

Called: *Bob*
 5/11/87
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 MFL FORM NO. 103

JAMES JONES

nated everyone in the place. He was also a superb, masterful, old-fashioned Irish storyteller. The structure of his Second Regional Assistance Command (SRAC), I gathered, with himself as advisor to the II Corps commander, apparently ran right on down through the Viet chain of command to his junior-officer advisors at the regiment and battalion level. On the spur of the moment I asked him if while I was around there, he could get me into Kontum, and maybe as well have me flown up to the Border Ranger post at Dak Pek. His face sobered and got a little distant, and he gave me a funny little look. As if he thought I might be using him. He could probably get me into Kontum all right, for a short while, he said. But Dak Pek was out of the question. It was fifty miles inside the enemy lines, with antiaircraft positions all the way up.

It suddenly occurred to me—I thought I sensed—that Healy might not be feeling too happy about his assignment from General Weyand of squiring a novelist around. That I was getting off on the wrong foot with him. I didn't want that to happen. So when he asked me how long I'd been in service, I told him the truth. I'd been in five and a half years. But—I added—I was discharged early, in 1944. Invalided out. He looked up. Actually, I continued, with a vague intuitive flash of some irrational inspiration, I had wangled myself a discharge. After first coming back from the Pacific wounded, and then spending some time in a couple of Army jails. Perhaps he knew the type? Healy grinned suddenly, and nodded. I said I felt I'd used up all my luck and if I was sent to Europe I would never get back. Healy nodded again. Anyway, at the time I was in a lousy Quartermaster Gas Supply

Jones
WWII

VIE

outfit with a bunch of said, if I hadn't wanted have stayed in for the I myself launched into the story of my reassignment Camp Campbell, Kentucky main themes of the thing on. The point was, I had Army.

Healy was an excellent was silent for a long moment of blind, Gung-Ho nose, and said the Army molding and shaping you then launched into a story first enlisted and was Riley, Kansas. He had Year's Eve, at the Office death had climbed up off the window and watched their ladies and their enjoying their ball. When back to his freezing barracks knocked out and looked stopped-up johns and pifloor and stormed down the company commander there. The CQ of course he insisted. And when the him upstairs and showed broken windows in the heat was off. How did the in and believe in an outfit that? he stormed. Like p

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 it as if I had been
 d-grenade tossers.

And when I looked back up, I thought for a split-second flash I had glimpsed again my hairy, jugged, bucktoothed little friend in the branches, among the leaves of the big tree outside, his tiny eyes glinting, his small body bouncing up and down excitedly.

I had seen my hairy little pal again the night before I went to Dak Pek. And I had glimpsed him again the night after I got back from Tri Ton. I still did not know why I wanted to go to Dak Pek and Tri Ton. And I did not know what my hairy little friend meant or stood for.

I could remember being terribly afraid under mortar barrages in World War II. Getting to shoot back at the enemy and hurt him had helped that fear a lot. Anyway, I was younger. Back then, I had been afraid of dying without having made my voice heard in the world, without having made the fact of my existence at least known. I did not want to be lumped namelessly together with a lot of dead heroes who got remembered only collectively. A perhaps legitimate vanity.

But I had not been terrified when I was wounded, or even much afraid. Afterward, I had been afraid I might get hit again, before I could get out of there, legitimately and honorably. I thought that would be the most unholy, Godless irony. And I had seen it happen to men.

But in those days I had never touched on this odd conspiratorial physiological alliance between fear and the sense of sex. And I had never seen my apelike little friend.

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planning and execution left most men of the 3d Battalion without any water when the battalion moved out at 0900 after an artillery preparation. The main thrust by two companies toward the Horse's Head came to a standstill in a ravine raked by machineguns. Once halted, mortars assailed them. Here, declaimed Bush, the effects of the lack of water induced an "inertia." Leaders became lethargic, and the led, ever more thirsty and exhausted, rapidly became fewer from heat exhaustion and casualties. In one platoon only ten men remained conscious.

Shortly after noon, Colonel McCulloch sensed that the 3d Battalion had run out of steam. He ordered Lieutenant Colonel Herbert V. Mitchell to pass through the 3d Battalion and continue the attack with his 2d Battalion. During the late afternoon, Mitchell conducted a hasty reconnaissance and issued his orders. Following air and artillery pummeling of the objective, the 2d Battalion attacked from Hill 52 at 0630 on January 12. On the right, Company G gained its goal, the southern meandering of Hill 57, by noon. On the other flank, Company F secured a feature called Exton's Ridge, but was then checked by the Japanese. The defenders likewise halted an attempt by Company E to work around to the south. Company F recoiled and sidestepped to the right to attack Sims's Ridge from the north while Company E plunged frontally against Sims's Ridge. The Japanese stayed Company F about halfway down Sims's Ridge and repulsed Company E.

