

US Infantryman in World War II (1)

Pacific Area of Operations 1941–45



Robert S Rush • Illustrated by Elizabeth Sharp & Ian Palmer

Warrior • 45

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FRONT COVER **Men of 1st Battalion, 165th Infantry Regiment, prepare to enter the jungle from Red Beach, Makin, November 1943. (National Archives)**

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US INFANTRYMAN IN WORLD WAR II (I) PACIFIC AREA OF OPERATIONS 1941-45

INTRODUCTION

"His name and fame are the birthright of every American citizen. In his youth and strength, his love and loyalty, he gave all that mortality can give. He needs no eulogy from me or from any other man. He has written his own history and written it in red on his enemy's breast."

General Douglas MacArthur

This book is the first of a sequence that examines the U.S. infantryman in World War II. It provides a general overview of how American infantrymen in the Pacific were organized, equipped, trained and cared for, and deals particularly with the problems these soldiers faced fighting the Japanese, and the specific nature of the Pacific combat environment.

Rather than fill this book and the others to follow with just the dry details of soldiering, I focus on a composite built on actual events to examine the lives of soldiers in a National Guard regiment during the period 1938-45, analyzing their lives, the regulations they followed, and the environment in which they lived. From the common soldier's viewpoint, a different perspective of the U.S. Army in the Pacific emerges.

The Pacific war zone was a huge expanse that was subdivided for administrative purposes into the Pacific Ocean Areas (POA) of North, Central, and South Pacific, comprising small island groups as well as the Japanese islands. The Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) included most of the major island land masses, and the China-Burma-India (CBI) encompassed areas on the Asian continental land mass. Combat, as an infantryman was markedly different in each area. The CBI was primarily a British-Indian theater with only one American infantry regiment, the 5307th (later renamed the 475th and commonly referred to as "Merrill's Marauders") experiencing combat, and is not covered here. Soldiers in the SWPA fought through the jungles of New Guinea, New Britain and the Solomon Islands in vicious hand-to-hand fighting, with little support from armor, artillery or air power. In the POA, Army infantrymen fought alongside Marines in sharply contested, high-casualty battles, taking one island at a time as they fought north up through the Japanese Mandates. Much more has been written of the GI in the SWPA fighting under General Douglas MacArthur than of the Army infantryman fighting alongside the Marine in the Pacific area of operations.

The narrative follows our hypothetical Guardsman from his enlistment into the 165th Infantry Regiment (New York National Guard) in 1938, training, and first combat at Makin Atoll through his final battle on Okinawa. His experience reflects the everyday experience

of many soldiers in the POA theater of operations. This composite soldier has been drawn by examining the social and demographic environment of a National Guard regiment, the U.S. army regulations under which the soldiers operated, the uniforms they wore and the weapons they carried, company diaries and official reports of the actions. While the focus is on one hypothetical soldier, the generalities and experiences of the majority are also examined and carefully woven into the individual narrative thread. This is the story of one man in one infantry regiment whose experience represents the life of many infantry soldiers in the Pacific from their initial entry to the end of the war.

Between 1940 and 1943 the infantry arm of the U.S. Army increased from 42 to 317 infantry regiments on active duty, as well as an additional 99 separate battalions which included rifle, armored, mountain, glider and parachute. The vast majority, 204, were standard rifle regiments and included 57 Regular Army (including Philippine Scouts and the four dismounted cavalry regiments of the 1st Cavalry Division), 79 National Guard and 125 regiments of the Army of the United States (AUS).

The Tables of Organization and Equipment for infantry units changed several times between 1938 and 1945. These changes, however, were always based upon the mobility and firepower of the units at the lowest level. A platoon's mobility was focused on the three men carrying the Browning Automatic Rifles (BAR), and there was no weapon seen as a focus for enemy fire. All weapons in a company were capable of being hand-carried; all those in a battalion could be hand-carried for a short distance, and weapons needing prime movers were in regimental companies. Although equipment and personnel strength changed, the duties and responsibilities of the infantry leaders in a rifle company did not.

