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THE
FIFTH MARINE
DIVISION

JOHN C. CHAPIN

the
FIFTH MARINE



DIVISION

**Historical Division
U. S. Marine Corps**

THE FIFTH MARINE DIVISION
in
WORLD WAR II



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HISTORICAL DIVISION
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CHAPTER I

Formation and Training

THE Fifth Marine Division had its origin in a letter written by the Commandant of the Marine Corps on November 11, 1943. This letter was sent to the Commanding General at Camp Lejeune and to the Commanding General, Fleet Marine Force, San Diego Area. It stated in part: "The Fifth Marine Division consisting of the 22nd Marines (Infantry), 26th Marines (Infantry), 27th Marines (Infantry), 13th Marines (Artillery), 16th Marines (Engineer), and Headquarters and Service Troops, will be organized during the months of December 1943, and January and February 1944." It was intended at this time that Headquarters and Service Troops would have two components: Special Troops and Service Troops. The former was to contain a Special Weapons Battalion, a Headquarters Battalion, and a Tank Battalion. The latter was to have a Service Battalion, a Motor Transport Battalion, a Medical Battalion, and an Amphibian Tractor Battalion. The Division's original plan of organization was modified, however. Another letter from the Commandant on January 20, 1944, stated that the 22nd Marines would not become part of the Division, and directed that the 28th Marines be formed instead.

By late January, the activation of the different elements of the Division was well under way. The first unit had been Headquarters Battalion, which was formed at Camp Pendleton on December 1, 1943. Then the 16th Marines* under Lieutenant Colonel Clifford H. Shuey, USMC, was activated on December 15, 1943, at Camp Lejeune. On January 10, 1944, several regiments were organized at Camp Pendleton: the 13th Marines** (Colonel James D. Waller, USMC), the 26th Marines (Lieutenant Colonel Chester B. Graham, USMC), and the 27th Marines (Colonel Thomas A. Wornham, USMC). The Service Troops were constituted as an entity on February 8, 1944, under Colonel John W. Beckett, USMC. This new unit contained not only the Service Battalion, the Medical Battalion, and the Motor Transport Battalion, but also the Tank Battalion and Headquarters Battalion. (Thus the Amphibian Tractor Battalion, the Special Weapons Battalion, and "Special Troops" were eliminated from the organic make-up of the Division.) Also activated on February 8 was the 28th Marines under Lieutenant Colonel Chandler W. Johnson, USMC.

During the period February 3-6, the medical, artillery, and engineer units that had formed and trained at Camp Lejeune arrived at Camp Pendleton. The Division was beginning to take shape now, and on January 21, 1944, it was formally activated with Brigadier General Thomas A. Bourke, USMC, as Acting Commanding General.*** On February 4,

* A 16th Provisional Regiment existed from May 11, 1920, to July 7, 1920, during which time it made one trip to Haiti.

** A 13th Regiment was activated on July 3, 1918, under Lt. Col. Smedley D. Butler, and went to France, although it was not in combat. It was disbanded August 15, 1919.

*** This date is taken from a letter of the Commanding General, 5thMarDiv, to the Commandant on 1 February 1944. For a complete list of the Division's units and their dates of activation, see Appendix "B".

Major General Keller E. Rockey, USMC, assumed command, and General Bourke became Assistant Division Commander. By the end of February, the Division contained 9478 officers and men. At this time, the Division Staff was organized as follows:*

Chief of Staff: Colonel William A. Worton
D—1: Colonel Lee H. Brown
D—2: Lieutenant Colonel George A. Roll
D—3: Lieutenant Colonel James F. Shaw
D—4: Colonel Randolph McC. Pate

Now that most of the units of the Division had been activated, intensive training was begun. This training was well organized into progressive steps, each emphasizing a certain subject. These phases were:

"A"—February 8 to March 12—Basic individual training
"B"—March 13 to April 23—Individual and small unit training
"C"—April 24 to May 14—Company tactical training
"D"—May 15 to June 4—Battalion tactical training
"E"—June 5 to June 11—Regimental tactical training
"F"—June 12 to August 1—Amphibious training.

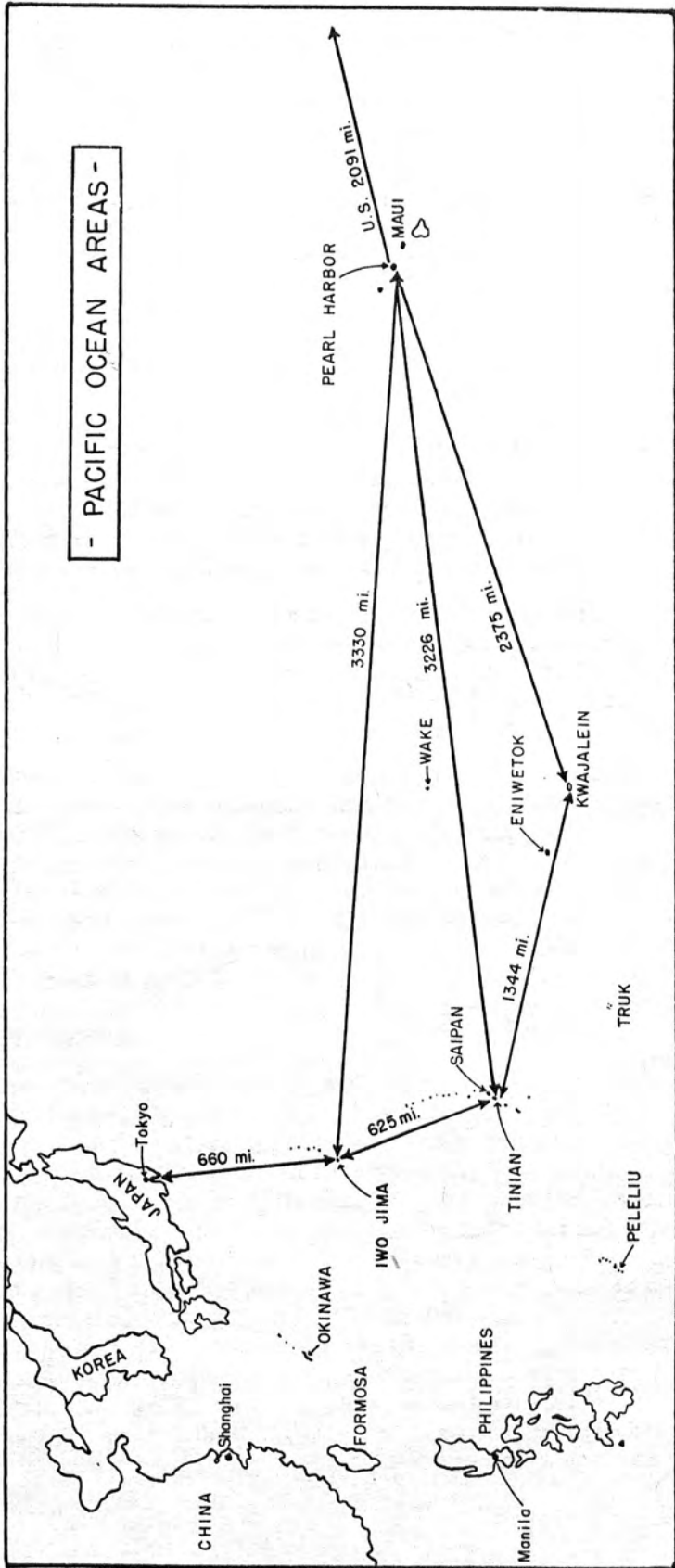
The early periods of individual and unit training in the basic essentials of combat were followed by practice in the technique of amphibious operations. Schools were held for naval gunfire, medical, communication, transport quartermaster, and staff personnel. Meanwhile the troops were engaged in transport training. In the midst of all these activities came one day of ceremony, for on June 17 the regimental colors were presented to each of the regiments of the Fifth Division at a sunset parade. By the end of June the strength of the Division had climbed to 18,187 officers and men.**

