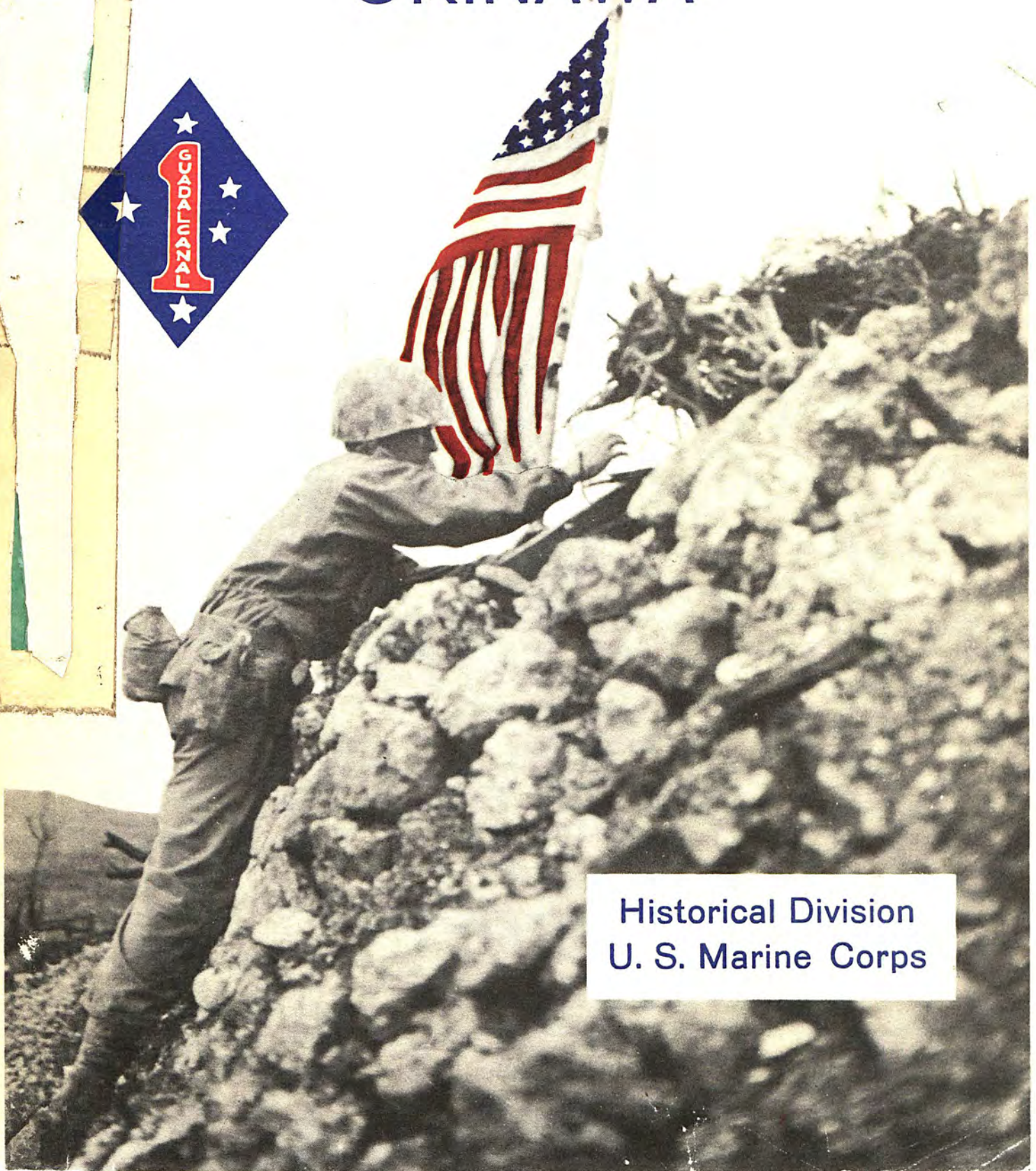


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# THE FIRST MARINE DIVISION ON OKINAWA

1 April - 30 June  
1945



*Prepared by*

James R. Stockman, Capt., USMC

HISTORICAL DIVISION

HEADQUARTERS, U. S. MARINE CORPS

MARINE CORPS  
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# **PART I**

## **FOREWORD**

This monograph is one of a series concerning important engagements of the Marine Corps in World War II. Within certain limitations it is a factual account based on the records, special action reports, war diaries, journals, etc., of the various units of the 1st Marine Division. In addition, much valuable information was gained through interviews of company officers and enlisted men by a team from the Historical Division that was closely associated with 1st Marine Division units during the Okinawa operation.

In its present form this monograph is tentative and it is realized that certain inaccuracies are likely to appear; that much of the action is treated too briefly. Those readers of this monograph who were present during the Okinawa campaign, and have certain knowledge of events, are urged to communicate to the Historical Division all changes, additions, and other constructive criticism that will make this monograph more accurate and detailed when revision is undertaken. Comments should be forwarded within 60 days.

It is hoped that a revised version, with more maps and illustrations, may be published in a more permanent form sometime in the near future.

Howard N. Kenyon  
Colonel, USMC  
Officer-in-Charge  
Historical Division

## THE 1ST MARINE DIVISION ON OKINAWA

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## INTRODUCTION

The general purpose of this monograph is to set forth in some detail an account of the activities of the 1st Marine Division in the Okinawa Operation. In preparing such a work, the writer must choose a level for detail, an arbitrary thing, dependent upon the amount and reliability of primary and secondary sources of pertinent historical data for an operation. Ordinarily this data consists of such secondary sources of information as special action reports and war diaries; seldom is there to be found good primary sources, i.e. first hand, eyewitness reports.

Prior to the Okinawa Operation, Colonel John Potts of the Historical Division, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps, arranged to send out historical teams to cover the work of the III Amphibious Corps and the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions on Okinawa. As it developed, Major Almet Jenks of the Historical Division covered the III Amphibious Corps, Captain Phillips D. Carleton worked with the 6th Marine Division, and Sergeants Kenneth Shutts and Paul Trilling attached themselves to the 1st Marine Division to gain first-hand knowledge of transpiring events. The writer of this monograph is indebted to Shutts and Trilling for their excellent work in interviewing company officers and enlisted men during the operation.

This monograph is concerned largely with the actual fighting done by the regiments of the 1st Marine Division. Scant space is devoted to the preparation for the operation, the task organization, the movement to the objective, and the original landings on 1 April 1945. If a sense of proportion is to be maintained, all these are of lesser importance than the division's activities from the time it was assigned to the XXIV Corps until the southern coast was reached.

Rather than follow the movements and activities of the entire division on a day-by-day basis, the writer chose to follow the regiments individually as each one attacked enemy defenses mounted on a given terrain feature or features. This is done to prevent a breakdown in coherence, the destruction of unity, and a certain loss in interest. Tactically speaking, southern Okinawa was a series of problems based on prominent terrain features. The entire operation consisted of a number of small battles, differing in amount of time consumed, but all based upon the enemy's defense of a given piece of ground.

Because it is impossible to be fair to all participants this monograph does not deal in personalities. Some individuals stood out head and shoulders above the rest, but if the writer follows this line he will soon find himself limited to the small number of people about whom he has certain knowledge; hundreds of others, just as deserving, will be left out. Suffice it to say, the Tenth Army was commanded by Lieutenant General Simon Bolivar Buckner. Commanding the III Amphibious Corps was Lieutenant General Roy S. Geiger and Major General Pedro Del Valle had the 1st Marine Division. Beyond these, for all intents and purposes, the other officers were Regimental Commanders, Staff Officers, Battalion Commanders, Company Commanders, etc.

This is primarily a ground force account; specifically it is an account of the three infantry regiments of the 1st Marine Division. Little is said, therefore, about other units or echelons. It is felt that these are discussed elsewhere and to include them all in one monograph, with the same space devoted proportionately, would result in the work becoming too bulky and unwieldy. It is not assumed that their work was less important.

To illustrate this monograph, thirty-two maps or sketches are used. Part of these were taken directly from the maps of the 1st Marine Division's Special Action Report. Most of the remainder are hasty sketches drawn by the author and are intended only as an aid to the reader.

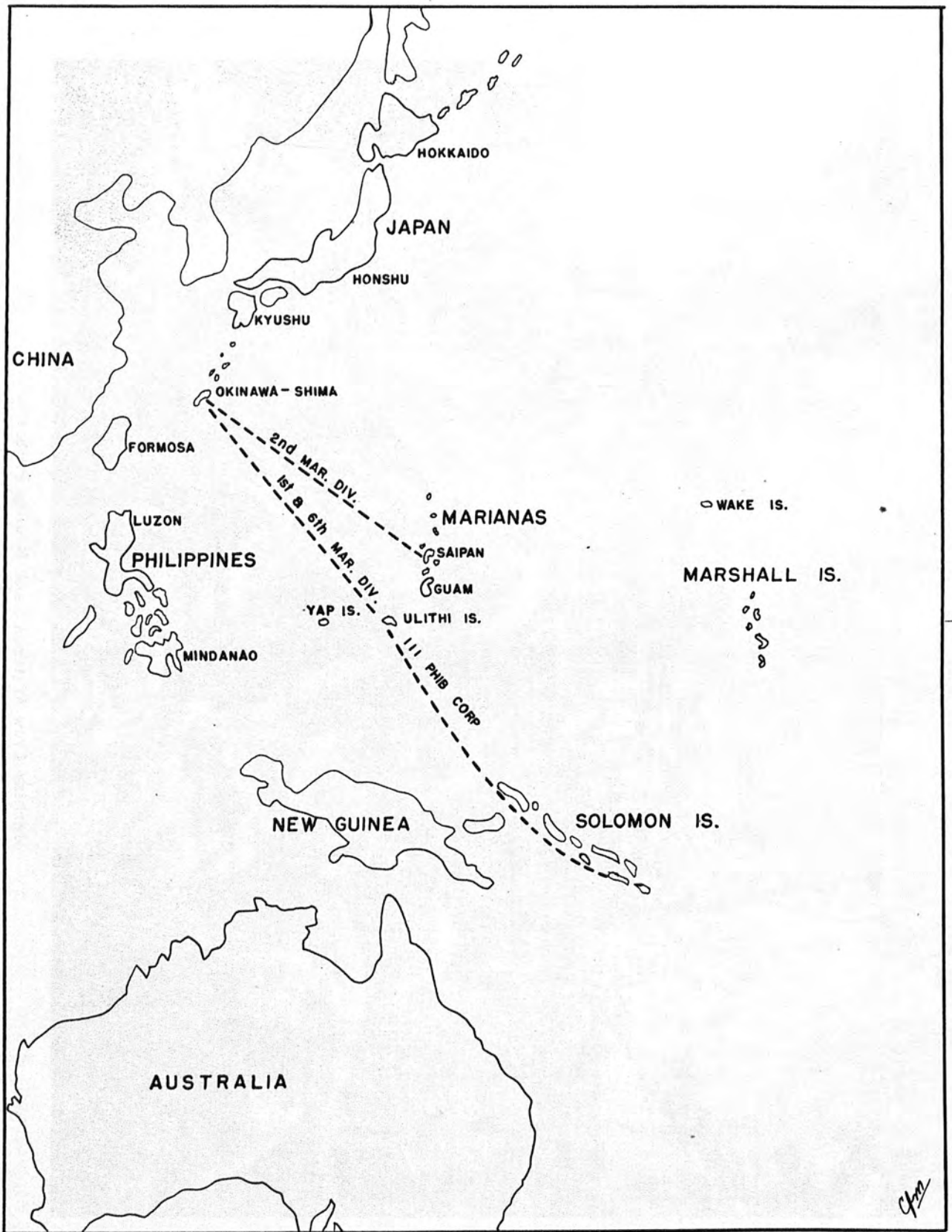


It is realized that certain inaccuracies will appear. Since the action reports of battalions for a given day sometimes fail to agree with that of their regiment, and frequently division, it is left to the writer to inquire, if possible, of some officer present on the particular occasion as to exactly what happened. When this is not possible, the answer may be found in company reports, the written interviews prepared in the field by the historical team. Action reports, prepared hurriedly days after the operation is over, do not tend to depict clearly the action as it really happened.

## **PART II**



**Machine Crew Watches Tank Reduce Pillbox**



MAP NO. 1  
OVERLAY

MAP OF THE PACIFIC

## 1. FROM THE RUSSELLS TO MACHINATO

After an arduous campaign in the Southern Palaus, the 1st Marine Division began to return to its base camp at Pavuvu, Russell Islands, during October, 1944, and in early November was ready to start training for its next—and last—campaign for World War II. Peleliu had been a costly operation (5,931 Marine casualties, not to mention equipment, etc.) and the division was faced with the problem of preparing in four months for the biggest combined Army-Marine operation ever attempted in the Pacific. While casualties on Peleliu had cost about one-third of the division's strength, it was to lose even more of its veterans upon returning to the Russell Islands. Some of the officers and men had participated in the original landings on Guadalcanal on 7 August 1942 and it was time for them to be sent home for rehabilitation.

In the division were 246 officers and 5,600 enlisted men who had served overseas nearly thirty months; they had seen action at Guadalcanal, Cape Gloucester, and Peleliu. All of the enlisted men except fifty were sent home, but replacements for the officers were not available. Consequently, the officers were either flown to their homes in the United States for a 30-day leave and then returned to their old outfits, or if they chose, they could take their leave in New Zealand or Australia. The fifty enlisted men mentioned before held key positions and elected to take leaves in Australia rather than be sent home.

In order to bring the division up to strength, it was necessary to absorb over 8,000 replacements, place them properly and train them—all in four short months! That this was done in an efficient manner was proved by the accomplishments of the division during the fight on Okinawa.

The Russell Islands offered little in the way of suitable training areas. It was necessary to send the artillery and the regimental combat teams over to Guadalcanal for large scale field maneuvers. Basic training, small unit problems and specialized schools were held at Pavuvu. After the jungle fighting on Guadalcanal in 1942 and Cape Gloucester in 1943, and the limited space for maneuver offered on Peleliu, special emphasis was placed, all during training, on the type of warfare to be faced in a large scale operation on a large island. Okinawa was a relatively large land mass with extensive (if poor) road nets, cities and villages and large numbers of enemy civilians.

On 1 March the 1st Marine Division embarked for rehearsals off Tassafaronga, Guadalcanal, in the British Solomon Islands. Next day preliminary maneuvers were held with emphasis on debarkation and ship-to-shore drills. Simulated naval gunfire and air support were included on 3 March when assault units went ashore. Maneuvers ashore were limited so that all the time could be devoted to practice for the ship-to-shore movement. On 6 March a full scale dress rehearsal was staged when all units, except the Division Reserve (1st Marines), were landed. That same afternoon, all units, except the 1st Marines, returned to the Russells. Next day the 1st Marines conducted brief landing exercises and then it too returned to its base camp. On 12 March the Northern Tractor Flotilla departed for Ulithi. The remainder of Transport Squadron 18 remained in the Russells until 15 March.

At 0600, 15 March 1945, TransRon 18 departed the Russells\* for Ulithi in the Western Carolines. On 21 March the convoy anchored at Ulithi and remained there until 27 March when it left for Okinawa. While at Ulithi, troops were sent ashore for conditioning and recreation. Aboard the various flagships conferences were held.

\*See Map No. 1

Comprising the III Amphibious Corps were the 1st, 2nd, and 6th Marine Divisions. Of these three, the 1st and 6th were chosen by Corps to make the assault landings on Okinawa on Love Day, 1 April 1945.<sup>1</sup> With the 6th Marine Division on its left, the 1st Marine Division, according to the III Amphibious Corps' plan, was to land alongside the left element of the XXIV Corps on the Hagushi beaches. In the sector of III Amphibious Corps was Yontan Airfield and it lay in the zone of action of the 6th Marine Division; as soon as the airfield was captured, the 1st Marine Division was to make the Corps' main effort on the right, coordinating its advance with that of the XXIV Corps, in an effort to push across the central part of the island as quickly as possible.

Dawn of 1 April 1945—Love Day—found the American invasion forces standing off the west coast of Okinawa.\*\* At 0510, Transport Squadron 18, with the 1st Marine Division embarked, reached its assigned area and began preparations to launch the assault troops. The weather was ideal with calm seas, a moderate breeze and rapidly clearing visibility. From 0530 on, the ships and planes pounded the landing beaches. Early in the morning there were scattered enemy air attacks, but most of the raiding aircraft were either intercepted by carrier aircraft or knocked down by ships anti-aircraft fire.

Since the enemy did not elect to oppose the landing, there was nothing to upset the carefully studied schedules of the landing craft.<sup>2</sup> H-hour had been set at 0830 and within nine minutes both of the division's regimental assault teams, the 5th Marines and the 7th Marines, had their assault waves ashore on the twenty-four hundred foot division beach. The offshore reef caused the troops little or no difficulty; potholes in the reef did cause some vehicles to be lost. The advance inland was rapid. The 7th Marines on the left of the divisions zone of action was past the village of Sobe by 0940. On the right the XXIV Corps was advancing rapidly and on the left the 6th Marine Division was approaching Yontan airfield.

Only a few scattered Japanese remained in the area and these were taken care of quickly. The Division Commander came ashore at 1630 and ordered his combat teams to halt their advance, establish a defensive line for the night and carry out extensive patrolling to the front.\*\*\* During the day part of the division's artillery and tanks got ashore and were now available. The 1st Marines, in reserve for the division, were ordered ashore before noon when it was seen that our troops were advancing rapidly.

With nightfall came time for reflection on the day's activities. The men of the 1st Marine Division could hardly believe their luck. After being prepared for the usual type of Japanese resistance on the beach they had found virtually no opposition and their advance had been limited only by their own ability to advance. There was nothing about the picture of Love-Day that remotely suggested the usual Marine landing. The initial elation felt by the men did not keep them from preparing for enemy action that night. Japanese doctrine had always dictated that a counterblow be struck the invader before his beachhead was enlarged or secured. This time, however, the enemy did not act in his accustomed fashion. Within four days, the 1st Marine Division was to reach the east coast, cutting the island into two parts, and would still be looking for the enemy. With the exception of a few pockets, there was no enemy force, worthy of the name, in central Okinawa. Colonel Udo with a force of 2-3000 men was waiting for the 6th Marine Division up north on Motobu Peninsula. The 32d Japanese Army was waiting for the XXIV Corps of the Tenth Army down south in the high hills around Shuri.

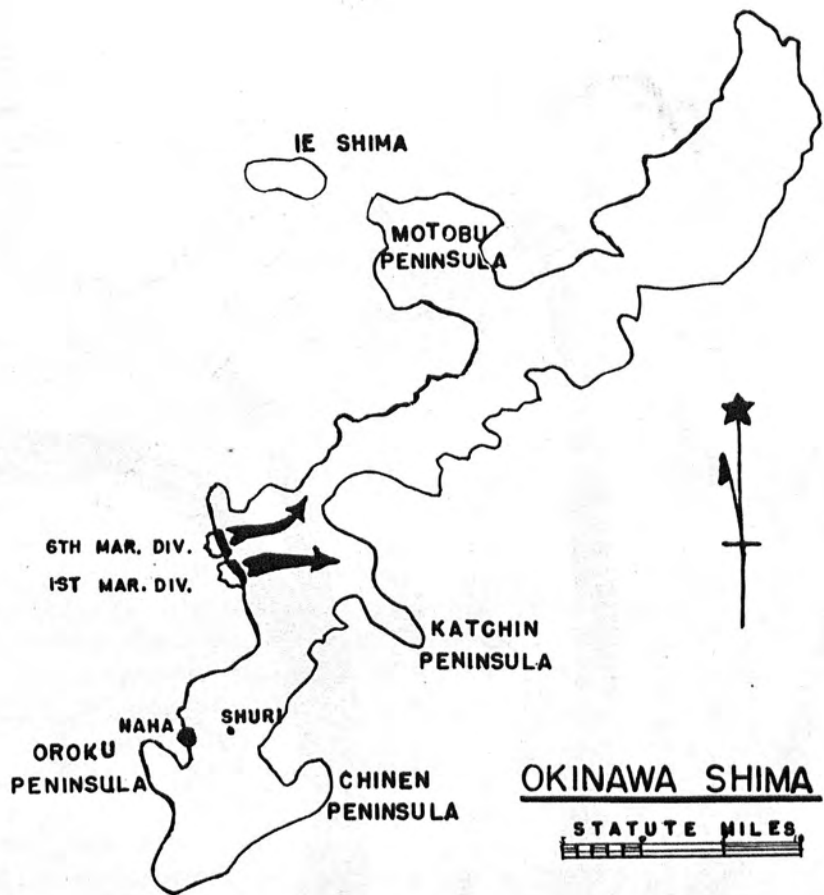
\*See Map No. 1.

<sup>1</sup>See Footnote No. 1 in the appendix.

\*\*See Map No. 2.

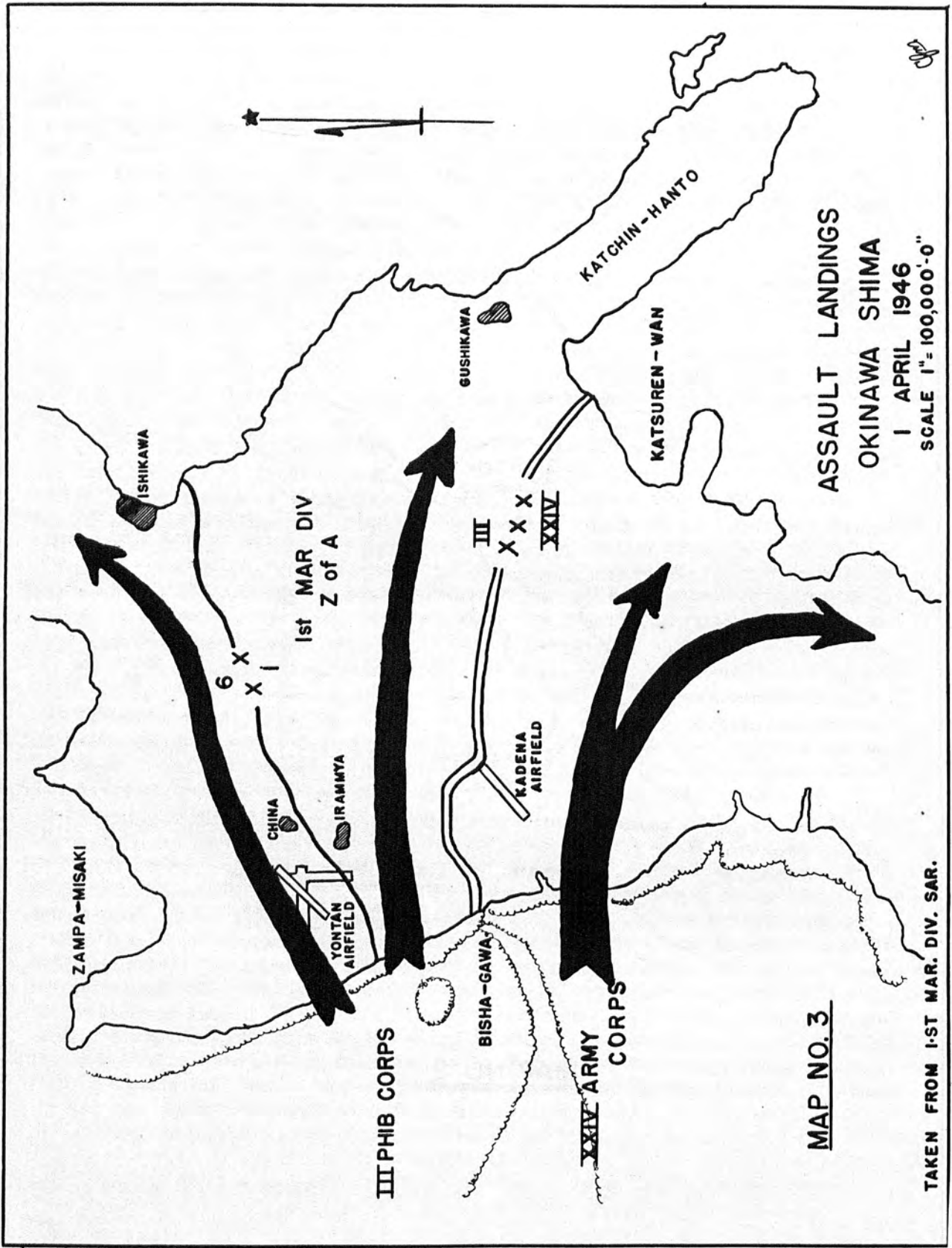
<sup>2</sup>See Footnote No. 2, Appendix.

\*\*\*See Map No. 3.



MAP NO 2

*John*



MAP NO. 3

ASSAULT LANDINGS  
 OKINAWA SHIMA  
 1 APRIL 1946  
 SCALE 1" = 100,000'-0"

TAKEN FROM 1-ST MAR. DIV. SAR.



The Bisha Gawa (river) was the right or south boundary of the zone of action of the 1st Marine Division. From the mouth of that river on the west coast the line ran across the island slightly to the southeast to include Katchin Peninsula. On the left, the division's flank boundary began north of Sobe and cut diagonally across the southern part of Yontan Airfield to Hizaonna, just south of Ishikawa (Ishicha). In the path of the division's advance lay broken hills and ridges, some stream beds and valleys and a maze of terraced fields sprawling in a crazy-quilt fashion over the hilly terrain.

With the exception of a few pockets of resistance, small in number and infrequently placed, there was nothing but the terrain to slow down the division's advance. On 3\* April with all three of its combat teams committed in the widening zone of action, the 1st Marine Division sent the 1st Reconnaissance Company on a series of motorized patrols which eventually included Katchin Peninsula. The patrols met only negligible resistance.

Next day, 4 April, saw all three regiments on the east shore of the island; the 7th Marines on the left met some resistance in the vicinity of Inubi, but by nightfall had its battalions on the coast and tied in with the 4th Marines on the left and the 5th Marines on the right. In the meantime, the 1st Marines occupied all of Katchin Peninsula and next day sent its Third Battalion to Yontan Airfield to relieve the 29th Marines of the assignment of guarding the field.

The remainder of the month of April proved to be uneventful for the 1st Marine Division. In a more or less static position, the division devoted its time to patrolling, mopping up, sealing caves and handling civilians.\*\* The combat teams lost few men during this period and the vigorous patrolling put the men into first rate physical condition.

By 8 April the enemy situation had been clarified. Elements of the XXIV Corps were engaged in small actions with enemy outposts comprising the outer fringe of the main line of Japanese resistance. Prisoners of War attested to the already established fact that the main body of Japanese on Okinawa had withdrawn from the central part of the island to the high and broken land mass around Shuri.

The principal activities of the 1st Marine Division during these days were concerned with furnishing III Amphibious Corps a suitable reserve as the Corps area of responsibility increased, due to the rapid northward movements of the 6th Marine Division. In addition, the division ordered the 5th Marines to reconnoiter and garrison the four little islands lying off Katchin Peninsula: Ike Shima, Taka Banare Shima, Heanza Shima and Hamahiki Shima. During the second week in April, the 1st Tank Battalion reconnoitered all road nets in the division zone and drafted plans to furnish support in case of enemy counter-measures such as a paratroop landing or amphibious counterinvasion.

By the fourth week in April the situation had developed as follows: (1) The 6th Marine Division had completed the occupation of all northern Okinawa including Motobu Peninsula where a band of 1500-2000 Japanese put up a stiff, but fruitless, fight. (2) The XXIV Corps had reached a virtual stalemate with its front lines reaching from Machinato on the west coast to north of Yonabaru on the east coast. (3) The Commanding General Tenth Army decided to relieve the 27th Infantry Division on the right of the line with the 1st Marine Division. The 27th was to move to northern Okinawa to relieve the 6th Marine Division so that that division could move to central Okinawa preparatory to coming into the lines alongside the 1st Marine Division. (4) The 77th Infantry Division, elements of which had landed on and secured Kerama Retto prior to Love-Day, had secured the island of Ie Shima, northwest of Motobu Peninsula, and now was ready to turn the island over to garrison troops and move its strength to the mainland to augment further the

\*See Map No. 6.

\*\*See Map No. 7

forces already there. (5) Until the Asa Kawa was reached, the 1st Marine Division would remain under control of XXIV Corps. At that juncture, the 6th Marine Division would be fed into the line and the two Marine divisions would be under control of III Amphibious Corps.

This was the situation in late April. The past three weeks had given the 1st Marine Division opportunity to unload all its gear and supplies and to bring its men up to a high peak of efficiency and physical fitness. The division's artillery was already attached to the XXIV Corps and was helping to provide supporting fires. From time to time, the 1st Tank Battalion had lent tank platoons to the Army to help with support. The division was in a high state of readiness.

## 2. THE DIVISION MOVES SOUTH

On 28 April 1945 a conference was held at Tenth Army Headquarters to discuss plans for the employment of the III Phib Corps in southern Okinawa.<sup>3</sup> It was concluded that the 1st Marine Division would be attached to General Hodges' XXIV Army Corps on 30 April and would commence movement to the sector occupied by the 27th Infantry Division near Machinato Airfield on the western end of the Army line. Upon arrival, the 1st Marine Division would relieve elements of the 27th Infantry Division on the line and assume responsibility in its sector. When relieved, the 27th Infantry Division was to move to Motobu Peninsula to relieve the 6th Marine Division of its patrolling activities, so that that division could move to assembly areas in central Okinawa preparatory to joining the 1st Marine Division in the front lines. About 7 May the III Phib Corps was to take over the zone held at that time by the 1st Marine Division and a coordinated Army attack would be made soon thereafter.

Accordingly, on 29 April III Phib Corps detached the 1st Marine Division and it was attached by Army order to the XXIV Corps. The staffs of the division and regiments made a reconnaissance of the sector indicated and drafted plans to effect the passage of lines to relieve the 27th Infantry Division.

On 30 April the 1st Marines left Deregawa, near the east coast of central Okinawa, and moved via convoys to a turning and detrucking point near Uchitomari, at which point troops dismounted and continued on foot toward Machinato.\* The 1st and 3rd Battalions, 1st Marines, relieved the 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry and the 2d Battalion, 106th Infantry in a line from the beach north of Kuwan running south of Machinato Airfield back north of Kuran.\*\* The Third Battalion, First Marines went into the lines on the left of the First and immediately attempted to straighten out the curved line by pushing south of Miyagusuku. Earlier this area had been patrolled without incident by 2d Battalion, 165th Infantry, but the enemy had reoccupied the town in the meantime. Consequently the movement of the Third Battalion was unsuccessful; twenty-nine casualties were received in short order as a result of intense knee mortar, rifle, and machine gun fire.

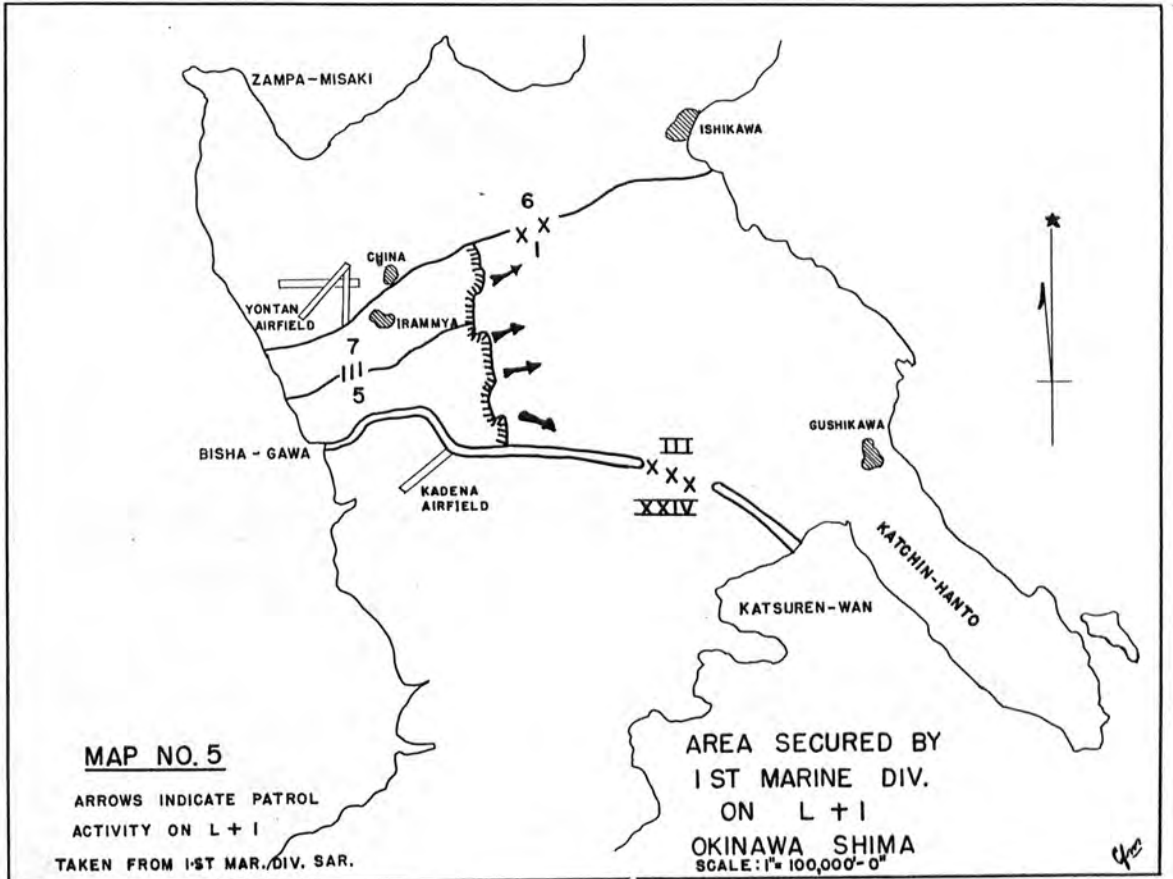
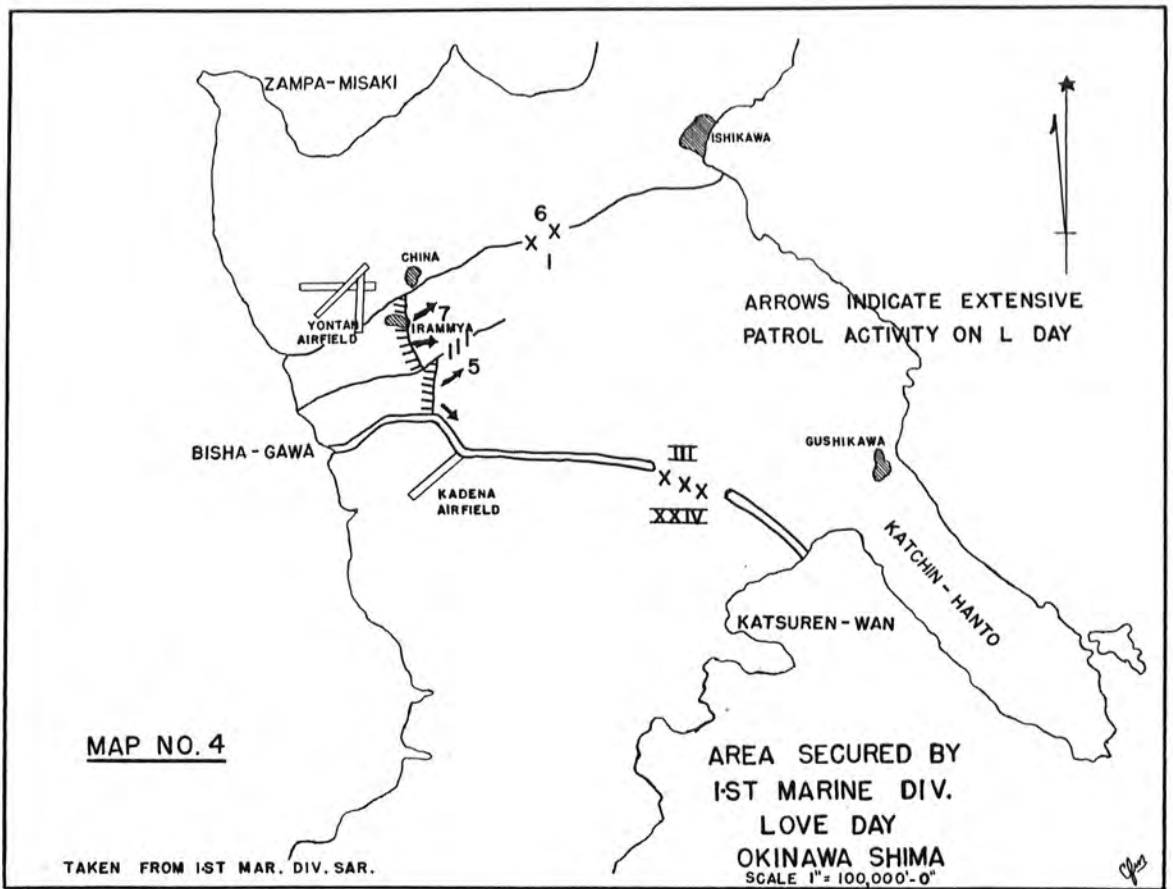
On the following day, 1 May, the 5th Marines left Inubi in central Okinawa and, using the same route as the 1st Marines, journeyed south to relieve elements of the 105th and 106th Infantry regiments. The 2d Battalion, 5th Marines went in on the left of the regimental zone and the 3d Battalion on the right, with the 1st Battalion in reserve.

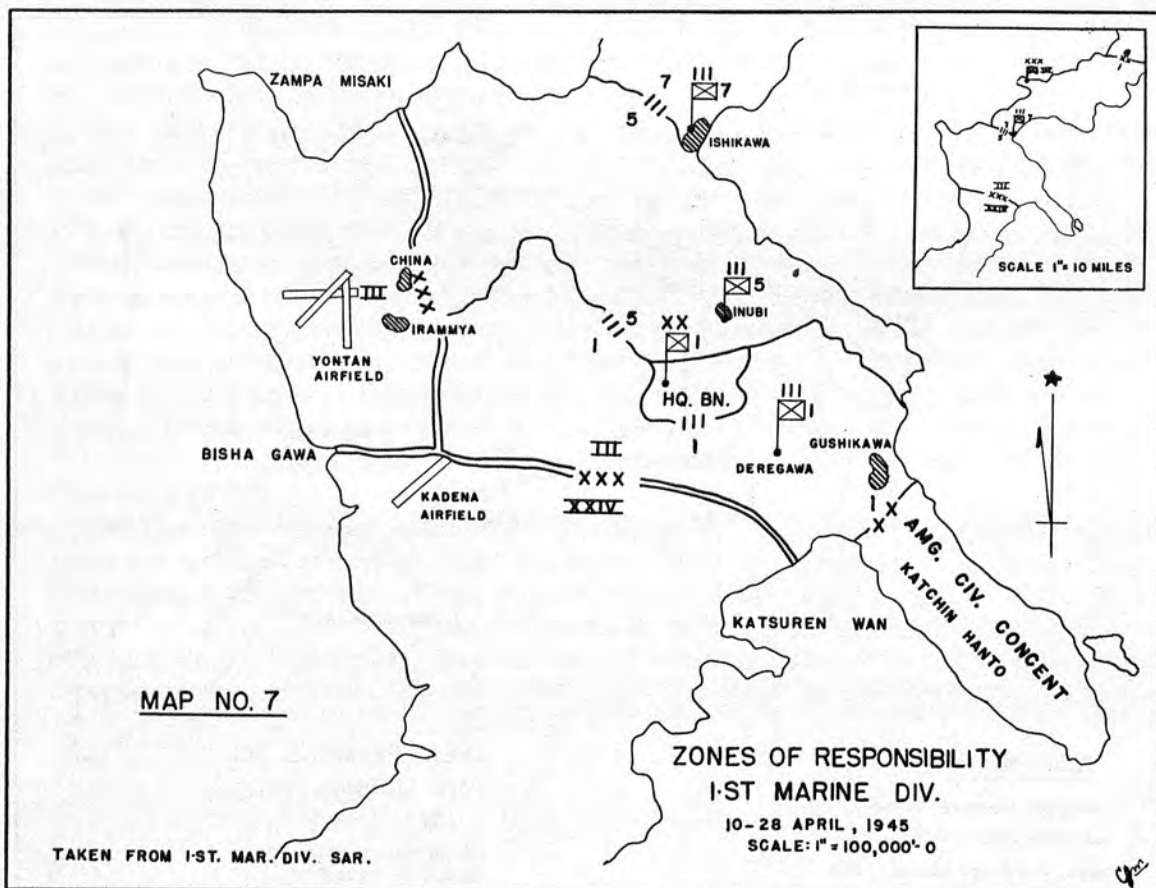
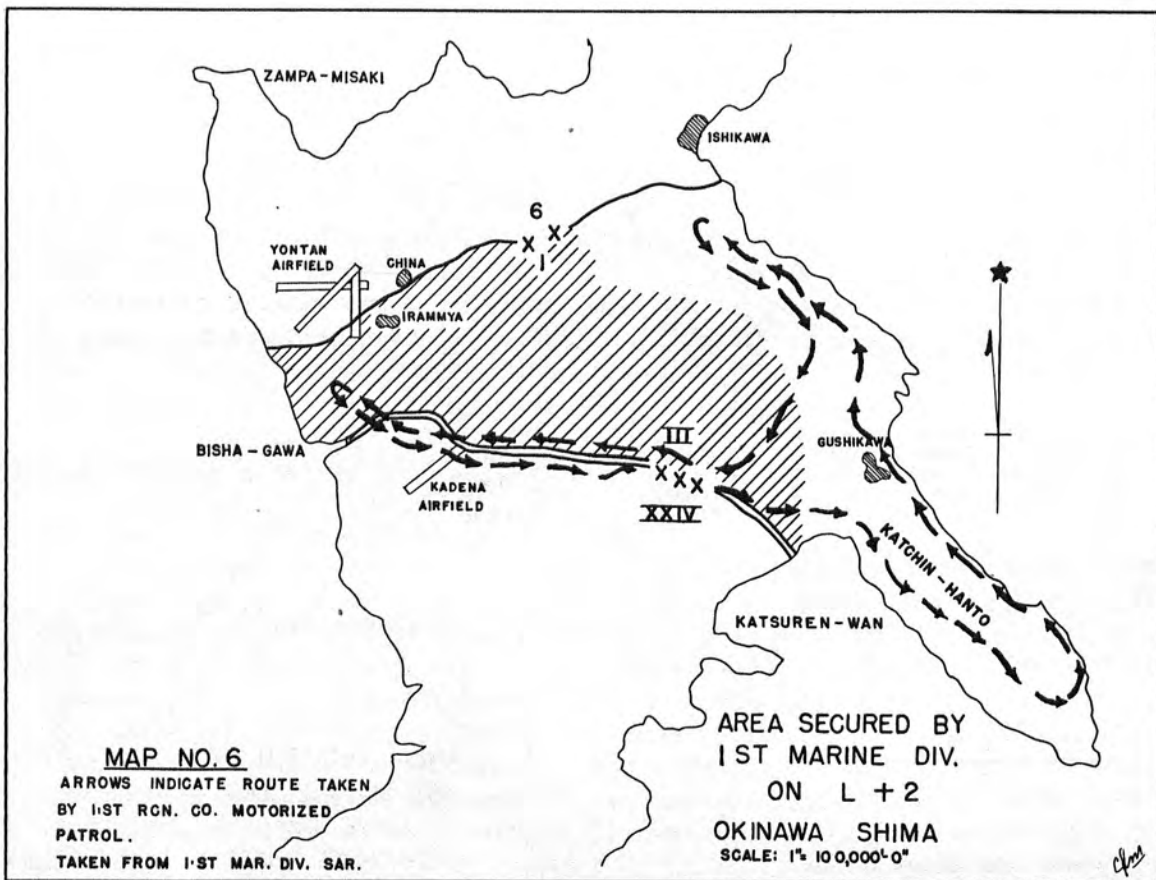
Immediately confronting the 1st Marine Division was a high ridge extending from west of Jichaku through the town and on to the east. On the division's left front and

<sup>3</sup>See Appendix.

\*See Map No. 8.

\*\*See Map No. 10.





flank were a well-defended hill called "SUGAR LOAF", (not to be confused with the SUGAR LOAF discovered later in the Sixth Marine Division's sector south of the Asa Kawa), a high rough ridge, subsequently called Wilson's Ridge, and the valley leading to Wilson's Ridge, known later as Death Valley. On these hills and ridges the Japanese had placed the outer perimeter for the defense of the Shuri hill mass. In anticipation of the advance of the American forces to the south, the Japanese had carefully prepared all the terrain leading into Shuri and utilized every mound, hummock, hill, and ridge to emplace troops and weapons.<sup>4</sup> In some instances the burial vaults of the Okinawans were opened up to made positions for machine guns, 47mm anti-tank guns and mortars. Caves were dug with connecting passageways so that ammunition could be brought up for emplaced weapons. Special emphasis was placed on coordinated fields of fire. By carefully using the natural arrangement of the hills and ridges, gun positions were made mutually supporting. On the reverse slopes of the ridges or hills, the enemy dug caves for protection of mortar squads, to store food and ammunition, or to provide places of safety for defenders of the hills when our artillery, naval gunfire and aerial bombing made the forward slopes and crests untenable.

This high ground immediately facing the 1st Marine Division was all on the north side of the Asa Kawa (river). On every piece of high ground leading toward Shuri the Japanese had prepared defensive positions; it was a disconcerting fact that each piece of defensive ground was higher progressively and afforded the enemy excellent observation of all troop movements and activities to his front as the Tenth Army gradually pounded toward Shuri.

The Japanese prepared well for the defense of Shuri in choosing that dominating hill mass and its broken outlying hills and ridges running across a narrow section of the island. Nowhere on the island could be found more suitable ground for a real war of attrition.\* The tactical position of the enemy, by virtue of his choice of such favorable terrain, was such that he could commence his delaying action far north of Shuri itself, and, as the pressure intensified, slowly withdraw his troops to prepared positions on the next hill or ridge as he fell back where he could continue to hold out in well-organized, mutually supporting, positions. In the contraction of his defensive perimeter as superior numbers and force of arms necessitated, the enemy would further solidify and make efficient his fortress.

Directly in the path of the 1st Marine Division lay formidable ground, held in strength and with cunning. The reduction of enemy positions on this ground would only mean temporary achievement; immediately the division would face even worse ground and, as the line across the enemy's front pushed forward, it was inevitable in the light of past performances that he would attempt to break out and disrupt our lines of supplies and communications, perhaps overrun a command post. His first effort to compromise our line was not attempted until the night of 4 May.

During the night of 30 April—1 May all First Marine battalions received sporadic mortar and artillery fire. The Third Battalion Command Post reported that approximately eight rounds of artillery, estimated to be 150mm, landed in its area. No attack order was issued to the First Battalion for 1 May. However, an attempt was made on the battalion left to straighten out the regimental line. The action was unsuccessful.

To appreciate events which follow, it is important to understand the nature of the terrain in the First Battalion's zone of action. The battalion front was contained by a deep gorge which ran laterally from west to east and then bent back north on the left

<sup>4</sup>See Appendix.

\*See Map No. 9.

flank to fan out into a wide valley. The gorge had the effect of barricading the approach to the plateau which was the next logical objective. Reconnaissance showed that a tank crossing was impossible. The only feasible route might have been the main Naha highway, which cut the gorge at its bend, but it was blown out, pre-registered for artillery and anti-tank fire, and under constant observation.

Able company attempted to probe by patrol for a possible tank approach across the mouth of the draw. Its efforts were cut short by intense machine gun and small arms fire from caves dug out of the steep cliffs on the south side of the draw.

The Third Battalion concentrated on reducing Miyagusuku in order to clear its path to the south. A platoon of medium tanks, and another of flame thrower tanks from the Army, pulverized walls and burned out the village, while 60mm mortars laid a barrage in the town and 81mm mortars and 75mm artillery placed their fires between Miyagusuku and the enemy. By 1045 Company "I" sent a two squad patrol through the town without encountering opposition.

At 1315 Company "K" started to advance through Miyagusuku with "L" Company moving on its left flank. Initially, the advance was slow and steady, but without incident; it was covered part way by 81mm smoke. As the company emerged from the southern edge of the village, it received heavy machine gun, rifle, mortar, knee mortar and artillery fire. The men took cover, although they were under constant observation from the enemy on higher ground at Hill 84. Company casualties were heavy. Twenty-two men had been wounded and two were killed. The company commander, seeing that his position was untenable, requested permission to withdraw. This was granted and he commenced the movement, evacuating wounded and dead under cover of our own artillery, 81mm mortar smoke and high explosive shells; the company took up its old positions north of Miyagusuku.

Meanwhile, the Fifth Marines were relieving elements of the 106th and 105th Regiments. By 1700 relief was completed and the efforts of the Fifth Marines were limited to consolidating positions and reconnoitering for attack. During the relief, mortar and light machine gun fire was experienced from time to time. Casualties were light.

### 3. THE JICHAKU PLATEAU

During the first week in May, the primary concern of the Tenth Army was to straighten out and further consolidate its front line in preparation for a coordinated attack, tentatively set for 11 May, designed to overwhelm the Shuri hill mass positions of the Japanese.<sup>5</sup> In its zone of action, the 1st Marine Division was faced with the problem of capturing the high ground overlooking the Asa Kawa from the north. With two of its regiments in the line on 2 May, the division commenced a series of attacks designed to capture this high ground comprising the Army objective in its sector.

With its 1st and 3d Battalions on the line, the 1st Marines renewed the attack on the morning of 2 May. "C" Company of the 1st Battalion was to attack through Nakanishi in a southwesterly direction and cross the draw between it and the next plateau. This was intended to straighten out the left flank of the battalion line. "B" Company, on the right flank, was then to assault directly south across the ravine and seize the high ground that constituted the northern rim of the Jichaku plateau. The subsequent turn of events would determine the use of "A" Company. It was planned that "C" Company would attack at 0900 supported by tanks, although it had not been determined as yet how the tanks would negotiate the draw.

<sup>5</sup>See Appendix.

ZAMPA MISAKI

7th MARINES DISPLACED MAY 2nd  
MOVED TO KAKAZU AS DIV. RES. SAME DAY

ARROWS INDICATE ROUTE OF CONVOY

5th MARINES LEFT INUBI MAY 1st  
RELIEVED 27th DIV. SAME DAY.

DIV. HDQRS. BN. LEFT NUPUNIA MAY 1st.

1st MAR. LEFT DEREGAWA APRIL 30th  
RELIEVED 27th DIV. SAME DAY.



CHINA  
IRAMMYA  
YONTAN AIRFIELD

KADENA AIRFIELD

NUPUNIA

GUSHIKAWA

CHATAN

DETRUCKING & TURN AROUND POINT.

UCHITOMARI

MACHINATO AIRFIELD

DIV. RES.