	7 Oct 20	1 Nov 40	1 Aug 42	15 Jul 43	24 Jan 45
Total Strength	3,041	3,449	3,333	3,118	3,068
Hq & Hq Co	119	210	132	108	104
Band			29		
Service Co	225	152	132	114	111
Anti-Tank Co		185	169	165	159
Cannon Co	104		123	118	114
Rifle Battalion (3)	831	932	916	871	860
Hq & Hq Co	70	52	139	126	121
Rifle Co (3)	205	223	198	193	193
Machine Gun Co	146				
Heavy Weapons Co		211	183	166	160
Medical Detachment	100	106	136	135	136

Infantry Rifle Regiment Table of Organization and Equipment 1920-45.

Organization and Personnel, Rifle Company

Between 1941 and 1945 the rifle company consisted of three rifle platoons, a weapons platoon and a headquarters section split between a command and an administrative group. The commanding officer (CO), executive officer (XO), first sergeant (1SG), and communications sergeant made up the command group.

The company commander (captain) was responsible for the discipline, administration, supply, training, tactical employment, and control of his company. Although he decided how best to employ his company, he did so in conformity with orders from higher headquarters.

He could accept advice and suggestion, but he alone was responsible for his organization's success or failure. On the battlefield, the commander was located where he could most decisively influence the situation. The XO (lieutenant) was second-in-command. In combat he remained at the company command post maintaining contact between battalion and company, keeping abreast of the tactical situation and was prepared to assume command if the company commander was injured. He was in charge of the command post until called forward to assume either company command or command of one of the platoons. The XO frequently coordinated resupply of ammunition and rations to the platoons. The ISG (pay grade 2, until 1944 when it became pay grade 1) assisted the company commander and XO in controlling the company. During combat, his duties varied from handling administrative and supply matters to commanding a platoon. Ordinarily, he took over the communication and administrative duties when the XO was absent.

The admin group consisted of those headquarters elements not directly involved in the fighting, such as the supply sergeant, company clerk, and mess team, all of whom (except the supply sergeant) were normally back in the battalion trains area.

The platoon was composed of three rifle squads and a command group. The platoon leader (lieutenant) was responsible for the training, discipline, control and tactical employment of his platoon. In combat, he was located where he could most decisively influence the situation. The platoon sergeant (PSG, technical sergeant) was second-in-command. He assisted the platoon leader in controlling the platoon and acted as platoon leader when there was no officer present. In combat, the PSG was normally located at the second most decisive point. The platoon guide (staff sergeant) enforced the orders concerning cover, concealment, and discipline. He was normally located behind the platoon, where he could observe the flanks and rear. He managed the platoon's ammunition resupply.

The rifle squad was made up of a squad leader, an assistant squad leader, an automatic rifleman, an assistant automatic rifleman, and eight riflemen, two of whom acted as scouts. The squad leader (a corporal prewar, a sergeant 1941-43, and a staff sergeant 1944-45) was always with his squad and was responsible for their employment, training, and sustenance. In combat, he ensured they fought. The assistant squad leader (private first class prewar, corporal 1941-43, sergeant 1944-45) assisted the squad leader in carrying out the squad's mission. In combat, he normally led a portion of the squad and acted as squad leader when the squad leader became a casualty. He might also ensure squad members remained resupplied with ammunition.

Weapons

Soldiers in rifle companies carried the same type weapons whether they fought in the Pacific or European theaters. In 1940, the company's primary weapon was the M1 Garand rifle, carried by all rifleman except snipers. The one sniper in each squad wielded an M1903 Springfield. The Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR) was the principal automatic weapon with three in each platoon's weapons squad, and officers carried .45 cal. pistols. Company heavy weapons consisted of two M1919A3 .30 caliber light machine guns, one .50 cal. heavy machine gun and three

60 mm mortars. However, most organizations lacked the machine gun and mortars until production increased in late 1941.

