 at about 1700. The 1st Battalion set up about 100 yards inland of the 3d Battalion. This congestion was neither desirable nor according to tactical doctrine, but the situation left no choice. The beach conditions prohibited proper dispersal.

The 2d Battalion made the most difficult landing. Transportation for Lieutenant Colonel George B. Wilson's guns became available only one vehicle at a time. The result was chaos. Equipment had to be hand lowered over the side of the transport ships into the bobbing LCVPs below. This required the pack howitzers to be broken down into six separate loads. Once the equipment was on board, the cannoneers scampered over the rail and made their descent into the waiting LCVPs. The LCVPs then made their way to the reef, where plans called for the men and equipment to be transferred to LVTs for the final leg of the

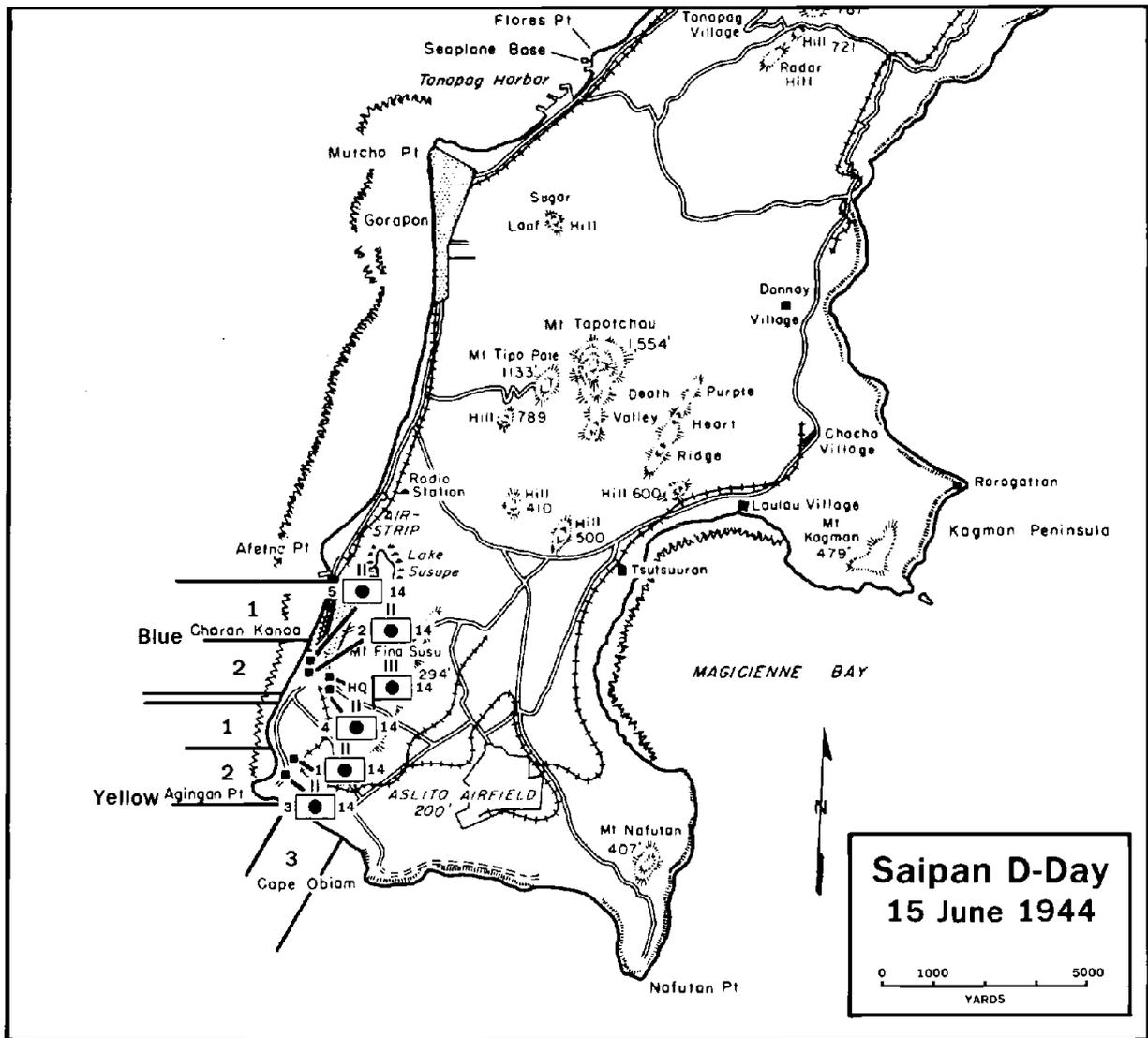
journey to shore. The guns and their skeleton crews landed all over the beaches. Once ashore they had difficulty finding guides to lead them to the proper firing positions. One group attempted to land from their LCVPs but were turned away by heavy fire when it reached the channel entrance. This group went back to the assembly area and circled until it was able to return later in the day. The battalion lost two pack howitzers when the LVTs carrying them broached at the reef and dumped their cargo into the sea. The Marines later recovered the pieces and reassembled the howitzers. Enemy fire knocked out two more howitzers; however, by using parts from both, the gunners created a single new one. Hardest hit was Battery E, which lost two howitzers on the way to shore and then lost another to a direct hit by Japanese artillery during the first night ashore. Losses of personnel and equipment forced Colonel Wilson to reorganize and form two batteries out of the remnants of the three that started for Saipan earlier in the day. Battery E was split between Batteries D and F for the rest of the battle, but was reconstituted during the lull before the Tinian landing.⁹

The regimental command group, under Lieutenant Colonel Victory, landed at Blue Beach 2 at about 1300. It established a command post in an abandoned trenchline located in a small grove of trees about 500 yards inland. While the position offered relative safety, the Marines killed two snipers within 40 yards of the command post. In spite of the hardships and confusion at the beach, the 14th Marines had all of its bat-

Despite problems getting ashore, a 75mm pack howitzer from LtCol Harry J. Zimmer's 1st Battalion prepares to fire from a camouflaged position, 100 yards from Yellow Beach.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 84792





teries ashore and firing before dark. The harried front-line Marines were happy to know their own “big stuff” was on hand and ready to reply to the Japanese “incoming,” round for round.¹⁰

The tactical situation dictated that the combat teams along the forward edge of the battle area readjust their lines before darkness covered Saipan. While this was going on, the artillery battalions registered their night defensive fires on likely assembly areas and avenues of approach. At the same time, the infantry registered its mortars to cover the dead spots between the fire lanes of the heavy machine guns along the main line of resistance. Individual riflemen dug foxholes in anticipation of a Japanese counterattack. Forward observers checked telephone lines to the batteries, and arranged for radio backups, as the heavy enemy shelling and numerous tracked vehicles in the area constantly severed wire lines. At the guns, men readied

ammunition and dug gun pits. All this hard work paid big dividends later that night. The 14th Marines assisted RCT 23 in repelling an estimated 200 Japanese near Lake Susupe. At 0330, RCT 25 stopped one attack with the support of the 1st Battalion, 14th Marines. Later, First Lieutenant James V. Walker, a forward observer from the 1st Battalion, spied a group of “civilians” approaching the lines of Company C, 1st Battalion, 25th Marines. These “civilians” soon turned out to be Japanese soldiers. The alert young officer immediately called for fire. The 1st Battalion ran out of ammunition before the enemy attack halted, and the regiment shifted the fire mission to the 3d Battalion. Aware of the critical situation, the 3d Battalion had been tracking every adjustment even though its batteries were not engaged. This foresight allowed the 3d Battalion to commence firing without hesitation and destroy the attackers. The Japanese at-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 84815

A Marine 105mm section from the 3d Battalion readies for action. Marine 105mm howitzers played a major role in the duel with the Japanese 3d Mountain Artillery Regiment.

tack failed because of a cooperative effort by two battalions of the 14th Marines. Lieutenant Walker was later awarded the Silver Star Medal for his actions that night.¹¹

On the morning of 16 June the artillery duel between the 14th Marines and the *3d Mountain Artillery* (reinforced by the *3d Battalion, 10th Field Artillery*) heated up. The attached 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion was the hardest hit, taking an estimated 300 incoming rounds in less than 24 hours. Enemy fire knocked out every gun in Battery B by 0500, and then did the same to Battery A by 0730. Battery C lost two guns. At 0800 Lieutenant Colonel Reeve notified Colonel DeHaven that he had only two guns still operable. This forced Colonel DeHaven to relieve the battalion of any further fire missions until it could reorganize.

The unsung heroes of the battle for Saipan were the Marines of the division Ordnance Company. They worked miracles with the battered weapons they received. Howitzers came in with trails blown off, recoil mechanisms damaged, hydraulic cylinders punctured, sights damaged or missing, and cracked barrels. The mechanics spotwelded ruptured seams, jury-rigged firing mechanisms, cannibalized damaged guns for spare parts, and devised field expedients to keep the maximum number of guns at the firing line throughout Operation Forager. On D plus 1, enemy fire knocked out 4 of the 15 batteries of the 14th Marines; the ordnance mechanics later repaired and returned all of these cannons to the fight. One howitzer, named "*Belching Beauty*," survived a direct hit on its gun pit which killed or wounded all its crew but one; mechan-

ics repaired the 105mm howitzer and returned it to action on the same day. All 10 of the howitzers lost by the attached 4th Battalion had received repairs and were firing by 1000 the same day. Through this outstanding effort, the ordnance repairmen kept the 14th Marines in the thick of the fight for Saipan.¹²

An unusual opportunity presented itself to the 4th Battalion. First Lieutenant Russell F. Schoenbeck, the former commanding officer of Battery K, and at that time the assistant operations officer, responded to a call for help to stop a column of about 30 Japanese advancing along the coast. Without moving from his perch atop the FDC, Schoenbeck directed a fire mission on the enemy positions by shouting his fire adjustments to Major Spritzen's fire direction section in a dugout below. After observing the impact area, he would make the proper corrections and yell the new fire command. Soon the rounds had bracketed the enemy and Schoenbeck called "fire for effect." Shell after shell whistled overhead on its way to the enemy position until the fire mission had destroyed the Japanese force. The Japanese retaliated later that afternoon when they scored a direct hit on one gun section of Battery M.¹³

On this same day, 16 June 1944, the U.S. Navy reaped one of the dividends of the decision to attack the Marianas. Admiral Spruance, Commander Fifth Fleet, reported that the Japanese *First Mobile Fleet* was sailing to assist Saipan's defenders. Admiral Turner ordered the 27th Infantry Division and XXIV Corps Artillery to land at once so all naval forces would be free to meet the enemy at sea. To make room for these new units on the crowded beachhead, General Smith

ordered the 4th Marine Division to press its attack with all three regiments abreast. The decision to hurry the landings was a wise one, in spite of the confusion and frustration caused when equipment was lost, landed on the wrong beach, or left in the hold of a departing transport ship. On 19 June, Vice Admiral Marc A. Mitscher's carrier forces inflicted such heavy damage on the Japanese Fleet in the Philippine Sea that this engagement became known as the "Marianas Turkey Shoot."*

Once the 27th Infantry Division and XXIV Corps Artillery were safely on shore, the tactical plans called for the Marines to drive toward Mount Tapotchau and Magicienne—called "Magazine"—Bay to cut the island in half. Aslito Airfield and Nafutan Point were objectives assigned to a regiment of the 27th Infantry Division. The 14th Marines divided its attention between supporting the drive to Magicienne Bay and counterbattery fire to silence the Japanese artillery which still hampered the landing force. One night, while firing a harassment mission far to the Japanese rear near Magicienne Bay, the howitzers of the 4th Battalion struck an unknown target which caused a gigantic explosion and a huge fireball lit up the evening sky for miles around.

The 14th Marines direct support mission changed so often during the battle that each of the five artillery battalions fired in support of each of the rifle regiments at some time in the 25-day campaign for Saipan. At times, the cannoners of the 10th Marines (2d Marine Division) fired in support of 4th Marine Division; at other times, the 14th Marines fired for the 2d Marine Division. After the Army division's initial landings, the 14th Marines fired in support of the 27th Division's RCT 165 during its attachment to the 4th Marine Division. These complex operations called for great flexibility, good communications, excellent liaison work, and a unique spirit of teamwork which transcended unit or service loyalty. This cooperative effort was obvious in mission assignments, fire direction, communications relays, and logistical support. At times early in the campaign, the 14th Marines borrowed 105mm ammunition from U.S. Army dumps, then returned the favor when Army artillery units depleted theirs during the drive to Marpi Point.**

The drive to Magicienne Bay progressed well. The 165th Infantry Regiment captured Aslito Airfield and

*The Japanese lost more than 400 aircraft and many pilots; the U.S. Navy suffered minimal losses. This action virtually destroyed Japanese carrier aviation for the rest of the war.

**Colonel DeHaven stated in a letter to the Commandant on 9 January 1950 that the logistical situation might have gotten out of hand if it were not for this cooperation. (Hoffman, *Saipan*, p. 121.)

continued its push to pinch off Nafutan Point and isolate the defenders. At about the same time that Admiral Mitscher's forces began the Battle of the Philippine Sea, the 14th Marines had a "turkey shoot" of its own, albeit on a much smaller scale. At about 0700 on the morning of 19 June, Marines spotted a large group of Japanese, reinforced by tanks, in an assembly area. The 14th Marines opened up with all it had. Every battery executed a "fire for effect" on the Japanese position. There was no attack by this enemy force. General Saito's plans failed because of the accuracy of the 14th Marines' howitzers. Immediately after finishing this mission, the 2d and 4th Battalions began preparatory fires on Hill 500 to soften it for a future assault.

Hill 500 was the dominant terrain feature in the 4th Marine Division's zone of action. The 3d Battalion, 25th Marines, nicknamed "Chambers' Raiders" after its commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Justice M. "Jumping Joe" Chambers, received the mission of capturing Hill 500. Colonel Chambers—a former Raider, Guadalcanal veteran, and future Medal of Honor recipient—decided to make maximum use of supporting arms for this attack. The 1st and 2d Battalions, 14th Marines, alternately fired white phosphorus and high explosive shells to neutralize the defenders. Smoke rounds hid the movement of the attacking Marines when they crossed an open valley. Joining the 14th Marines on this mission were the mobile rocket artillery and 81mm mortars. When the assault force reached the road marking the line of departure, all the supporting arms shifted their fires to box in the objective area and prevent the attackers from escaping or reinforcements from coming to their aid. The defenders, blinded by the smoke, were huddled deep in their bunkers when the rifle battalion began its assault. The battalion surged to the top of Hill 500. The attack was a success. An excellent scheme of maneuver and masterful use of supporting arms made this a textbook-perfect attack.¹⁴

Operation Forager was notable for the cooperation and smooth coordination of all artillery units—the 14th Marines, the 10th Marines, 27th Division Artillery, and XXIV Corps Artillery—during the entire campaign. After landing on D plus 1, Army Brigadier General Harper began holding daily conferences attended by the operation officers of each artillery unit. They discussed plans, problems, solutions, and techniques. Major Karch credited General Harper with instilling a feeling of confidence, cooperation, and unity in these meetings.¹⁵ After the campaign General Holland M. Smith spoke of General Harper in the most laudatory terms.¹⁶ One incident, symbolic of the ar-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 82549

A typical Marine 105mm position which not only supported the drive to Magicienne Bay, but fired continuous counter-battery missions in an effort to silence Japanese artillery.

tillery cooperation, happened on 19 June. A forward observer from 1st Battalion, 14th Marines spotted a Japanese artillery position near Magicienne Bay. He could not contact the FDC using his own SCR 300 radio, therefore, he had to relay his fire requests by contacting another artillery observer who then told the FDC. The 1st Battalion could not respond to the request because it was firing a mission with a higher priority. The 1st Battalion contacted the regimental FDC by land line, only to discover that all the other batteries of the 14th Marines also were engaged in firing. The regimental FDC phoned XXIV Corps Artillery, whose 155mm howitzers fired the mission. Using this combination of radio and telephone links, the Army guns destroyed the target. This complicated procedure could not have succeeded without the smooth-working relationship and strong sense of teamwork so obvious in all artillery operations during the capture of Saipan and Tinian.¹⁷

On D plus 6, General Smith ordered, "Hold present lines." While it was a day of rest and replenishment for most units on Saipan, this was not true for the 14th Marines. The cannoneers continued to fire on targets of opportunity, destroyed suspected Japanese positions in front of the 4th Division, and reinforced the fires of the 27th Division's artillery. At this time, another example of interservice cooperation surfaced. While ammunition supplies never reached critically low levels, resupply continued to be Colonel DeHaven's biggest headache. At his request, the Army willingly

supplied the 14th Marines from its own ammunition reserves until the Marines' replacement stocks arrived.¹⁸

The morning of 24 June 1944 brought a tempest as great as any turbulence that rocked the Pacific area in World War II. Marine General Holland M. Smith, dissatisfied with the performance of the 27th Infantry Division, relieved Major General Ralph C. Smith, USA, of his command. Major General Sanderford Jarman, USA, took temporary command of the 27th Division until Major General George W. Griner, USA, arrived on the island. The dark clouds created by this storm hung over this operation and marred interservice relations for years to come. Another unfortunate outcome of this incident was that General Harper's daily conferences were curtailed soon afterward.*

The next day the 1st Battalion moved four of its pack howitzers to the northeast slopes of Hill 600. This position permitted close, direct fire missions for the assault battalions. At this same time, enemy fire from "Purple Heart Ridge" hampered actions in the 4th Marine Division's sector. To resolve this problem, Headquarters, 14th Marines asked for and received permission to fire into the 27th Division's zone of action. The enemy guns remained silent for the rest of the day, and allowed RCT 23 to continue its drive across the Kagman Peninsula. By late afternoon the

*Holland M. Smith presented his personal view in *Coral and Brass*. In the official histories, Shaw, Nalty, and Turnbladh, *Central Pacific Drive* and Crowl, *Marianas* present the views of the respective services; Isley and Crowl, *Amphibious War* is another good source.



National Archives Photo 127-N-86002

LtCol Justice M. Chambers, left, discusses the tactical situation with the 14th Marines operations officer, LtCol William F. Thyson, Jr., prior to 3d Battalion, 25th Marines' assault on Hill 500, an assault heavily supported by the 1st and 2d Battalions, 14th Marines.

Americans had occupied the entire peninsula and had begun mopping up.¹⁹

To support the 4th Marine Division's rapid drive up the right side of Saipan, the 14th Marines had to displace and move to positions located between Aslito Airfield and Hill 500. To the south, infantrymen of the 27th Division tried to seal off the Nafutan Peninsula. On the night of 25-26 June more than 500 Japanese attacked Aslito Airfield and Hill 500. At about 0530, elements of this force struck the 14th Marines' positions. The blow hit the 2d Battalion full force. At first, the cannoneers held their fire, thinking the attack force was an expected patrol returning to American lines. The gunners leapt into action when they discovered the true identity of the approaching force. All along the line heavy machine guns spit tracers at the enemy. Gun crews swung their field pieces around to face the attackers. Gunners lowered muzzles and cut fuses short. The howitzers fired rapidly into the mass of humanity moving toward them in the darkness. Rifles and hand grenades joined the chorus of firing as the Japanese moved forward. When the smoke cleared and daylight arrived, 143 enemy bodies lay in front of the 2d Battalion. The previous

In the 4th Marine Division's rapid drive up the right side of the island, the 14th Marines displaced to positions between Aslito Airfield and Hill 500. Here a 75mm gun section fires a round while an observer notes the location of impact and adjusts subsequent fire.

National Archives Photo 127-N-85328





National Archives Photo 127-N-88352

A typical 105mm howitzer position, here firing in support of the assault on Garapan.

long hours of drill with infantry weapons paid big dividends on that morning.²⁰

The terrain characteristics of central Saipan made accurate fire support extremely difficult. The island was a vast tangle of indistinguishable ravines and ridges, all covered by dense underbrush. Place names like "Death Valley," "Hell's Pocket," and "Purple Heart Ridge" were nicknames given to some of these locations by the participants. To advance through this area, General Smith ordered an attack with all three divisions abreast: The 2d Division on the left, 27th in the center, and 4th on the right. The plan faltered because of an uneven advance over the rough terrain. The two flanks moved rapidly while the center remained anchored near its original line of departure. The irregular front lines, compounded by inaccurate maps and faulty land navigation, caused several near-tragic accidents when artillery landed on or near American lines. A shower of green flares shooting skyward brought an immediate ceasefire until the problem could be worked out. Soon, the primary mission for most artillery became deep support and counterbattery fire. Light tanks, self-propelled 75mm guns, and the 37mm guns of the infantry regiments were the primary direct support weapons during this stage of the fight.

Another important fire support assignment for the artillery at this time was preparatory fire on a clearly defined objective. Places like Hill 767, "Radar Hill," and "Fourth of July Hill" were pounded by volley after volley of 75mm and 105mm fire from the 14th Marines. These "prep fires" knocked out few actual posi-

tions, but kept the enemy groggy, disrupted communications, and prevented troop movement. When used properly the artillery proved to be an effective weapon even in this difficult zone.²¹

As the campaign drew to a close, artillery support played a larger role because the flat terrain made target acquisition easier, fewer units were on the front line, and there were fewer counter-battery missions. All these factors increased the number of guns available per maneuver unit along the front. When the 4th Marine Division assaulted the 0-8 Phase Line, it called on the massed fires of the 10th Marines, the 14th Marines, and XXIV Corps artillery. When Japanese fire from a small hill held up RCT 24, fire from eight artillery battalions pounded the enemy position for one half-hour. An example of the effectiveness of the 14th Marines occurred when one of its phosphorus shells struck a Japanese dual-purpose gun being wheeled in and out of a cave near the beach. The enemy gun exploded in front of a Marine rifle company that cheered the result.

On the west coast, VAC attached the 3d and 4th Battalions, 10th Marines to the 4th Marine Division to support RCT 23's drive toward Marpi Point. On the night of 6-7 July, a large Japanese force penetrated the lines of the 27th Division. At about 0500 this force probed the position manned by the 10th Marines. Soon the Japanese charged out of the darkness in an attempt to overrun the artillerymen. In the ensuing hand-to-hand combat the 10th Marines lost a battalion commander, Major William L. Crouch; Private First Class Harold C. Agerholm earned a posthumous

Medal of Honor; and the 10th Marines received a Naval Unit Commendation for its gallant stand.²²

The futile Japanese attack on 7 July broke the back of the enemy resistance on Saipan. American forces pushed north at a rapid pace and gained Marpi Point. General Smith declared the island secure at 1615 on 9 July 1944. Horror, not joyous celebrations of victory, colored the end of the Saipan campaign. As the Americans watched helplessly, Japanese soldiers and civilians jumped from the rocky cliffs into the ocean rather than submit to capture by American forces. Humanitarian efforts failed to halt the wholesale slaughter. It was a sad ending to the 25 days of bitter conflict that marked the struggle for Saipan.