At the beginning of July, the scope of the amphibious training widened, and plans were made for landings by each regimental combat team. These maneuvers were to be under the supervision of the Amphibious Training Command, Pacific Fleet. The troops of CT 26 embarked at San Diego on July 7. From there they went to San Clemente Island, where two landing exercises were held. Then the ships moved to a position off the California coast, and CT 26 made a landing with the mission of seizing "Pendleton Island." It had been planned to continue the exercise ashore with a three day problem lasting until July 14. On the twelfth, however, the maneuvers were cancelled, and CT 26 returned to camp. All hands were very curious about the cause of this sudden change. The answer was not long in coming: the 26th Marines was going overseas. The senior officers were informed that a dispatch had been received the day before from Headquarters, Marine Corps, ordering the Fifth Division to send one reinforced regiment overseas immediately. It was to be available for use with the First Marine Division Provisional Brigade in the Guam operation. CT 26 had been chosen for this assignment, and on July 13 it was redesignated the "26th Marines, Reinforced" (with the usual attached engineer, motor transport, tank, and medical units). The regiment was ordered to reduce its equipment to a minimum and then to move to San Diego and combat load its ships. Only July 22 the 26th Marines, Reinforced, was detached from the Fifth Division and sailed from San Diego to report to the Commander in Chief, Pacific Ocean Areas, for duty. While the regiment was en route, information reaching CINCPAC indicated that the Guam operation was

* Command and staff personnel are chronologically listed in Appendix "A".

** For a tabulation of the strength of the Division at the end of every month, see Appendix "D".

- PACIFIC OCEAN AREAS -



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progressing favorably and that additional forces would not be required there. Accordingly, CINCPAC ordered the 26th Marines, Reinforced, to proceed to Hilo, Hawaii. On July 29 the regiment arrived there. Further orders were received to "execute debarkation with a view to embarkation for combat." This was done and the regiment began moving to Camp Tarawa at Kamuela.

Meanwhile, back at Camp Pendleton the remainder of the Fifth Division continued its training. From July 15 to July 23, CT 27 carried out landing exercises at San Clemente and at Aliso Beach, with a three day continuation of the problem ashore. Immediately afterward, CT 28 engaged in the same maneuvers, and upon completion, it returned to its base at Tent Camp 1.

This concluded the "stateside" training of much of the Division. During the early part of August, the final preparations for departure were made. CT 28, however, was designated part of the Rear Echelon that would remain at Camp Pendleton after the main portion of the Division had left. On August 12, the 27th Marines (Reinforced), the Rear Echelon of the 26th Marines, and the Division Control Echelon under General Rockey embarked at San Diego and sailed for Hawaii. The convoy arrived at Hilo on the eighteenth, and General Rockey reported for duty to the Commanding General, FMF, Pacific. That same day the Division Command Post opened at Camp Tarawa.

Since it now appeared probable that the Division would be able to assemble and train as a unit at Hawaii, the regimental combat teams were broken up. Units attached to CT 26 and CT 27 reverted to parent organizational control, and the 26th Marines (Reinforced) became the 26th Marines, Fifth Marine Division, once more. A Division order was issued setting forth a master training schedule for all units at Camp Tarawa to follow.

The Rear Echelon was also engaged in intensive training in field problems and jungle fighting at this time. As the end of August approached, however, it too began to get ready for embarkation. VMO-5 was the first unit to leave (August 23). During September the various remaining units of the Division departed from San Diego one by one: the last of the 13th Marines; then the Forward Echelon of the 28th Marines; then the H&S Company, the Regimental Weapons Company, and the Second Battalion, 28th; and then the First Battalion, 28th. By October 11 the final units of the 28th Marines had left San Diego, and the Command Post of the Rear Echelon was closed at Camp Pendleton that day. The last elements of the Rear Echelon arrived at Hilo on October 19, and the Fifth Division was finally together again as a unit.

Now that the whole Division was assembled on Hawaii, training and planning proceeded apace. On October 18 two officers of the Division Staff attended a conference at Pearl Harbor. Here they were informed that an assault on Iwo Jima was planned and that the Fifth Division would participate in it as part of the V Amphibious Corps. Upon receipt of this information, they returned to Hawaii, bringing with them a concept of the forthcoming operation prepared by the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the tentative scheme of maneuver drawn up by Corps, and a few maps. General Rockey then held a conference at Camp Tarawa, and the general situation was explained to the remainder of the Division Staff and to the Regimental Commanders. The Fifth Division was formally assigned to the V Amphibious Corps on October 20, and at another conference that day, the formulation of the Division's operation plan was begun. For reasons of security, the objective was referred to only as "Island X," and all identifying features were eliminated from the maps used. Thus a wider distribution of the plan to the lower echelons of the Division was possible. By November 1, the Division's preferred operation plan had been completed and flown to Pearl Harbor.

Now that the major part of the planning had been done, it was necessary to train the assault troops in the projected scheme of maneuver. Moreover, time was growing short, for word had been received on October 24 that loading for the forthcoming operation was to begin on December 2. This left little more than a month in which to finish training, but the Division would be ready in time. For each of its units, upon arriving at Hawaii, had rapidly been fitted into the Division's overall training program. Thus, during the first half of October, all units had engaged in platoon and company training, and in the latter half of the month they had conducted landing team problems (with practice in the use of small landing craft, air support, tanks, etc.)

With the completion of the Division's operation plan at the beginning of November, all units began practicing for the specific role they were to play in the attack on "Island X." CT 28, for example, maneuvered in terrain similar to that it would encounter in its assault on Mount Suribachi.

The manifold activities of the Division toward the end of its stay on Hawaii are well described in the Division's War Diary:

"From 1-18 Nov. the Division was undergoing Regimental and Combat Team tactical training, emphasizing planning and functioning of CT and LT staffs, with special stress on the planning and preparation of operation orders, conduct of the Command Post, cooperation and teamwork between staffs, and preparation of staff records and reports. Functioning of supply channels, and operation and coordination of all communication agencies was exercised.

"The period from 19 Nov. to the end of the month was spent in buttoning-up for complete readiness for combat. Orders were issued for conduct of training while afloat, Combat Teams and Support Group were carefully inspected for shortages of equipment, a Division CPX was held emphasizing use of communications and submission of periodic reports, and numerous staff conferences were called relative to the plans of the forthcoming operation. The Division was entering the final stages of its training prior to loading out for combat operations against the enemy."

Dispatches were received in November indicating that the loading date was to be delayed. The last-minute training of the Division was continued, therefore, and three final Command Post exercises were held. On December 16, VMO-5 left for Pearl Harbor. By now, it was obvious to everyone that the departure date was at hand. All combat equipment had been crated and marked for shipment, final inspection of gear had been made, tetanus shots had been given, field training had tapered off, and all hands were ready to go. The movement of equipment and supplies to the piers at Hilo and to the LST beach began on December 20. Christmas Day was a holiday and was appropriately celebrated. This same day the loading of cargo aboard ship got underway. For the next two weeks the supplies and personnel of the Division left Kamuela in a steady stream and moved to Hilo for embarkation. By January 9, the last unit (CT 28) of the Combat Echelon had sailed for Pearl Harbor, and only the Base Echelon remained at Camp Tarawa.

As each unit arrived at Pearl Harbor, a liberty schedule was set up so that 25% of the men could go ashore each day. This pleasant life did not last long, however, for on January 12 the whole Division left Pearl Harbor for maneuvers. These were conducted at Maalaea Bay (Maui) and at Kahoolawe, and included rehearsals of the ship-to-shore movement as well as a full-scale landing and overnight problem. This was the first time that the

Division had worked as a part of a corps, and thus a great deal of valuable experience was gained. Furthermore, since the maneuvers were designed as a rehearsal for the Iwo Jima landing, they gave additional practice in the execution of the Division's operation plan.

On January 18, all units returned to Pearl Harbor for a final period of rehabilitation. Once again liberty was granted to a certain portion of the men each day. Senior officers and their staffs held conferences and critiques. On January 22 the LST and LSM flotilla, bearing the 13th Marines, 11th Amphibian Tractor Battalion, 5th Tank Battalion, and the 5th Shore Party Regiment, departed from Pearl Harbor. Five days later, the main part of the Fifth Division left, bound for its first combat.

