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# **Fighting on Guadalcanal**



**U.S. Marine Corps**



DEPARTMENT OF THE NAVY  
Headquarters United States Marine Corps  
Washington, DC 20380-0001

26 September 1991

FOREWORD

1. PURPOSE

Fleet Marine Force Reference Publication (FMFRP) 12-110, *Fighting on Guadalcanal*, is published to ensure the retention and dissemination of useful information which is not intended to become doctrine or to be published in Fleet Marine Force manuals. FMFRPs in the 12 series are a special category of publications: reprints of historical works which are not available elsewhere.

2. SCOPE

This reference publication is essentially the after-action report of the Marines and soldiers who fought and defeated the Japanese on Guadalcanal. Published initially in 1943, this publication was commissioned by General George C. Marshall, the Chief of Staff of the U.S. Army. Guadalcanal was the first offensive ground campaign conducted against the Japanese in World War II. Both Marines and soldiers were very inexperienced, and Guadalcanal proved to be the critical learning experience on how to meet and defeat a tenacious and proficient enemy in very difficult terrain under most adverse conditions. Viewpoints and suggestions came from every level within the First Marine Division and the Army's Americal Division. The focus, however, is at the small-unit level where the experiences of the combatants are very vivid and very personal. Interesting and instructional, it is a book which every Marine should read and absorb the many experiences highlighted.

3. CERTIFICATION

Reviewed and approved this date.

BY DIRECTION OF THE COMMANDANT OF THE MARINE CORPS



M. P. CAULFIELD

Major General, U.S. Marine Corps  
Director, MAGTF Warfighting Center  
Marine Corps Combat Development Command  
Quantico, Virginia

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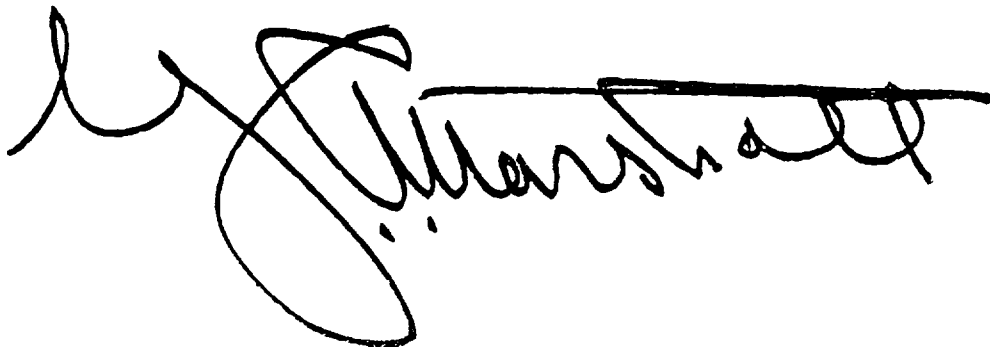


## FOREWORD

To secure the point of view of the fighting men in the Solomon Islands, Lt. Colonel Russel P. Reeder, Jr., of the Operations Division of the War Department General Staff, was designated as my personal representative. He reported to Major General Vandegrift, U. S. M. C., and Major General Patch, U. S. Army, on Guadalcanal, and discussed with many officers and soldiers their experiences in jungle fighting against the Japanese.

The stories of these men as told to Colonel Reeder have been printed for your information. The American Marines and Doughboys show us that the Jap is no superman. He is a tricky, vicious, and fanatical fighter. But they are beating him day after day. Their's is a priceless record of the gallantry and resourcefulness of the American fighting man at his best.

Soldiers and officers alike should read these notes and seek to apply their lessons. We *must* cash in on the experience which these and other brave men have paid for in blood.

A large, stylized handwritten signature in black ink, which appears to be "D. MacArthur". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style with a prominent horizontal line across the middle.

MAJOR GENERAL VANDEGRIFT, Commanding General First Marines Division.

“I desire to thank General Marshall for the message which he has just sent me. I passed this message of congratulations on to my men.

“My message to the troops of General Marshall’s in training for this type of warfare is to go back to the tactics of the French and Indian days. This is not meant facetiously. Study their tactics and fit in our modern weapons, and you have a solution. I refer to the tactics and leadership of the days of **ROGER’S RANGERS.**”

GUNNERY SERGEANT H. L. BEARDSLEY, Company G, Fifth Marines.

“I been in the Marines 16 years, and I been in three expeditions to China and five engagements since I have been in the Solomons. I will say that this 1942 model recruit we are getting can drink more water than six old timers. We have to stress water discipline all the time. They don't seem to realize what real water discipline is. We have too many NCO's in the Marines who are 'namby-pamby' and beat around the bush. Our NCO's are gradually toughening up and are seeing reasons why they must meet their responsibilities. Respectfully speaking, Sir, I think that when officers make a NCO, they should go over in their minds, 'what kind of NCO will he make in the field.' ”

---

SERGEANT MAJOR B. METZGER, Fifth Marines.

“I have just been promoted from First Sergeant. In the fire fighting the Marine First Sergeant helps the Company Commander. He checks up on the Company as



a whole, even down to checking on the evacuation of the wounded. I was available to the Company Commander for any emergency orders during the fire fight. Teach your soldiers, Sir, that when a man is hit in the assault to leave him there. Too many of our men suddenly became first-aid men.

“Your men have to be rugged and rough, and to win they must learn to disregard politeness and must kill.”

---

PLATOON SERGEANT H. R. STRONG,  
Company A, Fifth Marines.

“Some of my men thought their hand grenades were too heavy. They tossed them aside when no one was looking. Later they would have given six month's pay for one hand grenade.

“I hear that in the new jungle kits the men will get water sterilizing tablets. These will help as my men dip water out of streams.”

---

PLATOON SERGEANT F. T. O'FARA,  
Company B, Fifth Marines.

“After the Japs had been located, my platoon has gained the element of surprise by moving in fast with bayonets and hand grenades.

“In turn, they have surprised us by being in a defensive position on the reverse slope of a ridge. I think the snipers look for BAR men.” (Note by Col. Edson: “No doubt about this. In one engagement, in one platoon, every BAR man was hit.”)

---

PLATOON SERGEANT R. A. ZULLO,  
Company C, Fifth Marines.

“Sir, I would like to tell you that a man’s keenness or dullness of eye may determine whether or not he will live. Ten men in my platoon were killed because they walked up on a Jap 37mm gun. I went up later, after the gun had been put out by our mortars, to help bring back the dead. The Japanese gun was so well camouflaged that I got within *four feet* of the gun before I saw it.”

---

CORPORAL W. A. McCLUSKEY, Com-  
pany D, Fifth Marines.

“Sir, the other day on ‘Bloody Ridge,’ riflemen protecting our light machine guns pulled out and left us. We were doing okay at the time, but their pulling out caused our whole outfit to withdraw. I think men in these rifle companies should receive training in the work and in the mission of the ma-

chine gun company. They should be able to act more intelligently.”

---

SECOND LIEUTENANT ANDREW CHISICK, Fifth Marines.

“I think that in the regimental supply there should be extra canteens so when an outfit gets in a place like the ‘table plateau’ where there is no water, an extra canteen of water can be issued. Sir, this would really help our men stay in there. (Note by Col. Edson: ‘This idea is being used on certain parts of the terrain here. The turn-over in the canteens will be great if this is continued, but it is a big help at times. At one time we had a battalion without water for 24 hours and only *two* men were evacuated by heat exhaustion—Major Lou Walt was the Battalion Commander.’) My flank men in each squad in the advance are responsible to maintain contact with the squad on the right or left. Of course, we have a base squad.”

---

MARINE GUNNER E. S. RUST, Fifth Marines.

“I hate to admit it, but it’s the truth; when we got here, a lot of our young men were confused at night. They were not used to jungle at night. They could not use their

compasses at night, and we did not have enough compasses.

“We have learned that when we get off the beaten trails, it seems to confuse the Japs, and we have better success.”

---

PLATOON SERGEANT J. C. L. HOLLINGSWORTH, Company H, Fifth Marines.

“When we move around on these jungle trails, we have learned to have men at the rear of each platoon who carry light loads so they can get their weapons into action quickly to help overcome ambush fire from the rear.

“Put the big rugged men into the heavy weapons company.

“Some of our new men were so scared of our hand grenades when they were first issued, that they jammed down the cotter pin. Then, later in action they could not pull the pin!

“I noticed, and I pointed this out to my platoon, that when men get hit, the men close by get to yellin’, ‘Corps man, Corps man, Corps man,’ and they get so excited sometimes that they actually forget to use first-aid packets.

“In first-aid training, teach correct use of injecting morphine and procedure of taping.

'cause what you gonna do when the Corps man gets hit?

"I'd give \$75.00 for a pair of tennis shoes to rest my feet and for use in night work. I have only been in the Marine Corps four years, but I have learned that you have got to develop a sense of responsibility in the men wearing chevrons.

"In action we have had unauthorized persons yelling, 'Cease firing,' or 'Commence firing.' This caused confusion."