For January 13, Mitchell drafted a new plan of attack. Company F would pull back off Sims's Ridge and swing wide right to approach the Horse's Head through the cover of the jungle to the north and east. Company E would press down Sims's Ridge and meet Company F at Hill 53, the Horse's Head. While Company F began its maneuver, Company E was checked on Sims's Ridge. With the plan threatening to miscarry, the executive officer of the battalion, Captain Charles W. Davis, volunteered to lead four other men against a knoll at the south end of the ridge that housed machineguns and mortars and was the fulcrum of Japanese resistance. Crawling on their bellies, Davis and his party crept to within 10 yards of the enemy emplacements. Two Japanese grenades came sailing out into their midst but failed to explode. In reply the American party hurled a salvo of eight grenades into the Japanese position. Davis leaped to his feet and fired one shot, whereupon his rifle jammed. With his right hand he drew his pistol and fired at the enemy while with his left he waved the others on with his rifle. This sequence of gestures took place in full view of the Japanese and his own battalion, for the sky perfectly

silhouetted Davis on the ridgetop. Collins, who observed the entire action from Hill 52, stated that Davis's bold conduct had "an electrifying effect on the battalion." Company E "came to life" and promptly cleared Sims's Ridge before surging down the Galloping Horse to join Company F at the head. By noon the 27th Infantry held its objective.

THE COASTAL DRIVE

To the north of the 25th Division, the coastal sector assigned the 2d Marine Division sector from Hill 66 to Point Cruz was not active for the first three days of the XIV Corps offensive. On January 12, the Marine division received orders to begin its advance westward. This marked the first action by the division as a whole, although two of its constituent regiments, the 8th and the 2d, had already seen action, and indeed the 2d Marines was vastly overdue for relief. The marines confronted the same ground that had proved impervious to an assault by two reinforced regiments in November: a deep wooded ravine flanked on the east by Hills 80 and 81 and on the west by a ridge peaking at Hills 82, 83, and 84 and commanded by Japanese machineguns expertly sited to place fire seaward perpendicular to the path of any unit attempting to move west. The boundary of the sectors held by the 38th Division and the 2d Division ran across Hill 83 so that the 1st Battalion, 228th Infantry (I/228) faced the left half of the 2d Marine Division front and the remnants of the 4th and the 16th Infantry Regiments confronted the right of the division's front. To nullify the defensive advantages conferred by the terrain, the marines chose to attack in echelon from left (south) to right or, in terms of the ground, from the head of the ravine downward. In this fashion, each unit would maneuver forward clearing a lane so that the next unit on the right could gain the rear of the Japanese positions to its front and attack downhill toward the enemy machinegun emplacements. The commander of the 2d Marine Division, Brigadier General Alphonse DeCarre,² aligned his front with the 2d Marines on the left and the 8th Marines on the right (beach) flank. He held the uninitiated 6th Marines in reserve.

²DeCarre led the 2d Marine Division on Guadalcanal by virtue of an exercise in military punctilio. The actual commander of the division was Major General John Marston, but Marston was senior to Major General Patch. As the Army provided the bulk of the troops on Guadalcanal at this time, Marston remained in New Zealand.

An all-night mortar weapons Marines began the I/228th Infantry resistance and annihilated against the battalion. The adj minutes later and ravine to its front 84 on the west. B objective, but Cor nese resistance. Tl ary 14, but accom attempted to assis mouth of the ravi retired to the Lur assignment on Gt replace them. In strength, the 4th twenty replaceme

The succeeding heavy resistance fi Hills 83 and 84 ov supported attack w it. From its enclave to flank the Japane bling of his positi Colonel Tamaoki, drawal. Tamaoki p at 1700, Maruyama front-line regiments unpressed, and they the 16th. But the wi in the 16th and 4t closing Marine net.

On January 17, a bardment "became riddled with crater way, and the 6th M Marines completed t before passing into counted only 3,700

(Edinger)" For two weeks this type of fighting went on and we ate cold C Rations, drank from shell holes, and slept in holes full of mud and water. The Btn. CO came around and asked if we were getting plenty of hot food. Plenty of troops volunteered for KP to get off the line and I guess they didn't want to bring up any hot chow. The Col. told the kitchen crew to get hot chow up there to us or get back on the line."