CHAPTER II

Iwo Jima

ONCE the convoy was underway, the word was passed to all hands that the Division was bound for Iwo Jima. Classes began right away, so that everyone would receive all available information about the objective and the plan of attack. The island of Iwo Jima, a member of the Volcano group, was situated only 660 miles from Tokyo and 625 miles from Saipan. Pearl Harbor, on the other hand, was 3330 miles away. (See map of "Pacific Ocean Areas.") The importance of Iwo lay in its strategic location, for it guarded the home islands of Japan, and from its airfields rose the Jap interceptor planes that harassed America's B-29's.

The United States had marshalled and coordinated a great many units in order to prepare for the landing on Iwo. Planes from the 20th Air Force and the Fast Carrier Force had hit the mainland of Japan to prevent any surface or air support from reaching the enemy on Iwo. American submarines had been active in blockading the objective. The Strategic Air Force, Pacific Ocean Areas, had been making strikes against Iwo itself for several months. In direct support, Task Force 52 and Task Force 54 made the pre-invasion bombardments and air strikes, while the minesweepers and underwater demolition teams cleared the way for the assault forces. Simultaneously, the planes of Task Force 58 were over Honshu in force.

The chain of command of the invasion troops was organized as follows:

Fifth Fleet (TF 50)—Admiral R. A. Spruance, USN.

Joint Expeditionary Troops (TF 51)—Vice Admiral R. K. Turner, USN.

Expeditionary Troops (TF 56)—Lieutenant General H. M. Smith, USMC.

Landing Force (TG 56.1)—Major General Harry Schmidt, USMC.

The Landing Force was built around the V Amphibious Corps which contained two assault divisions, the Fifth Marine Division (Major General Keller E. Rockey, USMC), and the Fourth Marine Division (Major General Clifton B. Cates, USMC). The Third Marine Division (Major General Graves B. Erskine, USMC) formed the Expeditionary Troops Reserve. The operation plan called for the Fourth and Fifth Divisions to land abreast (with the Fifth on the left) on D-day on the southeast beaches of Iwo. D-day had been set for February 19, 1945, after being postponed from January 20. Units attached for this landing brought the strength of the Fifth Division (Reinforced) up to 24,797 officers and men.*

Aboard ship, the men of the Division were studying maps, aerial photographs, and relief models of the objective. Classes were held daily, and the plan of attack was ex-

* Headquarters, Expeditionary Troops, G-1 Report on Iwo.

plained in detail to everyone. The Fifth Division was to land on beaches Green 1, Red 1, and Red 2. The assault battalions in their LVT's would be preceded by a wave of LVT(A)'s. CT 27 and CT 28 (each reinforced with engineers and other special troops) were to be abreast with the 27th Marines on the right. Advancing inland as rapidly as possible, these two regiments would attempt to drive across the island to the western beaches. There they would wheel, and the 27th Marines would move northward, while the 28th would attack to the south against Mount Suribachi. Following the infantry units would come the regimental weapons and tanks. A total of approximately 4500 men and their equipment would be ashore within 45 minutes. The Division Reserve (consisting of LT 3/28 and LT 1/26) and the Division Artillery (the 13th Marines) were to land on call. CT 26 minus LT 1/26 was to be in Corps Reserve.*

As these plans were being explained to everyone, the convoy moved westward. On February 5 the Division arrived at Eniwetok and a staff conference was held there. The convoy departed on February 7, and on the 11th it arrived at Saipan. Two days later, a final rehearsal was conducted with a simulated landing on the west coast of Tinian. After one last conference, at which the latest intelligence data was distributed, the Division left for Iwo Jima on February 16.

Tension began to mount now. This was the Fifth Division's first combat assignment, and everyone was keyed up as the convoy approached the objective. However, about 40% of the men in the Division had been in battle before (in the old Raider Battalions and other units), so there was a valuable stabilizing element of experienced Marines.

Early in the morning of February 19, the convoy arrived in the transport area. It was D-day and Iwo Jima lay ahead. By 0744 the first LVT's began disembarking. H-hour was set for 0900. On every side, the supporting ships of the Navy were pouring their fire onto the island. Planes were making run after run on their targets, bombing, rocketing, and strafing. At 0825, the first wave crossed the Line of Departure. LCI's firing mortars and LCS's using rockets were in direct support.** The landing beaches were saturated with high explosives as the assault troops went in. The first wave hit the beaches between 0859 and 0903. The enemy was still stunned by the pre-H hour barrage, and only moderate fire was received. "Upon landing, it became apparent that the enemy had not chosen to defend the beaches at the landing areas. Accordingly, speed of the attack was emphasized, and the attack was pushed rapidly across the island to the cliff lines controlling the west coast."*** Advancing inland, the assault battalions from right to left were 1/27, 2/27, and 1/28. As LT 1/28 moved westward, 2/28 landed (at 0956) and deployed facing Mount Suribachi to cover the open left flank. Enemy artillery and mortar fire increased steadily in its intensity. Its pin-point accuracy never varied, however, for the high ground on both sides of the corps' zone was dotted with Jap observation posts.

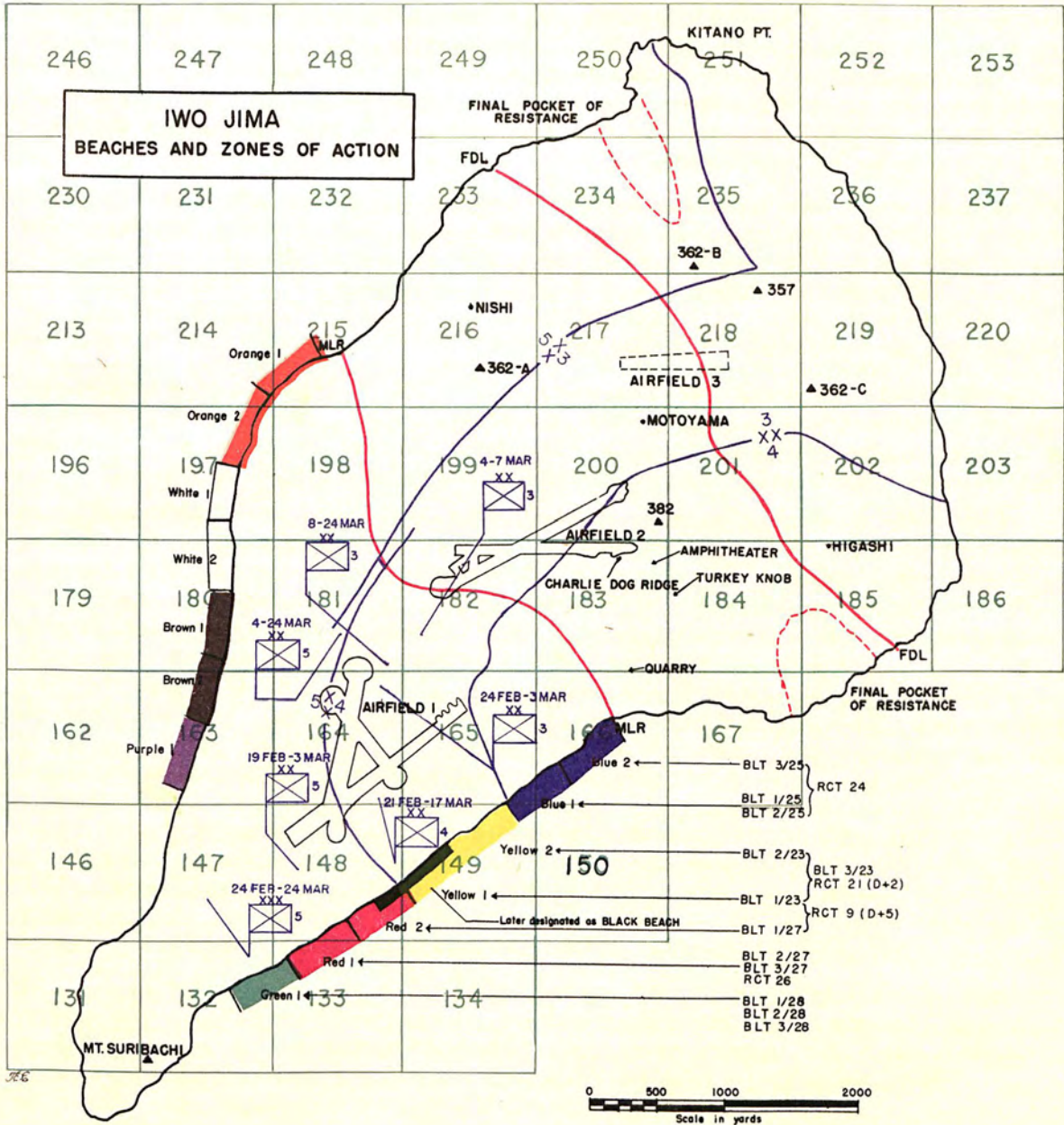
While the infantry was fighting its way inland, the supporting arms were having trouble back on the beach. The loose black volcanic sand was bogging down the wheeled vehicles, the surf was causing a considerable number of landing craft to broach, the steep terraces were blocking egress from the beaches, Jap artillery and mortar fire was blanketing the beach area, and extensive mine fields were taking a heavy toll. In spite of all these difficulties, reserves continued to pour ashore. Tanks were coming in by 0930, LT 3/28 was on Green 1 by 1215, and LT 1/26 was ashore by 1445. The rest of CT 26 was soon released to the Fifth Division by Corps, and it had been landed by 1732. During the after-