---

PLATOON SERGEANT GEORGE E. AHO,  
Company F, Fifth Marines.

"I put five years in the U. S. Army before joining the Marine Corps. Sir, I like the Marines better than the Army because the average Marine officer is closer to his men than the average Army officer whom I observed. We have comradeship in the Marine Corps. Also, the Marine enlisted men are more Spartan-like. I believe, Sir, we baby our soldiers too much in peace-time. I hope we are not doing this now. (I asked Col. Edson what kind of NCO Sergeant Aho was, and he told me he was one of the outstanding men in his Regiment, and that he was a very rugged individual.)

"In our training for this jungle warfare we had a great deal of work in hand-to-hand individual combat, use of knife, jiu-jitsu, etc. With the exception of bayonet fighting we have not used this work. I have been in many battles since I hit this island and I have never seen anyone use it.

"Bring back the signal flags; needed badly.

"Sir, tell the Army to get the knee mortar. It's hell.

"Sir, every man should have a watch.

"We could use pack artillery here.

"Our Battalion Commander, Major Walt, wants every last man in our Battalion to know as much as he does about the situation. It pays.

"Get rid of the gold-bricks. It's better to be short-handed having good men around than having a lot of undependables."

---

CORPORAL J. S. STANKUS, Company E,  
Fifth Marines.

"Unnecessary firing gives your position away, and when you give your position away here, you pay for it.

"It's helpful in using the field glass in this tropical sun to cup your hand over the front end in order to keep out the glare.

“The men in my squad fire low at the base of the trees. There is too much high firing going on. I have observed the Japs often get short of ammunition. They cut bamboo and crack it together to simulate rifle fire to draw our fire. They ain’t supermen; they’re just tricky bastards.

“Put ‘bug dope’ in your jungle equipment.

“A palmetto log looks sturdy for use in machine gun emplacements and dugouts, but it is spongy and rots. I have seen it collapse and pin the gun. It is better to use the hard wood.”

---

SECOND LIEUTENANT H. M. DAVIS,  
Fifth Marines.

(Promoted on the field of battle).

“Travel light. For example, to hell with the mess equipment! We used our mess cup and spoon for the first 15 days here and enjoyed our chow. You don’t have to live like a gentleman in jungle warfare. Our mess equipment is too bulky for this type of warfare and makes noise.

“Not every man can lead a battalion. Find out who can lead your battalions before you go into the combat areas. (Remark by Col. Edson: ‘I would like to concur in that statement.’)

“We learned from the Nips to make the ‘stand-up covered Japanese spider hole.’ (Camouflaged American fox-hole.)

“In defense in the dense jungle sometimes you make a line—then, on other types of terrain you make strong points.

“In an advance in a jungle it is hard for a platoon leader to keep control of his men. Corporals and their men must be taught to act individually.”

---

PLATOON SERGEANT C. M. FEAGIN,  
Company I, Fifth Marines.

“We are learning the hard way to move quietly in this jungle.

“I have been fired at many times by snipers and haven’t seen one yet.

“The sabers which the Japanese officers carry have proved to be worthless. I killed two Japs who came at me with sabers and I got them first by shooting them. But, I wished I had ‘in reserve’ a good jungle knife. I don’t mean a bolo, which we should have for cutting trails, but a knife with a 12-inch blade of good steel. We could use this against these Japs as well as cutting vines that catch on us at night.” (Note: *Many men* expressed their wish for a jungle knife such as described here. This desire is being



omitted in further remarks to avoid repetition.)

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MOTOR SECTION SERGEANT T. E. RUMBLEY, Company I, Fifth Marines.

“Our 60mm mortars are fine weapons if you have observers who know their stuff. The mortar was not stressed enough in our training. I love our mortar.

“If the numbers on the mortar sight were luminous, with a luminous strip on the stick, we would not have to use the flashlight. This flashlight business is dangerous.”

---

CORPORAL FRED CARTER, Company I, Fifth Marines.

“On the Matanikau River we got to firing at each other because of careless leadership by the junior leaders. We are curing ourselves of promiscuous firing, but I should think new units would get training to make the men careful.

*“We learned not to fire unless we had something to shoot at. Doing otherwise discloses your position and wastes ammunition.*

“Sergeant Dietrich of Company I, of our Regiment, recently used his head. One night when the Japs advanced, a Jap jumped into

Sergeant Dietrich's fox hole. Sergeant Dietrich pulled the pin of a hand grenade and jumped out. There was a hell of an explosion and one less Nip.

"I have been charged twice by the Japs in bayonet charge. *Our Marines can out-bayonet fight them and I know our Army men will do the same.* (Note by Col. Edson: 'Incidentally, in the last push we executed 3 bayonet charges.')

"A Japanese trick to draw our fire was for the hidden Jap to work his bolt back and forth. Men who got sucked in on this and fired without seeing what they were firing at, generally drew automatic fire from another direction.

"Every scout should be taught to look in the trees. I was a scout and got shot in the shoulder by a Jap in a tree. I look in the trees now.

"We take turns being scouts; so, all should be trained as scouts."

---

SERGEANT O. J. MARION, Company L,  
Fifth Marines. A Platoon Guide.

"You crawl in the advance—unless you are to charge and make it. The reason for this is that all men hit are hit from the knees

up, except for ricochets. We have crawled up to within 25 yards of a machine gun firing over our backs. The Japs don't depress their machine guns. (Note by Col. Edson: 'I saw men of Company L doing this.')

"Men get killed rushing to help a wounded man. If the wounded man would crawl about ten yards to his flank, he can generally be aided in safety, as the Japs seem to fire down lanes in the jungle. (*Remark by Col. Edson: 'We have taught our men that the best way to aid a wounded man is to push ahead so that the wounded man can be cared for by the Corps Men.'*)

"The men have to be trained individually, for when the fire fight starts, the Corporal can't see all of his men and further, when the order for attack is given, any number of men are unable to see the man on his right or left. So you see, Sir, it takes guts for men to get up and move forward when the signal is given. The men have to depend on one another and have confidence in each other.

"I was in one advance when the Japs let us come through and then rose up out of covered fox holes and shot us in the back. The best cure for that is a rear guard looking towards the rear."

CORPORAL E. J. BYRNE, Company L,  
Fifth Marines.

“Get used to weird noises at night. This jungle is not still at night. The land crabs and lizzards make a hell of a noise rustling on leaves. And there is a bird here that sounds like a man banging two blocks of wood together. There is another bird that makes a noise like a dog barking. I thought, Sir, this might give you an idea for your training.”

---

CORPORAL F. R. McALLAN, Company  
L, Fifth Marines.

“Sometimes the information doesn’t get down to us and then we are really in the dark. When we get the orders and information we can get in there and pitch better.

“My platoon is the best one in the company because we are like a baseball team. Our Lieutenant is like the Captain of the team. He is close to us and we like him and yet respect him. We have a wonderful platoon. I am not bragging. That’s a fact! (Note: When I read this to Col. Edson at the end of the day, he was so delighted that he sent a runner to find out who Corporal McAllan’s platoon leader was.)

“Some men used to lag behind in the advance. They have finally learned to keep up as lagging is unsafe for all.

“This BAR I have here is my best friend.”

---

COLONEL MERRITT A. EDSON, Commanding Officer, Fifth Marines. (Colonel Edson was a Battalion Commander of the Raider Battalion. He was given the Fifth Marine Regiment and has made it into one of General Vandegrift's best regiments. He is an outstanding leader and has been recommended by General Vandegrift for the Medal of Honor).

“If I had to train my regiment over again, I would stress small group training and the training of the individual even more than we did when we were in training.

“There must be training in difficult observation, which is needed for the offense. It is my observation that only 5% of the men can really see while observing.

“The offensive is the most difficult to support, as you cannot tell exactly where your troops are.

“Whether the Japs will continue to fight as they do now, I don't know. They defend on

the low ground in the jungle. They dig standing trenches, extremely well camouflaged.

"We need the rifle grenade, or a weapon to fill the gap between hand grenade and the mortar. We need to dig the Nip out of his hole under banyan trees, etc.

"We need the knee mortar badly. The name "knee mortar" is a misnomer. It is not fired from the knee. One of my men tried this and broke his leg. The following are reasons in its favor:

"1. It is a one-man load.

"2. A man can carry ten rounds on his person *besides* his weapon.

"3. It has a high rate of fire.

"4. It gives to the Platoon Commander a weapon of this type which is immediately available to him.

"5. This mortar uses the Jap all-purpose hand grenade—ranges 50 yards to 650, I believe.

"The Japs have three (3) of these mortars in a Mortar Squad in each Rifle Platoon. They have two ammunition carriers per mortar. It can be lowered to a low angle and placed against a log and shot straight out further than a hand grenade.

"I would recommend one change in the projectile. The Japs have too much high ex-

plosive in the projectile and the case is too thin. We get a lot of casualties from it, but they are minor wounds.