KAKAZU

YONABARU AIRFIELD

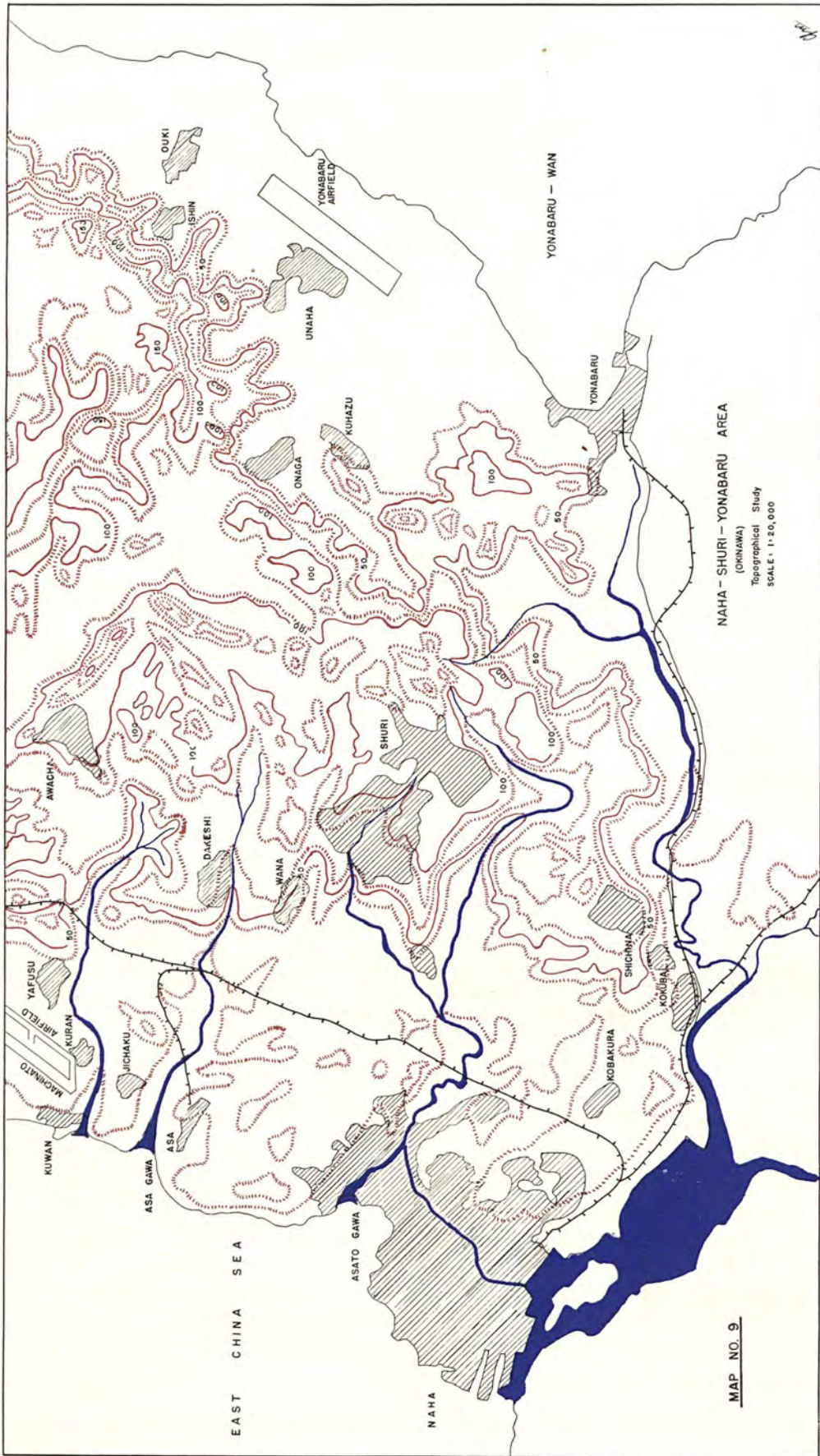
MOVEMENT OF  
1ST MAR. DIV. SOUTH  
OKINAWA SHIMA  
30 APRIL 1 MAY  
1945

SCALE: 1" = 100,000'-0"

MAP NO. 8

TAKEN FROM 1st MAR. DIV. SAR.

*Class*



NAHA - SHURI - YONABARU AREA  
(OKINAWA)  
Topographical Study  
SCALE: 1:20,000

MAP NO. 9



After waiting for the tanks, "C" Company finally attacked at 1000. Advancing as skirmishers through the rain and cold with two platoons abreast, the company had little difficulty in pushing through Nakanishi, although light sniper fire was experienced. On the left flank the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, had halted before reaching its objective in order to maintain contact with the 5th Marines on its flank; the 1st Battalion, and "C" Company in particular, had to proceed cautiously at the risk of receiving enfilading flanking fire.

At approximately 1045, the 2d platoon and a squad of the 3d platoon descended into the draw. Some men managed to cross the stream flowing through it but were quickly pinned down by deadly Hotchkiss, Nambu,\* and flanking rifle fire, as well as 105mm artillery, 90mm mortar and knee mortar barrages. The heaviest small arms fire came from a group of excellently camouflaged caves dug into the cliffs at the elbow of the draw. From these positions, the Japs were able to direct enfilading fire right up to the 3d Battalion's lines. The men were faced with so many targets it was difficult to determine which ones should be knocked out first. Casualties were piling up, no progress was being made, and the company commander requested permission to withdraw. Machine guns from the high ground just south of Nakanishi covered the withdrawal which proceeded at the discretion of the platoon leaders. The men were sent by twos and threes at a time. The evacuation of the wounded was a terrific problem and had to be executed under fire; every wounded man was brought out. The company withdrew through the road cut left of Nakanishi and established its lines for the night north of the village.

"B" Company attacked at 1100. Previous to its attack, the company sent patrols into the ravine to test Jap strength. The patrols reported the enemy encaved in the northern, as well as southern, cliffs. The effectiveness of these enemy positions was manifested in "C" Company's plight described above. "B" Company was supposed to assault the draw at its mouth and then scale the high ground beyond. Advancing in a skirmish line, the company drew sporadic machine gun and sniper fire as it left its positions of the previous night. The intensity of the fire increased as "B" Company descended into the draw and prepared to cross the stream at the bottom. Crossing by way of a blown-in concrete bridge, one man at a time, the 1st Platoon drew a terrific burst of enemy small arms fire. Three of the first five men were hit. The 2d Platoon on the left crossed a small foot bridge and received similar fire. Then, as the men scaled the ledge and attempted to crawl over its top, the enemy turned all his weapons in the immediate area upon the Marines. The Japanese had cut fire lanes to the very edge of the bank and had registered every foot of ground for machine gun and sniper fire.

The first man of the 1st Platoon managed to scramble over the bank, but the next three were hit squarely in the head. Determinedly, one squad of the 1st Platoon and a half squad from the 2d fought their way onto the high ground. Repeated efforts by the remainder of both platoons failed to meet success and they were forced to hug the southern bank of the draw. Until 1300 the situation remained unchanged and at that time battalion ordered a general withdrawal. Artillery threw down a curtain of white phosphorus smoke to cover the movement but was too far out to be effective. The men gathered up smoke grenades and threw them into the draw but the enemy fired into the smoke. Men in the draw and those hugging its southern bank were organized as stretcher bearers to evacuate the wounded. Effectives left on the plateau covered the evacuation, as did the company's six machine guns. In the confusion and lack of contact that characterized the situation, some men were left on the plateau, although this fact was not ascertained until after dusk

\*Japanese light machine gun.

when two men managed to "get out from under" the enemy fire and reported to the company command post. After dusk the 1st Platoon worked its way back into the ravine, over the foot bridge, and up on the plateau. They found and brought back eighteen men, of whom five were wounded.

The battalion was not to be denied its objective. It planned to continue the attack with two companies and, because "C" and "B" were badly mauled, borrowed "F" Company from the 2d Battalion to use with "A" Company. At 1600 "A" Company was ordered to attack at 1630 to seize ground on the high plateau further west from where "C" and "B" Companies had tried it.

"A" Company advanced with two platoons abreast, one in reserve, and descended the steep slope of the old stream bed. Clambering up the opposite bank under light sniper fire, the leading elements crawled over the edge of the south bank where they were met by heavy flanking machine gun fire from their left rear, and fire from light machine guns along their entire front. Sniper fire from camouflaged Japs in trees was effective and from the rear of a pillbox, northeast of Jichaku, the Nips hurled a steady barrage from knee mortars.

In spite of the intense enemy fire, "A" Company held its ground, dug in, and established a semi-circular line of defense about three hundred yards long, both ends of which were anchored to the edge of the south bank of the stream bed. The objective was considered won at 1930 and a platoon of "C" Company was attached to "A" to assure consolidation of the bridgehead.

Meanwhile, "F" Company of the 2d Battalion was ordered to tie in on "A" Company's right flank. Moving up along the airfield after dusk through the rain and mud, "F" Company prepared to cross the ravine and gain the plateau. The crossing was made without incident and the company formed a line on the plateau. The men dug their foxholes by the light of the flares and received intermittent enemy mortar fire. Next morning the company discovered a Jap bunker just twenty yards to the left front of the first platoon.

The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, had about the same kind of day as that experienced by the 1st Battalion. For the initial phase of its attack, the battalion had one platoon of medium tanks, two flamethrower tanks and two M7 tank destroyers in support.

"K" Company attacked at 0930 and was soon moving through Miyagusuku. "L" Company was forced to remain at its line of departure because of the inability of the 5th Marine unit on its left to advance. By 1515 "K" had advanced against little opposition and passed through the village of Yafusu after standing by most of the day. "L" had still not come abreast.

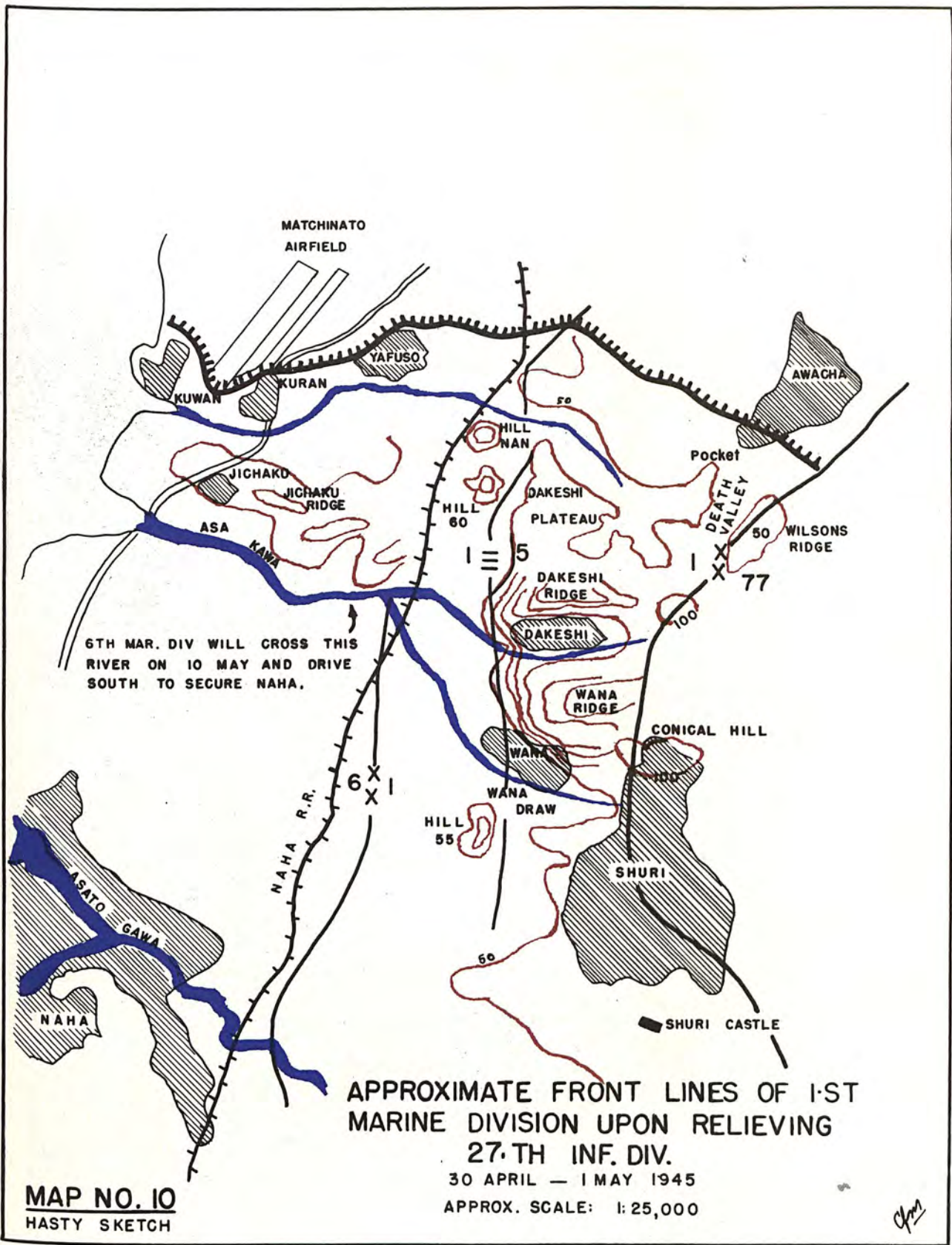
Subsequent events are rather confusing. At any rate the special action report of the 1st Regiment, page 8, states:

"At 1446, orders were received to change direction of the attack to 122 degrees, maintaining contact right to left. Battalion boundaries were adjusted and orders issued to resume the attack at 1630."

The 3d Battalion further describes the situation as follows:

"At 1600, oral orders were received from 1st Marines that this landing team would attack at 1630 and seize high ground south of Yafusu. At this time, heavy rains began falling in the battalion zone of action. The C.O. 3d Battalion contacted C.O. 1st Regiment and requested that the attack be delayed until the next day but the request was denied."

With little time to prepare for the attack, "K" Company moved out at 1640. The men were wet and chilled and moved slowly through the downpour. Following a ten minute artillery barrage, the company assaulted with two platoons abreast and under the covering





First Division Marines Cross Fire-swept Ground

fire of its two sections of machine guns which delivered overhead fire from high ground on the line of departure. Upon reaching the immediate objective, the high ground, the company commander found that it was necessary to commit his reserve platoon in order to fill a gap in the center of his line. From the moment the attack began, the company received fire from knee mortars, rifles and automatic weapons, coming from its front and its left flank. The company's 60mm mortars laid down a barrage that lessened the amount of enemy fire considerably. As the company climbed out of the valley into which it had descended and up the slope of its objective, the Nips emerged from their caves and holes to fanatically defend their positions. Accurate enemy machine gun fire hit "K" Company from three directions.

In the meantime "L" Company had attacked too. The company advanced in line as skirmishers on "K's" left flank with all three platoons in line. Similarly, "L" drew heavy fire from the enemy but managed to push forward for forty-five minutes with casualties increasing steadily. Communications between platoons broke down. At points of farthest advance, each of the platoons was separated from the others by gaps of approximately two hundred yards. The confusion of the platoon leaders was aggravated by the excellence of the enemy's camouflage and by the fact that their men's weapons were jammed with mud; only a few were in condition to fire.

At 1800 and after examining the situation closely, "L's" commander ordered a withdrawal. Circumstances did not offer the remotest possibility for establishing any reasonable defensive line. Providing their own covering smoke with white phosphorus grenades, the men began an orderly withdrawal. The company's machine guns on the high ground on its line of departure covered the movement with overhead fire.

"L" Company's advance of approximately five hundred yards had placed it on "K's" left flank. Its withdrawal presented "K" with a dangerously exposed left flank. On its own initiative, the 3d platoon curled its line back and established a perimeter of defense. The 1st platoon, which had filled in the center of the company line, placed its men back to back in order to defend north as well as south, since it was discovered that the company had by-passed a Nip cave in the advance.

In both companies, "K" and "L", stretcher bearers worked under intense enemy fire across two hundred yards of open ground to carry out the wounded. "K" men loaded their stretchers with grenades for the return trip to the lines.

Facing a cold rainy muddy night, the prospects for "K" Company were not very bright; only one BAR and a handful of M1's were in working order. The company's left flank was exposed for approximately five hundred yards. It proved to be a grim night. An expected counterattack developed at 0200. The enemy's plan apparently was to strike the center of the company and to fan out to destroy it. When this strike at the center failed, the Japs slid off to the left and attempted to encircle the company's flank. This effort also failed. In striking the center, the Nips came charging out of the dark toward the 1st Platoon with bayonets fixed and hurling grenades. The Marines threw grenades in return, fired the two rifles that would fire, and used their rifles as clubs on the few of the enemy who got close enough. This attack lasted for about twenty minutes and then the Nips moved to the left. Led by an officer and several NCO's the enemy fared no better on the left flank. The only BAR that would work was on this flank and accounted for the officer and seven more of the enemy. The attack on the company's right was beaten off with grenades.

For both "L" and "K", the day's cost was high. "K's" losses were eleven killed and thirty-one wounded. "L's" losses were twenty three wounded and three killed.

On 3 May new objective lines were prescribed by division for the 1st Marines re-or-

ienting the direction of attack toward the southeast.<sup>6</sup> The zone of action barely included the hill called "SUGAR LOAF" (Hill 60) on the left and the village of Dakeshi on its high ridge. Since the 3d Battalion was on O-1 with its left flank, the plan for the day's attack called for the main effort to be made by the 1st Battalion in order to straighten out the line in a wheeling movement.

The 1st Battalion with "F" Company attached, attacked at 0933 and fought through Jichaku, but received such heavy fire from across the Asa Kawa and from the hills north of Shuri, it was forced to withdraw again due to mounting casualties. At 1100 the 3d Battalion attempted to displace its command post forward but met such determined artillery fire it was forced to reoccupy its former position. After fruitless efforts to advance on the part of the 1st Battalion, the 3d Battalion attacked at 1630 and moved "L" Company up on the western slope of the hill just north of "SUGAR LOAF". "K" Company had moved up abreast of "L" Company but found its position untenable and was forced to withdraw. Due to the extreme frontage of the 3d Battalion—over twelve hundred yards—it was necessary to attach "G" Company from the 2d Battalion for the night. With the exception of heavy artillery fire from 2000 to 2400 the night was uneventful.

At 2000 the 1st Battalion sent out a patrol, with engineers attached, down the road leading south from Kuran. The mission of this patrol was to reconnoiter the road and remove all mines so that tanks could use it as an approach to Jichaku. After proceeding as far as the big bend in the road, the patrol was almost cut off by a number of the enemy and was forced to pull back and engage in a fire fight to reach its own lines.

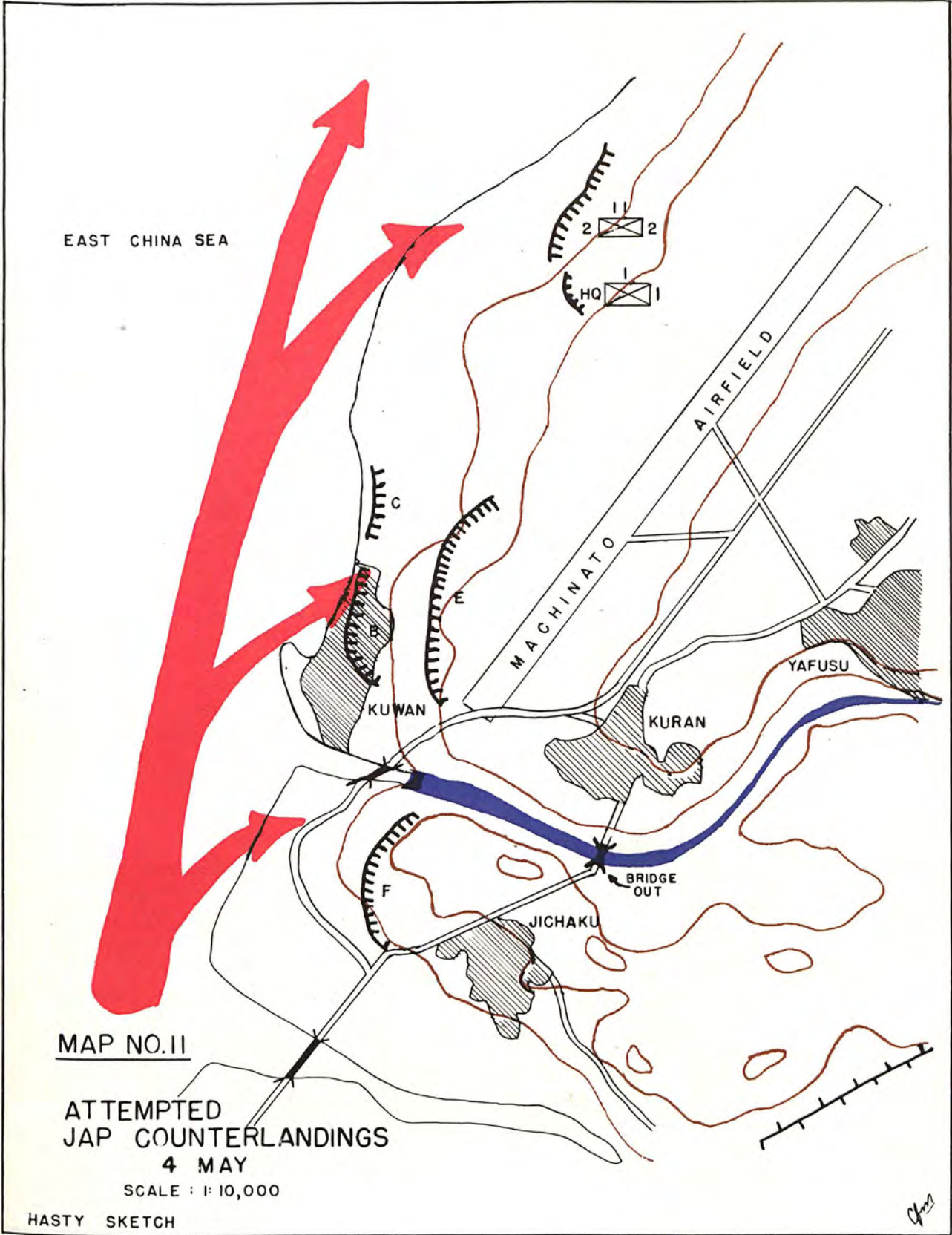
#### 4. THE ENEMY TRIES A COUNTER LANDING

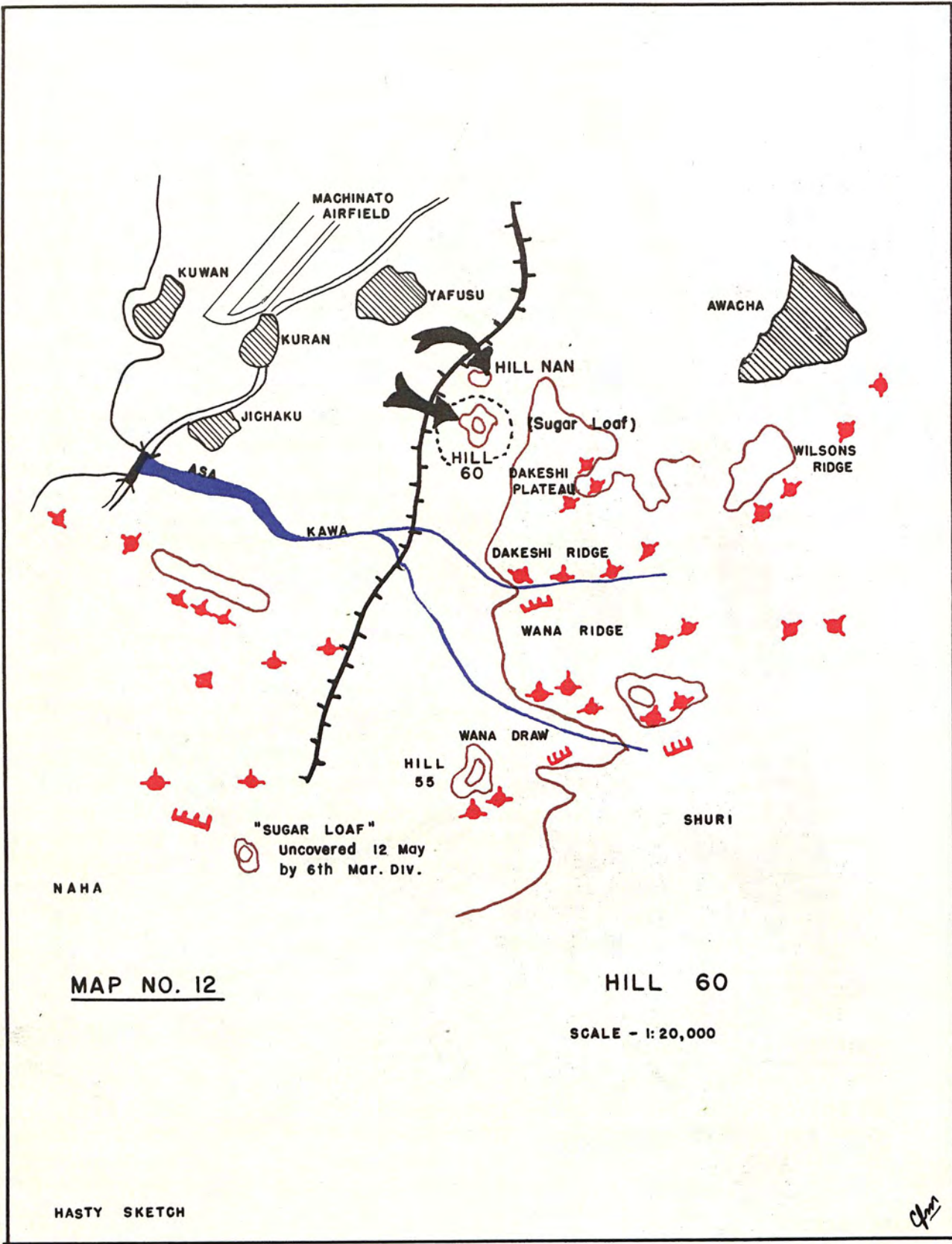
As the troops of the 1st Marine Division dug in and prepared to defend their lines on the night of 3 May, little did they realize that before the next dawn one of the decisive actions of the campaign would occur. Many times after this, small units would stage desperate counterattacks to regain a piece of vital ground, or to drive our men off a freshly seized piece of ground before they could dig in to hold it, but never again would the Japanese 32d Army issue such an order.

During the month of April the Japanese had committed only a portion of their strength in the line north of Shuri. They were worried about the possibility of an American landing somewhere on southern Okinawa and consequently kept many units disposed in that area. However by the first week in May many of the staff officers of the 32d Army were of the opinion that the Americans were not contemplating such a landing and they were unanimous in their belief that the time had come to strike out and deliver a crushing blow.

Lt. Gen. Isamu Cho, chief of staff of the 32d Japanese Army, was instrumental in the decision to stage a counterattack on the night of 3-4 May. In the opinion of many of the higher and more ambitious Japanese officers, the time was ripe to strike a decisive blow. Cho was supported by Fujioka, Commanding General of the 62d Division, who expressed the general desire of his men to fight the decisive action in the 62d Division's zone of defense. This division, reinforced by the 22d Regiment, was holding a line from ONAGAKOCHI-Hill 187 to the Machinato Airfield. According to the plan, an ambitious one, the 23d and 26th Shipping Engineer Regiments were to effect counter-landings on the west and east coast respectively during the night 3-4 May. On 4 May the 24th Division (89th Regiment on the east, 22d in the center and 32d Regiment on the west) was to launch an attack with Futema as its objective. The 44th Independent Mixed Brigade was to follow

<sup>6</sup>See Appendix.







the 24th Division, bearing west to the coast, thus cutting off the 1st Marine Division. As events transpired the 62d Division did not participate in the attack.<sup>7</sup>

At approximately 0200, enemy barges containing an estimated six hundred Japs were sighted approaching the beach near Kuwan.\* "B" Company with a platoon of "C" Company, 1st Battalion, was defending this beach area. The men on the sea wall counted ten barges and, as they came into range, opened fire with machine guns, mortars, rifle grenades and small arms. Several of the barges burst into flames and one was sunk by a direct hit from a rifle grenade launched by a carbine. The 60mm mortar officer from "B" Company went down to the sea wall and, finding excellent observation, fired over eleven hundred rounds, sinking one barge, killing many of the enemy and causing them to disperse. "B" Company had placed all its machine guns and half of its BAR's on the sea wall to reinforce the "C" Company platoon and was able to deliver murderous fire. The corporal of the machine gun section with "C's" platoon exercised good judgment in constantly shifting the guns from position to position and also alternated fire from one gun to the other. By doing this, needless casualties were avoided.

The 1st Battalion, 1st Marines had called for illumination, and naval flares lighted the landing area clearly outlining the barges. During the first half-hour it was difficult to tell exactly how the situation was progressing. After that it was slaughter. The platoon from "C" Company burned out six machine gun barrels and one gun and used fifty boxes of ammunition. While the Japanese were attempting the main landing near Kuwan a small group of the enemy was spotted by "F" Company from its positions across the little inlet south of Kuwan and BAR fire was brought to bear. The 1st Battalion initially felt that it would need additional troops, and the regiment sent "E" Company to contact the right flank. Immediately after contact was made, action with the enemy was joined. In the meantime the 1st Marines requested that an additional battalion be attached, and division ordered the 7th Marines to send them one battalion. The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines was moved accordingly to an assembly area just northeast of Machinato Airfield. In addition, a platoon from the 3d Armored Amphibian Tractor Battalion was moved to a position on the reef just north of "E" Company. This prevented further movement of the enemy to the north, and this platoon succeeded in sinking several barges and mopped up remnants in the beach area. In the words of one of the officers from "B" Company,

"The whole thing was a God-send. If the Nips had landed above us, they would have faced no opposition, but they headed in where we were and we cut them down."

Over four hundred of the enemy were killed in this action and many others were mopped up during the succeeding day. Numerous Japanese bodies washed up on the beach on 4 May, testifying to the number who drowned when the barges were sunk. In contrast, our own casualties were exceptionally light, which was probably due to:

1. The fact that our troops were well dug in and provided minimum targets for enemy fire.
2. The excellence of our fire discipline and direction which enabled our troops to inflict heavy casualties with a minimum of effort and loss.

By 0400, the situation was well under control. The 2d Battalion, 7th Marines reverted to parent control with the mission of mopping up enemy remnants in the area of Kuwan. The only success enjoyed by the enemy would seem to be the delay he caused us in our attack next morning.

<sup>7</sup>See Appendix.

\*See Map No. 11.

## 5. THE FIRST MARINES' SUGAR LOAF

On 6 May the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines launched an attack to capture a hill named by some of the men Sugar Loaf.\* This hill is not to be confused with the one in the Sixth Marine Division sector that caused so much trouble later and which became the subject of numerous newspaper reports. The First Division's Sugar Loaf, or more properly, Hill 60, was only a short distance east of the railroad tracks and north of the Asa Kawa drainage basin, a thousand yards southeast of Kuran. To its immediate north was another little hill about two hundred yards away, whose southern side was a maze of enemy caves and gun positions. This little hill was located in Target Area 7775N and Sugar Loaf (or Hill 60) was in 7775S. To the east and southeast lay the Dakeshi Plateau, commanding both of these little hills. To attack Sugar Loaf from the south flank meant exposure to fire from Dakeshi, from Wana, and from the high ground south of the Asa Kawa. Similarly, to attack the hill by flanking action from the north, it was necessary to secure the hill Nan. "G" Company held the top and north side of Nan on 6 May but could not clean out the numerous caves on its south side because of the murderous fire from Sugar Loaf. A direct frontal attack meant fire from all the above named areas.

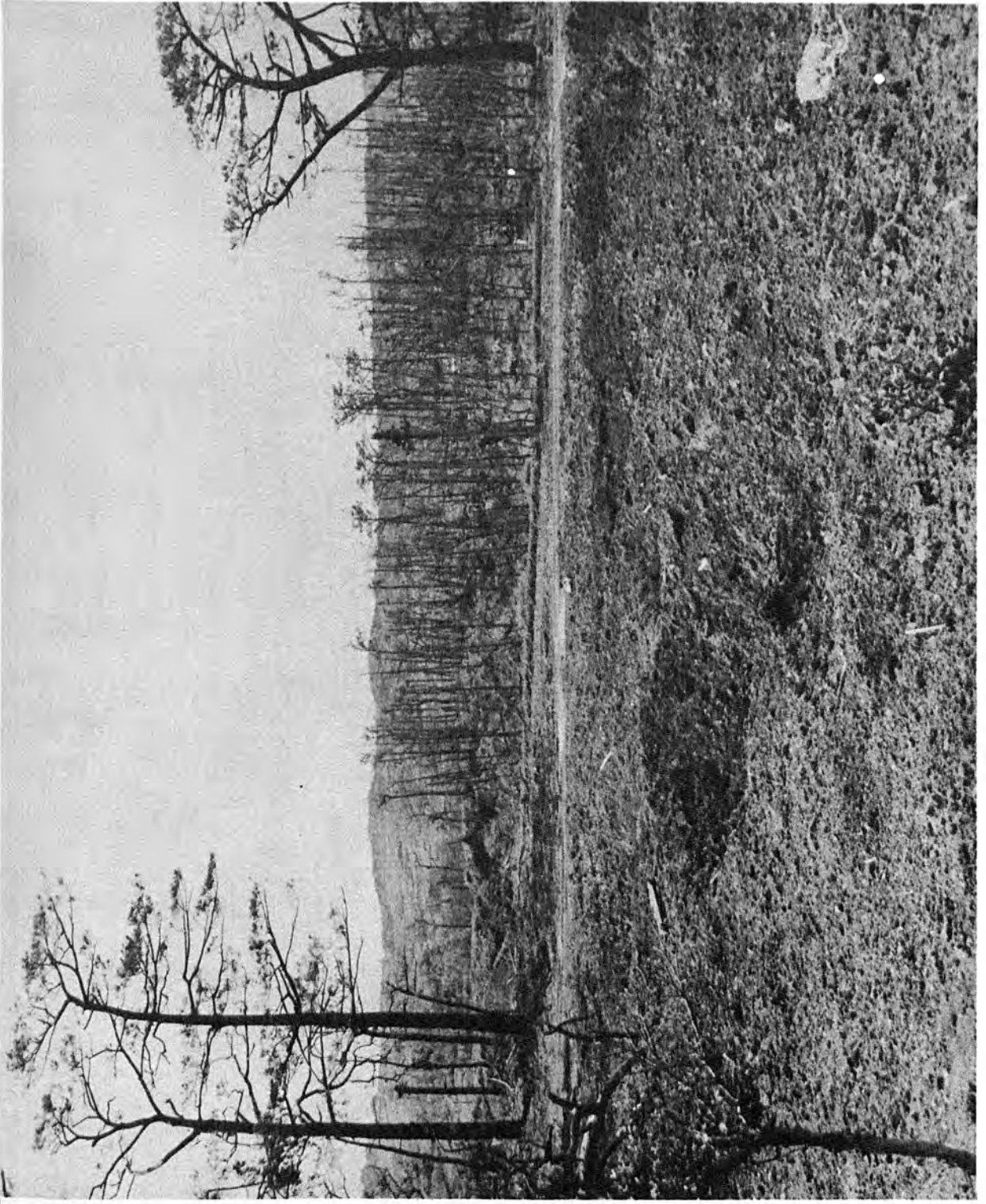
As has been said, Nan hill was undermined with caves which were alive with Nips. During the time that "G" Company held the hill it was subjected to incessant grenade barrages from the enemy under it, as well as heavy artillery, mortar, knee mortar, and sniper fire from Sugar Loaf, Dakeshi, and the hill mass near Awacha to the north.

According to a "G" Company man:

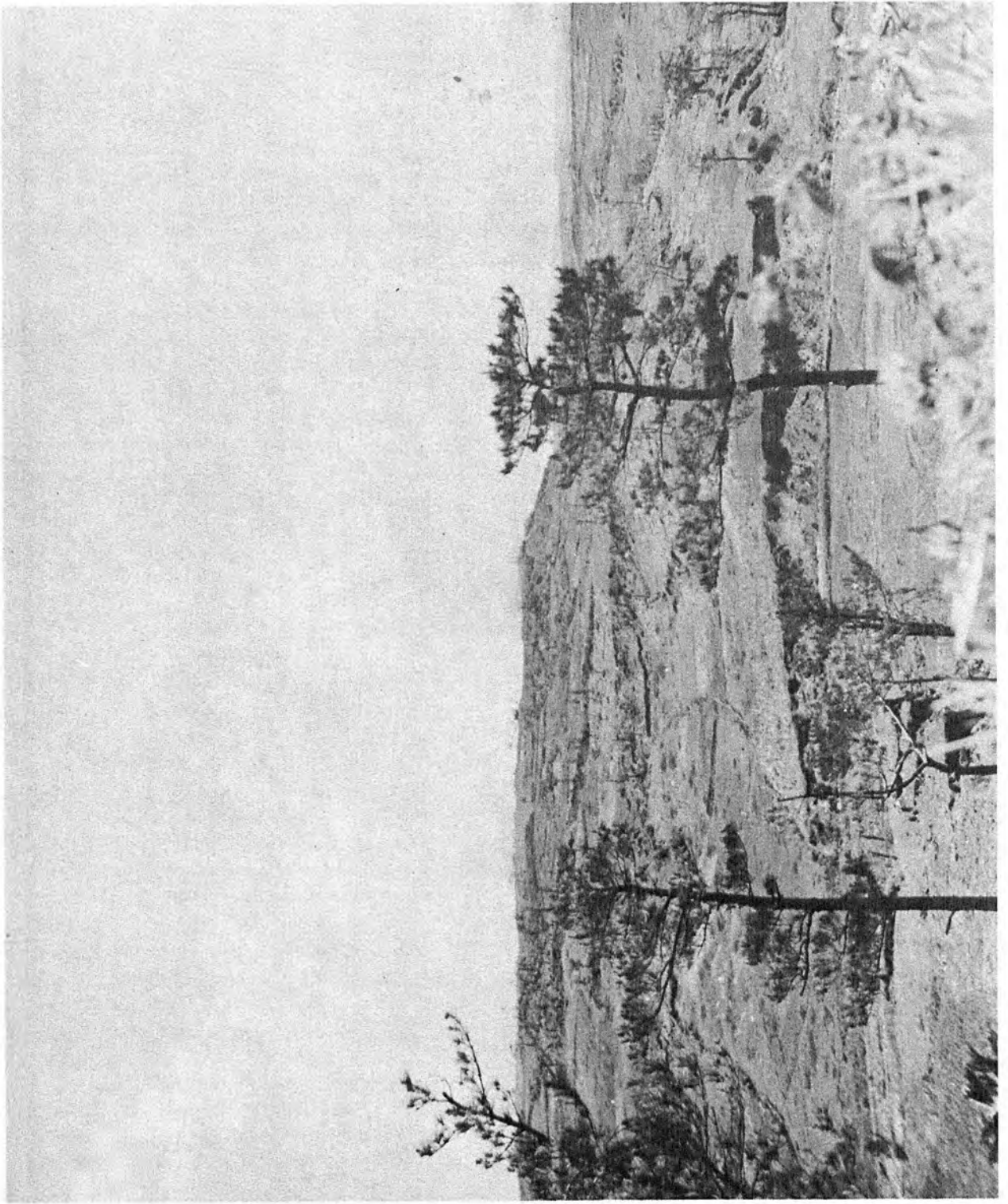
"Our regular dish was a grenade fight each night. From dark until dawn we expected Nips to crawl into our holes, and they didn't disappoint us. There were incidents of our men killed by bayonets and slashed with knives. Before we could get all of the Nips, they were over the cliffs and under us again. The majority of those who ventured over to our side of the hill did not return to their caves and in a couple of days the trips were much discouraged."

Early on the morning of 6 May "F" Company was moved from its reserve area north of Machinato Airfield to a position behind "L" Company. The plan for this day's attack was for "F" Company to move through "L" Company and in a coordinated attack, using tanks and half-tracks, to seize the battalion's objective, Hill 60 or Sugar Loaf. "G" Company, which was on the north slope of Hill Nan, was supposed to clean out the caves under that hill and help "F" Company to seize Hill 60. "E" Company was to deliver supporting fires from its position in reserve. The air strike, which was to be preliminary to this attack, was late, and the attack was delayed until 1000. Before attacking the 2d Battalion arranged for the following preparatory and supporting fires: 81mm mortars and the 60mm mortars of the three companies were to work on the reverse slope of Sugar Loaf, while the artillery, consisting of 105mm and 75mm packs, covered the top, forward slope, and commanding caves of Dakeshi. Naval gun fire was also to work on Dakeshi. After this preparatory fire was laid down, the assault was launched. First to move was the 3d Platoon on the right, but it was only a matter of minutes before it was pinned down by machine gun, mortar, and anti-tank gun fire. Twenty minutes later the 1st Platoon pushed off, its attack having been delayed because it was disastrously hit by a heavy mortar barrage and only had fourteen men left. Since its strength was inadequate, a few minutes later the 2d Platoon passed through it and advanced on the objective, echeloned to the left. Because of the terrain and the heavy fire received, contact between attacking elements was poor. The 2d Platoon, separated at first from the 3d, slowly inched its way forward until at 1154 it

\*See Map No. 12.



The Awacha Sector Looking South



Looking South Toward Dakeshi Ridge

was on the objective. What happened then is best described in the words of one of the members of that platoon:

"Too many things happened to remember all the details. The Nips hit us with grenades, satchel charges, white phosphorus shells, and literally dumped carloads of knee mortar shells on us."

From the caves underneath the hill that "G" Company was on, the enemy swept with machine gun fire the approaches to, and the forward slope of Sugar Loaf. A trail of casualties was left in the wake of the attacking platoons. Now they began piling up on the hill. Because the approach to Hill 60, or Sugar Loaf, was swept with enemy fire, stretchers could not be sent east of the railroad tracks. Six men were pulled out on "ponchos". The wounded who could, kept fighting.

At 1227 the battalion commander ordered a withdrawal. Machine gun sections from "G" Company and "F" Company's 3d Platoon covered this withdrawal, and in addition, "G" Company used smoke grenades and flame-throwing tanks in an effort to neutralize slope enemy caves on Hill Nan. By 1330 "F" was back where it started and was relieved by "E" Company. Its losses were three killed and thirty-two wounded.

"G" Company had not been able to move down off of its hill to help in the attack. As soon as its men attempted to come down off of the hill, they were engaged not only by the enemy in the caves in the southern base of the hill but received fire from Sugar Loaf, from the high ground to the front of the 5th Marines on the left, and from Dakeshi. The position of "G" Company was unique. It controlled the surface of the hill, but the Nips controlled the earth below, and the area to its direct front. In a sense Nan Hill was the key to Sugar Loaf, but the situation was one which would be repeated many times. With the enemy holding a number of mutually supporting hills and dominating ground, it was to be learned that more than one of the hills involved would have to be taken simultaneously; to assault one, and one alone, would mean that the entire brunt of the enemy's fire power located on the adjacent hills would be brought to bear and troops would find their positions untenable.

In this attack on 6 May, tanks from "A" Company, 1st Tank Battalion were used. In helping the infantry in its assault, the tanks were hit hard as soon as they moved out down the draw. In an effort to blast and burn out the caves under Nan Hill, and to bring direct fire to bear on Sugar Loaf, the tanks found themselves under a heavy barrage of artillery and mortar fire. This in itself was bad enough, but from well-concealed positions the enemy fired his 47mm anti-tank guns and three tanks were disabled, having received a total of ten hits; two were destroyed and left burning in the field.

"E" Company was the next to attempt to take Sugar Loaf. On the morning of 7 May, with rain falling and the ground a sea of mud, the 2d Battalion ordered "G" Company to move out at 0850 in a tank-infantry assault upon the caves and burial vaults directly in front of its position. Because of the weather, the tanks were not used initially. It was difficult for them to move, and their visibility was extremely limited. It soon became evident that the attack could not continue without tank support, and while waiting for the tanks to make their appearance, all of the company and battalion support weapons massed their fires upon the reverse slope of Hill 60 where "G" Company reported seeing an estimated company of the enemy. "E" Company was notified to be prepared to attack at 1315. Prior to the attack the fires from four battalions of artillery and from one fire support ship were brought to bear upon the foot and crest of Sugar Loaf. Artillery air bursts and the battalion's 81mm and 60mm mortars worked over the reverse slope. "E" Company had little difficulty in reaching its objective, and by 1422 had many of its troops on top of Hill

60. Originally it had been planned to fan one of the platoons to the left side of Sugar Loaf. However the fire on the left side of the hill from Hill Nan was so intense the platoon was forced to remain on the right side of Sugar Loaf, protected by a razor-backed formation of the ground which divided the hill from foot to summit, approximately in half. The 3d Platoon held its portion of the hill with comparative ease, but the 1st Platoon met stiff resistance. For one and a half hours the Japs poured heavy mortar, knee mortar, white phosphorus shells, hand grenades, and satchel charges into "E's" ranks. There was a great deal of hand-to-hand fighting. It was impossible to keep enough grenades on the line. One of the men in the 1st Platoon said:

"We used two machine guns effectively to drop those Japs who attempted to rush over the summit of the hill, returned satchel charges that the Nips threw at us, and clubbed them with rifle butts."

Men continued to fight after they were wounded. One N.C.O. directed his squad until the moment he died from his wounds.

At the end of the first hour and a half, concentrated enemy mortar and knee mortar fire forced the company off its objective, but once again the men battled their way to the top and dug in for another hour and a half. Finally sniper, mortar, and particularly, machine gun fire from the reverse slope of "G" Company's hill became so intense that it was evident that the position had become untenable.

The evacuation of casualties while the fire fight was in progress was extremely difficult, not that there was a shortage of men; indeed, there were too many on the hill as it was, and the company was dangerously crowded. The wounded had to be dragged off of the hill under fire. The battalion's 81mm mortars and supporting artillery dropped smoke on Dakeshi Ridge and in the valley to the left of Sugar Loaf to cover the evacuation.

At 1700 the battalion commander ordered "E" Company off of the hill. This withdrawal was covered by smoke and was made in an orderly manner. During this attack "E" Company lost eight killed and thirty-seven wounded.

In the meantime "G" Company, with the aid of twelve tanks, was working on the caves in its sector. The following is the terse report of "A" Company, 4th Tank Battalion for this day's fighting:

"A total of twelve tanks supported the attack of G-2-1 in TA 7775S. A hillside with many caves was the principal target. Tanks were employed in two relays of six tanks each. Mortar fire and possibly AT fire from direction of Dakeshi Ridge drawn by the tanks. One tank hit a pottery mine but was repaired at once and returned to camp. There was one platoon of six flame-throwers employed in this action. A section of three worked with each relay of six covered by tanks and did excellent work in reducing several caves. Twenty-four hundred gallons of napalm were expended during the day's action. Most of the tank work involved moving up a draw and firing into high ground. Several enemy were killed in caves. Numerous machine guns and pill-boxes were destroyed."

The men of "G" Company had found that it was not an easy matter to seal the enemy caves; they had tried it with and without flame throwers, had directed tank fire and had used demolitions. From its positions "G" Company could see the Nips running around on Sugar Loaf and could observe the effectiveness of the fire from enemy 47mm AT guns against our tanks. One of the men said:

"The Japs knew our positions. Their observation from the commanding ground was perfect. Still, they paid a surprisingly small amount of attention to us and concentrated on assaulting troops. Some of the Nips were either brazen or stupid. I looked

over the ledge of our position one day to find one frying bacon. At night we could hear them stirring around. The thump of their knee mortars became a familiar sound. Our grenades usually settled them for a while."

On 8-9 May circumstances permitted greater opportunity for "G" Company to work on caves. The task was extremely hazardous and often disheartening. Demolition charges placed in the mouth of one cave would sometimes blow out several other openings. The men never knew whether or not deflade, which they considered good while a charge went off, would not turn out to be another port to a cave passage. The company knew that the Japs brought in reinforcements to replace those who had been sealed in or killed by concussion. In several instances caves that were sealed were unsealed again by the enemy digging out from the inside. On 9 May the 2d Battalion received orders from regiment that it would support the attack of the 1st Battalion on its left by fire. Regiment was throwing in the 1st Battalion to assault Dakeshi Ridge from the north in an effort to diminish fire from that area.<sup>8</sup> If a coordinated attack were made whereby the 2d Battalion would again assault Sugar Loaf and clean out Nan Hill while the 1st Battalion attacked the northwestern portion of the Dakeshi plateau, it was believed that these positions could be overrun, and the obstacles in the path of the main attack for Dakeshi would be removed. By 1240 the 1st Battalion was on its objective almost directly to the rear or east of Sugar Loaf. "E" Company was ordered to prepare to take Sugar Loaf with "F" Company in support. At this point flame throwing tanks and M7's were thrown into direct support, affording cover for the troops flanking to the left. The men of "E" Company were anxious to assault the hill. While the artillery laid a time-on-target concentration on the top and slope of Sugar Loaf, the 81 and 60mm mortars played over its concealed rear. At the same time tanks shot up the approaching ground.

The attack moved around the flanks of Sugar Loaf and up onto its top. On Hill Nan, "G" Company attacked and overran the enemy caves under the hill. The men of "E" Company, now resting on top of Sugar Loaf, were greatly impressed with the excellent coordination of infantry units, tanks, and supporting weapons in the assault of this hill. At last Sugar Loaf was held firmly by Marines.

## 6. THE AWACHA POCKET

While the 1st Marines were capturing the high ground north of the Asa Kawa including the Jichaku area, Hill 60 (Sugar Loaf) and the western slopes of the Dakeshi plateau as the regimental direction of attack pointed toward the southeast to pass around the Asa Kawa Estuary, the 5th Marines were hammering away at a heavy pocket of enemy resistance known as the Awacha Pocket.\* This area lay to the northeast of Dakeshi and was on the left of the 1st Division's zone of action when that division relieved the 27th Infantry Division.

Like the 1st Marines, the 5th Marines shuttled south from the east central portion of Okinawa. On 1 May the 2d Battalion relieved elements of the 106th Infantry on the left or east side of the regimental sector and the 3d Battalion relieved elements of the 105th Infantry Regiment on the right (west) side. The 1st Battalion was initially in reserve. By 1700 the reliefs were completed without undue incident except for a few casualties from enemy mortar and artillery fire.

Attacking at 0900 on 2 May, the 2d Battalion managed to advance its center and right flank companies, but "E" Company on the left, whose mission was to maintain contact with the 306th Infantry, could not advance since this Army regiment was pinned down at

<sup>8</sup>See Appendix.

\*See Map No. 13.

its line of departure. "G" and "F" Companies had moved out about two hundred yards, but their positions became untenable due to heavy fire from their left rear and front. The 3d Battalion received heavy fire while on the line of departure and could not advance. The terrain in the 5th Marines' zone of action was unfavorable for maneuvering, and it was soon seen that any movement of this regiment would depend upon the progress of the unit on its left flank.

Using a smoke screen, the 2d Battalion extricated its companies from their precarious positions. In an effort to probe the front for possible routes of attack and to further determine enemy resistance, reconnaissance patrols were sent out but immediately were hit with small arms and knee mortar fire from the high ground in the zone of the 307th Infantry and were forced to retire.

Little was accomplished on 3 May. The 1st Battalion passed through the 2d and continued the attack at 0810. After the passage of lines was effected, the 2d Battalion moved over to its left and relieved the 2d Battalion, 307th Infantry. The expanding zone of action and commitment of all three of its battalions necessitated that the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines be attached to the 5th. "K" Company of the 3d Battalion, 5th, made an advance of two hundred yards but was hit so hard by enemy fire it was forced to withdraw under a smoke screen.

The day's attack proved the correctness of the change in plan made previously which called for a pivoting movement by the 5th Marines in order to flank the high ground in its left zone of action from the west, rather than to try to take it by frontal assaults from the north.<sup>9</sup>

Next day the real pivoting began with the 2d Battalion on the regimental left holding and maintaining contact with the 307th Infantry on its left and the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines on its right.

On the far right the 3d Battalion moved over eight hundred yards while swinging on the 1st Battalion which in turn advanced about seventy yards on the left and nearly four hundred on the right.