* For the Task Organization of the Fifth Division at Iwo, see Appendix "C".

** Speaking of this naval fire, the 5th Division Action Report says (P.17): "These fires made it possible for the assault waves to land."

*** 5th Division Action Report, P.17.

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noon, the artillery of the 13th Marines, the remainder of the 5th Tank Battalion, the Shore and Beach Parties, and the Division Advance Command Post all came ashore and began operations.

Thus by the end of D-day, all the main elements of the Fifth Division were ashore. The assault regiments, after splitting the island in two, were driving north and south in the face of bitter opposition. The Jap defenders were hidden deep in countless emplacements, caves, and pillboxes, all of which were mutually supporting. Every foot of the Marine advance was into the teeth of this defense-in-depth with its bands of interlocking fire. In one day, therefore, the Fifth Division suffered 904 casualties.* Three hundred sixty-six enemy dead had already been counted,* however, and a beachhead 1000 yards deep and 1500 yards wide had been seized. (See map of "Iwo Jima.")

After the heavy fighting during the day, the hours of darkness were needed for rest and reorganization. The enemy had other plans. In the words of the Division's official report: "The night of D-day was active with numerous infiltration attempts, an attempted counterattack in strength, and heavy shelling of our lines and rear areas."

When morning came on D plus 1 (February 20), the Division's two-pronged attack was resumed. CT 28 drove southward against the Suribachi defenses, while CT 27 advanced northward along the west coast of the island. CT 26 remained in Division Reserve. The attack against Mt. Suribachi was made with LT 2/28 on the left and LT 3/28 on the right. LT 1/28 was in reserve initially. The regiment was met by intense fire from pillboxes and emplacements at the base of the mountain and from caves dug into the cliffs. Every move the Marines made was under direct observation of the enemy on top of Suribachi. It was a yard by yard advance with all supporting weapons brought into play where possible. When they could not be used, squads and platoons, using flame throwers and demolitions, did the job alone. Progress was slow and bloody. At the end of the day only minor gains had been made by the 28th Marines.

On the Division's other front, CT 27 was able to make better progress. LT 1/26 was attached to it and was used as the left assault battalion, with LT 3/27 on the right. Tanks spearheaded the advance. Although enemy opposition was heavy, the portion of Airfield No. 1 that lay in the Division's zone was taken, and an advance of about 800 yards was made.

Back on the beaches, heavy artillery and mortar fire was being received constantly. Casualties kept on mounting. The flow of ample supplies ashore and up to the assault troops was still obstructed. The beachline was littered with broached landing craft. The loose sand continued to pose a problem; Green 1 was impassable except for LVT's. Yet somehow the Shore and Beach Parties "delivered the goods."**

On the following day, D plus 2 (February 21), CT 28 resumed its drive on Suribachi. Once again, progress was slow in the face of fanatical resistance. Concealed Jap positions had to be taken in hand to hand combat. By nightfall, the 28th had reached the base of the mountain and there it dug in.

Meanwhile, CT 27 was also meeting heavy enemy resistance. Casualties were heavy, especially in LT 1/26. However, with the help of tanks, an advance of 900-1000 yards was

* These figures, and all succeeding casualty totals, are taken from Annex "A" of the 5th Division Action Report on Iwo, and from the Division's War Diary.

** It will not be possible in an account of this size to mention the role of all the elements of the Division. Such groups as the aerial observers, the medical personnel, the communicators, the engineers, the naval gunfire and air liaison parties, the Seabees, and many other all contributed a great deal to the final victory of the Division.

achieved during the morning, and the O-1 line was nearly reached. (See map.) Here the regiment was stopped by intense fire from enemy mortars and artillery. Moreover, a large gap had developed between the Fifth Division's right flank and the Fourth Division. LT 1/27 was committed to fill the space. It had to extend its lines 400 yards into the zone of the Fourth Division before the gap was closed.

This same afternoon (D plus 2), General Rockey and the Division Staff landed, and the Division CP was opened ashore (1330). Conditions in the beach areas were improving now. Matting and bulldozers were speeding the clearance of supplies, and enemy fire had diminished. Nevertheless, by nightfall the Fifth Division's casualty total stood at 2057.

During the night, the entire northern flank of the Division was hit by a series of Jap counterattacks that lasted from 2100 until day-break. The men of the 27th Marines repulsed all attempts at a breakthrough and maintained their lines intact.

With the coming of day on D plus 3 (February 22), CT 26 passed through the 27th Marines, and jumped off in the attack with its three battalions abreast. Enemy fire from the right flank slowed the regiment's progress, and permission was obtained to direct its assault into the Fourth Division's zone in order to silence the enemy weapons there. Several hundred yards were gained, but when the units adjacent to its right flank failed to keep abreast, the 26th was once again subjected to enfilade fire, and it was forced to withdraw to its original position.

Meanwhile, CT 28 in the south was working its way around the base of Mt. Suribachi. Because of the nature of the terrain, it was not feasible to use support fires to any great extent. Thus the fighting resolved itself once more into a direct assault on enemy fortifications by small units of Marine riflemen. Simultaneously, patrols were reconnoitering the area in search of a route up to the top of the mountain. They were unable to locate any usable path, but at the end of the day (D plus 3), Suribachi had been surrounded except for a 400 yard gap on the west coast.

The following morning a patrol from Company E of the 28th Marines did discover a path up the mountain which they were able to ascend, and at 1037 that morning of D plus 4 (February 23) the American flag was hoisted on top of Mt. Suribachi. The remainder of the mountain was soon surrounded and mopping up began.

In the northern sector, CT 26 (with LT 2/27 still attached) continued its efforts to batter its way through the wall of fire that faced it. No progress was made, however, and by now (D plus 4), the Division had lost 2926 officers and men. A total of 1628 enemy dead had been counted and four prisoners had been taken.

To give additional support to CT 26, an extremely heavy preparation was laid down the next day, D plus 5 (February 24), by artillery, naval gunfire, and planes. In an attempt to knock out the enemy positions beyond Airfield No. 1 that had been holding up the advance, the tanks of all three Marine divisions were concentrated for a coordinated drive on that area. With this spearhead, CT 21 in the Fourth Division zone was able to come up abreast of CT 26 by noon. Then another barrage began; all available Marine artillery was massed on the same targets. (In addition, planes, rockets, and naval gunfire joined in the preparation.) Under cover of this, CT 26 drove slowly forward, still under heavy fire from Japs deeply entrenched in cave positions on the right flank. After such a heavy shelling, the continuation of Japanese resistance almost undiminished showed the skill with which the enemy's defenses had been prepared. His pillboxes were dug deep into the ground, often with several levels and interconnecting tunnels. When a Marine barrage fell on an enemy position, the Jap defenders merely retired to the depths of their emplace-

ment and waited out the storm. Then they remanned their weapons, and when the Marines advanced, the Japs poured out a hail of fire. If one position was assaulted, the enemy would move to another on the flank and open up with deadly surprise fire from there.

