

HISTORY OF THE 22D MARINES

by

Harold P. Hammann, Past President & Trustee

The 22d Marines (Reinforced) was the first Marine regiment organized for independent duty after the United States' entrance into World War II. It was activated at Linda Vista (a tent camp suburb of Camp Elliot, California) on 1 June 1942. It was deactivated on 26 March 1946. It was reactivated, but as school troops, at Quantico, Virginia, on 1 September 1947, and deactivated on 17 October 1949.

It is my opinion that it was activated specifically to relieve the 7th Marines, and their support, then stationed on Upolu, Western Samoa and on Wallis Island, so that the 7th Marines could join the rest of the 1st Division which was scheduled to take Guadalcanal.

The 7th Marines had been sent to Samoa to help stem the tide of the Japanese movement into the Pacific. The Japanese had taken part of China, most of South East Asia, and many of the Islands and Atolls in the Pacific. Their next goal was threefold: Samoa, Fiji and New Caledonia. To stem this tide, the 8th Marines were sent to American Samoa on 6 January 1942, the 7th Marines were sent to Western Samoa on 10 April 1942, and Army units were sent to Fiji on 13 May 1942 and to New Caledonia on 29 January 1942. The Japanese delayed their planned actions in favor of aiming at Midway as a staging area to be used as a base for an assault on Hawaii. Fortunately, their defeat at the Battle of Midway deprived them of the necessary naval support needed to attempt their earlier planned assaults.

On 19 July 1942 most of the 22d Marines (Reinforced) embarked aboard the S.S. Lurline and left San Diego, escorted by a destroyer. After escorting us for three miles, the destroyer turned back to San Diego, and we were all alone except for a 3 inch gun on our fantail. On the morning of 29 July 1942 one of our 22d Marines Association members, and my Battery Commander during a later period, Dr. Morris Garrett, was Officer of the Deck. A sentry spotted a torpedo approaching the Lurline. It passed in front of the bow. Dr. Garrett says that the second one, headed for our amid ship but sunk before reaching the ship. The third torpedo passed astern of our fantail. We then went full speed ahead into the safety of Pago Pago Harbor, arriving in the morning of 29 July 1942. We sailed that same date, and arrived at Apia, Upolu on the same date. When we disembarked several days later, Battery A, 2nd Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion, set up in the center of the Race Track on the outskirts of Apia, living luxuriously in our pup tents for about a month. It was during that stay that we heard of the first American offensive of World War II, when our Marines assaulted Guadalcanal on 7 August 1942.

When the 7th Marines moved out, the 22d Marines occupied their camp sites. We trained in Samoa for about a year and a half. We then moved to Maui, Hawaii, landing there on Thanksgiving day of 1943. I vividly remember the Thanksgiving dinner of a spam sandwich and an orange. I would make up for this the following year.

Colonel Wallace M. Greene, Jr., Tactical Group-1's operation observed that, "The 22d Marines was at its peak in small unit training--training which was anchored firmly around a basic fire team organization. This was accomplished by tough, vigorous jungle training given the unit--during its stay in Western Samoa. And it was this excellence in fire teams which really paid off

at Eniwetok.---This regiment was one of the best trained and spirited units I observed.---It was this isolation in Samoa and opportunity to train which made the 22d Marines far superior to the 106th Infantry in the close tough fighting on the beaches and in the bush of Eniwetok Atoll.

We trained on Maui, encountering one disastrous training accident, in which 21 men were killed and 27 were wounded. We were more than ready for our first action scheduled for February 1944. We had been overseas a year and a half without being blooded, and we were getting anxious. Then to add to our disappointment we were put in reserve to back up our 4th Marine Division at Roi Namur. But our time had arrived.

The 2d Division was scheduled to take Eniwetok atoll, 330 miles Northeast of Kwajalein in May 1944. Because we were not needed in the quick conquest of Roi Namur and Kwajalein, we were assigned the job of taking Eniwetok three months earlier.---in February 1944, with the assistance of the Army's 106th Infantry Regiment. Eniwetok Atoll is comprised of some 30 islands arranged in an irregular circumference of about 70 miles.

Our task force moved into the 17 by 21 mile lagoon. Artillery was set up on two small islands adjacent to the first key target, Engebi Island. Our 2d Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion set up on Camellia, and the 104th Field Artillery Battalion set up on Canna. The first island to be assaulted was Engebi. On D+1, 18 February 1944, the 1st and 2nd Battalion, 22d Marines headed for the beach in Amtracs. At this time, one of those pathetic episodes to the horrible waste of war occurred. The lever holding the ramp on an LCM loaded with a tank, was activated. The LCM filled with water, and spilled the tank into the lagoon, while 500 yards from the beach. Miraculously, one of the tank crew escaped when it hit bottom, 40 feet down.