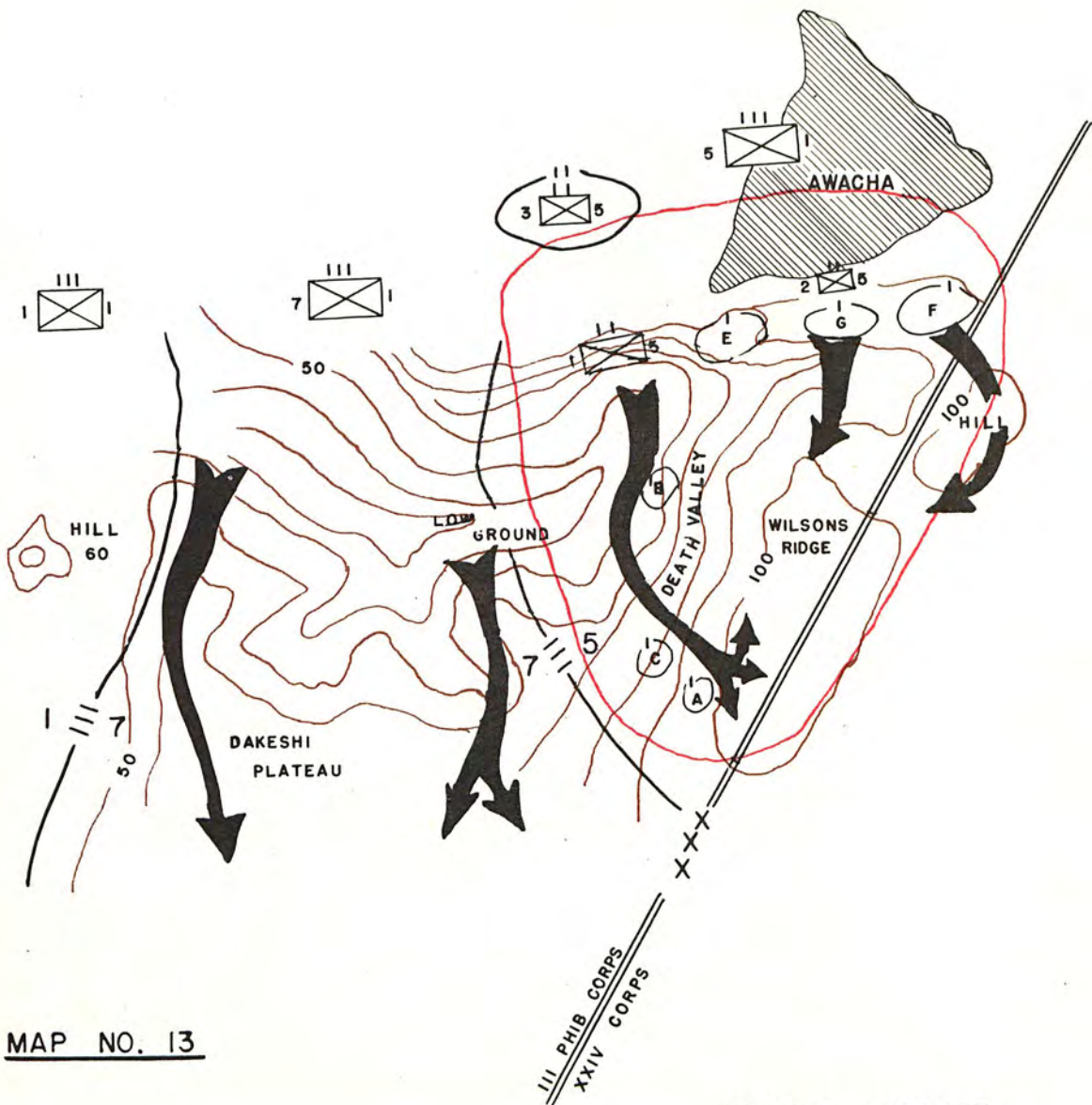
Tanks were indispensable in gaining ground on this day. At the disposal of the 5th Marines were twenty tanks and six large flame thrower tanks. The tanks were used in direct support and destroyed numerous caves and pillboxes. The flame thrower tanks were used effectively, being supported by tanks and infantry and succeeded in destroying the enemy in caves and in burning away the concealing camouflage so that high explosive fire could be directed into the mouths of caves and other enemy positions. Blasting away with their guns and spraying the defended positions with their machine gun fire, the tanks enabled the infantry to advance in many cases across open ground to seize enemy strong-points. Another function of the tanks that helped morale a great deal was their use in evacuating casualties via the escape hatch after they had laid down a protective smoke screen.

During the early morning hours of 5 May the enemy tried to infiltrate through the lines of the 2d and 3d Battalions. This was the beginning of a series of abortive attempts at infiltration. The 3d Battalion was quite busy all day, from dawn to dusk, sealing caves and neutralizing enemy positions in its immediate zone of action. During the day the 307th Infantry advanced on the left of the 5th Marines, and the 2d Battalion was able to advance its left flank about two hundred and fifty yards.

The action report of the 2d Battalion for 5 May is very interesting: "A field order covering operations for 5 May was received during the night of the 4th, ordering the Bat-

<sup>9</sup>See Appendix.



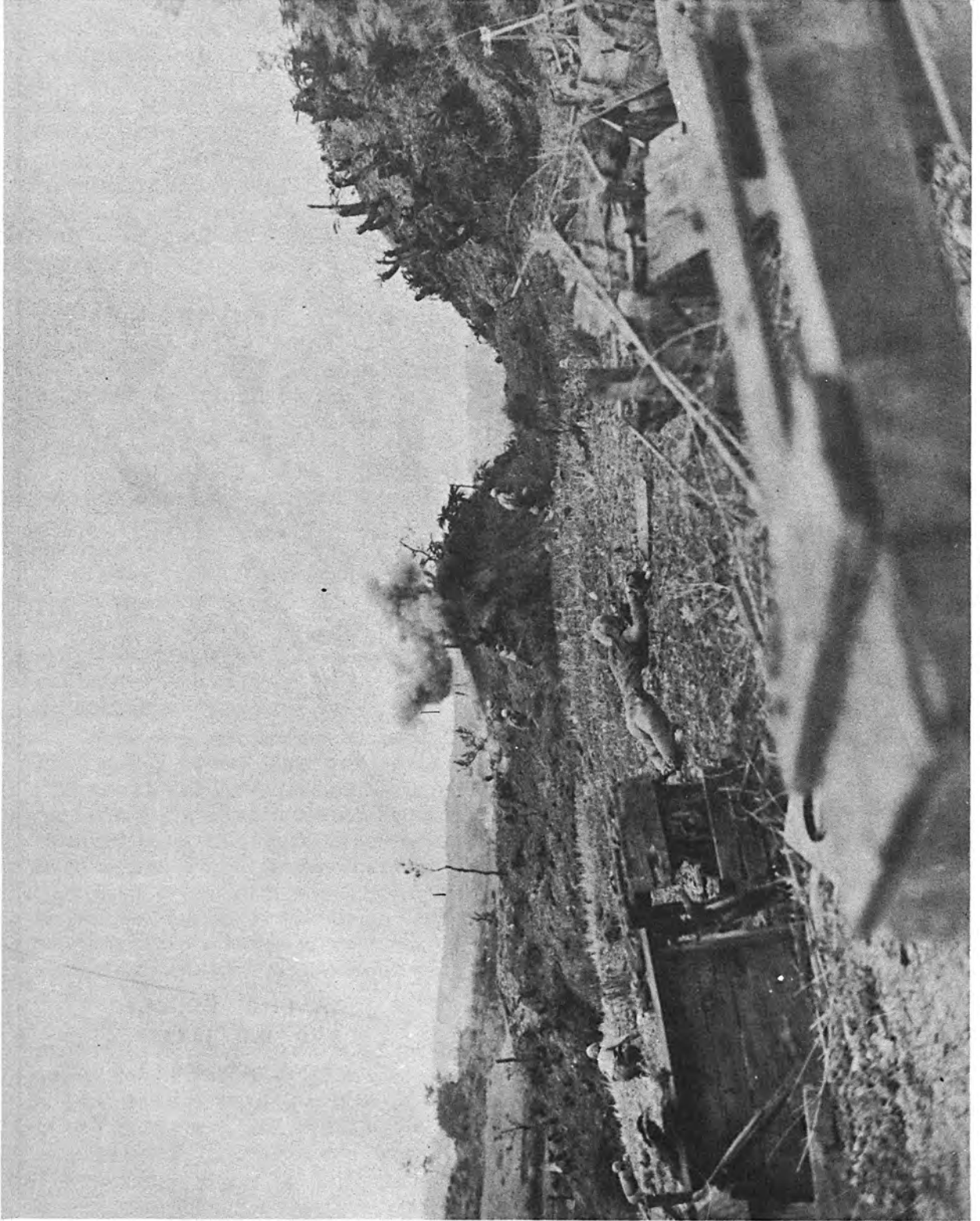


MAP NO. 13

AWACHA POCKET  
 10 MAY 1945  
 SCALE - 1:20,000

HASTY SKETCH

*Handwritten signature*



The First Marines Seal A Cave

talion to resume the attack at 0730 using the same zones, boundaries, and objectives as on the preceding day. The attack was to be preceded by air strikes, artillery, and Naval gun fire on targets from 500 to 4,000 yards in front of our lines. The artillery preparation for the battalion was to begin at 0730 and was to be lifted when masked by advancing troops.

"The attack moved out on time and almost immediately "E" Company on the right was again pinned down by heavy automatic and mortar fire coming from in front of the 1st Battalion's left flank. "F" Company moved out for about seventy-five yards before they ran into heavy fire from several caves in a knoll to their front. At 1100 a carrier pigeon was observed to fly up from this vicinity and was shot down and retrieved by personnel in the Battalion O.P. The message it carried stated that we were attacking 'the 4th C.P., on Hill 105.' At 1115 it was decided to try to bring tanks up to fire on these positions and at 1230 six tanks reported to the battalion C.P. and were dispatched to "F" Company. With an officer from "F" Company acting as guide, the tanks then moved to a position just behind our lines at the southern edge of Awacha, turned left and attempted to move along the line out toward our left flank. At 1355 a terrific artillery barrage of over 100 rounds hit the battalion's left flank, and "F" Company, attacking over open ground, was hard hit. The tanks were withdrawn and "F" Company let two platoons fall back to their original positions to reorganize. By 1500 "F" had again moved out and occupied their most advanced positions and "G" Company was ordered to effect a relief of "F" Company immediately. This relief was completed at 1625 though one platoon of "F" Company holding the extreme left flank of the battalion sector remained on line and having organized its defense for the night was attached to "G" Company. At 2000 the entire battalion front was again subjected to heavy shelling for over an hour. Ninety-one men and five officers joined the battalion during the day as replacements and were placed in rear of the Battalion Command Post preparatory to assignment on the following day. Twelve of these men became casualties from enemy artillery during the night. Shortly after midnight an enemy counterattack of estimated company strength was launched against the battalion left flank, and heavy close quarter's fighting raged until just before dawn. "F" Company, now in reserve, was alerted at 0300 and moved forward to a position in readiness just behind the line. However, our lines held, and as the attack was repelled at dawn, it was unnecessary to commit "F". After daylight, 125 dead Nips, all heavily armed, and several light and heavy machine guns and mortars were found in and around our left flank positions."

This quotation from the 2d Battalion's Action Report is particularly illuminating because in one day's action it points out so many of the problems common to periods of action put in on the lines by units. Constant and heavy casualties made necessary the reinforcement of front line units with replacement officers and men. Many of these were wounded and evacuated without ever participating in an assault or drive, some within hours after joining their new organization. The heavy artillery fire laid on "F" Company when the tanks moved up to assist them was a typical Japanese action. Since the Japanese could observe practically all of our movements and maneuvers by virtue of their being on higher ground, they seldom passed up an opportunity to use their artillery, mortars, and 47mm anti-tank guns with devastating effects on the infantry in the immediate area of the tanks. For this reason, men in the rifle companies, while they welcomed the tanks to help them assault fortified positions, at the same time hated to see them come into the company area because of the enemy fire they inevitably drew. The same held true for rocket trucks and M7 Tank Destroyers.

There was very little ground gained by the 5th Marines during the next three days. With the forward movement of the 2d Battalion on the left, the pivotal action of the right elements described an encirclement of the Japanese pocket of resistance. The 3d Battalion, 7th Marines had been attached to the 5th Marines, and its elements had been fed into the right side of the line. On 9 May, 1st Battalion, 7th Marines was also attached early in the afternoon. At 1855 both of these battalions reverted to the control of the 7th Marines, and that regiment prepared to continue the attack in its zone of action toward Dakeshi, leaving the 5th Marines to complete the encirclement of the Awacha Pocket and to systematically reduce it.

During the period 6 May to 9 May inclusive, the 5th Marines moved very little but worked on the numerous caves, pillboxes, and installations that honeycombed the hills and ridges in its zone of action. Every night the battalions received sporadic mortar and artillery fire; sometime during each of these nights the Japanese either attempted infiltrations or actually counterattacked. Over seventy Nips were killed during the night of 6-7 May; approximately the same were accounted for on the following night, and on the morning of 9 May roughly sixty dead Nips were found in the 1st Battalion's area.

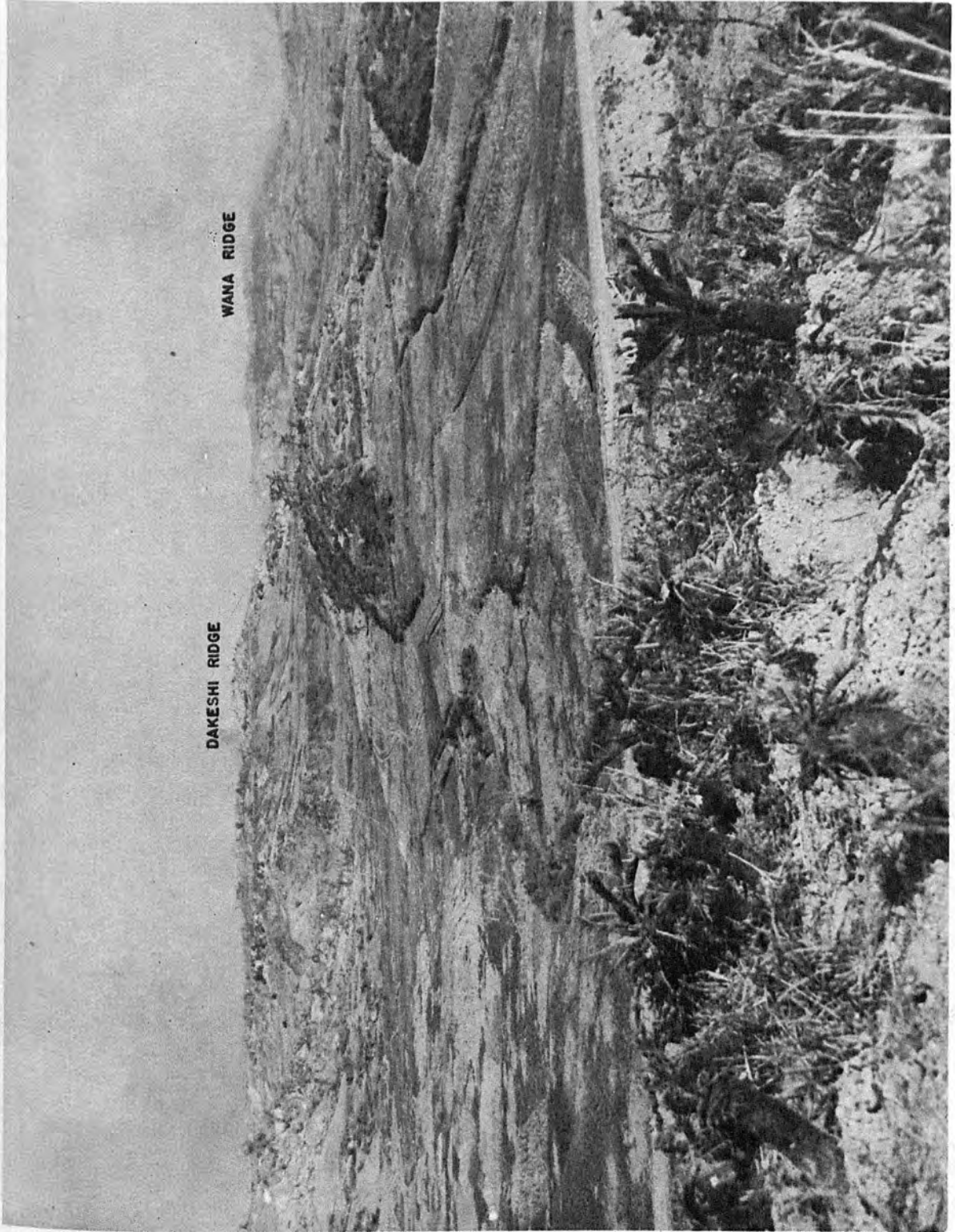
South of Awacha about five hundred yards, and about eight hundred yards northeast of Dakeshi village, there is an oblong ridge, whose northwestern side is quite irregular, called Wilson's Ridge.\* To its north and west lies a valley whose mouth begins just south of Awacha Town. This valley spreads as you look down into it to the southwest. Subsequent action and casualties led to its being named "Death Valley".

To take Wilson's Ridge and Death Valley the 5th Marines fought from 3 May to 11 May, one day after the regiment was in reserve for the 1st Marine Division. All the efforts of the 1st and 2d Battalions up until 10 May were designed toward maneuvering their companies into positions from which the Ridge could be overrun and the Valley cleared. The crazy pattern of Japanese defenses complicated the problem. With caves and pillboxes on front and reverse slopes, as well as flanking slopes, the enemy was always in a position to deliver fire, regardless of our direction of attack, until we had occupied physically every foot of important ground and methodically destroyed and sealed all enemy positions. The situation on 10 May was this: 2d Battalion was on the 5th Marines' left with companies from left to right: "F", "G", and "E". Next was "A" of the 1st Battalion, "C" and then "B". The 2d Battalion's zone of action included the eastern part of Wilson's Ridge and a hill northeast of lesser importance. The 1st Battalion had to cross Death Valley to strike at the remainder of Wilson's Ridge. The 7th Marines were attacking the Dakeshi Plateau to the right of the 5th Marines' zone of action.

On 10 and 11 May the 1st and 2d Battalions completed the encirclement and reduction of the Awacha Pocket by successfully assaulting and holding (on the latter day) Wilson's Ridge. While the encirclement of this pocket seems like an isolated incident, that conclusion is far from being true. What was happening was that an enemy strongpoint, a part of a heavily fortified and fanatically manned defensive line, was being reduced. This action was only a part of a pattern of similar actions to be repeated again and again as the attack moved south.

During the early evening 9 May the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines held a conference and formulated a plan for the battalion's attack for the following day. Inasmuch as the 2d Battalion was the pivot, it was obvious that it should be concerned primarily with supporting the 1st Battalion on its right with fire, destroying enemy caves and emplacements within its immediate zone of action, and attacking that part of Wilson's Ridge which lay within its zone of action. Briefly, this was the plan:

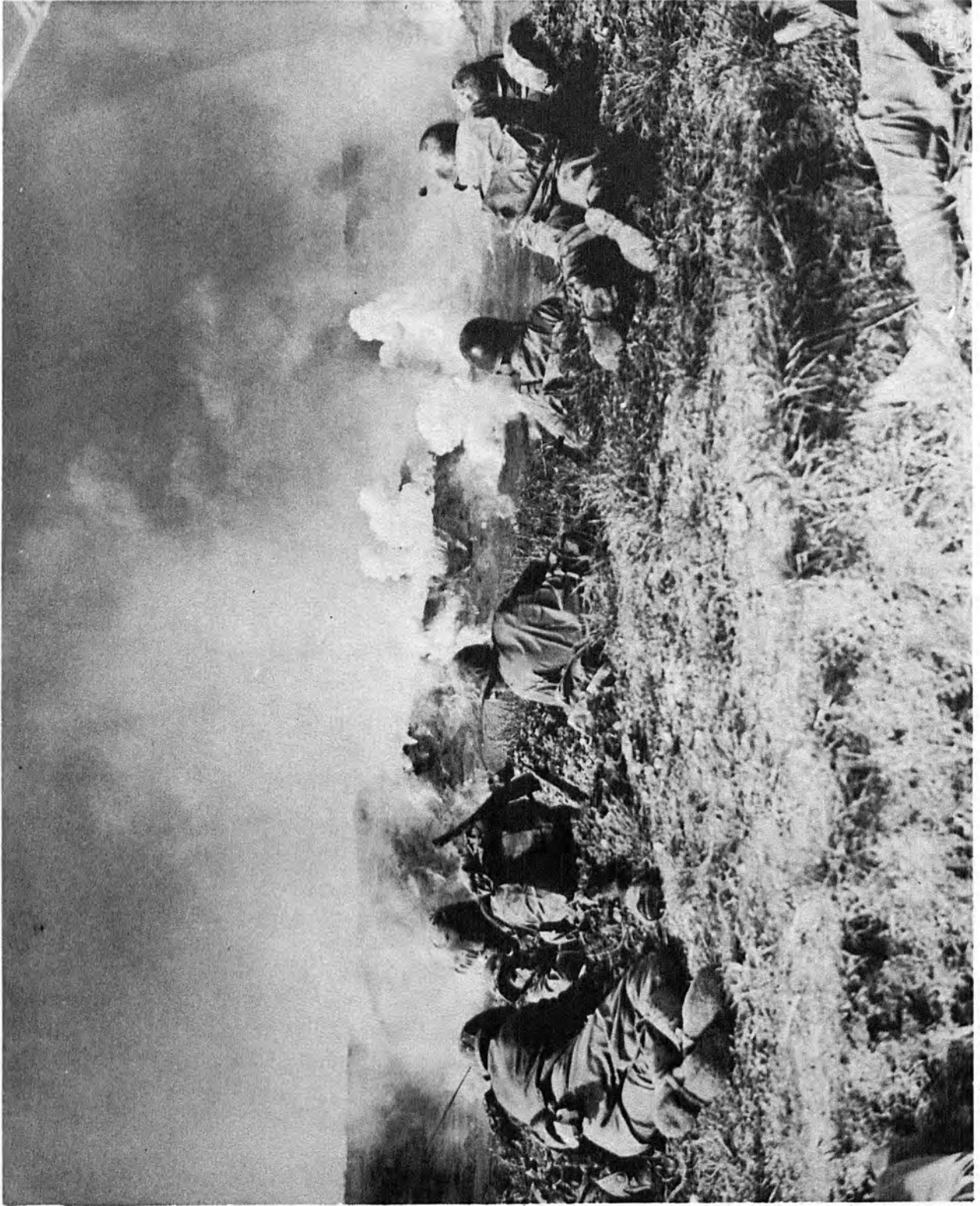
\*See Map 13.



DAKESHI RIDGE

WANA RIDGE

Our Artillery Works on Dakeshi and Wana Ridges



The Seventh Marines Use White Phosphorus

"G" Company was to be moved around from its left flank position to the mouth of the draw (Death Valley) where it was to be met by three tanks coming south from Awacha, at which time the company was to take up positions in order to fire on enemy gun ports and cave entrances in the draw. At the same time, the advance of "G" Company and the movement of the tanks south of Awacha was to be covered by three more tanks which were to move out in front of "E" Company on the target pulling up to the edge of the gorge and firing back into positions in the reverse side of the cliff facing the 1st Battalion. Simultaneously, one more tank and one flame thrower tank were to move to the battalion's extreme right flank, engaging the automatic weapons and possible AT gun positions covering the southern exits from Awacha with their 75mm fire and flame.

At 0620 a flame thrower tank and its escorting tank moved out rapidly; ten minutes later they were followed by the other six tanks. "G" Company moved out rapidly to the designated rendezvous, but the tanks that were to meet them there were delayed by a bomb crater in the road and did not reach the rendezvous until a half-hour later. "G" Company, waiting in the exposed mouth of the draw, was receiving heavy fire and suffered numerous casualties. Meanwhile the flame thrower tank moved up to the battalion's right flank and sprayed the whole north side of the draw in front of "B" Company, while its escort tank fired its 75mm gun and machine guns at point blank range. Enemy troops, flushed out by the flames, were quickly destroyed, along with a 47mm AT gun which had been perfectly concealed by natural camouflage in a position less than fifty yards from our lines. This gun covered all exits south of Awacha. Its crew was burned to death in the position before it was able to put the gun into action against the tanks moving out in support of "G" Company. By 0700 all tanks were in position and firing. Enemy fire subsided almost immediately, and "G" Company moved into the draw and in close quarter's fighting succeeded in eliminating resistance in its assigned sector. "F" Company attacked on the battalion's left flank without the benefit of preparatory fire, because of its limited frontage, with two objectives in mind; one was a little hill two hundred yards northeast of Wilson's Ridge; the other was to gain a foothold on the northern end of Wilson's Ridge. Both of these objectives were under fire from high ground to the southeast in the Army's zone of action, but it was felt that the two objectives should be occupied in order to relieve pressure on the 1st Battalion as it attacked across Death Valley. "F" Company succeeded in occupying both of its assigned objectives but was forced to pull its troops back from the little hill northeast of Wilson's Ridge because of heavy enemy fire.

"E" Company was occupied mainly with maintaining contact with the 1st Battalion and supporting its advance with fire. Since "B" Company remained in position, "E" Company could not advance and concerned itself mainly with delivering supporting fires and mopping up in its immediate zone of action.

In the 1st Battalion's zone, the plan of attack was for "A" Company on the right to move down across the draw toward Wilson's Ridge followed by "C" Company, while "B" Company assisted with supporting fire. "A" moved rapidly and reached the slope of Wilson's Ridge, at which time it received heavy machine gun and mortar fire from the front and both flanks. Tanks and armored amphibian tractors could not support the action due to poor road conditions. The position of the company rapidly became untenable with casualties mounting. It was impossible to evacuate the wounded by carrying parties because of the terrific fire that the enemy laid down in Death Valley. Two amphibious tractors were sent forward to evacuate the wounded but were unable to get there because of road conditions. At 1700 the assault troops were ordered to withdraw to their positions

held on the previous night. Heavy smoke was laid in front of their positions so that the casualties could be carried out by hand on "ponchos". "C" Company had followed "A" Company's advance and managed to put two platoons on Wilson's Ridge with "A" Company. It was forced to withdraw under the same circumstances that compelled the withdrawal of "A" Company.

On the following day 11 May the 1st Battalion succeeded in crossing Death Valley with both "A" and "C" Companies and captured Wilson's Ridge. The 2d Battalion, using all available tanks, supported the action by fire. Casualties for the day were fairly heavy, but the objective attained justified the cost. The day's end saw the 7th Marines cross the front of the 5th Marines in its flanking movement to gain contact with the XXIV Corps. Thus with the crossing of Death Valley, the assault on Wilson's Ridge and the movement of the 7th Marines in its flanking action, the Awacha Pocket was finally overrun. During the next few days, the 5th Marines occupied themselves in mopping up this pocket where they had sustained so many casualties against bitter and fanatical resistance. The 5th Marines were now to get a few days' rest before moving over to the right of the 1st Marine Division's zone of action, where they would relieve the 1st Marines on 15 May.

## 7. DAKESHI RIDGE

The 7th Marines, after moving down the island from an area near Ishikawa to Kakazu on 2 May, was first in Division Reserve. During the first week of May the regiment as a whole remained in a reserve status, although from time to time its battalions were assigned different missions as circumstances dictated. On 3 May the 1st Battalion, 7th was moved forward to a position northwest of Machinato airstrip to provide security and reserve for the 1st Marines. This battalion set up a perimeter defense along the beach and helped to repel the attempted Japanese counter-landing of 4 May. At this time the 2d Battalion was in a supporting position on the right flank of the 1st Battalion. On 3 May the helped to repel the attempted Japanese counter-landing of 4 May. At this time the 2d 3d Battalion, 7th Marines was attached to the 5th Marines who were concerned at this time with the Awacha Pocket. The 2d Battalion relieved the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines northwest of Jichaku, and under parent control launched an assault to gain and hold the high ground overlooking the Asa Kawa on the right flank of the 1st Marines. This battalion remained in its position after securing this ground until relieved by the 1st Battalion, 22d Marines on the afternoon of 8 May.

Having been relieved of its zone of responsibility by the 22d Marines on 9 May, the 7th Marines prepared to take its place in the line, with the Dakeshi Ridge as its main objective.\* On the morning of 10 May the 7th Marines attacked with its 1st and 3d Battalions in assault and its 2d Battalion and the 3d Battalion of the 5th Marines in reserve.

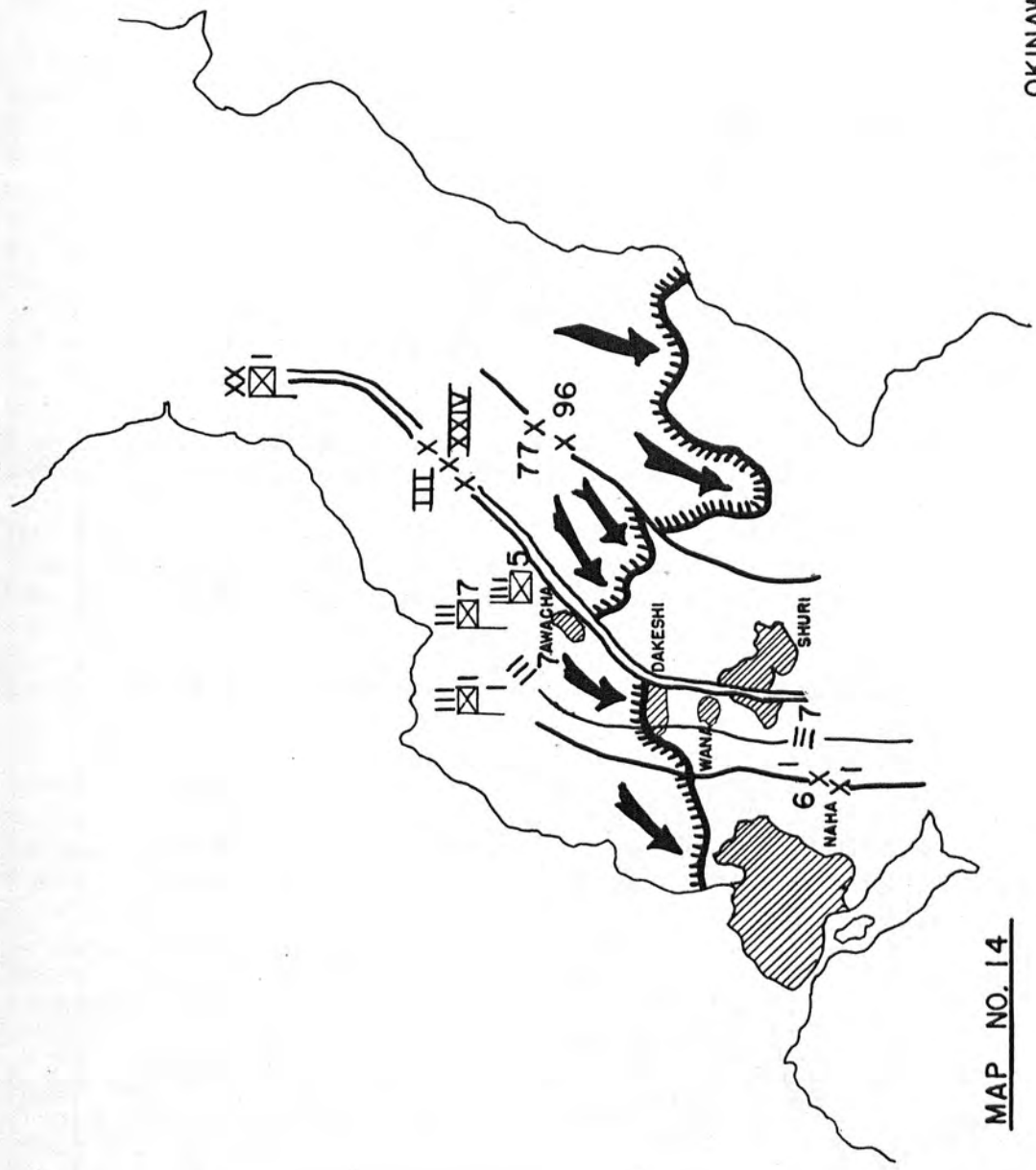
At 0800 the 1st Battalion moved out into the attack with "B" Company in assault, and its other two companies in reserve, on the left of the regimental zone of action. Initially contact was broken with the 5th Marines on the left and with the 3d Battalion on the right until "B" Company had reached the low ground north of Dakeshi Ridge where visual contact was established. "A" Company was moved up on the left of "B", and by 0900 the two companies began to receive machine gun and mortar fire, and an artillery and 81mm mortar concentration was immediately placed on Dakeshi Ridge and the town of Dakeshi. "B" Company's left rear was receiving considerable fire, and it was necessary to put screening smoke from the battalion's 81mm mortars in that area to reduce the effectiveness of the enemy fire. In spite of this smoke, the company continued to receive machine gun fire

\*See Map No. 16.



OKINAWA SHIMA  
7-TH MARINES CAPTURE DAKESHI  
12 MAY, 1945

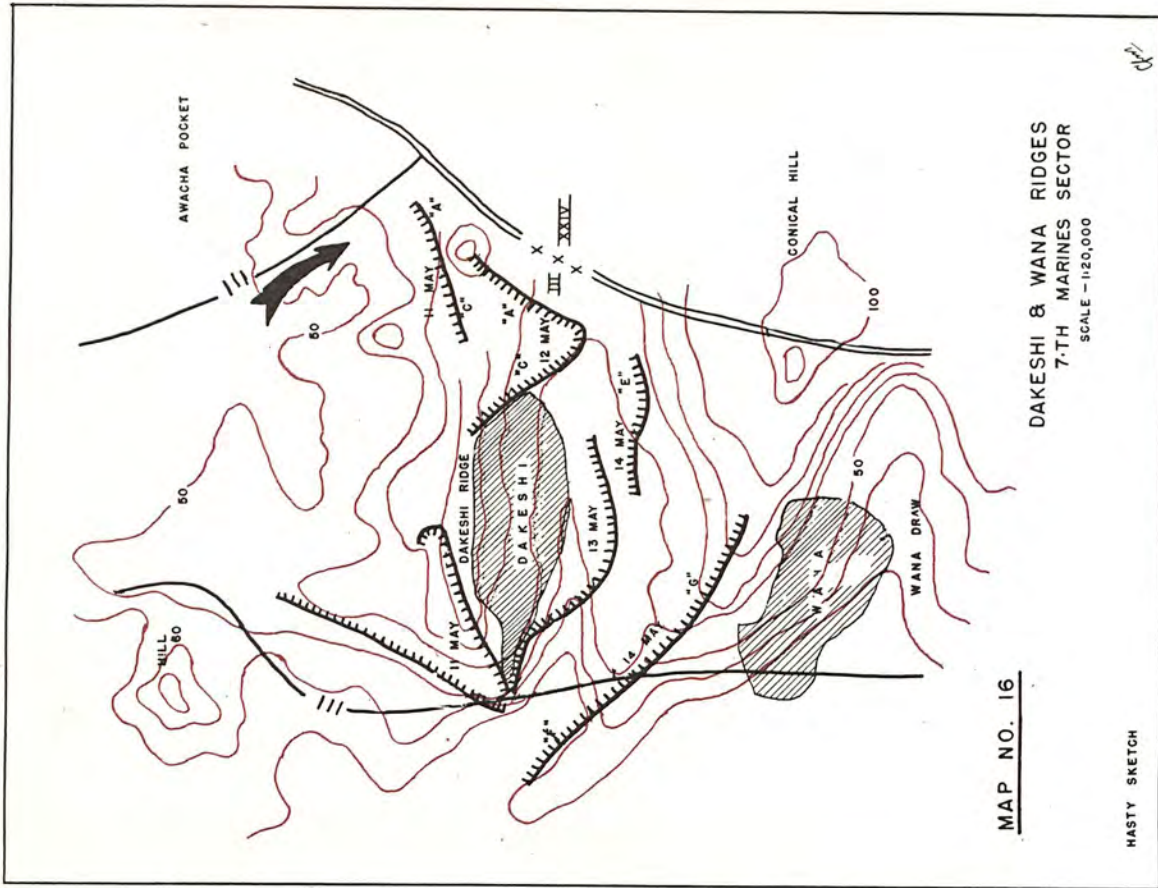
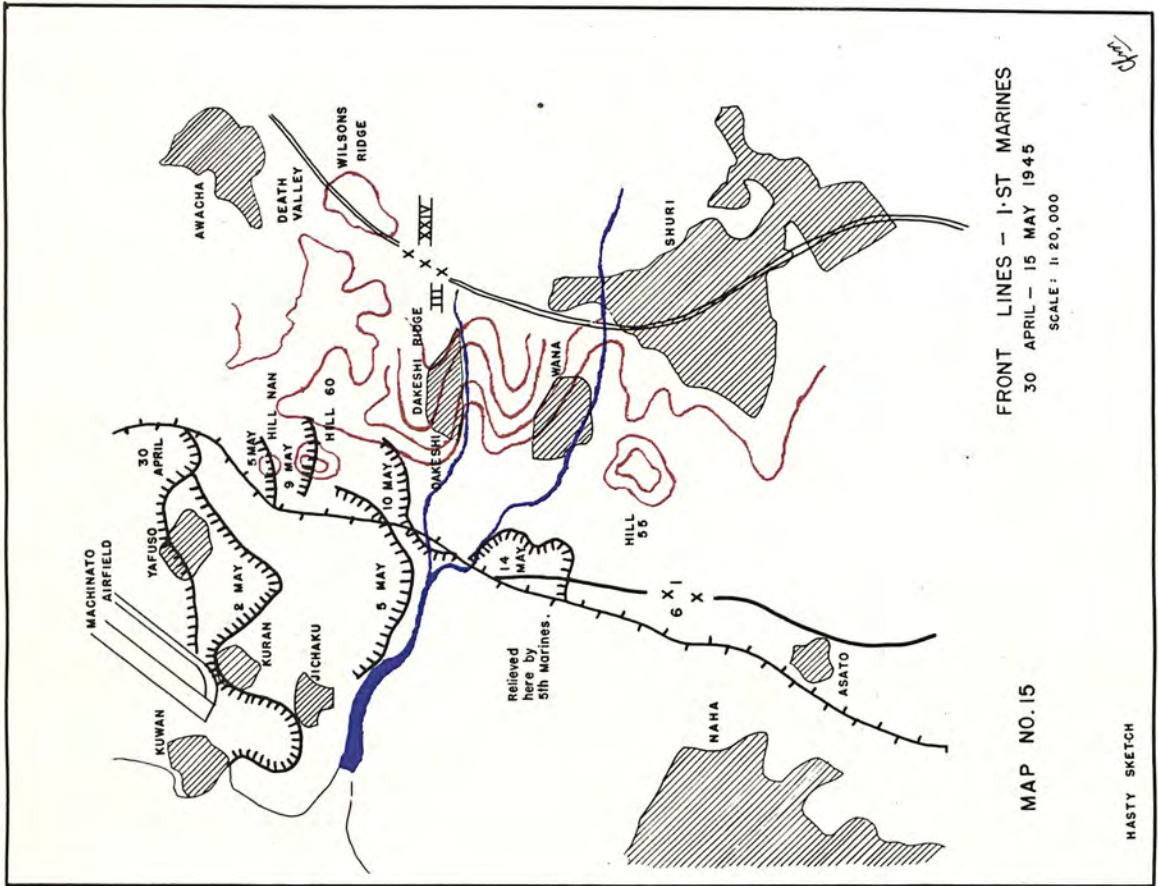
SCALE: 1"= 100,000'-0"



MAP NO. 14

TAKEN FROM 1-ST MAR. DIV. SAR.

*Map*



from its left rear which, with mortar and small arms fire from the Ridge to its front, prevented any further advance. "A" Company was able to stay in its position until the 5th Marines on the left commenced to withdraw to its original lines. Efforts were made to hold the positions attained by these two companies, but enemy fire from the front and the two exposed flanks necessitated withdrawal to better positions. By 1854 all forward elements had pulled back to the lines held on the previous night and had evacuated their wounded.

The 3d Battalion was unable to carry its attack forward in its zone of action due to heavy enemy fire and poor approaches on the ground for attack. Next morning at 0500 the front line companies of the 3d Battalion began to receive automatic, small arms, and mortar fire, and the enemy made a counterattack on their positions. All available fires were brought down, and the counterattack was repulsed with heavy enemy casualties. The 3d Battalion prepared to assist the 2d Battalion, which was passing through its lines, to continue the attack. Some difficulty was experienced in getting tanks into position, due to the fact that the 1st Battalion's tanks had to move over the same route as the tanks supporting the 3d Battalion. At 0900 units of the 2d Battalion began moving through the right flank of the 3d Battalion. With the 2d Battalion attacking from the right and partly across the front of the 3d Battalion, all that remained for the 3d Battalion was to destroy the remaining enemy to its front and support, when possible, the 2d Battalion. On this day, 11 May, the regimental plan of attack called for a two-pronged attack with the 1st Battalion in assault on the left of the regimental zone of action and the 2d Battalion in assault on the right. The objective for the two battalions was the high ground north of Dakeshi. At 0700, "A" and "B" Companies of the 1st Battalion commenced their attack and immediately came under heavy enemy fire. Further advance was impossible until supporting tanks arrived about a half-hour later, at which time "C" Company advanced through the forward elements and continued the attack with "A" and "B" supporting the advance by fire. "C" Company moved slowly to the foot of Dakeshi Ridge, where it received enemy machine gun fire on its left flank. Tanks were called in to deliver fire on enemy positions to the left, where they succeeded in killing a number of the enemy and effectively neutralized the fire from these positions. "C" Company continued its attack against heavy enemy opposition and succeeded in capturing 100 Meter Hill on the left of the battalion zone, from which it continued the attack until it reached the crest of Dakeshi Ridge before noon. The 1st Battalion then ordered "A" Company to move forward and occupy the ridge line to the left of "C". By 1310 "A" was moving forward with tanks. "C" Company had received heavy mortar fire and temporarily pulled down off of the ridge, but with "A" Company coming up on its left flank, it prepared to assault the crest as soon as "A" Company was abreast. Both companies displayed smoke signals, and "A" Company was guided into a position about one hundred yards to the left of "C" Company, at which time both companies assaulted and seized the crest of Dakeshi Ridge on the left of the battalion's zone of action. This particular ground was of vital importance because it denied the enemy excellent observation of the whole Machinato area, as well as that of the low ground around the Asa Kawa. These two companies set up their night defensive positions on Dakeshi Ridge.

On the right of the regimental zone of action the 2d Battalion, with "F" Company in assault, jumped off in the attack on Dakeshi Ridge at 0700. Small groups of the enemy, equipped with light machine guns and grenade launchers, had to be dislodged and mopped up as the company moved up to the approaches of the ridge. Initially casualties were light, and by 0948 forward elements of "F" Company had worked over the crest and were on the edge of Dakeshi. Enemy fire increased in intensity all along the front, necessitating

small local withdrawals, none greater than thirty yards. All during the day the battalion called counter-battery fire on known enemy artillery positions. Naval gun fire registered directly on a Japanese gun position and destroyed both the gun (6") and the house that had concealed it. By 1520 tanks had made their way to the rear of "F" Company, and the attack was continued with tank-infantry teams working on enemy strongpoints. The battalion's special action report states that the fighting on the ridge was reminiscent of that on "Bloody Nose Ridge" on Peleliu, and that it had become evident that the reverse side of Dakeshi Ridge and the village itself were as heavily defended, if not more so, than had been the forward slope. From Wana Ridge directly to the south, the enemy had perfect observation and excellent fields of fire.

Members of "F" Company made the following comments on the day's fighting:

"We did damn little attacking. Every time a man raised his head he was hit."

Men of the 3d Platoon explained that after their wounded were evacuated, the remainder withdrew **behind one tank**. Twenty minutes after the Japs opened up on the 2d Platoon, not more than a dozen men remained who were not wounded or killed. According to one of the men:

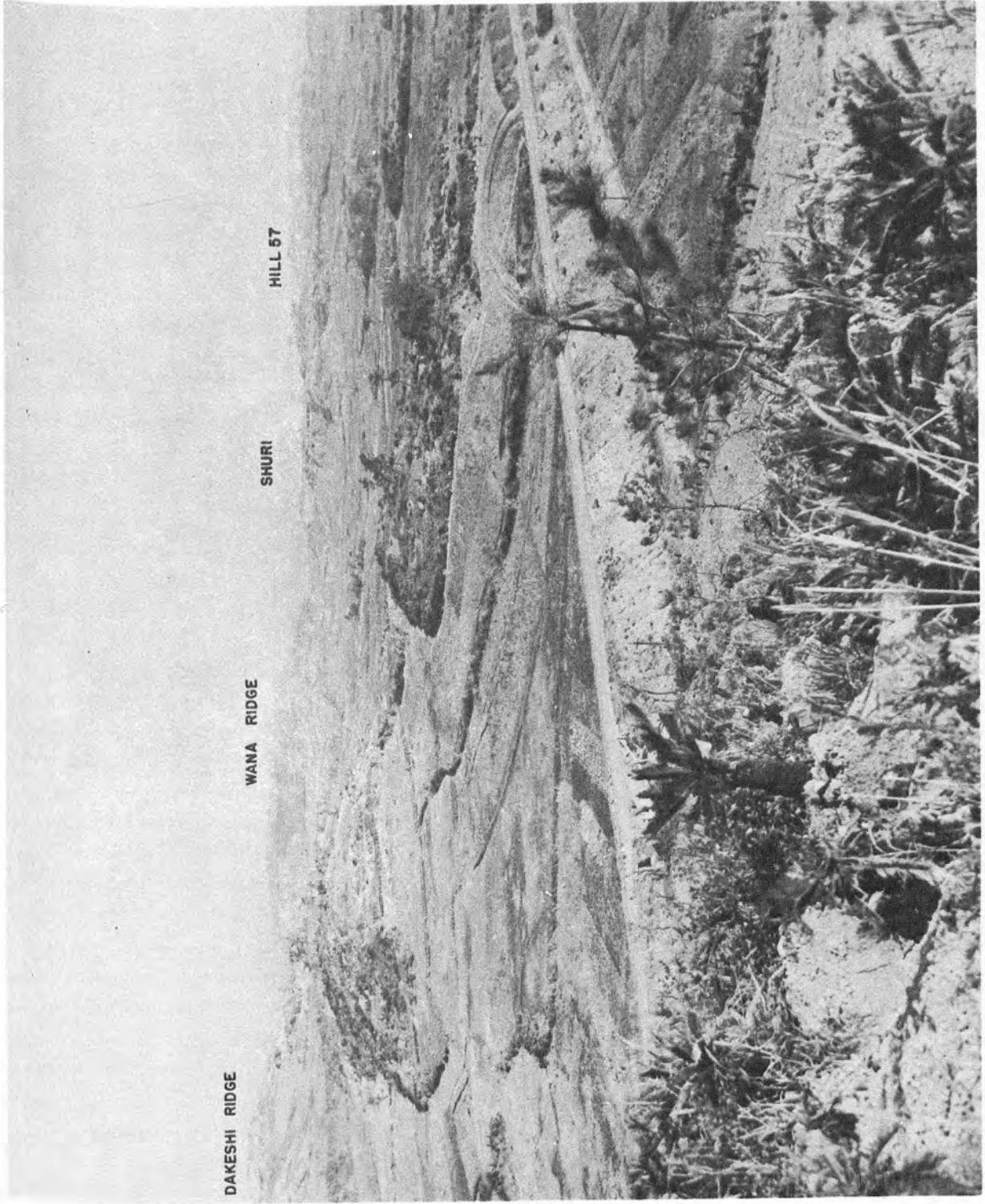
"One of our boys was struck by a spurt from a Nip flame thrower. We tried to get the flame out for fifteen minutes but every time anyone rushed across the plateau to aid him, he was hit. One of the corporals finally reached the burning boy and attempted to smother the flames with his poncho. He was shot in the eye."

"F" Company lost every squad leader in its two assault platoons, the 1st and 2d, as well as its commanding officer. During the day the company lost twenty-five men killed and thirty-five wounded. This little hill on the end of Dakeshi Ridge, where it had sustained its losses, was dubbed by "F" Company men "Suicide Hill".

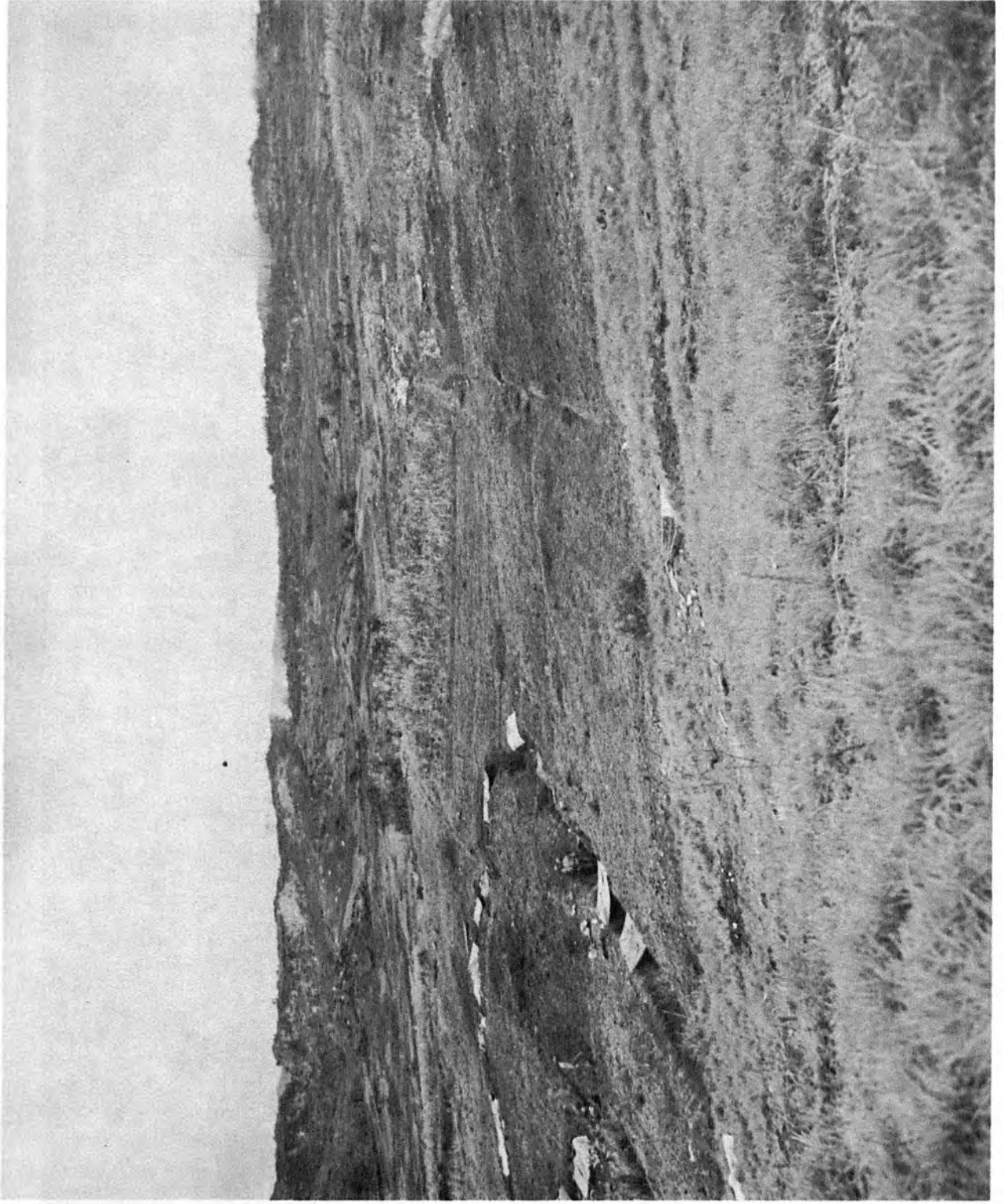
In attacking Dakeshi Ridge the 7th Marines had used a two-pronged attack with the spearheads on either extremity of the regimental zone of action. Progress made during the heavy fighting of 11 May had placed the 1st Battalion well up on the reverse slope of Dakeshi Ridge on the far east, and the 2d Battalion occupied a curved line on the far western end of the ridge. The reason for this type of maneuver was that the best ground for attack lay on the two outer flanks, the center of the ridge being the crowning crest of the base of a giant horseshoe whose two legs extended on the right and left flanks of the regimental zone of action. It had been recognized in the beginning that an attack up through the bowl formed by this horseshoe would have no chance for success, and it was felt that the area could be contained and mopped up by the 3d Battalion while the other two were taking the main ridge by flanking action.