In spite of this unyielding resistance of the enemy's, CT 26 managed to claw out a gain of 500 yards on this day of D plus 5, February 24. (See map.) The massed artillery fires were proving their value, and their accuracy had been greatly increased now by observation posts that had been set up on newly won Mt. Suribachi. This area on and around the mountain was still being mopped up by CT 28. Over 1000 enemy fortifications and 600 Jap dead had been counted there, with another 200-300 of the enemy still active. (For instance, 122 Japs were killed by the 28th Marines as they attempted to infiltrate into the artillery positions very early in the morning of D plus 5.)

The next day was a quiet one for the Division. CT 26 remained in position waiting for the unit on its right flank to draw abreast. CT 27 was in Division Reserve now, while CT 28 had been placed in Corps Reserve.

On D plus 7 (February 26) after the usual preparatory barrage, the 26th Marines jumped off in the attack again. The terrain was generally unsuitable for tanks, although flame-thrower tanks were used with good results against some Japanese cave positions. Throughout the day, heavy artillery and mortar fire was received from the enemy on the high ground to the north. Counter-battery fire, using HE, time fire, and white phosphorous simultaneously, was successful in knocking out several of the Jap guns. By nightfall, the center units of CT 26 had advanced 500 yards ahead of the flank elements, so that the regimental line was echeloned to the rear on both sides. The Division's casualties had mounted by now (D plus 7) to 3518. Japanese losses to the Fifth Division totaled 2663 dead and 5 prisoners.

During the night, several hundred of the enemy were observed assembling near Hill 362A, but they were dispersed by a concentration of artillery fire.* At 0630, CT 27 (with LT 1/26 attached) relieved the 26th Marines in the line and resumed the attack with three battalions abreast. Progress was slow in face of fierce resistance, mutually-supporting caves and pillboxes, bad terrain and mines that hampered tanks, and heavy Jap mortar fire.

In the rear areas, things had improved considerably. The beaches and roads were now able to handle wheeled traffic, and supplies were moving up steadily. Snipers were being eliminated. (To date, 515 by-passed Japs had been killed by patrols behind the lines.) The reconstruction of Airfield No. 1 was under way, and during the afternoon (D plus 8, February 27), the first plane of VMO-5 landed on it.

When CT 27 began its assault on D plus 9, it was spearheaded by tanks, but it ran into a hornet's nest. "The attack of CT 27 was made against the backbone of the western flank of the enemy cross-island defensive position . . . These emplacements consisted of caves, reinforced concrete pillboxes, and blockhouses emplaced in vertical cliffs around the base of jagged rocky outcrops where excellent fields of fire commanded the all around approaches. The enemy put up a bitter defense making no withdrawal but leaving each man to be exterminated in his position or to be by-passed and converted into a sniper. In this area a much greater use was made of small arms than in any other position previously

* There were two hills named "362" in the zone of the Fifth Division. For purposes of clarity, the first one (in TA 216R) will be called "362A", and the more northerly one (in TA 235U) will be called "362B".

encountered. Firing from close ranges, sniper fire was extremely effective and our casualties among leaders of companies, platoons, and squads was heavy."*

The keystone in this defense line was Hill 362A. (See map.) The assault on it began about noon and ground slowly ahead through the maze of Jap fortifications. At 1545 the enemy counterattacked and was repulsed, although Marine losses were heavy. CT 27 was on the hill by 1700, but the Japs were still well dug in on the reverse slopes.

The night (D plus 9-10, February 28-March 1), the rear areas of the Division received a heavy shelling, and the Division ammunition dump was hit. The fire that resulted produced a spectacular pyrotechnic display and caused the loss of 25% of the Division's munitions before it was brought under control.

To complete the reduction of Hill 362A, a fresh regiment was committed the following morning. CT 28, which had been mopping up the Suribachi area while in Corps Reserve, was brought up to relieve the weary 27th Marines. With LT 3/26 attached, CT 28 began its assault. By 1100 LT 1/28 had secured the stubborn hill, and then it began blowing shut the multitudinous caves there and mopping up the area. Good progress was made on both flanks by the other battalions, and it was necessary to commit LT 3/26 to fill a gap that opened up on the right flank. The fierce fighting for Hill 362A had raised the Division's casualties to 4283, while Japanese losses in the Fifth Division zone now came to 3252 dead and 12 prisoners on D plus 10.

With one natural obstacle taken, the Fifth Division was immediately faced with a new one. Ahead of it loomed Nishi Ridge. (See map.) Another difficulty that arose now was the increasing width of the Division's front. The Third Division on the right had shifted the direction of its attack to the east, and as a result it became necessary for the Fifth Division to put additional battalions in the line. Accordingly, LT 1/26 and LT 2/26 were moved into the gap on the right flank (D plus 11, March 2). Thus all three landing teams of CT 26 were now in action on the right of the 28th Marines.

With these two regiments abreast, the Fifth Division pounded steadily against the enemy's defenses. On D plus 11 the ruins of the village of Nishi were overrun, and a Jap counterattack on the right flank was thrown back. The next objective was Hill 362B, which commanded all the surrounding area. (See map.) The terrain here was extremely rough and actually presented as much of an obstacle as the Japs did. In addition, the enemy was defending Hill 362B with extremely heavy fire. All of its approaches were mined, and armored bulldozers were used to clear routes and make new roads, so that tanks could be brought up in close support. CT 26 then moved in, and after savage hand-to-hand fighting it finally secured the hill on D plus 12 (March 3).

That night the Japs made a determined attempt to infiltrate the lines of CT 26. They failed and 97 of them were killed. The next day two successive groups of the enemy, each 200-300 strong, were seen forming up for an effort to retake Hill 362B. Mortar and artillery fire were placed on them and they were dispersed. The Division made no material gains this day of D plus 13, and by now its losses had reached 5511. Jap dead, however, totaled 4790 (plus 19 prisoners) in the Fifth Division zone alone.

After the long, grueling days of steady fighting and sudden death, with little sleep and hasty meals, the men of the assault battalions were nearing complete exhaustion. A day for rest and reorganization was ordered, therefore, on D plus 14 (March 5). Preparations were also made for the continuation of the attack the next day.

An intensive preparatory barrage was laid down the following morning (D plus 15) by all supporting arms, with the 13th Marines alone firing 6200 rounds. At 0800, the

* 5th Division Action Report, P. 23.

Division jumped off with all three regiments abreast. The "assault was bitterly contested by the Japs from prepared bunkers, pillboxes, and caves. Heavy rifle, machine gun, mortar fire, and white phosphorous shells poured into our troops attempting to advance from Hill 362 B to the north. The jagged rocks and broken country made close tank support impossible and greatly reduced the effectiveness of our artillery. It was once again a battle of Marine against Jap, with the Jap having all the advantages of cover, concealment, and fields of fire from prepared positions. Most of the heavy caliber enemy weapons to our front had been destroyed but the division was receiving sporadic heavy caliber fire from the northeast part of the island. A gain of 50 to 100 yards was made along the fronts of CT's 27 and 26 on the right and in the center of our zone of action. No material gain was made by CT 28 on the left. However, more progress was made than could be measured in yards as numerous enemy installations were destroyed or neutralized."*

The continued pressure on the enemy slowly began to bring results. On D plus 16 (March 7), the 28th Marines made substantial gains. By-passing many cave positions, it advanced 500 yards and seized Hill 215. (See map.) On the right flank CT 27 made only limited progress, although LT 2/27, after grenade duels and hand-to-hand fighting, did reach a position within sight of the shore line on the northeast coast of the island. The Division had lost 6043 officers and men so far (D plus 16), but the enemy had had 6489 killed by the Fifth Division.

To check the enemy's constant attempts at infiltration during the night, trip flares were set out, and they proved very effective in silhouetting Japs who approached the Marines lines under cover of darkness. On the night of D plus 16-17, for example, LT 1/26 repulsed an enemy patrol which had set off flares revealing its position.