The island was riddled with "spider holes", something like camouflaged fox holes. In spite of this, the underbrush and the fallen trees caused by the shelling, the assault ground ahead against enemy defenses. The whole of Engebi had been overrun by the afternoon of D+1. An Engineer Company, however, spent a busy next day, using flame throwers and demolitions to mop up by-passed enemy soldiers. More than 1200 Japanese, Koreans and Okinawans were on Engebi, only 19 surrendered. (Ref. M.O.H. Citation of CPL Anthony P. Damato)

On D+2 the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the Army's 106th Infantry Division landed on Eniwetok Island. Their advance was slow. Less than an hour after the landing, General Watson felt obliged to radio Col. Russell G. Ayers, Commander of the 106th, and told him to "Push your attack". To speed the progress on Eniwetok Island, the 3rd Battalion, 22d Marines was sent ashore early in the afternoon. Halting for the night several hundred yards from the tip of the Island, the Marines were greeted the following morning, D+3, by an astonishing sight. The Army Battalion, supposed to be on their right flank, had, without notifying the Marines, pulled back 300 yards (about 1/6th of a Mile) to the rear during the night, and left a large gap in the American lines. The Marines then had to stem a small but furious Japanese night counter attack. When the soldiers returned in the morning the American attack began again, and by mid afternoon the Marines and the Army Battalion had secured the southern part of the Island. Progress was still very slow in the Northern sector, so Marine tanks and Engineers moved in to assist the other Army Battalion there. Finally, in the afternoon of D+4, 21 February 1944, the northern area was also declared secure.

General Watson brought down from Engebi the 1st and 2nd Battalion of the 22d Marines, and pulled the 3rd Battalion off Eniwetok Island, designating them for the assault on Parry. About this time one of those ludicrous actions occurred. A U.S. Float Plane landed and moored in the

lagoon. A boat was sent to take off the crew. Coming alongside the Float Plane, the crew boarded the boat and the Plane sank.

General Watson decided to hold off the landing on Parry Island until D+5, 22 February 1944, so that there would be time for servicing and repair of equipment, reorganization, rehabilitation, and to allow time for air and surface bombardment of Parry.

The night of 22/23 February 1944 the 104th Field Artillery on Eniwetok Island, and the 2d Separate Pack Howitzer Battalion on Japtan joined four destroyers in a night harassment of Parry. Fire support ships also slammed 143 16-inch, 751 14-inch, 896 8-inch, and 9950 5-inch into the 200 acres of Parry Island. This was the heaviest weight of metal delivered during the Eniwetok campaign. Prelanding artillery support created such dust the vision was hampered. This and a bad current caused a confused landing.

By evening it was almost over. Early on D+6, 23 February 1944, Parry was completely in American hands. Some 3400 Japanese had been eliminated. The 22d Marines had performed superbly. Recognition came in the form of a Navy Unit Commendation which praised the *"sustained endurance, fortitude, and fighting spirit throughout this operation"*.

Of great importance, U.S. Forces were now within 1100 miles of its next objective, the Marianas, in which the 22d Marines would also participate. Also the timetable of the War moved up by at least 20 weeks.

The 22d Marines (Reinforced) then proceeded to Kwajalein and Roi Namur to mop up the surrounding small islands, making no less than 26 amphibious landings, many of them against opposition. This lasted from 7 March to 5 April 1944. Mission accomplished, the 22d Marines (Reinforced) embarked for Guadalcanal

Casualties of the 22d Marines (Reinforced) and the Army's Regimental Combat Team, 106th Infantry (Reinforced) were: 22d Marines, 258 killed or died of wounds, and 568 wounded in action. 106th Infantry, 96 killed in action or died of wounds and 407 wounded in action. The source of these statistics is the book *The Marshalls: Increasing the Tempo*, by Lt. Col. Robert Heinz, Jr. USMC and Lt. Col. John A. Crown, USMC, Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters, US Marine Corps. For its action in the capture of Eniwetok the 22d Marines (Reinforced) was awarded the Navy Unit Commendation.

So it was from Linda Vista to Western Samoa and Wallis Island, to an all too brief stay in Maui, to Eniwetok, to Kwajalein atoll, and now in late April 1944 to Guadalcanal to train for the attack on Guam.

Being 35 miles long, 9 miles wide at its widest point and 4 miles wide at its narrowest point Guam is by far the largest island of the Marianas, the second largest, Saipan, being only about 12 miles long.