On the morning of 12 May the regimental plan envisaged the necessity for joining the interior flanks of the 1st and 2d Battalions, and the effort of the day was directed along that line with the 2d Battalion getting off to a late start after waiting for its tanks to come up. The most advanced element of this battalion was "F" Company, followed by "G" and then "E" in a long curving line whose westernmost point was in the edge of Dakeshi town. During the day "G" eventually relieved "F" under the most difficult circumstances. The relief could be effected only by moving a fire team, or its equivalent, at a time. All day long the enemy pounded the area with artillery and mortar fire. After one enemy mortar barrage in one of its platoons, "F" Company had only one officer and one enlisted man left. In two platoons there was only one officer and eight enlisted. Before being relieved, "F" fought its way out on the nose extending forward on its right flank, engaging the enemy in a hand grenade fight.

In the meantime, "E" Company started to move over to the east in order to fill the



Looking Southeast Toward the Enemy's Fortress



Wana Draw (Looking Southeast)

gap between the two battalions. The movement of "E" was slowly executed because of the intensive work that had to be done by tank-infantry teams. By late afternoon the company was in position with its left flank joined to "C" Company, and Dakeshi Ridge was firmly held in its entirety.

The 1st Battalion spent a restless night. Because of the precarious positions of its companies, the battalion was apprehensive and anticipated an enemy counterattack before dawn. It was the lot of "C" Company to catch the brunt of this attack at 0235, 12 May, and the enemy was completely repulsed, leaving over forty dead Nips in the company's sector. Next morning's advance found thirty more who had been killed by our artillery fire during the night. The Marines were surprised to find that the counterattacking enemy dead were well-equipped with small arms, grenades, and grenade launchers and had, on their bodies, American cigarettes and first aid packets.

Early in the morning on this day, 12 May, the 1st Battalion prepared to move further up on the ridge in a southwesterly direction. Directly to the front of "C" Company and blocking its progress was a hill, sharply outlined in the shape of a pinnacle, that had given the company a great deal of trouble on the day before. As usual, the Japs occupied their reverse side and were in such favorable positions that flanking or frontal attacks were virtually impossible. There was only room for a platoon to maneuver, since all of the surrounding ground was fairly open and offered little protection and cover. First the platoon commander and three men tried to occupy the pinnacle by stealth, carrying with them a large number of grenades. This attempt failed, and 60mm mortar fire was laid on the reverse slope in a heavy concentration, followed immediately by an assault of twelve Marines, but this failed because the enemy was waiting unscathed, and threw such a barrage of hand grenades from protected positions that the Marines had to withdraw. Next, the engineers and demolitions men were brought up to place about four hundred pounds of charges along the top of the ridge. Our troops were withdrawn from the immediate vicinity while the demolitions were set off. The effect of the blasting was startling but ineffective. It failed to dislodge or destroy the enemy in his caves and holes on the south side of the pinnacle.

The platoon leader was not without hope after all of these failures. It was just the same old idea of utilizing all of the weapons and means at his disposal until the correct one for the particular situation was found. Sometimes it would be hand grenades, sometimes flame thrower tanks, or demolitions, mortars, or artillery; one never knew in the beginning. What worked one time in a given situation might fail in a similar situation the same day. The answer to this specific problem, the taking of the pinnacle, was found in the next move attempted. The platoon leader secured two flame thrower tanks and one line tank for an escort. Riding in one of the tanks in order to guide them in properly on the target, the officer directed the tanks through the saddle on the right of the pinnacle, and on the left of the 2d Battalion, and moved down the south slope of Dakeshi Ridge east of the village to where fire and flame could be brought to bear on the pinnacle's reverse side. The area was thoroughly worked over with 75mm gun fire and strafed by the tanks' .30 calibre machine guns. Simultaneously, the flame thrower tanks poured their flame over about three-fourths of the target. They could not work over the top of the reverse slope because of the broken terrain which limited their movement. As the tanks retired, the platoon leader went back to his troops and ordered another advance on the pinnacle. This time the assault was successful.

While the above incident is an isolated one, it is more or less typical of the problems faced by our troops. The Japanese defended tenaciously every piece of terrain that had

any tactical value. This pinnacle was one obstacle in the path of one company. Multiply this by the number of companies in the line on a given day, keeping in mind the fact that the taking of one important piece of ground only led to being confronted by another such obstacle, and the reader will begin to understand the extreme difficulty of movement faced by all front line units.

"A" Company advanced concurrently with "C" and met considerable opposition manifested in the form of small arms, automatic, mortar, and artillery fire. By late afternoon it had tied in its lines with "C" Company, who in turn was in contact with "E" of the 2d Battalion.

By nightfall the 7th Marines had a strong front line on favorable ground.\* Its next problem was to figure out how to get down off Dakeshi Ridge and onto Wana Ridge\*\* to its immediate front. In addition, there was a great deal of mopping up to be done in the area just secured.

During the night 12-13 May the enemy counterattacked in considerable force in an attempt to drive "E" Company from its positions on the ridge. The attempt proved abortive with about forty Japanese killed, including two officers who had on their persons excellent maps of the area.

Using tanks to support the movement of the infantry, "G" Company and "E" Company attacked simultaneously on the morning of 13 May in an effort to cross the draw to their front and gain footholds on Wana Ridge. To accomplish this it was necessary to occupy completely the town of Dakeshi which lay on the southern slope and foot of Dakeshi Ridge. From the edge of the town, the attack could be mounted to cross the intervening ground to the protective northern slope of Wana Ridge.

The town of Dakeshi was a maze of tunnels, shafts, caves, and other hiding places for a large Japanese defending force. Snipers were hidden in the houses, behind the walls, and in wells and cisterns. From the caves and tunnels, mortar fire was thrown over the top of the ridge and on its crest into the foxholes of the companies of the 2d Battalion. When "G" Company moved into the town, it ran into bitter opposition in the form of small arms, mortar fire, and hand grenades. The same was true for "E" Company, attacking on "G's" left flank. Not only was fire received from Dakeshi but from Wana Ridge to the front, from caves in the southern slope under the 1st Battalion, from the left flank and front in the Army's sector, and from the Shuri area.

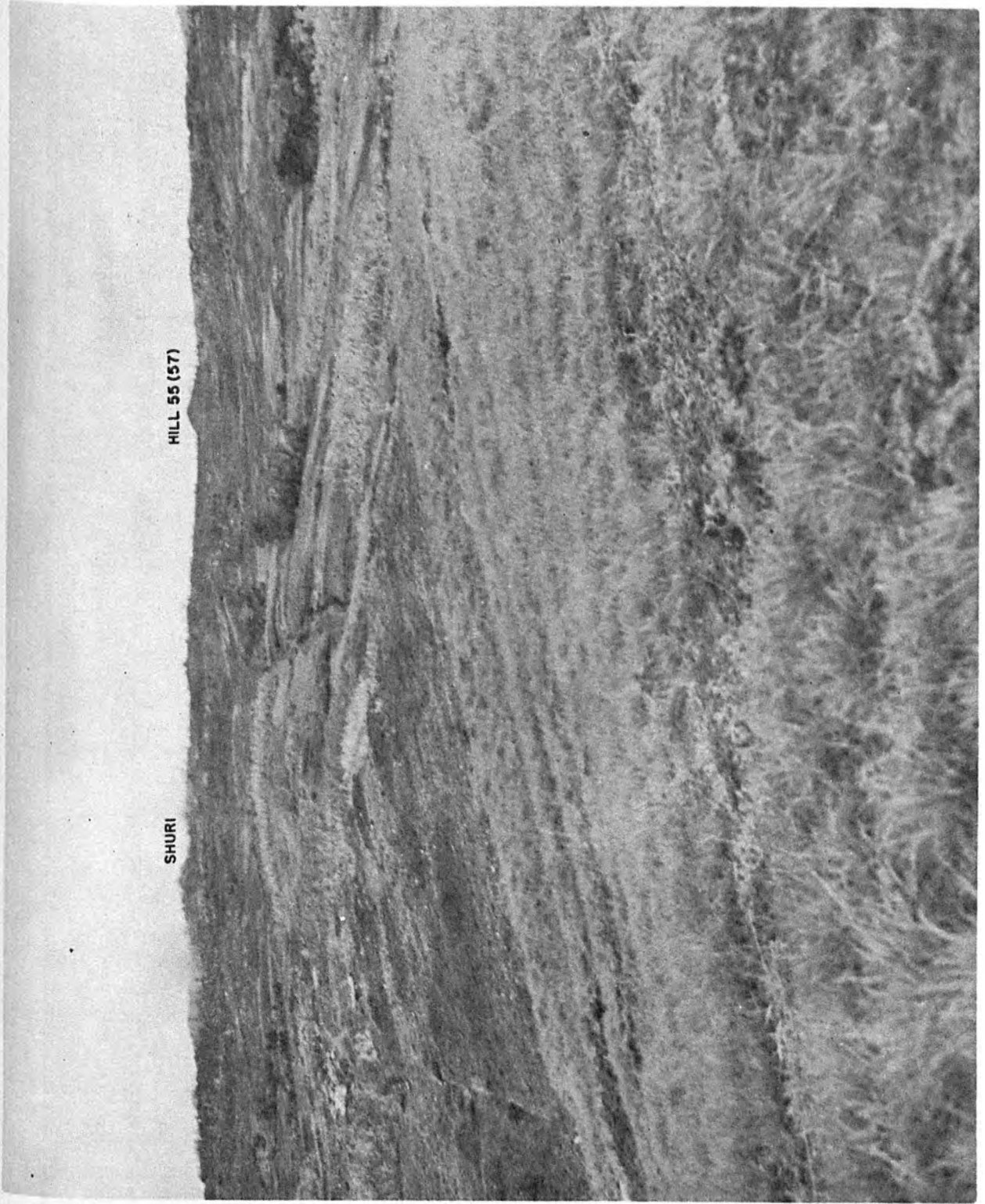
"G" Company was faced in the beginning of the day's operation with two tasks. The first was to put a platoon on the crest of the western extremity of Dakeshi Ridge to support the movement of the other two by fire as they moved into the village from its northwest flank, the second task. This crest had not been occupied on the day before because it contained a huge shaft which was either an entrance or exit to a cave system, and from it the Japs launched knee mortar fire and rained hand grenades when attacked. The crest was covered with enemy fire from Wana and from Dakeshi Town. In attempting to take it on 12 May, casualties were so heavy the attacking elements had to withdraw.

At 0800, after a normal mortar preparation, the 2d platoon sent its right flank squad forward to assault the crest under the cover of smoke. Enemy mortar and machine gun fire was so deadly the squad was forced to pull back immediately. Then before committing the entire platoon in attack, tanks were called in. Two line tanks and one flame thrower worked under protective 60mm fire to burn and clear out the area. Before attacking, the platoon called mortar fire in as close as twenty-five yards and at 1000 rushed forward to occupy the ridge. One of the members of the platoon said later:

\*See Map No. 15.

\*\*See Map No. 16.

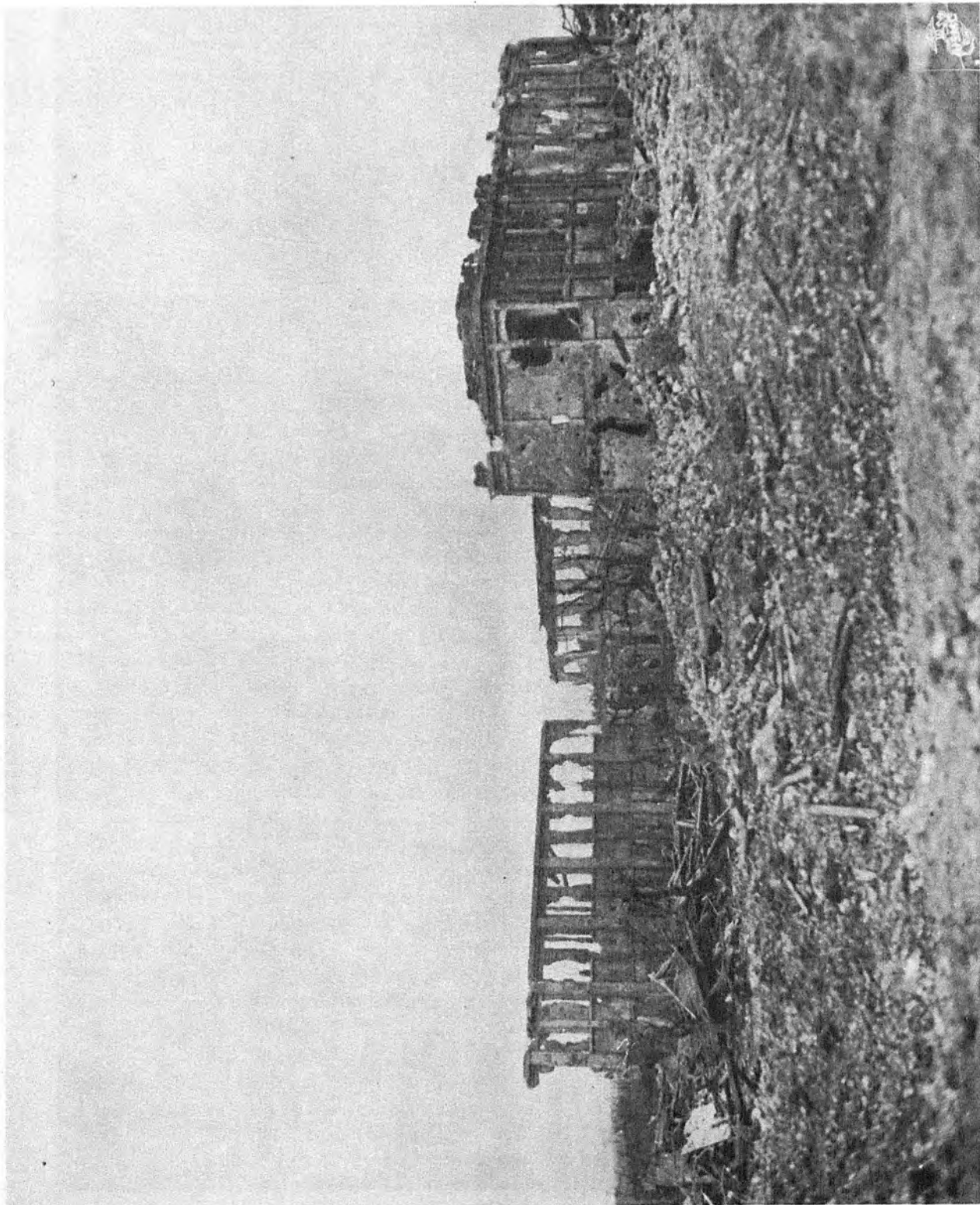




SHURI

HILL 55 (57)

There Was No Cover In Wana Draw



Jap Barracks at Shuri

"It looked like the Nips were going to try a 'Banzai', but we threw them off balance. From our commanding ground we could see them chasing around and rushing out of West Dakeshi in complete disorder. Our boys had a 'field day'. We couldn't understand why the Nips made no effort to retreat to Wana Ridge. Instead they either scurried around or remained in Dakeshi."

During this time, the whole area was being blanketed with fire. "E" Company was moving in on the left. "G" was coming in on the right flank. The 2d Battalion used M-7 Tank Destroyers, tanks, and the 37mm gun of the 1st Battalion to wipe out a pocket of approximately two hundred and fifty Japs on the southern slope of Dakeshi in front of "G" Company.

After moving into Dakeshi, "E" Company prepared to assault the base of Wana Ridge across the draw to its front. In this draw was a dried-up stream bed or ditch, and, with the exception of the ditch, the draw offered no protective cover. The 3d Platoon attempted to cross this draw with two squads in assault and one in reserve. Working to the edge of Dakeshi without drawing fire, the first two squads rushed forward as far as the ditch where they were pinned down by enfilading fire from the left flank from two Nambu.\* One of the men in the platoon reported the situation as follows:

"We were getting a lot of heavy machine gun fire in addition to the Nambu fire. The Nips also concentrated 90mm and knee mortars on the area. Defilade was negligible, and our men could not be certain when they were in it, since enemy machine gun fire soon came from the right too. The platoon's 'spam can' (SCR 536 radio) broke down, and the platoon was out of communication with the company. None of us could move. Our corpsman was killed while patching up a casualty. About five yards away from me a boy was hurt so badly he begged to be shot. Two of his comrades crawled to him, shouted for a corpsman, and a Jap threw in a grenade to kill all three.

"81mm mortars, tanks, and artillery attempted to screen us with smoke, but the Nips crawled forward under our smoke to harass the platoon with grenades."

At 1800 the platoon received the word to withdraw. Wounded who could not walk were evacuated under smoke. At 1825 still under smoke, the rest withdrew. To continue the quotation above:

"We all just got out of the ditch and ran for it. The walking wounded hobbled along with our help; several collapsed when they reached the edge of town."

After the platoon completed its withdrawal, it counted twenty-nine wounded and three killed. Thirteen infantrymen and four machine gunners got through the melee.

In the meantime "G" Company was pushing into Dakeshi from the northwest against heavy resistance from Japs behind walls, in wells, and in caves. Casualties were mounting, and late in the afternoon the company withdrew to its positions on Dakeshi Ridge. To stay in the town that night was unthinkable, since in the advance, caves had been bypassed and new positions could not be effectively consolidated in the dark to prevent the possibility of Nip infiltration or a counterattack.

Results for the day were very good in spite of the fact that the village was not occupied. The battalion estimated over five hundred enemy killed, one spigot mortar, two heavy field pieces, and two 47mm guns captured or destroyed, and great stores of enemy food and ammunition captured. This area on the slope of the reverse side of the ridge and into the town itself had contained the command post of a brigade, it was later found, which explains the tenacity of the enemy defense.

\*Japanese Light Machine Guns.

On 14 May the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines pushed "G" Company out across the draw to its front to the first slope of Wana Ridge where enemy opposition, in the form of grenades, small arms, and mortar fire, became so spirited that "G" was pinned down. To "G's" right rear was "F" who found itself in a similar position in short order. "E" Company attempted to cross the draw again but was forced to pull back after a short gain. This was the fourth straight day in assault for this battalion; its strength had been seriously depleted, and its tactical efficiency impaired comparably.

During the afternoon regiment ordered the 1st Battalion to relieve the 2d, and "A" Company prepared to relieve "G". The company commander of "A" had become a casualty so the executive officer and three runners started out to find "G" Company in order to arrange for the relief. On the way to "G" Company's position the three runners became casualties, and the company executive officer continued alone only to become a casualty himself while at "G" Company's command post. Meanwhile "A" Company moved out toward where they thought "G" was and found themselves engaged in a fight with a small enemy pocket on the way.

At 1500 all supporting weapons of the 2d Battalion were turned over to the tactical control of the 1st Battalion. "G" Company found itself in the unenviable position of being pinned down pending relief and without supporting fires. Eventually, "A" Company effected the relief of "G", but it was impossible for the 1st Battalion to get "B" Company in on "A's" flank because of the intense and accurate enemy fire. For the night "A" had to curl its flanks into a perimeter defense, covering the flank gaps with fire, while "B" and "C" Companies tied in with the 3d Battalion. To the right rear of "A" were the left elements of the 1st Marines who had been abreast of "G" Company during the day but had been forced to pull back just prior to darkness to better ground for the night.

Next day, 15 May, was spent in organizing positions, mopping up, and preparing for the continuation of the attack on the following day. Artillery, naval gunfire, and air strikes were employed throughout the day on known and suspected enemy positions. The 1st Battalion withdrew "A" Company and placed it in reserve to reorganize.

During the night orders were received from regiment to carry out normal activities on the following morning to give the impression that an attack was being mounted.<sup>10</sup> Troops were to be in a state of readiness in their front line positions and customary preparatory fires from supporting weapons were to be laid down.

These orders were carried out, and on the morning of 16 May the enemy area to the front of the 7th Marines was worked over thoroughly by artillery and naval gunfire. In addition, smoke was laid down by the 81mm and 4.2 chemical mortars.<sup>11</sup> Following an air strike the 1st Battalion was supposed to send out patrols and feel out enemy resistance to the front. When the air strike did not materialize, the Battalion Commander requested that it be called off so that he could start his patrols on their way. Permission was granted and following a preparatory barrage laid by the 81mm and 4.2 mortars, "C" Company dispatched its patrols at 1055.

The patrols moved easily across the draw and around the western nose of Wana Ridge where they received grenade and mortar fire from the south. Counterfire was placed immediately on the area from which "C" was receiving enemy fire. "C" was ordered to hold this high ground that it had seized, and more troops were moved forward to reinforce those already there. At 1240 one platoon from "A" Company was sent forward to further reinforce "C" Company. Screening smoke was laid down by the mortars to cover the movement

<sup>10</sup>See Appendix.

<sup>11</sup>See Appendix.

of the platoon but considerable enemy resistance was encountered by forward elements in the form of grenade barrages from enemy troops hidden in burial vaults and coral rocks to their front.

From the defladed southern slope of Wana, just east of Wana Village, the enemy launched a strong counterattack at 1605. Immediately, the 1st Battalion concentrated the fire of all its supporting units, including rockets, on the area where the attack was being formed. The counterattack was broken, but stiff resistance continued, and "B" Company moved forward to support "C" and the platoon from "A".

Within an hour's time two more enemy counterattacks developed, the first of which was thrown back, but the last one drove our troops back from their exposed forward positions, limiting the advance for the day to two hundred yards, although "C" Company's patrols had been out over six hundred yards. The 1st Battalion then set up a defensive perimeter on its precarious foothold on Wana Ridge and held it during the night. The strength of the companies and platoons had been depleted to the point where the remnants were organized into one company for the whole battalion. This was the last day in assault in this area for the 1st Battalion. It was exhausted. Next morning, 17 May, the 3d Battalion relieved the 1st at 0600 and prepared to continue the attack.

During the next three days the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines attacked up Wana Ridge each day only to meet heavy resistance and to find itself forced to retire to positions held in the edge of Dakeshi previous to going into the attack. On 17 May after relieving the 1st Battalion, "I" Company led the assault on the ridge with "K" Company on its left. The 3d Platoon of "I" led the company's assault along with the 1st Platoon, which was quickly pinned down by heavy enemy machine gun fire from its left flank, heavy mortar fire from its right flank, and knee mortar fire from the reverse slope of Wana Ridge. The 3d Platoon managed to get on a part of the crest of the ridge and remained for an hour before being driven off by heavy and accurate enemy fire of all types. In the meantime "K" Company, attacking on the left of "I", managed to advance across the open draw under heavy fire to the base of the cliff in its zone of action. Finding itself still under heavy fire from the top of the ridge and its reverse slope, the company was forced to withdraw to Dakeshi where it went into battalion reserve. "L" Company reinforced "I" for the night in the high plateau and prepared to assist in the next morning's attack to seize Wana Ridge.

The morning of 18 May was spent in delivering fires from all supporting weapons on Wana Ridge and the area to its south. At noon "I" Company attacked and succeeded in getting troops on the ridge, followed by one platoon from "L". "I" Company's 1st and 2d Platoons attacked in a staggered skirmish line, and the latter reached the crest of the ridge only to be driven off within thirty minutes by heavy machine gun, mortar, and grenade fire. The 1st Platoon was unable to attain the crest due to heavy enemy fire resulting in numerous casualties. "K" Company moved forward to support the other two companies.

Again on 19 May the entire morning was spent in laying artillery, mortar, and naval gun fire on enemy positions. Tanks and M-7's moved forward through the zone of the 5th Marines on the right to fire into the reverse slope of Wana Ridge in an effort to neutralize enemy fires from that area. "I", "L", and "K" attacked in that order but were forced to pull back in mid-afternoon to more favorable ground in order to be relieved by the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines, who by order of Division now assumed responsibility for this sector.<sup>12</sup>

<sup>12</sup>See Appendix.

The 7th Marines now reverted to Division reserve and moved to the rear to reorganize and rehabilitate. Since attacking on 10 May this regiment had fought over difficult terrain to seize the important Dakeshi Ridge and to go on to secure a foothold on Wana Ridge. Its strength had gradually wasted away. Since 10 May the regiment had incurred the following casualties:

Killed .....	110
Wounded .....	884
Missing .....	8
Non Battle .....	172

Total..... 1,174

For this action the regiment was awarded the Presidential Unit Citation.

## 8. HILL 55

On the 1:25000 Map used during the operation, there is a small hill at Target Square 7773X that bears the number 55.\* At first glance the hill does not look terribly important, but it was one of the bastions of the Shuri defensive perimeter, as was Crescent Ridge, Sugar Loaf, Dakeshi Ridge, and Wana Ridge. Called by its number by the men of the 1st Marines who tried to take the hill on 13 May, and by the men of the 5th Marines who finally did seize and occupy it, this hill played an important part in the fighting for Wana Ridge and Shuri.\*\* Fire from Hill 55 helped to drive the 7th Marines off Wana Ridge time after time, and the same type of fire caused the 1st Marines to use the embankment of the railroad track as a covered route of approach in its zone of action.

As a background for the action in this area, it might be well to go back to the activities of the 1st Marines after Sugar Loaf (Hill 60) was secured on 9 May.\*\*\* On that day the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines had taken the western portion of the Dakeshi Plateau just north of Dakeshi Ridge, while the 2d Battalion was seizing Sugar Loaf and clearing Hill Nan. In continuing the attack on 10 May the 1st Marines found its zone of action sloping downward to its front and almost entirely exposed to enemy observation and fire from Dakeshi Ridge, Wana Ridge, Shuri, and Hill 55. To the regiment's immediate front lay the low basin drained by the Asa Kawa, and the left of the regimental zone of action lay exposed to the nose of Dakeshi Ridge, from behind (or south) of which came murderous flanking fire. Along the right of the zone and veering out of it to the west ran the railroad track and its embankment where it crossed the low ground of the Asa Kawa valley.

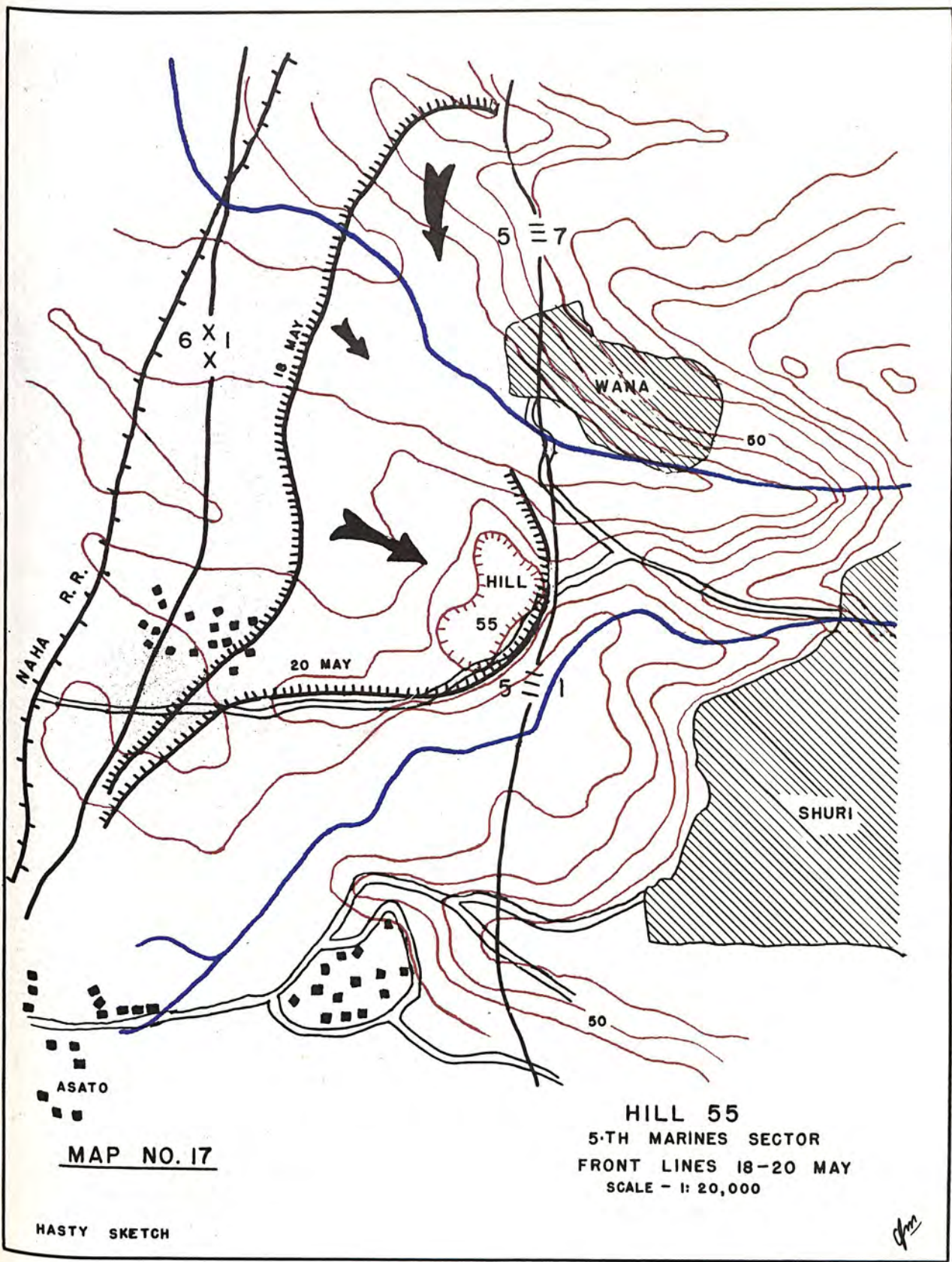
In tracing the action of the 1st Marines for the next five days we find the attack progressing only on the extreme right flank of the zone of action, the only area that offered any protection for the troops—and very little at that. On 10 May the 1st and 3d Battalions, 1st Marines pushed south to the road that runs west out of Dakeshi, but patrols on the left were hit hard from the western nose of Dakeshi Ridge.

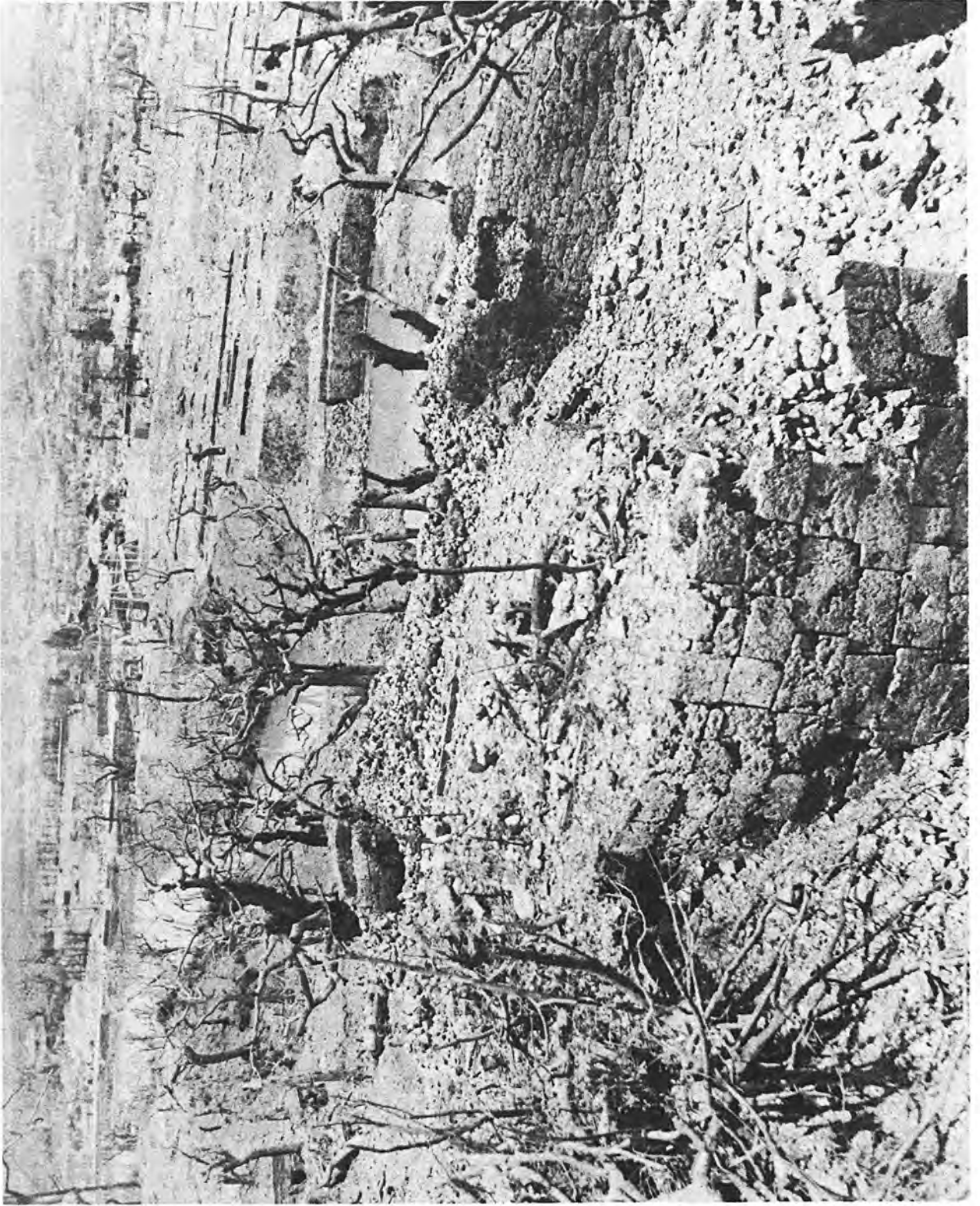
Next day, 11 May, the 2d Battalion passed through the front lines to attack toward the high ground to the front but was hit so hard on the left flank when it came abreast of the nose of Dakeshi Ridge that the Battalion reoriented its attack down the west side of the railroad track on the right of the regimental zone of action. The attack proceeded without incident until about 1600 when it was held up pending the movement of the 22d Marines

\*See Map No. 17.

\*\*The hill was also known variously as Hill 57 and Hill 59.

\*\*\*See Map No. 15.





Shovel Castle, Captured By The Fifth Marines



on the right. By this time the battalion was receiving heavy long-range artillery fire from its left and front, taking a heavy toll in casualties. Supply and evacuation became almost impossible since all routes of approach were receiving enemy fire. The 2d Battalion had advanced over nine hundred yards, and the 1st Marines ordered the 3d Battalion to move out in order to cover the gap between the 2d Battalion and the 7th Marines who were engaged in heavy fighting in Dakeshi. In moving forward, the 3d Battalion caught the same heavy fire from the nose of Dakeshi Ridge that the 2d had experienced previously and lost several tanks from 47mm AT fire. The situation was solved by the 3d Battalion taking up positions just to the east of the railroad track.

The attack was held up on the morning of 12 May awaiting supplies to reach the 2d Battalion. Heavy enemy fire had been resumed at dawn, inflicting severe casualties, and it was found to be virtually impossible to supply the battalion on the ground. An air drop was finally accomplished, but many of the parachutes fell forward of the line in locations impossible to reach because of enemy fire. The 2d Battalion attempted to continue the attack toward the line Mawashi-Mura to Hill 55, but extremely heavy artillery, mortar, and machine gun fire limited the advance to minor gains for the 2d Battalion. Making gains up to three hundred yards the 3d Battalion managed to expand its positions to the south against severe opposition. That night the 2d Battalion tied in its right flank with the 3d Battalion, 29th Marines on the right. One counterattack was broken up at about 2200 by normal mortar and artillery barrages, and about twenty-five of the enemy were killed.

The attack was held up on the morning of 13 May, waiting for the 7th Marines who were working in Dakeshi to come up on the left. Artillery, naval gun fire, mortars, and 37mm's proceeded to fire at all known and suspected enemy positions. During the afternoon at 1530 "L" Company jumped off to assault Hill 55. Using supporting tanks, the company reached the hill with little opposition and immediately was hit hard with extremely heavy machine gun fire from the town of Wana to its left and rear. In addition to the machine gun fire the Nips started using 20mm automatic fire and mortar fire, forcing the company to withdraw under the cover of smoke at 1800.

Arrangements were made with the 7th Marines to launch a coordinated attack against Wana Ridge on the morning of 14 May. The 1st Battalion, 1st Marines jumped off from its little ridge in the Asa Kawa Basin to secure that part of Wana Ridge which lay within the regimental zone of action. By 1212 "C" Company had reached the objective but had no contact with the 7th Marines on its left. At the same time the 2d Battalion, consolidating its positions, was hit with a terrific barrage of enemy mortar and artillery fire believed to have been directed against 6th Marine Division tanks to its right, but falling short. Heavy casualties were sustained. "C" Company found its portion of Wana Ridge literally swarming with the enemy. To the left rear of the company, the 7th Marines were seen moving up slowly against bitter opposition. At 1905 the enemy launched one of their few daylight counterattacks, moving down from the crest of the ridge with the obvious intention of cutting off "C" Company. The company was entirely out of contact with other units and was ordered to withdraw, which was done with great difficulty. The wounded, including the company commander, were finally gotten out under the cover of smoke, and the remaining men, under the only two officers left, dug in with "A" Company of the 1st Marines and "A" Company of the 7th Marines on the little ridge from which the attack had been launched.

And now another regiment comes in to take its turn at Hill 55.<sup>13</sup> During the night "E" and "G" Companies of the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines quietly relieved the 2d Battalion,

<sup>13</sup> See Appendix

1st Marines and the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines respectively. At dawn "F" Company, 5th Marines relieved the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines. Backing up the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines in close support was the 3d Battalion while the 1st Battalion remained in reserve on the high ground north of the Asa Kawa.

Like their predecessors in the line, the 5th Marines faced a difficult situation. The frontage for the regiment consisted of about eight hundred yards but offered very poor ground for attacking. The whole regimental zone of action was dominated by Dakeshi Ridge, Wana Ridge, and Hill 55 in the mouth of Wana Draw, in that order—all to the left and left front of the sector. The 1st Marines had found that forward movement on the left of the zone of action was impossible, except when made concurrently with the 7th Marines as that regiment reduced the above-mentioned defended terrain features. In order that the attack be continued and that some aggressive action be carried out to bring flanking pressure on the Shuri hill mass, of which Dakeshi and Wana Ridges were a part, the only alternative for the 5th Marines was to attack on the right of the regimental zone, using the small hills and railroad embankment for the little cover that they offered. A conclusion reached by the 1st Marines and agreed to heartily by the 5th Marines upon effecting the relief, was that as many available tanks and M-7 Destroyers as possible be brought up and used to bring direct fire to bear on the numerous known and suspected enemy gun positions and strongpoints dotting the western and southwestern slopes of Wana Ridge and Hill 55. In addition, artillery fire and air strikes were to be used to continue the unrelenting pressure on Wana Ridge and Draw, and Shuri.

A practice followed by the 1st Marines when that regiment was still in the line, was to man outposts or strongpoints well out past the railroad embankment during the day when our movements could be discerned by the enemy and then to reinforce these outposts during the night. To attempt to keep entire companies out in the open ground during the hours of daylight was to invite needless casualties without accomplishing anything worthwhile. It is difficult to picture with words the plight of those Marines who attempted to maneuver across this low ground. It should be sufficient to point out that the movement of every man was clearly visible to countless numbers of the enemy in the high ground to the east. To say that the Marines in this sector merely held their ground under the terrific enemy pounding would be a tribute to their spirit and indoctrination, but these men went further. They patrolled daily right under the very noses and eyes of the Nips. In addition, contact was being maintained on the right with the 29th Marines as that regiment assaulted the broken ground guarding the corridor leading to Crescent Hill.

No aggressive action was carried out by the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines on 15 May after the relief was effected. During the day the area was thoroughly reconnoitered and plans made to increase the pressure from the supporting fires of the artillery, naval gunfire, and tanks. The specific objective was the pulverization of the high ground on both sides of Wana Draw. The battalion asked for twelve tanks and four M-7's for the following day. At 2000 the companies advanced to their night defensive positions well out in the valley to the east of the railroad, and upon establishing contact, dug in for the night. Only spasmodic artillery fire from the Nips broke the quiet of the night for the first few hours and then the usual enemy attempts at infiltration began. Next morning twelve dead Japanese attested to the futility of such attempts.

At 0630 on the morning of 16 May the tanks and M-7's requested on the previous day reported, and the M-7's took up firing positions just west of the railroad behind "E" Company and began firing. The tanks, working in relays and escorted by infantry fire teams, moved into the low ground at the mouth of Wana Draw and commenced firing, immediately

drawing 47mm AT fire which disabled two tanks. Two other tanks were hit but were able to withdraw after evacuating the crews of the immobilized tanks. As usual, the Nips used mortar fire on the tanks in an effort to knock out the accompanying infantry fire teams. Two of the anti-tank gun positions were spotted and during the afternoon fire from the main batteries of the USS Colorado was placed on them, destroying both guns.

The only troop movement of the day occurred in the late afternoon when "F" Company moved out to straighten its lines and to maintain contact with the 7th Marines on the left. At 2030 that night, when the forward defensive positions were manned, heavy enemy mortar fire fell in the battalion area and all hands were alerted for a possible counter-attack. The counterattack failed to materialize and the night passed quietly.

The battalion was ordered to improve and consolidate its present positions on 17 May, while continuing the reduction of the strong enemy positions in Wana Draw by fire. To the east, the 7th Marines were attacking the coral pinnacle ridge forming the north side of Wana Draw. By noon the 7th Marines had run into extremely heavy fighting on Wana Ridge and were driven back by a terrific mortar and artillery barrage. "F" Company, 5th Marines had been attacking in conjunction with the 7th Marines, and it had to fall back too.

In the meantime the 2d Battalion decided to attack from its right with Hill 55 as its objective; "E" Company was assigned this mission. Moving out with two platoons in assault, the company was forced to expose both of its flanks immediately. Two tanks supported the attack of each platoon and the attack was preceded by a preparatory barrage from 60 and 81mm mortars, and 105mm howitzers. About halfway to the base of the hill and while in the open field that lay to the west of it, the company received intense machine gun and knee mortar fire from its left and left front on Wana Ridge. The company was pinned down, and when two of its supporting tanks were knocked out by accurate 47mm AT gun fire from a hill to the right, it requested permission to withdraw. This granted, the withdrawal took place under the cover of scanty smoke fired by the mortars, who were short of ammunition. The wounded were carried out by hand and by amphibious tractors. By 1600 "E" Company was back in its positions and had reorganized. Again the company was ordered to take the hill and this time only the 3d Platoon, supported by six tanks, moved out and quickly occupied the west slope of the hill. Enemy fire had died down to some extent when this platoon advanced, perhaps because of the covering heavy machine gun fire delivered from each flank by the company's machine gun sections. During the night the platoon could hear a great deal of enemy activity on the hill, but there were no attempts at infiltration and only sporadic small arms, machine gun, and mortar fire was experienced.

Early next morning the M-7's moved into their positions of the previous day and began firing into Wana Draw. Tanks covered by fire teams worked up into the draw to continue their work of the day before. Over seven thousand (7000) rounds of 105 and 75mm ammunition were fired during this day, 18 May, and under the cover of this heavy fire "F" Company sent one platoon and an attached platoon of engineers with demolitions and flamethrowers into the village of Wana itself. Remaining until 1700, this group found and destroyed large numbers of grenade discharges, machine guns, and rifles. Since Wana Ridge, forming the north side of the draw behind Wana Village, was still held in strength by the enemy, it was necessary to withdraw "F" Company's platoon and the engineers before darkness.

On the following day, 19 May, the 2d Battalion continued to call fires in on Wana and in addition patrolled to its front with small four-man patrols. The platoon on Hill

55 could hear voices above them, but any attempt to take the top of the hill or go around its sides was immediately discouraged by heavy enemy fire. This was the last night for the Nips to hold the hill.

Next morning an all-out attack was launched by the 2d Battalion to seize the regimental objective line 0-2, which ran roughly from Hill 55 southwest to the Naha-Shuri road. After a heavy preparation fired by tanks, M-7's, artillery, and naval gunfire, "E" Company moved out to seize the rest of Hill 55. Shuri Ridge was kept under a continuous artillery pounding in order to keep enemy fire at a minimum. Hill 55 was assaulted by one platoon going around its left under fire, another platoon going around its right under heavy fire, and the remaining platoon going up over the top. The latter ran into hand-to-hand fighting but had little trouble dispatching the Nips. Simultaneously, the tanks accompanied by fire teams moved up into Wana Draw and with point-blank fire flushed out numerous enemy dug-in on the reverse slope of Hill 55. The result amounted to a "field day" for the Marines who had the opportunity of killing the enemy as he was forced from his positions. The 0-2 line was quickly reached and the attention of the battalion was directed to the cleaning up of numerous spider traps in the open ground over which the fighting had passed. These spider traps were manned by Nips with satchel charges, who intended to knock out our tanks in the advance. They only succeeded in immobilizing one tank, and squads working along the valley quickly located the traps whereupon the enemy either committed suicide or was killed by members of the squad. After taking Hill 55, "E" Company continued its drive to take the entire objective and, upon arriving at objective, received heavy artillery, mortar, and small arms fire. This pressure was quickly relieved by the tanks who circled out far in advance of the front lines and fired directly on Shuri Ridge and all targets of opportunity. The battalion was relieved during the night by the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines and moved back to a reserve position near Yafusu. Hill 55, a thorn in the flesh of the 7th Marines, the 1st Marines, and finally the 5th Marines, was now safely in our hands.\*

## 9. WANA RIDGE

In one of the sections preceding this entitled Dakeshi Ridge, the progress of the attack of the 7th Marines was studied until that regiment was relieved by the 1st Marines on 19 May. After seizing Dakeshi Ridge, the 7th Marines had gone on to attack Wana Ridge and had secured a foothold on the northwestern part of the ridge before being relieved.

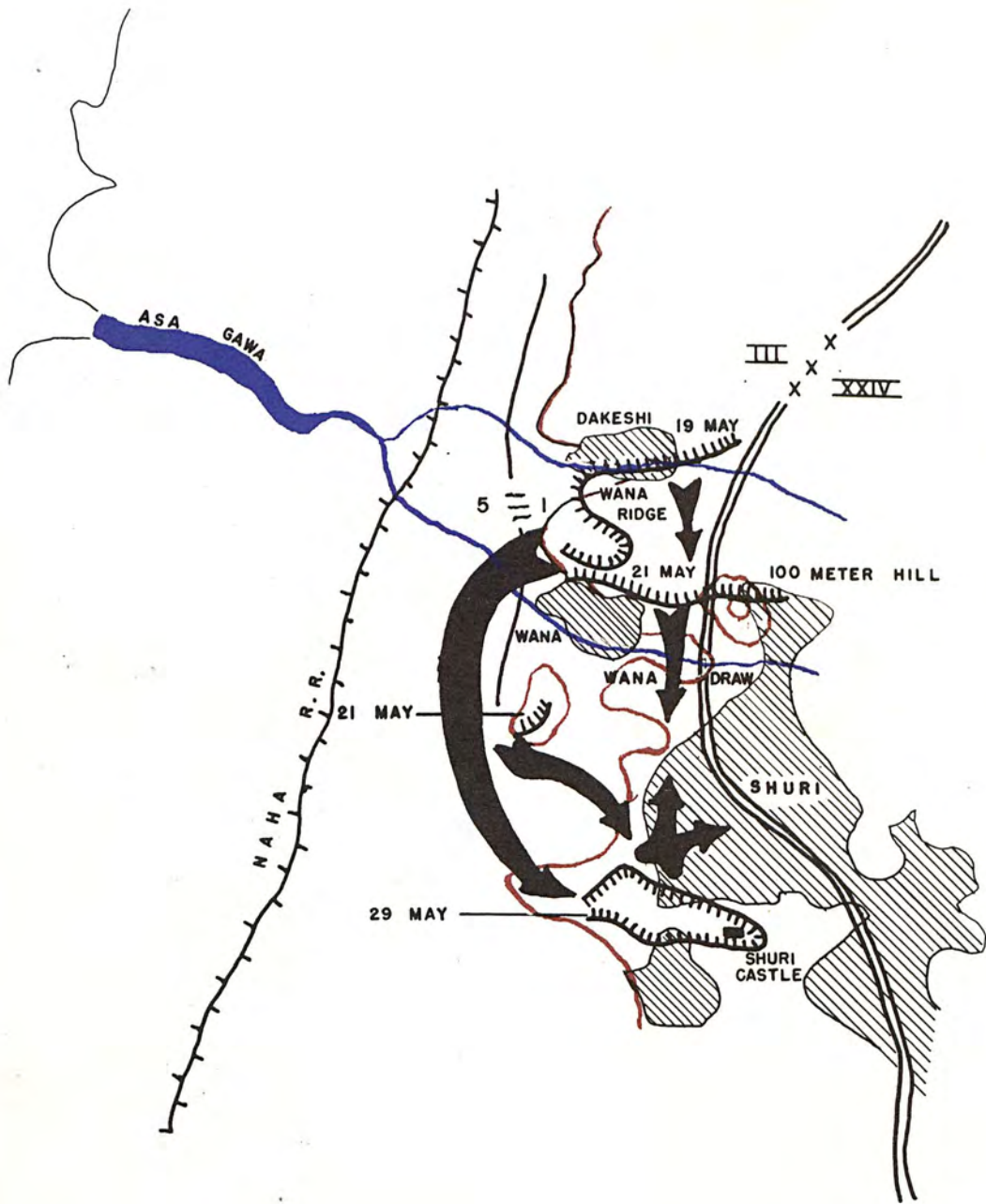
Beginning on 13 May, for six straight days, the 7th launched attack after attack, sometimes getting up to the crest before being driven back by enemy fire so intense that casualties, mounting rapidly as darkness approached, forced the companies to fall back to better positions.

The situation on 19 May found the 7th Marines, weary and depleted after nearly three weeks of fighting, being relieved by the 1st Marines who had been resting for four days.\*\* In the meantime, the 5th Marines now had a platoon on Hill 55, and on the following day would overrun the hill and push the regimental front far to the southwest. For over a week now the weather had been excellent for fighting. Hot sunny days had dried the ground after the intermittent rains of the first week in May, and the terrain was hard and well-suited for the use of tanks, amphibious tractors, and M-7 Tank Destroyers.

Shortly after the 1st Marines went into the lines at Wana Ridge, torrential rains began to fall for periods of varying length each day and night until the end of May. This almost

\*See Map No. 17.

\*\*See Map No. 18.