When morning came, the Division began its attack once more. All three regiments were still abreast, with the main effort being made on the right by CT 27. The objective was a concentration of interconnecting caves and tunnels. The whole area was heavily mined, and the reverse sides of the rocky ledges were as strongly fortified as the forward slopes. In terrain of this nature, advances were painfully slow. It was the old familiar problem of assaulting each cave and pillbox individually, while being hit by flanking fire from a foe that was always unseen. One regiment estimated that it by-passed as many Japs as it killed. Supporting arms were severely handicapped by the rough ground, and the Division moved ahead only after each close-in fight had been won by small groups of riflemen using grenades and flamethrowers.** Finally, on D plus 18 (March 9), the strong-point was taken and mopping up of the area began. The Division had now suffered 6544 casualties, while 7605 of the enemy had been killed.

When the attack was continued the next day, two new terrain features rapidly came to the attention of the Division. Across its front for 700 yards ran a deep gorge, and beyond that lay a high ridge that extended southeast from Kitano Point. Heavy enemy fire was being received from both these areas. On D plus 20 (March 11), therefore, an intense preparation was fired with 12 battalions of artillery pouring down 10,000 rounds in front of the Fifth Division. Behind this barrage, CT 27 and CT 28 began their attack. The fighting was at such close ranges that it was impossible to use further artillery or air support. All entrances to the gorge were thoroughly covered by enemy fire. Concealed Jap emplacements were opening fire at point blank range.*** Nevertheless, CT 28 fought its

* 5th Division Action Report, P. 25.

** RCT 27, however, had a 75mm pack howitzer moved up to its front lines on D plus 17 in order to bring direct fire to bear on the caves and pillboxes that were holding up its advance.

*** As a result, this piece of ground soon became known to the men of the Fifth Division as "Bloody Gorge."

way nearly up to the rim of the gorge. On the right, CT 27 advanced 200 yards, storming cave after cave as it went.

By now, the Jap defenders were being steadily compressed into a smaller and smaller portion of the northern tip of the island. As a result, their nightly efforts to break through the Division's lines grew stronger and more frequent. On the night of D plus 20-21 a concentration of Japs forming up for a counterattack was smashed by Marine artillery fire, and numerous attempts at infiltration were also dealt with. Another outcome of this shrinking of the territory held by the enemy had become apparent by D plus 21. "There was no shortage of enemy manpower, weapons, or ammunition in the area the Japs had remaining for defense; the enemy was definitely crowding our lines and maintaining close contact at all points in order to minimize or escape our air and artillery fire."* Nevertheless, air strikes were called for in an attempt to knock out some of the concrete block-houses in the Fifth Division's zone.

It was clear that the Division was now up against the enemy's final defensive line. CT 28 on the left flank had reached the edge of the gorge. Any attempt to move forward here ran into a stonewall defense and brought deadly fire from every side. It was decided, therefore, to make the main effort of the Division on the right flank where the terrain corridors could be utilized to envelop the southern (left) flank of the enemy in the gorge and to surround his remaining forces. Accordingly, CT 27 on the right began a tank-led assault on D plus 21 (March 12). It advanced slowly fighting for every inch of ground. It was the same the next day. In an effort to knock out some of the stubborn Jap positions, 7.2 inch rockets on launchers were pulled up to the front lines by armored tractors and fired. Then flame thrower tanks worked over the enemy emplacements, burning them out one by one.**

The final drive to break the enemy's line was launched on D plus 23 (March 14). CT 26 was committed in the center of the Division's zone. An air strike was used to burn out one strongpoint with a huge blazing fire. The terrific pressure on the Japs began to tell now. The daily pounding they had taken was too much to bear; their line had to give, and it did. CT 27 broke through on the right for a gain of 600 yards. (See map.) A total of 8789 Japs had now been killed by the Fifth Division, while 35 had been taken prisoner. However, CT 27 reported that its "men were exhausted and badly in need of rest," and the Division's casualties had jumped to 7792.

In spite of their reduced strength and overwhelming weariness, the three regiments repulsed the usual nightly infiltration attempts and moved out in the attack again the next morning (D plus 24). The enemy had no heavy caliber artillery left to him now, but the terrain was ideal for his defensive tactics, and every position was fanatically defended with intense small arms fire delivered at point blank range. CT 26 and CT 27 made only small gains during the day, but the encirclement of the enemy was now well under way: the final Jap pocket had begun to take shape. (See map.)

CT 27 was completely worn out by this time, and on D plus 25 (March 16) it reverted to Division Reserve. Simultaneously, the boundary line between the Third and Fifth Divisions was changed, and the 27th's zone of action was taken over by units of the Third Division. CT 26 (with LT 3/28 attached) continued the Fifth Division's drive to squeeze the Japs into one small pocket. From its positions along the southwest rim of the gorge, CT 28 supported the advance of the 26th Marines by fire. At the end of the day the Third Division

* Fifth Division War Diary for March, 1945.

** Speaking of these flame thrower tanks, the Fifth Division Action Report says: "This was the one weapon that caused the Japs to leave their caves and rock crevices and run."

on the right had reached the northern tip of the island, and the Fifth Division was nearly there. (See map.) The last die-hard Japs were surrounded. At 1800 that day of March 16, the Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps, declared that organized resistance had ceased. After 26 days and nights of the bitterest kind of fighting, Iwo was pronounced "secure," except for one minor area holding out at the north end.

This exception loomed rather large in the eyes of the men of the Fifth Division. The pocket was little, but it was also deadly. On D plus 25 when the announcement was made that organized resistance had ended, the Fifth Division's combat efficiency had fallen to 30%. It had lost 8162 officers and men, and it had accounted for 9512 Jap dead and taken 42 prisoners.

The reduction of the enemy's final position was begun on D plus 26 (March 17) by CT 26 and CT 28. An unsuccessful effort was made to persuade Colonel Ikeda to surrender his troops in the pocket, and then CT 26 started its attack. By 1232 LT 1/26 had reached the ocean at Kitano Point, so the 26th swung around to continue its advance in a south-westerly direction. Now it was closing in on the rear of the Japs in the gorge who had been holding up CT 28. (See map.) By the end of the day, the two regiments were facing each other across the gorge, and the remainder of the Japs were trapped between them. With the fighting reduced to such a small area, it was no longer possible to use any artillery fire in support, so the 13th Marines was secured and given its reembarkation orders.

The situation confronting the assault battalions now is best described in the words of the Division's official report:

"The Japs were now cornered in a pocket of resistance approximately 200-500 yards wide and 700 yards long. This was a rocky gorge for the most part with precipitous sides. Scattered through this gorge there was a series of jagged rocky outcrops which were in effect minor gorges and constituted major obstacles to all types of movement and were ideally suited to the enemy type of defense. All suitable routes into the main gorge were swept by heavy and accurate fire from machine guns and rifles coming from cave positions in the cliffs and in the outcrops.

"The Japs chose to defend to the last in this area without making any last futile attacks. Enemy defenses in this area were built around their strongly manned cave positions many of which were interconnected by subterranean passages. They gave no ground and used their remaining weapons to full advantage. Because of the size of the pocket and the very broken nature of the ground, supporting fire of our artillery could not be used and tank support was extremely difficult. It was necessary to use tank dozers and armored TD-14's and TD-18's* to construct routes of approach for the tanks before they could be brought into supporting positions.

"Our own losses at this time had been extremely heavy. The average battalion which landed with 36 officers and 885 enlisted, now had about 16 officers and 300 enlisted from the original battalion. Most of the company commanders, platoon leaders, and squad leaders had become casualties and many platoons were commanded by Corporals or PFC's. Assault squads were depleted.

"Since the division had been in the line since D-day and it had been practically impossible to rest the troops, they were extremely tired. In most cases, the battalions out of the line had to be held in local reserve in a position of readiness. During these brief periods when they were not actually engaged, these battalions found it necessary to hold schools

* Author's note: These were types of heavy tractors used for bulldozing.

to fit the replacements into their units and to give them instructions as the majority of them were not prepared for the type of fighting employed in this operation.