By 1943, officers were carrying M1 carbines instead of pistols, leaving the pistols to be carried only by gunners and assistant gunners. The weapons squad disappeared and the BAR again became an integral part of the rifle squad. Other weapons systems remained the same. Additional weapons available to the company on a mission-by-mission basis from the battalion weapon's pool were Thompson submachine guns and flamethrowers. Many squad leaders in the Pacific carried the Thompson instead of an M1, giving squads two automatic weapons. By 1943 the 2.36 in. bazooka was added to the armory, and in many organizations the M3 submachine "grease" gun replaced the Thompson. A detailed description of each weapon is in *Men-at-Arms 342 The US Army in World War II (I) The Pacific*.

The onset of World War II

In summer 1940, France and the Low Countries had fallen, the Battle of Britain was raging, and the United States had placed its first embargo on war trade against Japan. By the fall of 1940, President Roosevelt had signed the Selective Service Act, which provided for the registration of male citizens and aliens between the ages of 21 to 36 and authorized the induction of up to 900,000 men for a period of 12 consecutive months of training and service; National Guard organizations were federalized. The draft and mobilization were to last for only one year, but in August 1941, Congress extended the term of service for draftees and mobilized guardsmen for up to 18 months.

This prewar army formed in 1940 and 1941 from the standing army, of 296,437 regulars, 241,612 guardsmen, and 106,000 Reserve officers, was the tool that fought the United States' first battles of World War II. There were three types of enlisted soldier within the U.S. Army. The regular who enlisted for adventure, patriotism or need; the guardsman, who had signed up for the same reasons as the regular, and was part-time until his unit federalized and he laid down the wrench to pick up the rifle; and the draftee or inductee, who after November 1940 was selected by his county draft board.

During 1940 and 1941, the average age of the soldier was 26; more soldiers were over 40 than under 21, and most had not finished high school, although this was typical of the rest of the white male population. Regular Army officers were commissioned either through the United States Military Academy, the Reserve Officers Training Corps (ROTC, a university military training program), or for a select few, through a direct commissioning process for enlisted men and warrant officers. National Guard officers were much less likely to have had formal military training, and were appointed as officers by their state governor.

With war clouds looming, and the realization that the regular army was too small to provide enough proficient trainers to build the expanding army, masses of new manuals appeared in 1940-41 that addressed every aspect of army organization and operations from the individual soldier through corps and army operations. From 1940 every soldier received FM 21-100, *The Soldier's Handbook*, and the farther in rank a soldier progressed the more manuals he accumulated. A good