Col. Mitchell elected to envelop Sims Ridge so he withdrew F Co. from Exton and ordered it to attack Sims Ridge from the north. Easy Co. attempted to continue its attack but could not and when Fox Co. got halfway to the crest it was halted by an enemy strongpoint on the reverse (west) slope. While the Wolfhounds could not locate the machine gun position, E Co., still trying to advance, drifted to their right and became intermingled with F Co. (File) "Gen. Collins was a frequent visitor to the front lines and, on the 13 Jan., he was in our OP on Hill 57. On our left flank (to the south) the 2 Btr. was having a go at Sims Ridge and we could see the action developing in their sector. We could all see the charge up the hill and when it was over Gen. Collins turned to his aide and instructed him to find out who led the charge so he could put the man in for the Medal of Honor."

(Bill "Chubby" Curran) "We were lying in front of the crest of Sims Ridge, on 12 Jan., throwing grenades at the Jap machine gun position because we had them spotted. Fox Co. had taken a hill and occupied it and we were to jump off and try to take Sims Ridge, 12 Jan., with my platoon. I sent out my two scouts, then myself, followed by three other



l.-r.: Davis, Curran, Ward, Woodward, and Steck

men. After we had gone over the crest of the hill a machine gun opened up

preventing the rest of my platoon from coming up. We were in the high 130
grass on a saddle. Snipers hidden in "spider holes" then opened up and
got three of my men right through their helmets. Two were dead and
Holliston was wounded. We were within 25 yards of the enemy strong point
and then ran out of pineapples."

The close proximity between the Japs and Wolfhounds on Sims Ridge
protected the enemy from mortar fire; though, A and F company mortars
had tried fire from two different positions it was not effective.

(Curran) "We ran out of grenades so Strassman started relaying them
by lobbing them to us. Then he got hit in the arm so I took Holliston
back and asked for volunteers to go back up there - with more grenades."
Wolfhounds chew up Sims Ridge

(Charlie Davis) From his citation: CMH "--for distinguishing himself
conspicuously by gallantry and intrep-
idity at the risk of his life above
and beyond the call of duty in action
with the enemy on Guadalcanal Island.
On 12 Jan. 1943, Mjr. Davis (then
Capt.) executive officer of an Infan-
try btn. (2), volunteered to carry
instructions to the leading companies
of his btn. which had been caught in
crossfire from Jap machine guns. With
complete disregard for his own safety,
he made his way to the trapped units,
delivered the instructions, supervised
their execution, and remained overnight
in this exposed position. On the fol-
lowing day, Mjr. Davis again volunteer-
ed to lead an assault on the Jap pos-
ition which was holding up the advance.
When his rifle jammed at its first shot



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point for a desperate conference with his commanding officer, Lieutenant Colonel Herbert V. Mitchell. The two professionals doped out a plan for cracking the enemy stronghold.

Mitchell led part of Easy Company down Sims Ridge, behind Davis' shelf on the slope to a point directly east of the enemy. Davis, meanwhile, with the four survivors of the group which had made the unsuccessful attempt earlier in the morning, planned to sneak in, neutralize the enemy position, and pave the way for Mitchell's group to assault.

Even though the action on Guadalcanal represented Davis' first combat action, he went about the job as though it were everyday stuff. In a sense it was, for this is what Charley Davis, now a regular army lieutenant colonel, had been readying himself for ever since he joined the Army as an 18-year-old private in 1935. He was a non-com by the time he was 20, and a second lieutenant at 22.

Now, wearing nothing but shorts and a helmet liner, he led his small assault party down a draw. They crawled to within ten yards of the enemy before they were seen. Then the Japanese started throwing grenades. Davis and his companions replied with a salvo, then the Texas-born Davis reacted to his feet yelling, "Come on, you Wolf-

hounds!" With his M1 at his hip level, he started into the enemy gun emplacement followed closely by the four GIs. He squeezed the trigger but the M1 jammed. He threw it aside but never lost stride as he drew his pistol and tore into the Japanese defenders. With Davis' pistol blazing and the others' rifles exploding, the enemy was routed. Seeing Davis' brave dash, Easy Company, under Colonel Mitchell, got its blood up and swept over the hill, flushing the Japs out of the area.