Saipan was a resounding victory and a strategic success which yielded many rewards—a major defeat for the Japanese fleet and its naval air arm, interdiction

of Japanese lines of communication, acquisition of heavy bomber bases within range of Tokyo, and a jumping off place for the attack on Tinian. The campaign, however, became synonymous with the inter-service hostility caused by the relief of General Ralph Smith. It is important to note that artillery operations on Saipan made a lie of the myth that the Marines and the Army could not work in harmony; in fact, the relationships between the two services were cordial and effective throughout both Saipan and Tinian. The 14th Marines landed on D-Day in DUKWs developed by the U.S. Army, using techniques pioneered by the U.S. Army. The calm, efficient leadership of Brigadier General Harper, an Army officer, impressed all Marine leaders. Marine and Army artillery units shared rations, supplies, ammunition, and information in an unselfish manner; each reinforced the fire of the other at one time or another during Operation Forager.

CHAPTER 6

Tinian, 1944

The assault on Tinian was one of the most obvious operations of the Second World War, a fact not lost on the island's Japanese defenders, most of whom were spectators while the battle of Saipan raged only a few miles away. Since there was virtually no chance for strategic surprise as at Roi-Namur or Saipan, the American planners relied on tactical surprise alone. This resulted in a brilliant scheme of maneuver and fire support unparalleled in originality and effectiveness during World War II in the Pacific. This masterful use of the "indirect approach" took place under a heavy umbrella of supporting arms, utilized an original logistical plan, and followed a convincing feint that left the Japanese in disarray because they were unable to identify the correct landing area. After the war, General Holland M. Smith labeled Tinian "the perfect amphibious operation."¹

Tinian lay about three and one-half miles south of Saipan's Nafutan Point. It sat in the azure Pacific waters like a misplaced billiard table. It had a relatively flat interior, and, other than the steep cliffs that surrounded it, Tinian's only height of note was Mount Lasso, which rose only 564 feet above sea level. In 1944, the main industry on Tinian was the raising of sugar cane, and thick cane fields covered about 90 percent of the island's surface. The only urban area, Tinian Town, centered around the sugar refinery.

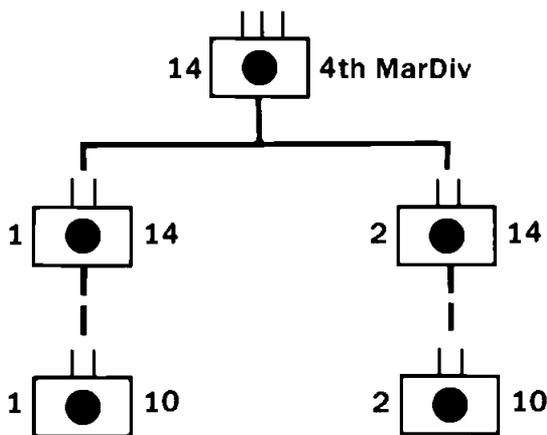
Before the invasion, Marine reconnaissance teams located only three beach areas suitable for an amphibious landing. The most favorable, in terms of terrain, was at Tinian Town. A second was at Asiga Bay on the east coast. The least likely, because of its small size, was on the island's northwest corner and had two extremely narrow beaches codenamed White 1 and White 2. The major military targets of note were the airfields which cut across the cane fields at four different locations. Indeed, Tinian's flat terrain and its suitability for constructing the long airstrips necessary for the U.S. Army Air Force's B-29 bombers were a major reason for the selection of Saipan and Tinian as objectives for Operation Forager. Of particular interest were the two fields near Ushi Point and the one just inland of Gurguan Point, about midway down the island's west coast. In general, the flat terrain of Tinian

could support rapid movement by tank-infantry teams without natural obstacles barring the way. The enemy forces on Tinian were a mixture of Japanese Army and Navy units under the command of Colonel Keishi Ogata. Colonel Ogata commanded the *50th Infantry Regiment, 29th Division*, plus a battalion of the *135th Infantry Regiment* (reinforced), and the *56th Naval Guard Force*. The Americans estimated the total number of Japanese available to defend Tinian at just over 9,000 men.²

Immediately after the battle for Saipan, the 4th Marine Division changed hands. Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith became Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, Pacific, and Major General Harry Schmidt, until then the commanding general of the 4th Marine Division, received appointment as the new Commanding General, VAC. Major General Clifton B. Cates, later Commandant of the Marine Corps, took over the 4th Marine Division. General Schmidt's first task was to complete planning for the capture of Tinian, scheduled to begin a fortnight after the securing of Saipan. After careful study, the landing force staff recommended a plan that took full advantage of the military principle of surprise. Rather than force a landing at the most obvious spot, it recommended sneaking in the "back door." The 2d Marine Division would conduct a demonstration landing at Tinian Town to hold the Japanese main forces in place, while the actual assault would consist of the 4th Marine Division landing over the miniscule White Beaches to the north. One of the major determinants in General Schmidt's approval of this controversial plan was that the White Beach landings could occur under the massed fires of 13 different artillery battalions shooting from Saipan. At Tinian, as at Roi-Namur, the advantages of shore-based artillery were apparent. The ability of the artillery to conduct accurate fire missions without regard to weather was very important, as the typhoon season was approaching rapidly, and a storm might strike the Marianas sometime during the Tinian campaign. The location of the firing positions, close to their resupply dumps, eased the logistical burden. The stable land platform provided by Saipan allowed careful selection and destruction of targets without fear

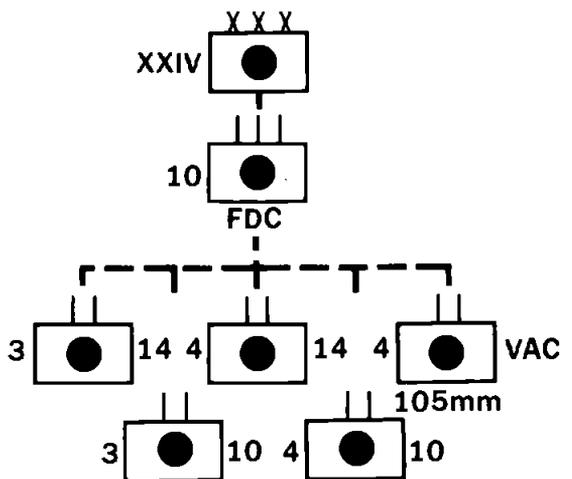
Task Organization at Tinian

Landing Teams



All Battalions Armed with
75mm Pack Howitzers

Fire Support Teams



All Battalions Armed with
105mm Howitzers

of betraying the proposed landing area. Each of these factors played an important role in General Schmidt's decision to avoid the heavily defended beaches at Tinian Town and to land instead at the least likely spot.

General Schmidt realized the importance of superior fire support, and instituted a truly unique task organization for the upcoming operation. Observing the principle of unity of command, General Schmidt placed all of the artillery units scheduled for the prelanding bombardment under the command of Army Brigadier General Arthur M. Harper's XXIV Corps Artillery. General Harper further subdivided this artillery into three groups which controlled a total of 156 field artillery pieces of 105mm or greater. Groupment A, an all Marine artillery group, was under the command of Colonel Raphael Griffin, the commanding officer of the 10th Marines. Groupment A consisted of the 10th Marines (less the 1st and 2d Battalions); the 3d and 4th Battalions, 14th Marines; and the 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion, VAC. The 3d and 4th Battalions remained under the command of Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. MacFarlane and Lieutenant Colonel Carl A. Youngdale, respectively; Lieutenant Colonel Douglas E. Reeve headed the attached

4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion. Groupment B controlled the U.S. Army's 27th Division Artillery (105mm howitzers). All of the long-range, heavy artillery (155mm) came under General Harper's personal control in Groupment C. The Marine 105mm batteries located west of Aslito Airfield shifted to the control of XXIV Corps Artillery on 15 July.³

Despite the overwhelming fire support available to the 4th Marine Division at Tinian, General Schmidt wisely decided to land some artillery on J-Day (named to avoid confusion with Saipan's D-Day and Guam's W-Day). The plan consolidated the assault artillery, all 75mm pack howitzer units, in the 14th Marines (Colonel Louis G. DeHaven) and consisted of the 1st Battalion, 14th Marines (Lieutenant Colonel Harry J. Zimmer); the 2d Battalion, 14th Marines (Lieutenant Colonel George B. Wilson, Jr.); the 1st Battalion, 10th Marines (Lieutenant Colonel Donovan D. Sult); and the 2d Battalion, 10th Marines (Major David L. Henderson). The pack howitzer units served as the assault artillery because of their compact size, limited range, and ease of ammunition handling.⁴

While the two weeks between the securing of Saipan and the assault on Tinian were days of rest and

recuperation for most men of the 4th Marine Division, this was not true for the members of the 14th Marines. As soon as they completed their fire missions on northern Saipan, the batteries of the 14th Marines hustled south where they either joined the firing line or began packing and crating for embarkation and another amphibious landing. Battery E, 2d Battalion, 14th Marines was reconstituted and rearmed for the Tinian assault. The busy cannoners found their days of "rest" continuously interrupted by thick swarms of green flies that landed everywhere. One could neither sleep nor eat without these pesky insects making their presence felt. Much to the chagrin of the Marines, the flies continued to bother them on board the ships that loaded near Charan Kanoa and were not completely gone when the Tinian landings took place. The Marines loaded each of the pack howitzers into an Army DUKW and then embarked on board their assigned LSTs on 22 July 1944. This gave the men of the pack howitzer units two days to enjoy the Navy's "home-cooked" meals and a chance to sleep in a dry, warm bunk for the first time since landing at Saipan.

The artillery bombardment of Tinian actually began only five days after the landings at Saipan. While the cannoners of the 14th Marines were pounding the stubborn Japanese on Saipan, the U.S. Army's 531st Field Artillery fired its 155mm "Long Tom" guns at Colonel Ogata's positions on Tinian. As the American advances up Saipan's spine neared Marpi Point, more and more artillery joined the preparatory fire on Tinian. This bombardment achieved such a fury that in the final accounting nearly 25,000 artillery rounds exploded on Tinian; more than one for each minute of each day between 9 July and 23 July. By the evening of J minus 1 (23 July 1944) Tinian had endured merciless pounding by naval gunfire, artillery, close air support, and a new jellied-gasoline bomb called "napalm." Tinian was a burning ruin; no other target in the Pacific in World War II received such a systematic preinvasion pounding. This careful preparation paid big dividends during the campaign.

Jig Day began early for the gunners of the 14th Marines.* Long before dawn the ships carrying the pack howitzers—LST 483 with the 1st Battalion on board, and LST 340 with the troops of the 2d Battalion in its berthing compartments—departed for the assembly area off Tinian. At 0600 the preparatory bombardment by the Saipan-based batteries began. General Harper's 155s opened the firing when they peppered Mount Lasso with a mixture of smoke and high ex-

*Under the World War II phonetic alphabet, "Jig" referred to the letter "J." The current system uses "Juliet."

plosive shells intended to confuse and blind Colonel Ogata's headquarters located on the hill. The Marine 105s joined this barrage by hitting known targets, potential assembly areas, and likely avenues of approach in or near the landing zone. At H-Hour minus 15 minutes all the battalions of the XXIV Corps Artillery massed their fire on the landing area. When the first LVTs carrying the assault waves crossed the line of departure, the bombardment shifted to the wooded areas and cliffs on the edges of the two White Beaches. Smoke shells kept the defenders from spotting the arriving LVTs, and high explosive shells kept Japanese heads down while the Marine combat teams crossed the narrow beaches. The amphibian tractors poured across the rocky beaches in single file, then fanned out as they crawled toward their objectives. The effectiveness of the preliminary bombardment was obvious; the Marines encountered only light opposition. The landing went so smoothly that the command ship quickly flashed the word to land the support force. At about noon, LST 483 opened its massive jaws, and the DUKWs carrying the guns of the 1st Battalion began swimming toward the shore.

The ship-to-shore movement of the four artillery battalions under the operational control of the 14th Marines went without a hitch. The DUKWs carried the preloaded guns across the beaches and directly to their firing positions. At no time did the howitzers require unloading or manhandling until they reached their final destination. This greatly simplified the landing procedure, and assured quick unloading and set up of the guns. The 1st Battalion, commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Zimmer, was the first artillery unit ashore and firing. The gunners of Battery A (Captain Carl A. Tricky), Battery B (Captain Charles V. Watson), and Battery C (Captain Curtis P. Irwin, Jr.) crossed White Beach just after 1315 and set up their howitzers in positions about 300 yards inland of White Beach 2's southern boundary. At about 1430, they were able to answer the calls for fire from their forward observers—First Lieutenants Harry A. Snell, Jr., Daniel M. Manfull, and Robert B. Bishop—attached to RCT 25.

Lieutenant Colonel George B. Wilson, Jr.'s 2d Battalion made a time-consuming single-file crossing of White Beach 1 due to the hectic landing activities and the small, 60-yard width of the beach. Battery D (Captain Ralph W. Boyer, Jr.), Battery E (Captain Horace W. Card, Jr.), and Battery F (Captain William C. Law) set up about 400 yards southeast of White Beach 1, and began firing in support of RCT 24 at about 1515. The regimental command group, commanded by the



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 87645

Marines, using specially mounted "A" frames, unload a 75mm pack howitzer from an amphibious DUKW. The size of the howitzer coupled with the ability of the DUKW to travel through sea and over land allowed the guns to be delivered directly to their positions.

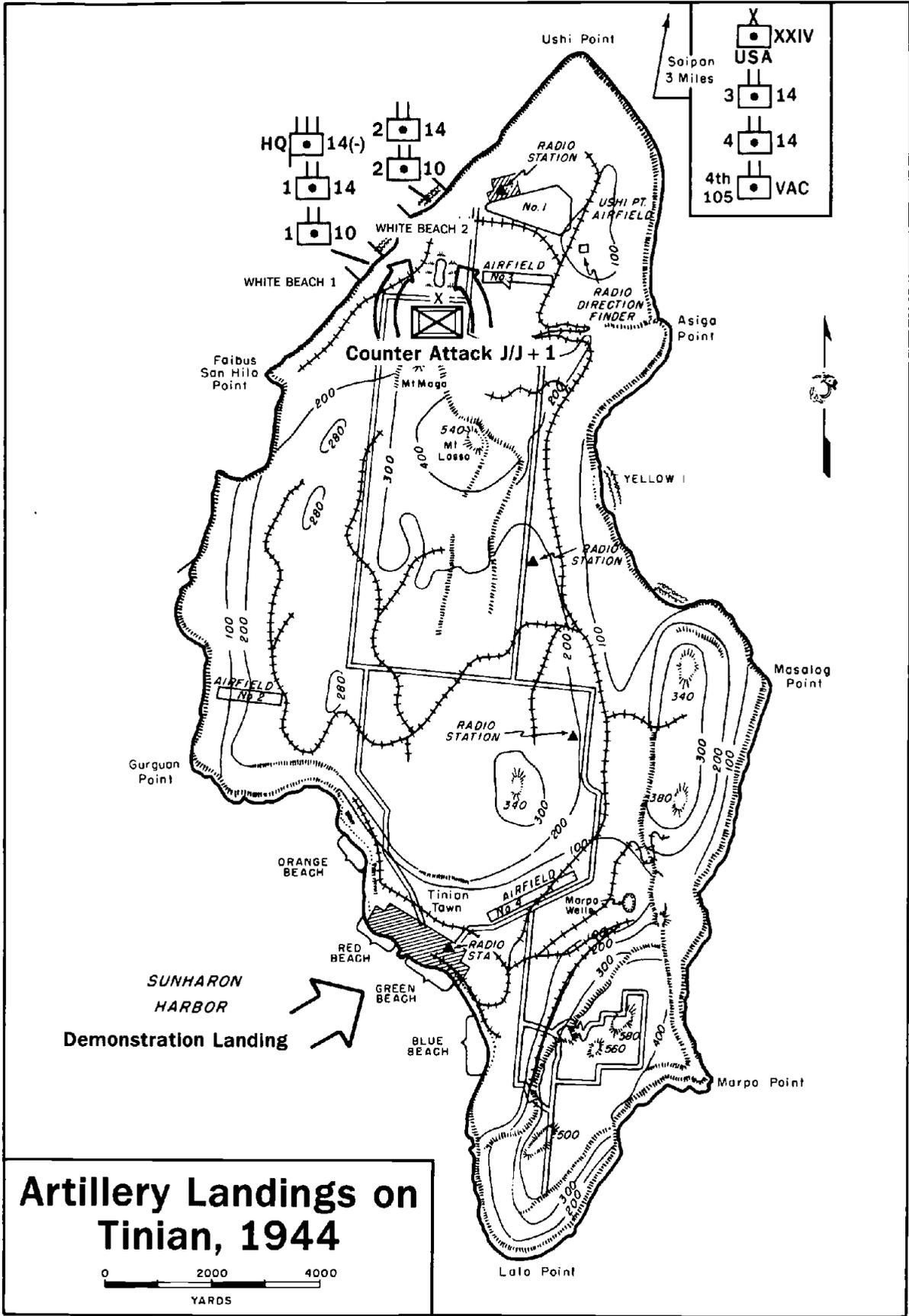
14th Marines' executive officer, Lieutenant Colonel Randall M. Victory, followed close on the heels of the 2d Battalion, and set up an advanced CP behind a small railroad embankment just inland of White Beach 2. The command group quickly established communications with all of its organic and attached units, as well as with the combat teams it would support, and assumed control of all the firing batteries on Tinian well before darkness.*

The two attached battalions from the 10th Marines followed the batteries of the 14th Marines ashore. The 1st Battalion, 10th Marines landed at White Beach 2 and assumed its firing positions about 300 yards inland. These batteries were reinforcing the batteries of the 1st Battalion, 14th Marines by about 1635. The 2d Battalion, 10th Marines crossed White Beach 1 and moved 800 yards inland, where it established firing positions and reinforced the fires of the 2d Battalion,

*Colonel DeHaven remained with the Division CP on board ship and landed the next day with General Cates and the rest of the CP group. This was necessary so he could effectively carry out his duties as division artillery officer.

14th Marines by 1630. The 105mm battalions on Saipan had handled all the calls for fire promptly while the 75mm battalions were landing and setting in. There were no difficulties during either the landing or fire support phases of Jig Day. All the pack howitzer units were ashore and firing without suffering a single casualty. When darkness finally arrived on the first day at Tinian, the artillery situation was well in hand; it had been a perfect day.⁵

Just after 1600 on J-Day, advancing infantry units received orders to halt and dig in along easily defensible terrain. This order went out from General Cates even though the landing force had not reached its first objective. General Cates, a veteran of Guadalcanal, wisely anticipated a concentrated effort by all available Japanese forces to throw the Americans back into the sea after darkness. Rather than press inland, Cates decided to stop, settle in, and let the Japanese wave break on well-prepared American positions. All along the defensive line there were the sounds of men busily using entrenching tools. To the front, teams of Marines strung barbed wire to canalize the enemy attack-



ers. Gunners sandbagged their crew-served weapons and sited them along likely enemy approach routes. Units distributed small arms ammunition and grenades up and down the firing line. Artillery observers called in spotting rounds to ensure accurate night defensive fires. In the artillery operation centers, men marked friendly positions on maps, inked chart data on firing cards, and assigned routine watches. At the guns, artillerymen hurriedly broke open ammunition crates and stacked the shells in their familiar pyramids, ready for immediate action. Throughout the beachhead, Marines checked and rechecked last minute details as the last rays of sunlight disappeared over the horizon.

The early evening hours dragged by without incident. At about midnight, the Marines noticed that the sporadic enemy artillery fire had begun to increase in its intensity and accuracy. Alert sentries in the combat outposts spotted movement to their front. As time passed, more and more calls for fire came over the telephone lines connecting the 14th Marines with the forward observers. Unknown to the tense Marines in their foxholes, the enemy was moving forward in three columns. A group of Japanese naval infantry approached on the right. A wedge of about 200 infiltrators inched its way forward near the center of the Marine lines, seeking any vulnerable gap between two units. To the left, files of Japanese infantry moved on either side of a column of five tanks. Between 0200 and 0600 this Japanese trident tried again and again to puncture the Marine lines. The two sides clashed

in a life-and-death struggle to determine who would control Tinian.

The howitzers of Lieutenant Colonel Wilson's 2d Battalion barked into the night in response to the desperate pleas of forward observer First Lieutenant William E. Ryan as an enemy force crashed against the defenses of RCT 24 at about 0200. Company A, 1st Battalion, 24th Marines bore the brunt of the attack, which reduced the unit to 30 effective fighting Marines before reinforcements and M4 Sherman medium tanks arrived. Once the tanks were in the area and the infantry began mopping up, the artillery shifted its fire to the periphery of the battle zone and boxed the enemy into the killing zone. While the sweaty cannoners serviced their hot guns, an enemy force found shelter in a wooded swamp which cut the Marine defensive line. Once through the swamp, the Japanese divided into two groups. At about 0200 one group turned west and ran into the flank of RCT 25, which stopped them cold. The other group moved directly toward the sound of the guns of the 2d Battalion, 14th Marines.

At Battery E's position, Clayton B. "C.B." Ponder spotted the approaching Japanese and consulted the sergeant of the guard, wondering if they might be the remnants of a friendly unit relieved during the night. As the force approached the howitzer positions, a fire fight broke out. The carbines of the alert sentries sounded in the darkness. The Japanese rushed toward Battery E's position but their charge was broken by small arms fire. Two hundred yards to the rear, the

Two typical 75mm howitzer emplacements set up soon after the Tinian landings.

National Archives Photo 127-N-93376



howitzers continued to fire at distant targets. The enemy charge concentrated on Captain Boyer's Battery D. Surprised gunners looked up and spotted the desperate enemy in the flickering green light of the flares supplied by three U.S. Navy destroyers off shore. All hands not actively engaged in firing artillery missions picked up rifles and manned a hasty defense line. Soon the heavy chugging sound of American .50-caliber machine guns entered the fray. Marines from Batteries E and F arrived, joined the fight, and helped stop the Japanese attackers. During this entire time, the gunners continued using their howitzers to fire their normal fire missions without interruption. At about 0400 reinforcements from Company C, 1st Battalion, 8th Marines and a platoon of tanks arrived to lend a hand. A survey the next morning indicated about 100 enemy perished in this futile attempt to overrun the gun positions. Once again, the well-trained cannoneers of the 14th Marines proved the soundness of their Marine Corps training with its emphasis on "every man a rifleman."*

After the hectic night of 24-25 July the men of the 14th Marines were ready for a rest, but fate would not allow it. The following day, Jig plus 1, proved very difficult. The previous night the artillery positions near the beach suffered hits from what the Marines believed were a series of Japanese short rounds aimed at the landing beach, especially the new pier the Seabees were building at White 2. Just after first light a sporadic artillery duel broke out between the howitzers of the 14th Marines and the 75mm mountain guns of Major Katuru Kahi's *Artillery Battalion, 50th Infantry Regiment*. This artillery fight ebbed and flowed in inverse proportion to the intensity of the combat at the front; as the maneuver units needed more artillery support, the 14th Marines could spare fewer guns for counterbattery fire. Throughout the morning, the 14th Marines obviously held the upper hand in this bout. The Japanese would fire a few shots, then the howitzers of the 14th Marines would reply vigorously until they temporarily silenced the enemy guns. This pattern continued for several hours and became almost routine.⁸

Suddenly, tragedy struck the 14th Marines. At about 0920 a 13-pound high explosive projectile from one of Major Kahi's Type 41 howitzers hit a tent pole of the 1st Battalion, 14th Marines' Fire Direction Center. This lucky shot reaped a devastating toll. It killed the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel Harry J. Zimmer; the battalion operations officer, Major Tho-

*Private First Class Clayton B. Ponder was awarded a Bronze Star Medal for his actions during the defense of Battery E.

mas McE. Fry; the intelligence officer, First Lieutenant Dean W. Atwood; and seven other men. An additional 14 Marines were seriously wounded. This one lucky shot gutted the command group of the 1st Battalion. The battalion executive officer, Major Clifford B. Drake, calmly took charge and supervised the evacuation of the wounded and dead, then proceeded to form a new command group, allowing the 1st Battalion to continue its fire missions unabated. Major Drake, later a major general, received a Legion of Merit for these actions.⁷ This one day, 25 July 1944, was the worst single day of combat for the 14th Marines—the regiment suffered more men killed in action this day than on any other single day of World War II. It did not take the rest of the 14th Marines long to avenge the 1st Battalion. Soon the entire northern face of Mount Lasso was pummeled by a cascade of high explosive shells. Naval gunfire, artillery on Saipan, and close air support joined the fray and left every potential firing position a smoking ruin. No more fire came from that area until later that evening.