"I recommend substituting the M1919-A4 (the light machine gun) for the heavy machine gun for *offensive* operation in the jungle. The heavy machine guns are needed and are very valuable in the defense. I am even considering substituting BAR's for the light machine guns in the offensive.

"I think that the Battalion Heavy Weapons Company should have the 60mm mortar to use in addition to the 81mm mortar. I like the 81 but it cannot keep up in certain situations because of its weight and its heavy ammunition.

"I think that in each of our squads there should be two BAR's instead of one.

"I suggest that you have maneuvers with ball ammunition where possible, even if you get a few casualties.

"The tendency is to overload the infantrymen with ammunition. It seems to be the standard practice to start out with a belt full plus two bandoliers. We soon found out that 25 rounds was enough for two or three days if you do not have targets to shoot at. (Note: Our infantrymen approaching Buna

in the jungles of New Guinea were carrying 40 rounds.)

“Two ammunition pockets in the belt should be converted to grenade pockets. Each man should have two hand grenades. If you don't do that, develop slip-open pockets, which can be quickly opened and which will carry two hand grenades.

“Our Marine field shoes have too heavy a ‘top’ which chafes. It should have a type of hob-nail as it slips on the jungle grasses. Rubber shoes are needed for night work.

“Our basic training is all right. Emphasize scouting and patrolling and really learn it and apply it. In your training put your time and emphasis on the squad and platoon rather than on the company, battalion and regiment.

“Your principle of the Command Post up and to the front is certainly true here.

“In your scouting and patrolling, *and your ‘training in patience’* (which you should have) have the men work against each other. Same thing for squads and platoons in their problems.

“We should develop better snipers. The Japanese snipers are really annoying. All commanders, up to include the regiment, must realize you cannot clear out all the



snipers before you advance. Some will be left, but they won't be particularly effective. Annoying, yes. You can get these snipers by small groups from the reserves. Some Japanese snipers, which were by-passed in the attack, hid for two or three days and then quit. Some will hang around inside your lines for a month.

"The Japanese night attacks, of course, have limited objectives; and sometimes withdrawing after dark as much as fifty yards will fool them and they won't know where you are.

"The 'smoking lamp' goes out at dark and *you have got to be quiet.*

"In the Raiders we adopted the custom of dropping all rank and titles. We used nicknames for the officers. All ranks use these nicknames for us. We did this because the Nips caught onto the names of the officers and would yell or speak in the night, 'This is Captain Joe Smith talking. A Company withdraw to the next hill.' So we adopted nicknames as code words. Captain Walt became 'Silent Lou'. My nickname was 'Red Mike'. An example of the use of these nicknames as code words is: One night the Japs put down smoke and they yelled 'gas.' We were green at that time and two of our

Companies withdrew leaving A Company exposed on its two flanks. In this instance I was a Battalion Commander. Captain Walt called me on the voice radio to inform me of the situation. He was cautious and used the nickname as follows: He said, 'Who is speaking?' and I said, 'Red'. He said, 'What name do you identify with 'Silent'? I said, 'Lou.' He said, 'That is correct.' So, we *both* know that we were talking to each other and were not talking to the enemy. He explained the situation to me. At the end of his conversation, a voice broke in and said in perfect English, 'Our situation here, Colonel Edson, is excellent. Thank you, Sir.' This was the enemy speaking.

"A value of night training is that it lets men learn the normal noises of the woods at night. Woods are not silent at night.

"The Japanese is no superman. He has the same limitations that we have. They have the advantage of experience. With proper training, our Americans are better, as our people can think better as individuals. Encourage your individuals and bring them out.

"Discontinue the use of tracers for night firing. They give away your position.

"Both our riflemen and machine gunners must be taught to shoot low.

“This leadership business resolves itself down to being hardboiled. By that I mean getting rid of the poor leader, even if you like him personally, because this is a life and death affair. This goes right on down to the non-coms.

“At Tulagi the Japanese used wooden bullets. I saw some of these wooden bullets. My *theory* for their use is that they were developed for troops which were to infiltrate behind our lines and shoot us in the back. These wooden bullets could not carry far enough to injure their attacking troops.”

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(Note: Colonel Edson asked me at the end of the day to read back to him what each man had said when he was interviewed. Notes by Colonel Edson which appear, were made after the men had been interviewed.)

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MAJOR LOU WALT, C. O. 2nd Battalion, Fifth Marines. (Note: Col. Edson told me that Major Walt was one of his best leaders, and one of the best men he has ever seen in action. Major Walt is a young man of about 35 years of age. He is extremely rugged and looks like a fullback on a football team. I talked to him over 20 minutes before I was able to

make a single original note as his ideas seem to echo Col. Edson's.)

"I can report officially to you that we had 9 men killed in one company in the last assault! 4 of these men were killed by a wounded sniper who had three holes in him. He was laying in thick brush 15 yards from my CP. He was camouflaged and had been passed over for dead. You have to KILL to put them out. They attack in bunches, shoulder to shoulder. An example: we were on the Matanikau River. (See fig. 1.) Our

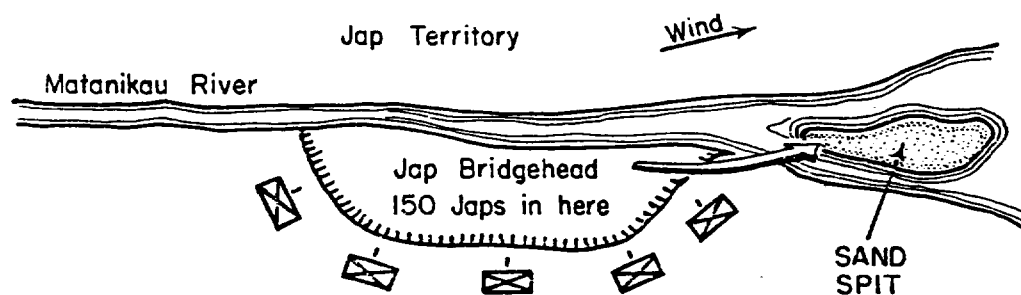


FIGURE 1.

Companies were at half strength. This was a Raider Battalion plus two companies of the 3d Battalion, Fifth Marines. The Japanese beach head was a thick jungle with camouflaged standing-type fox holes. They had with them in their beach head 6 heavy machine guns and 8 light machine guns which we captured in this action.

"At 6:30 p. m. they smoked our two right companies, and when the smoke had enveloped these two companies, they broke out.

They came out in a mass formation, 20 abreast, yelling, bayonets fixed, automatic weapons working, rear ranks throwing hand grenades, (heavy arrow in the above sketch shows the Japanese route). They were trying to escape to the sand spit at the mouth of the river in order to cross the river to get back. Our right front company had just completed a double-apron barbed-wire fence. When the Japanese hit the left flank of the right company, they killed 9 out of the first 11 men they met. Then they hit the barbed-wire. Two of our heavy machine guns opened up, shooting down along this barbed-wire fence and dispersed their attack. It got dark—quickly like it does here. There was smoke, Japs and Marines all mixed up. Three Jap officers were swinging their two-hand swords. There was hand-to-hand fighting all night long. We mopped them up at daybreak. We killed 78 Japs. They killed 12 Marines and wounded 26 of us.

“The Jap has a great deal of respect for our hand grenade, and it is a valuable weapon to us. *Do you ever practice throwing it in wooded country?*

“The Jap is not an individual fighter. He won't fight with a bayonet unless backed up with a dozen other Japs.

“Here is something that I know the Army teaches, Sir, but I would like to say it, as we really believe in it here, and that is don't put troops in a skirmish line until actual physical contact is made. Keep 'em in squad columns, with two scouts in front of each squad. Sometimes making files between the columns.

“As in the Basic Field Manual, each man should know the objective. I make my Platoon Leader designate an objective every 100 yards in the jungle, and they work to it and reorganize. They don't push off for the next objective until they get word from the Company Commander. This method, we have found, insures control.

“I control my companies exactly the same way. I set up objectives for each company. When the companies reach their objective, they report. After the reorganization, we go ahead.

“I think reserves in the attack should be kept up close so that they can be committed immediately. The Reserve Company Commander continually reconnoiters the ground and is ready to commit his company at once when ordered to do so. If the Reserve Company is not on its toes and has to take time out for reconnaissance, this may delay them to such an extent that their effort may be

useless—the situation may change if they cannot act at once. I keep my best Company Commander in reserve.

“In the attack we always use the telephones from Regiment to the Battalion. The jungle is thick, but the wire can be made to keep up. The wire is supplemented by the TBX radio. If we get held up, the wire goes right out to the companies from the Battalion.”

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PLATOON SERGEANT C. C. ARNDT,  
H & S Company, Fifth Marines. Chief Scout for the Regimental Intelligence Section. (Note: When Col. Edson sent for his best fighters, he did not include Platoon Sergeant Arndt. After I got through talking to these men, two of them came up to me and said, “Sir, you did not see Sergeant Arndt. He has been on more patrols and does more scouting than any man in the Regiment. Could we get him for you, Sir?”)