Official U. S. Army Photos



Up front it's hard to tell an officer from a GI. Here, a couple of company commanders take a brief time out for a smoke in central Korea.

another body of soldiers followed and seized the hill. The capture of that position broke Jap resistance and the btn. was then able to proceed and secure the corps objective. The courage and leadership displayed by Mjr. Davis inspired the entire btn. and unquestionably led to the success of its attack."

There were three awards of the Medal of Honor in the 25th Inf. Div., on Guadalcanal, two of them being posthumous to soldiers of the Cacti Rgt. (Sgt. William Fournier and T5 Lewis Hall), and the third was awarded to Wolfhound Capt. Charles Davis as the Rgt.s first living recipient in WW II.¹³²

(Charlie Davis) "I might add some observations of the action described herein. We had attacked on a broad front early on the morning of 12 Jan. We followed an intense artillery barrage and Naval dive bombing. The cool of the early morning gave way to blistering tropical heat later. After the attack of the 2 Btn. had bogged down, I told Col. Mitchell, that I would go forward to see what was holding the units up. Lt. Weldon Sims, Btn. commo officer, and Capt. Mellenchamp, Gen. Collins aide, went with me. As we went forward Lt. Sims was shot in the chest - and died there. I cut his radio strap and took the radio along as we proceeded forward. On reaching the forward elements I called in mortar fire on the enemy positions and it was so close the fragments and debris were falling on us. We spent another day in that place. I informed Col. Mitchell, who had joined us on 12 Jan., that I would take a group of volunteers and move to dislodge the enemy positions to our immediate front. The next day, 13 Jan., Pvts. Ward, Woodard, Steck, and Sgt. "Chubby" Curran went with me. We were seen by the Japs as we crawled forward and a grenade bounced in between Curran and myself. It didn't go off; however, we did!"



While the Wolfhounds 2 Btn. was moving to dislodge the enemy, on 12 Jan., the enemy machine guns were still in action and kept the troopers

halted, halfway to the objective, the day was nearly gone. The two companies had exhausted their drinking water and were on the verge of collapse. They organized an all round defense on the north slopes of Sims Ridge in anticipation of a Jap counter attack that night.

Col. Mitchell and Capt. Davis devised a plan to break the standoff. The Col. took part of Easy Co. down Sims Ridge, behind the shelf on the east slope, to a point directly east of the enemy. Meanwhile, Capt. Davis and the four survivors of Sgt. Curran's party, which had previously been up there, crawled and wriggled their way southward down the west slope as close as they could get. They were to neutralize the position, with more grenades, to prepare for Col. Mitchell's unit to assault, from the east, on Davis' signal. The five volunteers crawled within ten yards when Jap grenades came bouncing out at them; but, fortunately, they were duds and failed to explode. The Wolfhounds responded with grenades that did go off and then sprang up and charged the enemy, some of whom fled. Capt. Davis' rifle jammed, after one round, so he threw it away, drew his pistol, and led the troopers among the surviving enemy and finished them off with rifle and pistol fire. Easy Co. witnessed the bold rush and, came to life driving the last Nips from Sims Ridge.

(Curran) "We "volunteers" arrived back at our original position, with Capt. Davis, and, on signal, threw our grenades and charged the enemy machine gun nest. Enroute a Nip popped up out of a spider hole and this was the first time I ever used a bayonet. What a mess! We



Jap MG, Type 92(1932), 7.7mm with carrying adaptors - type used on Sims Ridge
charged on and cleaned out the strong point and the machine gun nest. The rest of the troops then



"Chubby" Curran (rt.)
at Dir. Reunion at
Cleveland 1985

"Top" pictured on p. 12/
was my old buddy Phil Fife.

Small talk - Cleveland Div. Rouneon 1984 1985

X Curran - later on, on New
Calabria, they commissioned
me - and then - I damned near
goofed that up. (Bill Curran
would become the most decorated
Wolfhound of E Co.)

p135 Curran on the
monitashok,
One day, when we were
on ~~good~~ security for the ^{opening}
Field Hospital, the doctors ^{of their} ~~see~~
saw some of the patients with
these different ~~top~~ knives. They said something
to us and we said sure we
could get them some of these
knives (They were a high grade
steel.) We'd cleaned ~~a lot~~ out a
lot of hip ~~stuff~~ ^{stuff}, up in some caves,
and dumped it in the river.
We just went down and ~~did~~
salvaged a couple arm loads.
The docs came thru with a
couple gallons of medicinal
alcohol - It was the best deal
I made in the War.
Quality "Jungle Juice" was hard to come by.

grass was 120 degrees. Capt. Davis received a Medal of Honor, for this 133 action, and we received Silver Stars."