From this point, the attack on Tinian divided into three distinct phases. The first phase was the expansion of the beachhead area and capture of the dominating terrain in that area: Mount Maga, Mount Lasso, and the Ushi Point Airfield. The second phase was the drive down the island which culminated south of Tinian Town. The final phase was the last push to eliminate the Japanese defenders holed up in the cliffs at the extreme southern end of Tinian. The first step in this plan called for RCT 23 to capture and secure the Faibus San Hilo Point area; RCT 25 took charge of the capture of Mount Maga; and RCT 8 captured the Ushi Point Airfield. The plan of the day placed the 2d Battalion, 14th Marines in direct support of RCT 23. The 1st Battalion, 14th Marines, reinforced by the 1st Battalion, 10th Marines, provided direct support to RCT 25, and the 2d Battalion, 10th Marines fired in direct support of RCT 8. All general support missions were the province of General Harper's XXIV Corps Artillery on Saipan. Additional supporting fires were readily available from naval gunfire and close air support.

The attack on Faibus San Hilo Point went smoothly, and the 23d Marines encountered only light resistance. Mount Maga was a tougher nut to crack. The 25th Marines utilized a complicated double envelopment maneuver to capture the 390-foot-high hill mass. Because of tough terrain and stiff enemy resistance, the direct support artillery remained busy during this attack. After a short preparatory barrage, the two pack howitzer battalions supporting RCT 25 joined naval



National Archives Photo 127-N-85413
Cpl John H. Kiefer operates an artillery range finder at one of the many artillery observation posts.

gunfire from the battleship *California* (BB 44) to close a gap between RCT 23 and RCT 25 during the final stages of the attack. On the extreme left, the 8th Marines successfully captured the airfield. As darkness approached, the Marines buttoned up for the night by stringing barbed wire, closing all gaps along the front, and registering night defensive fires; they wanted to be well prepared in case the Japanese tried a repeat performance of the previous night's attacks. Luckily, the evening of 25-26 July passed quietly.

On Jig plus 2 the Marines unveiled a new tactic which they termed "elbowing." Each of the two Marine divisions would alternate driving down the island behind the massed fires of almost all of the supporting arms. When it was the 4th Division's turn, it would move out with three artillery battalions supporting it; the other division would have only a single direct support battalion firing for it during the push. This adjustment called for maximum flexibility and close cooperation of all the artillery battalions to ensure success. The plan worked magnificently. The tank-infantry teams of the two divisions took turns ripping off gigantic pieces of enemy real estate as they drove down the island. The main problem encountered by the 14th Marines during this period was staying abreast of the swiftly moving attack. This required frequent moves by the firing batteries, which took turns displacing forward while other batteries temporarily assumed their

assigned missions. In only six days, well ahead of schedule, Tinian Town fell.

Back on Saipan, the 3d and 4th Battalions, 14th Marines and the attached 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion, VAC, were busy packing up to move south as quickly as possible. The rapid advances on Tinian meant that the landing force soon outdistanced the effective range of the 105mm howitzers. Anticipating this, General Schmidt ordered the 105mm artillery landed on Tinian as soon as possible. In order to facilitate the movement, General Harper released the Marine Artillery Group on 26 July. A few hours later, the first artillery greater than 75mm went ashore on Tinian when the 105mm howitzers of Lieutenant Colonel MacFarlane's 3d Battalion, 14th Marines landed just after noon, followed by the 3d and 4th Battalions, 10th Marines. MacFarlane's guns were a welcome asset for the 14th Marines, since the attached howitzers from the 10th Marines had reverted to the 2d Marine Division at 0630 that morning. Jig plus 2 proved to be the direct antithesis of the previous day on Tinian since the 14th Marines recorded no casualties on 26 July 1944.⁹

The next day the 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion came ashore. This battalion landed in mid-afternoon and was ready to fire at 1810. It was attached to the 14th Marines, and came under its administrative and tactical control. This gave the 14th Marines two light 75mm pack howitzer battalions for direct support and two 105mm medium howitzer battalions for general support. The landing of this battalion caused a good deal of confusion within the 14th Marines. Colonel DeHaven expected the 4th Battalion, 14th Marines to be landed instead of the 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion. It seems that Lieutenant Colonel Youngdale's 4th Battalion, 14th Marines encountered some displacement difficulty when rough seas ruined the causeways at the landing beaches. This delay and the similarity of the titles between the two units led to confusion among those controlling the landing beaches. Lieutenant Colonel Youngdale's battalion spent several days on board the *Cambria* (APA 35) and finally landed at Tinian Town on 1 August, too late to join the fight on Tinian. Colonel DeHaven reported that plans called for Lieutenant Colonel Reeve's battalion to revert to VAC control after debarking from Saipan. He blamed the fog of battle for the confusion. Some of the confusion may have originated from the fact that many members of the 14th Marines were unaware of the attached battalion's title change prior to Saipan and still referred to the unit as the 5th Battalion, 14th Marines.*

*The official records of Operation Forager actually listed the 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion, VAC, as "5/14."

The next day saw the 1st Battalion shooting in direct support of RCT 25, the 2d Battalion in direct support of RCT 23, and the 3d Battalion and the 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion in general support of the 4th Marine Division. This day brought the biggest single gains of the campaign. The 4th Tank Battalion led the rifle battalions across the smooth cane fields, crunching cane stalks and other tropical vegetation that barred their way. The main job for the 14th Marines on Jig plus 4 was keeping up with the fast moving spearhead of the attack. The highlight of the day came when the new airfield at Gurguan Point fell to the swiftly moving Marines. Jig plus 5 saw slow movement because of the heavy torrential rains and high winds that hit Tinian. The dirt roads and cane fields became muddy quagmires that sucked at vehicle tires, the wheels of the field pieces, and the artillerymen's feet. The bad weather and pouring rain were more than mere nuisances to the Marines on Tinian, they also masked enemy movements. The Marines spent the night of 29-30 July on high alert. The guns of the 14th Marines swept likely assembly areas to the front of the Marine lines. At about 0340 the artillery blasted a suspected assembly area where Marines believed enemy troops were hiding prior to an attack. The guns worked over the area for about 15 minutes with satisfactory results. No enemy attack materialized.

At 0745 on the morning of 30 July the entire 14th Marines fired a 10-minute barrage in front of the 4th Division's lines. Five minutes later the regiment delivered another barrage 400 yards further south in support of the division's drive to Tinian Town. The missions for the day were as follows: 1st Battalion, direct support of RCT 25; 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion, direct support of RCT 24; 2d and 3d Battalions in general support. By this time, the logistic situation had improved significantly from the first days ashore and the 14th Marines could fire without worry about depleting its ammunition stocks. In the first five days of the Tinian Campaign the 14th Marines fired just under 23,000 rounds of ammunition. On the single night of 29-30 July, however, the regiment pumped out almost 29,000 rounds; a three-fold increase thanks to better supplies. The improved logistical situation meant better protection for the men of the 4th Marine Division. The 24th Marines captured Tinian Town at 1420 that afternoon. The main benefit of this victory was to allow the Marine planners to see what might have happened had the VAC tried to storm the beaches here. The opinions were unanimous—high casualties would have resulted. General Schmidt's gamble proved to be the best course.

On Jig plus 7 the noose around the remaining Japanese tightened. The entire 14th Marines again

A 75mm pack howitzer crew fired several rounds, one of which just happened to drop through the mouth of a cave at 1,300 yards, silencing a Japanese 75mm field gun.

National Archives Photo 127-N-94367



fired a barrage to soften up the defenders hidden in caves at Marpo Point. The regiment fired 2,419 rounds to support the attack. These continuous fires served a dual purpose. First, they kept the Japanese in their defensive positions and prevented any spoiling attacks they might have planned. Second, they kept the defenders awake and on edge all night long. Once the attack began, the effectiveness of artillery support was decreased by the nature of the terrain. Many of defenders were hiding in the steep cliffs that faced the sea, and were better targets for naval gunfire than artillery. Most of the other positions proved to be targets of opportunity, better dealt with by the direct fire of 75mm guns on half-tracks and the tanks that moved up with the combat teams. These point-fire weapons were better suited to the job at hand and did not require adjustment time.

The last official day of the campaign was Jig plus 8. This was a busy day for the cannoners. The day started at 0750 with a five-minute barrage about 600 yards in front of the line of departure. At 0805 the 14th Marines fired a two-minute barrage about 900 yards in front of the jump-off positions. This was the last official day of the campaign and General Schmidt declared Tinian "secured" at 1855, 1 August 1944. While the island was declared secure, this did not mark the end of the fighting on Tinian. Japanese troops engaged in small battles and individual fights until the end of the war. The last combat for the 14th Marines at Tinian came on 4 August when the members of Battery I, 3d Battalion were involved in one of these brief firefights. About 15 Japanese made an attack on the battery, but the artillerymen drove them off after killing 12. This incident marked the end of the 14th Marines' combat in the Marianas.⁹

Between 5 and 14 August, the 14th Marines embarked on board its ships for transportation back to Hawaii. There were headquarters elements on most of the ships carrying the 14th Marines to Camp Maui. The 1st Battalion loaded on board the *Cape Johnson*, the 2d Battalion sailed on the *Sea Corporal*, the 3d

Battalion left on the *Jean Lafitte*, and the 4th Battalion embarked on board the *Typhoon*. These ships sailed in several different convoys, and arrived at Kahului, Hawaii, between 24 and 31 August. The tired Marines could look forward to a well deserved rest after spending nearly three months in the field.¹⁰

The 14th Marines could take pride in its achievements. The battle of Saipan and Tinian were strategic victories of the first magnitude. Tinian furnished the American forces with an excellent base for the B-29 bombers to begin their destruction of Japan. Its final strategic importance only became known after the bomber *Enola Gay* dropped its atomic load at Hiroshima, and led the world into the nuclear age.

The regiment played a key role in the capture of Tinian. The ability of the 14th to divide into two groups, each with widely varied missions, proved the flexibility of the organization. The ease with which it assumed command of the two attached battalions of the 10th Marines showed the adaptability of Marine artillery. Again, as at Saipan, the flawless relationships of Marine and Army artillery under the command of General Harper served as a beacon of interservice harmony. The quality of artillery support throughout the campaign was outstanding. The assault units encountered no difficulties during the landing phase because the Saipan-based groups covered the landing area. Unlike Saipan, there were no incidents of friendly rounds striking American positions. Marine artillery defended itself when attacked by a superior force. The ultimate tribute to American artillery support came when a Japanese prisoner told the interpreter, "You couldn't drop a stick without bringing down artillery."¹¹ For their participation in the Marianas Campaign, the men of the 4th Marine Division, including most of the members of the 14th Marines, received a Presidential Unit Citation. While the cannoners of the 14th Marines deserved a rest, they could not simply sit back and relax, because there was another battlefield ahead.

CHAPTER 7

Iwo Jima, 1945

To the Japanese soldiers living there, it was "Sulphur Island." In Marine operation plans it was ominously referred to as "Island X." In early January 1945 it was so obscure that it did not even appear on most maps or charts. The island—a stinking, smoldering, spitting hunk of porous rock—lay covered by dark volcanic ash, like a sizzling pork chop recovered from the embers of a charcoal fire and then discarded among the Bonin Islands. Very few people resided there, no indigenous wildlife lived there, and little vegetation was able to survive on its rugged terrain. This barren island had remained anonymous throughout its history. Few explorers visited its shores; none found anything of note. On the first day of 1945 it appeared that this island would go unnoticed forever. A short time later, however, its name became a permanent symbol of courage and determination in battle, known around the world, and recorded for the ages. This island was Iwo Jima.

The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS) selected Iwo Jima as VAC's next objective because of its obvious strategic importance. Its location in the Nanpo Shoto island group, about halfway between the American bomber bases in the Marianas and their target areas in Japan, put Iwo Jima astride the airpaths used by B-29 bombers. The capture of Iwo Jima offered several bonuses for the Americans. Once U.S. forces captured the island, the Japanese would lose their early radar warning of bomber attacks; Japanese fighters could no longer harass the B-29s on their way to and from Japan; North American P-51 Mustang fighters could escort the B-29s from Iwo's airfields; and crippled B-29s could use Iwo's airfields for emergency landings. The JCS issued a directive on 3 October 1944 that designated Iwo Jima the next stepping stone on the road to Japan, ending speculation that Formosa would be the next target.¹

By 19 February 1945 Iwo Jima was one of the strongest island fortresses in the world. Miles of trenches, caves, and tunnels honeycombed its volcanic rock. Numerous concrete bunkers and pillboxes were located all around the island. The defenders were hand-picked, crack troops armed with Japan's best weapons. The officers selected to defend Iwo Jima were the flow-

er of the Japanese Empire.*² Each defender swore to uphold "Courageous Battle Vows." The Iwo Jima defense force numbered about 20,933 men; 13,586 soldiers and 7,347 naval infantry. These troops could count on the support of an unusually high allotment of artillery and antitank weapons.³

The American assault force scheduled for Operation Detachment, the attack on Iwo Jima, was the largest fielded by the Marine Corps up to that time. The 4th Marine Division was again part of the VAC. The men of the 14th Marines were only a small part of the 111,308 men and 485 ships scheduled to participate. Vice Admiral Richmond Kelly Turner commanded the Joint Expeditionary Force (Task Force 51). Lieutenant General Holland M. Smith was in charge of the Expeditionary Troops (Task Force 56). The VAC, still under the command of Major General Harry Schmidt, now controlled three divisions, the 3d, 4th, and 5th Marine Divisions.** Major General Clifton B. Cates remained in command of the 4th Division. Colonel Louis G. DeHaven retained command of the 14th Marines. The mission of this newly formed armada was, simply stated, "to seize an advanced base from which to attack the Japanese Empire."⁴

Preparations for the campaign began much earlier. Immediately after the Tinian campaign, the 14th Marines returned to Camp Maui. After its arrival, the regiment faced the familiar problems of reorganization, resupply, and retraining. The division received the VAC operation plan on 24 October 1944, and its planners quickly began work on their own version of the document, issued under the title 4th Marine Division Operation Plan 1-45. The plan cloaked the real objective in secrecy by calling it "Island X" or "Workman Island." On 27 December 1944, the 4th Marine Division divided into five task oriented forces: the three regimental combat teams, the Artillery Group, and the Support Group. The 14th Marines received elements of the 4th Amphibian Truck Company, the

*The island commander was Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi. His assistants were Captain Samji Inouye, IJN, and Baron Takeichi Nishi, a former Olympic Gold Medal equestrian.

**The VAC was only slightly smaller than the entire Marine Corps during its World War I peak.

476th Amphibious Truck Company (U.S. Army), and VMO-4 for combat support.⁵

The 14th Marines embarked between 6 and 10 January 1945, while the rest of the division was participating in a final training exercise in Hawaii. The regimental headquarters elements, H&S Battery, and the 3d Battalion loaded on board the *Hendry* (APA 118). The 1st Battalion embarked on board the *Napa* (APA 157). The 2d Battalion was on the *Logan* (APA 206). The 4th Battalion split between the *Newberry* (APA 158) and the *Mifflin* (APA 207).⁶ Just after the men of the 14th Marines completed their loading, they experienced the shock of hearing of their departure on the evening radio broadcast by the Japanese propagandist, Tokyo Rose.⁷

After leaving Maui, the transports carrying the 14th Marines proceeded to Pearl Harbor, and a rendezvous with the rest of the fleet prior to sailing for Iwo Jima. This offered a last chance to see the sights of Oahu. The Marines along the ships' rails caught glimpses of scenic Diamond Head, the white sands of Waikiki beach, the pink towers of the Royal Hawaiian Hotel, and the somber remnants in the naval base of the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor. The next nine days, 18-27 January, allowed the Marines an opportunity for final liberty calls before leaving for the forward area. They spent their time swimming and surfing along the beaches, or at the curio shops, tattoo parlors, photo booths, hamburger stands, and hula shows. Finally it was time to depart beautiful Hawaii and begin the journey that would lead them into their toughest fight.

The Marines were pleasantly surprised. The ships which carried them into battle this time were much more modern and comfortable than those in which they had previously sailed. The gunners of the 14th Marines learned their destination on the third day at sea. There were intensive precombat briefings throughout the voyage. Unit leaders carefully instructed the Marines on their duties once they went ashore. Again and again they went over detailed maps, aerial photographs, and scale models of Iwo Jima. The daily routine at sea included physical training, general housekeeping chores, maintenance of equipment, lectures on essential military skills, intelligence briefings, and long hours in the chow lines.

A major break in the monotonous shipboard life came when the convoy crossed the 180th Meridian, or International Dateline. All members of the 14th Marines who had not previously crossed the dateline were mustered to enter the "Domain of the Golden Dragon"—the mythical ruler of the meridian. Officers

and enlisted men alike participated in this naval service tradition. Moustaches were cut in half, hair was cropped in bizarre patterns, bodies painted, and numerous pranks committed before the concluding ceremony when the uninitiated members had to kiss the feet of "Emperor Neptune" (an outlandishly dressed member of the crew). This ritual, like most jocular rites of passage, was humiliating for the initiates, but hilarious to the observers. The certificate issued for successfully entering the Golden Dragon's Domain was a treasured item, and many can be seen adorning the walls of former Marines today.⁸

The convoy which carried the 14th Marines arrived in the Marshall Islands on 5-7 February 1945. After a brief stay and several "swim calls" at Eniwetok, the fleet moved to Saipan on 11 February. The stark white beaches, irregular hill lines, and green cane fields were very familiar to many members of the 14th Marines. They had fought for that very island only a half-year earlier. Last minute reorganization, final changes in loading plans, and combat loading of supplies took place at Saipan. Men learned their final boat assignments. Gunners loaded artillery pieces into their DUKWs. In anticipation of the tough struggle ahead, they loaded seven units of fire instead of the normal five. On 13 February there was a final landing rehearsal off the coast of Tinian, but due to rough seas, it was a ship-to-shore movement only, and no actual landings took place. On 16 February the fleet departed the Marianas and moved toward Iwo Jima.⁹

The VAC scheme of maneuver called for the 4th Marine Division to land over the four northern beaches: Yellow 1, Yellow 2, Blue 1, and Blue 2. Its units were to move rapidly inland and seize a predesignated phase line, named O-1. The men of the 4th Marine Division were to protect VAC's right flank on D-Day and be ready to continue their attack along the right side of the Motoyama Plateau.¹⁰ The 4th Marine Division's sector contained the toughest terrain and the most heavily fortified areas on Iwo Jima. These included Charlie-Dog Ridge, overlooking Motoyama Airfield No. 1; the East Boat Basin; the quarry which dominated the landing areas; Minami City; Hill 382; the area called the Amphitheater; and a towering hill bunker complex called the Turkey Knob. The 14th Marines' orders called for the regiment to land on order with two battalions in direct support, and two battalions in general support. Upon occupation of their firing positions, the battalions were to begin defensive fires immediately. There were admonitions to be especially alert for mines and booby traps while moving inland. Once established and firing, the regiment's



National Archives Photo 127-N-111256

A general view of the invasion beach after the Marines were firmly established ashore.

next priority was to be ready to repel an expected Japanese mechanized counterattack, which did not develop.¹¹

The fleet arrived off the coast of Iwo Jima during the early morning hours of 19 February 1945. Reveille sounded at 0330 for members of the 14th Marines going ashore with the first waves. On board the escort aircraft carrier *Bismarck Sea* (CVE 95), the aerial observers of the 14th Marines attached to VMO-4 wiped the sleep from their eyes and prepared for a long day in the sky over Iwo Jima. Forward observation teams climbed into the LVTs which would carry the units assigned to the initial waves to the beach. As dawn approached, the landing craft and amtracs bobbed up and down in the ocean swell and patiently circled while landing waves were formed. First light revealed a much different scene from the one the veteran Marines were used to seeing. Instead of a colorful, plush, green tropical isle, the observers saw a colorless, barren, ashen ruin. Iwo Jima looked like a half-submerged black whale. No vegetation dotted its landscape; no white sandy beaches outlined its shore. Only an ugly black-grey volcanic ash covered its craggy features.

At 0645 on 19 February 1945 Admiral Turner issued the traditional D-Day order which sent hundreds of landing craft scurrying toward the beaches: "Land the landing force!" The first waves encountered little

difficulty as their amtracs moved toward the shore. They churned through the mild surf and crossed the line of departure without a shot being fired at them. The first trouble came when they struck the beaches. Many of the tractors could not negotiate the steep slopes that led to the first terrace, 8-10 feet above the shore. Some broached in the pounding surf, and spilled their precious contents into the salty water. Other tractors could not plow through the loose volcanic ash which made up the shore line. Gradually, however, more and more tractors mounted the first plateau, and allowed the infantry spearheads to sweep toward their objectives, Motoyama Airfield No. 1 and the Boat Basin. Resistance was light at first. Suddenly, the massed fires of Lieutenant General Tadamichi Kuribayashi's resolute defenders opened up. The American advance stalled immediately. The forward observers of the 14th Marines crawled to the front lines to assist by spotting targets and directing naval gunfire. Aerial observers in their Stinson OY-1 Sentinels, swooped low over the battlefield to pinpoint targets for the support ships that roamed back and forth along Iwo Jima's shore.*

At 1010 the reconnaissance parties of the 14th Marines went ashore. Their job was to locate and prepare the preselected artillery positions, to keep Colonel De-

*The unofficial, but more common nickname for these aircraft was "Grasshoppers."