MAP NO. 18

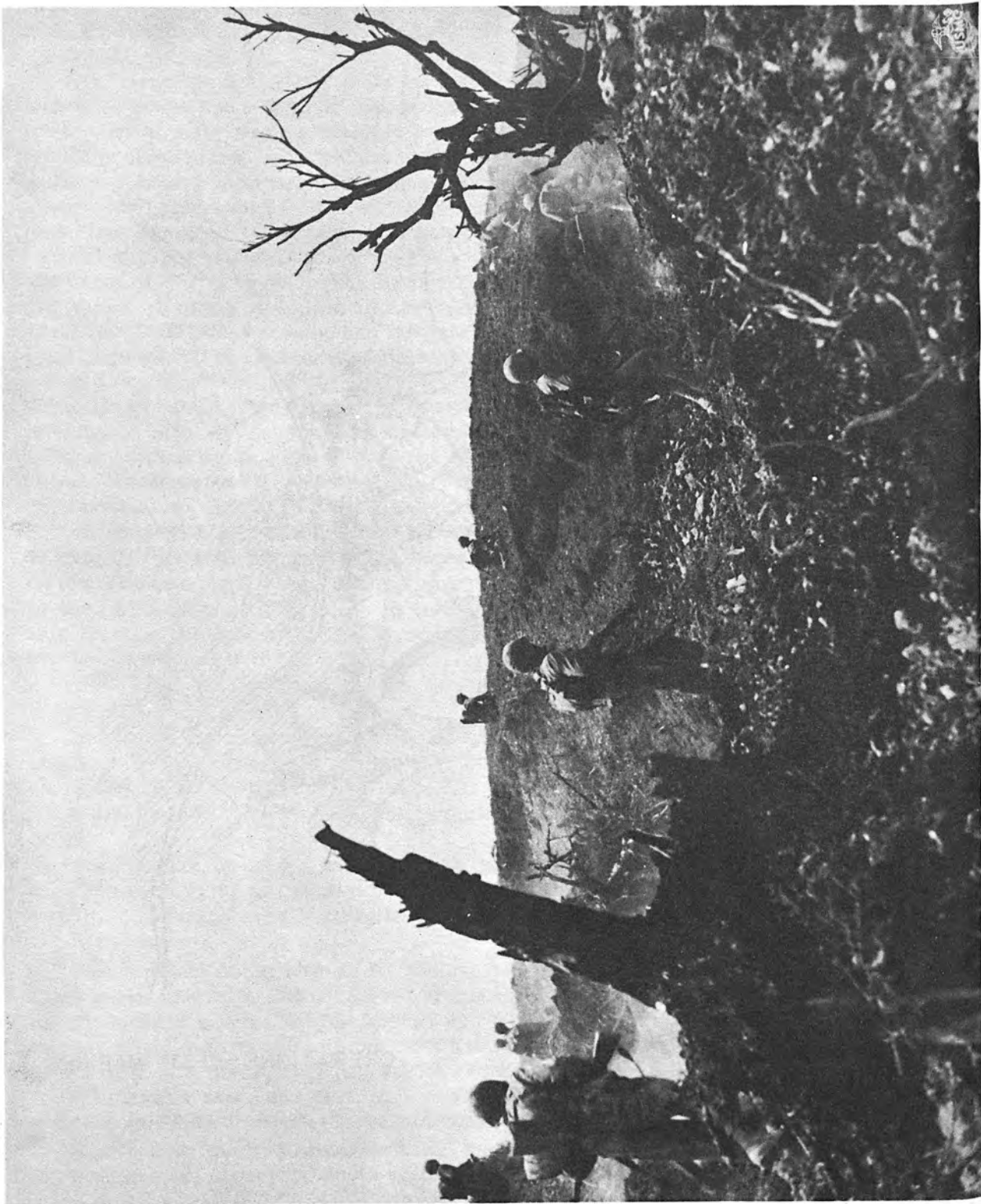
OPERATIONS - 1ST MARINES

19 - 30 MAY 1945

SCALE - 1:20,000

HASTY SKETCH

*cfm*



continuous downpour turned Wana Draw into a sea of mud and water until it resembled a lake. Tanks bogged down and were useless. Amphibious tractors found themselves unable to negotiate this morass, and front line units were faced with a supply and evacuation problem that was extremely difficult. From time to time food, water, and ammunition were dropped by planes, but too often these supplies fell into enemy territory. Some supplies were manhandled when possible, but this necessitated the crossing of a draw constantly swept with enemy fire. Evacuation of the wounded was a backbreaking task performed under the most trying and difficult circumstances. By using the concealment provided by mortar and artillery smoke, the litter cases were carried over long distances through mud knee deep. The living conditions of the frontline troops were pitiful. Foxholes had to be bailed out constantly. The men's clothing, shoes, feet, and bodies were wet for over a week. Just outside their foxholes lay the deteriorating bodies of the Japs killed each day and night, and flies multiplied by the thousands. Sanitation broke down completely and before long amoebic dysentery became evident. The troops were often hungry, going from day to day on scanty rations. Sleep was almost impossible, and the nervous and physical strain began to take a mounting toll of men.

This week of bad weather, mud, flies, and constant fighting was to prove an unusual one. Until the very last—the 29th day of May—the men of the 1st Marines felt that their task was well-nigh hopeless. Wana Ridge had been assaulted for nine straight days before the rains set in, when tanks and M-7's could help the attack by fire and maneuver in Wana Draw. Flamethrower tanks had helped to rout the enemy from concealed positions. Air strikes had helped to keep pressure on the whole Shuri hill mass. With the coming of the rains, the 1st Marines found themselves limited to patrolling and probing. The 11th Marines, when the weather permitted observation, harrassed the enemy in his positions. From data already obtained, the artillerymen could place fire in almost any area designated by the front line battalions, regardless of observation.

What the men of the 1st Marines did not know—or anyone else at first—was that the enveloping movements of the 6th Marine Division on the west and the 7th Infantry Division on the east, along with the unrelenting pressure maintained on the core of the Shuri line—the hill mass—by the 1st Marine Division, the 77th Infantry Division and the 96th Infantry Division, had forced an enemy decision to withdraw from Shuri to new defensive positions in the extreme southern part of Okinawa. However, this withdrawal did not commence until 26 May, and the 5th Marines were not able to capitalize on it (with their sudden dash into Shuri from its west and rear when the 1st Battalion captured fabulous Shuri Castle) until 29 May. This was the period that marked the breaking of the Shuri Line; it was a period capable of breaking the spirit and morale of many men.

At 0855 on the morning of 19 May, the 1st Marines was ordered to relieve the 7th Marines on the left of the 1st Marine Division's zone of action.\* The regimental plan called for its 3d Battalion to relieve the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines, which was attacking Wana Ridge at the time. The 1st and 2d Battalions of the 1st Marines were to relieve the same battalions of the 7th in that respective order. These latter were in static positions at this time. By 1830 the relief was complete and the 3d Battalion, 1st Marines was in position on the western edge of Wana Ridge, with its line bent back to a small hill southwest of Dakeshi. To the left of the regimental front was the 2d Battalion holding a line from the south edge of Dakeshi Town to Hill 120, about four hundred yards northeast. The other battalion, the 3d, was in reserve just east of Hill 60 (Sugar Loaf). Fortunately, only light mortar and artillery fire on the 2d Battalion marred an otherwise easy relief.

\*See Map No. 18.

The regiment was notified by the 1st Marine Division that it would move into the zone of action of the 77th Infantry Division on its left next day and launch a coordinated attack with the 305th Infantry. The boundary between the two regiments was the north-south road about five hundred yards east of Dakeshi Town, and the objective was Wana Ridge. Crowning Wana Ridge to the east, and guarding Shuri, was a hill called several different names, profane and otherwise. On the map it is marked as being of 100 meters elevation. Some units, accordingly, called it 100 Meter Hill. Men of the 2d Battalion, in whose sector it fell, named its highest point Conical Hill (not to be confused with the Army's Conical Hill).

On the next day, the 1st Marines launched a two-pronged attack with the 2d Battalion assaulting the approaches to 100 Meter Hill, and the 3d Battalion attacking to the south-east up Wana Ridge. If the 2d Battalion succeeded in achieving its objective for the day it would actually be on the western part of Meter Hill and practically at the mercy of the enemy defending Conical Hill.

In the sector of the 2d Battalion, "G" Company moved out in the assault at 0815 on the morning of 20 May supported by fire from tanks, M-7's and 37mm guns. The company used fire teams with line tanks in its advance and moved rapidly to the base of the western part of 100 Meter Hill. Enemy fire from Conical Hill and from the south caused heavy casualties and "G" Company soon found all three of its platoons pinned down. Consequently, the battalion commander ordered "F" Company to move through "G" Company and continue the attack. This was done at 1525 and "F" Company pushed on to the top of the ridge while "G" Company supported the advance by placing fire in Wana Town. Because of the large frontage now held by "F" Company, "E" Company was drawn into the line for the night between "F" and "G". On the left flank of "G" Company there was a considerable gap since the Army's advance had not kept pace, but this gap was covered by fire for the night.

In the meantime, the 3d Battalion moved to the southeast up the north slope of Wana Ridge. The battalion made an advance of about 200 yards for the day, being limited by heavy enemy resistance which resulted finally in hand to hand fighting with grenades. The night was an uneasy one for the two battalions with several bayonet duels and hand grenade fights taking place.

On the morning of 21 May the 2d Battalion prepared to seize the top of 100 Meter Hill, the hill crest called Conical Hill by the men.

The weather on 21 May presaged the change that was to follow within two days. Gusts of wind blew and visibility was reduced somewhat by the overcast. At the head of Wana Draw was a precipitous cleft in the high ground making tank support against the reverse side of Conical Hill impossible. In the 2d Battalion sector "F" Company attacked at 0630 driving into Wana Town under heavy mortar, artillery, and rifle fire. The Army was reported to be advancing 100 yards to the left but closer examination revealed them to be 500 yards away. "E" Company was ordered to move up on the left flank of "F" and tie in with the Army unit on the left when it came abreast. Reconnaissance showed that Wana Draw—to the front of "F" Company—was too steep for the use of tanks, being from 200 to 300 feet deep and with sheer walls, defended by numerous caves difficult to approach.

Sniper fire became intense, despite the fact that all the battalion's mortars were blanketing Wana Draw, and the 2d Battalion's Commander ordered "F" Company to secure napalm to be ignited in the draw with use of phosphorus grenades. This proved successful in driving many of the enemy from their caves out into the open where they



were caught in mortar fire. The burning napalm also exploded several large stores of enemy ammunition.

In the meantime the 3d Battalion was attacking around the west end of Wana Ridge. "L" Company, the left flank one, had drawn the assignment of going through Wana Village and soon found that progress was slow with bitter fighting. Hundreds of grenades, white phosphorus and fragmentation, were used on the caves in the slope of the ridge, as well as bazookas and rifle grenades. The area through which the company was moving was blanketed constantly with mortar and small arms fire, forcing the men to utilize the cover afforded by native tombs, walls, and coral formations. Tanks fired their 75mm guns and used their flamethrowers to help the attack move, but resistance was such that forward progress only amounted to about seventy-five yards. Heavy enemy fire made the company's position untenable and after casualties were evacuated, the rest of the company withdrew to the positions of the night before.

While "L" Company attacked, "K" Company moved out to Hill 55 and attempted to attack to the east right up the head of the draw, but intense enemy fire stopped the company's attack in its tracks. "I" followed "K" and got halfway across the open ground toward Hill 55 when it was pinned down. At 1930 both companies were pulled back to their old positions with "K" tying in on its right with the 5th Marines. The gap in the line between the 2d and 3d Battalions was filled by "C" Company, and the 3d Battalion covered by fire the gap between it and the Army on its left.

The 2d Battalion soon learned that the enemy had pre-registered his artillery and mortars on the ridge where the battalion was dug in. To the left front was Conical Hill with an estimated battalion of the enemy holding it, despite heavy casualties inflicted by our artillery, mortars, and naval gunfire.

At 0200 in the early morning hours of 22 May, "C" Company, between the 2d and 3d Battalions, caught the full impact of a vicious enemy counterattack. About two hundred Nips participated, apparently hoping to split the company. Since the crest of Wana Ridge in the company's sector was under constant fire during the early evening, the third platoon had taken up a position on the military crest; to its right was the first platoon pulled slightly back from the top of the ridge. To the front of the men, forming a prominent terrain feature, was an upthrust outcropping of coral called by the men "Snag-tooth".

The Nips started their attack by lobbing grenades over the ridge line. The grenades came thick and fast, following and mixed with a downpour of knee and heavy mortar fire. No artillery or small arms, except for sporadic sniper fire, accompanied the attack. Through a little road out in the top of the ridge line came the Nips. They were surging up the steep reverse slope using ropes, picks, and ladders. "C" Company cut loose with its machine guns and small arms, but its most effective weapon was the grenade. The men threw them until their arms were sore. Several members of the machine gun section were converted into rifle grenadiers and used their weapons as mortars. When the company ran out of grenades, it borrowed them from other companies until amphibious tractors brought up more at 0400.

Some of the Japs attempted to set up a machine gun at "Snag-tooth", but the "C" Company commander was watching them, and after he saw their first burst of fire, he tossed a grenade into their midst to silence the gun and Nips.

While the fighting was going on, the company's 60mm mortars and the battalion's 81mm mortars poured over a thousand rounds of high explosive fire each just over the crest of the ridge. Next morning "C" counted one hundred and forty dead Japs in its sector. The company lost four killed and twenty-six wounded.

Shortly after dawn rain commenced to fall and by 0800 tanks were having extreme difficulty in trying to move up to support the attack. The downpour was to continue all through the day and night and for many days and nights to follow. Dakeshi Draw and Wana Draw rapidly became seas of mud, and supplies had to be manhandled to the troops. Visibility was limited, and the idea of attacking without the support of tanks and amphibious tractors was out of the question. The day's activity resolved itself into a series of mortar and artillery duels. All through the day and night the enemy kept pumping mortar and artillery fire into our positions, occasionally varying the monotony with sniper and machine gun fire. During the night about one hundred of the enemy were killed while attempting to infiltrate our positions.

Next day, 23 May, found the rain coming down as heavily as before and the 1st Marines found that movement would have to be limited to small patrols to the front. A unit from the 1st Pioneer brought up a pump and hose and pumped raw napalm over the crest of the 1st Pioneer Battalion brought up a pump and hose and pumped raw napalm over the crest of Wana Ridge in about the center of the line. White phosphorus grenades were used to ignite the napalm. Results were apparently negligible. Enemy mortar and artillery fire continued through the day and night.

From 24 May to 27 May our front lines in the sector of the 1st Marines did not change. The troops held their positions, bailed out their foxholes only to find them quickly filled by the continuous rains, and lived as best they could under the constant pounding from Japanese artillery and mortars. Transportation for supplies and evacuation was non-existent. Even the amphibious tractors "bellied down" in the sea of mud. Food, water, and ammunition were manhandled to the front lines and casualties were carried out on stretchers and ponchos by hand, with from six to ten men in relays struggling to carry the wounded through the deep, slippery mud, occasionally stopping under the best available cover while the enemy shelled the area.

Clear weather greeted the 1st Marines on the morning of 28 May and regiment ordered that the attack be continued, with the 2d Battalion assaulting 100 Meter Hill, while the 3d Battalion prepared to strike out to secure Wana Draw within its zone of action as soon as the 2d Battalion had secured the hill. There was a great feeling of confidence that the hill might be taken as a result of happenings on the two previous days.

Aircraft, on 26 May, reported seeing large enemy movements to the south from Shuri. An estimated 1,500 Japanese were seen dragging field pieces and equipment to the south. This was a part of the movement to withdraw from Shuri, decided upon by the Japanese as a result of the flanking movements by the 6th Marine Division and the 7th Infantry Division. Outflanked and under constant pressure Shuri was about to crumble.

It is interesting at this time to note the contents of the interrogation of Japanese Colonel Yahara, Senior Staff Officer of the 32d Japanese Army for the period 21-29 May:

"On the night of 21 May a conference attended by all Division and Brigadier CG's was held in the 32d Army Hq caves under SHURI Castle. Three possible courses of action were proposed: (1) to make the final stand at SHURI, (2) to withdraw to the CHINEN Peninsula, and (3) to withdraw to the south. The first plan was favored by the 62d Division which was reluctant to withdraw from what they thought of as their own territory. Other factors favoring the adoption of this plan were the presence of large quantities of stores in SHURI and a general feeling that a withdrawal would not be in the best traditions of the Japanese Army. It was recognized that to stay would result in a quicker defeat and consequently it was discarded in accord with the 32d Army policy of protracting the struggle as long as possible. A retreat to CHINEN was regarded with no great favor by anyone and was deemed unfeasible due to the diffi-

culties of transportation over rough and mountainous terrain. The discussion resolved in a decision to conduct an ordered retreat to the south, influenced to a great extent by the presence of 24th Division positions and stores in that area.

"The transport of supplies and wounded began on the night of 22 May. The burden of the operation was in the hands of the 24th Transport Regiment, an unusually proficient organization commanded by a Colonel NAKAMURA who later received a commendation for the masterful way in which the operation was carried out. While in CHINA the Regiment had been intensively trained in night driving, apparently with some success.

"The occupation of YONABARU on 22 May came as a surprise to the Japanese who did not accept such a move during the inclement weather prevailing at that time, assuming that Blue infantry would be unwilling to attack without tanks which were thought to be immobilized by the mud. On 23 May elements of the 24th Division were despatched to retake the town. The attack continued with no success on the 24th and 25th of May.

"At this time the 62d Division sector consisted only of less than a 2000 yard front north of SHURI held by one battalion. The main force, consisting of about 3000 men, was in SHURI, several hundred yards to the rear. Since the pressure directly north of SHURI was relatively light, it was decided to place the battalion in the line under the command of the 24th Division and to send the rest of the 62d Division to assist the 24th Division in the attack on YONABURA. On 25 May the 62d Division left SHURI and travelling by a circuitous route approached YONABARU from the South, three days being required for the maneuver. The arrival of the 62d Division failed to relieve the situation.

"The mass retreat from SHURI took place during the night of 29 May. Combat units left one-fifth to one-third of their troops behind to hold the line for another day with orders to retreat the night of the 30th."

The Special Action Report of the 1st Marine Division describes the Japanese withdrawal from Shuri as follows:

"On 26 May the enemy, hoping to succeed under the cover of limited observation resulting from the pouring rains which had brought our ground and air operations to a virtual halt, began a withdrawal southward from his Shuri fortress positions. An estimated three to four thousand Japanese were caught in the open under a devastating barrage from the main batteries of our ships offshore, artillery, and the machine guns and bombs of our planes. More than fifty Marine aircraft took off despite limited ceiling and difficult operating conditions to strafe and bomb the moving groups. Some thirteen minutes after front-line units of this Division reported indications of troop withdrawals the first salvo from the guns of the USS NEW YORK began to fall on the retreating Japs. Approximately fifteen minutes later, support aircraft had taken to the air and was strafing foot and motorized columns trapped on the muddy roads. With air spot confirming the magnitude of the troop movements, additional support ships from the 77th Infantry Division and 6th Marine Division were brought to bear, and by nightfall the vallages of Zahana, Gisushi, and Dakiton, all sheltering troops, had been pounded into a shambles; two truck convoys had been smashed; six light tanks and two mobile field pieces had been destroyed. Fighter pilots reported the roads littered with enemy dead and smashed equipment."

On the evening of 26 May, the enemy smoked the frontlines of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 1st Marines and adjacent units with the intent, apparently, of covering the with-

drawal of some of their troops. Sporadic smoke and high explosive shells continued to fall during the night. Our artillery and mortar fire was stepped up to catch enemy troops moving in the open. Next morning, 27 May, in the steady downpour, the 2d Battalion sent "E" Company to reconnoiter its front to determine whether the enemy still held the ground in any sizeable force. The company patrol reported, upon returning, that it had received very little fire and that it believed that with the use of tanks, 100 Meter Hill could be taken. Intense enemy artillery and mortar fire continued throughout the evening and night. So did the rain.

And so, on the morning of 28 May, there was confidence that, with the enemy withdrawing, it might be possible to break the stalemate enforced upon the 1st Marines by enemy opposition and weather conditions. The weather had cleared; no rain was falling, and visibility was practically unlimited. At 0700 "E" and "G" Companies were ordered to assault Conical Hill. "F" was to be in support.

By 0800 "E" had reached the top of the hill but was hit immediately by heavy enemy fire from the Army sector on the left, and with casualties mounting, hopes for holding the hill dissipated rapidly. It was necessary to withdraw. The enemy was still in considerable strength awaiting our forward movement. It was decided by the 2d Battalion that although it might again take the top of the hill, it could not possibly hold it against a strong enemy counterattack. The strength of the companies was low, and regiment refused requests for replacements. All morning long the fighting continued, and enemy rifle fire became so intense that it was necessary to employ smoke in evacuating casualties. The front lines of the regiment remained the same.

More rain came with the dawn of 29 May, and with this day came some respite from the boredom of staying in the foxholes on the ridge and "taking it" from the Nips. At 0940 division ordered the 1st Marines to by-pass Wana Draw and relieve elements of the 5th Marines who had entered Shuri against little or no opposition.\*

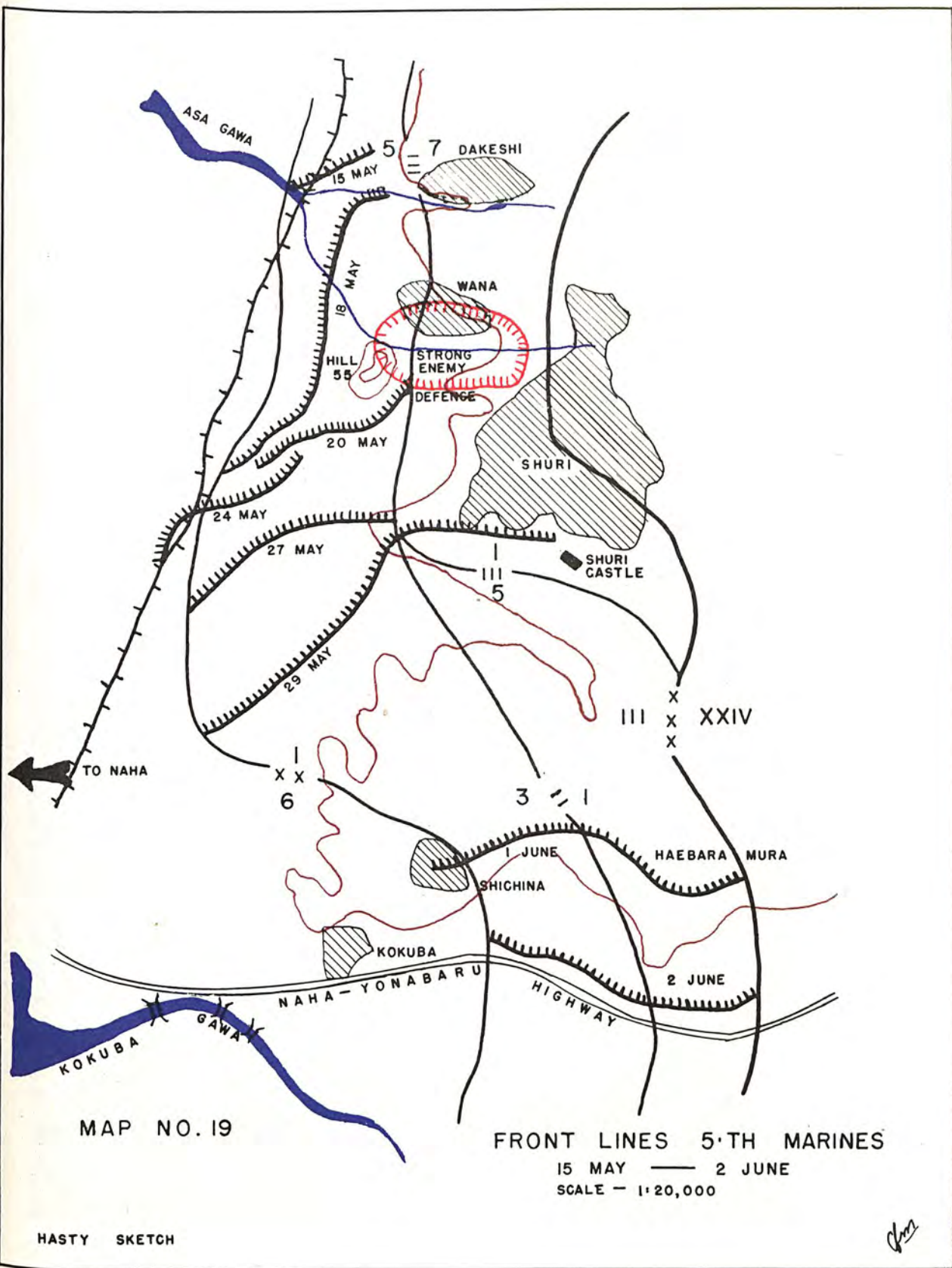
The 3d Battalion moved out and around Hill 55 to come into Shuri from the southwest and relieved the 1st Battalion, 5th Marines, establishing a line in from the west around the south side of Shuri Castle and back to the west. Following the 3d Battalion was the 1st, whose mission was to turn east from Hill 55 and sweep directly into Shuri. Attacking in a column of companies with "B" in the lead, closely followed by "A", the 1st Battalion was hit by heavy machine gun fire from a deep and rugged draw a few hundred yards south of the by-passed Wana Draw. Moving to its right, the battalion went around the enemy defenses and eventually contacted the 3d Battalion in the south of the city. A perimeter defense was set up for the night with "A" and "C" holding that sector of the line which faced to the north.

In describing the situation it is interesting to read from the Special Action Report of the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines:

"At this stage of the advance the supply problem became the most critical of the campaign; carrying parties of replacement troops formed an almost unbroken chain from the regimental dump at Jichaku all the way to the big barracks in southwest Shuri. It was a gallant and heartbreaking effort to carry sufficient food, water, and ammunition to the frontline units, and a large number of the men dropped from sheer exhaustion. Air supply was also used, and the planes saved the day despite the difficulties of "ceiling zero" weather conditions."

Next day the 306th Infantry on the left of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines attempted to take 100 Meter Hill late in the afternoon but were driven off by intense fire. None

\*See Maps Nos. 18 and 20.





Frontlines Were Supplied By Air

of the battalions of the 1st Marines moved except for small patrols. Because of the acute supply situation, the day was devoted to air drops for the 1st and 3d Battalions in Shuri. Patrols venturing into northern Shuri drew 47-mm. and machine gun fire.

The rear guard defenders of Shuri withdrew through the only exit left them—out through the southeast corner of the hill mass—and with their departure the whole Shuri fortress collapsed like a punctured balloon. Patrols from the 1st and 3d Battalions moved out at 0800 on 31 May to the north and to the west and found no opposition. Conical Hill—and all of 100 Meter Hill—was taken without a shot being fired when the 306th Infantry mounted the crest during the morning.

Immediately, the 2d Battalion ordered patrols sent into Wana Draw from the west. At 1000 the patrols reported no enemy activity so the battalion moved without difficulty across the draw to the next ridge on the northern side of Shuri. At long last Wana Ridge was ours, and the Draw, where so many men had been killed and wounded, could be traversed safely now, except for the normal risk of being shot by some by-passed Nip hiding in a cave or vault. The regiment went into reserve for the division during the afternoon with instructions to stay in Shuri and mop up that area.

## 10. FROM HILL 55 TO SHICHINA

(21 May—1 June, 1945)

After seizing Hill 55 and the regimental objective line to the south, the 5th Marines prepared to continue the drive toward the Tenth Army's objective line—the hills east of Shichina overlooking the Naha-Yonabaru Highway.\* On the right of the 5th Marines, the 6th Marine Division had finally captured Sugar Loaf Hill and had footholds on Horseshoe Ridge and Crescent Ridge. The lines of the 1st Marine Division at this time approximated, roughly, a misshapen curved line like the letter "S", with its top distorted to the northeast and its bottom extended in a similar manner to the southwest. The top of the "S" contained Wana Draw, and in following the line down past Hill 55 the bulge in the bottom part of the letter is easily seen. Until Wana Ridge and Draw were taken, the forward progress of the 5th Marines would have to be limited somewhat, or else the regiment would find itself facing east. The regiment's right was protected, since it was in physical contact with the 4th Marines who had just relieved the 29th Marines.

The morning of 21 May found the 1st Battalion in the line and preparing to patrol at 0730. During the hours of darkness this battalion had relieved the 2d Battalion which was tired and depleted in strength after being in the assault for six days.

Using medium tanks, supported and protected by infantry fire-teams, the 1st Battalion patrolled to its front and found, just south of the Naha-Shuri Road, a steep escarpment constituting a barrier against tank movements in that area. From time to time these patrols found themselves pinned down by heavy machine gun and mortar fire from the front. The enemy used his artillery to shell the battalion all during the day, and during the afternoon "B" Company was hit especially hard. The front lines were anchored firmly in the late afternoon with the 1st Marines on the left rear, and the 4th Marines of the 6th Division on the right (west) flank.

The 1st Battalion's plan to attack on the following day, 22 May, was shelved because of heavy rains. This rainy period has been described before and no attempt will be made here to repeat what has been said. By 0900 the ground was in such condition as to prevent the use of tanks in working on cave installations. The Battalion Commander ordered the companies to mop up around their present positions and sent an engineer

\*See Map No. 19.

squad to clear out anti-tank mines in front of the lines. Heavy rifle and mortar fire drove this squad back almost as quickly as it had moved out. Directly to the front of the battalion was a high nose extending from the east out of Shuri. Gun flashes were seen from the slope of this ridge and naval gunfire of 14" calibre was placed on the targets. The same type of fire was placed on a heavily fortified position in the southern outskirts of Shuri. This position contained a landmark known as Shuri Castle, an ancient moated building that had been the seat for the rulers of Okinawa for many generations. Hits were scored by this fire causing several explosions, apparently from ammunition dumps. Many of the enemy were seen running around in confusion and approximately ten carrier pigeons were seen flying from the ruins on the high ground.

On 22 May, division had advised the 5th Marines that the boundary between the two Marine divisions was being moved to the west to take in part of the line now held by the 4th Marines. In order to take over this new sector, the 5th Marines moved its 3d Battalion into the line on the right of the 1st Battalion, relieving the 4th Marines on the morning of 23 May. Due to the heavy rains, the tanks found the terrain virtually impossible to negotiate and were unable to assist the troops. One airstrike on the Shuri Castle area was called and naval gunfire and artillery worked on known installations and targets of opportunity during the day.

The ground in front of the 5th Marines was rendered impassable for everything except foot troops by the heavy rains that plagued the attacking forces for a whole week. Tanks, amphibious tractors, jeeps, and even weasels found themselves hopelessly mired every time they sallied forth. The 1st Battalion was forced to content itself with small patrols to its front and these were quickly pinned down before advancing any appreciable distance. On the right, the 3d Battalion was a little more fortunate. Its patrols got as far as Asato on 24 May and found little opposition except for sniper fire. Again on 25 May patrols reached Asato but were driven back by rifle and mortar fire. A patrol from the 3d Battalions went out in front of the lines on 26 May to lay some anti-personnel mines and was hit immediately by intense machine gun and small arms fire. At little later in the day about forty of the enemy were seen moving across the front, and artillery fire was called on the group, apparently annihilating it.

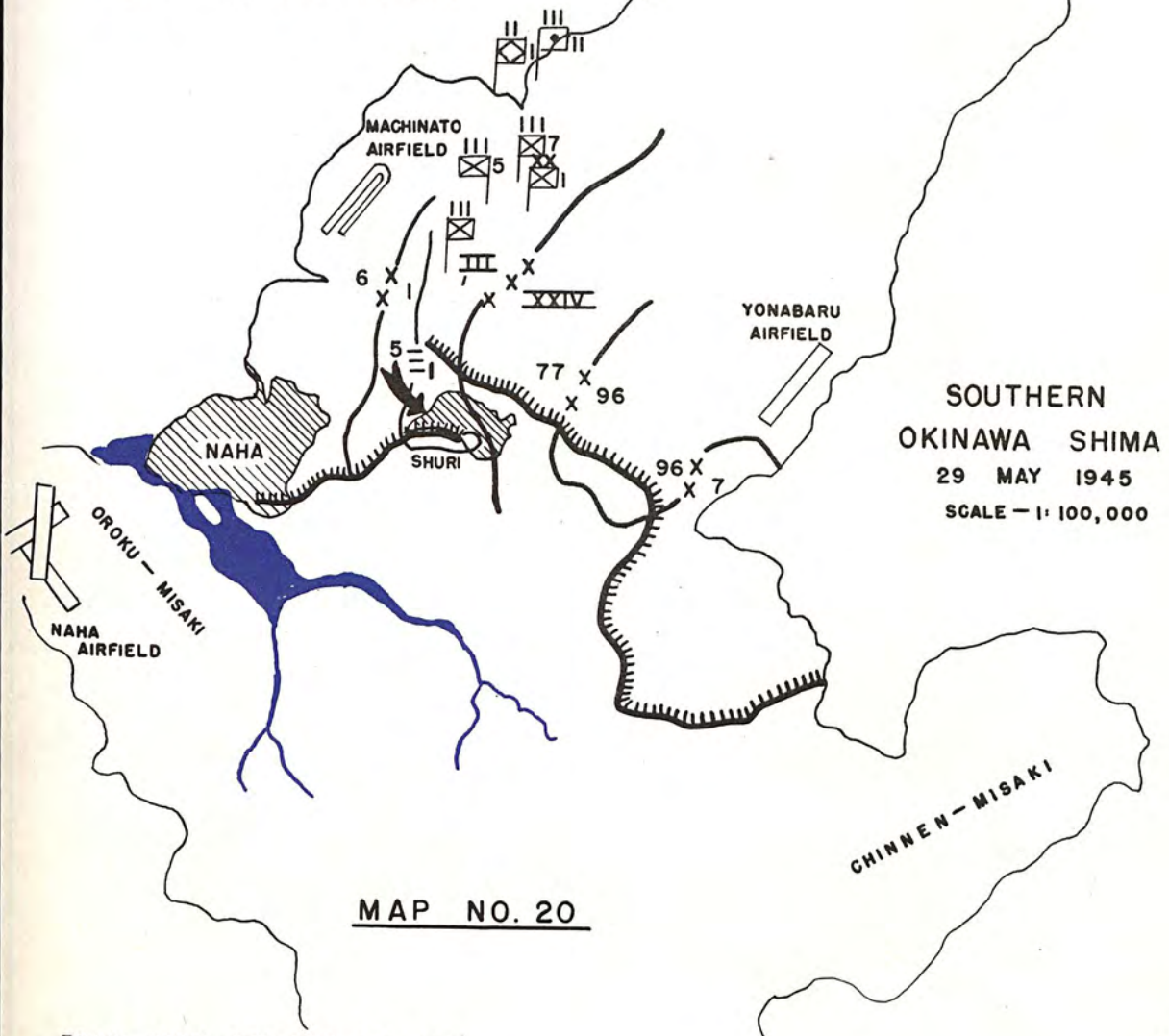
There were no indications that the enemy was withdrawing on 27 May. Patrols again were fired upon and forced back. The enemy continued to pour a heavy volume of fire on our positions from Shuri and the high ground to the left front of the 5th Marines.

Next day, 28 May, the 3d Battalion, with "F" Company attached, moved out early in the morning and seized the little town of Asato on the main Naha-Shuri Road. Meanwhile the 1st Battalion patrolled over three hundred yards to its front, still drawing enemy resistance in the form of small arms fire and some mortar fire.

On this same day the 5th Marines issued an order for its battalions to attack on the following day, 29 May, to seize the long nose of Shuri Ridge to its left front, and to continue toward the regimental objective, the high ground overlooking the Naha-Yonabaru Highway. At the same time, the 1st Marine Division had ordered the 1st Marines to attack in coordination with the 77th Infantry Division, to seize the high ground south of Wana Draw and that portion of Shuri that lay within the regiment's zone of action. The Division Reconnaissance Company was to move out at dawn to investigate all the area to the Division's front as far south as the Naha-Yonabaru Highway. The 1st Tank Battalion was ordered to support the attack when and where ground conditions would permit. Contact was to be maintained in the division from right to left.



LINES SHOW ENCIRCLEMENT &  
CAPTURE OF SHURI CASTLE  
BY "A" CO. 5-TH MARINES

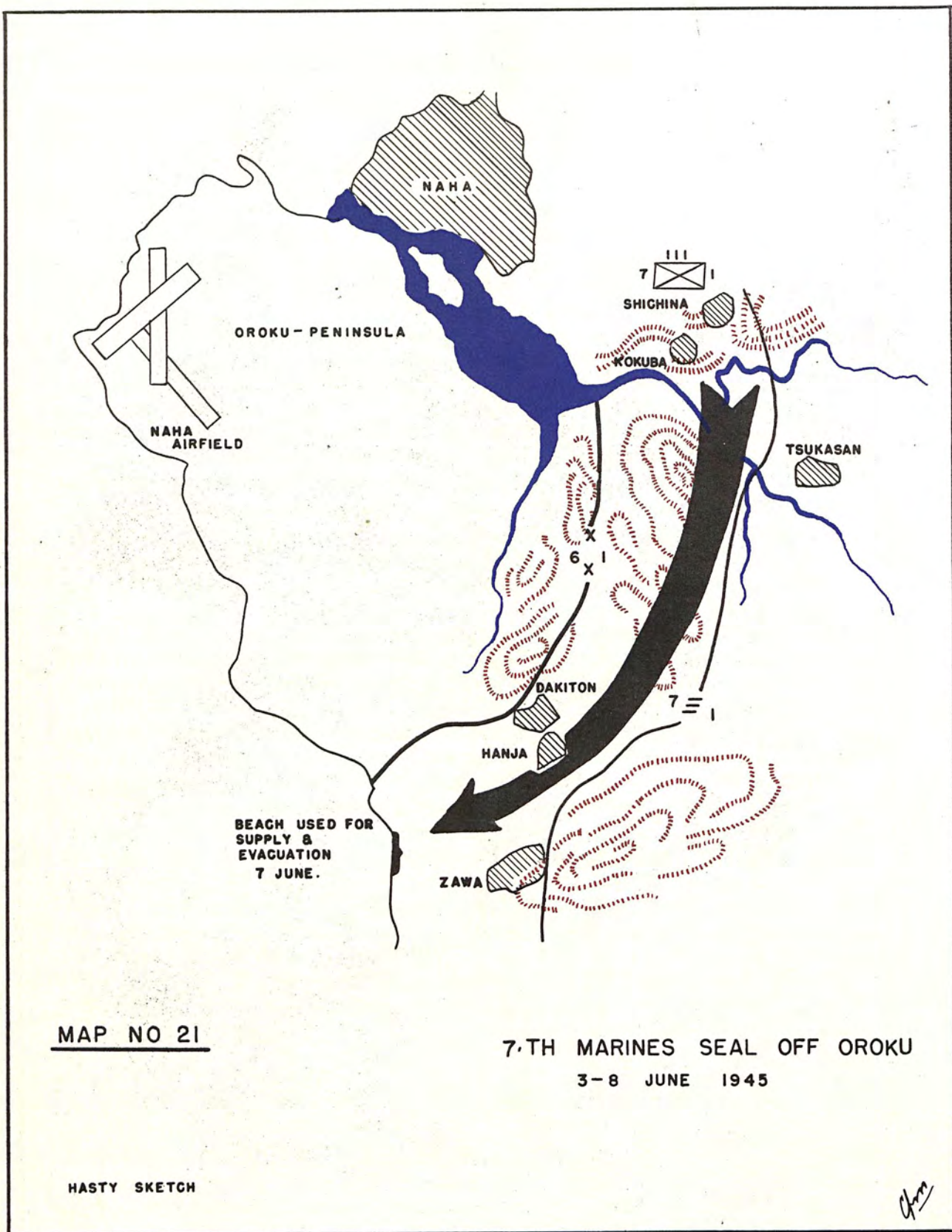


SOUTHERN  
OKINAWA SHIMA  
29 MAY 1945  
SCALE - 1: 100,000

MAP NO. 20

TAKEN FROM 1-ST MAR. DIV. SAR.

*Geo*



Over eight hundred yards were gained by the 5th Marines on 29 May, but this was of secondary interest as compared to two items of greater interest. The first was that the 1st Battalion succeeded in capturing Shuri Castle; the second, that the Japanese had withdrawn to the south with the exception of a holding force in front of the 1st Marines. Without much trouble the 1st Battalion moved out early in the morning with "C" and "B" Companies in assault and seized Shuri Ridge. The Battalion Commander, upon ascertaining that Shuri Castle lay virtually undefended, requested permission from regiment to send one company to the left and out of his zone of action to seize the high ground around Shuri Castle. Permission was granted and the reserve company, "A", passed through the left of "C" and occupied the Castle. This company was later relieved by elements of the 1st Marines as previously described and moved back into a reserve position for the 1st Battalion.

In the meantime the 3d Battalion moved south of Asato and soon found that the Japanese had left considerable troops to effect delaying action. The battalion's two assault companies were pinned down by machine gun and mortar fire and dug in for the night about five hundred yards south of Asato. The movement of this day had been somewhat like a pivot and found the 5th Marines facing southeast. The flanks were tied in for the night with the 1st Marines on the left and the 3d Battalion, 22d Marines on the right.

The weather continued to be bad with rains falling all through the day. The tanks were largely inoperative because of the condition of the ground. Records do not show why the Reconnaissance Company did not carry out its assigned mission. The only information at hand consists of the action report of that company which says:

"29 May 45. On mission of blowing caves in C.P. area.

30 May 45. No activity.

31 May 45. Same."

During the night and early next morning the 1st Battalion found many of the enemy trying to infiltrate its positions and killed 112 Nips. The 3d Battalion was bothered less; it accounted for 17.

Next day, 30 May, the 1st Battalion ordered out patrols to its front to determine the strength of the enemy. Advancing about five hundred yards, the patrols from the three companies found little opposition until they came within range of the next high ridge and then the enemy brought heavy machine gun and rifle fire to bear, forcing the patrols to return to their lines.

In two more days the two battalions were occupying the high ground east of Shichina that overlooked the Naha-Yonabaru Highway. The 3d Battalion, attacking on the right in conjunction with the 29th Marines, found the terrain about as troublesome as the Japs. It was not easy going; men were still being wounded and killed, but it was a relief to be on the move again and with sufficient pressure to cause the Japs much concern. The 1st Battalion moved concurrently with the 3d over much of the same type of terrain. There were no roads worthy of the name to the rear of either battalion and although the sun had finally broken through, the mud was still a major factor for consideration in supplying the front line troops and evacuating the wounded. Upon reaching these final hills, from which the troops could see the roads to the south littered with enemy vehicles and equipment, both battalions sent reconnaissance patrols across the Kokuba River valley to the next high ground to find the enemy and determine his strength. These patrols met scattered enemy resistance and by 1 June it was felt that the next obstacle would be at Hill 69, slightly to the east of Tsukasan.\*

\*See Map No. 22.

The 3d Battalion patrolled to its front and ran into the same situation as that found by the 1st Battalion. Both units were having great difficulty with their supply and evacuation problems. During the day, the 2d Battalion, in reserve, sent part of its platoons to help the two battalions on the line in carrying up food, ammunition and water, and to carry casualties back. The entire zone of action was a sea of mud.

## 11. THE 7TH MARINES SEAL OFF OROKU

(2-7 June, 1945)

Elements of the 22d and 29th Marines in the vicinity of Kokuba were relieved on 2 June by the 2d and 3d Battalions, 7th Marines, as that regiment prepared to continue the attack on the right of the 1st Marine Division's zone of action.<sup>14\*\*</sup> The general direction for attack lay to the southwest, and in the path of the regiment was the Tomigusuku Mountain mass. Except for the Tomigusuku-Zawa road, there was little in the way of supply routes. All secondary roads and trails were in such condition as the result of the rainy weather, that they offered little promise for the regimental supply and evacuation scheme. To the right of the 7th Marines' zone of action was Oroku Peninsula which was being softened up at this time by artillery, naval gunfire, and airstrikes in anticipation of the dawn landing by the 4th Marines on 4 June. The movement of the 6th Marine Division during 29 May-1 June had been to the southeast out of Naha and the direction of attack had paralleled the Kokuba Estuary. When the attack of the two Marine divisions had stopped on 1 June on the high ground that overlooked the Naha-Yonabaru Highway, it must have been evident to the Japanese that the divisions were preparing to cross the north fork of the Kokuba Gawa to continue the attack to the south.

Two things at this time explain the nature of events to follow and the difference in the progress of the two divisions. First of all, the enemy did not intend to fight any decisive action in the area to the immediate south of the Kokuba. His plan, so far as it is apparent, was to post delaying forces, small in number, in the path of the attackers, while his main forces dug in and concentrated their strength in the Kunishi-Mezado-Yuza-Yae-Dake area. In the second place, the enemy already deployed on Oroku Peninsula were to remain in their positions and defend it to the bitter end—exactly what they proceeded to do. The above is the explanation why the 7th Marines were able to drive through to the west coast above Itoman by 7 June and seal off all Oroku. In doing this the right flank battalion of the 7th Marines, the 2d, was exposed to heavy artillery, mortar, and automatic fire as it moved from Takanyuta to Hill 108, west of Dakiton.

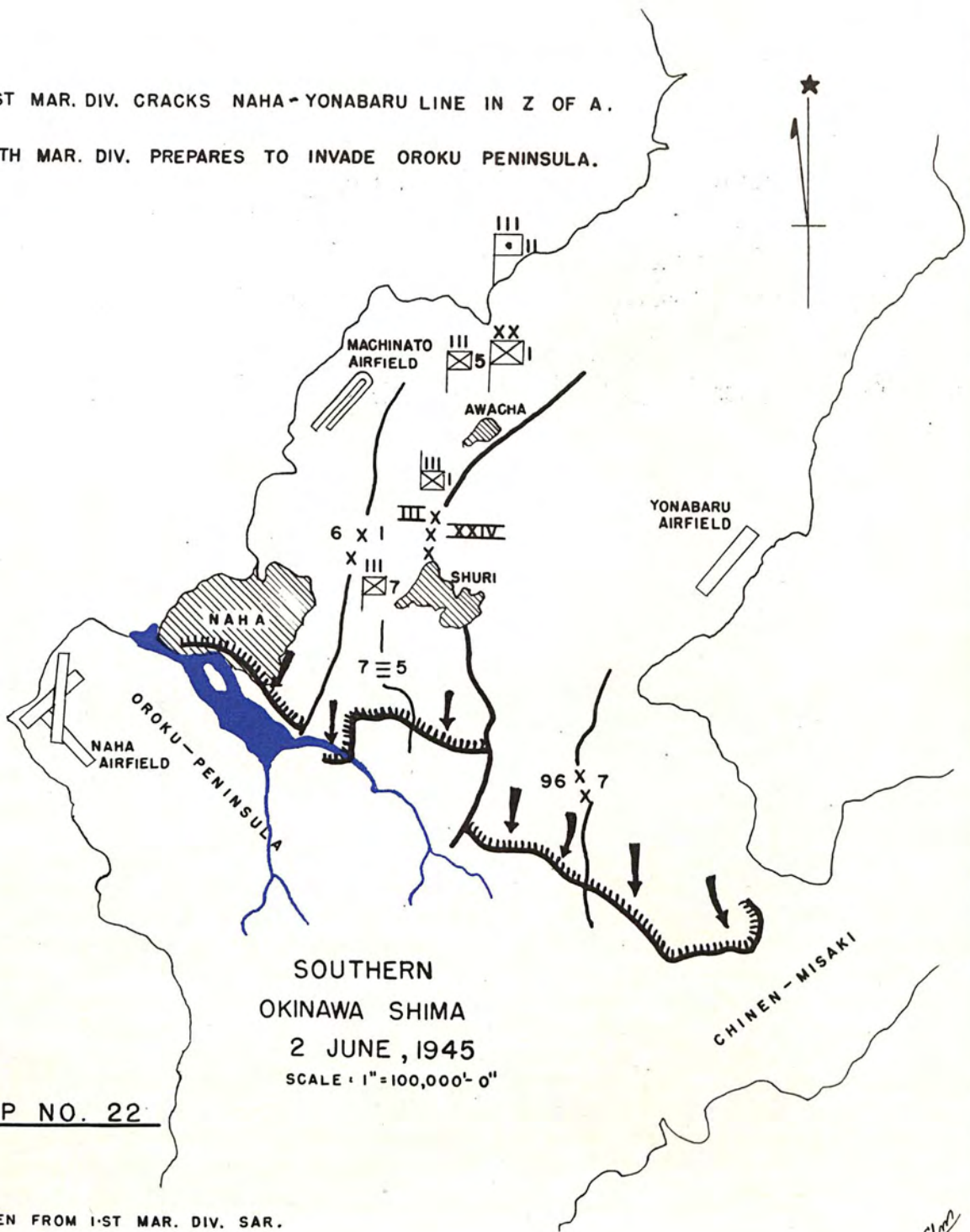
Patrols to the south had found no stable enemy defensive line; they had only found small pockets of Japanese offering, at best, limited delaying opposition. For this reason the 1st Marine Division saw fit to attach its Reconnaissance Company to the 7th Marines in order to help that regiment to move over the sluggish terrain as quickly as possible. It was expected that resistance on the left of the Division zone of action would develop around Iwa, and with its attacking regiments carrying only equipment and supplies that could be manhandled, it was desirable to reach the west coast at the earliest practicable date so that the supply and evacuation problems might be ameliorated by using seaborne transportation. Within one week after crossing the Kokuba and launching the attack to the south, the 1st Marine Division was landing supplies on the beach north of Itoman and could send its casualties out directly to a hospital ship. By 11 June, planes were using a hastily constructed airstrip, made by clearing a section of primary road, to fly wounded

<sup>14</sup>See Appendix.

\*\*See Map No. 22.

1-ST MAR. DIV. CRACKS NAHA-YONABARU LINE IN Z OF A.

6-TH MAR. DIV. PREPARES TO INVADE OROKU PENINSULA.