(Davis) "One might ask why one person receives the Medal of Honor while those with him do not. I honestly cannot say; I can only observe that my part in the action on Sims Ridge covered a two day period and I was the leader. Many heroic acts occur in battle that are worthy of recognition, but are not seen and may not be reported. The circumstances surrounding my recommendation were highlighted by the presence of Gen. Collins in an OP overlooking the scene of the action."

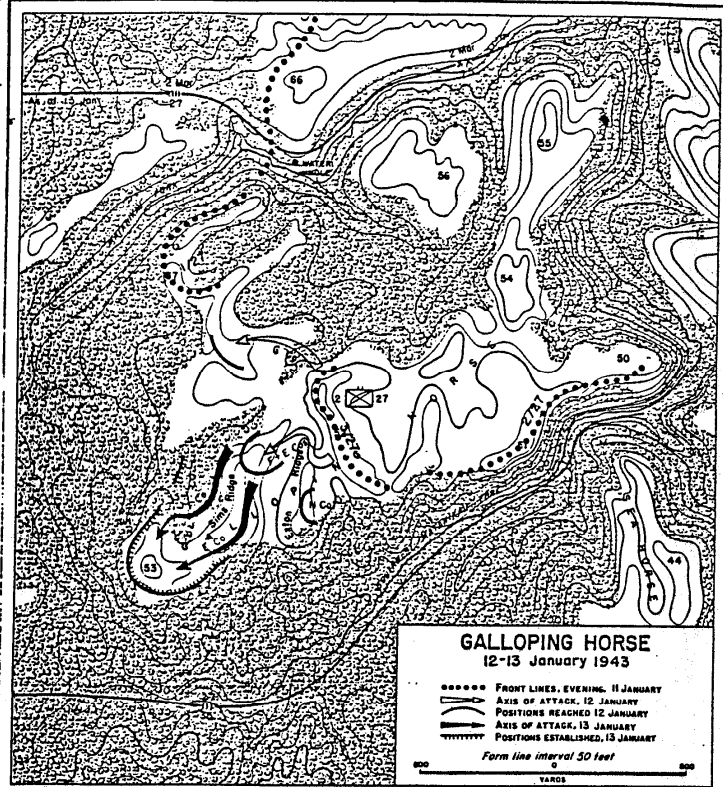
*Henry account * p. 25*

(Phil File) "The fourth morning, 13 Jan., I displaced forward, moving the CP group, with switchboard, up to join the Btn. on the Horses Hoof. When we arrived at the forward CP, we found it was a hastily dug hole big enough for only about four people to crowd into. Col. Journey (1 Btn. CO) crawled out from beneath a shelter half and, when he poked his grizzled head out with mud smeared in his bristle of beard, he reminded me of a fiesty old groundhog. Our water came from a spring down in the ravine and the Japs had it interdicted so that the water detail had some trouble. One of our replacements, reputed to be a "guardhouse lawyer", had an allergy to water - especially bathing. We had taken the GI soap and bristle brush treatment to him and it hadn't seemed to faze him. One day, on water detail, he came struggling back up the hill with a five gallon can of the precious stuff, stripped off his clothes, filled his steel pot full, and proceeded to bathe.

"The daily reports required by SOP were a cumbersome nuisance (however vital) and the morning reports were still maintained in handwritten ledger form which were hand carried to Btn. and returned as soon as the information was transcribed. To save the runners and keep up to date on what was happening on the company level I took the reports back to the companies myself. The second afternoon we were on the Horses Hoof I was making the trip to the company c.p.s when Pistol Pete started shooting from the direction of Kokumbona. I saw a EEB near a mortar position and threw myself in a small depression grabbing the phone. Looking up I could

I thought I had bought the farm. Five men, who had been digging a mortar position twenty feet away dived into their hole and, as I watched, that shell went right in with them. The explosion threw all five of them out of the hole and lined them up on the edge of the emplacement like five ears of corn. Four had their heads and hands blown off and the fifth man got up and started walking away in a daze. I jumped up to go to his aid when a second shell came in. I felt a burning sensation in my crotch and thought the Nips had dismantled me. Ripping my pants open I found a fragment the size of a silver dollar that had just burned the skin a couple places. Not even enough for a Purple Heart. I then helped the casualty back to the aid station. He didn't appear to have any injuries but he was in deep shock. I don't think he had any idea what had happened."