Haven's command post on board the *Bayfield* (APA 33) informed of developments on the beach, and to act as guides for the arriving weapons and crews.¹² They found conditions on shore chaotic. The attack had proceeded much slower than expected. Accurate enemy fire constantly swept the beach area. The front line had not advanced to the designated firing positions. Despite heroic efforts, routes had not been plowed through the volcanic ash to allow the DUKWs to carry the artillery pieces up from the beach. The landing areas were littered with broken vehicles, victims of land mines or enemy direct-fire weapons; stalled LVTs that could not negotiate the steep gradient of the terrace; and the hulks of broached landing craft that wallowed in and out with the breaking waves. Heavy enemy fire soon found the artillery reconnaissance parties and caused casualties. Lieutenant Colonel Robert E. MacFarlane, the commanding officer of the 3d Battalion was wounded by shell fragments and required evacuation to a first-aid station at the beach. The situation there became so bad that Colonel DeHaven ordered the reconnaissance parties back to their ships, but the fire was so intense they could not comply and had to remain on shore.¹³

As the day wore on, the situation continued to deteriorate. The front line remained almost stationary as the assault battalions inched their way forward in the face of determined resistance. Undelivered supplies, litter, and battlefield wreckage piled up along the landing areas and restricted access to the beaches. The shoreline became overcrowded as new waves of troops hit the beach. They intermingled with casualties awaiting evacuation and the shore party teams which struggled to clear the beach. As time passed, the confusion increased. The firing batteries of the 14th Marines waited on board ship. At 1405 General Cates ordered Colonel DeHaven to send the two direct support battalions in, regardless of the beach conditions.¹⁴

The DUKWs of the 4th Amphibian Truck Company, carrying Major John B. Edgar's 1st Battalion, plunged into the water and began swimming toward the shore. Unfortunately, one of the DUKWs had problems, and sank after leaving its mother ship.* It took one of the battalion's 75mm pack howitzers with it. When the remaining amphibian trucks got to Blue Beach I, they bogged down immediately. The beach gradient was too steep for the DUKWs to climb. If no tracked vehicle was available to assist, the little DUKWs soon became mired in the loose ash, unable to move forward. Luckily, the versatile 75mm pack

*The problem was sea water entering the fuel lines. This problem plagued the DUKWs throughout the entire operation.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 111892
Struggling with the soft volcanic soil of Iwo Jima, Marines used any available vehicle such as LVTs, trucks, and DUKWs, to haul the guns into position.

howitzers were designed to be manpacked into battle. When a DUKW's progress stalled, the gunners broke the compact howitzers into six separate loads—each weighing about 200 pounds—and hauled them into their firing positions. Frequently the heavily burdened Marines stumbled and fell under the weight of their loads, but they quickly rose and continued their inland trek. The swells of D-Day were moderate, but an unseen undertow made it almost impossible to keep good footing in the shallow water. Men in ankle-deep water found their feet swept out from under them. Those caught in knee deep water could not move ahead without assistance. This treacherous undertow made the unloading process very dangerous. Bruised legs, broken limbs, and violent dunkings were part of the price paid to get the guns up the cliff.¹⁵ As the men dragged the field pieces toward the shore, the moving sands engulfed the wheels of the guns. The slow movement inland continued under heavy enemy fire, and the casualty rate rose alarmingly in the early hours of the battle. Despite the hardships, the 1st Battalion, 14th Marines had 11 howitzers shooting in support of RCT 25 at 1745 that evening.¹⁶

The 2d Battalion, under Major Clifford B. Drake, went ashore in the DUKWs of the U.S. Army's 476th Amphibious Truck Company, a segregated unit with white officers and black enlisted men. The company operated trucks specially constructed to handle the 105mm howitzers they were carrying. Each truck had a reinforced body structure and some mounted an "A" frame hoist to assist in unloading the bulky guns. Due to the beach conditions, only one truck at a time could



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 109999

A 75mm pack howitzer section of the 1st Battalion led by Sgt Kenneth G. Morris, wearing earphones, prepares to fire a round at a critical moment in an effort to stop one of several Japanese counterattacks as Marines attacked toward the northern end of the island.

move across Yellow Beach 1. The usually dependable DUKWs were unsuited for the task. They bogged down here, just as they had on Blue Beach earlier. LVTs, bulldozers, and tractors quickly aided the trucks, but not without trouble. Frayed cables snapped and endangered men working nearby. The towing shears of the DUKWs broke off under the heavy strain. Intense Japanese fire wounded crew members who struggled to get the guns inland. Despite the heavy fire and traction problems, the drivers gunned their trucks forward. Darkness soon clouded the landing areas and compounded the unloading difficulty. DUKWs lurched through the volcanic ash in the darkness. They swerved to avoid wrecked vehicles that blocked their paths. With great effort the DUKWs clawed their way to the firing positions. The determination of their gun crews and the dauntless courage of the black DUKW drivers were the keys to unloading the 105mm howitzers and getting them into action. The howitzers of the 2d Battalion fired their first rounds at about 2130 that evening.¹⁷

The 3d Battalion, now commanded by its executive officer, Major Harvey A. Feehan, received orders to land at 1505.* Ignition problems with many of the DUKWs of the 2d Platoon, 476th Amphibious Truck Company delayed the debarkation until almost 1630. By that time Colonel DeHaven, on board the *Bayfield*, decided it was not practical to land any more units on the crowded beaches. He ordered the 3d Battalion

*Major Feehan and Lieutenant Colonel Youngdale later served together in the 11th Marines at the epic Marine Corps battle of the Chosin Reservoir, Korea, in 1950.

to return to its ship instead of going ashore. As the amphibian trucks reembarked, one of them lost power as it mounted the ramp and slipped below the waves with a 105mm howitzer still onboard.

The 4th Battalion suffered six casualties from enemy shore fire while it was still on board LST 1032. The 4th Battalion advance party went ashore early in the day. After monitoring radio traffic between the command group and the advance party, the battalion executive officer Major Spritzen concurred with the ship's captain that beach conditions required an early landing of artillery. In order to reduce the running time to shore and protect the vulnerable DUKWs from the rough sea and enemy fire, LST 1032 moved to the unloading area. The ship suffered four shell hits and was quickly moved out of range, but the damage was done.

The regimental CP group under Lieutenant Colonel Victory left the *Hendry* in a landing craft at about 1500, but orders halted the vessel alongside LST 763, where it remained overnight. D-Day ended with the Marines on Iwo Jima hard pressed and only about one-half of the 14th Marines' artillery on shore.¹⁸

The 1st and 2d Battalions opened fire at 0740 on D plus 1 (20 February) in support of an attack to seize the O-1 line. These preparatory fires blasted suspected enemy positions. They began prior to H-Hour (the time of the attack) and shifted when the attacking units crossed the line of departure. Soon after shifting their fires, both battalions became involved in intensive counterbattery fire to silence the Japanese artillery which rained down on the beachhead. This was not an easy mission. Targets were difficult to spot because of limited visibility, poor terrain recognition, and inferior maps of the target areas. The enemy emplacements were cleverly concealed and well protected. Usually it took several direct hits to destroy one.¹⁹

At 1012 on D plus 1 the DUKWs carrying the 3d Battalion once again entered the water. Heavy enemy fire on potential landing areas kept them off the beach for almost five hours. The bobbing DUKWs and nervous tension caused many of the Marines to become ill during this period. Finally, the order to land arrived. The guns of the 3d Battalion moved to their preselected firing positions behind Yellow Beach 1 and near Red Beach 2. The howitzers began their registration fires at about 1725 on 20 February 1945. They fired in support of infantry units for the rest of the day. The three firing battalions of the 14th Marines shot almost 5,000 rounds in counterbattery missions that day. Lieutenant Colonel Victory's advance CP was operating ashore by 1715 the same day.²⁰

Disaster struck the hard-luck 4th Battalion. The first



National Archives Photo 127-N-109735

"Miss Fortune," a 105mm howitzer assigned to Battery F, 2d Battalion, 14th Marines. The other guns of the battery were named "Miss Fire," "Miss Carriage," and "Miss Hap."

DUKW went down the ramp at 1511. One DUKW and its howitzer went to the bottom when it couldn't negotiate the LST's ramp while trying to reenter the ship. It slipped off the ramp and stalled, the DUKW quickly filled with water, and was swamped by the rough seas. The majority of the DUKW-borne howitzers followed the amphibious truck carrying Major Spritzen, the 4th Battalion executive officer, to the rendezvous area where they were ordered to circle because the landing beaches were cluttered. Major Spritzen hailed the control LCVP and persuaded the boat control officer to allow him to go to the beach for a personal reconnaissance. While moving toward the beach, the control LCVP exploded in a ball of smoke and fire. There were no survivors. Major Spritzen's DUKW continued its perilous journey to the shore. After reporting the situation to Lieutenant Colonel Youngdale, Spritzen was ordered to go back and guide the remaining DUKWs ashore. While Major Spritzen headed for shore, mechanical troubles plagued the circling DUKWs. One after another, six of them sank. After his return to the rendezvous area, Major Spritzen found the remaining DUKWs and led them to the proper landing area.* He also discovered two howitzers that had been recovered by the cranes of a nearby cruiser. He ordered these guns sent ashore after repairs were made and the DUKWs could safely make

the journey. At the landing area, two of the DUKWs broached in the surf and another howitzer was lost. The 4th Battalion finally set up to fire after midnight, but only four of its 12 howitzers were operational.²¹

The batteries of the 14th Marines received a hard earned "well done" from division headquarters on D plus 3 (22 February) for their support of RCT 23's dawn attack. The front lines surged forward 300 yards in the pouring rain, the longest gain to date. The accurate fires of the 14th Marines' howitzers kept the Japanese under cover during the attack's initial stages. The tactical mission of the entire regiment remained the same. The 1st and 2d Battalions were in direct support of RCTs 25 and 23 respectively, while the other battalions furnished general support. The 1st Battalion received credit for knocking out several enemy gun emplacements, although the observers could see no more than 100-200 yards at most times.²² The craggy nature of the terrain prohibited accurate adjustment of fire. After shells began to hit the target area, dust billowed so high it obscured the target. The Marines discovered that even direct hits by the 75mm or 105mm guns sometimes didn't knock out the enemy positions. Often it took 10-12 consecutive hits to neutralize a single position.²³ The 14th Marines' Sound Ranging Unit came ashore on D plus 3 to help locate enemy guns. Several problems hampered their effectiveness. Many of the range finders sustained damage when bulldozers operating near the beach destroyed their signal wires. The ranging unit also discovered that Japanese mortars did not record because their sound

*The cause of these losses was the mixture of sea water and gasoline that stalled the engine and stopped the pumps. Soon, the DUKWs became too heavy and sank. Most sank in a vain attempt to return to their LSTs for help.

frequencies were incompatible with those of the range finders.²⁴

Marines spotted a lucrative target of opportunity at about 2330 that night. The forward observers attached to the 3d Battalion, 23d Marines reported large-scale movement in the vicinity of Motoyama Airfield No. 2. The guns of the 14th Marines spoke into the night. The next morning (D plus 3) the Marines discovered the bodies of more than 200 Japanese in the target area.²⁵ On D plus 4 the mission of the 1st Battalion changed to direct support of RCT 21. This regiment was part of the 3d Marine Division, but was temporarily attached to the 4th Marine Division. The 21st Marines had just landed and its division's organic artillery, the 12th Marines, was not yet ready to fire. The following morning, 22 February, the guns of the 1st, 2d, and 3d Battalions of the 14th Marines all supported RCT 21's attack into the middle of Kuribayashi's main line of resistance (MLR). The attack succeeded and the infantrymen penetrated the MLR.²⁶ At about 1700 that evening the tired infantrymen dug in and prepared for night defense. Just after 1830 they spotted a group of Japanese moving toward RCT 25's lines. Before the Japanese could launch an attack, artillery and infantry heavy weapons decimated them.²⁷

On Friday, 23 February 1945 Lieutenant Colonel Carl A. Youngdale took over as commanding officer of the 3d Battalion, 14th Marines. He was replaced as commanding officer of the 4th Battalion by Major Roland J. Spritzen. The 4th Battalion continued to operate out of two captured concrete emplacements that served as its headquarters and fire direction centers for the rest of the campaign. The day's actions began when the 14th Marines opened fire in support of the 4th Marine Division's attack on Motoyama Airfield No. 2. Defending the airfield was the elite *145th*

Two artillery forward observers whose job it was not only to pick and plot targets of opportunity, but also to adjust the regiment's fire onto those targets.

National Archives Photo 127-N-113906

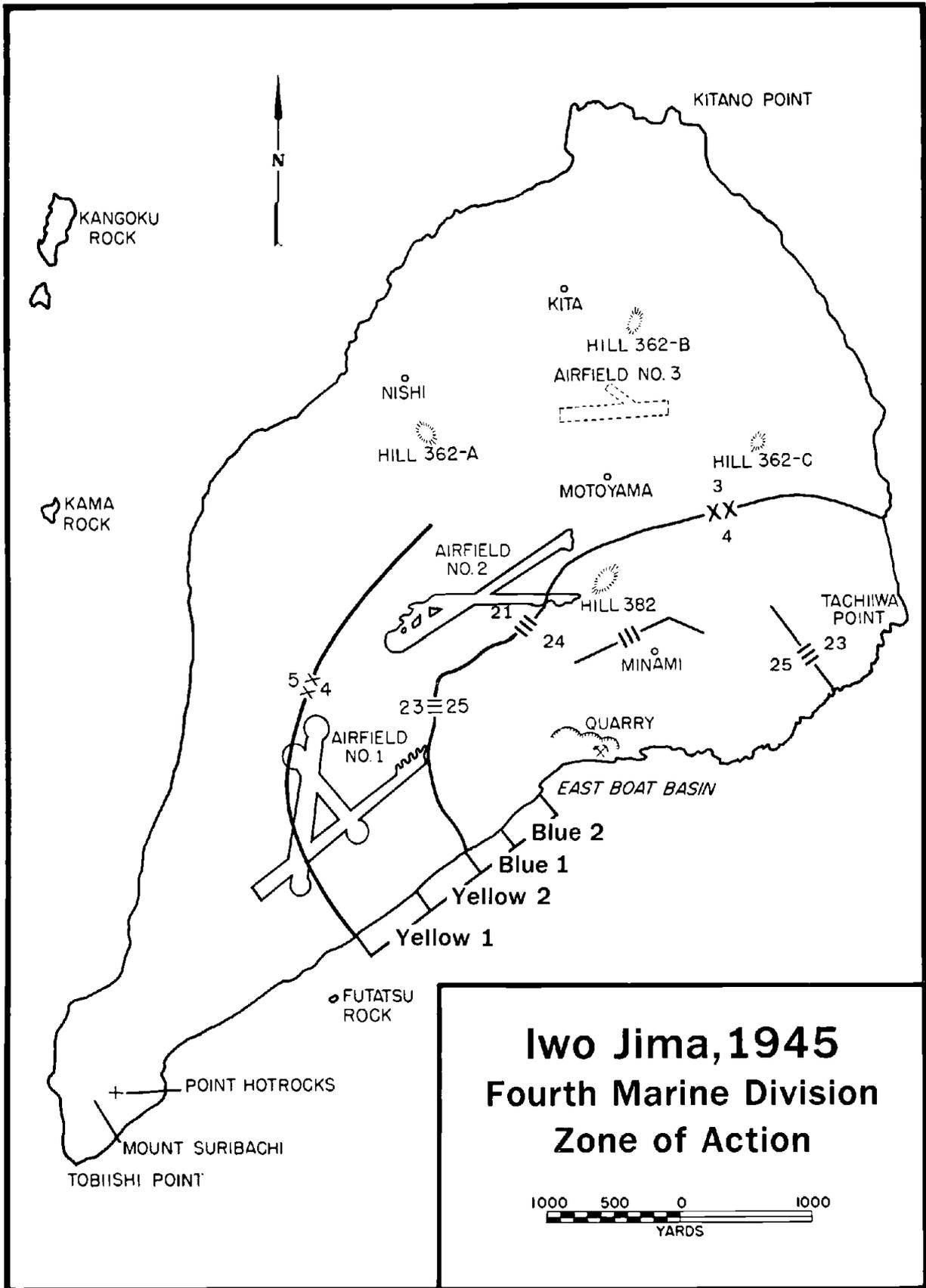


Independent Regiment of Colonel Masuo Ikeda. Its automatic weapons fired directly down the airstrips and formed a murderous crossfire. The tactical key to Airfield No. 2 was a finger of land called Charlie-Dog Ridge because of its grid location on the map. Accurate fire by the 14th Marines destroyed several key enemy strongpoints. Under the cover of an intense barrage, a Marine infantry-armor combat team moved ahead. To the south, an American flag unfurled atop Mount Suribachi.* Cheers rose along the firing line as busy men took notice of this historic event. The 14th Marines immediately sent echo and sound ranging equipment up the mountain. Again, as with the sound ranging equipment before, problems developed. Fog patches, dust raised by shelling, and sulphur vapors rising from the bowels of the island interfered with the collection of data.²⁸ Once again the burden for target discovery returned to the keen eyesight and expertise of the forward observers.

The following day combat teams supported by artillery fire from the 14th Marines captured Charlie-Dog Ridge. About this time logistical problems developed. The high mortality rate of the DUKWs and the chaotic conditions on the beach created shortages of ammunition at the guns. The resupply of ammunition was always a major tactical consideration when employing artillery fire. The basic allowance of ammunition—the amount of ammunition that must be expended to accomplish a certain task—can often exceed 100 tons for an artillery battalion. This huge amount can be fired in less than 20 minutes of intense fire. These figures reflect a basic allowance for a 105mm howitzer. On Iwo Jima the regiment often used up its basic allowance quickly and requested emergency resupply. Fulfilling such a request was difficult, and required the full cooperation of the unit and the shore party teams. Compounding the problem was the shortage of amtracs and DUKWs, as well as the continued enemy fire that pounded the logistic dumps near the beach. As the ground units captured more and more enemy positions, the latter problem diminished.

On Sunday, 25 February, the 4th Marine Division entered the most strongly held defensive zone on Iwo Jima. The division's new mission was to seize and hold the portion of Iwo Jima east of Motoyama Airfield No. 2 and south of Hill 362. The barren terrain of this zone was the most forbidding on the entire island. The key

*Actually, the Marines of RCT 28 raised two flags. The first was too small to be seen, so they raised a second, much larger one. Joe Rosenthal's camera immortalized the second flag raising. (Spritzen comments)





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 113644

A 1st Battalion 75mm pack howitzer engaged in direct fire. This weapon could be broken down into seven basic components and packed to the forward lines and then reassembled.

terrain features of this area were: Hill 382, the highest point on the Motoyama Plateau; a bald swell of ground named the "Turkey Knob," which housed a reinforced concrete command and communications complex; and a 200 by 400 yard depression called the "Amphitheater." Blocking all the avenues of approach were a series of nondescript ridges and canyon-like depressions, each one heavily fortified and strongly defended by the *2d Mixed Brigade* reinforced by Baron Takeichi Nichi's *26th Tank Battalion*. This area was known to Marines as the "Meatgrinder."²⁹

The Marines tried every tactic to capture the Meatgrinder. Most proved futile. They advanced behind standard volumes of fire and failed. They followed flame-throwing tanks into the cauldron, but the Japanese repulsed them. The artillery fire of the 14th Marines often had to be lifted because the fighting became hand-to-hand during the desperate struggle for the Meatgrinder. Colonel John R. Lanigan's RCT 25 tried an end run; it did not work. The Japanese still held out. On D plus 9 (28 February), the 23d Marines tried a frontal assault behind the massed fires of the 14th Marines, reinforced by the 155mm howitzers of the Corps Artillery and the combined strength of all the infantry mortars within range. The attack again failed. The frustrated gunners of the 1st Battalion broke down a pack howitzer and manhandled it to the forward edge of the battlefield. From that vantage point, they pumped 85 75mm shells into the Turkey Knob at pointblank range.³⁰ The 14th Marines combined the firepower of all its guns and shot 1,746

rounds during a 36-minute "Time on Target" barrage, with all the batteries firing at exactly the same target at exactly the same time. Corps Artillery added 300 rounds of 155mm fire. Another 1,576 more shells pounded into the Meatgrinder from various batteries of the 14th Marines answering fire mission calls.³¹ Incredibly, the Meatgrinder refused to fall. For seven days the 4th Marine Division slammed into the Meatgrinder with little effect. On D plus 10 (2 March 1945), the 14th Marines joined Corps Artillery, mobile rocket artillery, and direct fire of the 4th Tank Battalion's 75mm guns. The 60mm and 81mm infantry mortars added to the chorus. The infantry surged forward but Japanese fire stopped its movement. The next day was an exact repeat. Finally, RCT 24 overran Hill 382 in the early evening. On D plus 12 the Marines bypassed the Meatgrinder, but resistance in the area continued until 18 March 1945.³²

Many of the fire missions executed during the siege of the Meatgrinder were directed by the aerial observers of VMO-4. This tactic proved very effective for counter-battery fire and targets of opportunity. Many times the aerial observers spotted enemy positions in defilade, on reverse slopes, or behind obstacles. The Grasshoppers of VMO-4 were the first American planes to operate regularly from Motoyama Airfield No. 1 after the sinking of the escort carrier USS *Bismarck Sea* on 21 February 1945 left them homeless.*

*The *Bismarck Sea* went down with the loss of 218 lives after being stuck by two kamikazes. These started fires which spread out of control and ignited the ammunition stored on board.

After the Meatgrinder finally broke, the second stage of the 4th Marine Division's drive to Tachiiwa Point was over. The division commander declared Monday a day of rest and reorganization. On Tuesday, the 14th Marines participated in the largest Marine barrage of the war. The 132 guns of 11 different artillery battalions poured 22,500 shells into the Japanese lines. The troops of all three Marine divisions moved out behind its protection. This Marine steamroller cracked Kuribayashi's last line of resistance. It was the beginning of the end on Iwo Jima.³³

The turning point came on the night of 8-9 March 1945. That night about 1,000 Japanese troops of Captain Samaji Inouye's *Naval Landing Force* gathered for a final charge. Marines discovered enemy infiltrators trying to penetrate a gap between the lines of RCT 23 and RCT 24. At about 2330 the air was shattered with cries of "Banzai" as Inouye's men charged the Marine lines. The phones of the 14th Marines rang immediately. Urgent requests for "final protective fires" came through. At the guns, Marines dropped everything and sprinted to their stations. Tired gunners awakened and jumped to their positions. These final protective fires had the highest priority of fire. The battalions registered these fires just before dark, so their accuracy was well established. When a howitzer was not firing, the crew set the correct data on the gun for its final protective fire. This eliminated the need for confusing adjustments in the darkness. Final protective fires landed as close to the defensive lines as possible without endangering friendly troops. The guns of the 14th Marines barked into the night and fired at their sustained rate until the order to cease fire came through. The men of the 14th Marines gave it their maximum effort. They placed a solid curtain

of steel in front of the 4th Division's defensive lines and repulsed the desperate attackers. Although a few Japanese reached the lines of Company E, 23d Marines, most died in the assembly area or during their charge across the open ground. Marine intelligence officers claimed the majority of the 784 dead later discovered were killed by supporting arms.³⁴ The final result was an overwhelming Marine victory. This last-ditch effort broke the back of the Japanese defense.