"The plan for attacking the gorge called for one regiment to hold the southern rim along the steep vertical cliff while another regiment worked in from the north and east. Because of the strength of the units and the condition of the troops, assigned zones of action were relatively narrow.

"The battle was one of attrition against enemy positions. Our advance into the east end of the gorge was measured in yards as each cave had to be sealed off before our troops could advance and this was slow. Flame throwing tanks were used extensively. Each night small enemy groups attempted to infiltrate our lines and were successful on several occasions in reaching company CP areas where they were killed without inflicting much damage."

By D plus 28 (March 19), Jap resistance had become centered around a huge concrete blockhouse dug into the side of a knoll in the gorge. (See map.) This structure was covered by fire from every direction, and when the Marines finally did work their way up to it, they found that 40 pound shaped charges and tank fire had practically no effect on it. It was decided, therefore, to knock out the surrounding cave positions that guarded the approaches to the blockhouse. In terrain as broken and rough as it was in "Bloody Gorge," it was necessary to attack caves such as these one by one. First an armored bulldozer would cut a route of approach, then a flame thrower tank would saturate the cave entrance with fire, and finally an assault squad would blow the mouth shut with demolition charges.

When the Jap defenses surrounding the blockhouse had been knocked out in this way, the position was by-passed. This same day of D plus 28, LT 3/27 worked its way into the southeastern end of the gorge and began to push slowly toward the sea. (The rest of CT 27 remained in Division Reserve.) On the following day, when renewed attacks on the blockhouse with shaped charges and point blank fire produced no results, tank dozers were brought up and they closed off some of its air vents and a door on the north side.*

Throughout this period, enemy resistance continued bitter. Many Japs were armed with M-1 rifles and were fighting in Marine uniforms now. Few of them could be seen, but their fire was deadly accurate at the close ranges that characterized all fighting in the gorge. Marine tanks could not be brought into action much of the time because of the impassable ground. If a route of approach for them was bulldozed, the enemy would often infiltrate and plant mines along it during the night.

Behind the lines, mopping up of snipers was continuing. On D plus 30 (March 21) the Fifth Division Cemetery was dedicated by General Rockey at a memorial service. At the beaches the 13th Marines had reembarked by now, and CT 27 was in the process of loading aboard its ships.

Meanwhile, CT 26 (with LT 3/28 and LT 3/27 attached) was attacking down the length of the gorge toward the sea, while CT 28 continued to hold its position along the southwest rim, where the main enemy resistance was now centered (D plus 31, March 22).

The attack was continued the next day by CT 26 and CT 28, and in the late afternoon the enemy's organized resistance seemed to be breaking. The pocket had been reduced by now to a triangular area extending 200 yards along the beach and 250 yards inland.

* This blockhouse was completely destroyed later only when 5 separate charges of high explosive, totaling 8500 pounds, were set off on it.

Since it was obvious that the fighting was nearly over at last, most of CT 26 was withdrawn from action and moved to the beaches on D plus 33 (March 24) to begin reembarkation. The 27th Marines had finished loading the day before. At the northern tip of Iwo CT 28, with LT 3/26 attached, was pounding the final pocket in a drive to finish off the remaining Jap defenders. By 1800 only one small area 50 yards square remained to be taken.

On D plus 34 (March 25), the final drive to the sea was begun by LT 3/28 and LT 2/28. At 1045 they reached the beach. The pocket had been eliminated, and the long battle was over.

However, one last flare-up of resistance occurred early the next morning (D plus 35). Approximately 250 Japs suddenly launched a surprise attack in the area west of Airfield No. 2. The 5th Pioneer Battalion happened to be directly in the path of the enemy, and it bore the brunt of the attack (although several Army and Navy units were also engaged). By 0830 the Jap force had been annihilated, with 196 dead counted in the Pioneer's zone.

That was the last action of the Fifth Marine Division on Iwo Jima. At 0800, March 26, after 36 days of continuous combat, it turned over its zone to the Third Division, and then CT 28 and LT 3/26 proceeded aboard ship. The following day, D plus 36, the Division completed its reembarkation and departed from Iwo Jima, bound once more for Hawaii.*

The bitter struggle for Iwo had been a costly one for the Fifth Division. The campaign had taken a toll of 8719 officers and men. Of these, 2482 had been killed in action or died of their wounds.** But the Division had done an outstanding job in its first battle. It had captured over half of Iwo, including the vital objective of Mt. Suribachi. It had killed 11,314 Japs and taken 62 prisoners. The small number of prisoners was a good indication of the fierceness of the fighting and the bitterness of the enemy's defense. The Commanding General, V Amphibious Corps, commented: "The Fifth Marine Division carried the attack to the enemy with determination and effectiveness throughout the Iwo Jima operation in spite of heavy casualties in its infantry units."

The price had been high, but the island was worth it. From the airfields that had been won by the heroism and sacrifices of the men of the Third, Fourth and Fifth Marine Divisions, American fighter planes would soon be taking off for Tokyo. Crippled B-29's returning from Japan would have a friendly base on which to land. The Fifth Marine Division had done much to make this possible.

* For an illustration of the feelings of the people of Hawaii about the return of the 5th Division, see Appendix "E".

** A letter from General Rockey to the Commandant on 7 June, 1945, gives the following breakdown of the casualties:

KIA & DOW		WIA		MIA		Total	
Off.	Enl.	Off.	Enl.	Off.	Enl.	Off.	Enl.
104	2378	250	5968	2	17	356	8363

Of the battle casualties, 70% occurred in the infantry regiments (including their replacements). Some of the rifle battalions suffered losses of over 100%.

APPENDICES

APPENDICES

APPENDIX "A"

Command and Staff Personnel

NAME	ASSUMED COMMAND	RELINQUISHED COMMAND	NEW ASSIGNMENT
Commanding Generals			
Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Bourke	21 Jan 44	3 Feb 44	Asst. Div. Comdr.
Maj. Gen. Keller E. Rockey	4 Feb 44	24 Jun 45	III Phib Corps
Maj. Gen. Thomas A. Bourke	25 Jun 45		
Assistant Division Commanders			
Brig. Gen. Thomas A. Bourke	4 Feb 44	11 Apr 44	V Phib Corps
Brig. Gen. Leo. D. Hermle	24 Apr 44	15 Jun 45	CINCPOA
Brig. Gen. Ray A. Robinson	16 Jun 45		
The Division Staff: Chief of Staff			
Col. William A. Worton	7 Feb 44	18 Sep 44	3rd Mar. Div.
Lt. Col. James F. Shaw, Jr.	18 Sep 44	10 Oct 44	D-3
Col. Ray A. Robinson	10 Oct 44	15 Jun 45	Asst. Div. Comdr.
Col. Benjamin W. Gally	16 Jun 45	4 Jul 45	III Phib Corps
Col. Clarence R. Wallace	5 Jul 45		
D-1			
Maj. Lawrence A. Theodore	4 Jan 44	5 Feb 44	Div. Adjutant
Col. Lee H. Brown	5 Feb 44	11 Sep 44	HQ, FMF, Pac
Maj. Lawrence A. Theodore	11 Sep 44	18 Oct 44	Div. Adjutant
Col. John W. Beckett	18 Oct 44	25 Jun 45	HQ, FMF, Pac
Lt. Col. Warner T. Bigger	25 Jun 45		
D-2			
Lt. Col. George A. Roll	6 Jan 44		
D-3			
Lt. Col. James F. Shaw, Jr.	4 Jan 44	15 May 45	2nd Mar. Div.
Lt. Col. Frederick R. Dowsett	15 May 45		
D-4			
Col. Randolph McC. Pate	1 Jan 44	10 Sep 44	HQ, FMF, Pac
Lt. Col. Earl S. Piper	10 Sep 44	1 Jul 45	III Phib Corps
Lt. Col. Frederick A. Stevens	2 Jul 45		
Regimental Commanders: 13th Marines			
Col. James D. Waller	10 Jan 44		
16th Marines			
Lt. Col. Clifford H. Shuey	15 Dec 43	17 Feb 44	Exec. Officer
Col. Benjamin W. Gally	18 Feb 44	25 May 44	5th Service Bn.
26th Marines			
Lt. Col. Chester B. Graham	10 Jan 44		
27th Marines			
Col. Thomas A. Wornham	10 Jan 44		
28th Marines			
Lt. Col. Chandler W. Johnson	8 Feb 44	10 Feb 44	CO, 2nd Bn.
Lt. Col. Charles E. Shepard	11 Feb 44	11 Feb 44	CO, 3rd Bn.
Col. Harry B. Liversedge	11 Feb 44		

Notes: (1) In March 1945, the designating letter for a division staff officer was changed from "D" to "G."