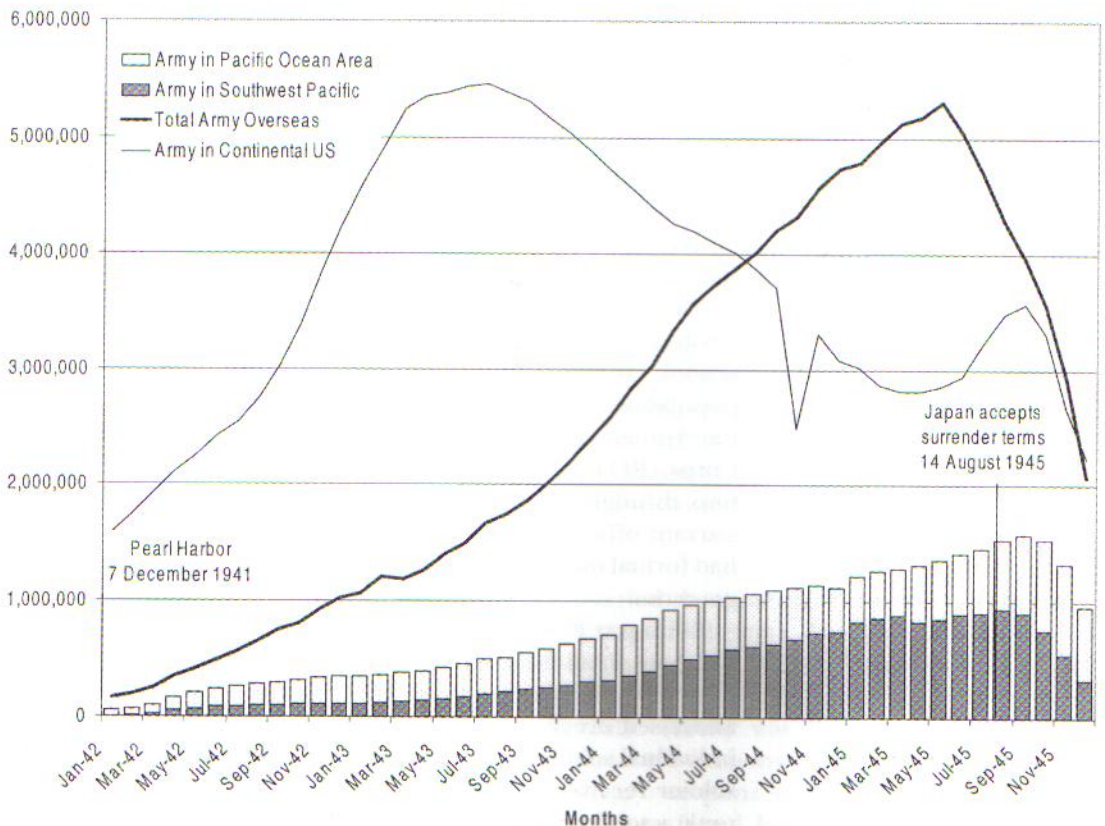
sergeant might have FM 7–20, *Rifle Company*; FM 21–20, *Physical Training*; FM 21–25, *Map and Aerial Photograph Reading*; FM 22–5, *Infantry Drill Regulations*; FM 23–5, *US Rifle Caliber .30*, and FM 23–15, *Browning Automatic Rifle with Bipod Cal. 30*. If something was to be done, there was a manual demonstrating how to do it. Not only were countless millions of manuals printed, but as the war wore on, and new lessons were learned, updates and appendices were added.

December 7, 1941, the day Japan attacked Pearl Harbor, ended any discussion as to whether the United States should enter the war. At the time there were 80 National Guard infantry regiments, 44 regular army regiments (16 of which were overseas in Alaska, Panama, Iceland, Hawaii and the Philippine Islands), and six regiments of the Army of the United States on active duty.

The Pacific Theaters of Operation

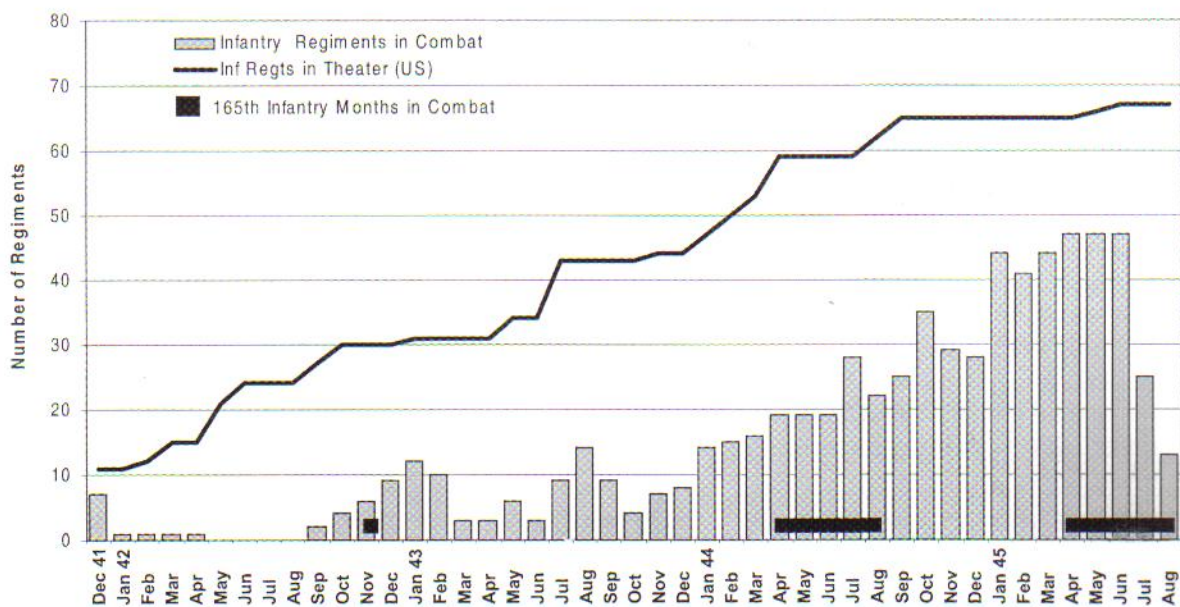
US Army strength in the Pacific never reached the level of the build-up in Europe, and did not break the million-soldier mark until July 1944. This was due in large part to the emphasis on European operations and the shortage of shipping. A large number of soldiers remained in the United States until July 1943 because of shipping shortages, and it was only from August 1944 that there were more soldiers overseas than there were in the United States. Because of the vast distances covered in the Pacific, every move from one island to another required shipping, and resources were tightly stretched.