Elements of the 4th Division pushed forward 700 yards the next day (D plus 18). The day after that, they reached Tachiiwa Point on the coast. On 10 March the 14th Marines fired its last combat rounds in support of the 4th Marine Division. After that, the regiment reinforced the 13th Marines, 5th Marine Division. All batteries of the 14th Marines closed shop on 13 March and the regiment recalled its forward observers and liaison officers. Working parties boxed, numbered, and banded equipment for the return to Hawaii. The following day all the firing batteries reembarked. At 0700 on 15 March 1945 the 14th Marines command post opened on board the *Bollinger* (APA 234).³⁵

The battle of Iwo Jima was over for the gunners of the 4th Marine Division's artillery. Iwo Jima was the toughest fight in the 14th Marines' brief history, and the regiment incurred its highest number of combat casualties (51 killed and 254 wounded) in a single campaign.³⁶ During the battle, the 14th Marines shot 62,833 rounds of 75mm ammunition and 156,598 rounds of 105mm ammunition. The regiment fired 5,924 separate missions and dropped more than 3,000 tons of explosives on the enemy.³⁷ The 14th Marines returned to Hawaii to rebuild for an even bigger fight—the invasion of Japan.

CHAPTER 8

Deactivation, 1945

After Iwo Jima, the tired gunners of the 14th Marines looked forward to a well-deserved rest. They were returning to Camp Maui for the third time in thirteen months. Before their departure from Iwo, many members of the regiment attended the dedication of the 4th Marine Division Cemetery on the morning of 15 March 1945, and said a silent last farewell to their buddies who could not accompany them to Hawaii. On 15-16 March the regiment reembarked on board the troop transports *Bollinger* (APA 234), *Grimes* (APA 172), and *Rockbridge* (APA 228). The Marines patiently waited off the coast of Iwo Jima while the convoy formed. Finally, the entire convoy left for Maui on 20 March.¹

The arrival in Hawaii on 4-5 April was a memorable one. The people of Maui turned out in large numbers to welcome the members of the 14th Marines and their comrades-in-arms from the remainder of the 4th Marine Division. People greeted the Marines with a spirit of hospitality that was second to none. Many signs proclaimed "MAUI NO KA OI" (Maui is the best!). Each Marine received a special greeting card which proclaimed the people of Maui were happy to see them back. At the dock, the men of the 14th Marines met a traditional Hawaiian welcome; music blared, the grass skirts of the hula dancers swayed to

the beat, and beautiful leis went around the necks of the new arrivals. The trucks, crowded with Marines, rode under a gigantic sign that stated "YOU BET WE'RE GLAD YOU ARE BACK." Cheering throngs of people lined the road to Camp Maui for miles. Waving hands, smiling faces, friendly greetings, and cold drinks accentuated the festive mood. The 14th Marines returned in triumph, its members happy to be back.

One of the first orders of business at Camp Maui was improvement of its physical facilities. Marine engineers and Navy "Seabee" Construction Battalions worked to upgrade the living conditions. Eventually permanent medical facilities, battalion offices, and the regimental mess hall were constructed. Most of the members of the 14th Marines continued to live in tents with outdoor, uncovered showers and wash racks. The paving of roads ended the cycle of bottomless mud pits alternating with choking storms of red dust which penetrated every corner of the camp. Auditoriums sprouted up, making it possible for the Marines to watch evening movies without being drenched by one of Maui's frequent tropical downpours. A beautiful officer's club was built on the cliff overlooking the ocean. A USO building emerged to provide morale and comfort services to the regiment. Another wel-

An overview of Camp Maui, Hawaii, to which the men of the 14th Marines returned following the hard-fought campaign to wrest control of Iwo Jima from the Japanese.

National Archives Photo 127-N-143668





National Archives Photo 127-N-143000

MajGen Harry Schmidt places hard-won campaign streamers on each of the regimental flags of the 4th Marine Division during ceremonies at Camp Maui, Hawaii, in late 1945.

come addition was the Red Cross recreation hut that featured hot coffee and doughnuts served by the first women attached to the division overseas.²

A lot of time and effort went into the construction of new athletic facilities. The leaders of the 4th Division always considered its morale outstanding, and many believed the division's well-rounded sports program was a major factor in maintaining such high morale. The division's leaders recognized the military skills fostered by athletics: excellent physical conditioning, the benefit of physical and mental rehabilitation after the stress of combat, and the unit pride that developed as a result of personal identification with the unit's athletic teams. The 14th Marines' athletic programs included both team and individual sports. Baseball diamonds, football fields, volleyball courts, handball courts, and basketball courts dotted Camp Maui. The 4th Marine Division was known throughout the Pacific as an athletic power. In 1944 the division football team was undefeated and outscored its opponents 164 to 6. In a division noted for its athletic prowess, the 14th Marines stood out as the best, the cream of the crop. The "Howitzers" of the 14th Marines dominated most of the interregimental compe-

titions. The baseball team, managed by Captain Harrison L. Rogers and assisted by Warrant Officer Lee B. Hurley, won the divisional title twice. The 14th Marines basketball team, coached by Lieutenant Colonel John B. Edgar, won the divisional title as well. Many members of the regiment participated in the popular boxing smokers. Members of the 14th Marines looked with pride on the athletic achievements of their regiment.*³

Other, more traditional military activities occurred during this period as well. On 12 April 1945 the regiment received the shocking news of the death of President Franklin D. Roosevelt. Marines held a brief memorial service, and the flag was lowered in tribute to the former commander in chief. The regiment assembled on 28 May for a change of command ceremony. Colonel Louis G. DeHaven turned the regimental colors over to his former executive officer, Colonel Randall M. Victory, when he became the chief of staff of VAC Corps Artillery. Lieutenant Colonel Carl A. Youngdale became regimental executive officer. A divisional awards ceremony took place at the parade

*Many felt this emphasis on athletics was due to the interest of General Cates, an avid baseball fan.

held on 4 July. A composite artillery battalion mounted on trucks towing howitzers, rode in review. These activities, like athletics and recreation, served to foster unit pride and keep up morale.⁴

The main task the 14th Marines faced, however, was to prepare for further combat operations against Japan. Once again, the 14th Marines readied itself for another combat assault. The familiar routine of replacement, reorganization, reequipment, and retraining began anew. New Marines from stateside training bases or replacement drafts filled the ranks of the 14th Marines. New equipment arrived to replace broken, worn, or dated items in the regimental inventory. The 4th Battalion was rearmed with a full complement of new 155mm howitzers to replace the 105mm howitzers that survived Iwo Jima. The M1 155mm howitzer had a maximum range of 16,355 yards and extended the reach of the 14th Marines' howitzers by about three miles. The heavy gun—it weighed 5.7 tons—provided a very stable firing platform. The result was that the “155” was known for its uncanny accuracy at all ranges. It fired a 95-pound shell at 1,850 feet per second. The 155mm used separate bag and projectile type ammunition, unlike the 75mm and 105mm howitzers in the other battalions which used case-type ammunition. This change required an intensive retraining program to indoctrinate the 4th Battalion in the new proce-

dure. Now each shell was loaded separately from the powder bags which propelled it. A crewman had to swab out the bore of the howitzer before each firing to prevent a premature ignition of the powder. This slowed the gun's rapid-fire rate somewhat, but the increased range offset this limitation. Overall, the 155mm was an excellent weapon; many artillery experts considered it the finest howitzer of its day.⁵ These new weapons enhanced the ability of the 14th Marines to support the 4th Marine Division.

The last operation scheduled for the 14th Marines promised to be even tougher than Iwo Jima. The 4th Marine Division was among those earmarked to participate in Operation Coronet, the second stage of the invasion of Japan. The rumor mill ground out speculation about the recapture of Wake Island, followed by an amphibious assault on the Honshu Plateau and the capture of Tokyo. The 4th Marine Division was detached from the VAC for reassignment to Lieutenant General Roy S. Geiger's III Amphibious Corps for this operation. As the training schedule picked up, the 14th Marines again moved into the tent bivouac near Maalaea Bay for the last time. Once again, live fire practice dominated the daily activities of the regiment. There was, however, no need for Operation Coronet after President Harry S. Truman announced on 14 Au-

A static view of the M1 155mm howitzer, capable of hitting targets at 14,900 meters, which was designated to replace the 105mm howitzers assigned to the regiment's 4th Battalion.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A18017



gust that Japan had tentatively submitted a surrender proposal. The war was over for the 14th Marines.

Two days after President Truman's announcement, the 4th Marine Division held a parade to commemorate victory over Japan (V-J Day). As the music blared, the color bearers of the 14th Marines moved sharply in step with those of the other regiments as they crossed the parade ground. They halted and presented their colors in unison. The flag bearer proudly dipped the golden eagle, globe, and anchor on a scarlet field when Major General Cates turned to face him. The division commander fixed a Naval Unit Commendation Streamer on the staff; a reward for the 14th Marines' actions at Iwo Jima. This presentation was the highlight of the ceremony for the regiment.⁶

Soon after the V-J Day parade, the 14th Marines received the welcome news that the 4th Division would be the first Marine division to return to the United States. Most of the men of the 14th Marines began to pack, crate, and mark unit equipment for shipment to the United States. They field stripped, cleaned, and packed crew-served weapons with protective lubricants, readying them for shipment to storage depots near the west coast. Individual equipment was cleaned, inspected, and returned to the regimental supply sections. Marines packed personal gear with loving care into seabags or ValPac suitcases for the return journey. While this was going on, drill platoons from the 14th Marines competed in the division drill competition in late September and early October. Soon afterward, the 14th Marines closed up shop and prepared to return with minimum delay.

The regiment embarked on board the aircraft carriers *Fanshaw Bay* (CVE 70), the *Rudyard Bay* (CVE 81), and the *Shamrock Bay* (CVE 94) at Kahaului Harbor, Maui, on 25-28 October 1945. Civilians from Maui bade tearful "Alohas" as the carriers steamed out of the harbor with decorative signs hanging over their sides. The trip to San Diego, California, took six days. The 14th Marines arrived and disembarked between 31 October and 2 November 1945. From San Diego the regiment proceeded to Camp Pendleton in trucks. Departing Marines staged at Camp Pendleton's Area 17 barracks prior to discharge from the Marine Corps. On 10 November many of the gunners of the 14th Marines celebrated their last Marine Corps Birthday while on active service. Career Marines and those with insufficient points for discharge transferred to new posts. By 15 November all four battalions were deactivated. On 18 November Colonel Victory departed. The last unit of the 14th Marines, Headquarters and Service Battery, deactivated on 20 November 1945.⁷

This deactivation marked the end of the 14th Marines' World War II service. During this period, the 14th Marines served for almost two and one-half years. The regiment spent 21 months overseas. It participated in four major combat operations: Roi-Namur, Saipan, Tinian, and Iwo Jima. It made four amphibious landings opposed by enemy forces. In 63 days of combat the 14th Marines fired almost 350,000 rounds, an average of 5,500 per day. The regiment received two awards, a Presidential Unit Citation and a Naval Unit Commendation. The 14th Marines provided outstanding fire support for the 4th Marine Division throughout its World War II campaigns.⁸

CHAPTER 9

The Marine Corps Reserve: 1945-61

The years immediately following World War II were marked by rapid demobilization and massive redeployment of the Fleet Marine Forces (FMF). The number of Marines on active duty dropped from 485,053 in 1945 to 155,592 in less than one year and fell to a mere 77,609 in 1948.¹ The 3d (December 1945), 4th (November 1945), and 5th Marine Divisions (January 1946) were deactivated. The 6th Marine Division was reduced in size and redesignated the 3d Marine Brigade. Eventually the 1st and 2d Marine Divisions were reassigned to Camp Pendleton on the west coast and Camp Lejeune on the east coast. The post-World War II Marine Corps was but a shadow of its former self and many FMF units were manned in only token strength.²

Planners in Washington D.C. recognized the need for a well-organized reserve force to augment the Regular Marine Corps in time of war or national emergency. In 1946 the Division of Reserve was reactivated at Headquarters, Marine Corps. It was given special staff status and ordered to form 18 rifle battalions, 10 supporting arms battalions (many of these later joined the 14th Marines), and 24 fighter-bomber squadrons. Reserve units were activated across the country, primarily manned by combat veterans of World War II who wished to retain their affiliation with the Marine Corps. These organizations were united by neither regimental nor divisional headquarters, but were administered by their respective Marine Corps Districts. Each battalion (or squadron) was envisioned as a training unit, rather than as part of a deployable combined arms team. The Reserve unit's function was to create combat ready Marines who could be called to active duty and then be rapidly assigned where the needs of the Marine Corps dictated. New members of the Reserve did not attend recruit training, but learned their skills "on the job" during weekly drill nights. Individual military skills and crew-served weapons training was accomplished at the battalion or squadron level. The Organized Marine Corps Reserve initially mustered about 32,000 Marines; a figure that rose to almost 50,000 by 1950. In all, the Marine Corps Reserve numbered about 127,475 Marines in three categories: the Organized Reserve, which included all

members of Reserve battalions or squadrons meeting on a regular schedule; members of Volunteer Training Units (VTUs), unpaid reservists who met to solve special problems; and Volunteer Reservists, subject to recall but not attending meetings or drills.³

The Reserve structure was put to the ultimate test when the North Korean People's Army invaded South Korea on 25 June 1950. In July orders were sent out activating 33,258 Marine reservists. Units from all over the country responded to the President's call. Among these "Minute Men of 1950" were members of the 1st 105mm Howitzer Battery, Richmond, Virginia; the 6th 105mm Howitzer Battery, Waterloo, Iowa; the 7th 105mm Howitzer Battery, Jackson, Mississippi; the 1st 155mm Gun Battery, Denver, Colorado; the 2d 105mm Howitzer Battalion, Los Angeles, California; the 1st 155mm Howitzer Battalion, Philadelphia, Pennsylvania; and the 4th 155mm Howitzer Battalion, Birmingham, Alabama. Each of these communities provided artillery units which would later become part of the modern 14th Marines. Once activated, the units were dissolved and their Marines screened prior to being reassigned. A few of the reservists, mostly college students, were sent to Camp Lejeune. Some of the Marines were immediately assigned to the two artillery battalions of the 1st Marine Division that were about to depart for the combat zone. Most of the Marines underwent further training and were then assigned to replacement drafts at Camp Pendleton before being sent to Korea. The 1st Marine Division, including more than 10,000 reservists, participated in some of the toughest fighting of the Korean War, including the classic amphibious assault at Inchon and the epic battle of the "Frozen" Chosin Reservoir.⁴

Although the Korean activation went smoothly and the reservists proved themselves in combat, some weaknesses in the Reserve structure were identified. The first crisis occurred during the winter of 1950 when the People's Republic of China committed troops to Korea and forced the United Nations to pull its forces south of the 38th Parallel. The Joint Chiefs of Staff hurriedly ordered the Marine Corps to reconstitute a combat ready reserve. Colonel (later Lieutenant Gener-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) 02687
Philadelphia reservist PFC John N. Dexter plots vertical control for the Fire Direction Center of the 1st 155mm Howitzer Battalion during a summer drill.

al) Wood B. Kyle was appointed acting director; his operations officer was Lieutenant Colonel Roland J. Spritzen, who commanded the 4th Battalion, 14th Marines during the latter part of World War II. New units were quickly formed and new members enlisted. Many of the units dissolved during the 1950 call up were reactivated in 1951 and 1952. By 1954 the Marine Corps Reserve was once again going strong. A series of Armed Forces Reserve Acts were passed by Congress to remedy Reserve problems. New reservists were required to attend recruit training and advanced schools during a six-month active duty period at the beginning of their enlistment. The enlistment period was extended to a six-year obligation. Each reservist was required to attend a minimum of 48 drills and to attend two weeks active training duty each year. Unit training schedules were changed from one four-hour drill each week to one drill weekend per month to increase field training opportunities. Increased funds and more modern equipment were made available as well.⁵

In the early 1960s America was being challenged

across the world. Guerrillas in Laos and South Vietnam threatened in the Far East. Major Cold War confrontations in Europe took place at the Berlin Wall and across the diplomatic conference tables at Vienna. In the Caribbean, the Bay of Pigs fiasco and the Cuban Missile Crisis reaffirmed the need for conventional military might. Reacting to these threats the new administration of President John F. Kennedy adopted a policy of "Flexible Response" by America's military forces. As a result of this new emphasis, Congress approved Secretary of Defense Robert S. McNamara's plan for a fourth Marine air-ground team of division/wing size to be composed entirely of Ready Reservists. In April 1962 the Commandant, General David M. Shoup, authorized a major reorganization of the Marine Corps Reserve. Fifty-three Reserve units were redesignated as member units of the reactivated 4th Marine Division on 1 July 1962. Four of these units were artillery battalions assigned to the new 14th Marines. For the third time in the 20th century members of the 14th Marines stood ready to answer their country's call to the colors.⁶

In 1962 the 8th 105mm Howitzer Battalion was redesignated the 1st Battalion, 14th Marines at Los Angeles, California. The "Ravine Marines," as the Los Angeles gunners proudly called themselves, were first mustered on 6 November 1940 as the 22d Artillery Battalion, commanded by Major Woodbridge S. Van Dyke. Activated for World War II, members of the unit saw extensive service in the Pacific. Following the war, another Los Angeles Reserve artillery unit was activated with the designation 2d 105mm Howitzer Battalion, Marine Corps Reserve, on 9 September 1946. The battalion was first commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Alfred V. Jorgenson; he was replaced by Lieutenant Colonel Andrew H. Rose, Jr., who commanded until the unit was activated for the Korean War in 1950. The battalion was again reactivated in Los Angeles on 14 February 1952. It was redesignated the 2d 155mm Howitzer Battalion on 1 January 1957. On 1 November 1959 it was reequipped and redesignated the 8th 105mm Howitzer Battalion. On 1 July 1962 it became the 1st Battalion, 14th Marines with Headquarters Battery, Battery A, Battery B, and Battery C located in Los Angeles. Batteries A and B were manned at zero strength. The battalion's other unit, Battery D (formerly designated Battery C, 8th 105mm Howitzer Battalion), was located at Pico Rivera, California. Lieutenant Colonel Vincent J. Harris was the commanding officer of the new battalion. Major Willis L. Gore, recently returned from Korea, was in charge of the Inspector-Instructor Staff. The new battalion at-

tended its first active training duty (ATD) with the 14th Marines at Marine Corps Base, Twentynine Palms, California.⁷

The 2d Battalion, 14th Marines was reactivated on 1 July 1962. Its home was Dallas, Texas (the city that currently hosts the 14th Marines' regimental headquarters). Formerly the 5th 105mm Howitzer Battalion, the new 2d Battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel William N. Lawson, and listed 23 officers and 374 enlisted men in its ranks. Like the 1st Battalion, two of the 2d Battalion's batteries were manned at zero strength (Batteries E and F). The two active firing batteries were Battery G and Battery H. Battery G, located at Wichita Falls, Texas, was formerly the 90th Rifle Company, an infantry unit whose members required extensive retraining to be able to operate effectively its artillery weapons and ancillary equipment. The 3d 105mm Howitzer Battery was redesignated Battery H at Fort Worth, Texas. The entire battalion was sent to the U.S. Army Artillery and Missile School, Fort Sill, Oklahoma, where it underwent intensive schooling in artillery weapons and procedures.⁸

The 3d Battalion was tabbed the "Pride of Philly" because of its long association with the city of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania. When the battalion was reactivated in July 1962, Lieutenant Colonel John Crawford commanded its 18 officers and 277 enlisted men;

Major John J. Snyder headed the Inspector-Instructor Staff. The two active firing batteries were Battery L (redesignated from the 3d 155mm Howitzer Battery) of Trenton, New Jersey, and Battery M (Reading, Pennsylvania). Batteries I and K were manned at zero strength. The battalion's heritage began in May 1930 when the Philadelphia area was selected to host the 1st Battalion, 21st Reserve Marines (a 75mm gun battalion). This battalion was redesignated the 7th Battalion (Artillery), Fleet Marine Force Reserve, in 1935. The Philadelphia Reserve artillerymen were activated in December 1940 and joined the Artillery Training Group at Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. The 7th Battalion was redesignated the 3d Battalion, 11th Marines in January 1941, and its members served with the 1st Marine Division in all of its Pacific campaigns. After World War II the Philadelphia Reserve activated a new artillery battalion, the 1st 155mm Howitzer Battalion, Marine Corps Reserve. In 1949 this battalion was selected as the outstanding Marine Corps Reserve unit in the nation. On 20 July 1950 the Philly Marines answered the call to arms. They were ordered to report for extended active duty and the battalion was sent to Camp Pendleton where it was deactivated in August 1950 and its members were reassigned. A new Reserve battalion was activated at Philadelphia on 21 November 1951. In August 1955, Battery B was activated at the Naval Aviation Supply Depot in North-

Members of the 7th 105mm Howitzer Battalion, later to become the 3d Battalion, 14th Marines, prepare ammunition prior to firing during an exercise at Quantico, Virginia.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A117022



east Philadelphia. In October 1955, Battery C was activated at Upper Darby High School, Upper Darby, Pennsylvania. Both batteries, however, were deactivated during the Reserve modernization program of 1959. As part of the same modernization, the Philly Reserve became the 7th 105mm Howitzer Battalion on 1 July 1959. Three years later the Philly Marine Reserves joined batteries from Trenton and Reading to form the new 3d Battalion, 14th Marines.⁹

The 4th Battalion, 14th Marines was reactivated at Birmingham, Alabama, on 1 July 1962. The battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Harrison K. Saturday; the Inspector-Instructor staff was led by Major Robert W. Ditmar. Lieutenant Colonel Carl Cooper assumed command on 11 September 1962. The initial strength of the battalion was only two officers and 23 enlisted men.

The battalion was originally formed as the 4th 155mm Howitzer Battalion in November 1947. Its member units were Headquarters Battery and Battery A at Birmingham, Alabama; Battery B at Meridian, Mississippi; and Battery C at Chattanooga, Tennessee.