“I practice walking quietly over rocks, twigs, grass, leaves, through vines, etc. I practice this around this bivouac area. I received instructions in scouting and patrolling at Quantico, but I still practice this around here in the bivouac area. I believe because I practice this is the reason I am

still alive. Some of the other NCO's laughed at me because I am always seeing how quietly I can walk around and because I go out and practice on my own. But they have stopped laughing because I have been on more patrols than any man in the Regiment, and I am still alive.

"When I am scouting and come to an opening in the jungle, and have to cross it, I generally run across quickly and quietly. Going slow here may cost a scout his life. Different types of terrain calls for different methods.

"Here is the way Japs patrol. I was out on the bank of the river with another man. We were observing and were carefully camouflaged. We heard a little sound and then saw two Japs crawl by about 7 feet away from us. These Japs were unarmed. We started to shoot them, but did not do so as we remembered our mission. Then, 15 yards later came 8 armed Japs. They were walking slowly and carefully. We did not shoot as our mission was to gain information. When I got back, we had a lot of discussion as to why the two Japs in front were not armed. Some of the fellows said maybe it was a form of Japanese company punishment. I believe they were the point of the



patrol and were unarmed so they could crawl better.

“You can tell Jap troops in the distance by their short, choppy step.” (Remark by Col. Edson: This is true and we think the reason for their short, choppy stride is because they wear wooden shoes in Japan.)

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COLONEL DEMUTH, Division Artillery  
Commander, Americal Division.

“The tactics and technique of our artillery fire as taught by the Field Artillery School at Ft. Sill are okay, and are good here on Guadalcanal.

“However, we have learned we have to fire 360° here. Also due to the way these Japs crawl around in the jungle, we have to pay more attention to the local security around our positions.”

---

COLONEL AMOR LE R. SIMS, Commanding Officer, Seventh Marines, 1st Marine Division.

“Is the Army stripping down to essentials in equipment?”

“Teach not to waste ammunition. Learn to make every shot count.

Don't spare your artillery. Make the most of it. Every time you get enough informa-

tion, even if the target is not profitable, get artillery fire on it. They hate it.

“Try to get the Japs on the move; keep bouncing them around; don't let them get set. When you let them get set, they are hard to get out. We have had a great deal of success with the 81mm mortar and with artillery fire. Here is an example (fig. 2):

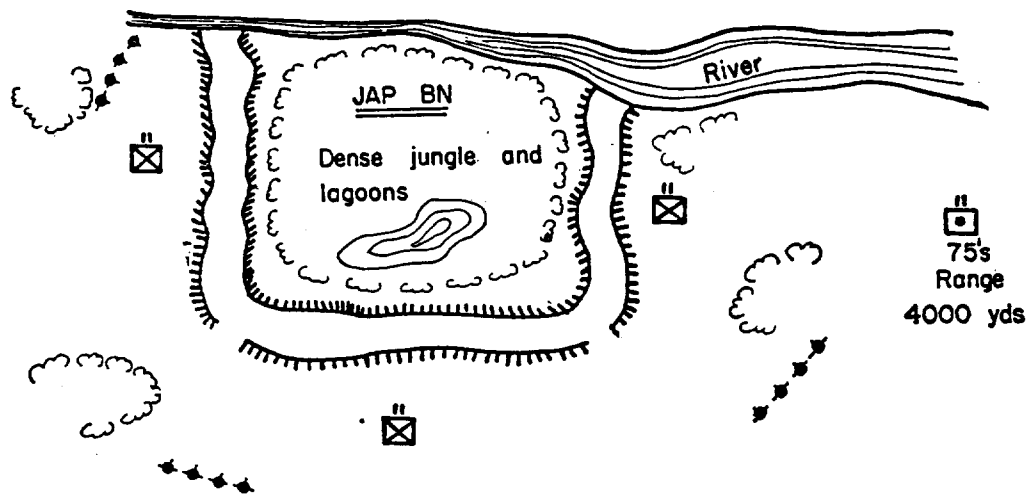


FIGURE 2.

We have the Japs surrounded with their backs to the river. The 3 Battalions were in close contact with the enemy. It was obvious that we had a large number of Japs surrounded and that the best way to get them out was to place field artillery and 81mm fire on them. However, the problem was to put this fire on the enemy and not on our own troops. The movement which we executed was carefully coordinated with the artillery and with the mortars. Each Battalion, at a cer-

tain time, was to withdraw just before the firing was due to start. *We were very careful to explain to the men what we were doing so that they would not get a mistaken idea of the order for withdrawing.* The maneuver was successful. Over 500 Japs were killed in this action. We had 44 Marines killed and 63 wounded. Our men were not hurt by the artillery and mortar fire, of course, but were killed and wounded in the fighting which took place before the withdrawal. After the firing ceased, we went in and mopped up in hand-to-hand fighting.

"Our Battalion Commanders in the Seventh Marines know that in reporting information *at once* and, if they need help to ask for it and not just try to bull things through that they are enabling Regiments to act as a team, in the right manner and in the right direction.

"I have a wonderful S-2 Section in this Regiment. I have been working on this S-2 Section for over 2 years. I have been putting my best men in this 2 Section, and it has paid me. We insisted that the Battalions have good 2 Sections. You cannot do any better than your information.

"Concentrate on communications. We depend to a large extent on wire communica-

tions. It is tough work, but it can be done. I have had to loan the Communications Regimental Section men to help carry wire through tough places, *but I want communications*. Your information has to be timely and properly evaluated.

"A Regimental Commander cannot be impatient. Don't push your Battalion Commanders unless you feel there is a reluctance on their part.

"Our great leader, General Vandegrift, gives me a job and lets me handle the situation with a regiment in my own way. He is not impatient with me. Impatience would ruin the best plans. A mapped plan may not turn out to be feasible. So, we have learned here not to be impatient.

"The forward observer of the artillery has furnished me with valuable information. Our system is to put the Artillery Observer Group with each battalion and keep the Artillery Liaison Officer with the Regiment.

"Are you teaching your Regimental Commanders to understand how to use artillery?

"It has been impressed upon us here that logistics have to be correctly planned. The science of logistics turns out to be your life. In this Regiment, I have a fine forceful Executive Officer, Lt. Col. Frisbee. I use the

Executive Officer in the rear echelon seeing that the S-4 functions and that supplies get up. Don't misunderstand me. The Executive Officer lets the S-4 run his job. He checks and *aids* him if he needs help.

"Here is a thought I would like to leave with the Regimental Commanders. Pick your officers for common sense. Basic Field Manual knowledge is fine, but it is useless without common sense. Common sense is of greater value than all the words in the book. I am 2 deep in my battalions in regard to Battalion Commanding Officers. That is, each one of my Battalion Executive Officers is a potential Battalion Commander. The reason for this is if the Battalion Commander gets killed or sick, I won't be caught out on a limb. My Battalion Commanders use their Executive Officers in the same way I use my Regimental Officers. I back up my Executive Officer. I never see a Battalion Commander or a Staff Officer about administration unless they see the Executive Officer first. My Executive Officer and I are a team. He is responsible to see that my policies are carried out.

"I make my Staff Officers get out of this CP—not to snoop on the troops, but to help the battalions and acquaint themselves with

the general situation. Insist on night training, but don't train day and night. If I were training my Regiment again, working 7 days a week, I would train three nights and four days.

"Our orders to our Marines on the perimeter defense are, 'You stay on your position and do not pull back. If they bust through you, we'll plug up the hole, but you stay there.'

"Our Battalion Commanders have learned not to pull a company out of action to use it elsewhere. For example (fig. 3):

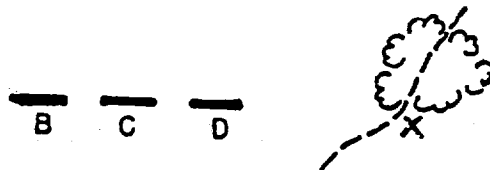


FIGURE 3.

If a company is needed at point 'X' don't send companies who have been committed at 'B', 'C', or 'D'. Send another company from somewhere else. If you make the mistakes of 'milling around', as we call it, you will expend men's lives. It is always expensive. I have never seen it to fail to cost two times as much as the original commitment.

"This Regiment can out-yell the Japs, out-fight them, out-bayonet them, and out-shoot them. This yelling, as in hand-to-hand ac-

tion, is important. It is like a football team that talks it up.

“The Japs yell at us, ‘Marines, we’re gonna keel you! More blood for the Emperor!’ The Marines yell back, ‘You ----- ----- ----- We’ll kill you Japs. More blood for Franklin!’

“The Regimental Commander must make it his personal duty to watch and be greatly interested in sanitation. Because of our great interest in sanitation, our sick list is lower than normal. Our sick list runs lower than 40 men per battalion.”

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL L. B. PULLER,  
C. O. 1st Battalion, 7th Regiment, U. S.  
Marines, First Marine Division.