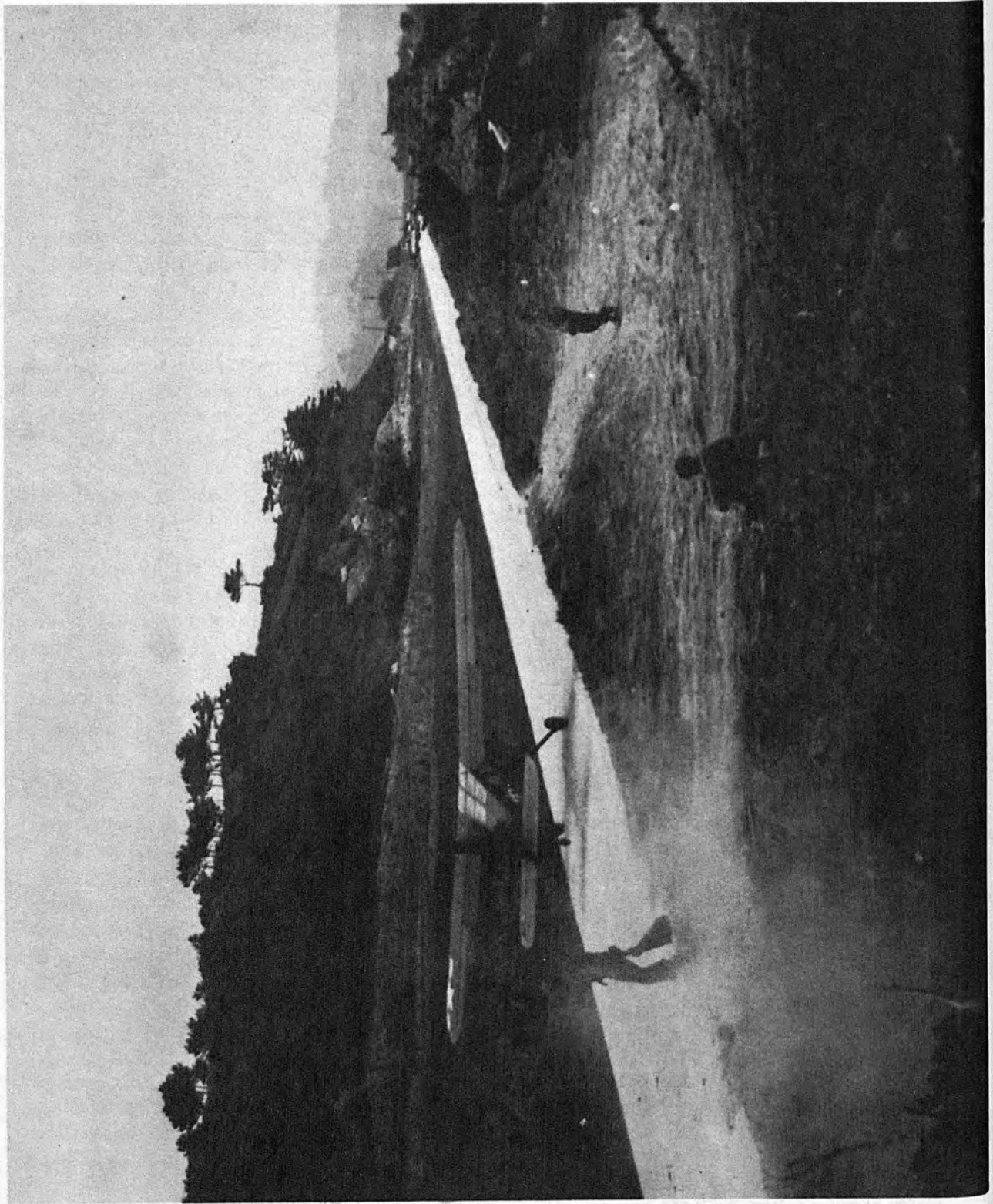


SOUTHERN  
OKINAWA SHIMA  
2 JUNE, 1945  
SCALE: 1"=100,000'-0"

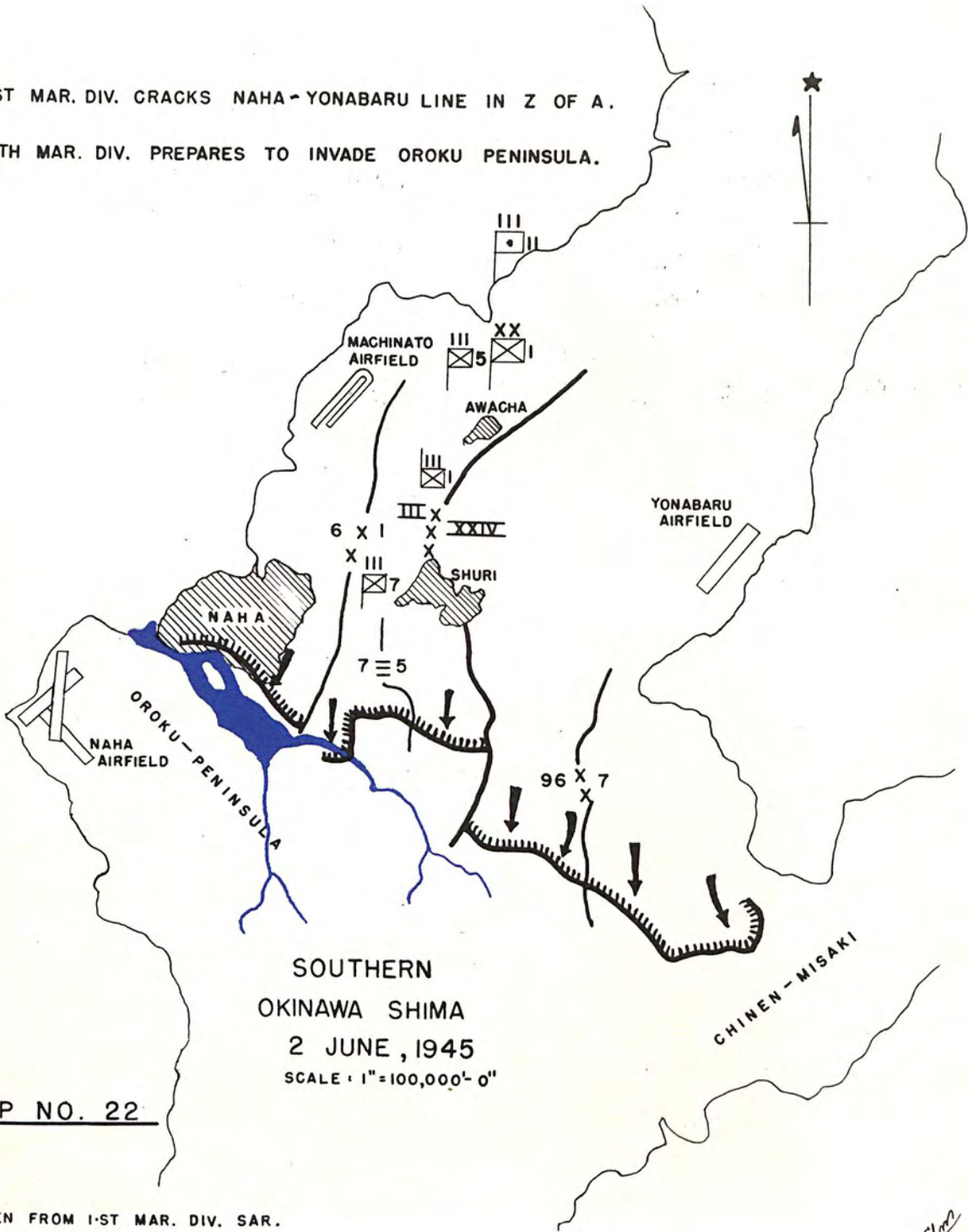
MAP NO. 22

TAKEN FROM 1-ST MAR. DIV. SAR.

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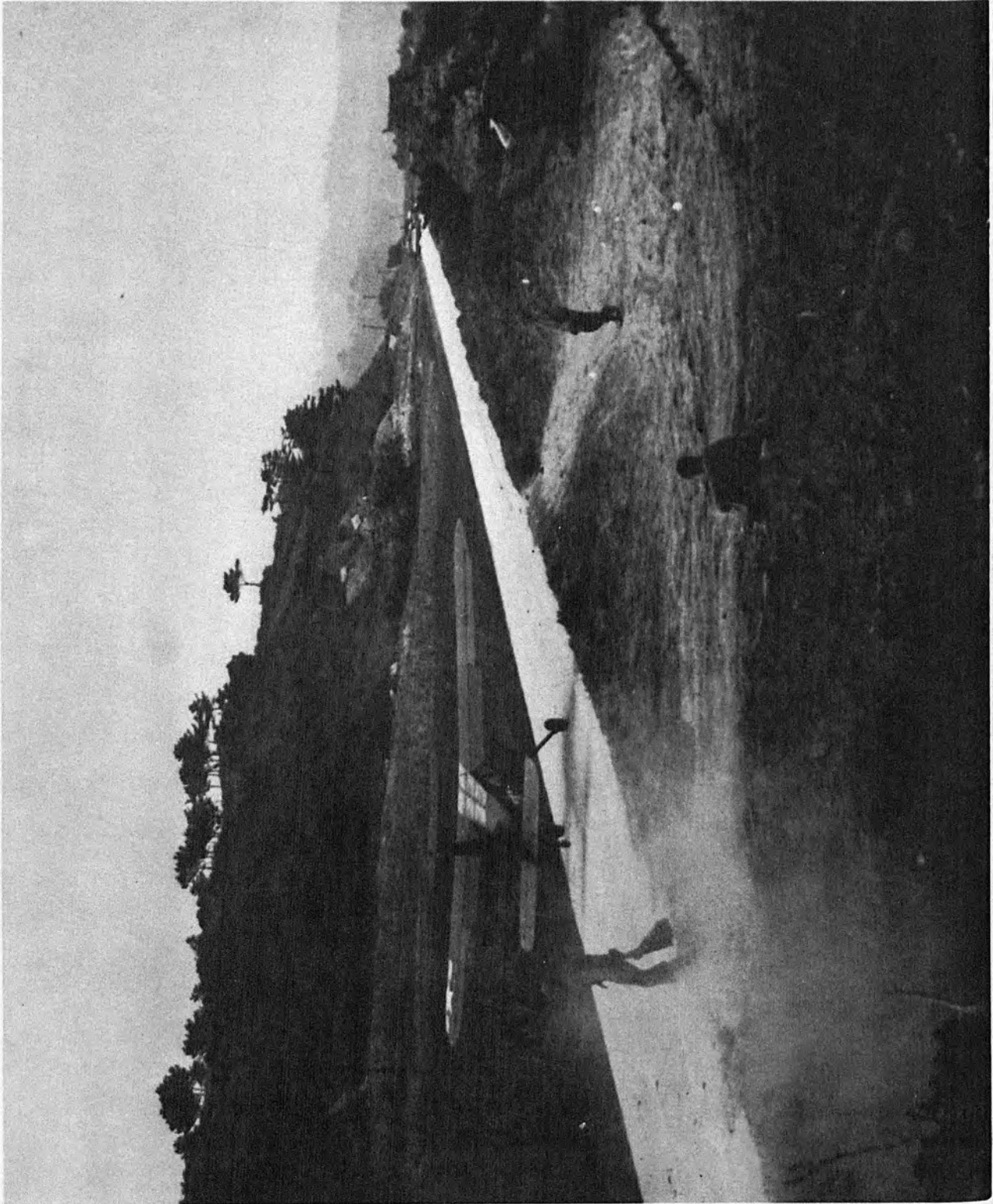
1-ST MAR. DIV. CRACKS NAHA-YONABARU LINE IN Z OF A.  
 6-TH MAR. DIV. PREPARES TO INVADE OROKU PENINSULA.



MAP NO. 22

TAKEN FROM 1-ST MAR. DIV. SAR.

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men back to hospitals in the rear areas.<sup>15</sup> This does not mean, however, that supply and evacuation problems were wholly solved. In the days to come, planes were called upon time after time to drop supplies to front line units.<sup>16</sup> Even tanks would be pressed into service later on Kunishi Ridge to carry reinforcements, plasma, and weapons forward and to haul back the wounded. This last phase (the term is arbitrary) of the campaign was one whose logistical aspect vied with the tactical constantly. Tanks, Weasels, M-7's—even the Amtracs—found their master in the unyielding, muddy hilly terrain of southern Okinawa. The only compensating factor was that there was fluidity of movement and maneuver for a while at least, but troops found small satisfaction in that when they depended upon the aeroplane for subsistence and had to carry wounded comrades distances measured in miles.

On 3 June the 7th Marines attacked with its 2d and 3d Battalions in assault, and by nightfall the troops were on the high ground south of the Kokuba. Enemy resistance, so far, was practically non-existent, and on the following day both battalions moved south and a little west against light opposition to occupy positions on the ridge running east from Takanyuta. The 1st Battalion mopped up in the wake of the other two, blowing caves and searching out all possible enemy hiding places.

Again on 5 June the assault battalions found very light resistance and continued to press southwestward. It was necessary to hold up the attack each morning until air drops were effected and the companies resupplied. The afternoon of 6 June found the front lines just to the north of the village of Dakiton.

Next day the 3d Battalion pushed all the way through Hanja down across the low ground to a ridge just north of Zawa. The 2d Battalion called naval gunfire in on Hill 108, just west of Dakiton, and had no trouble seizing the hill. The enemy was observed fleeing to the south in small groups numbering from ten to twenty, and fire from the battalion's supporting weapons, the artillery and mortars, accounted for a high per cent of casualties among the fleeing groups. From Hill 108, the 2d Battalion pushed on to the southwest to occupy high ground on the coast north of Itoman.\*

III Phib Corps had directed the 6th Marine Division to use the 22d Marines to cover the right flank of the 1st Marine Division as it moved to cut off Oroku Peninsula. Two battalions from the 22d Marines moved from the Naha Estuary across the Kokuba and filled in on the right and to the rear of the 7th Marines as that regiment moved southwest. With the progress of the 4th Marines in a wheeling movement around the southeastern part of the peninsula, the Japanese forces on Oroku found themselves completely encircled.

On 8 June the attack of the 1st Marine Division was reoriented to drive south through Itoman and across the Mukue Gawa toward the next high ridge at Kunishi. Both of the assault battalions of the 7th Marines fought their way against stiffening enemy resistance to positions just north of Itoman near the Mukue Gawa. During the day supplies were brought ashore on the beach directly west of Zawa, and LVT's and LCI's evacuated many of the wounded.<sup>17</sup> The regiment was now in position to prepare for the assault of the ridge at Tera and then Kunishi Ridge. In one week the assault battalions had advanced nearly ten thousand yards against rearguard enemy outposts and over extremely difficult terrain.

<sup>15</sup> and <sup>16</sup>. See Appendix.

\*See Map No. 21.

<sup>17</sup>See Appendix.

## 12. HILLS 57 AND 107

When the 5th Marines reached the hills north of the Naha-Yonabaru Highway on 1 June, the regiment sent patrols to the north fork of the Kokuba Gawa (river) to ascertain whether the stream was fordable. These patrols reported back that it could be crossed without difficulty in many places. On the following day the patrols crossed the river again in order to maintain contact with the enemy and to determine his strength. At the eastern edge of Tsukasan there is a large hill dominating all the ground around it and particularly that to the north. It was the opinion of the patrols that this hill, shown on the map as Hill 69, contained the next enemy strongpoint. Just after dark that night the enemy laid down a smoke barrage along the front of the 5th Marines.

On 3 June the attack was continued with the 3d Battalion in assault on the right, or west, and the 1st Battalion on the left.\* Resistance during the day was spotty, and nightfall found the front lines curving from the south fork of the Kokuba on the west around Tsukasan and over the top of Hill 69, which had been taken without too much difficulty. It was impossible to keep quartermaster supply dumps up with the battalions since the rains had ruined the two roads that ran into the 5th Marines' zone of action. Only by manhandling them could supplies be brought up to the battalions. Fortunately, casualties had been extremely light. The 2d Battalion in regimental reserve sent "F" Company to the 3d Battalion and "E" to the 1st to help with supplies and security.

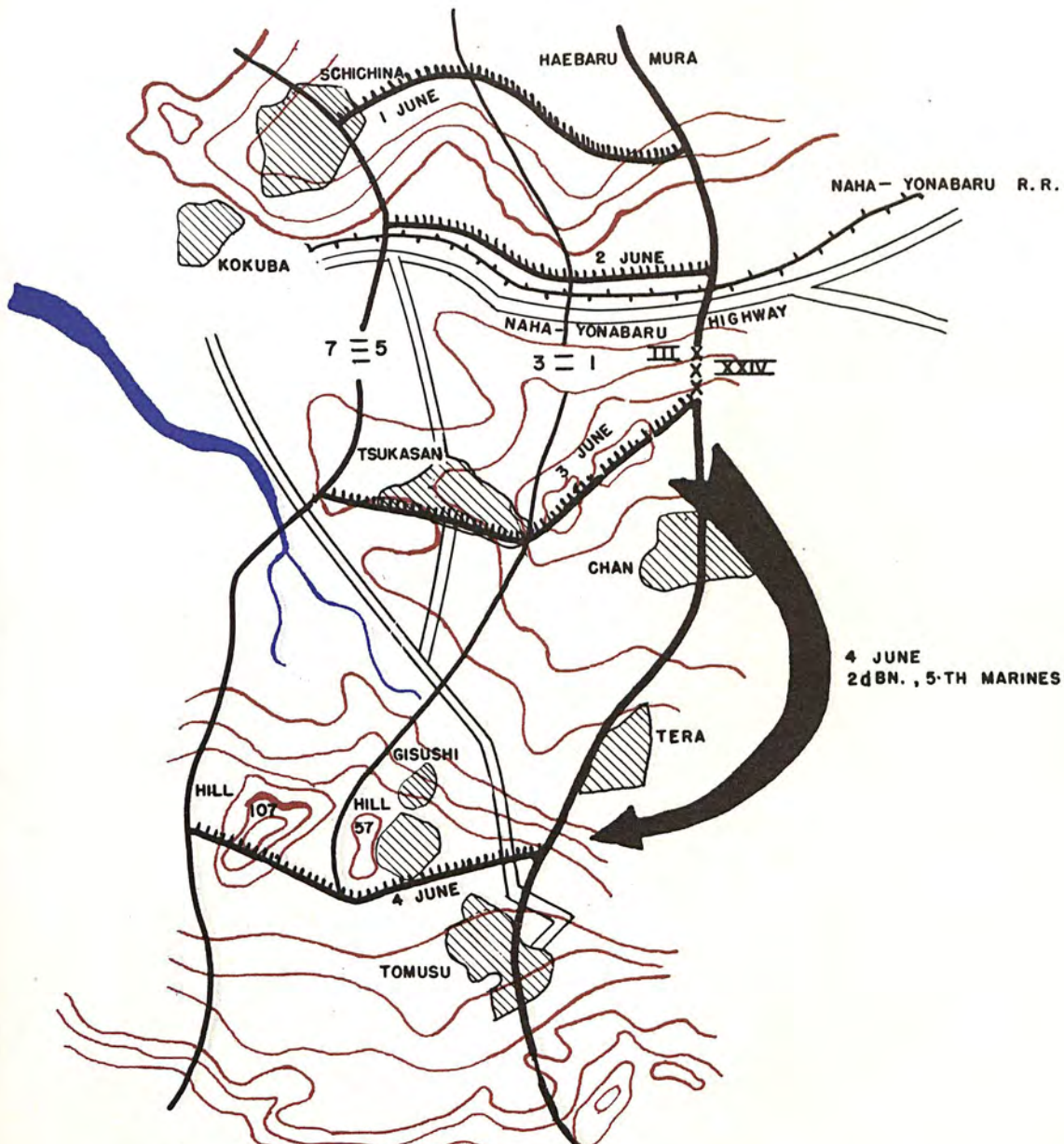
On 2 June the 2d Battalion had moved from its position in reserve in Shuri to the high hills of the Haeburu-Mura just north of the Naha-Yonabaru Highway. By 0600 next morning "F" and "E" Companies had returned to parent control. At 1145 the battalion was placed on twenty minutes notice to be prepared to move out in an enveloping movement through the zone of action of the 96th Infantry Division to attack Hills 107 and 57 west of the town of Gisushi from the east, or left, flank. These two hills were the next prominent terrain features in the 5th Marines' zone of action and lay about two thousand yards to the front of the 1st and 3d Battalions. The degree of resistance offered by the enemy, though light and sporadic, coupled with the slow and tedious progress forward as a result of the heavy, muddy terrain, helped to hold up the two attacking battalions of the 5th Marines in the immediate vicinity of Tsukasan.

It was regiment's plan now to strike from around the left, to seize the two hills at Gisushi, 107 and 57, and then to patrol the ground between the positions of the 2d Battalion and the other two battalions back at Tsukasan.<sup>18</sup> At 1230, the 2d Battalion left all its gear that could not be carried or manhandled in its dumps, and circled to the east around the left flank of the 1st Battalion into the Army's zone and on south over difficult terrain and impassable roads. By 1800 the battalion was in position about four hundred yards east of Gisushi; the battalion commander ordered "G" and "E" Companies to assault Hill 57 at once. Meeting only negligible resistance the two companies were in their objective within twenty minutes. It was now getting late, and the plan to attack Hill 107 was held in abeyance until next morning.

"G" and "E" Companies found Hill 57, a long ridge whose long axis ran north and south with its two ends curved to the west, to contain a well-organized cave defensive system. Demolitions were used extensively to close up as many openings as possible before dark. At 1900 two enemy soldiers were seen in a cave entrance on "E" Company's right flank. Immediately the Marines threw a white phosphorus grenade into the cave. The enemy did not come out; instead, the cave began to smoulder as though something was

\*See Map No. 22.

<sup>18</sup>See Appendix.



MAP NO. 23

PROGRESS LINES

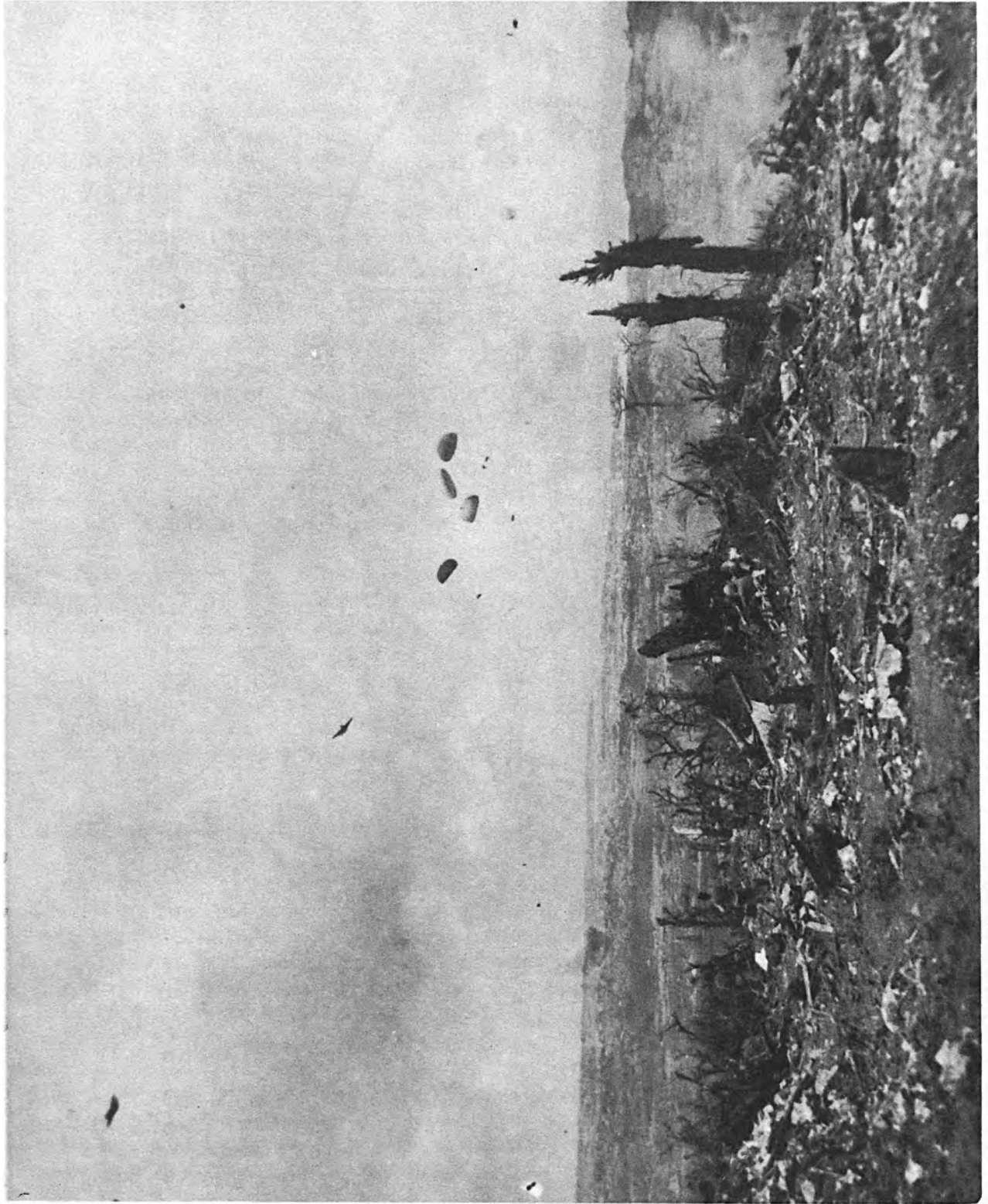
5-TH MARINES

1-4 JUNE 1945

SCALE - 1:20,000

HASTY SKETCH

*Handwritten signature*



First Division, Marine Corps, Hill in Foreground, Watch, Alaska, 1942

burning inside. Troops commenced to move away from the area of the cave when suddenly and without warning a terrific explosion occurred, forcing flame out of several cave openings in "G" Company's sector over two hundred yards away. At the same time the entire side of the hill blew up, killing three and wounding seventeen men from "E" Company.

The battalion had no communication with the rear except by radio. Roads to the rear were impassable and parts of them were in territory not yet under our control. All of this tended to magnify the evacuation problem. An Army unit on the left offered its facilities and gave invaluable assistance in getting the wounded back to field hospital.

Next morning an air drop was successfully effected just to the rear of the battalion, and the three companies were supplied quickly with food, water, and ammunition. Within an hour after the air drop "F" Company was prepared to move out and take Hill 107. This was done against no enemy opposition, and the battalion now held all the high ground across the regimental front.

The 2d Battalion was relieved at 1000 when two battalions of the 1st Marines passed through its lines to continue the attack to the south. All three of the 5th Marines' battalions then turned to aggressive patrolling and mopping-up.\*

### 13. TO KUNISHI RIDGE: 1ST MARINES

When the 1st Marine Division, with the 5th Marines in assault, moved south after the collapse of Shuri, the 1st Marines remained to mop up that area. Until 3 June the regiment kept busy its battalions patrolling, policing, salvaging, and burying enemy dead. The companies used their demolitions personnel to blast out all caves found in the area under regimental responsibility. During this period the battalions found time to assign replacements to the depleted companies.<sup>19</sup> While fighting on Wana Ridge and 100 Meter Hill, attrition had been heavy, but no replacements had been given the companies until the regiment was in reserve. This does not mean that the 1st Marines had no idea that the battalions were losing their strength under the constant pounding of the enemy. Strength in numbers is one thing and fighting efficiency is another. Feeding raw, usually inexperienced, replacements into the front lines during action had proved anything but successful. While it did tend to increase the strength of the units on the line, it did little to increase their fighting efficiency. The new replacements actually hampered the companies since they had no conception of what they were going into, and it took the time of NCO's and squad members away from more pressing business to help get these new men accustomed to the unit, into position, and forward with the squad or platoon in the next action. The usual comment heard many times in different sectors was that the replacements were "out of phase." That is, they were standing when they should have been down; they were down when they should have been up and moving; they seldom had time to get acquainted with their fellow squad or platoon members before they were moving into action; there was a lack of confidence felt by the veterans and a definite lack of unity in the squad or platoon because of these "strangers".<sup>20</sup>

Consequently, the 1st Marines waited until there was time to join these new men as effectively as time and circumstances would permit, and now that the regiment was in reserve and engaged in mopping up the Shuri area, the time seemed most propitious. Before moving south again on 3 June, the replacements had an opportunity to get acquainted with the other members of their units. They got some experience in the patrolling action and in the blasting of caves. One problem, however, could not be easily or immedi-

\*See Map No. 23.

<sup>19</sup>See Appendix.

<sup>20</sup>See Appendix.

ately solved. Replacement non-commissioned officers with no previous combat experience, who had won their stripes in a "stateside" office or on a drill field, were placed frequently in charge of a squad and over a man who had been in charge of that squad either by virtue of having "won his spurs" by showing aptitude for leadership and its requisite good judgment, or by the elimination by attrition of the NCO who had been in charge of the squad until he was killed or wounded. It is interesting to note that in most cases little resentment was felt over having these green, raw NCO's put in charge. Instead, the old members of the squad usually felt pity—and a lack of confidence that led to lack of efficiency.

This is not intended as an indictment of the replacements, their courage or aggressive spirit; neither is it presented as an indictment against our replacement system. The fact remains that this problem did exist and was a contributing factor in the fighting on Okinawa and for that reason it is herein chronicled.

On 3 June the 1st Marines were ordered to be prepared to move south to relieve the 5th Marines who were fighting south of Tsukasan. All day long efforts were made to get the regiment's vehicles out of the bowl enclosed by the horseshoe-shaped plateau and ridge north of Dakeshi. This bowl or draw was named "the Mudhole," an apt appellation, for according to the action report of the 1st Marines:

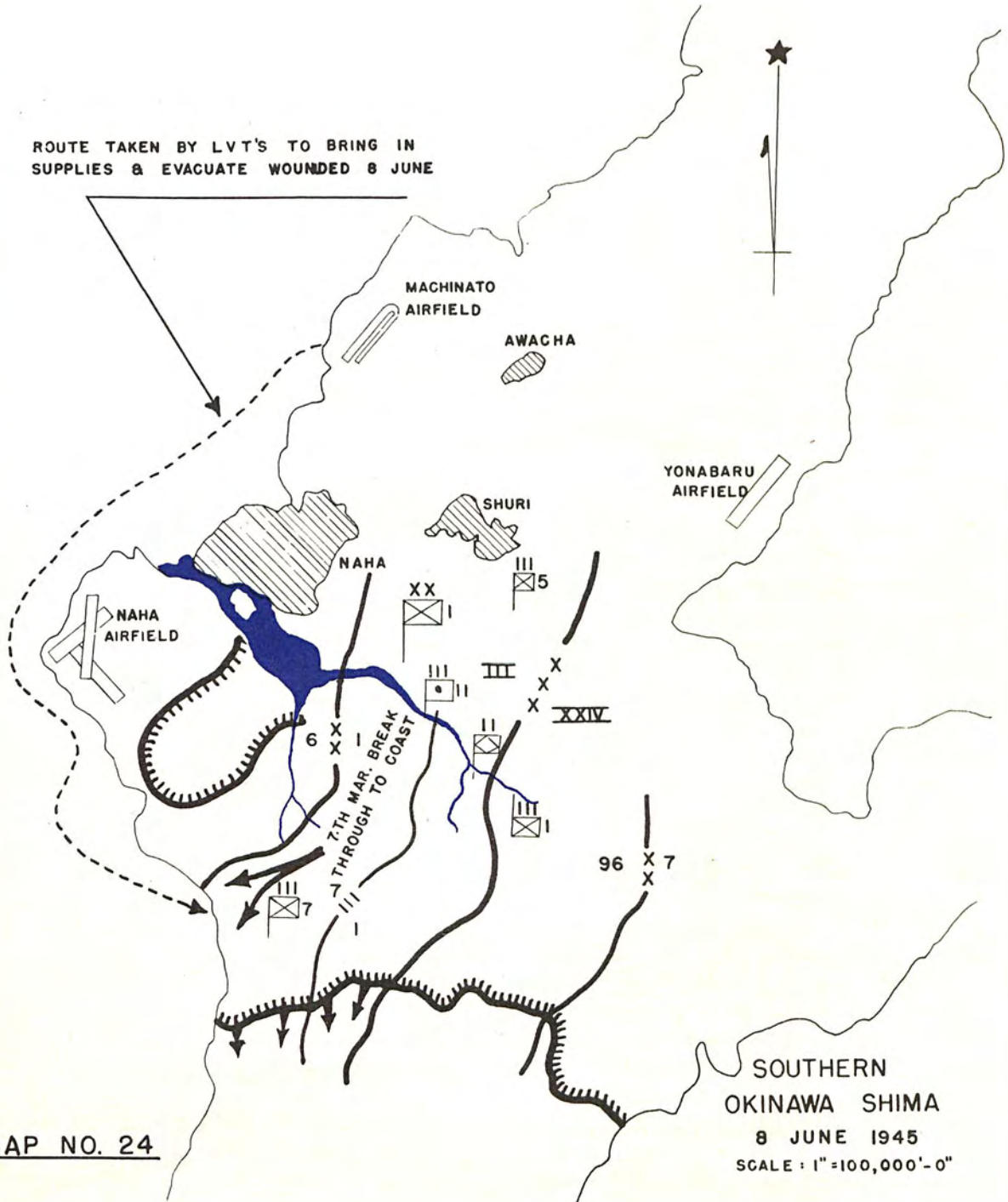
"Since all roads into this area were built without benefit of local roadbeds, they had turned into mud in some cases three feet deep. The majority of the battalion and regimental vehicles had to be abandoned until the ground dried out. Weeks later the regiment was still engaged in salvaging vehicles from this locality."

Just before dark the orders for relief were changed. Assigned to the 1st Marines was the mission of taking the high ground between Iwa and Shindawaku. The plan called for the regiment to move over to the left through the zone of action of XXIV Corps whose front lines were in the vicinity of Iwa. Next morning at 0530, the 3d Battalion, from its bivouac at Shuri, was to proceed to a road junction slightly south of Shuri where it would meet Army guides who were to lead it as closely as possible to the front lines of the right flank unit of XXIV Corps. From there the battalion was to attack to the right (west) to seize the regimental objective. The 1st Battalion was to follow the 3d as far south as Tera (not to be confused with the Tera near Itoman on the west coast. This Tera was southeast of Tsukasan) and then turn west behind Hills 57 and 107 where it would pass through the 5th Marines and attack south until contact was established with the 3d Battalion on the Iwa-Shindawaku high ground.

At 0430 on 4 June the 3d Battalion moved south and arrived at Tera in a veritable torrential downpour of rain. The guides had been useless; they had not been south of the meeting place at the road junction. About six hundred yards southeast of Tomusu the point of the battalion was pinned down by enemy fire. The leading company moved out in assault, but since the battalion had neither mortar ammunition nor an artillery observer, the fire fight was broken off, and the companies deployed for the night on the reverse slope of the draw to their rear.

In the meantime the 1st Battalion had moved to a position behind Hills 107 and 57 and prepared to launch its attack. Regiment had received word from Division to hold up the attack because of supply difficulties, and the 1st Battalion was quickly notified. Within an hour the battalion was ordered to attack, since the 7th Marines on the right had started to move forward. At 1630 the battalion moved out and advanced rapidly until it reached a stream, swollen by recent rains, about eight hundred yards south of Hills 57 and 107.

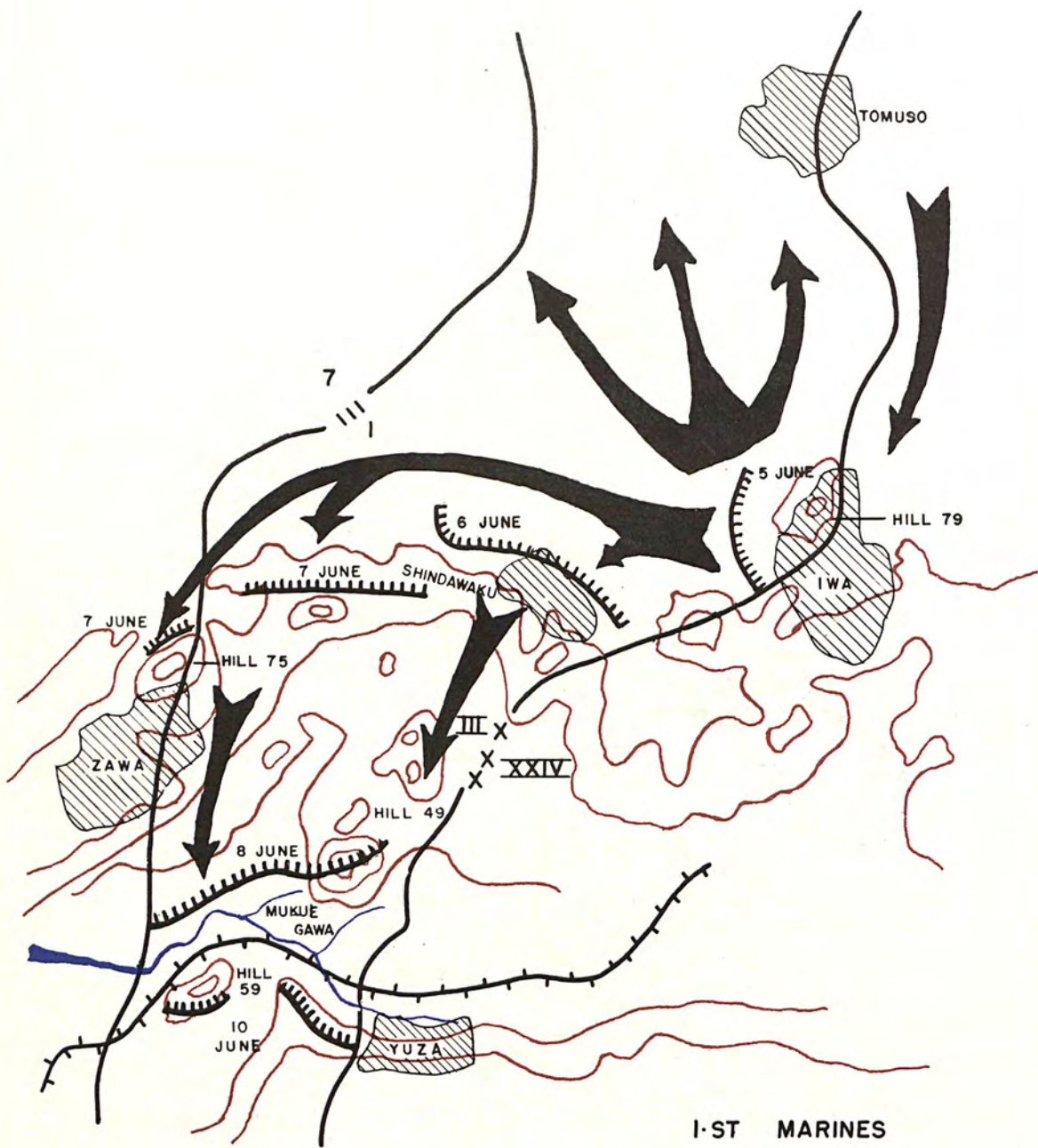
ROUTE TAKEN BY LVT'S TO BRING IN SUPPLIES & EVACUATE WOUNDED 8 JUNE



MAP NO. 24

SOUTHERN OKINAWA SHIMA  
8 JUNE 1945  
SCALE: 1" = 100,000'-0"

TAKEN FROM 1-ST MAR. DIV. SAR.



MAP NO. 25

1ST MARINES

5-10 JUNE '45

SCALE - 1:20,000

HASTY SKETCH

*Handwritten signature*



the Mukue Gawa, and upon crossing that stream, put troops on the northern slope of Hill 59, west and slightly north of the town of Yuza. With improving weather the supply situation was becoming less of a task and the troops were well supplied after digging in late in the afternoon. Orders from regiment directed that aggressive patrolling to the front be carried out on 9 June, and that the battalions utilize supporting arms to the maximum all during the day. A major assault would be staged on 10 June.<sup>21</sup>

Road conditions had improved to the extent that on 9 June the 1st Marines had tanks and bulldozers available, but before the tanks could be used, routes across the Mukue River must be found. On each extreme flank of the regiment there were bridges; both of these were largely destroyed by the enemy. The bulldozers were put to work filling in by-passes so that the tanks could cross the stream for the next day's attack. Patrolling action for the 2d Battalion had unfavorable results. Every time patrols were pushed around Hill 59, they were hit hard by machine gun fire from the enemy on the southern slope. During the day the 1st Battalion, which had relieved the 3d on the afternoon before, received orders to take Yuza Hill on 10 June, with supporting fires being provided by the 2d Battalion on Hill 59.

The attack on Yuza Hill is one that will long stand out in the memories of the survivors of "C" Company, for on the day of attack, 10 June, that company lost seventy-five of its one hundred and seventy-five men.

With the two by-passes completed it was possible to use tank support for the attack of 10 June. At 0800 the 2d Battalion commenced to clean out the southern slope of Hill 59 by sending tanks protected by infantry fire teams around to blast the enemy from his carefully prepared positions.

At 0915 the 1st Battalion supported by tanks moved out to attack Yuza Hill. Prior to the attack the 105-mm. and 75-mm. howitzers laid a "crawling" barrage that commenced at the base of Yuza Hill and moved up the hill as troops advanced. The battalion's 81-mm. mortars and the attached 4.2 chemical mortars laid a normal barrage on the hill and plateau behind it. From their positions on Hill 49 north of Yuza Hill, "A" and "B" Companies used their machine gun sections to deliver overhead supporting fire as "C" Company advanced. This preparation and covering was good, but it simply was not enough to keep the enemy from decimating "C" as it assaulted the hill.

In moving from its position to assault Yuza Hill, "C" Company had several obstacles in its path. Besides the usual rice paddies, still soft with oozy mud after the rains, there was a branch of the Mukue Gawa to cross and after that the railroad track. The skirmish lines for the final assault were formed in the stream bed behind (north of) the track. Heavy enemy machine gun and sniper fire took its toll while the men were getting into position. To avoid this fire some squads, after running, jumping, and crawling through the rice paddies, waded nearly a hundred yards up the stream, utilizing the protection afforded by its covering south bank.

It was the plan of the company commander to use his 1st and 2d Platoons in assault, but before the assault could be launched, the 1st Platoon was hit hard by a heavy barrage from enemy artillery, coupled with fire from friendly Army tanks. Suffering a dozen casualties, the 1st Platoon was left behind temporarily and its place was taken by the 3d Platoon. During the assault on the hill, the fierce Japanese machine gun and sniper fire never let up. The 3d Platoon was pinned down for a while by extremely accurate fire from a Hotchkiss gun firing from the left flank. The company commander and the platoon leader finally located the muzzle of the weapon sticking out of a cave and crawled near enough to put it out of action with hand grenades. They had barely completed this job when a

<sup>21</sup>See Appendix.

Nambu opened up from the right of the Hotchkiss, and the two officers took care of it in the same manner.

Before noon the company was on its objective and still under heavy fire. For some inexplicable reason one of the platoon leaders attempted to advance his platoon into an open field on the right. The Nips literally tore the platoon apart with deadly machine gun and sniper cross fire. The platoon leader and eleven men were killed and eight men were wounded. The Army unit on the company's left failed to advance and the company remained in a tight perimeter of defense until joined by part of "B" Company.

After waiting for Army tank support that never materialized, "B" Company attacked Yuza Hill on "C" Company's left flank. The company commander saw his company shot up and partially pinned down before it got to the stream. Finally he got about thirty-six men across the stream and advanced to the edge of Yuza where he told the men to wait and if he did not return by 1730 to join "C" Company on the hill. He then went back and waded down the stream to where the remaining elements of his command were pinned down and led them out under the best available cover to rejoin the platoon in Yuza. The company then joined "C" Company in a perimeter defense for the night.

One of the company men interviewed later had this comment to make on the day's attack:

"There were so many replacements, mostly untrained, that nobody knew anybody else. New men were hesitant, easily excited, unwilling without urging to take chances and to evacuate wounded buddies."

Total casualties for the two companies were over one hundred and twenty-five men. It was a costly day for the 1st Battalion.

At 1030 on the morning of 11 June the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines launched an attack to take Hill 69, about two hundred yards west of Ozato. After a preliminary artillery bombardment "F" and "E" Companies moved out while "G" Company on Hill 59 supported the attack with overhead machine gun fire. At first the attack moved with great rapidity but once out in the valley both assault companies began to lose men due to heavy enemy mortar and artillery fire.

"F" Company on the left advanced two of its platoons across the low ground between Hill 59 and the objective until they were within two hundred yards of Hill 69 when they were pinned down by sniper, machine gun, and mortar fire. With these two platoons unable to move, the company commander directed the 2d Platoon in reserve to attack around the right in an attempt to outflank some of the guns and positions that were holding up the company. Using the railroad for cover the platoon advanced in column formation until it was about west of its objective and then crossed the tracks to move up to an old factory. With the platoon safely under cover one squad was sent forward through a canefield to flush out snipers with white phosphorus grenades. The squad's efforts were rewarded by killing five of the enemy in this canefield. The platoon continued to advance until it reached the base of the hill where it stopped to blow caves. For a while mortar fire pinned the platoon down, but upon finding a defiladed approach, the squads quickly infiltrated into the enemy positions from the rear. The fighting was brief but final, and the surprised enemy quickly overwhelmed. In the meantime the company commander called for mixed smoke and high explosive artillery and mortar fire on Ozato to relieve pressure on the other two platoons. As soon as the smoke blanketed the flank, the platoons dashed forward and quickly took positions on the hill with the 2d Platoon already there.

"E" Company had little difficulty in getting its assault platoon across to the western end of the ridge that was a part of Hill 69, but when the other two platoons tried to advance in column they found enemy machine gun and mortar fire sweeping the length

So far there had been no enemy opposition, but the battalion commander was faced with the problem of how to get his battalion across an unfordable stream. The 7th Marines on the right reported no place to cross in their sector, and in the battalion's sector there was only one little footbridge. There was no alternative so the men started to move across in single file with "C" Company platoons in the lead. By 1730 the first two platoons of the company were across and pinned down by heavy machine gun and mortar fire coming from the high ground to their front.

It was obvious that the attack could not continue as planned; in fact the two "C" Company platoons could neither advance nor withdraw across the footbridge due to the heavy enemy fire. The 1st Battalion commenced a withdrawal to its line of departure and under cover of darkness succeeded in getting the two platoons back across. The casualties were evacuated with the greatest of difficulty.

Next day, 5 June, the 3d Battalion attacked toward Iwa, and with the exception of a fire fight for Hill 79, northeast of the town, had reached good positions about four hundred yards west of Iwa in time to dig in for the night. In moving west out of Iwa the battalion found moderate enemy resistance in the form of machine gun and small arms fire. In the meantime, on orders from Regiment, the 1st Battalion by-passed its pocket of resistance near the stream and went over into the XXIV Corps' zone to establish a position about six or seven hundred yards to the northeast of the 3d Battalion. Moving down toward Tsukasan, the 2d Battalion, in reserve, prepared to mop up by-passed pockets of resistance behind the other two battalions.

Next day, 6 June, was to see the regiment send its three battalions north, south, and west.\* The 1st Battalion moved through Iwa and turned north with all three companies in a wide line to sweep to Tomusu where it bivouacked for the night. The 2d Battalion proceeded south to a point northwest of Iwa. The 3d Battalion attacked toward Shindawaku and reached the town at 1045. Against moderate resistance, the battalion pushed on out to the ridge about six hundred yards west of town.

From the positions of the 3d Battalion on the morning of 7 June to the regimental objective, the distance was roughly sixteen hundred yards. The objective line was on the high ground just north of, and parallel to, the Yuza-Zawa road. Early that morning, the 2d Battalion moved over to the right of the 3d, and filled the gap between the 3d and the 7th Marines on the right. The 3d Battalion, 1st Marines had contact with the 383d Infantry on its left. Both the 2d and 3d Battalions attacked at 0900 and progressed without too much difficulty against moderately heavy artillery fire on the right and occasional machine gun fire from the caves on the left. Gains for the day averaged about twelve hundred yards and found the 2d Battalion just north of the town of Zawa, and the 3d Battalion about four hundred yards short of the objective in its zone of action. During the day the 1st Battalion moved up in the vicinity of Iwa and stood prepared to relieve the 3d Battalion on the following day. Air drops were used to supply the battalions late in the afternoon. The terrain had prevented the Weapons Company from moving its 37-mm. guns up to the assault battalions so far, and its M-7's were still bogged down in the mud about 11,000 yards to the north.

Before the two battalions attacked at 0730 on the morning of 8 June, preparatory fires, both artillery and mortar, were laid down on known and suspected enemy positions to the front.\*\* Against increasing enemy resistance and with mounting casualties both battalions moved forward to secure the objective line except on the left flank where the 3d Battalion was under fire from Yuza ridge. The 2d Battalion went on past the line to the banks of

\*See Map No. 25.

\*\*See Map No. 24.

of the column. The canefields that dotted the area were suddenly alive with snipers. Due to the heavy artillery fire and the numerous landmines that appeared everywhere, the tanks could do little to help the troops assault the hill. The tanks did fire from available positions, along with the mortars and the artillery, in an effort to knock out enemy positions. It was not until dusk that the 1st Platoon, at the head of the advancing column, could infiltrate its way up near to where the 2d Platoon was holding on the hill, and "F" Company's advance helped this platoon to move forward when it did. Approximately one hour after dusk the remaining platoon, the 3d, moved up and filled the gap between the other two platoons. "E" Company lost two men killed and twenty-three wounded during the day, and "F" lost one killed and eighteen wounded.