The battalion was commanded by Major Neal C. Newell, a noted Birmingham attorney. The unit participated in annual training duty at Camp Lejeune and Quantico. It was at Quantico in 1950 that the members of the battalion were notified they had less than three weeks to get their personal affairs in order before being called to extended active duty because of the Korean War. The battalion left Birmingham and went to Camp Pendleton where it was deactivated and its members reassigned. Most of the Birmingham Reservists were assigned to replacement drafts for the 1st Marine Division in Korea. One of these Marines, a former Birmingham cannoneer, Technical Sergeant Harold E. "Speedy" Wilson, won the Medal of Honor while serving with the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines during the Battle of Horseshoe Ridge on 23 April 1951. In March 1952 the 3d 105mm Howitzer Battalion was reformed around a nucleus of Marines recently returned from Korea. For the next 10 years the battalion grew in strength while conducting training in Birmingham and at training sites in North Carolina and Virginia. Battery M was first organized in 1948 as Bat-

Members of Battery B, 7th 105mm Howitzer Battalion from Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, fire their 105 during their annual summer reserve training at Camp Barrett, Quantico.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A52001



tery B, 4th 105mm Howitzer Battalion at Chattanooga. This battery was called to active duty and then dissolved in 1950, but was later reactivated as the 1st 105mm Howitzer Battery in the spring of 1952. The battery attended annual training in different years at Camp Lejeune, Twentynine Palms, and Little Creek, Virginia. It was redesignated Battery P, 4th Battalion, 14th Marines on 1 July 1962. Some of the notable members of the 4th Battalion at that time were Korean War hero "Speedy" Wilson; Lieutenant Claude R. Kirk, who became governor of Florida; and Lieutenant William W. Taylor, who became Deputy District Director of the Reserves.¹⁰

The 14th Marines was recreated during the Reserve reorganization of 1962. The reactivated regiment was originally composed of four small battalions with no regimental headquarters activated and no commanding officer named. At first, each battalion consisted of only a few firing batteries which made up a central core around which full battalions could later be built. Plans called for the regiment to become eventually a "mirror image" of the active duty artillery regiments in the Fleet Marine Force, but because of personnel and equipment shortages many of the Reserve batteries were "phantom batteries," manned at zero strength. The total strength of the regiment's four battalions was less than 1,000 Marines at the end of 1962.¹¹

Reserve units differed from Regular Fleet Marine

Force units because most of their members were "part-time" Marines, yet, the units had to be manned and ready to go at all times. This duty rested on the able shoulders of the Inspector-Instructor (I&I) Staffs at each Navy-Marine Corps Reserve Training Center across the country. The I&I Staffs acted as a training cadre composed of active duty Marines. Each I&I Staff was led by an active duty officer (called the "I and I"), who was assisted by a small group of commissioned officers and enlisted Marines. The I&I program was established in 1952 to develop, train, instruct, and administer the Marine Corps Reserve. The I&I Staffs were assigned to local training centers, but were not part of the Reserve units stationed there. The I&I Staffs performed supervisory chores, but had no command function. These active duty Marines served several important purposes: they instructed the reservists in care and use of modern weaponry, acted as liaison between the Regular and Reserve establishments, and supervised the day-to-day activities of the unit (monitoring equipment, planning drill schedules, etc.). The I&I Staffs were frequently called on to perform auxiliary duties such as color guards, funeral details, media events, community relations, casualty calls, Toys for Tots, military escorts, and parades. Each of the battalions of the 14th Marines was manned by part-time Reservists and full-time regular Marines. These two groups, acting in concert, created a smooth running team capable of meeting any challenge.¹²

Rebuilding a Force in Readiness: 1962-69

The formative years of the reactivation of the 14th Marines coincided with two occurrences that had major impacts on the Marine Corps. The first was the formulation, adoption, and implementation of a new Marine Corps doctrine, the Marine air-ground task force (MAGTF) concept. The other was America's deepening involvement in Southeast Asia, particularly Vietnam. Each of these two events resulted in sweeping changes in the structure, tactics, and employment of both the 14th Marines and the entire Marine Corps. A Marine air-ground task force was a modern version of the combat teams which included 14th Marine units during World War II, updated by the inclusion of organic air assets. A MAGTF was a combined arms team that closely integrated maneuver units, supporting arms, air support, and combat service support under the direction of a single force commander. A MAGTF had four elements: (1) the command element; (2) the ground combat element; (3) the aviation combat element; and (4) the combat service support element. These air-ground task forces varied in size and composition depending on the specific mission each was assigned. In the 1960s these MAGTFs were called the Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU), with a battalion landing team and a composite helicopter squadron; the Marine Expeditionary Brigade (MEB), with a regimental landing team and a Marine aircraft group; and the Marine Expeditionary Force (MEF), composed of one or more divisions and a Marine aircraft wing.*

This new doctrine required great changes in the organization and employment of Marine Corps artillery. Artillery battalions were reorganized and decentralized. Instead of relying on the battalion as the primary operational unit as in World War II and Korea, Marine artillery was restructured to make each individual battery capable of independent operation and deployment. Batteries were increased in size to meet new demands placed on them while operating as part of a

MAGTF. Forward observers and liaison officers were provided by batteries, not battalions, as was true during World War II. Each battery could establish and operate its own fire direction center (FDC) to control artillery fire. The battery commander became the fire support coordinator for the task force and was responsible to the MAGTF commander for effective integration and control of all supporting arms. A fire support coordination center (FSCC) acted as a clearing house for all supporting arms requests. Manned by artillery liaison officers and representatives of other supporting arms agencies, the FSCC was the nerve center of combat operations. The artillery battery was now responsible for the complex duties of plotting and controlling not only artillery fire, but also the fire of infantry indirect weapons, heavy artillery, naval gunfire, and close air support. The busy FSCC had to be ready to lift or shift fires to protect arriving or departing aircraft, plot harassing and interdiction fires, keep close air support from striking friendly positions, locate enemy positions and likely avenues of approach and take them under fire, direct counterbattery fire, and control close-in final protective fire in front of defensive positions. Each of these complicated duties added to the training burden of the 14th Marines.

Under this new doctrine the basic organization for amphibious deployment to the world's "hot spots" was the Marine Expeditionary Unit. A typical MEU ground combat element had one rifle battalion, a reinforced artillery battery, and a platoon each of trucks, tanks, amphibian tractors, reconnaissance scouts, and engineers. The aviation combat element was usually a composite helicopter squadron with light, medium, and heavy helicopters and the ability to provide aviation command, control, maintenance, and ordnance support. The combat service support unit had detachments to provide medical, dental, communications, shore party, and logistic support. A MEU was commanded by a colonel, who was assisted by a small headquarters staff. The artillery battery assigned to a MEU was more like a small artillery battalion than a traditional battery of World War II vintage. It provided almost all of the functions associated with an artillery battalion during World War II (FOs, FDC,

*In 1965, due to the presumed political sensitivity of the South Vietnamese, the term "Expeditionary" was replaced by "Amphibious," and a Marine Expeditionary Unit (MEU) became a Marine Amphibious Unit (MAU). The MAU, MAB, and MAF once again became MEU, MEB, and MEF in 1988 when the term "Expeditionary" was reintroduced.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A19540

A major addition to the Marine artillery inventory was the transportable Howtar, a 4.2-inch mortar mounted on the wheeled chassis of a 75mm pack howitzer.

FSCC, liaison, etc.). Normally the battery's six 105mm howitzers (now designated M101A1) were reinforced by a 4.2-inch mortar section (two 107mm mortars) and a 155mm howitzer platoon (two M114A1 howitzers). A reinforced battery was capable of providing both direct and general fire support. The light-weight, highly mobile mortars ensured the battery was able to accompany a vertical envelopment or a deep penetration by helicopter assault.*

While artillery tactics and organization underwent radical changes, the primary support weapons of the artillery battalion remained the 105mm howitzer for direct support and the 155mm howitzer for general support. Variants of both these weapons were used by the 14th Marines during World War II. A major addition for direct support was the M-98 "Howtar," a 4.2-inch mortar mounted on the wheeled chassis of a 75mm pack howitzer. The Howtar was a 671-pound, muzzle-loaded, drop-fired weapon with a rifled barrel capable of shooting a 26-pound high-explosive projectile more than 5,600 meters. The Howtar had a sustained rate of 20 rounds per minute. Its greatest asset, and the primary reason for its adoption, was its small size and light weight which enabled it to be manpacked into battle or transported by all landing craft and most of the helicopters available to the Fleet Marine Force at that time.

In keeping with changes in the Fleet Marine Force structure, the 14th Marines dropped its four battery "square" battalions and adopted "triangular" battal-

*The Sikorsky UH-34 Sea Horse medium transport helicopters available in the early 1960s were not capable of lifting either 105mm or 155mm towed howitzers.

ions of three "lettered" batteries each. The three direct support battalions, 1st, 2d, and 3d, each had one 4.2-inch mortar battery (six mortars), and three 105mm howitzer batteries of six guns each. The 4th Battalion, the general support battalion, had three batteries, each armed with six 155mm howitzers. All self-propelled medium and heavy artillery was centralized in Force Troops units under the direction of a Field Artillery Group (FAG). The weapons assigned to force troops at that time were the 155mm self-propelled gun, the 8-inch (203mm) self-propelled howitzer, and the 155mm self-propelled howitzer.

On 8 March 1965 the 9th MEB, commanded by Brigadier General Frederick J. Karch (a World War II era leader of the 14th Marines), landed at Red Beach located just north of the city of Da Nang, Republic of Vietnam. This event marked the entrance of American ground combat troops into Vietnam, into what was to become America's longest lasting armed conflict. In spite of President Lyndon B. Johnson's decision that the Reserves should not be called to active duty as had been done in 1950, Vietnam had a great impact on the daily operations of the 14th Marines. One area of change was personnel. Manning levels and membership rose in all units. The Vietnam War saw about one-half million Marines serve in the combat zone between 1965 and 1972. Many of these combat veterans chose to retain their affiliation with the Marine Corps Reserve after their obligated service time ended. These Marines provided a well-trained, combat-tested core for the gunners of the 14th Marines during the late 1960s and early 1970s. Many Americans chose to show their patriotism by serving their country while remaining close to their homes and retaining their civilian occupations; they elected to join the Marine Corps Reserve, and many were assigned to units of the 14th Marines. These volunteers added fresh faces and new attitudes to the 14th Marines. Some members of the 14th Marines were not satisfied to remain at home while their countrymen fought overseas and volunteered for extended active duty in Vietnam. One such Marine, Sergeant Paul H. Foster of San Mateo, California, a former member of Headquarters Battery, 14th Marines, received a posthumous Medal of Honor for his actions while serving as an artillery liaison operations chief with the 2d Battalion, 4th Marines near Con Thien on 14 October 1967. By the end of 1966 the strength of the 14th Marines had risen from less than 1,000 in 1962 to more than 3,000 by December 1966.¹

Vietnam yielded many lessons for the future employment of Marine Corps artillery. New tactics and

techniques were worked out in the fiery crucible of combat. New weapons were added to the Marine Corps inventory while unsatisfactory or outdated ones were dropped or improved. At first, Marine Corps artillery in Vietnam was employed much as it had been during World War II and Korea. Units of battalion-size or greater were centralized at large Marine enclaves like Da Nang, Chu Lai, and Phu Bai. Traditional roles of direct, general, and reinforcing support were conducted under the close supervision of battalion, regimental, or field artillery group command staffs. Later, some artillery was moved into fortified artillery bases like Camp J. J. Carroll near the Demilitarized Zone (DMZ) or Hill 55 southwest of Da Nang. The units that occupied the forward positions were composite battalions, some armed with light and medium weapons and others made up of armored, self-propelled medium, and heavy weapons. By 1969 a common artillery tactic was the mobile fire support base, a reinforced battery helolifted to a small hilltop position to provide direct fire support for maneuver units, protect nearby landing zones, or give mutual support to other fire support bases. With the withdrawal of American combat units and increasing reliance on "Vietnamization," Marine units perfected tactics where small observation teams located enemy units or positions and directed artillery, close air support, or naval gunfire while concealed from the ene-

my. A variety of new techniques and equipment were used to locate and mark targets, control supporting arms, and enhance communication. Field Artillery Digital Automatic Computers (FADAC) were introduced in 1967, electronic surveillance devices were used along likely infiltration routes, the Save-A-Plane program which coordinated supporting arms and aerial support was perfected over the years, improved equipment increased radio transmission range and allowed "scrambled" conversations, new ammunition added range and lethality to existing weapons, "Stingray" and "Keyhole" reconnaissance tactics made artillery fire more effective, stationary artillery outposts were built using Integrated Observation Devices which combined high powered surveillance devices with laser range finders. Each of these innovations improved the ability of field artillery to support maneuver units.

Combat experience in Vietnam reaffirmed the need for towed artillery weapons like the 105mm and 155mm howitzers, however, it also pointed out advantages of self-propelled, armor-protected heavy artillery like the 8-inch howitzer and the 155mm howitzer. A mobile fire base required light-weight, towed artillery that could be rapidly inserted by medium or heavy transport helicopters on hilltop positions where it could be protected by minimal infantry forces and allow maneuver units to operate under the safety of an "artillery umbrella." The desirability of having a light,

Enhancing its general support capabilities, the 4th Battalion, 14th Marines adopted the M109A self-propelled 155mm howitzer, capable of striking targets up to 14,600 meters.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A19394



accurate, fast-firing weapon led to the adoption of the M30 107mm mortar. The 330-pound M30 replaced the Howtar. It had similar firing characteristics, but weighed only about half as much. Other lessons from Vietnam resulted in the adoption of the M109 155mm self-propelled howitzer by the 4th Battalion to enhance its general support capabilities. The M109 was a tracked, armor-encased, medium artillery piece with a maximum range of 15,080 meters and a rate of fire of about 3 rounds per minute. These iron monsters weighed more than 27 tons and were often mistaken for tanks because of their "Caterpillar" tracks and turret-mounted long guns. The introduction of the M109 increased the mobility and survivability of the 14th Marines' general support batteries. Theoretically these self-propelled howitzers could travel about 300 miles under their own power, but tactical realities often required them to be used from static positions, moving only short distances to gain better firing platforms. Other tactical advances in artillery support generated by the Vietnam War and adopted by the 14th Marines included the development of computer-assisted fire support control, close integration of supporting arms, and better coordination of tactical air support, artillery, and naval gunfire.

The day-to-day operations of the 14th Marines were also greatly affected by the Vietnam War. A new emphasis on community relations to present the Marine Corps Reserve in a favorable light was instituted using programs like the popular "Toys for Tots," a Christmas season collection of new toys gathered by the Marine Corps Reserve and distributed by charitable agencies in local communities. The 14th Marines collected over 10,000 toys annually in this popular event. The 14th Marines often sponsored and participated in special blood drives and fund raisers. The Marine Corps Reserve Assistance Program for Vietnam raised funds and collected toys and food for Civic Action projects in Vietnam. Meeting the needs of the time, training emphasized fire base tactics, search and clear operations, and riot control. Among the sadder duties of the 14th Marines, usually performed by the I&I Staffs, were casualty calls and funeral details. Casualty calls were made by the nearest Reserve unit to the next of kin when a Marine on active duty was killed or seriously wounded. In keeping with the dictate "Marines take care of their own," a Marine Officer or NCO made personal contact with the family of a Marine casualty to offer condolence and assistance. A funeral detail rendered military honors during burial. The Marine Corps Reserve provided such services when requested by the next of kin of a Marine; whether the deceased was on active duty, retired, or a veteran. The unit

provided pallbearers, a firing detail, a bugler, and a noncommissioned officer. These somber duties had to be performed all too often during the Vietnam War. Reserve units were often asked to provide speakers about the Marine Corps for elementary schools, service clubs, scouting organizations, and veterans' associations. These activities were called "Flag Talks" by the Marines who conducted them. Members of the modern 14th Marines took pride in maintaining the strong athletic tradition started during World War II by participating on unit teams in community athletic programs such as softball, basketball, touch football, and volleyball. These athletic events fostered a spirit of camaraderie in both the unit and the community. Finally, members of the 14th Marines assisted in times of emergency or natural disaster. Units provided blood, food, traffic control, casualty evacuation, transportation, clothing, and temporary shelter for people left homeless by the ravages of nature or other disasters. Each of these activities allowed the units of the 14th Marines to "show its colors" to the local community and enhanced the image of the Marine Corps Reserve during the tempestuous times of the "Sixties."

The years between 1962 and 1966 were years of rapid growth and reorganization for the 14th Marines. On 1 February 1966 Headquarters Battery, 14th Marines was reactivated at Treasure Island, San Francisco, California. The battery was not authorized a complete command structure at that time, so Major Charles L. Murphy served as Operations Platoon Commander/Acting Commanding Officer. Prior to its redesignation, Headquarters Battery was the 3d 105mm Howitzer Battery, Marine Corps Reserve. After joining the 14th Marines, the unit was honored as the "Best Marching Unit" in the San Francisco Chinese New Year's Day Parade. The battery also had the distinction of having a Cantonese/Fukienese Special Language Detachment. On 14 February 1966, the Marine Corps activated the headquarters of the 4th Marine Division at Camp Pendleton. The division's first commanding general was Major General (later Commandant) Robert E. Cushman, who concurrently commanded the newly reactivated 5th Marine Division. The 2d Battalion, 14th Marines activated batteries E and F and relocated Battery G to Fort Worth, Texas, on 1 April 1966. In an interesting side note, Brigadier General Clifford B. Drake, who commanded the 2d Battalion, 14th Marines at Tinian and Iwo Jima, became Director of the Marine Corps Reserve in January 1966. The following year, he received his second star and a Legion of Merit Medal for his outstanding performance as Reserve director.²

On 1 February 1967 Headquarters Battery, 14th Ma-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC)

Section chief Cpl Joe Bocanegra pulls the lanyard of a 105mm howitzer during the live firing exercise of monthly training at Camp Pendleton for Battery A, 1st Battalion.

rines was transferred to Fort Worth. On 1 May 1967, Colonel Vincent J. Robinson became commanding officer of the 14th Marines as part of a pilot program, later adopted by all Marine Corps Reserve regiments. Colonel Robinson was a veteran artilleryman. He saw combat action during World War II, served in numerous command and staff billets, was an instructor at the U.S. Army Artillery School at Fort Sill, and commanded the Provisional Artillery Group seven times. Colonel Robinson's appointment was the first time a Reserve officer on full time service assumed command of a Reserve regiment. This switch changed the commanding officer's duty from serving about 35 days a year to 365 days each year, and reflected the growing commitment to the Reserve from the highest levels of command. The Marine Corps considered this step necessary for satisfactory command and management at the regimental level. The command relationship between Colonel Robinson and the regiment's units was a decentralized one, with the District Directors responsible for administration, discipline, and logistic support. Colonel Robinson had authority to assign tasks, designate objectives, and construct training schedules, and was responsible for combat readiness; he was to monitor and supervise the training of all artillery units of the Marine Corps Reserve (including the non-

regimental medium and heavy artillery support weapons of two field artillery groups attached to the 14th Marines) and recommend active duty training sites and dates. The job of commanding officer was a challenging one because the responsibility for supply and fiscal management was very complicated and called for the utmost ingenuity and resourcefulness on the part of the commanding officer. Future plans called for the Commanding Officer, 14th Marines to eventually be placed in the normal FMF chain of command, subordinate to the Commanding General, 4th Marine Division.³ Colonel Robinson's performance as commanding officer of the 14th Marines served as a model for the future commanders of organized Marine Corps Reserve regiments.

The late 1960s were busy years for the 14th Marines. The Texarkana cannoneers of Battery E, 2d Battalion, 14th Marines, commanded by Major Harry F. Barnes, were called on to perform a humanitarian mission on Friday, 19 April 1968. A tornado struck Fort Chafee, Arkansas, in the afternoon and Battery E rushed men and supplies to the disaster area and aided those stranded by the storm. On 30 August 1968 the 2d Battalion, 4th Battalion, and Headquarters Battery, 14th Marines participated in the first regimental parade since November 1945. Colonel Robinson was formally

presented the regimental colors during this ceremony at Fort Sill. The 1st Battalion participated in ResMebLex-68 at Camp Pendleton. The reinforced artillery battalion was part of a Marine amphibious brigade built around the 25th Marines. The exercise called for the fictional country of Wolsno to repel an attack and reestablish a friendly local government. Emphasis was on counterinsurgency operations supported from mobile artillery fire bases.

In 1969 units of the 14th Marines were involved in exercises across the country. In addition to numerous exercises, the 14th Marines prepared for combat by conducting command post exercises (CPX). A CPX was designed to exercise the command and staff functioning of a MAGTF without participation by maneuver units. These CPXs allowed the headquarters team of a MAGTF to practice its skills without the time and expense of moving large numbers of Marines into the field. They also served as "dress rehearsals" to work out command and communication bugs prior to an actual exercise. A command post was set up under field conditions and a series of tactical, administrative, and

logistical problems were thrown at the staff in a very short time. These problems had to be solved and the answers tried out using either a computer or a tactical map. Observers watched, then critiqued, the staff's work.

A CPX was an excellent training tool that stressed command and control at all levels of a MAGTF. One such exercise, CPX Bloody Bull, was held from 31 January to 2 February 1969. Members of the 14th Marines headquarters staff boarded planes at Carswell Air Force Base, Fort Worth, Texas, and flew to Camp Pendleton, California. There they joined the staff of the 13th Marines (5th Marine Division) and the 3d Field Artillery Group, along with representatives of the U.S. Army, Navy, and Air Force. This CPX was a prelude to Operation Cordite Junction held in July 1969. During the operation, units from all four battalions of the 14th Marines operated together for the first time since 1945. The 14th Marines was awarded an "Outstanding" rating for its performance during the exercise. Operation Cordite Junction closed the decade that saw the reactivation of the 14th Marines.⁴

CHAPTER 11

New Missions and Structure: The 1970s

The 1970s was a busy and trying time for both the Marine Corps and the 14th Marines. The Marine Corps faced many problems. Once the last Marine ground combat units returned from Vietnam in 1971, the search for a "proper" Marine Corps mission was initiated. As has happened so often before in American history when there was no war to fight, critics began to question the purpose and missions of the Marine Corps. Under the administration of President Richard M. Nixon the primary focus of American military planning centered on Europe, the North Atlantic, and the Mediterranean Basin. By 1975 the role of the Marine Corps was being reexamined, and critics of the Corps sought to either mechanize it, or seriously reduce its size and eliminate its aircraft wings; one study group suggested making the Marines an airborne assault unit.¹ It was not until the dust from Vietnam had settled and a hostage crisis in the Persian Gulf reaffirmed the maritime nature of America's overseas interests that the Marine Corps was able to return to its traditional amphibious mission unquestioned.

A second problem was personnel recruitment. With the antimilitary feelings prevalent in the late 60s and early 70s it became increasingly difficult to recruit either the numbers or the quality of personnel desired. This problem was multiplied when the draft was ended and the All-Volunteer Force was established. The Commandant, General Louis H. Wilson, Jr., wisely gave firm guidance to all units that unacceptable Marines would not be retained and only qualified people would be enlisted; if reduced strength was the result, it was a problem the Marines would have to live with. All units of the 14th Marines experienced personnel problems during that time and reduced manning levels became the norm for several years.²

Another problem was equipment. The Vietnam experience showed much of the current inventory of weapons and field equipment to be less than suitable for modern combat. Tough decisions were made at the highest levels as to which projects would receive funds for research and development. In artillery matters, it was decided to make do with the existing artillery pieces, cutting some unsatisfactory weapons from the inventory. This simplified maintenance and training

at the cost of some combat power. The only major new research and development project, jointly agreed on with the U.S. Army, was the replacement of the 105mm howitzer with a 155mm direct support howitzer that had longer range and a much greater ammunition selection. This turned out to be a long-term proposition that saw almost a decade pass between the first request and the introduction of the new howitzer into the FMF. The closing years of the decade found the Marine Corps playing an increasing role in the projection of American power in the Middle East when the Rapid Deployment Force (RDF) was created and the Marine Corps was assigned many key roles.