(Note: Lt. Col. Puller is being recommended by General Vandegrift for the Medal of Honor for leading his Battalion, with 7 holes in him, continually for 24 hours. I met him on the day he came out of the hospital. Lt. Col. Puller had considerable experience in jungle warfare in Haiti.)

“In handling my companies I take the Company Commander’s word for what is going on. You have to do this to get anywhere. In order to get a true picture of what is go-

ing on in this heavy country, I make my staff get up where the fighting is. This Command Post business will ruin the American Army and Marines if it isn't watched. Hell, our platoons and squads would like the command post in the attack if they are not watched! As soon as you set up a Command Post, all forward movement stops.

"The 'walky-talky' the Japs have operates. Why can't we have a similar one?"

"To HELL with the telephone wire with advancing troops. We can't carry enough wire. We received an order. 'The advance will stop until the wire gets in.' THIS IS BACKWARDS!

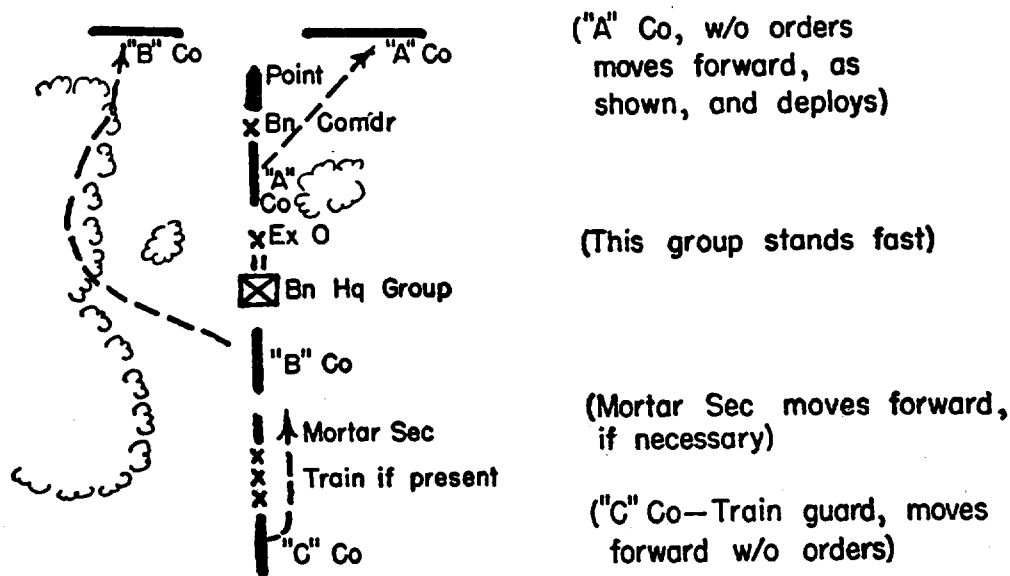


FIGURE 4.

"The staffs are twice as large as they should be. The Regimental staff is too large. I have 5 staff officers in the Battalion and



I could get along with less. The officers have to dress and look like the men. One time the Commandant of the Marine Corps asked me why our patrols failed in Haiti. I replied, 'Because of the officers' bedding roll.' In Haiti at that time the officer had to have a pack mule, and the enlisted men saw the officers lying around in luxury, etc. The patrols were actually held up for this pack mule. Your leaders have to be up front. Those that won't get up there, and are not in physical shape to keep up with the men, will cause plans to fail.

"It is okay to say that an outfit cannot be surprised, but it is bound to happen in this type of warfare; so, therefore, your outfits must know what to do when ambushed.

"Calling back Commanding Officers to Battalion and Regimental CP's to say, 'How are things going?' is *awful*.

"My Battalion moving through jungle country, acting alone, operates as follows (see fig. 4):

"A platoon of D Company is attached to each rifle company because of the heavy country. C Company watches the rear. Each company is responsible for its flank. This is a time-tested and proven formation which works. If attacked from a flank, face and adjust.

“In marching or in camp, we have learned here that you must have an all-around defense.

“We need more intrenching shovels. Give shovels to men who have wire cutters. You need both the wire cutter and shovels.

“I wish we had the M1 rifle, and when we get relieved from Guadalcanal, I am going to make every effort to get it.

“I consider it *imperative* that the Army and Marines be equipped with knee mortars and only carry one type grenade. Have the hand grenade fit in the knee mortar and be of use as a hand grenade and also as a rifle grenade. You need a rifle grenadier in each squad for use against enemy machine gun nests.”

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The following is the result of a conference with 5 of the best NCO's in the First Battalion of the Seventh Marines. These NCO's were selected by Lt. Col. Puller:

“The Japanese fire is not always aimed. It is harassing fire and scares recruits. Get the recruits so they are used to overhead fire. Japs who have infiltrated signal to each other with their rifles by the number of shots. We get these birds by constant patrolling.

"The snipers tie their guns in the trees so they can't drop it carelessly or if wounded. In putting their light machine guns in the trees, they lash them in and have relief men ready to go up the tree.

"Their machine guns don't traverse and search.

"A Jap trick:"

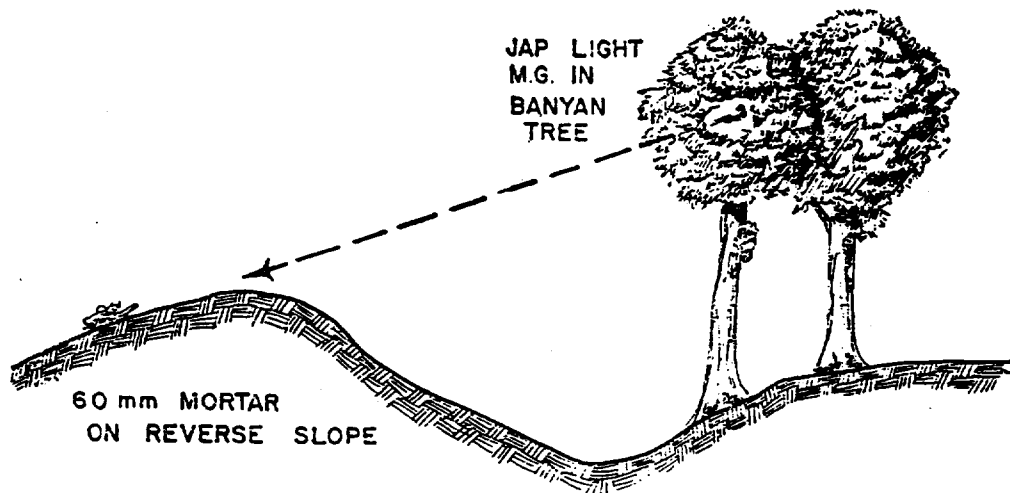


FIGURE 5.

The mortar men thought they were safe. The Japanese let them fire two or three rounds. They cracked down, killed 3 and wounded 2.

"The rifle grenade demoralizes the Jap. A Japanese prisoner told me in English, 'That 30 calibre cannon is terrible, Sir.' The Japanese sew grass and leaves to their shirts and hats.

"They hit hell out of our points. They don't wait until they could get more men.

They seek to delay us. When the point goes down, teach men to get behind big trees, if close, but not behind saplings.

“If you shoot their officers, they mill around. Their NCO’s are poor. *You can tell they are officers by their sabers and leather puttees.*

“A lot of these Japs who infiltrate have radios. Think of this advantage in respect to artillery, mortar fire, location of troops, etc.

“My platoon found 9 Japs slipping behind our lines. (Note by Lt. Col. Frisbee, Regimental Executive Officer: We have killed 38 Japs behind our lines during the period of August 7, 1942, to November 29, 1942.)

“Their outpost at times is in trees. I saw one tree which was rotten inside. The Japanese had a light machine gun and gunner down inside, and they had built a trap door on our side. Every once in a while the door would open, and they would poke the machine gun out and fire. We took care of this.

“When we cease firing, they cease firing. When we fire, they open up. They do this to conceal their positions.”

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LIEUTENANT SHEPPARD, Seventh Marines. (Promoted on the Field of Battle.)

"Sir, how about training in the field with short rations? Put your patrols out from 3 to 5 days; every officer in the outfit to participate. If I were Commanding General of a training base, all people who missed one-third of the training would drop back to the next unit. I believe that the units should have a minimum of 90 days' training in jungle warfare. I would stress in this training team work between the leaders in all units. Liaison between support plans and all leaders. Liaison between artillery and infantry.

"If I were training my unit again. I would really have some high-class patrol training. I would do everything with these patrols I could possibly think of to include losing them and making them go across country without maps or compasses.

"The Japanese do a lot of yelling at times, and at other times are deadly silent. One night some Japanese got in our marching column. We discovered them and bayoneted them.

"At another time, I, myself heard a Japanese yell in good English, 'K Company, forward!'

"The Japs don't like our men yelling back at them."

---

MASTER GUNNERY SERGEANT R. M. FOWLE, Seventh Marines, First Marine Division.

(Note: Master Gunnery Sergeant Fowle has had 24 years service in the U. S. Marines.)