Like the 3 Btn., the 2 Btn. had received no water after its 12 Jan. attack and thirst might very well have stalled the attack the next day. Shortly after Easy Co. had cleared Sims Ridge a quick heavy cloudburst drenched the earth and cooled the soldiers who were able to obtain a little water from pools and by wringing their clothes. While F Co. was moving on its route, three arty btn.s placed fire on Hill 53 and, as it lifted, E Co. advanced along Sims Ridge to seize the top of



Printed by Army Map Service

MAP NO. XV

the Horses Head while Fox Co. emerged from the tunnel to attack the



At the Sea Horse, another isolated hill mass like Galloping Horse, the capture of the key terrain was assigned to the 35th Infantry, sister regiment of the 27th since the old Hawaiian Division days. Colonel (now Major General) Bob McClure's King Company soldiers were struck by a strong enemy force while crossing a branch of the Matanikau River. With its machine gun out of action, the company started to withdraw to reform its lines and prepare for a flank attack. Two soldiers had different ideas. Sergeant Bill Fournier and T/5 Lewis Hall, machine-guns attached from Mike Company, bounded forward and took over the idle gun although they had been ordered to fall back with the others. They cracked open an ammo box and tucked a belt quickly into the guts of the Browning. Hall pulled back on the operating lever, squinted down the barrel as he pulled the trigger, and the gun started to spit lead. But because they were on a knoll, they couldn't get the results they wanted in firing on the Japanese below them. So Fournier lifted the tripod until the muzzle was lowered. The improved angle enabled Hall to clobber the on-coming enemy and they poured lead into the advancing ranks until gunfire struck them down. But by then the enemy had reeled back and the 35th's attack rolled on as scheduled.

The 25th's rapidity of movement on the 'Canal earned for it the nickname "Lightning" Division, soon to become "Tropic Lightning." The Division took part in the seizure of Kokumbona, then joined in the advance on Cape Esperance on the island's northwest coast. It effected a juncture with the Americal Division in the first week of February, 1943, and with this maneuver clamped the jaws of defeat around the Japanese.

At Kokumbona, the 27th Infantry Wolfhounds outran their wire communications fighting for the last time under the leadership of their rugged old CO, Colonel Bill McCulloch, a class of 1913 West Pointer who had commanded a machine-gun battalion in the AEF in World War I and was soon to depart for a one-star general's berth in the Americal Division.

During its comparatively short length of time in combat, the Division suffered 700 casualties. When the 25th finally sailed from the 'Canal after several months of post-combat garrison duty, 219 former comrades-in-arms were left behind.

Joe Collins' men had learned a lot about the Japanese soldier, and as might be expected, some of their early opinions had to be reversed. They had found, for example,

that the Jap's caliber .25 Arisaka wasn't just a pop-gun—it could kill. His "knee-mortars" weren't a joke; they discharged a grenade-like missile with cork-in-the-bottle accuracy. His *Nambu* light machine gun sprayed a lot of lead, and in some situations it outgunned our BAR.

The GIs learned, too, that the Jap was not the poor soldier they had erroneously believed him to be. He was small but he was courageous. He fought to the death in most cases. There were 84 prisoners taken between January 1 and February 15 in 1943—but 33 were sick or wounded.

Japanese-speaking U. S. Army captain from the Hawaiian island of Maui, John M. Burden, broadcast surrender appeals in the Gifu sector and begged beaten enemy soldiers to ignore their leaders and save their lives before they were annihilated. After a number of such efforts, several emaciated enemy soldiers were finally taken by the company commanded by young Lee Cagwin. Today a veteran officer with the rank of full colonel, Leland Cagwin was then only three years removed from the classrooms of West Point. He summed up the way he and his men felt about the prisoner situation. "We'll give 'em every chance to surrender. Sure we could do the 'heroic' thing and go down and clean them out as easily as not. But why slaughter them if we can get them to give up?"

One of the PWs was a corporal who told Cagwin's men he hadn't eaten in seven days and hadn't had a cigarette to smoke in more than three months. Someone handed him a cigarette and lighted it for him. The corporal was clearly puzzled by the ways of the crazy Americans.

Tom Walker, a soldier from Quincy, Massachusetts, hoisted the Jap corporal on his back and carried him down the trail to the Battalion CP.