(2) For some time, the Fifth Division's staff planning officer was called the "D-5."

Sources: (1) Fifth Division Muster Rolls.

(2) Fifth Division War Diaries.

(3) Headquarters Memorandums.

APPENDIX "B"

(1) ACTIVATION OF THE DIVISION'S UNIT:*

a. Camp Lejeune:

16th Marines (minus 2nd Battalion) 28 January 1944
5th Medical Bn (minus H&S Co, A Co) 28 January 1944
2nd Battalion, 13th Marines 16 October 1943
Co B, Co C, 5th Motor Transport Bn 19 January 1944

b. San Diego Area:

Headquarters Battalion 1 December 1943
5th Tank Battalion (minus Company D) 3 January 1944
5th Service Battalion 7 February 1944
5th Motor Transport Bn (minus Co B, Co C) 1 February 1944
H&S Co and Co A, 5th Medical Bn 1 & 6 February 1944
13th Marines (minus 2nd Battalion) 10 January 1944
2nd Battalion, 16th Marines 8 February 1944
26th Marines 10 January 1944
27th Marines 10 January 1944
28th Marines

c. The Fifth Division was activated on 21 January 1944.** (Although Headquarters Battalion was organized on 1 December 1943.)

d. On 25 May 1944 the 16th Marines was disbanded, and that same day the 5th Engineer Bn and 5th Pioneer Bn were activated.

(2) COMPONENT UNITS (as of August 1945):

Headquarters Battalion including 5th Assault Signal Company

5th Service Battalion

5th Medical Battalion

5th Motor Transport Battalion

5th Amphibian Truck Company

5th Tank Battalion

116th Naval Construction Battalion

5th Pioneer Battalion

5th Engineer Battalion

13th Marines

26th Marines

27th Marines

28th Marines

Temporarily Attached:

6th Laundry Platoon

3rd Provisional Rocket Detachment

* This data is taken from a letter written by the Commandant to the Commanding General, Camp Lejeune, and the Commanding General, FMF, San Diego Area, on 20 January 1944.

** Letter from the Commanding General, 5th MarDiv to the Commandant on 1 February 1944.

APPENDIX "C"

**TASK ORGANIZATION OF THE 5TH MARINE DIVISION
AT IWO JIMA**

1. **CT-27** (Col. WORNHAM)
 - 27th Marines
 - B Co, 5th Engr Bn (less Dets)
 - 5th Tk Bn (less C Co)
 - B Co, 5th Med Bn
 - 2nd Plat, 5th MP Co
 - 1st Sec, 6th Mar War Dog Plat
 - Det 5th JASCO
 - Det 3rd Prov Rocket Det

2. **CT-28 (less LT-328)** (Col. LIVERSEDGE)
 - 28th Marines (less 3rd Bn)
 - C Co, 5th Engr Bn (less 3rd Plat and Dets)
 - C Co, 5th Tk Bn
 - C Co, 5th Med Bn
 - 2nd Plat, 5th MP Co
 - 2nd Sec, 6th Mar War Dog Plat
 - Det 5th JASCO
 - Det 3rd Prov Rocket Det

3. **ARTILLERY GROUP** (Col. WALLER)
 - 13th Marines
 - 5th Marine Amphib Truck Co
 - 471st Amphib Truck Co
 - VMO-5

4. **ARMORED AMPHIBIAN GROUP** (Maj. BEVANS)
 - C and D Co's, 2nd Armd Amphib Bn
 - Hq Det, 2nd Armd Amphib Bn

5. **AMPHIBIAN TRACTOR GROUP** (LtCol. STEFAN)
 - 3rd Amphib Trac Bn
 - 11th Amphib Trac Bn

6. **SUPPORT GROUP** (Maj. AYRAULT)
 - 5th Hq Co
 - 5th Sig Co
 - 5th Recon Co
 - 5th MP Co (less 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, and 5th Plats)
 - Det Sig Bn, V Phib Corps
 - JICPOA Int Team

APPENDIX "C" (Cont'd)

6th Mar War Dog Plat (less 1st and 2nd Secs)

5th JASCO (less Dets)

Det 726th SAW Co

7. 5TH SHORE PARTY REGIMENT

(Col. GALLY)

5th Plon Bn

31st NCB

Det 5th Engr Bn

Div Band

592nd Port Co

Det 8th Field Depot

Det 5th MT Bn

Det 5th Serv Bn

Det 5th JASCO

4th and 5th Plats, 5th MP Co

27th Replacement Bn

31st Replacement Bn

8. SERVICE GROUP

(LtCol. SHUEY)

H&S Co, 5th Engr Bn (less Dets)

5th Med Bn (less A, B, and C Co's)

5th MT Bn (less Dets)

5th Serv Bn (less Dets)

9. DIVISION RESERVE

LT-328:

(LtCol. SHEPARD)

3rd Bn, 28th Marines

3rd Plat, C Co, 5th Engr Bn

Det 5th JASCO

LT-126:

(LtCol. POLLOCK)

1st Bn, 26th Marines

1st Plat, C Co, 5th Engr Bn

Det 5th JASCO

SUMMARY OF ATTACHED UNITS REINFORCING THE DIVISION

a. 2nd Armd Amph Bn (less Dets)

b. 3rd Amph Trac Bn

c. 11th Amph Trac Bn

d. 5th JASCO

e. VMO-5

f. 6th Mar War Dog Plat

g. 31st NCB

h. 6th Sec, 726th SAW Co (Army)

i. 471st Amph Truck Co (Army)

j. 592nd Port Co (Army)

k. Det, Sig Bn, VAC

l. 3rd Plat, 2nd Laundry Co

APPENDIX "D"

1944			
31 January	5,446	30 November	17,278
29 February	9,478	31 December	17,267
31 March	17,275	1945	
30 April	17,177	31 January	17,214
31 May	17,573	28 February	17,201
30 June	18,187	31 March	14,478
31 July	12,817	30 April	15,702
31 August	18,637	31 May	17,499
30 September	17,125	30 June	17,268
31 October	17,349	31 July	17,066
		31 August	17,681

Note: On 31 July 1944, the 5th Division was split into an Advance Echelon and a Rear Echelon.
 Sources: (1) Monthly Strength Reports of 5th Marine Division.
 (2) War Diaries of 5th Marine Division.

APPENDIX "E"

The following resolution was adopted by the Senate of the Legislature of the Territory of Hawaii on 20 April 1945:

"WHEREAS, in the long and glorious history of the United States Marine Corps one epic scene of valor succeeds another; and

WHEREAS, in all that glorious history, the Marines have never fought with greater valor or contempt for their own lives and safety than in the conquest of Iwo Jima; and

WHEREAS, not merely their fabulous courage and fortitude, but the immense importance of their conquest to the speedy victory over the enemy, commands the respect and gratitude of the American people; and

WHEREAS, the Fifth Division of the United States Marine Corps are old friends of the people of the Territory and particularly of the island of Hawaii, and have now returned to rest and recuperate on Hawaii; now therefore

BE IT RESOLVED by the Senate of the Twenty-Third Session of the Legislature of the Territory of Hawaii that the heartfelt welcome of the Senate and of the people of Hawaii be extended to the officers and men of the Fifth Division of the United States Marine Corps upon their return to the island of Hawaii after their magnificent part in the conquest of Iwo Jima; and

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that copies of this Resolution be sent to Major General Keller E. Rockey, the commanding officer of said Fifth Division, to General Alexander A. Vandegrift, United States Marines Corps, to Admiral of the Fleet Chester W. Nimitz, and to the Honorable Secretary of the Navy."