For the 14th Marines, the 1970s saw four regimental command changes, two major reorganizations, numerous activations and deactivations, the addition and deletion of several weapons systems, and the introduction of new personal combat equipment and uniforms. The first change took place when the 4.2-inch mortar batteries of the direct support battalions were deactivated on 31 March 1971. The improved Vertol CH-46D Sea Knight medium transport helicopters could haul 105mm howitzers so the compact but less capable 4.2-inch mortars were no longer needed to ensure helicopter mobility. The personnel of the 4.2-inch batteries were redistributed among batteries of the battalions. About the same time the 4th Battalion received its first M109A1 self-propelled 155mm howitzers to replace older M114A1 (towed) howitzers. The M109A1 upgraded the ability of the 4th Battalion to move, shoot, and protect itself on the modern battlefield. Some batteries of the 3d and 4th Field Artillery Groups received the M107 175mm self-propelled gun. These 31 ton monsters could fire a 150-pound high-explosive projectile 32,700 meters at a rate of one round every two minutes. The 3d Field Artillery Group was reorganized to control two 175mm gun batteries, one 8-inch howitzer battery, and a searchlight battery. The 4th Field Artillery Group was activated to control east coast non-regimental Reserve artillery.³

On 1 July 1971 Colonel Richard B. Baity replaced Colonel Robinson as commanding officer of the 14th Marines. Colonel Baity was a native of Covington,

Pennsylvania, who saw combat as a battery commander in Korea and as a battalion commander in Vietnam. He was a graduate of Mansfield State College and received a master's degree from Pennsylvania State University. Colonel Baity assumed command of the 14th Marines after returning from a second tour of duty in Vietnam where he had been operations officer of the 1st Marine Division.⁴ His first major task was to oversee the reorganization of the 14th Marines.

On 1 October 1971 the 14th Marines underwent a major reorganization and modernization program. In the 1st Battalion (Los Angeles) Batteries A and B closed down. The 5th 155mm Howitzer Battery (Spokane, Washington) was redesignated Battery A. Battery C (Pico Rivera, California) was redesignated Battery B. The 7th 105mm Howitzer Battery (Waterloo, Iowa) was redesignated Battery C. The 2d Battalion's Battery F was deactivated and the 2d 105mm Howitzer Battery from Jackson, Mississippi, was redesignated Battery F. Battery G (Trenton, New Jersey) assumed control of a detachment from Battery H. The 1st and 8th 105mm Howitzer Batteries merged to become Battery H, 3d Battalion, 14th Marines at Richmond, Virginia. The 4th Battalion activated Battery K when the 6th 155mm Howitzer Battery of Joliet, Illinois joined the 14th Marines and was redesignated. On 2 October 1971 the 3d Battalion (Philadelphia) assumed operational control of the 4th Searchlight Battery (Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania). The 3d Field Artillery Group (attached to the 14th Marines) assumed operational control of the 4th 155mm (SP) Gun Battery, the 8th 155mm (SP) Gun Battery, and the 4th 8-inch (SP) Howitzer Battery. The 4th Field Artillery Group (attached to the 14th Marines) was activated in 1971.⁵ On 15 June 1973 the Battery G Detachment, located at Reading, Pennsylvania, was redesignated Battery I, 3d Battalion, 14th Marines. On 1 April 1976 the 1st Battalion (Los Angeles) added Battery X armed with four M114A1 howitzers. On 1 October 1977 the 4th Marine Division (New Orleans, Louisiana) assumed administrative and operational control of the 14th Marines from the Marine Corps Districts. The 14th Marines was now officially in the 4th Marine Division chain of command and the commanding officer of the 14th Marines assumed full control of its four battalions (and attachments).

The last organizational change of the 1970s occurred on 1 September 1979 when the 3d Field Artillery Group was redesignated the 5th Battalion, 14th Marines at San Francisco, California. The new 5th Battalion was commanded by Colonel George R. Killam and included Battery N (El Paso, Texas, formerly the 4th 8-inch Howitzer Battery), Battery O (Oklahoma

City, formerly the 5th 8-inch Howitzer Battery), and Battery P (Denver, formerly the 4th 175mm Howitzer Battery).⁶

During the 1970s, as in previous decades, members of the 14th Marines worked to improve their basic military skills throughout the year. There were three areas of emphasis for the Marine Corps Reserve at that time. First was annual training to perfect each individual Marine's skills. Second, field training included CPXs, live fire exercises (FirEx), and major training exercises. The final area of emphasis was mobilization capability tested by unannounced Mobilization, Operational Readiness, and Deployment Tests (MORDT). Each summer most units attended two-week active duty training assignments at major military bases around the country. Weekend drills consisted of live fire, CPXs, or field training whenever possible. Throughout the year both mission-oriented and essential subjects training took place. Classroom instruction, demonstrations, and field firing exercises sharpened each unit's technical and tactical artillery skills. Individual Marines were instructed in leadership, threat analysis, shipboard living, computer assisted fire control, land navigation, patrolling, infantry squad tactics, map and compass reading, self-defense, physical fitness, small arms marksmanship, cold weather survival, mountain operations, swimming and drownproofing, maintenance of equipment, drug and alcohol abuse, chemical warfare, military courtesy, the Uniform Code of Military Justice, field medical training, field sanitation, combined arms training, personal affairs, parachute operations, NATO military operations, and jungle warfare. Once in each training cycle each battalion was called on to conduct desert warfare, amphibious assault, and cold weather training at bases like the Naval Amphibious Base, Coronado, California; the Landing Force Training Center at Little Creek, Virginia; the Marine Corps Mountain Warfare Training Center at Pickle Meadows, California; or Marine Corps Base, Twenty-nine Palms, California.

The goal of all operations and training in the 14th Marines was to achieve the most advanced state of combat readiness possible. The final payoff after all of the individual and unit training throughout the year was participation in large-scale field exercises. These field exercises were the closest thing to actual combat short of war. The units had to live in the field simulating combat conditions. More than one-half of the units of the 14th Marines were called on each year to participate in major training exercises in the United States or overseas. During the 1970s, units of the 14th Marines participated in exercises in the Pacific, the Carib-



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A355401

Marine reservists load a 155mm howitzer during one of the many summer training exercises held in the high desert at Marine Corps Base, Twentynine Palms, California.

bean, the Mediterranean, and the Atlantic, and in Norway, and Denmark.

The first major Reserve training exercise of the 1970s was the biggest Marine Corps Reserve training exercise since the Korean War. Operation High Desert (ResMebLex-70) brought together 19,000 Reservists from 28 different states representing 109 ground units and 48 air units. The war game took place from 17-20 August 1970 and was attended by Assistant Commandant, General Lewis W. Walt. Brigadier General Harold L. Oppenheimer commanded the 21st Marine Amphibious Brigade (MAB), including units from the 1st and 4th Battalions, 14th Marines. The scenario called for the 21st MAB to defend the mythical country of Margarita from attack by invaders from Talega. The exercise tested the ability of the Marine Corps Reserve to mobilize and be ready to fight on short notice. The 1st Battalion, 14th Marines (Los Angeles) was reinforced by the 155mm howitzers of the 4th Battalion (Birmingham) and the heavy artillery of the 3d

Field Artillery Group (San Francisco). The artillery mission was to provide support for Regimental Combat Team 23, the maneuver element of the 21st MAB. General Walt proclaimed the artillery performance "noteworthy." The new Mobile Tactical Evaluation System (MOTELS) was used to tabulate the results of the mock battles.⁷

In 1971, 1972, and 1973 the emphasis was on artillery training and fire exercises. The 2d and 4th Battalions, reinforced by the 4th Field Artillery Group, participated in a series of east coast fire exercises hosted by the 10th Marines (2d Marine Division). The 1st and 3d Battalions, reinforced by the 3d Field Artillery Group, participated in Operation High Point (1972), Operation Cyclone Cestus, Exercise Alkali Canyon, and Operation Beagle Dancer (1973) on the west coast.⁸ In 1977 Reserve units were issued the new All-Purpose Individual Combat Equipment (ALICE) and camouflaged "Cammie" utility uniforms.⁹

On 21 May 1974 Colonel Patrick H. Harrington as-

sumed command of the 14th Marines. From 1968 to 1971 he served with the 14th Marines as a logistics officer (S-4), fire support coordinator (FSC), and executive officer. A Reservist, he was a school psychologist with the Shreveport Public School System. Colonel Harrington had been a long-time member of the Marine Corps Reserve Shooting Team and was designated a "Distinguished Pistol Shot" in 1971. He also earned a 2d Degree Black Belt in Karate. Colonel Harrington commanded the 14th Marines until he was replaced by Colonel Kay D. "Don" Bjorklund on 1 July 1975. Colonel Bjorklund was born in Deadwood, South Dakota. He received his bachelor's degree from Hartford College and his master's degree from Eastern Washington State University. A Korean veteran, his previous military experience included command of both infantry and artillery units. Colonel Bjorklund was replaced by Colonel Clarence E. Hogan on 20 August 1978. Colonel Hogan was an experienced artilleryman. He was commissioned through the NROTC program of the University of Oklahoma in 1951. He served during the Korean Conflict as a forward observer, battery executive officer, and battery commander. Before assuming command of the 14th Marines, Colonel Hogan commanded seven different artillery batteries, one artillery battalion, and two artillery regiments. His commands included all artillery

weapons from 75mm pack howitzers to 8-inch howitzers. He came to the 14th Marines following a tour as commanding officer of the 11th Marines (1st Marine Division). His personal decorations included the Legion of Merit Medal, the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, the Joint Services Commendation Medal, and the Vietnamese Honor Medal.¹⁰

Typical of the busy operations of a Reserve artillery battalion in the mid-1970s were those of the 1st Battalion, 14th Marines. The Ravine Marines were commanded by Lieutenant Colonel Harry R. Delkeskamp. The battalion included Battery A (Spokane), Battery B (Pico Rivera), Battery C (Waterloo), Battery X (Los Angeles), and Headquarters Battery (Los Angeles). Battery A, commanded by Major George S. Olivas, attended Exercise Phantom Night (DesEx 3-75) at Twentynine Palms. The battery received glowing reports from the participants of Exercise Phantom Night for its operations in the searing 130-degree desert heat. The battery provided timely, accurate, safe fires despite severe personnel and equipment shortcomings. The fire direction center under the close supervision of CWO-2 Raymond T. Moon was a model of calm efficiency. The firing battery was supervised by Captain Dan W. Keefe and its fire was directed by forward observer Captain Jan P. Thomas. The liaison

A 155mm self-propelled artillery piece stands ready to fire during live firing exercises.

Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A356452





Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A332659

Sgt Kyle Lathrop, left, and Cpl Kevin Buster of Battery A, 1st Battalion, 14th Marines react to the blast noise and kicked-up dirt when their Army 105mm howitzer is fired.

officer, First Lieutenant Philip E. Cotton, impressed many field grade officers with his competence and understanding of fire support coordination. Overall, a spirit of teamwork and cooperation under trying circumstances led to an "Outstanding" rating.¹¹

Battery C, commanded by Captain David E. Ira, ably assisted by I&I Captain Harold P. Klink, attended a fire exercise hosted by the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines (2d Marine Division) at Vieques Island, Puerto Rico, in February 1975. The battery participated in 4.2-inch mortar refresher training and a 105mm direct fire artillery competition with the 3d Battalion, 10th Marines. The Reservists of Battery C won a decisive victory.¹² Battery C provided a detachment for Operation Jack Frost from 9 to 25 January 1976. Sixteen members of the battery flew to Fort Wainwright, Fairbanks, Alaska, and participated in the mock defense of the Alaskan pipeline against enemy raiding parties. Needless to say, this exercise was conducted in the most severe weather, blowing snow and temperatures that never rose above zero, hitting a low of -58 degrees.

Later in the year Battery B, Battery C, and Battery X were hit with a surprise Mobilization, Operational Readiness, and Deployment Test (known as a "MORDT and Go"). These tests were held to determine the combat readiness of Reserve units. Alerted late Thursday evening, the battery commanders had to have their Marines and equipment packed and ready to go by 2300 Friday night. The batteries worked throughout the night to establish firing positions. The big guns roared at first light and continued firing until late Saturday. All three batteries were rated "Combat Ready" by the evaluation team from the 4th Marine Division.¹³

In 1975 Commandant Louis H. Wilson announced the first in a series of exercises that would emphasize combined arms operations using live fire. These exercises were to be conducted at the recently expanded desert warfare facility at Twentynine Palms and were labeled the "Palm Tree" series. While the exercises were held in the Mojave Desert, their real purpose was to expose new Marines to live fire situations and to de-

velop a better combined arms doctrine, not to train for desert operations. At the time these exercises were reported to be the most realistic combat training in the United States. The 14th Marines began large scale participation in these exercises with Exercise Palm Tree III during the summer of 1976. These exercises were excellent training grounds and at least one battalion of the 14th Marines participated from then until the present day.* In 1977 members of the 2d Battalion, 14th Marines operated as part of the 4th MAB in Operation Display Determination which culminated in an amphibious landing on the coast of Turkey. This marked the first major Reserve deployment to the Mediterranean.

The summer of 1977 saw the largest artillery field fire exercise held by the 14th Marines. More than 1,400 Marine artillerymen gathered at Fort Bragg, North Carolina, to shoot more than three and one-half tons of ammunition. Sixteen firing batteries from all four battalions were reinforced by three firing batteries from the 3d Field Artillery Group, detachments from 4th Supply Battalion (Greenville, South Carolina), 6th Motor Transport Battalion (Abilene, Texas), and 6th Communications Battalion (Greensboro, North Carolina). This live fire exercise marked the end of summer ATD for most of the batteries involved. This was the last major field exercise of the 1970s.¹⁴ In 1978 a nationwide Reserve mobilization, Operation Nifty Nugget, was held to test America's Reserve reaction time.

Major morale builders in military units were awards for superior achievement. The Marine Corps Reserve understood this important principle of motivation and instituted the Clifton B. Cates Trophy, awarded annually to the best artillery battery in the Marine Corps Reserve. Units winning the award in the 1970s were Battery M, 4th Battalion (twice); Battery K, 4th Battalion; 5th 155mm Howitzer Battery; 8th 175mm Gun Battery; and Battery E, 2d Battalion, 14th Marines. The proud cannoners of Battery E (Texarkana, Texas) won the award five times. Partially as a result of this

*The Palm Tree exercises were improved and are now referred to as Combined Arms Exercises (CAX).

fine record, Battery E was awarded a Meritorious Unit Citation by the Secretary of the Navy. The award was presented for outstanding drill attendance, MCI course completion, ATD attendance, PFT qualification, weapons qualification, recruiting, civic action and community affairs, and rifle marksmanship qualification from 1 January 1975 to 30 September 1977. Battery E was commanded by Captain Joe S. Baker from 1 January to 31 June 1975 and Captain Louis E. Brassy from 1 August 1975 to 30 September 1977. Captain Bob C. Walker, the I&I, was awarded the Navy Commendation Medal for his achievements with Battery E during that time. Many other members of the 14th Marines won awards for individual performance as well. Some typical examples were: Sergeant Major Clifton Gatewood and Gunnery Sergeant James W. Martin (Headquarters, 14th Marines) received Certificates of Commendation from the Commandant of the Marine Corps; Corporals Anthony R. Karbo (Battery C) and Robert E. Sheehan (Battery I) won Honor Medals from the Freedoms Foundation; and Colonel George R. Killam (Commanding Officer, 5th Battalion) was awarded the Order of Saint Barbara for long term contributions to the science of artillery.¹⁵

A particularly notable Marine Reservist, Lieutenant Colonel (later Major General) Jerome G. "Gary" Cooper, assumed command of the 4th Battalion in June 1977. He was noted in the historical calendar of the Marine Corps as the first black Marine officer to lead an infantry company in combat. While serving in Vietnam he was awarded the Bronze Star Medal, two Purple Heart Medals, and three Vietnamese Crosses of Gallantry for his heroic actions. He joined the Individual Ready Reserve in 1970. He became the first black officer to command a Reserve company when he took over the 4th Reconnaissance Company (Mobile, Alabama). He was cited for his work as a personal consultant to the Commandant of the Marine Corps in the fields of equal opportunity and human relations and twice received the highest award given by the Secretary of the Navy for public service. During his tenure as commanding officer of the 4th Battalion, Lieutenant Colonel Cooper was elected to two terms in the Alabama House of Representatives.¹⁶

CHAPTER 12

The Modern 14th Marines: The 1980s

The 1980s has been called a “Golden Age” of the Marine Corps by some because President Ronald W. Reagan’s emphasis on rebuilding America’s military power brought the Marine Corps into the limelight where it played starring roles as America’s peacekeeping force in Beirut and during Operation Urgent Fury, the Grenada rescue mission. The “Total Force” concept called for Reserve units to pick up the slack created by the All-Volunteer Force and closely integrated Regular and Reserve forces. This change in doctrine quickly became apparent in the Marine Corps. Newer and better equipment was issued to Reserve units and the 14th Marines became a true “mirror image” of its active duty counterparts. By the end of the decade the 4th Marine Division, including the 14th Marines, was assigned contingency missions as part of a MEF follow-on force should the need arise. The distinction between regular and Reservist was purposely blurred at the highest command levels.

In 1982, updated M109A3 self-propelled howitzers replaced older M109A1s in the 4th Battalion. In 1983, the 175mm guns — disappointing field artillery weapons because of their short barrel life, slow rate of fire, and large impact dispersion at long range — began to be deactivated and were replaced by dependable 8-inch self-propelled howitzers. In 1985 the venerable M114A1 towed 155mm howitzers were finally retired after more than 40 years of service. The “steel pot” helmet of World War II vintage was replaced by lighter, stronger, and more protective Kevlar “Fritz” headgear.* The M16A2 .556mm rifle replaced the M16A1 rifle and the M9MM 9mm pistol replaced the M1911A1 .45-caliber pistol as the personal weapons of the members of the 14th Marines.

The most significant equipment change in the 14th Marines was the adoption of the new M198 155mm towed howitzer. The “One Niner Eight” replaced the long serving 105mm howitzer as the 14th Marines’ direct support artillery weapon. The M198 was adopted because of its superior range (almost double that of a 105mm) and the versatility of its ammunition which made it devastating as either a traditional high explo-

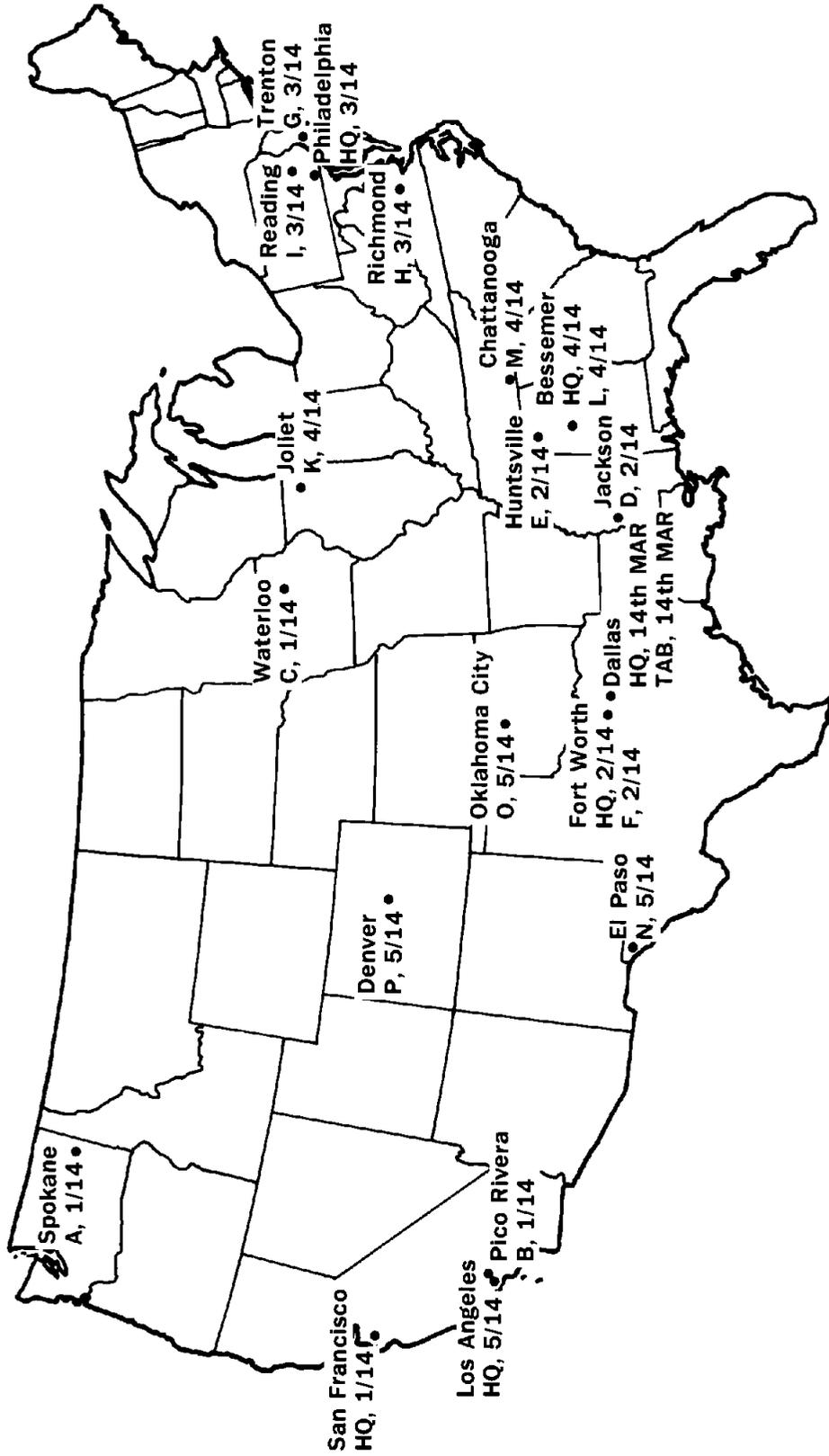
sive area weapon or as a precision guided point destruction cannon. A big artillery piece, the M198 weighed 3,500 pounds, stood 13 feet high, and was manned by a crew of 10 Marines. Its mobility was somewhat restricted because it could only be moved by a 5-ton truck, an assault amphibian vehicle (AAV), or helolifted by the powerful CH-53E Super Sea Stallion helicopter. The M198 offset this mobility problem by increasing the direct support range of the 14th Marines from about 11,000 meters to more than 22,000 meters (30,000 meters using rocket-assisted projectiles). The bag propellant used by the M198 required increased handling time and more expertise, but made it possible to use a much wider variety of existing and developmental ammunition. The final result of adopting the M198 for the direct support battalions was longer range, a bigger punch, and more mission flexibility.

The adoption of the M198 also changed Marine artillery tactics. Threat analysis studies showed American artillery to be vulnerable to enemy counterbattery and suppression fires. Therefore, it was decided to utilize the new howitzers in platoon-size tactical units, rather than by two-gun sections. Each platoon had four howitzers assigned and was capable of its own fire direction. This allowed a new artillery battery to displace by platoon without interruption of its direct support mission. These new tactics improved the ability of the artillery to “shoot and scoot,” and allowed for wider dispersion of artillery in the combat zone. Each battery now consisted of two platoons of four howitzers each, a total of eight guns; rather than three sections of two guns each, a total of six howitzers.¹

The 14th Marines had three regimental command changes during the 1980s. On 27 June 1981, Colonel Frank L. Capin assumed command. Colonel Capin was born and raised in South Dakota. He was commissioned from the NROTC Program after graduating from Southwestern University. He served as an artillery and staff officer with the 11th Marines and Marine Aircraft Group 33. In 1967-68 he was an 8-inch howitzer battery commander in Vietnam. After Vietnam Colonel Capin served as a liaison officer in Bangkok until he returned to the 10th Marines at Camp Lejeune.

*Called “Fritz” because of its resemblance to the World War II German Helmet.