"All along the trail," *Yank* Magazine's field correspondent wrote, "infantrymen moaned for the cameras they had left behind. It was a picture no photographer could resist; an almost unbelievable caricature: The corporal, rimmed spectacles and all, gazing bewilderedly ahead, his trousers and shirt separated rather widely at the rear, riding blandly on the back of a sweaty, embarrassed soldier."

In less than two months after Pearl Harbor, the Japanese at the other end of the Pacific perimeter had overwhelmed the Australian garrison at strategic Rabaul in New Guinea. Now, with Guadalcanal secured, it was the High Command's decision to start a pincers movement with Rabaul as the ultimate objective.

The Army's Alamo Task Force was to seize a number of islands in the Solomon Sea between New Guinea and the Solomons. Meanwhile, other soldiers and Marines under Bull Halsey would move boldly down The Slot, striking against New Georgia. This was envisioned as a short campaign, and originally the 25th Division didn't figure in the plans.

"We planned to use 15,000 men to wipe out the Jap garrison," Halsey said afterward, "but by the time the island was ours, we had needed 50,000. When I look back on it, the smoke of charred reputations still makes me cough."

In the early summer of 1943, the call went out to Joe Collins, "Bring the 25th to Munda!"

The first of the Division's regiments to reach the New Georgia fight was the 161st, which, compared with the 27th and 35th, had seen comparatively little combat on the 'Canal. Its commander was one of the Division's great heroes of the war, Colonel (later Brigadier General) James L. Dalton II. Jim Dalton, a Class of 1933 West

command the regiment when ill health forced its previous headman, Colonel Clarence A. Orndorff, to be hospitalized while the Division was in the midst of the Guadalcanal operation. Dalton had become CO on the 'Canal in time to lead the 161st—a Washington State National Guard regiment—in the capture of Doma Cove. On July 21, 1943, the One-Six-One landed on Baraulu Island and began to effect the relief of the 37th (Buckeye) Infantry Division.

The 161st, as distinct from the other regiments of the Division, still contained largely the Guardsmen from Washington who had been Federalized in September, 1940. At that time it was an element of the 41st Infantry Division. Historically, it is composed of militia groups (Klickitat County Guards, Seattle Rifles) formed in the 1880s. Its turn-of-the-century soldiers participated in the capture of Manila and fought the Moros on Luzon in 1899. It was called up for service during the Mexican Border operation and was part of the 41st Division in France in World War I. It was composed not only of veteran Guardsmen but of many who had simply decided to take the one-year compulsory training with the hometown outfit rather than go through the draft. Just as they became short-timers, along came Pearl Harbor.

On New Georgia, 18 months later, some of these bitter birds came up with a slogan that became known from one end of the Pacific to the other: "Golden Gate in '48!"

The One-Six-One had been cut adrift from the parent 41st Division in the Army's triangularization program which cut each "square" division from four regiments of infantry to three. In August of 1942, the 161st was ordered to join the 25th at Schofield Barracks to replace the 288th Infantry of the Hawaii National Guard.

The One-Six-One became a full and equal partner in the Division by dint of the hard-fighting professional attitude it displayed on New Georgia under Colonel Dalton, and it remained an integral part of the 25th until November 1, 1945, when it was relieved from active duty at Nagoya, Japan, and its control reverted to the Washington National Guard. Its 39 months in the Division included the roughest days of World War II.

From the high ground on Bibilo and Kengolo Hills the enemy poured a withering fire into the 161st's sector, and the fearless Dalton, destined to die at the hands of a sniper on Luzon in a later campaign, knew the only answer was to go in and dig them out.

Bibilo was the northernmost of two high points that overlooked Munda airfield and guarded the Zieta Trail into Munda from the north.

The infantry's main event was preceded by a series of confusing skirmishes in the jungle.

One time a patrol from a neighboring unit, withdrawing from a fire-fight, found itself closely pursued. The enemy fell on the patrol's rear just as the GIs reached the outposts of the One-Six-One's 1st Battalion. The battalion commander, alerted, said to let them come. The Japs moved right in behind the withdrawing GIs and found themselves in a full-fledged fight that lasted more than 24 hours—until every Japanese soldier in the attacking group had been wiped out.

After Bibilo there was a ridge named for 1st Lieutenant Charles J. Hastings, from Walla Walla, Washington.

After Hastings Ridge the 161st moved forward to the beach and ended the main phase of the effort on New Georgia. It was about then that the Division lost its artillery commander, Brigadier General John R. Hodge, who was ordered to assume command of the 43d Infantry Division.