U.S. Army strength in the Pacific Theaters of Operation, 1942–45.



Sixty-seven regiments served in the Pacific Theaters of Operation (SWPA and POA) accumulating 1,961 months in theater and 708 combat months between Pearl Harbor on December 7, 1941 and September 2, 1945, the day Japan signed the surrender document aboard the USS *Missouri*. Although there were 30 rifle regiments in the Pacific by October 1942, and over 60 by July 1944, it was only from April 1944 that more than 18 regiments were fighting in any month. This much higher overhead was due primarily to the need to garrison outposts and the Hawaiian Islands as well as the cyclical nature of combat in this theater. Short, high-intensity fighting resulted in high casualties over a short period, and combined with large numbers of non-battle casualties, primitive infrastructure, constrained shipping resources and the slow arrival of replacements to produce long delays between military actions. Only in late 1944 was the shipping logjam overcome, allowing major campaigns to be conducted in the Philippines and on Okinawa.

U.S. infantry regiments in combat, Pacific Theaters of Operation.



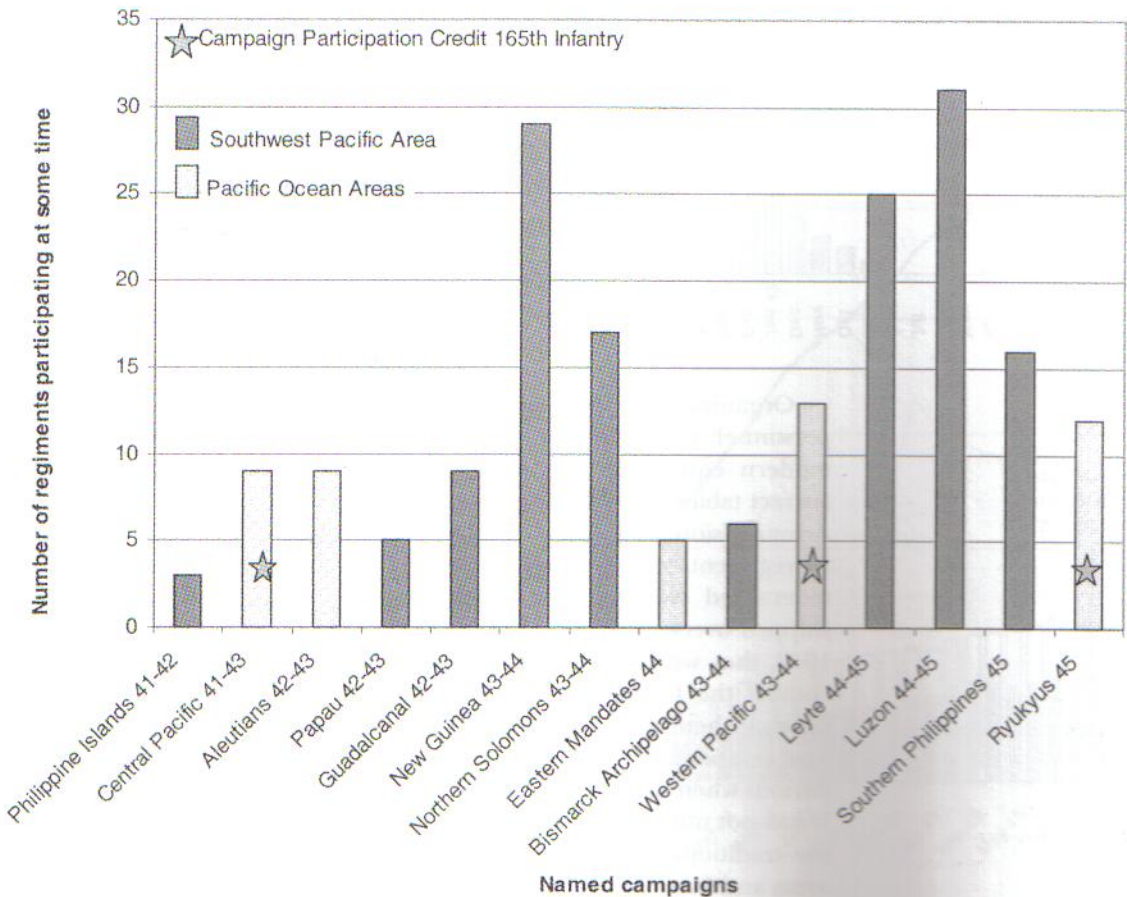
Organizations traveling overseas in early 1942 were at the correct personnel strengths, but lacked advanced training and some vital modern equipment; some units had not yet reorganized under the correct tables of organization and equipment. Since all but two Regular Army divisions had been heavily levied for soldiers to form new units, and 14 regiments were already overseas in December, it was the untouched federalized National Guard divisions and their regiments that first shipped overseas. Although some regiments entered combat as early as 1942, they were untrained in jungle warfare and had to learn how to combat the Japanese by the most brutal on-the-job training – simply fighting them. In much of the combat during 1942 and 1943, platoon and company operations were vital to the grand scheme, unlike later periods when divisions and corps maneuvering became more important. It was not until the land battles in the Philippines and on Okinawa that the traditional European style of warfare with corps, boundaries, rear areas and heavy use of land-based artillery on both sides came into play.