In early June 1944 the 22d Marines (Reinforced), as an element of the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, left Guadalcanal for assembly with the rest of the assault group at Kwajalein. In mid June the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade left to assemble East of Saipan. On 30 June 1944 it returned to the assembly area at Eniwetok. One incident broke the dull routine of a month aboard LCI's and LST's. A formation of enemy torpedo bombers attacked TG 53.16. But the curtain of fire raised by the LST's and LCI's drove the attackers off after downing three Japanese

planes. LCI 468, the only casualty to the assault force received a torpedo hit, and after being towed for a while finally sank. "Ship board" life became very boring in spite of the efforts to break the monotony with practice landings, boxing matches and movies. Probably there never was a group more eager to leave the ships of the fleet for an amphibious landing.

Intelligence gathered at Saipan indicated that, in addition to Guam being four times the size of Saipan, Guam was more formidably defended than Saipan.

Liberation day was set for 21 July 1944. The 3rd Division, with a strength of 20,238, landed north of Orote peninsula, and the 1st Provisional Marine Brigade, with a strength of 9,886, landed south of the Orote Peninsula. Prior to the landings Guam was subjected to around-the-clock pre-invasion bombardment by planes and ships. The 22d Marines suffered heavy losses during the initial stages of the landing. By 25 July 1944 the Brigade blocked off Orote peninsula from the rest of Guam. Shortly after midnight sake crazed Japanese started a counter attack. Approximately 26,000 rounds were thrown at them between midnight and 0300. At daylight there were 400 Japanese bodies sprawled in slippery blood. By evening the Brigade had advanced 1500 yards from its jump off point. There was a pre attack barrage on 27 July 1944. The Japanese cut and ran. The Marines dug in 300 yards short of the prized targets. On 28 July 1944 there was a 45 minute air strike, a 30 minute naval gunfire bombardment, plus our own artillery support. On 29 July 1944 there was another pre attack bombardment. By early afternoon the 22d Marines occupied the old Marine Barracks, and the Orote peninsula was almost entirely in our hands. The Japanese began committing mass suicide.

Having secured the Orote peninsula, the Brigade went north to join with the 3rd Division to sweep the island clean. The Brigade was first to reach the northern tip of the island as they were also the first to reach the southern tip.

Casualties of the 22d Marines (Reinforced) were: 271 Killed in action or Died of wounds received in action and 876 Wounded in action. The source of these statistics is the book *The Recapture of Guam*, by Major O.R. Lodge, USMC, Historical Branch, G-3 Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps. For its action in the recapture of Guam the 22d Marines (Reinforced) were included in the Navy Unit Commendation which was awarded to The First Provisional Marine Brigade. This was the second Navy Unit Commendation awarded to the 22d Marines (Reinforced).

After Guam had been secured the 22d Marines returned to Guadalcanal to train for the assault on Okinawa.

By adding the 29th Marines to our organization, the Brigade grew up to be the 6th Marine Division. On 1 April 1945, which was Easter Sunday as well as April fools day, the Division landed on Okinawa. On 8 April 1945 we went north to take Motobu peninsula. It was secured on 20 April 1945. It was turned over to the Army's 27th Division on 4 May 1945. On 4 May 1945 we entered the III Amphibian Corps lines. (Ref. M.O.H. Citations of MAJ Henry A. Courtney, JR, CPL James L. Day and Medical Corpsman Fred F. Lester). On 24 and 25 May 1945 the 6th Division assaulted Oroku peninsula. on 11 and 12 June 1945 organized resistance ended on Oroku peninsula. On 21 June 1945 organized resistance ended on Okinawa.

In late July and August 1945 the Division moved to Guam and some semblance of civilization. Cots were much better than foxholes. On 6 August 1945 the first 'Atom Bomb' was dropped on Hiroshima. This was the prelude to the end of World War II.

Early in September we received preparatory orders for the move to North China. An advance intelligence party was to gather information on the location of all Japanese, Chinese Communist and Japanese puppet forces in the Division's area of responsibility. Major defense installations were also a question, and high on the list was information about places where Allied prisoners were being held. Less than a week later the troops began filing aboard the twelve transports and five cargo ships that were to carry them to China. General Shepherd, General Clement and the staff boarded the convoy's flagship USS Dade, 1 October, and on the next day the ships sailed. There was little sorrow in the ranks over bidding farewell to Guam and its tropical heat.

Before leaving the USS Dade, General Shepherd issued a statement explaining their mission to his men. A few days later the USS Dade's weekly newspaper, The Invader, dedicated an issue to the Sixth Marine Division, in which the General's statement appeared:

United States forces have been designated to participate in the occupation of certain sections of China in order to assist Chinese Central Government forces in the disarmament of Japanese troops. The III Amphibious Corps will occupy the Tientsin-Tsingtao area pending the arrival of Chinese government troops. The Sixth Division will participate in the occupation of the Tsingtao-Chefoo area of Shantung Province.