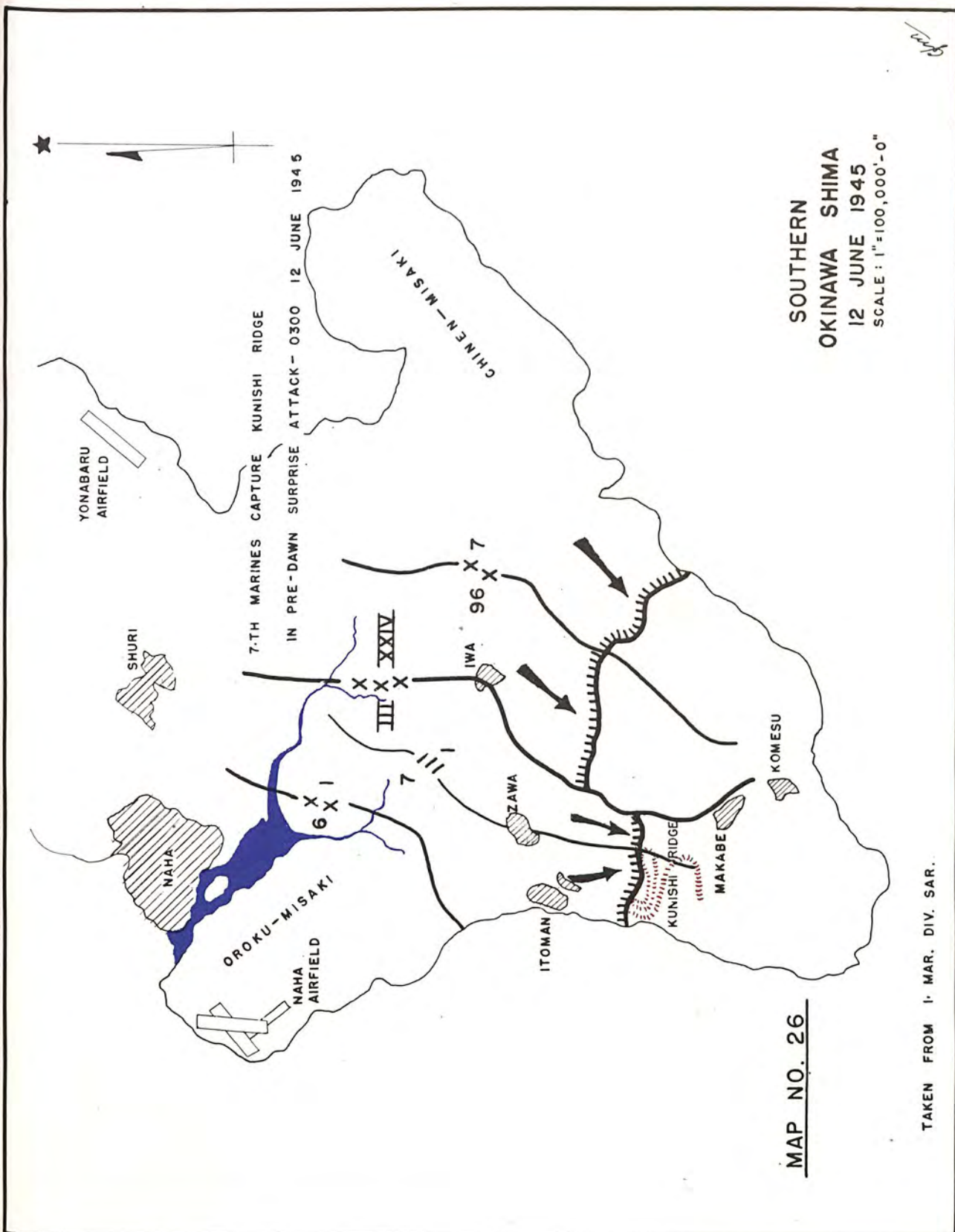
Although the Japs had been driven from their excellent positions on the hill they were unwilling to give them up without an attempt to regain them. The result was one of the most exciting nights for "E" Company that it experienced during the whole campaign. The action started when a long line of presumably Okinawan civilians started marching through the company's positions. Almost immediately it was discovered that every fifth "Okinawan" was a Japanese soldier. Upon discovery, fire was brought to bear, quickly liquidating the infiltrators. Soon after that, some fifteen or eighteen of the enemy attempted to charge through the lines with fixed bayonets and drawn sabers. At the same time, but apparently not coordinated with this charge, a similar number of Japanese soldiers emerged from a by-passed cave to the rear of the 3d Platoon and attempted to infiltrate forward to their own lines. The ensuing action is colorfully described by members of the company when later interviewed:

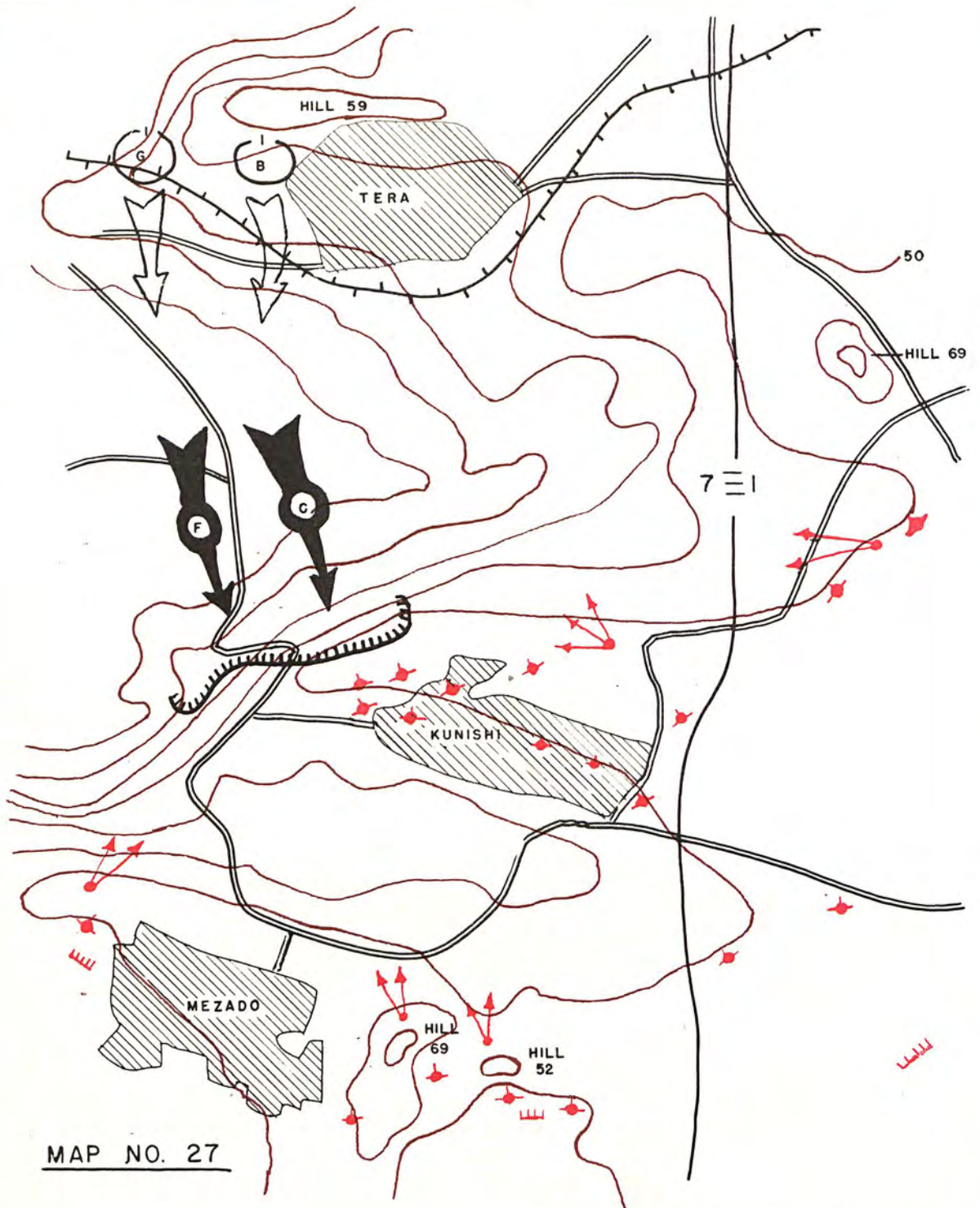
"Many of them (the Japs) seemed as amazed as we were. Our machine guns were going full blast to the front and rear. There were screams and shouts and general confusion but our men held their ground, unscrambled the mess, and knocked hell out of the Nips. It was amazing how we kept out of the way of our own bullets."

The action was as eventful as it was confused. The company commander killed two Japs while talking over the phone to battalion. Several of the enemy were carrying satchel charges and exploded upon being hit. A little later two women sprang from a cave and despite the shouts of nearby Marines rushed in the direction of Kunishi. They were both shot, perhaps accidentally, as was often the case, and the next morning it was discovered that one carried grenades and the other a satchel charge. The former appeared to be a nurse, but the latter carried nothing to identify her. Over forty dead Japanese soldiers were found in the company area when daylight came. "E" Company's losses for the night were very light. Only five men were wounded and none killed.

On 12-13 June the 1st Marines held its positions and consolidated them.\* The 2d Battalion on Hill 69 sealed caves and mopped up the small groups of enemy that had been overlooked in the attack of the previous day. Patrols were sent out toward Kunishi Ridge but could do little because of intense enemy fire. The troops holding Hill 69 were under almost constant pounding from enemy artillery and mortars resulting in a steady stream of casualties. During the afternoon of 13 June the 2d Battalion was given a warning order calling for an attack on Kunishi Ridge on the following morning. Plans were made to arrange for supporting fires from the tanks, M-7's, 37's, 4.2 mortars, artillery, and naval gunfire. The ridge was known to be held in some force, and the nearest adjacent friendly units consisted of the Army on the left in the town of Ozato and elements of the 7th Marines now on the western part of Kunishi Ridge but about 300-400 yards west of the regimental boundary.

\*See Map No. 26.





MAP NO. 27

HASTY SKETCH

COORDINATED ATTACK OF  
 F & C COMPANIES  
 12 JUNE 1945  
 SCALE: 1:20,000

*Handwritten signature*

After all of the plans were made and the word passed to the troops, a change in orders was made—sometime after dark—changing the time of attack from 0500 to 0300, 14 June. Due to lack of observation the planned fires from all supporting weapons except the artillery were eliminated. It was also requested that all flares be stopped prior to and during the attack until daylight, so that movements of the troops would not be silhouetted.

After a half hour artillery preparation well to the front (lack of observation would not permit the fire to be brought down close to the troops), the assault companies, "E" and "G", commenced to move forward. Despite the understanding that there would be no flares, adjacent units continued to use them. Coordination—and cooperation—broke down here (evidently somebody, as usual, failed to get the word) and the 2d Battalion saw the movements of its assault companies frequently illuminated. By 0500 "E" Company had its assault platoons on the topographical crest of the Ridge. but by this time the enemy had become aware of what was happening and commenced firing in such heavy volume that the remainder of the company could not advance to join the platoons on the crest. "G" Company had moved out behind "E" Company, and by 0530 had its 3d Platoon tied in on "E's" left flank. From the the defilade afforded by a low ledge on the side of the ridge, the 2d Platoon was fed forward, one or two men at a time, and built up a line on the left of the 3d Platoon. By this time the men on the ridge found themselves in as bad a situation as could be.\* They were receiving enemy fire of all types from their front and flanks, and from the canefields to the rear snipers plagued them with rifle fire. There was no such thing as a supply or evacuation route. The enemy in the fields below and to the rear of the platoons on the ridge denied all the ground between the assault and rear elements. Casualties began to pile up, and the battalion turned to the only hope that was left—the tanks.

Enemy 47-mm. fire made the route to the ridge very dangerous for the tanks, but they made it and commenced to evacuate the most seriously wounded first, taking them up through the escape hatches. Each tank brought up food, water, and ammunition and then carried wounded on the return trip.

As the day wore on the hot sun made the coral ridge almost unbearable. Efforts of the men to dig into the coral were practically fruitless. There was little cover or protection, and the enemy kept his artillery and mortar fire coming in at a steady rate. By noon the men were without water and when some of them tried to load water cans aboard the tanks on their return trip, the cans were shot full of holes and some of the men were hit. Finally canteens were gathered up on a poncho and dragged to the escape hatch of a tank successfully. For a man to raise up and even partially expose himself meant sudden death or at last a bad wound. The wounded could not be carried. Like the canteens, they had to be dragged on ponchos to the shelter of the tank and loaded up through the hatch.

Without the tanks it is doubtful if the ridge could have been held, but these vehicles managed to bring up enough supplies to enable the men to hold on during the night and following day. After dark "F" Company moved up to consolidate and strengthen the perimeter held by the other companies. During the night the enemy tried to infiltrate but his attempts were unsuccessful.

On the following day, 15 June, the situation remained unchanged. Enemy fire continued unabated and casualties mounted as the companies held their positions with grim determination under the blistering sun. "G" Company, using line and flame-thrower tanks, managed to extend its positions about two hundred yards to the left. The tanks continued their excellent work bringing up supplies and then acting as armored ambulances on

\*See Map No. 28.

their return trips to the rear. It was disheartening to the men to see an airdrop, originally scheduled for 0900, fall during mid-afternoon; only one-third of it fell into our lines. The ammunition that fell into the Japanese lines was put to use against our men. "E" Company men testified later to hearing "the hand grenades' spoons twang" every time a pin was pulled.

After dark the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines relieved the weary men of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines on the ridge. In spite of the heroic efforts of the companies, they had to leave the ridge without its being secured. There was still a gap on the left between our troops and the Army, and a similar gap also existed on the right between the right flank and the 7th Marines. "G" Company's casualties for the two days were fifty-nine (not counting fatigue cases), and "E" Company lost nearly ninety men.

#### 14. TO KUNISHI RIDGE: 7TH MARINES

Upon reaching the west coast of southern Okinawa on 7 June, the 7th Marines had commenced to drive due south in order to secure Itoman, Tera, Kunishi, and Mezado.\* With its right flank boundary the sea, the regiment found itself faced with the problem of crossing two cross compartments. After the 1st Battalion seized the high ground at Tera on 10 June, the 2d Battalion was able to move into and partially occupy Itoman. It had come as a surprise to find that the town was actually south of the Mukue Gawa instead of north as shown on the map. Patrols sent across the river had drawn sharp fire and the 1st Battalion had a neat task assigned to it when it was ordered to attack across the river and seize Tera. On 9 June the Battalion had attempted to take Hill 59 at the north edge of Tera but the enemy opposed the effort with such vigor that casualties forced the 1st Battalion to withdraw. Next day, however, it moved again with "A" Company in the lead and got a toehold on the northern slope of the hill. The company gradually worked its way around the hill, destroying many enemy as it moved and proceeded to seal the caves and blast the gun positions found on the eastern and western slopes. "C" Company then went across the river and joined "A", extending on the left. Patrols from the two companies found no military personnel but many civilians in Tera.

In the meantime the 2d Battalion was moving into northern Itoman. LVT's were used to shell and machine gun the town from the beach side. The battalion commander operated his command post in an LVT on 9 June and had his artillery liaison officer with him. From the LVT moving along out at sea forward of his lines and from 100-200 yards to the right of them, the battalion commander was able to gain better observation of his assault units and the terrain they were negotiating than he could on shore. Itoman was defended heavily. In moving through it, the 2d Battalion lost five officers in approximately seven minutes. After occupying the town, caves had to be destroyed and mines in the streets removed. Patrolling toward Kunishi and Mezado was attempted, resulting in several casualties from the intense enemy fire. Supply and evacuation were carried out by using the amphibious tractors.

At 2030, 11 June, orders were received by the 1st Battalion to continue the attack on Kunishi Ridge at 0300, 12 June. Efforts to get across the open compartment on 11 June had failed; a night attack might turn the trick. The 1st Battalion's commanding officer called the commander of the 2d Battalion and made arrangements with the latter to coordinate the attack of the two battalions. Each battalion was to send one company across to seize and hold the ridge in the regimental zone of action. So that the attack would be oriented correctly a road in the right of the 1st Battalion's zone was to be used for a guide.

\*See Map No. 24.



Moving up along the little road, "C" Company contacted "F" Company of the 2d Battalion at 0225 and the two assault companies of the two battalions went forward slowly and met no resistance while climbing up on the ridge.\* The Japanese were totally unaware of what was taking place and did not recover from their surprise until after daylight. "C" killed about ten of the enemy while climbing the ridge and managed to get its 3d Platoon set up on the line before the Japs could offer resistance. The 2d Platoon tried to extend to the east on the left of the 3d Platoon but by this time the Nips cut loose with a mortar barrage and forced the platoon to withdraw back to the 3d Platoon.

"B" Company tried to follow out the plan of the attack and reinforce "C" on the ridge, but daylight and the aroused Japanese caught the company in the valley approaching the ridge. Heavy machine gun and artillery fire forced the company back until two of our tanks came up to assist in the attack. A 47-mm. enemy anti-tank gun knocked out one tank and forced the other off the road. "B" Company could not advance in the face of such fire.

Requests for more troops came back from "C" Company, and the battalion began to ferry six men in each tank from "A" Company.<sup>22</sup> Although the trips were slow and few, due to enemy fire, about a platoon got over this way and built up the line on the left of "C". At 1300 the valley was smoked and "B" Company and "G" of the 2d Battalion, in an attempt to reinforce the ridge, moved forward simultaneously. Tanks were out to support the advance. No enemy artillery or mortar fire was received but machine gun fire criss-crossed the valley, pinning down the advancing troops and forcing them to withdraw to await the cover of darkness.

"F" had attained the ridge with the same ease that marked "C's" attack, but "G" Company, like "B", essayed crossing the valley three times that day, only to be driven back by the heavy enemy fire. Under the cover of darkness the 2d Battalion moved both "G" and "E" across the valley and up on the ridge to form a tight perimeter with "F" and the remainder of "A" crossed at the same time, and before midnight all the rifle companies of the two battalions were holding the ridge.

On 13 June the battle continued with all supporting fires concentrated on the area to the south and east of the Marines on Kunishi. Enemy fire from Mezado Ridge and from the southeast kept the two battalions of the 7th Marines from doing much beyond consolidating positions and close-in patrolling. Tanks hammered away at Kunishi Ridge but suffered several tank losses from accurate enemy anti-tank gun fire. At 0800 an air observer saw enemy troops apparently forming up southeast of Mezado. Naval gunfire and approximately eight hundred rockets from LCI (G)'s were placed on the target. During the mopping-up on Kunishi Ridge the 1st Battalion succeeded in destroying two 90-mm. mortars, one light machine gun, and one grenade discharger. All through the day the enemy continued to shell the ridge, and all the tanks operating near it drew heavy fire. Scattered snipers with machine guns and small arms made life miserable for the men on the ridge.

Air drops were used to supply the men with food, water, and ammunition. The tanks continued their excellent evacuation work, carrying many of the wounded to the rear during the day. The dead were carried to a protected pocket near the base of the ridge to await transportation, but during this day it was no safer to try to cross the valley than it had been the day before.

One platoon from "B" Company managed to move down into the town of Kunishi by circling to the west. After destroying caves and cleaning out pockets, the platoon tried

\*See Map No. 27.

<sup>22</sup>See Appendix.

to go directly north up the ridge to get back with its company, but numerous enemy, deployed on the southern slope between the town and the crest of the ridge, prevented the movement. The platoon found itself pinned down and was forced to go back the way it had come.

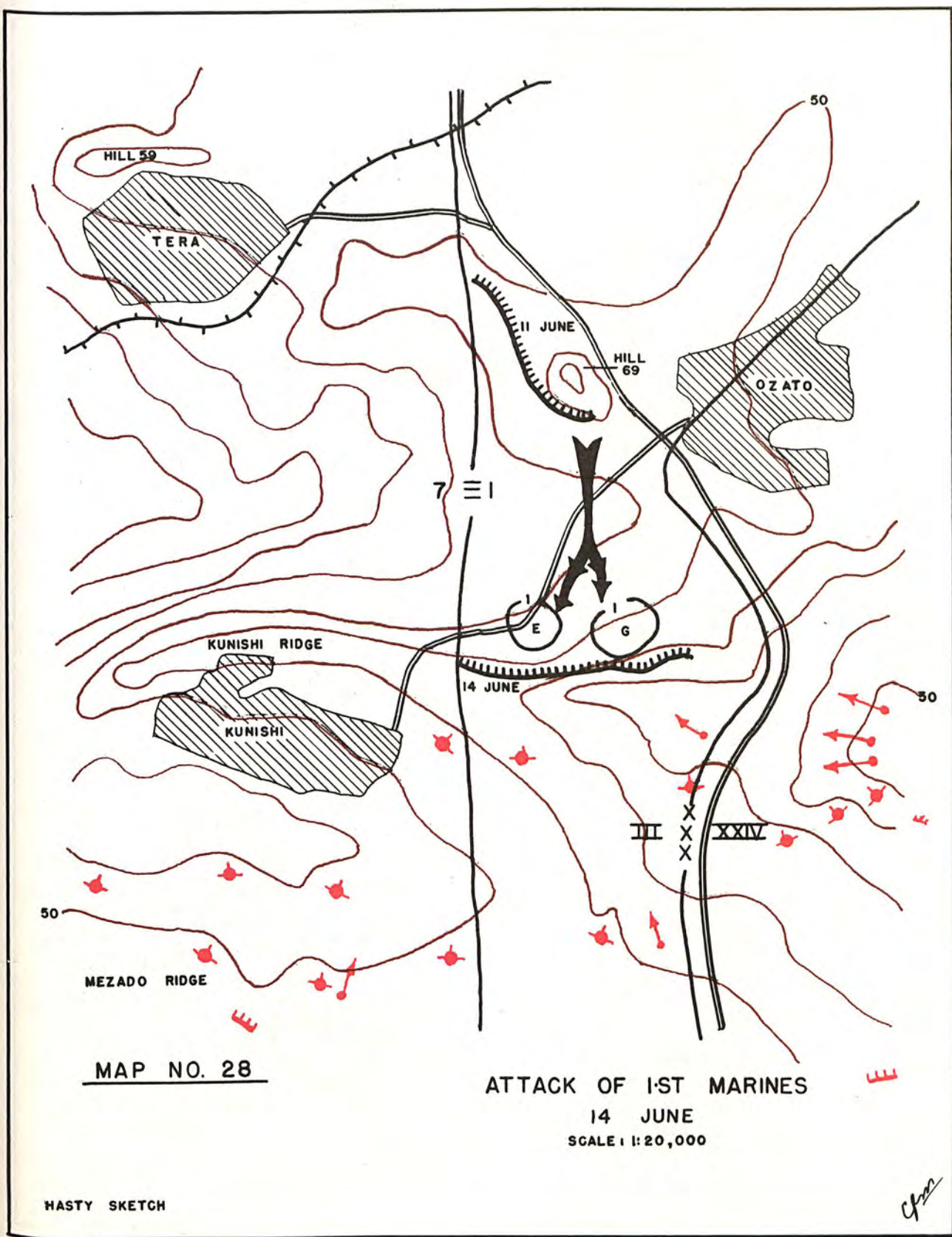
During the day, the 7th Marines managed to expand both flanks and to mop up the portion of the ridge occupied by our troops. In the rear the 3d Battalion mopped up and patrolled while guarding the regimental flanks. Losses for the two assault battalions on this day were one hundred and forty killed and wounded.

On the morning of 14 June the bright sun gave promise of another hot day for the Marines on Kunishi Ridge. The 1st Battalion attempted to attack to the east to further expand its positions on the ridge, but the enemy, from his prepared positions, resisted with great vigor and first "A" Company was driven back, and then "B", in an attempted move east from the town of Kunishi, was forced back by terrific fire. The 2d Battalion could do little in its sector for the same reasons that were making the 1st Battalion's efforts a stalemate. It remained for the tanks, taking heavy losses as they fought, to blast the enemy in his caves and to flush him from his foxholes. The situation was a bewildering one, to say the least. The tanks had little freedom of movement because of the rice paddies, so soft that a tank would bog down, and the land mines sprinkled indiscriminately around the Ridge area. As though that were not enough, the Japanese concentrated artillery and mortar fire to blanket the tanks' maneuvers. Hatches on the tanks had to be kept "buttoned up." On the previous day when two men from "A" Company, after being ferried across the valley, attempted to dismount from the top hatch of the tank rather than the escape hatch underneath and to the rear, both were hit by sniper fire and killed before they got off the tank.

Air drops to the men on the Ridge were largely unsuccessful because if the supplies landed a few yards outside the established perimeter it was worth a man's life to venture out in the open in an attempt to retrieve some of the bulky packages. The whole ridge was swept with sniper and machine gun fire, and to keep this from becoming too monotonous, the enemy periodically dropped in artillery and mortar fire. It has been mentioned that the tanks proved to be invaluable in evacuating seriously wounded men. Unfortunately, however, all the casualties could not be taken off the ridge. Tank losses and the use of many of the tanks to blast and shell the Nips limited the number that could be used for ambulance work. Men whose wounds were not serious enough to demand immediate surgery remained on the Ridge with their buddies.

While the 1st and 2d Battalions were clinging to their hold on the ridge, supporting weapons fired on all known and suspected enemy positions to the east and south. The day's routine consisted of air strikes interspersed with naval gunfire and artillery; the 81mm and 4.2 mortars searched and traversed, throwing their fire on the hidden ravines and enemy reverse slopes. Rockets were used time after time in an effort to blast the Japs from their positions. Like Wana Ridge, this battle became a slugging match. On this day, 14 June, the 1st Marines, far to the left of the 7th, were attacking the eastern part of Kunishi Ridge and undergoing the same difficulties and hardships. In mid-afternoon all available tanks were sent over to their support.

Next day, 15 June, the 1st Battalion was ordered to complete the seizure of Kunishi Ridge within its zone of action. The night before had seen considerable enemy activity resulting in several hand to hand fights and twenty dead Japanese were counted in the battalion sector next morning. One prisoner was taken and he divulged information in regard to positions of Japanese mortar emplacements and troops concentrations. These were taken under fire immediately.



MAP NO. 28

ATTACK OF 1ST MARINES

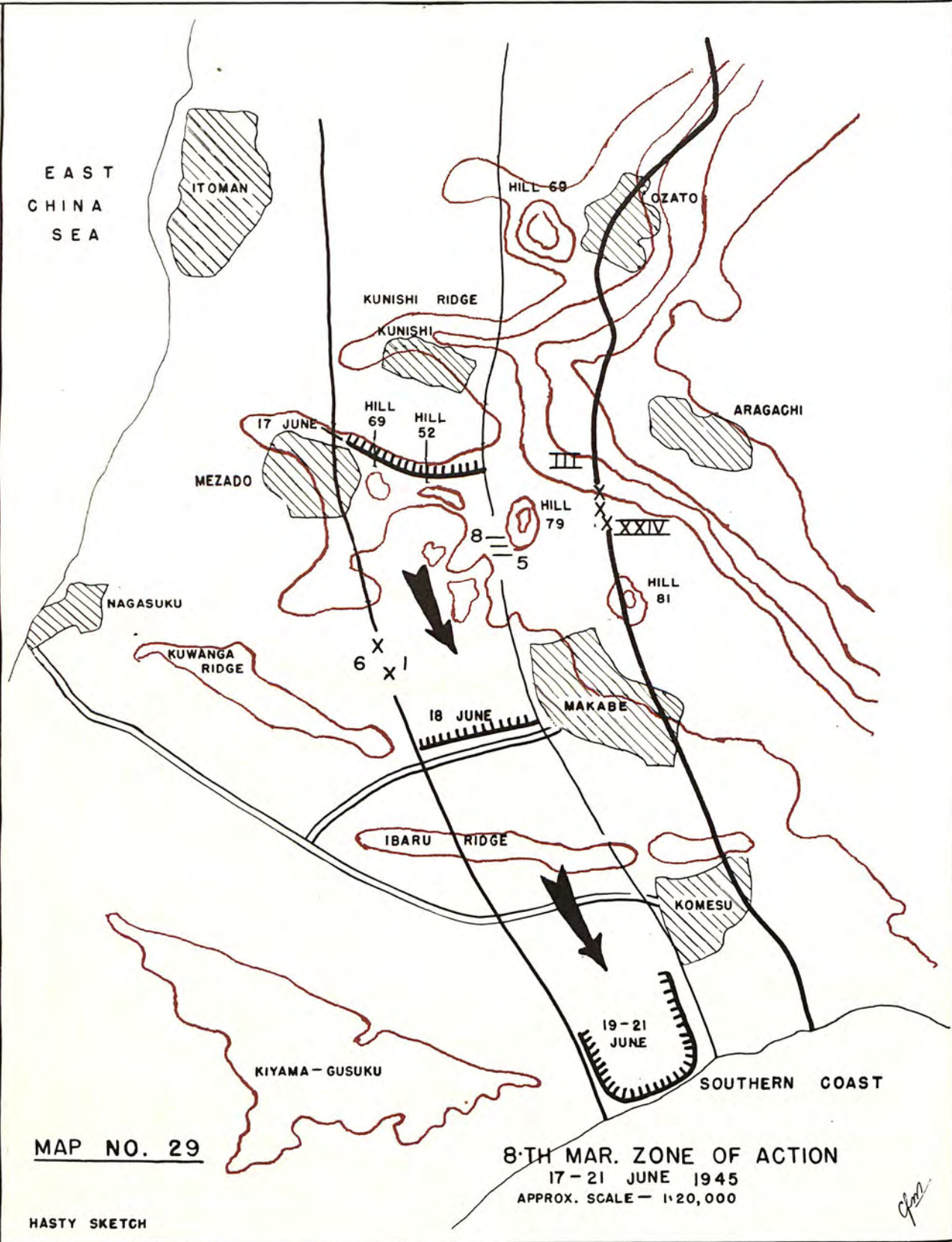
14 JUNE

SCALE 1:20,000

HASTY SKETCH

*Handwritten signature*

EAST  
CHINA  
SEA



With fifteen battalions of artillery in support, the 1st Battalion attempted to move "B" Company through Kunishi and up the ridge to the north while "C" Company tried the same maneuver that "A" Company had tried on the previous day. Enemy resistance had not diminished and both companies found themselves pinned down by accurate and heavy fire before they had made any appreciable advances. Both were forced to withdraw to their positions of the previous night. The two companies suffered four killed and thirty-one wounded during the day.

With "A" Company in assault to the east again on 16 June, and "B" Company working through Kunishi, the 1st Battalion attempted to extend to the east again. This time before the attack commenced, troops were withdrawn from the eastern flank, and the whole area was given a thorough working-over by artillery and mortars. As this fire moved out, "A" Company attacked, and as it moved to the east, "C" fed its troops in on the rear of "A" so that by nightfall a considerable distance had been effected, and "A" was in visual contact with the 5th Marines on the left (east) who had relieved the 1st Marines.

Meanwhile, the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines had used tanks in close support, and in the period 14-16 June had moved to the west and a little south about five hundred yards until its right flank was occupying the first high ground of the Mezado Ridge mass. Casualties during this period were heavy and the enemy took a heavy toll of the supporting weapons had been fully utilized. Main battery fire from the USS IDAHO was fired at one time within four hundred yards of our own troops. Twenty-five and thirty plane airstrikes were used quite frequently.

At 0400 on the morning of 17 June the 22d Marines passed through and relieved the 2d Battalion, 7th Marines and left that battalion to mop up in its own area while supporting the attack of the 22d Marines by fire. This was the last combat action for the 2d Battalion in the Okinawa operation, and the strength of its rifle companies had been depleted. "G" Company came out of the lines with forty-five men; "F" had forty-three and "E" had eighty-seven.

Late in the afternoon of 16 June the 3d Battalion, in accordance with orders from regiment, moved "I" Company up on Kunishi Ridge to relieve "A". The 1st Battalion was to remain in position while the 3d Battalion renewed the attack. In crossing the valley to get onto the ridge "I" Company came under heavy enemy sniper and automatic fire. During the night "K" and "L" Companies crossed the valley and relieved the remainder of the 1st Battalion.

Next morning before dawn, 17 June, "K" Company, attacking simultaneously with the 22d Marines on the right, seized another hill called Hill 69 about two hundred yards east of the town of Mezado. To get to the Mezado Ridge the company had to cross the valley between it and Kunishi, but except for stray sniper bullets, there was virtually no enemy opposition. Once on Mezado Ridge, "K" Company moved east to attack Hill 69 and here the 1st Platoon came under fire from two large underground pillboxes from which rifle and grenade fire issued. Eight Marines were wounded before these pillboxes were knocked out by hand grenades, demolitions, and flamethrowers.

With "K" Company on Hill 69, "I", followed by "L", moved across the valley in front of Kunishi and joined "K". As the 22d Marines continued the attack to the south, "I" Company maintained contact to the right of "K" while "L" guarded the battalion's left flank to the east of Hill 69. During 16-17 June the three companies lost two men killed, forty-one wounded, and killed fifty-eight enemy soldiers. The battalion was relieved by the 8th Marines on 18 June and moved back near Tera to reorganize.

The 1st Battalion was not relieved from its position until dawn of 18 June and con-

tinued to mop up in its area during 17 June. On the previous night there had been several enemy attempts at infiltration resulting in twenty-two Japanese dead. Commencing at 0200 on the morning of 18 June, this battalion had its companies relieved by elements of the 8th Marines from the 2d Marine Division. By 0650 the relief was complete and the 1st Battalion moved to a rest area in the rear of the lines. Like the 2d Battalion, the 1st found its companies with only a handful of men left. Kunishi Ridge had exacted a heavy price in men and equipment from the 7th Marines, but, as usual, the enemy had paid an even stiffer price and, in losing this ridge, his last main line of defense was broken.

## 15. THE COAST IS REACHED

On 15 June the 5th Marines began to relieve the 1st Marines whose 2d Battalion had established a small perimeter on Kunishi Ridge southwest of Ozato, and about five hundred yards east of that portion of the ridge held by the 7th Marines. The front lines of the 1st Marine Division on this date were about two and a half miles from the southern coast of Okinawa. To reach the coast, the Division was faced with reducing the remaining Japanese defenses in its zone of action, and after Kunishi Ridge, these were believed to be: Mezado Ridge, the area around Makabe, and the Ibaru-Komesu Ridge mass. The two regiments in the front lines on 15 June were tired and had suffered steady losses; their combat efficiency was duly impaired. On the right was the 7th Marines who had been fighting without a rest since 2 June; this regiment had relieved the 29th Marines on the right of the 1st Division's zone of action north of the Naha-Yonabaru Highway, had struck southwest toward Itoman to seal off Oroku, and was now fighting on Kunishi Ridge.

The other regiment in the front line on 15 June was the 1st Marines, also on Kunishi Ridge. This regiment had moved into the attack on 4 June when it sent a battalion around to the east through the XXIV Corps' zone to attack the high ground at Iwa-Shindawaku. The 1st Marines, like the 7th Marines, suffered steady casualties in its drive south to Kunishi Ridge. Yuza, the Mukue Gawa, Hill 69, and then Kunishi, all took their toll of men, arms, and equipment. The combat efficiency of this regiment was impaired, too.

In order to continue its drive to the coast, the 1st Marine Division needed fresh troops to put into the line. On 15 June the 8th Marines, one of the regiments of the 2d Marine Division, landed on Oroku Peninsula and passed under control of the 1st Marine Division. This regiment, along with the rest of the 2d Marine Division, participated in diversionary maneuvers simulating feint landings off southeastern Okinawa on 1-2 April. When the Division went back to Saipan, the 8th Marines accompanied it, only to be called back to the Okinawa area to land on the little islands of Iheya and Aguni on 3 June and 9 June respectively. Neither of these landings was opposed, and the combat efficiency of the reinforced regiment remained unimpaired. The mission of landing on these two islands had been under the direction of Tenth Army, and after garrison troops were sent to relieve the 8th Marines, the regiment was ordered to Okinawa and attached to the 1st Marine Division upon landing.<sup>23</sup>

As part of its reinforcing elements, the 8th Marines had attached to it the 2d Battalion, 10th Marines (artillery) and "A" Company of the 2d Tank Battalion. When the regiment was placed under 1st Division control, the artillery battalion was attached to the 11th Marines, and "A" Company was placed under operational control of the 1st Tank Battalion with the specific mission of supporting the 8th Marines.

After landing on Oroku (the regiment used the western portion of the same beaches

<sup>23</sup>See Appendix.

used by the 4th Marines when that regiment made its assault landing on Oroku) the 8th Marines moved around the southwestern part of the peninsula and took up positions 2000-4000 yards north of Itoman. The day of 16 June was spent in this area, and next morning the regimental command post was moved south to Tera. Orders were then issued to the 2d Battalion to relieve the 2d Battalion of the 7th Marines on Mezado Ridge prior to 0730, 18 June and be prepared to continue the attack to the south commencing at that hour. The area between Tera and Kunishi Ridge was still under fire, and to cross that valley in daylight hours was to invite needless casualties. During the same night the 3d Battalion, 8th Marines was to effect the relief of the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines on Kunishi Ridge. When the troops moved across the valley north of Kunishi Ridge on the night of 17-18 June, a few casualties were inflicted by enemy rifle fire, despite the fact that most of the movement was done under the cover of darkness.

Upon completion of the relief on Mezado Ridge, the 2d Battalion, 8th Marines commenced its attack to the south at 0730, 18 June.\* The next prominent terrain feature to the front was the Ibaru Ridge mass, a long narrow ridge whose long axis ran east-west and almost at a right angle to the direction of attack. When the 2d Battalion attacked, it moved across open ground down from Mezado Ridge and was separated from adjacent units on the right and left flanks.

Initially, light to moderate machine gun and rifle fire was received on the left front and flank of the attack but as the companies moved south, mortar and artillery fire from the vicinity of Kuwanga Ridge, to the southwest, began to cause casualties. By late afternoon the battalion had reached Road 33 and established its lines just north of the road. "B" Company from the 1st Battalion was sent forward to tie in on the left (east) flank in order to deny that flank for the night. This placed "B" Company on a north-south line facing Makabe. Steadily increasing enemy resistance and the absence of friendly troops on either flank led to the decision by the battalion's commanding officer to dig in at Road 33 for the night.

Shortly after noon on this day, 18 June, the Commanding General, Tenth Army, Lt. Gen. Simon B. Buckner, visited the regimental observation post of the 8th Marines. Located on Hill 52 east of Mezado and on that ridge, the observation post offered excellent visual possibilities for the General. The top of the hill was broken up into several large coral heads and a man could stand in the opening between the heads with some degree of protection. At approximately 1315 five enemy shells, believed to be 15cm by one officer present, hit the observation post, mortally wounding General Buckner.

Through the night of 18-19 June, the 8th Marines placed artillery fire on Makabe in front of "B" Company. This town contained numerous enemy troops and several light artillery pieces. Next morning the 3d Battalion prepared to pass through the 2d to continue the attack toward Ibaru and the coast. After daylight the enemy commenced delivering fire from Makabe again and the rocket trucks were called up to launch their missiles on the town. In addition the 4.2 mortars and tanks placed their fires on the target, and the area was quickly neutralized. Prior to the attack on Ibaru Ridge, a one-hour artillery concentration was fired, blanketing the ridge in the 8th Marines' zone of action. Following the artillery preparation, the ridge was covered with white phosphorus smoke. As the assault companies moved forward, the smoke continued to hang on the ridge, keeping it totally obscured until the troops were at its base, and then, like a curtain, the smoke lifted as the men assaulted the ridge.

After seizing Ibaru Ridge, the 3d Battalion kept on driving toward the coast. Occasional enemy artillery fire coming from the east forced the troops to take cover and in-

\*See Map No. 29.

flicted some casualties as the day wore on. At 1623, 19 June, one company of the 3d Battalion reached the sea and within twenty minutes the whole battalion had reached the coast. For the night, the battalion faced its defenses both to the east and west, since there were no friendly troops in the adjacent sectors.

During the period 19-22 June, the 8th Marines continued to mop up the Mezado-Ibaru area and found and destroyed many small pockets of resistance. Infiltrating Japanese made the town of Makabe troublesome and artillery fire from the high ground to the east harassed the battalions. One of the enemy artillery guns that was causing trouble was seen firing from a cave in Hill 85. An M-7 took the cave under fire and destroyed the gun, but fire from other positions kept inflicting casualties until the ground was occupied by friendly troops. In the period 18-22 June, the 8th Marines lost 10 officers and 313 enlisted men, while killing 1,223 Japanese.

## 16. THE 5TH MARINES TAKE HILLS 79 AND 81

On the same day that the 8th Marines landed on Oroku Peninsula, 15 June, the 5th Marines began to relieve the 1st Marines on eastern Kunishi Ridge. The 3d Battalion, 5th Marines relieved the 1st Battalion, 1st Marines on Hill 69 (the Hill 69 two hundred yards west of Ozato) early in the morning but no body of troops could hope to get across the open ground to where the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines was dug in on Kunishi Ridge until after darkness. That ground was swept with enemy fire of all types.

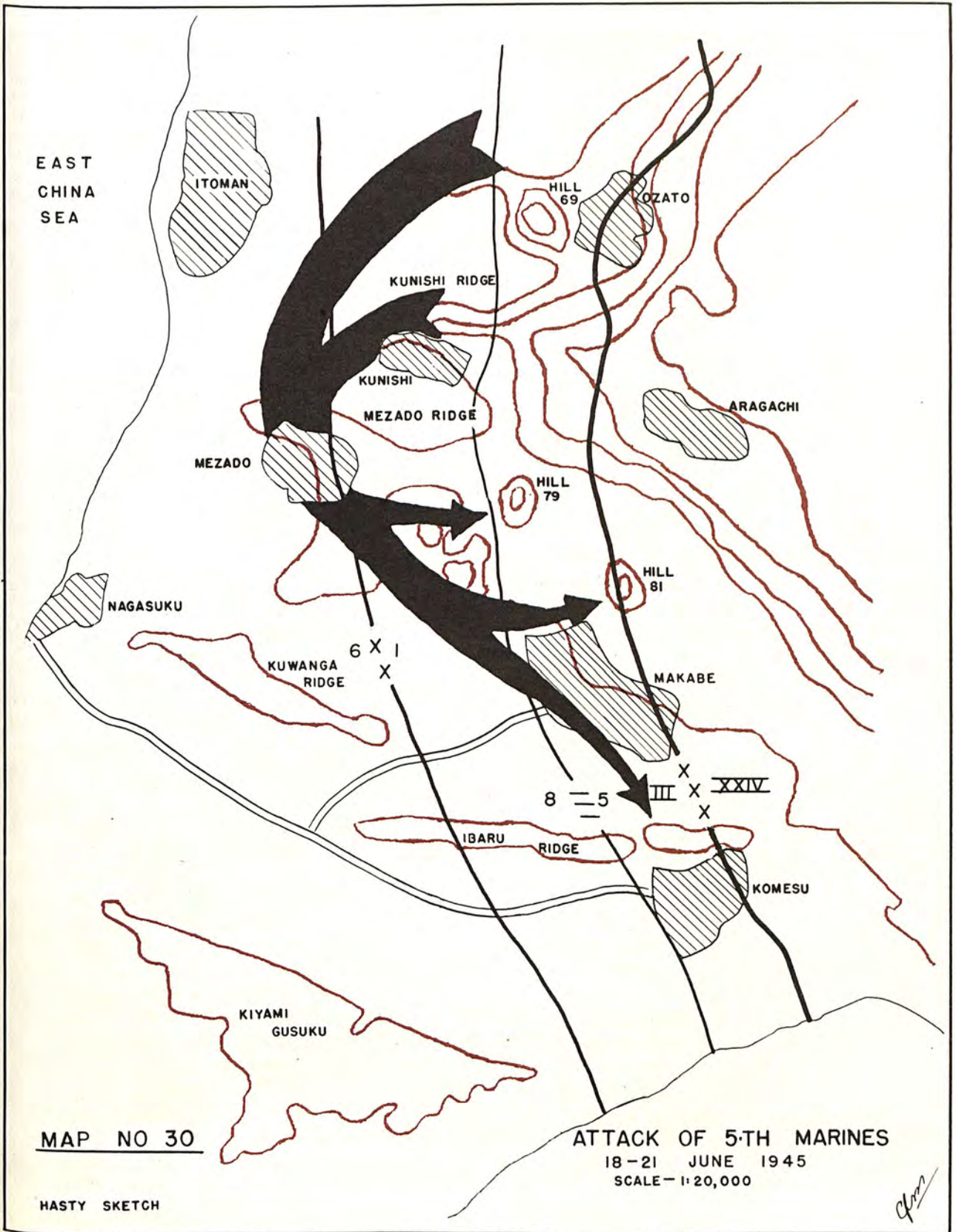
At 2000 of the same day, the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines commenced the relief of the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines on the ridge. Earlier in the day the company commanders were taken across the open valley to the ridge in tanks where they made a reconnaissance. Upon returning, they reported that the 2d Battalion, 1st Marines held a portion of the ridge whose width was about seventy-five yards. As a result, the 2d Battalion, 5th Marines decided to send one company over to occupy that portion, and the assignment was given to "G" Company. The battalion planned to expand the perimeter as soon as "G" had its position secured. The relief was completed before dawn, and, fortunately, the company suffered no casualties.

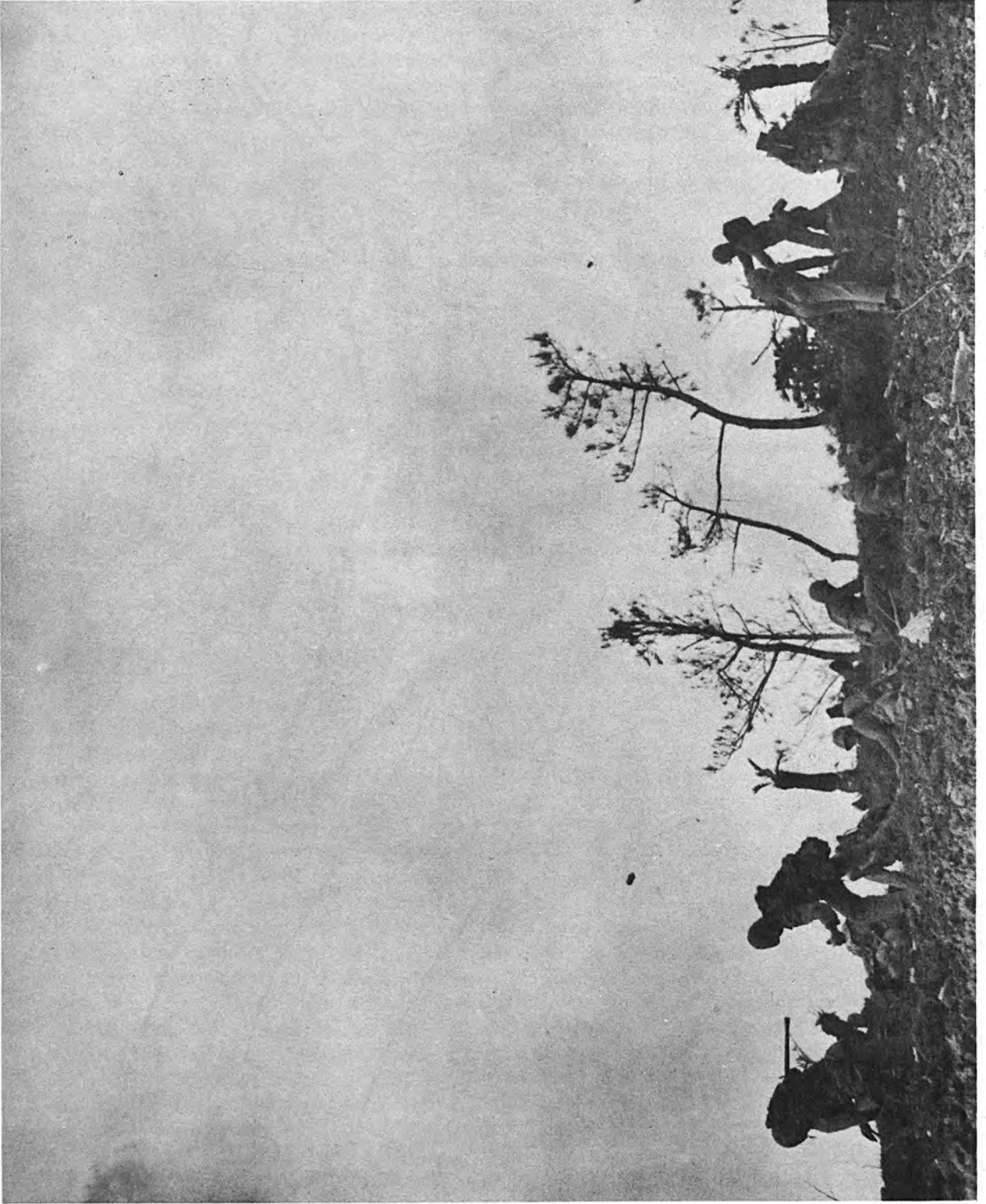
At 0730 on 16 June, a very hot and dry day, "G" Company attacked to seize a coral pinnacle on its right front which commanded the entire company's position. The enemy on the pinnacle contested bitterly the platoon that tried to dislodge them, but by 0900 two fire teams had succeeded in fighting their way onto the pinnacle, and it was secured. Then the company commander ordered an attack on his left flank to extend his front along the ridge crest. Enemy mortar and small arms fire held this attack to small gains; two line tanks and one flame thrower tank gave support but still the enemy fire continued. At 1335 the company commander requested a smoke screen and a tank to evacuate his casualties. Fighting continued all afternoon and although progress was extremely slow, some expansion was achieved.

By late afternoon men on the right flank of "G" Company could see the 7th Marines far to the west on Kunishi Ridge. With artillery and mortar fire harassing the company all during the day, a shuttle system was devised where by the tanks brought up ammunition from the dumps in rear of Hill 69 and carried back the wounded on the return trips. During the afternoon, it was decided to send "E" Company up on "G's" left flank under the cover of darkness. At 2020 "E" moved out in attack, killing four Japs armed with satchel charges while crossing the valley, and by 2315 had established itself on the line to the left of "G" Company. This increased the battalions frontage on the ridge to about 325 yards.

As dawn broke on 17 June, approximately forty Japanese were observed moving toward







Smoke Grenades Thrown to Protect Evacuation of Casualties

"G's" lines from a position about 500 yards to the front. The artillery forward observer called for a time-on-target barrage on this area which was believed to have killed all but five of the enemy in this group. It was the plan of the battalion to further extend to the left on the ridge. That portion of the ridge now held by "G" and "E" Companies was all on the extreme right of the regimental zone of action. "E" Company attacked at 0800 in an effort to seize the eight hundred yards of ridge still held by the enemy. Simultaneously with "E's" attack, "G" commenced to assault the south slope of the ridge to its front. So far it had not been possible to get tanks over, or around, to help on the southern slope but on the right flank of "G's" position was a trail that led over the ridge. An armored bulldozer was sent forward to break open a road along this trail. By 1030 the road was open and the tanks lumbered up over the ridge and joined in the fighting on the southern slope. To better coordinate the tank-infantry work, one of "G" Company's platoon leaders got into the lead tank and helped to direct fire.

Before attacking, "E" Company called for preparatory fires from the rocket trucks, tanks, 60mm, and 81mm mortars and 105mm howitzers. As soon as the barrage moved out, the company attacked and immediately ran into heavy fighting. Troops moving over the crest of the ridge were exposed to enemy fire but the advance continued along the top of the ridge to the edge of the enemy's reverse slope, at which time small arms and mortar fire caused heavy casualties. A smoke screen was laid down as the men pulled back, but the Japs tried to attack through the smoke. As the enemy broke out of the smoke with bayonets fixed, the Marines literally "mowed" them down. Some of the Nips were carrying long wooden sticks with bayonets lashed to their ends. Others were observed to be wearing Marine and Army clothing and carrying M-1's and Tommy-guns.

At 1700 the battalion commander decided to commit "F" Company and that company double-timed across the fire-swept valley to the base of Kunishi Ridge. "E" could extend no further; there was not much left of its 2d Platoon, and between the 1st and 2d Platoons there were about two full squads. "F" moved up and attacked on the left of "E" but met such heavy enemy fire as it reached the crest of the ridge—particularly a knee-mortar barrage—that it could advance no further and was forced to dig in along the crest. To protect "F" Company's rear and the battalion's left flank, "K" Company was ordered up and tied in below the ridge facing the east.

Sometime around midnight the enemy attempted a counterattack in about company strength and hit both "G" and "E" Companies. After a stiff hand grenade battle the enemy was driven back although a few infiltrated as far as "K" Company's positions where they were killed.

Next morning, 18 June, battalion ordered "K" Company to attack and seize the remainder of the ridge in the regimental zone.\* The attack moved out at 0420 and although progress was slow, it was steady, and "K" destroyed the remaining enemy positions on the ridge by 1150. Contact was established with XXIV Corps at the Corps' boundary. The balance of the day was spent in mopping up the remaining enemy in the vicinity of the ridge. At 1540 "K" was released and returned to the 3d Battalion. Two hours later the 2d Battalion attacked down the south slope of the ridge killing about twenty of the enemy, most of whom had been previously wounded but refused to surrender.

On the previous day the 1st Battalion was ordered to move out at 0500 on 18 June and to be in position to attack Hill 79 at 0730. The battalion was to move over into the 8th Marines' zone of action until west of the hill and then to attack to the east. After taking Hill 79, the battalion was to attack the next piece of commanding ground, Hill 81. The plan was ambitious, for the 1st Battalion found its hands full when it attacked

\*See Map No. 30.

Hill 79 and it remained for the 2d Battalion to come down and assault Hill 81 on 19 June, after being relieved of its mopping up operations on Kunishi Ridge by the 3d Battalion, 7th Marines.

By 0530 on the morning of 18 June the 1st Battalion was moving in column of companies over toward the western end of Kunishi Ridge in the 8th Marines' zone. After passing the end of the ridge, the battalion turned southeast to climb Mezado Ridge and then struck directly east toward Hill 79 which lies about 800 yards north of Makabe and due south of the 2d Battalion's positions on Kunishi Ridge. As the attacking companies moved toward the hill with "B" in the lead, they were coming up against a well-defended piece of commanding ground. For the next four days this battalion would spend its strength and energy in repeated attempts to dislodge the fanatical enemy from his last-ditch positions.

Hill 79 was honeycombed with caves and holes from which the enemy fired machine guns, grenade dischargers, small arms, and anti-tank guns. Behind the hill were more mortars and the east side was covered by fire from Hill 81 and the high ground in the XXIV Corps' zone of action.

"B" Company attacked the hill with no success on 18 June despite tank and artillery support. There were no covered routes of approach and the company found itself pinned down and unable to maneuver before it had more than a platoon on the first slope of the hill. Next day, 19 June, all three companies attacked but intense enemy fire drove the troops back. Again the tanks lent their support, but it was not enough. Enemy anti-tank fire accounted for one of our tanks during the afternoon.

Late in the afternoon the 2d Battalion moved around the 1st Battalion by using the same route via western Kunishi Ridge and Mezado and attacked Hill 81 to relieve pressure on the 1st Battalion. The attack was launched too late in the day, and enemy resistance drove the 2d Battalion back from the hill.