The Modern 14th Marines



His next duty station was the Naval War College, where he was a student and concurrently earned a master's degree from George Washington University. From there he served an overseas tour on Okinawa. After returning to San Francisco, he became the I&I of the 5th Battalion, 14th Marines prior to commanding the regiment.

Colonel Torrence W. Rogers assumed command of the 14th Marines on 6 August 1984. Colonel Rogers, a U.S. Naval Academy graduate with a master's degree from American University, served in the Western Pacific, Vietnam, Australia, Okinawa, and Fort Sill. His military experience included service as an artilleryman, an instructor, and a staff officer in joint and intelligence operations. His personal decorations included the Bronze Star Medal, the Meritorious Service Medal, and the Joint Service Commendation Medal. Colonel John H. Ressmeyer replaced Colonel Rogers on 23 July 1987 at Fort Bliss, Texas. He graduated from Hartwick College and saw service as an artillery officer in Vietnam, as an inspector for the 4th Marine Division, and as an I&I in Oklahoma City, Oklahoma, prior to assuming command of the 14th Marines.²

The 14th Marines began the 1980s with a five battalion structure; three direct support battalions and two general support battalions (very similar to the organization used by the regiment during the battles of Saipan and Tinian during World War II). Major organizational changes for the regiment occurred in 1985. On 30 September 1985 Battery X (Los Angeles) with its four 155mm howitzers was deactivated and its personnel transferred to Headquarters Battery and Battery B, 1st Battalion. On 31 December 1985 the following redesignations were authorized: 1st Battalion became the 5th Battalion, 14th Marines located at Los Angeles; Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion became Headquarters Battery, 5th Battalion (Los Angeles); Battery C, 1st Battalion became Battery D, 2d Battalion (Waterloo); Battery F, 2d Battalion became Battery C, 1st Battalion (Jackson); 5th Battalion became 1st Battalion, 14th Marines (San Francisco); Battery K, 4th Battalion became Battery E, 2d Battalion (Joliet); Battery D became Battery F, 2d Battalion (Dallas); Headquarters Battery, 5th Battalion became Headquarters Battery, 1st Battalion (San Francisco); Battery E (Texarkana) became Bulk Fuel Transportation Platoon, Transport Company, 6th Motor Transport Battalion; and 1st Platoon, Company I, 3d Battalion, 23d Marines became Battery K, 4th Battalion, 14th Marines (Huntsville, Alabama). These changes were necessary to better align the direct support battalions and batteries with their supported units across the United States.

The direct support batteries began receiving the new M198 howitzers in 1985 and most batteries completed the transition by 1988.* Transportation difficulties with the M198 required that the 14th Marines replace its M35 5-ton trucks with newer, more powerful M923/M925 5-ton trucks. The changing demands of the modern battlefield also resulted in the activation of a regimental target acquisition battery (TAB). The mission of the TAB was the detection and location of enemy indirect fire weapons systems, the registration and adjustment of friendly counterbattery fire, processing of counterbattery target information, and providing forward observation/laser designation teams. The battery had a headquarters platoon with motor transport, forward observer, communications, supply, and target procurement sections; and a counter mortar radar platoon with five radar teams equipped with AN/TPQ-36 counterbattery radars.³

The twin goals of the 14th Marines' training program in the 1980s were readiness and realism. These dual requirements were measured by mobilization tests, the Marine Corps Combat Readiness Evaluation System (MCCRES), and combined arms exercises (CAX). A MCCRES (pronounced "Mack-Cress") was the primary evaluation tool to determine a unit's combat readiness. It was a 48 to 96-hour in-depth test of a unit's ability to perform specific combat tasks in accordance with Marine Corps doctrine. An outside evaluation team closely observed as the Marines performed each task and carefully noted the results in a large notebook filled with numerous checklists. Reserve units received no "slack" from the evaluators and were expected to meet the same high standards as their regular counterparts. Once in each three-year training cycle a battalion and all of its batteries was evaluated, usually as part of a MAGTF during its annual training duty. These MCCRES evaluations were developed from earlier tactical tests. Lieutenant Colonel (now Brigadier General) Joe W. Wilson's 4th Battalion, 14th Marines was instrumental in developing the evaluation criteria and acted as one of the initial test units for the 4th Marine Division.

While MCCRES tests and MORDTs provided good statistical tools for use by higher headquarters, most Marines felt that the most important part of the Selected Marine Corps Reserve's training was its field exercise program. Individual instruction, unit instruction, and formal school attendance were put to the ultimate test when units went to the field and simulated combat conditions. Participation in training exercises af-

*Although the M198 is the direct support weapon of choice, the regiment keeps some of the trusty old 105mm howitzers on hand because of their greater mobility.



Department of Defense Photo (USMC) A355666

In the continuing effort to maintain their readiness should Marine reservists be called upon, units of the 14th Marines participate in numerous summer field firing exercises.

forded the reservists the same opportunity as their regular counterparts to develop and maintain combat skills. Command and control, combined arms operations, fire support coordination, and combat maneuvering were all tested under realistic conditions. In the 1980s units of the 14th Marines participated in numerous CAX, FirEx, and CPX exercises. They made amphibious landings at Camp Pendleton and Camp Lejeune. Some units were fully integrated into active duty units to participate in Exercises Alpine Warrior (Wisconsin), Northern Wedding/Bold Guard (Europe), Anchor Express (Norway), and Display Determination (Mediterranean).⁴

The ultimate peacetime test of a unit's warfighting ability was a combined arms exercise (CAX). Theories of fire support coordination and combined arms doctrine were put to the test at the sprawling 932-square mile Marine Corps Air Ground Combat Center (MCAGCC), Twentynine Palms, California, and were particularly demanding for artillery units. The artillery battalion or battery commander, depending on the size of the MAGTF, had to coordinate planning, training, logistics, and operations prior to the exercise.

Once the play began, he was responsible to the MAGTF commander for proper use and integration of all supporting arms and safety as the fire support coordinator (FSC). Artillery representatives manned the fire support coordination center (FSCC) in the combat operations center (COC) throughout the exercise, often putting in 24-hour days. "Alpha" and "Bravo" command groups alternated moving up and down the Delta Corridor or manned outposts like Alligator Ridge or Observation Post Sally, while the firing batteries pounded the impact zones from the Blacktop Area.

For the firing batteries the exercise began with reconnaissance, selection, and occupation of positions. The direct support batteries tried to locate within about one mile of the forward edge of the battlefield, and the general support batteries sought positions about five miles from the front. During a CAX the general support 8-inch and 155mm self-propelled howitzers served double duty as general support batteries and simulated naval gunfire during the exercise. All artillery tactical missions were used during the three-day exercise, frequently requiring position

changes. Artillery batteries shot “prep” fires to support a mechanized attack, peppered the Delta Corridor with harassing fires as the MAGTF pulled back, and ringed defensive positions with a curtain of steel when the simulated threat force approached.

A new artillery tactic, unique to the Marine Corps, known as suppression of enemy air defenses (SEAD) was developed as a result of the CAX program. Commonly called a “front door-back door” shoot by the cannoners, SEAD required the artillery battery to saturate suspected enemy air defense positions in order to confuse and disrupt enemy antiaircraft fire while friendly aircraft approached. As soon as the close air support was near the target area, the artillery quickly lifted or shifted its fire to avoid striking friendly aircraft. After the air strike the artillery resumed its fire on the target area to suppress enemy antiaircraft fire.

These sophisticated tactics required detailed coordination between the artillery and air units. A crucial timing error might result in a plane shot down by friendly fire, while unnecessary delay might allow the enemy an unmolested shot at the fleeing aircraft. The hot desert floor of Twentynine Palms was the perfect proving ground to practice these critical gunnery skills.

As in previous years each battalion was expected to conduct amphibious training, cold weather/mountain warfare training, hot weather/desert training, and nuclear, biological, and chemical warfare training during each training cycle. At the direction of Colonel Torrence W. Rogers, the 14th Marines emphasized mission oriented training. Units were expected to get away from the training center and into the field as often as possible. This field training was augmented by visits from Mobile Training Teams and about 250 members

Among the many services the Marine Corps Reserve provides local communities is the annual “Toys for Tots” program, collecting and providing toys to needy children.

Marine Corps Historical Collection



of the 14th Marines attended formal training schools each year. In 1980 the 1st Battalion participated in amphibious training at NAB Coronado. As part of its ATD exercise it became the first Marine unit to embark and debark from one of the new class of general purpose assault ships, the *Peleliu* (LHA 5). Training during the early and mid-1980s usually found one battalion in specialized training, one battalion undergoing a MCCRES, and the rest firing at one or more CAXs each year.

Civic action efforts by the 14th Marines continued unabated during the 1980s. The I&I Staffs of the 14th Marines conducted 32 casualty calls and funeral details for Marines killed in Beirut. The hard working cannoners of Texarkana's Battery E, 2d Battalion, 14th Marines won four civic action awards and a special citation from the Governor of Texas for their community work. Battery K, 4th Battalion (Joliet) won the 9th Marine Corps District Commander's Trophy in 1980. The Cates Trophy went to Battery E (Texarkana), Joliet's Battery K (twice), and Battery N (El Paso) in the early 1980s. The Harry Schmidt Trophy, awarded annually to the best battalion in the 4th Marine Division, was won three consecutive times by the gunners of the 4th Battalion, 14th Marines (Birmingham). The members of that proud battalion were authorized to wear the green, gold, blue, and red Meritorious Unit Commendation Ribbon for meritorious actions from 1 October 1980 to 30 September 1982. The Secretary of the Navy recognized their exemplary achievements during many MCCRES, MORDT, and CAX tests, out-

standing performance during numerous inspections, and demonstration of military skills exceeding the standards of the Marine Corps and the Naval Service. During that period the 4th Battalion was commanded by Lieutenant Colonels William M. Keal and Joe W. Wilson; the Inspector-Instructor Staff was led by Lieutenant Colonel John D. Phillips. Sergeant Major George D. Redmon was honored with the Meritorious Service Medal and the Order of Saint Barbara in 1986.⁵

Currently, the 14th Marines is armed with state-of-the-art weapons that will continue to serve well into the 1990s and beyond. The modern 14th Marines shares a large burden in today's Marine Corps. It controls one-fourth of the direct support artillery, almost all of the general support artillery, and well over 50 percent of the trained artillery manpower. The 14th Marines, possibly firing at a hostile beachhead from off-shore islands as at Roi-Namur and Tinian, may be called on to support a future landing force. A modern battlefield will most likely see the guns of the 14th Marines carried ashore by tilt-rotor aircraft like the Boeing MV-22 Osprey or brought over the beach by a speedy Landing Craft Air Cushion (LCAC), rather than manhandled into position as at Saipan or Iwo Jima. While weapons and circumstances change, one thing remains constant; the spirit of the regiment. The 14th Marines will provide the same outstanding fire support in the future as it has in the past. The role of the current 14th Marines, like its World War I antecedent, is to train and wait, standing always at the ready in case the Marine Corps Reserve is called.

Notes

INTRODUCTION

1. After 1930 all Marine Corps regiments were redesignated simply "Marines." When the 14th Marine Regiment was reactivated in 1943 it was known as the 14th Marines. This designation is still used today.
2. The Marine Corps simply numbers its combat support regiments, unlike the U.S. Army and many other military organizations around the world which not only number, but also add descriptive terminology. In most other military organizations, the 14th Marines would be called the 14th Field Artillery Regiment. The Marine Corps currently has four artillery regiments: the 10th (2d MarDiv); the 11th (1st MarDiv); the 12th (3d MarDiv); and the 14th (4th MarDiv).

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9. Capt Robert O. Underwood, "Marine Corps Field Artillery," *The Recruiter's Bulletin*, Aug15, pp. 1-2, hereafter Underwood "Marine Artillery."
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11. Ibid.
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13. Ibid., p. 2.
14. Subject File, "Strength and Distribution" (RefSec, MCHC, Washington, D.C.).
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3. Ibid.
4. Col Roland J. Spritzen, Comments on draft ms, 31Mar87 (Comment File, MCHC, Washington, D.C.), hereafter Spritzen Comments.
5. Capt Thomas N. Greene, "Little Dynamite," *Marine Corps Gazette*, May49, pp. 26-29.
6. Spritzen Comments.
7. *14th Marines Cruise Book* (Baton Rouge: Army-Navy Publishing Company, 1943), p. 21; Col Louis G. DeHaven biography file (RefSec, MCHC, Washington, D.C.), hereafter named bio file.
8. Chapin, *4th MarDiv*, p. 2.
9. Proehl, *4th MarDiv in WW II*, p. 16; Spritzen Comments.
10. Ibid., p. 17.
11. Ibid., p. 211.

CHAPTER 3

ROI-NAMUR

1. CinCPOA OPlan 16-43; VAC Op Plan 2-43.
2. 4th MarDiv OPlan 3-43 (revised), dtd 31Dec43 (Kwajalein File, MCHC, Washington, D.C.).
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4. Robert D. Heintz, Jr. and John A. Crown, *The Marshalls: Increasing the Tempo* (Washington: HistBr, G-3 Div, HQMC, 1954), pp. 30-31, hereafter Heintz and Crown, *Increasing Tempo*.
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16. Ibid.
17. U.S. Navy, "Amph Ops: Marshalls," pp. 3-16.
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3. Robinson Comments.
4. 14th Mar ComdC, dtd 26Feb70.

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12. 1st Bn, 14th Mar ComdC, dtd 15Jan76.
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Appendix A

Commanding Officers

Col Richard M. Cutts	26Nov18-20Apr19
Col Philip M. Bannon	21Apr19-19Jun19
LtCol Randall M. Victory	1Jun43-7Jun43
Col Louis G. DeHaven	8Jun43-27May45
Col Randall M. Victory	28May45-18Nov45
Col Vincent J. Robinson	1May68-30Jun71
Col Richard B. Baity	1Jul71-20May74
Col Patrick H. Harrington	21May74-30Jun75
Col Kay D. Bjorklund	1Jul75-19Aug78
Col Clarence E. Hogan	20Aug78-24Jun81
Col Frank L. Capin	25Jun81-5Aug84
Col Torrence W. Rogers	6Aug84-22Jul87
Col John H. Ressmeyer	23Jul87 - present

Appendix B

Chronology, 14th Marines

- 28 November 1918 Organized at Marine Barracks, Quantico, Virginia as Headquarters Detachment, 14th Marines.
- 27 November 1918-
18 June 1919 Stationed at Quantico, Virginia.
19 June 1919 14th Regiment deactivated at Quantico, Virginia.
20 February 1943 3d Battalion, 12th Marines redesignated as 3d Battalion, 14th Marines at Training Camp, New River, North Carolina.
- 9 March 1943-
13 March 1943 Pack Howitzer Battery, 1st Separate Battalion; 2d Pack Howitzer Battery, 2d Separate Battalion; and Battery A, 3d Separate Battalion transferred from Camp Lejeune, North Carolina to Camp Pendleton, California.
- 26 March 1943 2d Battalion, 14th Marines activated at Camp Pendleton with activation of Headquarters and Service Battery and the redesignation of the batteries of the Separate Battalions as Batteries D, E, and F.
- 1 May 1943 1st Battalion, 14th Marines organized and activated at Camp Lejeune.
- 1 June 1943 Regimental Headquarters and Service Battery organized and activated at Camp Lejeune.
- 5 August 1943-
14 August 1943 14th Marines (less 2d Battalion) moved by train from Camp Lejeune to Camp Pendleton.
- 9 August 1943 14th Marines assigned to 4th Marine Division.
- 4 August 1943-
19 August 1943 Batteries comprising 4th Battalion, 14th Marines organized and activated at Camp Pendleton.
- 19 August 1943 4th Battalion assigned to parent organization at Camp Pendleton.
- 6 January 1944-
31 January 1944 Enroute to Kwajalein Atoll, Marshall Islands.
- 31 January 1944-
5 February 1944 Participated in the Kwajalein Campaign.
- 8 February 1944 14th Marines (less 1st Battalion) departed Kwajalein Atoll for Maui, Hawaii.
- 28 February 1944 1st Battalion, 14th Marines sailed for Maui, Hawaii.
- 17 February 1944 Regiment arrived and disembarked at Maui.
- 12 May 1944 Embarked on board the *Leonard Wood* (AP 25) and sailed for Saipan, Marianas Islands.
- 15 June 1944-
9 July 1944 Participated in Saipan Campaign.
- 22 July 1944 Embarked on board LSTs 483 and 340 and departed for Tinian.
- 24 July 1944-
1 August 1944 Participated in Tinian Campaign.
- 8 August 1944 Embarked on board SS *Cape Johnson*, USAT *Sea Corporal*, and SS *Typhoon* and sailed for Maui by way of Saipan and Eniwetok.

- 29 August 1944 Arrived at Maui, Hawaii.
- January 1945 Participated in several ship-to-shore maneuvers in the Hawaiian Islands.
- 27 January 1945 14th Marines sail from Hawaii for Iwo Jima.
- 19 February 1945 Regiment landed and participated in Iwo Jima Campaign.
- 20 March 1945 14th Marines sail from Iwo Jima for Maui.
- 4 April 1945 Regiment arrived and disembarked at Kahului, Maui, Hawaii.
- 25 October 1945 14th Marines sail from Maui to San Diego, and then proceed to Camp Pendleton.
- 15 November 1945 All four battalions of the regiment disbanded at Camp Pendleton.
- 20 November 1945 Regimental Headquarters and Service Battery disbanded at Camp Pendleton marking the deactivation of the regiment.
- 1 July 1966 Reserve elements from Los Angeles, Dallas, Philadelphia, Birmingham redesignated as battalions of the reactivated 14th Marines.
- 1 February 1966 Headquarters and Service Battery, 14th Marines redesignated from 5th 105mm Howitzer Battery at Treasure Island, San Francisco, California.
- 1 February 1967 Headquarters, 14th Marines relocated to Fort Worth, Texas.
- 30 August 1968 Regimental colors presented to 14th Marines during the first regimental parade since 1945, held at Fort Sill, Oklahoma.
- 31 January 1969-
- 2 February 1969 Participated in CPX Bloody Bull at Camp Pendleton.
- 13 July 1969-
- 26 July 1969 Participated in Operation Cordite Junction at Marine Corps Base, Twentynine Palms, California.
- 1 April 1971 All 107mm mortar batteries deactivated.
- 1 October 1971 14th Marines underwent major reorganization: Battery A, 1st Battalion, 14th Marines (New Orleans, Louisiana) deactivated; 5th 155mm Howitzer Battery (Spokane, Washington) redesignated Battery A; Battery C, 1st Battalion, 14th Marines (Pico Rivera, California) deactivated; 7th 105mm Howitzer Battery (Waterloo, Iowa) redesignated Battery C; Battery F, 2d Battalion, 14th Marines (Fort Worth, Texas) deactivated; 2d 105mm Howitzer Battery (Jackson, Mississippi) redesignated Battery F; Battery G, 3d Battalion, 14th Marines (Trenton, New Jersey) redesignated Battery G (-); Detachment, Battery H redesignated Detachment, Battery G; 1st and 8th 105mm Howitzer Batteries combined and redesignated Battery H, 3d Battalion, 14th Marines; Battery K, 4th Battalion, 14th Marines deactivated; 6th 105mm Howitzer Battery redesignated Battery K.
- 1 October 1974 4th Searchlight Battery deactivated.
- 1 September 1979 3d Field Artillery Group redesignated 5th Battalion, 14th Marines.
- 1 January 1986 14th Marines reorganized units: 5th Battalion, 14th Marines relocated to Los Angeles, California; 1st Battalion, 14th Marines relocated to San Francisco, California; Battery C (Waterloo, Iowa) redesignated Battery D; Battery D (Jackson, Mississippi) redesignated Battery F; Battery F (Dallas, Texas) redesignated Battery C; Battery K (Joliet, Illinois) redesignated Battery E; 1st Platoon, Company I, 3d Battalion, 24th Marines (Huntsville, Alabama) redesignated Battery K.

Appendix C

Lineage

1918-1919

ACTIVATED 26 NOVEMBER 1918 AT MARINE BARRACKS, QUANTICO, VIRGINIA,
AS THE 14TH REGIMENT

DEACTIVATED 19 JUNE 1919

1943-1945

REACTIVATED 1 JUNE 1943 AT CAMP LEJEUNE, NORTH CAROLINA, AS
HEADQUARTERS AND SERVICE BATTERY, 14TH MARINES,
FLEET MARINE FORCE

RELOCATED DURING AUGUST 1943 TO CAMP PENDLETON, CALIFORNIA, AND ASSIGNED
TO THE 4TH MARINE DIVISION, FLEET MARINE FORCE

PARTICIPATED IN THE FOLLOWING WORLD WAR II CAMPAIGNS

KWAJALEIN
SAIPAN
TINIAN
IWO JIMA

REDEPLOYED DURING OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 1945 TO CAMP PENDLETON, CALIFORNIA

DEACTIVATED 20 NOVEMBER 1945

1966-1968

REACTIVATED 1 FEBRUARY 1966 AT NAVY AND MARINE CORPS RESERVE TRAINING CENTER,
TREASURE ISLAND, SAN FRANCISCO, CALIFORNIA, AS THE 14TH MARINES, AND
ASSIGNED TO THE 4TH MARINE DIVISION, FLEET MARINE FORCE,
U.S. MARINE CORPS RESERVE

RELOCATED DURING FEBRUARY 1967 TO NAVY AND MARINE CORPS RESERVE
TRAINING CENTER, FORT WORTH, TEXAS

RELOCATED DURING NOVEMBER 1976 TO NAVY AND MARINE CORPS RESERVE
TRAINING CENTER, NAVAL AIR STATION, DALLAS, TEXAS

PARTICIPATED IN NUMEROUS TRAINING EXERCISES THROUGHOUT THE 1970S AND 1980S

Appendix D

Honors

PRESIDENTIAL UNIT CITATION STREAMER
WORLD WAR II

SAIPAN AND TINIAN, 15 JUNE-1 AUGUST 1944

NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION STREAMER
WORLD WAR II

IWO JIMA, 19-28 FEBRUARY 1945

ASIATIC-PACIFIC CAMPAIGN STREAMER WITH FOUR BRONZE STARS

MARSHALL ISLANDS, 1-8 FEBRUARY 1944

SAIPAN, 15 JUNE-24 JULY 1944

TINIAN, 24 JULY-7 AUGUST 1944

IWO JIMA, 19 FEBRUARY-16 MARCH 1945

WORLD WAR II VICTORY STREAMER

Appendix E

Contributors

MajGen Clifford B. Drake, USMC (Ret)
MajGen Carl A. Youngdale, USMC (Ret)
BGen Frederick J. Karch, USMC (Ret)

Col Kay D. Bjorkland, USMC (Ret)
Col Douglas E. Reeve, USMC (Ret)
Col Vincent J. Robinson, USMC (Ret)
Col Harrison L. Rogers, USMC (Ret)
Col Torrence W. Rogers, USMC
Col Roland J. Spritzen, USMC (Ret)

LtCol Douglas J. Hance, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Daniel M. Manfull, USMC (Ret)
LtCol Richard J. Winsborough, USMC (Ret)

Maj Charles J. Irwin, Jr., USMC (Ret)

Capt Cecil D. Snyder, USMC (Ret)

Mr. Clayton B. Ponder

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