Our mission is to land and occupy Tsingtao and the adjacent Tsangkou airfield, and the port of Chefoo; to assist local authorities in maintaining order and in preventing disease and starvation; to release, care for, and evacuate recovered Allied military personnel and Allied internees; to cooperate with the Chinese Central Government forces; to accept, when necessary, local surrender of Japanese forces, as authorized by higher authority, and to assist the Chinese in effecting the disarming and confining of these forces.

It is apparent from the foregoing that the function of the Sixth Marine Division in its occupation of the Tsingtao and Chefoo areas is one of assisting a friendly nation in the discharge of a large and complex task.

At dawn on the 11th the word of land in sight was passed and by the time the troops had finished their breakfast, they were moving into Kiaochow Bay.

Thronged Chinese lined the streets to cheer the marching Marines, give the "thumbs up" salute and watch the big tanks rumble past. Buildings formerly used by the Japanese were taken over as troop billets.

Patrols had gone out to determine the number of Japanese troops in the area and the extent of the defensive installations. There were plenty of the latter - - forts covering all of the approaches to the Shantung Peninsula and the entrances to Tsingtao harbor. There were plenty of Japanese troops, too - - over ten thousand of them, who were garrisoning Tsingtao when the Division arrived. They surrendered in a colorful, hour-long ceremony at the Tsingtao race track.

All units of the Division except the 4th Marines, still on duty in Japan, were present, and General Shepherd issued a special division order, which said:

You are about to participate in the formal surrender of the Japanese military force in the Tsingtao area. It is an historical event which each of you shall long remember. It is the goal for which we have fought during these past four years, and I am sure the personal

satisfaction each of you obtains from witnessing the local Japanese Army commander lay down his sword in complete defeat will, in a small measure, compensate for the dangers and hardships to which you have been exposed during your service in this war.

As more than twelve thousand Marines stood at attention in the oval race course, their tanks and weapons forming a powerful display of military might, a Japanese Major General signed the surrender document. He was Major General Eiji Nagano, commander of the 5th Independent Mixed Brigade. The acceptances, in ten copies, were signed by General Shepherd and Lieutenant General Chen-Pao-tsang, representing the Chinese Ministry of War.

Flags of the United States and China flew from the masts on the surrender platform itself, and atop the race course grandstand were the flags of the United States, China, Great Britain, Russia and France. The audience beneath them was a highly cosmopolitan group, including internees only just released from the Wei H'sein internment camp. They saw General Nagano lay down his pen, unhook his sword and place it on the table in front of General Shepherd, an action presently imitated by the Japanese officer's staff. Marine Military Police now escorted the Japanese from the field, and the Division played the American National Anthem, the Chinese National Anthem and the Marine's Hymn. Among the officers witnessing the surrender from the platform with General Shepherd were Major General Keller E. Rockey, commanding the III Amphibious Corps and Vice Admiral Daniel E. Barbey, commander of the Seventh Fleet Amphibious Forces.

Attention now turned to arrangements for the repatriation of the Japanese, military and civilians, and to the maintenance of order and public services.

There were a good many United States citizens who had been stranded in Shantung, many of whom had lost all their possessions, even clothing. They had to be assisted, while guards were placed around approximately one hundred pieces of American property found in the Tsingtao area. Much American property had been systematically looted by the Japanese, and in such cases efforts to recover the missing furniture and equipment were set afoot. Sometimes the recovery proved impossible, and in some cases claims were investigated for report to the Allied Claims Commission.

Competition to the delights of liberty in town began to be offered by the appearance of such recreational facilities as the Red Cross and Enlisted Men's Clubs - - the former in what had been the Tsingtao International Club, built in 1913. The halls were provided with ping pong tables, a snack bar, a library and - - most welcome of all - - American hostesses. It was formally dedicated on 3 November by General Shepherd, in whose name the building was renamed "**The Shepherd House.**" At the dedication ceremony the general presented a key to the club to Private First Class Joseph J. Stadrawa, a veteran who had been wounded on Okinawa, and the first man to enter the building on the night it was opened.

Simultaneously, work was rushed to complete a new radio station, the first United States Marine Corps sponsored station ever operated in China. It was named XABU, and completed by 10 November, date of the Marine Corps birthday.

On 11 October 1945 the 6th Division landed in Tsingtao. On 25 October 1945 General Shepherd accepted the formal surrender of the Japanese garrison in Tsingtao and on Shantung peninsula. On 26 March 1946 the 6th Marine Division was disbanded at Tsingtao. The 22d Marines was deactivated the same day.