"Sir, the first thing I would like to say is that this Japanese sniper business has been over-emphasized. They talked and talked to us about the Japanese snipers and made these young men of mine jittery. You can't see the sniper anyhow until you start to attack, and as his fire, until the attack starts, is very inaccurate, there is no use to worry. I think this sniper business should be debunked. They hide under banyan trees and just poke their muzzle through a hole and fire, indiscriminately. When the attack starts, they will come out. Those you by-pass in the attack must be mopped up later.

"We learned not to get excited or go off half-cocked where there is noise. The Japanese make noise to mislead us. They shot off some fire crackers at the start, but we have

learned that where the noise is, he ain't. You never hear him move. He sleeps in the daytime and does his work at night.

"It must be impressed and drilled into young soldiers not to throw away their equipment. Our young men did this at first, and we regretted it, as later we needed the equipment. We actually found some of our new equipment, which had been thrown away, in the hands of the enemy.

"Some of our men got killed because they examined Jap mortar shells. There were hundreds of these shot at us which turned out to be duds. The recruits pushed the plungers. Result—instant death.

"Officers and NCO's, during shelling, should move around and talk to the men. Quiet them down. If you don't do this, some of them will walk around with their fingers on their triggers and they get to imagining things. And along this line, we learned to post double sentinels—one man to quiet another.

"We learned to dig *small* covered fox holes. Slit trenches are best. We had men smothered to death in too large holes. Don't put more than 3 men in any hole unless the hole has a support on top big enough to stop a 500 pound bomb.

“Teach the young fellows to look over the ground and look in the trees and to learn where the enemy probably will be. THE JAPS WILL BE IN THE TOUGHEST PLACES AND NATURALLY ON THE BEST GROUND.

“All my time in the Marines I have seen men bunch up, and I have talked about this and make my NCO's talk about this all the time. The men seem to fear separation.

“The BFM's state that a mortar round must not be opened until the round is ready to be fired. This, in my opinion, is impractical during battle, because to deliver a large volume of fire, you have to have hundreds of rounds opened and prepared for firing. Some of the containers for the mortar rounds get wet and have to be cut in order to get the round out. This takes up time. On occasion, it takes the entire ammunition squad and all available hands to cut open ammunition. Result may be, when ‘Cease firing’ is given you have numerous rounds open. These rounds, when exposed to the atmosphere, become wet or damp, making them dangerous to fire at a later time, because the increments won't burn uniformly and the round falls short. We have had a round fall as great as 600 yards short of de-



livery, firing at a range of 2700. I recommend that additional increments be issued in waterproof containers in order to remedy this condition. Also we need additional cartridges for misfires.

“The Japs are man-monkeys, and they run around considerable. In order to compete with these man-monkeys from Japan, you got to be in excellent shape and you got to be tough. We can lick them and we are doing it all the time, Sir.

“I have seen some awful attempts at individual cooking. However, some of my men have got to the point where they can make jam tarts.

“Sanitation—*I know* it's right! To violate it causes billions of flies and sickness. Some lousy undisciplined recruits defecated in fox holes, which caused trouble in the dark. We learned that individual cans should be buried. Some of the recruits threw the empty cans in the creek. Then, I heard that the next battalion came along and went in swimming and cut their feet. When you occupy a position for several days in the tropics, the sanitation problem becomes tremendous. The young officers and NCO's must get after this at the start and keep after it all the time.”

---

LIEUTENANT COLONEL FRISBEE,  
Executive Officer, Seventh Marines.

"I hope the Army is being toughened up. We toughened up by bivouacing—not camping—at the combat ranges. We lived at these combat ranges. In order to teach our platoons to keep off the road, we made the platoons march in the fields alongside the road when they moved from one combat area to another.

"We insist on overhead cover for fox holes because of the Japanese mortar fire. In doing this you have to guard against the men building these fox holes up too high above the level of the ground.

"The other day we received a peculiar order which we carried out, but in which I did not believe. We were ordered to establish Platoon listening posts. In my opinion I thought this was in error, as the listening post should either be a squad or a company. The platoon was no good, as it was not strong enough.

*"Try to teach your men not to steal from each other and adjacent units. If you could do this, you will save yourself a lot of trouble."*

LIEUTENANT COLONEL N. H. HANN-  
KAN, C. O. 2d Battalion, Seventh Ma-  
rines. (Medal of Honor men in Haiti.)

“It pays in the attack in the jungle to use the heavy machine guns. There is a difference of opinion, as you have noticed, on this matter. It’s hard work, yes, but don’t overlook the value—moral and otherwise—and don’t forget about the high rate of fire. If you ditch the heavy machine guns and substitute the lights in their place, you must remember that you will be up against the Japanese machine gun.

“Give more attention to the training of the 81mm mortars, and the coordination of these weapons with the foot troops. We were too slow in getting the 81 into action when they were needed. Get ’em into action fast.

“Be careful about withdrawing the men unless all the men know what it is about. If you don’t do this, you are liable to make the men panicky.

“Now this next idea may sound strange to someone who may read your notes in an office far away, but it is a very practical means of controlling a march on a winding trail in this hot country. Marches here in the tropical jungle, where the air is hot and so steamy that there seems to be no air, takes a lot out

of the men. The weak ones will say, when the march gets tough, 'hold it up!' As a result this will be passed on up to the front and the column will stop when you don't want it to. So, as a result, we use the letter 'H' plus a numeral meaning to halt. The leaders and the point know what numeral we will use, and we change the numeral. For example we will use 'H2' the first two hours; then 'H7', etc.

"We had an Army Company of the ----- Infantry attached to my Battalion. They had heard so much about the Japs they were scared to death. Some of these men were sent out on a patrol and while on this patrol 2 were killed and 3 were wounded. Those not killed or wounded were in a terrible state of mind. They must learn to grit their teeth and bear it, and that we can and are beating the Japs. The Captain of this company was scared too. They had the wrong attitude.

"I am screaming for gloves to use in handling barbed-wire. You cannot put up a barbed-wire fence in a hurry if you are bare-handed.

"You must realize that there is such a thing as not attacking when ordered to do so. We have got to get to the point where the men go ahead when ordered, and damn the

hindmost. Corporals must be indoctrinated with leadership to overcome this, and *all* ranks have got to have the 'hate'.

"We had a sad accident the other day. A man hung a hand grenade on a bandolier. A vine pulled the pin—two men were killed. Empty bandoliers are okay in which to place hand grenades. We have had hand grenades left around at night. Then a Company, we will say, gets an order to move and hand grenades are lost.

"We did not start taking quinine and atebine soon enough when we hit Guadalcanal. We are paying for this now."

---

Conference with three 2nd Lieutenants and 5 old NCO's of the 2nd Battalion, Seventh Marines.

"The basic principle of leadership in the U. S. Marine Corps is that the individual is told of his responsibility in different situations and is held to it.

"You gotta have confidence in each other. When signals to move forward are given, you must have confidence that the men next to you will move forward even if you cannot see them. We have that kind of confidence in this Battalion.

“We have developed signals in our Battalion which are not recorded in any text book. I recommend that your troops do the same.

“One night when we had a position on a steep ridge, the Japs attacked up the ridge. We pulled the pins of hand grenades and let them roll down hill. Don't forget to count 'one Jap dead, two Japs dead' before throwing the grenade. We had a Marine killed in this Battalion because he forgot to count, and a Jap picked up the hand grenade and threw it back.

“We love the heavy machine gun.

“The Thompson sub-machine gun or carbine is needed, as they execute their attacks en masse. We understand the carbine will have more penetrating power than the Thompson.

“We have two American Indians we use as 'talkers' on the telephone or voice radio when we want to transmit secret or important messages.

“Don't forget the Japs make noise when they move too. They are not supermen.

“Be mean and kill 'em. Kill 'em dead. Our motto in this Platoon is 'No prisoners.' ”

---

SECOND LIEUTENANT D. A. CLARK,  
Seventh Marines.

(Promoted on the field of battle—this officer was interviewed in the hospital where he was recuperating from wounds.)

“We have a lot of trouble in my Platoon with water discipline. We also have trouble with men bunching up in order to talk to each other. They seem to do this even though it means death.

“We have learned to make reconnaissance before moving into an area. We scout for ambushes. We have learned to be quiet, listen and look. I sure like to see that artillery come down on an area before we move into it.

“The big problem which we have not solved completely yet to my mind is maintaining contact in the attack between units in this jungle, especially between battalions.

“It takes *guts* to go up on the Japanese position to throw grenades and to attack.

“This reconnaissance, which is so important, is also hard work because the Japs move their defensive positions.

“I was on my first patrol here, and we were moving up a dry stream bed. We saw 3 Japs come down the river bed out of the jungle. The one in front was carrying a white flag. We thought they were surrendering. When

they got up to us, they dropped the white flag and then all 3 threw hand grenades. We killed 2 of these Japs, but 1 got away. Apparently they do not mind a sacrifice in order to get information. They are tricky bastards.