The 27th Regt. built 'H Cord' roads during the Civil War, also.

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in its operations on the southern flank between January 9 and 26 were 888 killed by the regiment, twenty-nine prisoners, and a further 188 Japanese killed by artillery.

RENEWAL AND READJUSTMENT

By January 17 the first phase of the XIV Corps' western offensive ended. The 25th Division attended to the reduction of the three pockets created by January 15. In the 2d Marine Division sector, the completion of the initial phase of the advance on January 17 coincided with the destruction of the Japanese defenders around Hills 83 and 84.

The annihilation of isolated Japanese detachments from regimental size down to a handful of individuals is a central characteristic of the events over the month after the XIV Corps offensive started. The exceptional scale and severity of the fight for the Gifu earned it examination in detail, and it may be taken as representative of the American perspective of the process. But what of the Japanese perspective? By far the majority of the encircled defenders, like those of the Gifu, perished by disease, starvation, or gunfire and grenades, leaving little more than emaciated corpses and a few scrawled diary entries. The diary of Major Nishiyama, the commander of the 3d Battalion, 228th Infantry Regiment at the Galloping Horse, however, affords a rare insight into the thoughts and conduct of surrounded Japanese soldiers.

On January 12, the 27th Infantry captured the Horse's Head, cutting off Nishiyama's unit. He gathered his survivors, about 200 of his original 600, at the battalion command post for a last stand. There he shared out his last cigarettes and, with tears in his eyes, advised his men to prepare to die. Their calm acceptance of imminent death moved him.

Though the next two days passed with a much-reduced tempo of fighting, Nishiyama's mental anguish waxed. Rain provided the only water for cooking or drinking, and on January 15, he penned a single entry in his diary: "O! Miserable." But the lull gradually transformed the mood of his soldiers. By the 16th, they began to converse of escaping encirclement to move elsewhere where their deaths might be more meaningful. Though Nishiyama admired the spirit animating this choice, he would not openly countenance it, for his last orders had been to hold his position. But in the privacy of his diary Nishiyama debated ordering a withdrawal on his own authority

"even at the expense of my honor," something Japanese officers valued more than their lives. He knew a "pretext" could be fabricated, but it would still be a retreat that would dishonor not just himself, but the whole unit. Still vacillating two days later, Nishiyama dispatched a runner to division headquarters, and then in the evening of January 19, General Ito summoned him. Ito sanctioned a withdrawal, though the general disdained to leave personally: "I have already decided what to do." In his last phone conversation with 38th Division Headquarters, Ito informed General Sano to consider him dead as of January 15. With his honor intact, Nishiyama and his 200 survivors succeeded in escaping. The exact circumstances of Ito's death are unknown.

Nishiyama's escape came just in time. As early as January 16, Patch distributed his plan for the next phase of his offensive. He set the corps objective as a line from Hill 87 angled northeast to the beach. Hill 87 and its neighbors, Hills 88 and 89, formed a terrain feature that dominated the Kokumbona area much as Mount Austen did the Lunga Plain. Patch detailed the 2d Marine Division (with only the 6th Marines and 182d Infantry on charge for rifle strength) to secure the corps objective on the right. The 25th Division would again advance in the southern portion of the front and seize its segment of the corps objective (including Hills 87, 88, and 89) by enveloping or turning the enemy right flank. Patch retained four of his ten infantry regiments to guard the airfields and held the 147th Infantry in corps reserve.

In the 25th Division domain, Collins again planned to attack with two regiments abreast. In a subsidiary role, the 27th Infantry on the right would advance astride a narrow ridge called the "Snake" to confront Hill 87 from the east. Collins assumed the Japanese held Hill 87, a dominating terrain feature, in force. The 161st Infantry would mount the principal effort by a deep envelopment from the Galloping Horse to the southwest, capture Hills X, Y, and Z, and adjust its trajectory northwest toward a rise southwest of Hill 87, thus outflanking the latter, and continue on to seize Hills 88 and 89. The 35th Infantry would protect the south flank of the 161st and would continue the extermination—a cruel term for a cruel business—of the Japanese forces already pocketed.

The 2/161st Infantry occupied Hills X and Y by January 21 against minor resistance. To comply with Collins's orders, Colonel Clarence A. Orndorff, the commander of the 161st, planned to detail his 1st Battalion to guard the south flank while a column composed

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