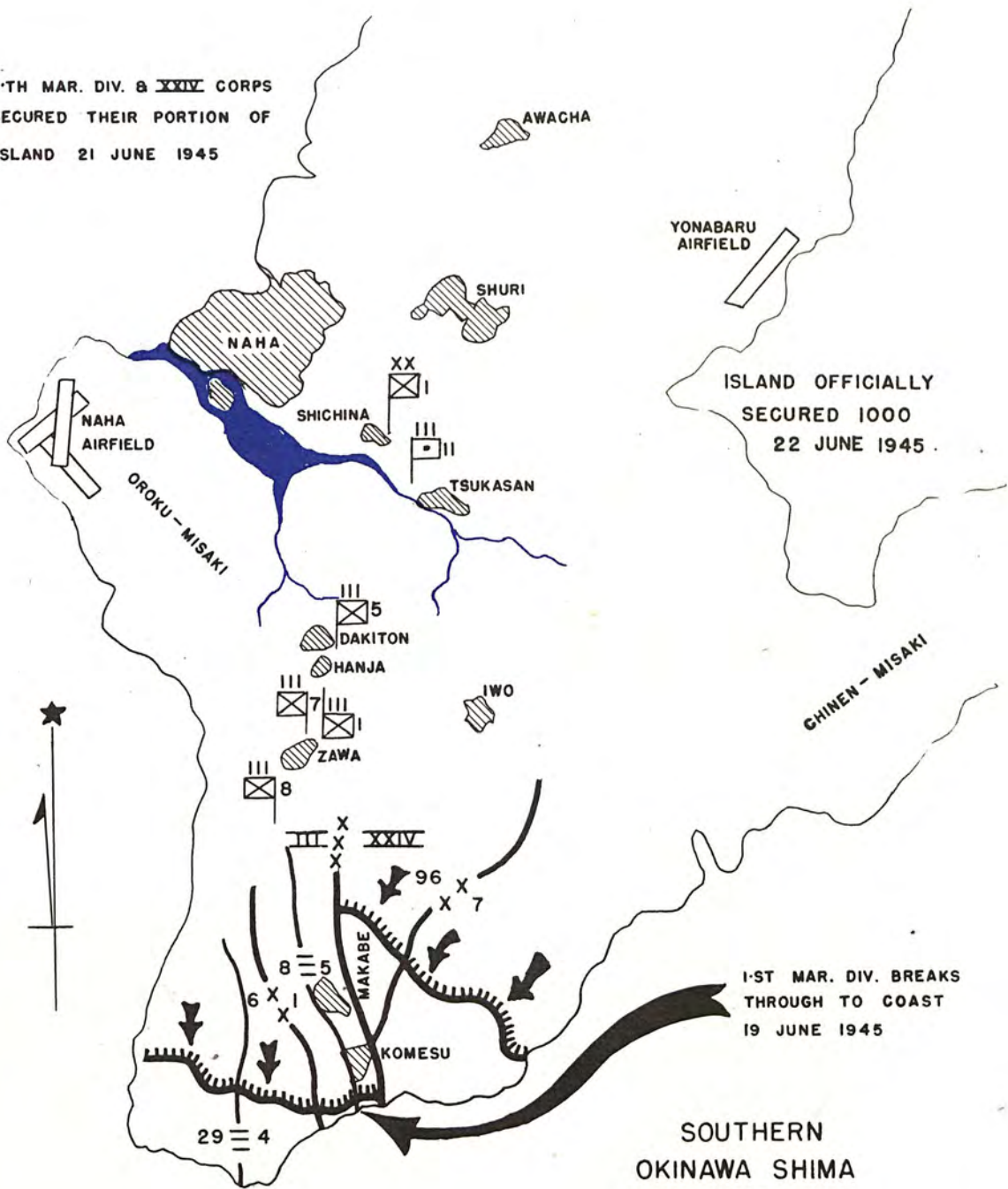
At 1145 the 3d Battalion attacked south through the town of Makabe. Early that morning the 8th Marines had given the town a thorough going-over, and slight resistance was met when the 3d Battalion pushed through. By 1622 the battalion had reached the southern coast and was attached to the 8th Marines for consolidation of a night defense on the beach. The battalion was used on the east flank facing the town of Udo to refuse the left flank of the 8th Marines.

The morning of 20 June found the 5th Marines with two obstacles, Hills 79 and 81, marring a clean sweep of its zone of action.\* The 1st Battalion spent the entire day attempting to take Hill 79 but fell short of its objective by a narrow margin. All three companies, supported by tanks, threw their combined strength into the attack. By 1300 "C" was within 75 yards of the top and pinned down. At 1635 "A" Company got its 3d Platoon on top of the hill, but there were so few men left, the platoon could not hold its ground and was driven back. The companies fell back for the night to prepared positions at the base of the hill.

About six hundred yards to the southeast the 2d Battalion was having no better luck with Hill 81. This hill, whose exterior was rough and broken, contained countless caves and holes heavily occupied by well-armed Japanese. In the defenses of this hill were machine guns, mortars, grenade launchers, some artillery pieces, and small arms. Like Hill 79, this hill was the final place of resistance for its Japanese defenders who were determined to sell their lives as dearly as possible; this they proceeded to do. "E", "F", and "G" all had a hand in the day's fighting, but due to intense enemy fire and the fact that there was no defilade or cover on the slopes of the hill, the companies could not

\*See Map No. 30.

6<sup>TH</sup> MAR. DIV. & XXIV CORPS  
 SECURED THEIR PORTION OF  
 ISLAND 21 JUNE 1945



YONABARU AIRFIELD

ISLAND OFFICIALLY  
 SECURED 1000  
 22 JUNE 1945

NAHA AIRFIELD

OROKU - MISAKI

CHINEN - MISAKI



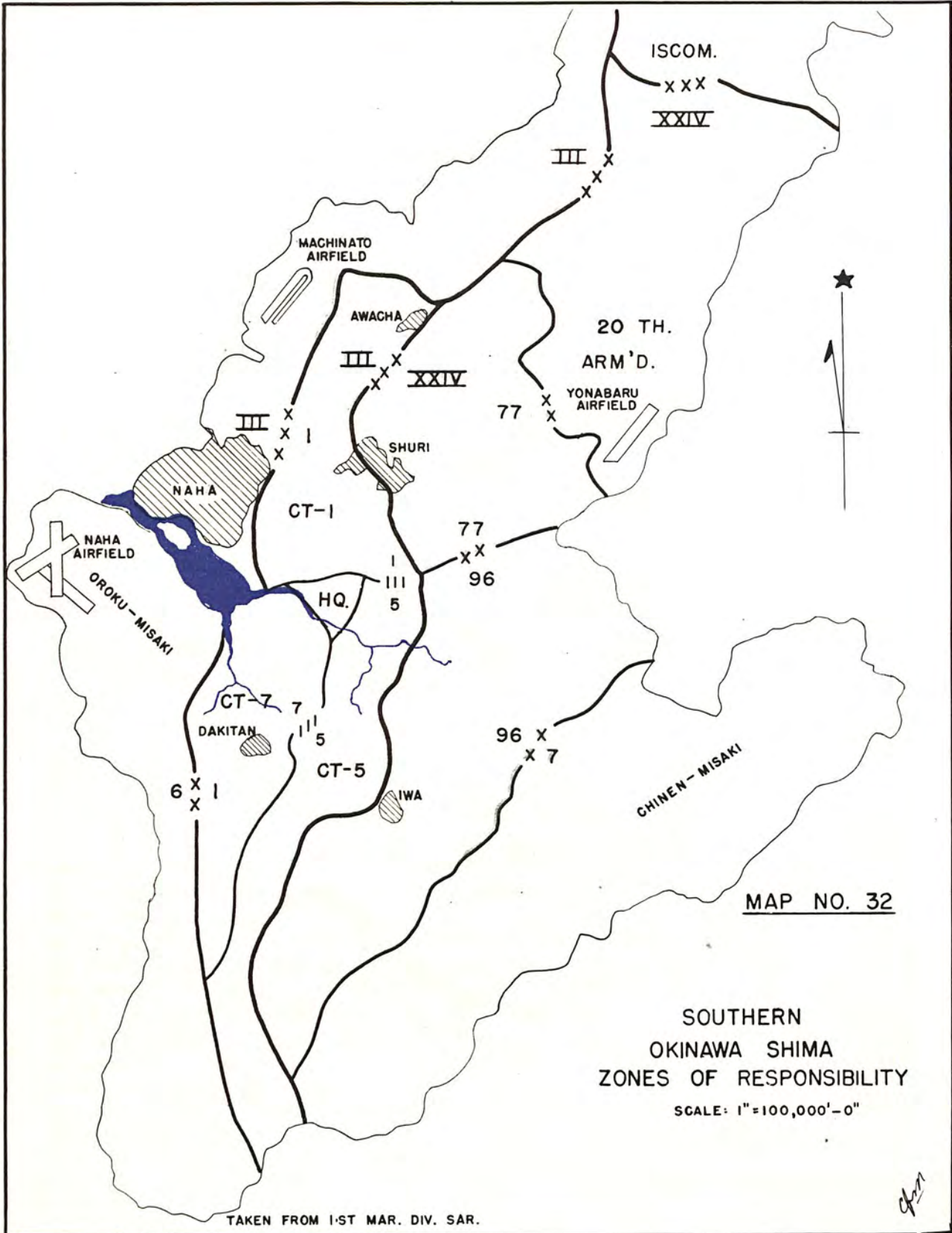
1<sup>ST</sup> MAR. DIV. BREAKS  
 THROUGH TO COAST  
 19 JUNE 1945

SOUTHERN  
 OKINAWA SHIMA  
 19 JUNE 1945  
 SCALE: 1" = 100,000' - 0"

MAP NO. 31

TAKEN FROM 1<sup>ST</sup> MAR. DIV. SAR.

*Handwritten signature or initials.*



MAP NO. 32

SOUTHERN  
OKINAWA SHIMA  
ZONES OF RESPONSIBILITY

SCALE: 1" = 100,000'-0"

TAKEN FROM 1-ST MAR. DIV. SAR.

*Jan*

reach the crest. When the tanks ran out of ammunition late in the afternoon and retired to their bivouac area for the night, the battalion commander ordered the companies back to the northern edge of Makabe to better defensive positions for the night.

On 21 June the 2d Battalion continued its attack on Hill 81.\* Tanks, M-7's, and rocket launchers reported at 0800 and were put into firing positions immediately. The plan of attack was the same as for the day before; first, one company would seize the eastern edge of the hill and then the other two would extend, company at a time, to the left. The tanks and M-7's began firing at 0900, but the rocket trucks had difficulty in finding satisfactory firing positions and did not launch their rockets until 1100. Four minutes later "E" Company reached the base of the hill and was soon pinned down by intense fire. After knocking out two light machine guns, the company advanced again to reach its assigned sector.

"F" Company then began to fight its way along the base of the hill under heavy fire. By 1230 the company had extended along the base of the hill and was fighting its way up, sealing and burning out caves as it went. "G" then moved past "F" and began to fight its way up. The slow advance of the companies continued on through the afternoon until 1700 when all of the companies reported reaching the crest. All that remained was the mopping up, so necessary where countless caves and passages were concerned.

Meanwhile over on Hill 79 the 1st Battalion was having a similar experience. During the morning the attack progressed slowly while tanks fired on emplacements on the hill. At 1310 the tanks, accompanied by infantry, moved forward and worked over the hill carefully. At 1400 all three companies jumped off in assault and fought their way up the hill, reaching the crest at 1735. Mopping up began immediately. Caves were blasted and burned before the troops dug in for the night.

## 17. FINALE

On 22 June, 1945, the Tenth Army announced the official end of organized hostilities on the island of Okinawa.\*\* Many enemy individuals and remnant groups remained scattered and hidden throughout southern Okinawa. Before base development on the island could be prosecuted with any degree of security, it was necessary that a thorough mopping up operation be conducted.

Accordingly, III Amphibious Corps issued Operation Order Number (24-25), which specified that the 1st and 6th Marine Divisions would conduct a coordinated mopping up operation from south to north within certain assigned boundaries, with three phase lines established for control. These lines ran across the Corps zone in a roughly east-west direction. The First Phase Line was drawn from the village of Nagasuku on the west coast to the northern edge of Makabe village. Phase Line Two ran from the lower part of Itoman in the west coast to the southern edge of Tera, thence to the northern edge of Yuza. The Third Phase Line began on the west between Naha and the Oroku Peninsula, and followed roughly the middle course of the Kokuba Gawa through the village of Kokuba to the Corps boundary north of Chan. The 1st Marine Division was to begin the mopping up of Phase Line One on O-Day, 22 June, and then to proceed, on orders, within its sector to Phase Lines Two and Three successively, coordinating its advance with the XXIV Corps on the right.\*\*\* Upon reaching Phase Line Three, the 1st Marine Division was to be prepared to move by water and motor to the Motobu Peninsula for rehabilitation. To prevent enemy remnants from escaping to the north during this drive, the 1st Marines, in Corps Reserve, was ordered to establish a blocking line from the Kokuba Gawa Estuary east along the Naha-Yonabaru road to the Corps boundary.

\*See Map No. 30.

\*\*See Map No. 31.

\*\*\*See Map No. 32.

The day of 24 June was spent, as had been the two previous days, in mopping up in the first phase sector. Flamethrowing tanks were found to be one of the most effective weapons for the work of burning out caves, small pillboxes, and sniper-infested brush and cane fields. As far as possible caves were blasted shut with demolition charges to prevent their being occupied again.

During the ensuing nights there were numerous enemy infiltration attempts. Small disorganized groups and individual soldiers moved around in the darkness trying to find other comrades or searching for a new place of hiding for the next day.

On 25 June, the elements of the 1st Marine Division began the coordinated sweep to the north. The main preoccupation of the troops was the destruction of the remaining enemy, but all unit commanders instituted salvage and policing activities in addition, so that when the last phase line had been cleared, the area covered would be not only safe, but in a decent state of police.

Concurrently with the mopping up, the division prepared to send small elements from each of its component units north to Motobu to begin the task of preparing a camp for the entire division. On 27 June approximately one thousand troops from the various elements of the division were transported to Motobu Peninsula for preliminary work on the Division Rehabilitation areas.

Relieved from 1st Marine Division control on 29 June by the 7th Marines, the 8th Marines were attached to III Amphibious Corps and began to assemble on Oroku Peninsula preparatory to embarking for Saipan where the regiment would rejoin its parent organization, the 2nd Marine Division.

At month's end, all organized enemy opposition on Okinawa had been eliminated. In addition to mopping up, salvage and police operations had been completed from the south coast north to the Naha-Yonabaru Highway. Patrols from the 1st Marines had worked as far north as Awacha. As transportation became available, the 1st Marine Division moved north in echelons to its new camp site on Motobu.

There is little need for any summary of the division's activities on Okinawa. If the reader has read thus far, he will be aware of the intense fighting engaged in, the length of time in combat, the terrible conditions present, and the fact that the division was bled white during the operation. Before the year 1945 few people, in service or out, had ever heard of—or cared about—the Ryukyu Retto and particularly the island of Okinawa. In years to come the name of the island will be mentioned, no doubt, from time to time by the veterans who fought there. Men of the 1st Marine Division will never think of Okinawa without being reminded of the hill mass upon which stood Shuri, a symbol of the Japanese main line of defense and of fanatical resistance on an unprecedented scale.



**PART III**

**APPENDICES**

## APPENDIX "A"

### FOOTNOTES

#### Footnote No. 1

The III Amphibious Corps Plan for the attack on Okinawa, as derived from the Tenth Army Plan, was to land two divisions abreast on the northern Hagushi beaches, designated as Beaches Green, Red, Blue and Yellow, beginning at 0830, tentative H-Hour, on 1 April, and seize Yontan Airfield; then making its main effort on the right and coordinating its advance with that of the XXIV Corps to secure to objective line L plus 15 within its zone of action, advancing to succeeding objective lines on order of Commanding General, Tenth Army. The landing plan for the assault provided that the 6th Marine Division, less the 29th Marines which was in Corps reserve, be landed on the left over Beaches Green and Red, and the 1st Marine Division be landed on the right over Beaches Blue and Yellow. One battalion landing team was to be landed on each beach with exception of Beach Red Two and Beach Red Three, both of which were to be assaulted by a single battalion landing team.

(From Corps Operation Orders.)

#### Footnote No. 2

The successful U. S. invasion of the Marianas convinced staff officers both in the 32d Army and the General Staff that the U. S. would attempt a landing either on Taiwan, the Ryukyu Retto, or Hongkong within the year. The 32d Army staff believed that, because of its strategic position, Okinawa would certainly be invaded; opinion in Tokyo remained more indefinite, some favoring Taiwan. The attack was expected either as (a) an immediate landing based from and using troops available in the Marianas or (b) an attack mounting from the Sowsespac area when the tactical situation should permit the withdrawal of troops from that area. The first possibility was regarded as a more dangerous threat since Okinawa was totally unprepared to repulse enemy landings at that time. The landings on the Palaus and on Leyte came as a respite, indicating that U. S. plans did not include an immediate attack in this area. The landing was then expected from late March to June, 1945, on the assumption that the situation in the Philippines would have eased sufficiently by that time to permit the withdrawal of troops and the use of Leyte as a staging area. The Okinawa landing was expected to take place before the Iwo landing because Iwo was considered of lesser importance. Some false confidence was inspired by intelligence reports that not enough troops were available to effect a landing on Okinawa for some time to come. However, in late February reports of shipping concentrations in the Marianas and Leyte convinced the 32d Army staff that the attack would come in late March or early April.

From an early date the principle guiding the Japanese plan of defense was that since it was impossible to defeat the invading enemy, the most successful plan would be that which denied him the use of the island for as long a period as possible and cause him the greatest casualties. The following plans were suggested, the first being that which was adopted.

1. To defend, from extensive underground positions, the Shimajiri sector (i.e. that part of Okinawa south of the Naha-Shuri-Yonabaru line) the main line of defense being north of Naha, Shuri, and Yonabaru. Landings north of this line will not be opposed; landings south of the line will be met on the beaches. Since it will be impossible to defend Kadena Airfield, 15cm guns will be emplaced so as to bring fire against the airfield and deny the invaders its use.

## APPENDIX "A" (cont'd)

2. To defend from prepared positions the central portion of the island, including the Kadena and Yontan Airfields.

3. To dispose one division around the Kadena area, one division in the southern end of the island, and one brigade between the two divisions. To meet the enemy wherever he lands and attempt to annihilate him on the beaches.

4. To defend the northern part of the island with Army Headquarters in Nago and the main line of defense based on Hill 220 NE of Yontan Airfield. The proponents of this course maintained that the terrain in the northern Okinawa was more favorable for prolonging the defense although, admittedly, the loss of the more highly developed southern section was undesirable.

Although the withdrawal of the 9th Division seriously weakened the forces available for the defense of Okinawa, the move was not opposed by 32d Army since the division was removed with the intention of using it to reinforce the Philippines. Pleas for reinforcements from Japan were made in vain to Tokyo. There was a faint hope of getting reinforcements before L-Day, but Colonel Yahara states, none whatsoever thereafter.

The plan which was adopted, i.e., to defend the Shuri line, presupposed Blue occupation of Kadena and Yontan Airfields. Although there was some pressure from Tokyo and certain individuals within the 32d Army to include Kadena Airfield within the zone of defense, this was deemed impractical, since, due to considerations of terrain, the defense of Kadena would seriously overextend forces barely sufficient for the effective defense of the southern part of the island.

The building of airfields on Ie Jima was criticized, since it was impossible to defend the island for more than a few days. Accordingly, on 10 March demolition of the airfields was initiated. Subsequently, four 15cm guns were emplaced in positions on the Motobu peninsula from where they could be brought to bear on Ie.

The beaches originally considered most probable for Blue landings were (a) the Hagushi beaches, (b) the Gusuku beaches, (i.e., the beaches west of Machinato Airfield), (c) the coast between Naha and Itoman, (d) the Minatogawa beaches and (e) the Nakagusuku Wan beaches.

By the end of March it was expected that the main Blue strength, probably 6-10 divisions would land upon the Hagushi beaches, immediately securing the Kadena and Yontan Airfields.

It was believed that the invading forces might, following the initial landings, establish beachhead perimeters, each two divisions in strength, 1½ to 3 kilometers in depth, each division holding 2 km of beach. The perimeter would be maintained until enough supplies had been landed to permit a large-scale attack, using massed tanks and concentrated artillery fire. The invaders would rely on material strength to wear down the defenders rather than making a frontal assault. It was estimated that about ten days would be required to get the Hagushi forces in position to attack the main defense line based on Shuri and that during that time the U. S. hoped to force the Japanese to move their main force to the Shuri line and then to effect a not too costly landing, probably by one division on the coast somewhere south of Shuri, probably Minatogawa. Additional landings on Ie Jima were expected but the landings on Kerama came as a surprise, foiling their plans for conducting suicide boat warfare.

Artillery was ordered not to fire upon Blue shipping and divisions were instructed not to oppose Blue reconnaissance or initial landings in their sectors until sufficient troops had been brought ashore to render it difficult to effect an escape by boat. The purpose

## APPENDIX "A" (cont'd)

was two-fold, (a) to attempt to deceive Blue intelligence as to the disposition of the Japanese forces (b) to ensure that any attack on Blue beachhead positions would engage and "annihilate" a sizeable force.

(Taken from P.O.W. Interrogation Report of Colonel Hiromichi Yahara, Senior Staff Officer, 32d Army, published by 1st Marine Division, Intelligence Section.)

### Footnote No. 3

Tenth Army notified III Amphibious Corps on 27 April that the 1st Marine Division would be attached to XXIV Corps at an early date and would take over the zone of action of the 27th Infantry Division.

(Taken from Corps Operation Orders.)

### Footnote No. 4

Cave warfare characterized the enemy's primary resistance. First employed in the Marianas and subsequently at Peleliu and Iwo Jima, it was considerably improved on Okinawa. This improvement was no mere haphazard result of experience. Captured documents of battle doctrine discussed in explicit detail the weaknesses and strong features of cave warfare, and methods to eliminate the faults.

The enemy built his defenses around caves, the number of which is almost beyond reckoning. All terrain features were studded with them—both natural ones and those excavated for definite tactical purposes. Each cave was the center of an infantry strong-point. Automatic weapons and sometimes light artillery pieces were emplaced in the caves, the mouths of which were small and well-concealed. Foxholes and rifle pits guarded each cave against the inevitable close-quarter attack of our infantry and tank-infantry teams. All cave strong-point defenses were interlocked into a system of mutual supporting fires so that the advancing forces were faced with an integrated defensive line.

The scheme of operation of the enemy defenses was one that denied the attacker any rest. Usually, the enemy defenses were in three (3) lines on a hill mass—on the forward slope, the crest, and the reverse slope. Automatic weapons, rifle, and knee mortar fire was delivered from the frontal positions and from flanking caves on adjacent hills. 81mm and 90mm mortar fire and artillery fire of all calibers were coordinated with small arms and machine gun fire. Once this fire was neutralized, the forward slopes of the hill mass secured, and the crest of the hill reached, severe infantry weapons fire was received from that area and from some of the reverse slope positions that faced forward up the hill. Heavy weapons fire was coordinated with that delivered locally in an all-out effort to force our withdrawal. Of the three phases, perhaps this defense of the ridge crest was the most fierce.

A hill could not be secured until the rear slope was occupied and cleared of all enemy troops, a task the Japanese opposed with extreme tenacity. For with the cross-corridor, terrain pattern over which we were forced to operate, reverse slope defenses, in addition to preventing flanking attacks, formed more often than not one side of a "pocket." From these well-hidden and sometimes almost inaccessible positions, the enemy fought with skill and desperation. Grazing, enfilade machine gun fire was delivered from each crevice and corner, knee mortar fire fell on our troops from out of nowhere and mortar shells were lobbed into the valley with extreme accuracy and frequency. Here too, the enemy employed to best advantage his anti-tank tactics, an element of his defense discussed separately.

(Taken from 1st Marine Division SAR, P. 38, Chapter VIII entitled Infantry).

## APPENDIX "A" (cont'd)

### Footnote No. 5

#### OPERATION ORDER NO. 11-45 8 May

This operation order is derived from 10th Army operation order 8-45; 10th Army attacks to south with Corps abreast, III Amphibious Corps on right to destroy enemy forces southern Okinawa. Initially it will envelop and reduce the Shuri position, (initial Army objective, and drive enemy forces by seizing the hill masses in the area Kara (7767)—Kamizato (8066) (second Army objective), thereafter be prepared for further advances.

Twenty-fourth Corps attacks on the left, envelops Shuri hill masses from the east, assists III Amphibious Corps in the reduction of that position and seizes those portions of Army objective within zone of action.

Third Amphibious Corps will attack to the south with two divisions abreast, main effort on left, envelop Shuri hill masses from the west and assist XXIV Corps in reduction of that position. Also, will seize those portions of Army objectives within zone of action; capture Naha and Oroku Peninsula.

First Marine Division will: (1) attack to south making Corps main effort; (2) capture Shuri hill masses by enveloping from west and assist XXIV Corps in reduction of that position; (3) continue attack and seize that portion of the general line Naha (7371-F)—RJ (7669-L)—RJ (7869-G) within its zone of action; (4) maintain contact with XXIV corps right (west) flank; (7) designate 1 RCT as corps reserve, not to be committed

Sixth Marine Division will: (1) attack to south within its zone of action; (2) assist with attack of 1st Marine Division on its left by fire and maneuver; (3) seize that portion of the general line Naha (7371-F)—RJ (7669-L)—RJ (7869-G) within zone of action; (4) maintain contact with 1st Marine Division; (5) be prepared for further advances to seize second Army objective and to capture Oroku Peninsula on order; (6) protect Corps right (west) flank; (7) designate 1 RCT as Corps reserve, not to be committed without Corps approval.

Corps also directed that: (1) Divisions are responsible for security of rear areas to corps rear boundary. Division rear boundaries to be established by corps as attack progresses. (2) Divisions responsible for containing and mopping up enemy forces in zone of action by-passed by assault elements. (3) Supporting fire and air strikes close to boundary to be coordinated by divisions concerned and corps to be notified. (4) Adjacent units may close boundary as required by tactical situation. Coordinate such movements directly with other units concerned. (5) Uses of smoke will be coordinated by corps except for local operations. (6) Maintain contact and establish necessary lateral communication between units to insure coordination of effort and mutual assistance. Primarily responsible from right to left.

(This is merely the substance of the order. It is not reproduced in exact form. From III Amphibious Corps Operation Orders).

### Footnote No. 6

Due to the fact that the 5th Regiment was held up on its left flank, the 1st Regiment's left boundary was changed to run southeast and consequently its objective lines were to the left front, a reorientation of the zone of attack. Later, with the advent of the 7th Marines between the other two regiments, the 1st Marines turned to fight almost directly south again.

(Taken from 1st Marines Special Action Report for 3 May.)

## APPENDIX "A" (cont'd)

### Footnote No. 7

(Taken from P.O.W. Interrogation Report of Colonel Hiromichi Yahara, Senior Staff Officer, 32d Army, published by 1st Marine Division Intelligence Section.)

### Footnote No. 8

Plans were made on 8 May for a dawn attack next morning by the 1st Battalion in conjunction with the 5th Marines. The regimental plan called for the 1st Battalion to launch its attack without preparatory artillery fires so that surprise could be achieved. After gaining the high ground at the northwest edge of the Dakeshi plateau, the battalion would hold, reorganize and support the attack of the 2d Battalion on Sugar Loaf while tanks mopped up the southern slopes of the draw to the rear. This plan was tentative, being contingent upon the weather next day.

(From 1st Marines Special Action Report).

### Footnote No. 9

The nature of the terrain in the Awacha sector was such that there were no covered routes of approach from the north toward Wilson's Ridge and very poor and infrequent ones from the west. The regiment chose the lesser of two evils.

(From 1st Marine Division and 5th Marines' Special Action Reports.)

### Footnote No. 10

No mention is made in the 7th Marines' Special Action Report about this, but the 1st Battalion of that regiment states that on 15 May, "orders were received at 2100 from regiment that a fake attack was planned for 16 May. Troops to concentrate in preparation for attack and all supporting weapons employed in feint."

### Footnote No. 11

During the attachment of Company "B" to the 1st Marine Division from 1 May, 1945 to 21 June, 1945, 16,149 High Explosive and 5,125 White Phosphorus rounds of ammunition were expended on targets of opportunity, pillboxes, enemy emplacements and strong points, barrages, interdiction and harassing fire at night, enemy troops in open, marking with WP for air strikes, smoke missions to cover advance, and to evacuate wounded.

(From Operational Report of Company "B", 88th Chemical Mortar Battalion.)

### Footnote No. 12

At 0855, 19 May, the 1st Marines were ordered to relieve the 7th Marines on the left of the division's zone of action. The 1st and 2d Battalions were ordered to relieve the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 7th Marines immediately as they were in a static situation. The 3rd Battalion would relieve the 3rd Battalion, 7th Marines, which was attacking the Wana Ridge, after 1600.

(From 1st Marines' Special Action Report.)

### Footnote No. 13

The 5th Marines had been placed in division reserve on 10 May and given the mission of completing the mopping up of the Awacha Pocket. On 13 May the 1st and 3d Battalions moved over behind the 1st Marines preparatory to effecting relief during the night of 14-15 May.

(From 5th Marines' Special Action Report.)

## APPENDIX "A" (cont'd)

### Footnote No. 14

1. Derived from Tenth Army Operation Order No. 12-45. Tenth Army continues attack to exploit present gains and to pursue and destroy enemy on Southern Okinawa Boundary between Corps present boundary to RJ 7969—road to Tera (7967Q)—Iwa (7964P)—RJ 8160L—south coast at 8159D, all to XXIV Corps.

Twenty-fourth Corps has been directed to make it main effort to seize Chan (7968), converging with III Amphibious Corps on boundary, then to drive rapidly southeast to south coast Okinawa to prevent enemy retiring into Chinnen Peninsula. Twenty-fourth Corps maintains contact with III Amphibious Corps.

Tactical Air Force, Tenth Army continues air support.

CTG 51.22 continues naval gunfire support.

2.(a) III Amphibious Corps will:

(1) Drive southeast to corps boundary, making main effort to converge with XXIV Corps vicinity of hills north of Tera (7968) in order to pocket the enemy north of that point.

(2) Secure Naha port and airfield.

(3) Seize Chikuto (7466)—Tomusu (7866) hill mass.

(4) Continue attack to south coast Okinawa and destroy remaining enemy in zone of action.

3. First Marine Division will:

(1) Relieve elements 6th Marine Division within zone of action.

(2) Patrol well to front.

(3) Making corps main effort, drive rapidly southeast and seize hill mass at Tera.

(4) Seize Chikuto—Tomusu Hill Mass.

(5) Maintain contact with 6th Marine Division.

4. Sixth Marine Division will:

(1) Seize Naha Airfield and Oroku Peninsula.

(2) Secure Naha Port.

(3) Seize Chikuto—Tomusu Hill Mass in zone of action.

(4) Continue attack to S.E. coast Okinawa and destroy enemy.

(5) Protect corps west (right) flank.

(6) Designate one RCT as Corps Reserve.

Contact will be maintained from left to right. The main hostile position has been broken. Every effort will therefore be exerted to prevent the enemy from consolidating on new position and to this end, the attack will be pressed with the utmost speed and vigor.

(Taken from III Amphibious Corps Operation Order No. 17-45 1 June 1945 in its entirety.)

### Footnote No. 15

"By 9 June the evacuation road net from forward units to rear hospitals was in extremely poor condition and it was necessary to provide alternate means of transferring casualties to the rear. Consequently, a cub landing strip was built two thousand (2000) yards in rear of the front lines and placed in operation on 11 June. Planes evacuating patients continued to operate from this strip until the conclusion of operations in Southern

## APPENDIX "A" (cont'd)

Okinawa. During this time the following numbers of front line casualties of the 1st Marine Division (Reinforced) were evacuated to rear hospitals:

11 June .....	52
12 June .....	67
13 June .....	35
14 June .....	82
15 June .....	72
16 June .....	68
17 June .....	73
18 June .....	89
19 June .....	54
20 June .....	22
21 June .....	14
22 June .....	13

Total..... 641

"The value of this means of evacuating casualties cannot be over-stressed. Casualties were evacuated from the medical clearing station to rear hospitals, a distance of twelve miles, in less than eight minutes, obviating the necessity of a land haul over roads practically non-existent."

(From 1st Marine Division Special Action Report.)

### Footnote No. 16

"During operations on Southern Okinawa, it became necessary to call for air delivery of supplies at various times. Dates on which drops were made and number of plane loads of supplies dropped as follows:

Date	Planeloads
10 May .....	11
11 May .....	14
30 May .....	7
31 May .....	44
1 June .....	71
2 June .....	28
3 June .....	48
4 June .....	18
5 June .....	53
6 June .....	51
7 June .....	63
8 June .....	67
9 June .....	6
12 June .....	11
13 June .....	21
14 June .....	3
16 June .....	20
17 June .....	8

Total..... 561



## APPENDIX "A" (cont'd)

The first air drops made on 10 and 11 May were not successful for the following reasons:

- (a) Our positions were divulged by dropping of parachutes.
- (b) Ground troops were unable to reach supplies dropped because of enemy fire.
- (c) Lack of experience of ground units concerning the use of air deliveries.
- (d) Close liaison between ground and air was absent.

Commencing 30 May, and continuing until 9 June, it was again necessary to supply assault units through the medium of air deliveries. This was necessitated by the prolonged period of inclement weather which rendered roads impassable, not only to trucks, but also to LVT's, tractors and trailers. During this same period, enemy resistance slackened somewhat and our assault units advanced rapidly, rendering the supply situation even more critical."

(From 1st Marine Division Special Action Report.)

### Footnote No. 17

Long-awaited supplies began to flow to our front line troops via water on 8 June. An amphibian tractor group of 8 cargo tractors, supported by 10 LVT(A)'s, reached the newly-won beaches at 7363H during the morning with no opposition from enemy guns. The convoy was covered by constant air patrol over the small islands lying off the west coast, and the 6th Marine Division, from positions on Oroku Peninsula, laid smoke on Senaga Shima. The same tractors that brought in supplies were used in the evacuation of wounded later in the day. Following initial success with this supply route, tractors continued to haul supplies into and evacuate from these beaches daily.

(From 1st Division Special Action Report.)

### Footnote No. 18

The situation here was a peculiar one. The 96th Infantry Division on the left flank of the 1st Marine Division had advanced rapidly and was now nearly 1200 yards ahead of the 5th Marines. Rather than patrol its way forward against sporadic enemy resistance from small remnant pockets, which would have been a slow process, the 5th Marines decided to send one battalion around to the left through the 96th Division's zone of action to a point directly east of the next prominent terrain features likely to be well-defended, Hills 57 and 107. In this manner the regiment foresaw the opportunity of seizing tactically important ground far to its front while it continued its slow and methodic advance in its zone of action.

(Author's own note).

## APPENDIX "A" (cont'd)

### Footnote No. 19

The following table shows a breakdown of replacements received and absorbed during the conduct of the operation:

Date	Replacement Draft	U.S.M.C.		U.S.N.	
		Officers	Enl.	Officers	Enl.
24 April .....	32d	9	0	0	0
24, 28, 29 April .....	29th	34	785	0	0
5 May .....	32d	26	589	0	0
7 May .....	29th	11	286	0	0
7 May .....	32d	22	498	4	0
11 May .....	29th	0	0	0	5
11 May .....	32d	0	0	0	24
16, 17 May .....	46th	25	653	0	0
27, 28, 29 May .....	57th	24	510	0	0
27, 28, 29 May .....	54th	17	516	0	0
27, 28, 29 May .....	63d	12	229	0	0
11 June .....	55th	12	357	0	0
16 June .....	62d	14	281	0	0
5-18 June .....		0	0	0	98
<b>TOTALS.....</b>		<b>206</b>	<b>4,703</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>127</b>

(From 1st Marine Division Special Action Report.)

### Footnote No. 20

All replacements had, of course, the benefit of "boot camp" training immediately upon their entry into the Marine Corps. The unusually heavy casualties on Iwo Jima and now on Okinawa caused such a drain on manpower that it was necessary to keep an almost continuous stream of replacement drafts on their way overseas. The transition from a stateside parade ground to a foxhole on Wana Ridge would seriously tax anyone's capabilities.

### Footnote No. 21

The attack of the 1st Marines for 10 June was a part of a large coordinated attack to be launched on that day simultaneously by the 1st Marine Division and the 96th Infantry Division. The divisions were attempting to maintain constant uniform pressure along the whole line in an effort to overwhelm the last-ditch positions of the enemy."

(Author's own note.)

### Footnote No. 22

"A reconnaissance revealed that it would be unwise to attempt to run tanks south of Kunishi without first widening and filling in tank roads now available. Even then, the steep craggy terrain in this particular sector would greatly impede the movement of tanks. While working at 7461-T the tank dozer was hit once by an enemy AT gun, believed 47mm. Return tank fire silenced the enemy weapon. At 1630, tanks began the ferrying of infantry troops, chow, ammunition, water, grenades and blood plasma across the open terrain from Tera to the base of Kunishi Ridge. A total of 54 infantry troops, (A-1-7), were carried across in three tank runs. Nine tank loads accommodated this total. In each tank crew, the assistant driver was displaced and six troops added, thereby doubling the ordinary crew capacity of the tank. Troops loaded at Tera, concealed from enemy observ-

**APPENDIX "A" (cont'd)**

ers, and disembarked through tank escape hatches on arrival at the base of the Ridge. A fourth tank run was prohibited when, at 1915, the last tank (C-12) in the column returning from the third run, had the narrow road cave in under it. The escape hatch could not be used for evacuating the crew and wounded men the tank was carrying, because it had "bellied up" on the road. Enemy snipers immediately found the range of the disabled tank's turret, but smoke from the M-3 2" mortars fired by another tank enabled the latter to come up alongside and evacuate the crew of C-12, and the wounded. This tank had to be disarmed and temporarily evacuated for the night. In addition to the 54 men carried forward across open terrain where heavy enemy machine gun fire had previously pinned down G-2-7, the returning tanks evacuated twenty-two wounded."

(From Action Report for 2400, 11 June to 2400, 12 June, 1st Tank Battalion.)

**Footnote No. 23**

The mission of the Iheya-Aguni Landing Force (8th Marines, Reinforced) was to capture the islands of Iheya Shima and Aguni Shima for the purpose of establishing a long range Radar Search Station on Iheya Shima and a long range Radar Search Station and Fighter Director Station on Aguni Shima, both to supplement the existing Air Warning organization to Okinawa, and to establish an initial garrison force for both islands.

(From Special Action Report of the Iheya-Aguni Landing Force.)

## APPENDIX "B"

### TASK ORGANIZATION

#### Nansei Shoto

CT-1

Col. Kenneth B. CHAPPELL, USMC

1st Marines  
Co A 1st Engr Bn  
Co A 1st Pion Bn  
Co A 1st Med Bn  
Co A 1st MT Bn  
Det Ord Co 1st Serv Bn  
    Atchd: 2d Plat, 1st Bomb Disposal Co.  
        (less 2d and 3d Sqds)  
Det S&S Co 1st Serv Bn  
1st Plat 1st MP Co  
Det 4th JASCO  
Det 454th Amph Trk Co (Army) 3 DUKW)

CT-5

Col. John H. GRIEBEL, USMC

5th Marines  
Co B 1st Engr Bn  
Co B 1st Pion Bn  
Co B 1st Med Bn  
Co B 1st MT Bn  
1st Amph Trac Bn (less Dets)  
Det Ord Co 1st Serv Bn  
    Atchd: 3d Sqd, 2d Plat, 1st Bomb Disposal Co  
Det S&S Co 1st Serv Bn  
2d Plat 1st MP Co  
Det 454th Amph Trk Co (Army) (8 DUKW)

CT-7

Col. Edward W. SNEDEKER, USMC

7th Marines  
Co C 1st Engr Bn  
Co C 1st Pion Bn  
Co C 1st Med Bn  
Co C 1st MT Bn  
8th Amph Trac Bn (less Dets)  
Det Ord Co 1st Serv Bn  
    Atchd: 2d Sqd, 2d Plat, 1st Bomb Disposal Co  
Det S&S Co 1st Serv Bn  
3rd Plat, 1st MP Co  
Det 454th Amph Trk Co (Army) (8 DUKW)  
Det 4th JASCO

\*From 1st Marine Division Special Action Report.

**APPENDIX "B" (cont'd)**

**Arty Gp** Col. Wilburt S. BROWN, USMC  
11th Marines  
Ard Amph Truck Co  
Det 454th Amph Truck Co (Army) (22 DUKW)  
VMO-3  
Det 1st Amph Trac Bn (12 LVT)  
Det 8th Amph Trac Bn (8 LVT)

**Armd Amph Trac Gp** Maj. John I. WILLIAMSON, USMC  
3rd Armd Amph Bn (Prov)

**Tk Gp** Lt. Col. A. J. STUART, USMC  
1st Tk Bn  
Det 1st Amph Trac Bn (3 LVT)  
Det 8th Amph Trac Bn (4 LVT)  
Tk Maint Plat, Ord Co. 1st Serv Bn

**Engr Gp** Col. Francis I. FENTON, USMC  
1st Engr Bn (less Cos A, B, C)  
145th NCB (less Det)

**Shore Party Gp** Lt. Col. Robert G. BALLANCE, USMC  
1st Pion Bn (less Cos A, B, C)  
½ 11th Special NCB  
Det 145th NCB  
Det 4th JASCO  
Replacement Gp

**Serv Gp** Col. John KALUF, USMC  
1st Serv Bn less Dets)  
1st MT Bn (less Cos A, B, C)  
2d Plat 1st Laundry Co

**MP Gp** Lt. Col. Austin C. SHOFNER, USMC  
Army MP Co.  
1st MP Co (less 1st, 2d, 3rd Plats)

**Div Trs** Lt. Col. James S. MONAHAN, USMC  
Div Hq Bn (less 1st MP Co)  
1st Med Bn (less Cos A, B, C)  
4th JASCO (less Dets)  
454th Amph Truck Co (Army) (less Dets) (9 DUKW)  
Dets A-1& B-1 AMG  
17th & 18th G-10 Dispensary Units  
Assault Air Warning Teams  
4th Prov Rkt Det  
4th War Dog Plat

**APPENDIX "B" (cont'd)**

**OKINAWA OPERATION**

**Battle Casualties<sup>1</sup>**

	KIA <sup>2</sup>		WIA <sup>3</sup>		MIA <sup>4</sup>		DOW <sup>5</sup>	
	Off.	Enl.	Off.	Enl.	Off.	Enl.	Off.	Enl.
1st Marine Division ....	54	1079	260	5993	0	12	11	139
Attached Units .....	1	16	8	105	1	0	1	4
1st Mar Div (Reinf) ....	55	1095	268	6098	1	12	12	143
8th Marines (Reinf)	1	48	9	241	0	0	0	0

1. Includes Navy Personnel\*
2. Killed in Action
3. Wounded in Action
4. Missing in Action
5. Died of Wounds

*USN	KIA		WIA	
	Off.	Enl.	Off.	Enl.
	0	51	10	197

(Taken from 1st Marine Division Special Action Report, Personnel Report, P. 1.)

**Enemy Casualties and Prisoners Taken**

**on Okinawa By 1st Marine Division,**

**1 April, 1945 to 30 June, 1945.\***

<b>Counted</b>	<b>Casualties</b>	<b>Buried</b>
13,645	Estimated 3,968	10,017
<b>Military</b>	<b>Prisoners</b>	<b>Combat Civilians</b>
403	Unarmed Laborers 122	11

\*Special Action Report, III Amphibious Corps.

## APPENDIX "C"

### COMMANDERS AND STAFFS\*

#### III Phib Corps

Corps Commander .....	Maj. Gen. Roy S. Geiger** <sup>1</sup>
Chief of Staff .....	Brig. Gen. Merwin H. Silverthorne
C-1 .....	Col. Gale T. Cummings
C-2 .....	Col. Charles C. Brown
C-3 .....	Col. Walter A. Wachtler
C-4 .....	Col. Francis B. Loomis, Jr.

#### 1st Marine Division

Division Commander .....	Maj. Gen. Pedro A. DelValle
Assistant Div. Comdr. ....	Brig. Gen. Louis R. Jones
Chief of Staff .....	Col. Robert O. Bare
C-1 .....	Lt. Col. Harold O. Deakin
C-2 .....	Lt. Col. John W. Scott (R)**
C-3 .....	Lt. Col. Russell E. Honsowetz
C-4 .....	Lt. Col. Harvey C. Tschirgi

\* For Period 1 April to 30 June, unless otherwise noted.

\*\* Later promoted to Lt. Gen.

\*\*\* USMCR.

<sup>1</sup> Assumed command Tenth Army after Gen. Buckner's death.

#### 1st Marines

##### (April-May-June)

Regimental Commander .....	Col. Kenneth B. Chappell (April-May) Col. Arthur T. Mason (31 May-June)
Executive Officer .....	Lt. Col. Richard P. Ross, Jr. (1 April-20 May) Lt. Col. James S. Monahan (21 May-30 June)
S-1 .....	Capt. James G. Gage (R)
S-2 .....	Capt. Richard A. Boyd (R)
S-3 .....	Maj. Bernard T. Kelly (1-22 April) Maj. Jonas M. Platt (23 April-30 June)
S-4 .....	Maj. Franklin C. Robinson (R)

#### 1st Bn., 1st Marines

Battalion Commander .....	Lt. Col. James C. Murray, Jr. (April-9 May) Lt. Col. Richard P. Ross, Jr. (10-12 May) Lt. Col. Austin C. Shofner 13-31 May-1-30 June)
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**APPENDIX "C" (cont'd)**

Bn. Executive Officer ..... Maj. Jonas M. Platt  
 (1-22 April)  
 Major Henry G. Baron, Jr. (R)  
 (23-30 April—1-14 May)  
 Capt. Thomas K. Greer (R)  
 (15-31 May—1-10 June)  
 Maj. Franklin B. Nihart  
 (11-30 June)

**2d Bn., 1st Marines**

Battalion Commander ..... Lt. Col. James C. Magee, Jr.  
 Bn. Executive Officer ..... Maj. Raymond Portillo  
 (1-21 April)  
 Maj. Bernard T. Kelly  
 (22 April—30 June)

**3d Bn., 1st Marines**

Battalion Commander ..... Lt. Col. Stephen V. Sabol  
 (1 April—20 May)  
 Lt. Col. Richard P. Ross, Jr.  
 (21 May—30 June)  
 Bn. Executive Officer ..... Maj. Frederick W. Lindlaw (R)  
 (1 April—18 May)  
 Capt. Wayne B. Davis (R)  
 (19-25 May)  
 Maj. Leon Goldberg (R)  
 (26 May—6 June)  
 Maj. John V. Kelsey  
 (7-18 June)  
 Maj. Frederick W. Lindlaw (R)  
 (19-30 June)

**5th Marines**

Regimental Commander ..... Col. John H. Griebel  
 (1 April—23 June)  
 Col. Julian N. Frisbie  
 (23-30 June)  
 Executive Officer ..... Lt. Col. John D. Muncie  
 (1 April—23 June)  
 Lt. Col. Robert E. Hill  
 (24-30 June)  
 S-1 ..... 1st Lt. Layton W. Bailey, Jr. (R)  
 S-2 ..... Capt. Levi T. Burcham (R)  
 S-3 ..... Maj. James H. Flagg  
 S-4 ..... Maj. Joseph Skoczylas



## APPENDIX "C" (cont'd)

### 1st Bn., 5th Marines

Battalion Commander ..... Lt. Col. Charles W. Shelburne  
Bn. Executive Officer ..... Maj. Frank W. Poland, Jr. (R)  
(1 April—16 May)\*  
Maj. Reed F. Taylor (R)  
(1-30 June)

### 2d Bn., 5th Marines

Battalion Commander ..... Lt. Col. William E. Benedict  
(1 April—20 June)  
Maj. Richard T. Washburn (R)  
(21-30 June)  
Bn. Executive Officer ..... Maj. Richard T. Washburn (R)  
(1 April—20 June)\*\*  
Maj. Robert M. Port (R)  
(28-30 June)

\* No name listed on muster rolls for 17-31 May.

\*\* Same as above for 21-27 June.

### 3rd Bn., 5th Marines

Battalion Commander ..... Lt. Col. John C. Miller, Jr.  
(1 April—16 May)  
Maj. Frank W. Poland, Jr. (R)  
(17 May—8 June)  
Lt. Col. Robert E. Hill  
(9-24 June)  
Lt. Col. Joseph L. Winecoff  
(25-30 June)  
Bn. Executive Officer ..... Maj. Martin C. Roth (R)

### 7th Marines

Regimental Commander ..... Col. Edward W. Snedeker  
Executive Officer ..... Lt. Col. James M. Masters, Sr.  
S-1 ..... Capt. Robert A. Scherr  
(1 April—18 June)  
Maj. John S. Hudson  
(19-30 June)  
S-2 ..... 1st Lt. Russell M. Wilkinson (R)  
S-3 ..... Maj. Walter Holomon  
(1 April—22 May)  
Lt. Col. Stephen V. Sabol  
(23 May—19 June)  
1st Lt. Charles E. Crow (R)  
(26-30 June)  
S-4 ..... Maj. Joe R. Hobbs, Jr. (R)

## APPENDIX "C" (cont'd)

### 1st Bn., 7th Marines

Battalion Commander ..... Lt. Col. John J. Gormley  
Bn. Executive Officer ..... Maj. Hector R. Migneault  
(1 April—13 May)  
Maj. Henry G. Baron, Jr. (R)  
(19 May—9 June)  
Maj. Harold C. Howard  
(10-28 June)  
Capt. Don P. Wyckoff  
(29-30 June)

### 2d Bn., 7th Marines

Battalion Commander ..... Lt. Col. Spencer S. Berger  
Bn. Executive Officer ..... Maj. Louis G. Ditta (R)

### 3rd Bn., 7th Marines

Battalion Commander ..... Lt. Col. Edward H. Hurst  
(1 April—18 June)  
Bn. Executive Officer ..... Lt. Col. Stephen V. Sabol  
(1 April—17 May)  
Maj. Walter Holomon  
(18 May—30 June)

### 8th Marines\*

Regimental Commander ..... Col. Clarence R. Wallace  
(1-28 June)  
Col. James F. Shaw  
(29-30 June)  
Executive Officer ..... Lt. Col. Martin S. Rahiser  
S-1 ..... Capt. Jesse F. Adams, Jr. (R)  
S-2 ..... 1st Lt. James H. Kavanaugh, Jr. (R)  
S-3 ..... Maj. Wm. C. Chamberlin (R)  
S-4 ..... Maj. Alfred E. Holland

### 1st Bn., 8th Marines

Battalion Commander ..... Lt. Col. Richard W. Haywood  
Bn. Executive Officer ..... Maj. Robert L. Holderness (R)

### 2d Bn., 8th Marines

Battalion Commander ..... Lt. Col. Harry A. Waldorf  
Bn. Executive Officer ..... Maj. William H. Junghans, Jr.

### 3d Bn., 8th Marines

Battalion Commander ..... Lt. Col. Paul E. Wallace  
Bn. Executive Officer ..... Maj. Byron V. Thornton

\* Month of June, 1945, only.

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3. Special Action Report, 1st Marine Division.
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7. Special Action Report, All Battalions, 1st Marine Division.
8. Special Action Report, 8th Marines, Reinforced.
9. Personnel, Intelligence and Supply Reports of above listed organizations.
10. Company reports prepared during the action by Historical Team, Historical Division, Headquarters, Marine Corps.
11. Special Action Reports, Attached Units, 1st Marine Division (Reinforced).
12. Maps, overlays and sketches prepared and submitted by above listed organizations.

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