“The mortars are very effective here. An example: We were moving up a trail. We were stopped by machine gun fire. I withdrew the platoon and spread out off the trail, forming a skirmish line. I sent word back to the mortars to set up. They had to cut down some trees in order to set up properly. The OP man comes forward and gets the azimuth and paces off the range as best he can. Then the mortars open up.”

---

MAJOR BUSE, Assistant G-3 on General Vandegrift's Staff.

“We have had to multiply our unit of fire in hand grenades by five. The yellow color on hand grenades is poor. Why can't they be painted black, as the yellow color enables the Japs to throw them back. When we have taken a defensive position, as we have now to protect the airfield, due to the dense jungle we do not take up a formation which we would use on more open terrain, like the terrain in the States. That is, here we generally



do not establish strong points. We have a shoulder-to-shoulder defense with mobile reserves in the rear.

“I am being sent back for a rest. We have been in action continually here from August 7, 1942, until this date—November 26, 1942. What we all marvel at is how General Vandegrift can stand it so much better than we do. It must be his character.”

---

GENERAL ED SEBREE, Assistant Division  
Commander, Americal Division.

“We have found it profitable to bring successful patrol leaders back to the OP’s of the mortars and artillery and let them direct the fire. We get these patrol leaders back to these points as soon as possible. The basis of this type of warfare is scouting and patrolling.

“You asked about individual cooking. Yes, in my opinion the troops should know this, but it is not practical for units who are not close to water to cook that way, as they cannot clean their mess gear properly and dysentery is the result. These units put the ‘C’ ration—stew or bean—can to their mouth and eat that way. You will notice as you go to the 164th Infantry that the Regimental Commander is relieving units who have been

taking it hot and heavy from the enemy, and also units who are on that ridge up there where there is no water and where the sun is beating down in that heavy thick tropical grass."

---

MAJOR BEN. J. NORTHRIDGE, C. O. 2d  
Battalion, 164th Infantry.

"We like this M1 rifle, but we don't like the way the front end shines.

"If I could train my men over again, I would put officers and men in slit trenches and drop bombs nearby to overcome fear. We were all scared to death at first. Let's overcome this fear. How about firing some captured 25 caliber ammunition out of captured rifles to let officers and men know the sound; also captured Jap machine gun ammunition out of captured machine guns.

"We are learning to get shoes off men at night if the tactical situation permits. If I could train my Battalion again I would have some maneuvers in which things were made to go wrong—communications upset, etc. and I would observe which leaders are no good and replace them on the spot—not later.

"I understand that in the U. S., troops in training for this type of warfare are practicing firing at short ranges. That is fine

“The Japanese powder is more smokeless than ours. We need smokeless powder.” (Note: The reason the Japanese bullet, when it is fired, does not make as much smoke is probably because not as much powder is needed to propel a 25 caliber bullet as is needed to send a 30 caliber bullet on its way.)

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LIEUTENANT COLONEL FRANK RICHARDS, C. O. 1st Battalion, 164th Infantry.

“We don't have enough ammunition carrying bags. We should have this for the mortars. We need these bags for other types of ammunition too. I do not know how many as we have not experimented—all I know is we need them. We need grenade carriers too. How to carry water and rations around in this jungle to the troops on the line is a big problem.

“Train patrols in stalking certain positions. I consider this very important. If I were training my Battalion again, I would have *training* in patience. I would have patrols wait for the enemy to expose himself. They move around too. They have to relieve themselves and have to get food. I would have the men in this patience training be made to stay still for hours at a time.

“We are not carrying mess kits—too bulky.”

---

CAPTAIN H. L. CROOK, C. O. 3d Battalion,  
164th Infantry.

“We need better trained scouts. The poor scouts lose their lives.

“When we first got here the Japanese fooled us as they like to place their machine guns on the reverse slope of the ridge, shooting upwards.

“Our rifle grenades have been effective against hidden machine gun positions. You have to KILL these Japs before they will leave. Just turning a large volume of fire in his direction will not make him leave.

“The time to have air observation is when we attack. At other times when our planes go over, the Japanese keep down and keep still.”

---

CAPTAIN JOHN A. GOSSETT, C. O. Com-  
pany H, 164th Infantry.

“Teach the men capacities of the hand grenades; and handling men! I thought I knew how to handle men, but since I have been here I have revised my ideas as I have learned a great deal. I have learned the primitive rough and tumble way. You can't pat all men

on the back. You have to be rough with some men in order to get results. It is not my nature to be rough, but I am forcing myself, and I have learned which of my men I can pat on the back and which I have to deal with in the hardest manner.”

---

CAPTAIN JOHN A. DAWSON, C. O. Company B, 164th Infantry.

“If I could train my company again, I would have some maneuvers on which the men were deprived of food, water and comforts in order to find out which NCO's and men can't take it. I would relieve these people. This type of maneuver would teach men to know and expect hardships. It will lessen the shock when they come up against the real thing in the presence of the enemy.

“It is important that the entire squad know the BAR. Not just 2 men. Reason, think of the BAR men who are wounded, get killed, and become sick and have to be evacuated.

“They don't appreciate the principle of reconnaissance here, or give us time for this very important thing. We must have time to do this as it saves lives and puts us in the proper position.

“Our Battalion Pioneer Section must have better and more complete training in carrying food, water and ammunition and in cutting trails.”

---

SERGEANT L. R. LANG, Platoon Sergeant,  
Company E, 164th Infantry.

“Are we getting more small hand radios? Man, they’re sure needed, for communication within the Company and within the Battalion is tough.

“Sir, are our men in the U. S. receiving individual training? I notice here that when I have to put 2 men out for say 48 hours, most of the men are upset unless they have a NCO along.

“For Pete’s sake, Sir, teach the men not to be ‘trigger happy’. (Note: An expression used on Guadalcanal for men who are very nervous and who fire without seeing the enemy. This type of man is dangerous and has caused a lot of trouble. He has also given the position away.)

“Are we getting a glass sight for the M1 for sniper work?”

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SERGEANT D. L. GOLDEN, Company F,  
164th Infantry.

(Note by Col. D. E. Moore, C. O., 164th Infantry: Sergeant Golden is an outstanding NCO in this Regiment.)

“The biggest thing I have learned since I hit Guadalcanal is that the Japanese camouflage is miles ahead of ours. Their individual can camouflage himself a lot better than ours. We must practice and train in this.

“Every man should be equipped with a compass, and must know how to use the compass. The dumbbells who don't know how to use one have to be helped instead of being able to help themselves. Those who don't know how to use a compass can't help you or their NCO's.

“I have been on 20 patrols in the last 40 days, and in most all of these patrols we went out from 2 to 5 miles. Getting communications back to the gun position is an awful problem. Can you help us?”

---

LIEUTENANT JOHN S. GRAVES, Platoon  
Leader, Company C, 164th Infantry.

“The biggest thing I have learned since I hit this island is that leadership and initiative is so important here. The Platoon Leader can only be in one spot at a time, and men must be

trained to act correctly on their own. I have never seen this type of training.”

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SERGEANT W. V. DEMOSS, Squad Leader,  
Company C, 164th Infantry.

“Sir, I would like to say that there is no place for recruits here. We need trained soldiers who have initiative and know what is the right thing to do. The jungle here is so thick that the Squad Leaders cannot get around all of the time to see men and to tell them what to do.”

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STAFF SERGEANT A. L. CHAPMAN, Platoon Sergeant, Company G, 164th Infantry.

“We want better field glasses. Can't we get a glass for spotting men in foliage? And along this line how about some training in shooting at vague targets, at close ranges, in dense woods. And, Sir, I would suggest some training in throwing hand grenades in woods.”

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SERGEANT C. W. ARROWOOD, Company F, 164th Infantry.

“My message for you to take back. Colonel, is to stress real scouting and patrolling and to teach them to go the hard way.



“I have been on 15 patrols, and each time a patrol was fired on, the man with a net on his helmet drew the fire. I have seen .25 caliber bullets go through our new helmet; so, as for me, I use a fatigue field hat. (Note: I talked to a man who showed me his steel helmet with a .25 caliber bullet hole in it. The man received a slight head wound. He was convinced, and so am I, that if he had not had on his steel helmet when this bullet was fired at him, he would have been killed.)

“The Jap knee mortar gives us hell. They come in fast, thick and accurate. Can't we have one?”

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COLONEL B. E. MOORE, C. O. 164th Infantry.

(Note: When I saw Colonel Moore, he was interviewing a patrol and patrol leader who had just come back. They had been on a reconnaissance for 15 hours. The patrol leader had been met at an advance position and, as he had valuable information of the enemy, he was conducted by 'jeep' to the observation post of the artillery where he directed artillery fire; then returned to the Colonel where he made his report. The patrol and its leader were nearly exhausted.

Colonel Moore had on hand small sample bottles of brandy which he issued one small sample bottle to each two men. He made them dilute this brandy with water in their canteen cups. It was noticeable that this helped them. The following interview took place after the patrol had been dismissed. One could not be around Colonel Moore very long without realizing that he is a leader and Regimental Commander, in every sense of the word.)

“The M1 rifle is a fine rifle. It is doing fine work here.

“The greatest problem is leaders, and you have to find some way to weed out the weak ones. The platoon leaders who cannot command, who cannot foresee things, and who cannot act on the spur of the moment in an emergency are a distinct detriment.

“It is hot here, as you can see. Men struggle; they get heat exhaustion. They come out vomiting, and throwing away equipment. The leaders must be leaders and they must be alert to establish straggler lines and STOP this thing.

“The men have been taught to take salt tablets, but the leaders don't see to this. Result, heat exhaustion.

“Many of the junior leaders have not used their heads at times. In their training, I recommend you put them up against situations where they **MUST** use their heads. For example, C. O. Company L reports he had only 35 men; that the rest had heat exhaustion. He did not have sense enough to rest his men, make them take salt, etc.

“The good leaders seem to get killed; the poor leaders get the men killed. The big problem is leadership and getting the shoulder straps on the right people.

“Not one man in 50 can lead a patrol in this jungle. If you can find out who the good patrol leaders are before you hit the combat zone, you have found out something.

“I have had to get rid of about 25 *officers* because they just weren't leaders! I had to *MAKE* the Battalion Commander weed out the poor junior leaders. This process is continuous. Our junior leaders are finding out that they must know more about their men.

“The good leaders know their men.”

*Notes given by a U. S. Marine on Guadalcanal:*

“For patrols from 1 to 10 days duration I suggest a pack whose contents are as follows:

The top half of our present pack to contain:

Dehydrated rations and type "D" rations for the period expected.

1 or 2 canteens, depending on the terrain in which you are operating.

Medical kit containing: bandaids, sulfa, atebrine, salve for protection against skin infection, tablets for the purification of water of a squad's canteens.

1 cake of soap

1 pair extra socks

1 pair shoe laces

1 shirt, flannel or woolen

All above in rubber bag.

1 poncho

1 can of oil and cleaning gear for weapon where such is not part of the weapon you carry.

The following equipment:

Good field glasses for all leaders down to sergeants in rifle units, and to squad leaders in weapons squads.

Compass—same distribution

Bush knife 12'' blade made of good steel for all hands

Helmet for all

Camouflage net for all helmets

Mosquito net, head, for all

Intrenching shovel for all

We need a rubber bag which will keep everything dry and can be used for floating contents across streams. Must be light and rugged.

I also favor canvas leggings, greased shoes and hobnails for footing in climbing hills, a pair of flannel gloves for protection against insects while sleeping.

Officers and men must be in identical uniform."

The following was dictated to a stenographer, in my presence, by Colonel G. C. Thomas, U. S. Marine Corps, Chief of Staff to Major General Vandegrift:

"We are operating our staff strictly along Leavenworth lines I learned while a student there. Job has been too big and clerks too few to engage in lengthy orders. Campaign has been fought with almost a total absence of paper work, and we have gotten over that jump by continuous, close personal contact between troop commanders and staff. This method was practicable because we have not been operating a very large area.

"Our successful Commanders are invariably those who understand the use of infantry weapons. The work of our artillery has, I feel, been exceptional. Our forward observers have been right in the front line,

and artillery fire has caused the enemy many casualties.

“We feel that we have been successful. We have caused the enemy enormous losses in men. Our battle casualties to date exceed 3500, of which about one-third have been killed in action.

“Most of the fighting here has been carried out at extremely close range, and there has been as much throwing of hand grenades as in firing a weapon. *No previous report, or even comment, on our enemy and our fighting has been made.* For one thing, we do not want to appear boastful; for another, we have been literally so busy we have not had time to really think things out.

“Concerning our enemy, several things are apparent. All of his efforts have been in the form of attacks on a narrow front at rather widely separated points. These were mass attacks, and although orders and operations maps captured have shown that they were to be simultaneous attacks, this was never the case. Our feeling is that his failure to estimate the terrain difficulties caused the lack of coordination. The result has been favorable to us, as it has permitted the shifting of our all too small reserves from one area to another.

“We believe that the enemy has dispersed his efforts and has therefore failed to make any gain at any one point. When given his choice, he operates exclusively at night. As I said before, he attacks on a very narrow front, practically en masse. This leads to many ‘purple nights’ when we watch longingly for sunrise. The result for him has been almost complete annihilation in every case. As far as we can determine, these various attacking groups are started out, and there are indications that they pass out of real control of their higher leaders. We have never seen anything to indicate that any effort has been reinforced after the initial push has been made.

“The Japanese soldiers fight with a sort of fanaticism and never surrender. We have taken practically no prisoners. Officers about to be taken prisoner sometimes commit suicide. Perhaps of greatest assistance to us has been captured orders and maps. A great deal of information has been gotten from captured diaries. Our interpreters on the spot were able to get from captured orders information on which we have successfully operated at once. It causes me to want never to write another order.

“The Japanese try all of the tricks, make all of the noises, and infiltrate as many snipers as is reported they did in Bataan and Malaya. These things have little effect on good troops who hold their positions, which they can do with safety and fight them when they come up. So far as I have been able to determine, though we have had hundreds of snipers in our position, only one man has been killed by a sniper. We usually get everyone of them. Don't worry about them. They are ducks on the pond when daylight comes.

“In their air attacks and in their ground operations, the Japanese appear to follow very definite patterns. Each attack appears to be the same. They are easily disconcerted by surprise, and if they fail to succeed in what is apparently the only way they know how to fight, they become ineffective. We have carefully avoided night attacks, making all of our offensive moves by day. Our officers feel that the Japs have placed so much stress on night fighting that they cannot or do not fight well at all in the daytime.

“Our officer casualties have been high, because it is necessary for the officer to be practically in the firing line in jungle fighting; otherwise he loses control. We have lost a number of Company Commanders and quite a



few Battalion Commanders. We have managed to keep up our officer replacement by field promotions of selected noncommissioned officers who have proven themselves in battle. It is not likely that the Division will receive any officers no matter how long it may operate.

“This account is hasty, disconnected and rambling, but I have attempted to get down just a few of the points on which I believe we have some conclusion.”

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The following is a *digest* of lessons learned in the tactics of Jungle Warfare as a result of interviews which are attached:

1. Troops must receive a high degree of individual training to prepare for jungle warfare. The individual in combat will be required to act on his own a large part of the time. This is due to the dense foliage. However, individuals must feel the very presence of their squad leaders and other leaders, and know that they are important members of a team which can lick the enemy. The leaders must take pains to carefully explain to the privates what their responsibilities are, and what is expected of them in each situation. Furthermore, weak individuals who cannot be trusted to act correctly without supervision

must be weeded out, preferably before they arrive in the Combat Zone.

Individuals must have thorough practice in throwing hand grenades in woods. They must reach a much higher degree of proficiency in the art of camouflage. This will require constant application in the training period.

By realistic training a large amount of fear can be overcome in the individual. He should know before he reaches the Combat Zone what it feels like to have bombs explode near him, what a sniper's bullet sounds like, and what overhead machine gun and artillery fire sound like.

The prowess of the enemy must *NOT* be over emphasized. American soldiers and marines can whip the Jap and they are doing so every day. Many men stated that they had been talked to so much about the Japanese snipers that at first they were afraid.

Individual riflemen must know the tactical relationship between the machine gun and their rifle in order to be able to act intelligently.

Training in observing and firing at vague targets must be emphasized.

2. In training, scouting and patrolling must be emphasized. Major General Vandegrift, Commanding the First Marine Division, states

that jungle warfare against the Japanese is a question of going back to the tactics of the French and Indian days, with these tactics adjusted to fit in with our modern weapons.

Men should receive training in *patience*. Our national character is foreign to this idea. We are an impetuous people. Training in patience is needed as sometimes the men will be required to remain motionless and quiet for hours at a time.

3. Not every man can lead a patrol successfully in the jungle. The good patrol leaders should be discovered in the training period.

In training, patrols should be sent out from 10 to 15 hours at a time. Due to the slow way in which a patrol moves, it is necessary to keep patrols out for long periods of time. The problem of getting communication back from the patrol to friendly territory in the jungle is a hard one. It must be made easier by training. Patrols should be confronted with unusual situations.

4. The Japanese knee-mortar is needed. An all-purpose hand grenade, which, in addition to being used as a hand grenade, can be used in the knee-mortar and as a rifle grenade, should be adopted.

Mortar squads must learn to set up quickly and be able to operate in wooded terrain.

5. All units must receive practice in the problem of maintaining contact in the advance in the jungle.

6. In the following interviews there are many remarks on leadership. The leadership shown by the 5th and 7th Regiments of the U. S. Marines stands out because of their great wealth in experienced officers and NCO's. On the other hand the remark of Colonel B. E. Moore, Commanding Officer of the 164th Infantry, emphasizes the great problems in the leadership which confronted a partially trained regiment which had been rushed to the Combat Zone.