Just as the war in the Pacific was broken up into two major combat areas for Americans, one commanded by a general, the other by an admiral, both areas had their own methods of combat. The SWPA encompassed large island land masses that were jungle-covered, infested with malaria, and where the high temperatures and humidity along with the muck, filth, and debilitating diseases combined to send a great many more soldiers to hospital as non-battle casualties than did battle wounds. The POA consisted of heavily defended islands, many of which were under Japanese mandate during the 1920s and 1930s. The incidence of disease on these tropical islands was not high and malaria was rare – dengue fever and dysentery were the most noteworthy diseases. For every soldier felled through combat in the SWPA, five others were stricken with disease or non-battle injuries. In the POA, for every soldier wounded or killed, 6.3 were lost to disease or other injuries. The average daily casualty rate for the U.S. Army was one battle casualty for every four and one half rendered ineffective through disease or non-battle injury.

	Disease	Non-battle injury	Battle injury or wound	Total daily admissions per 1,000
Pacific Ocean Areas	33.89	5.85	6.31	46.05
Southwest Pacific	46.25	7.23	10.39	63.87
Continental U.S.	27.06	4.24	.01	31.31

Daily average noneffective rate (per 1,000 strength).

BELOW Campaigns in the Pacific.



There were 14 campaigns in which the U.S. Army infantry fought in the two major Pacific areas; nine in the SWPA, including the fall of the Philippine Islands, through the recapture of the Southern Philippines; and five in the POA, from Pearl Harbor in the Central Pacific to the Ryukyu Islands in 1945.

There were 67 Army infantry regimental months of combat in the POA theater, including assaults on Kwajalein Atoll, Saipan, Peleliu, and Okinawa; and 641 months in the SWPA on New Guinea, New Georgia, New Britain, and in the Philippines. Both of these theaters culminated in fighting major land campaigns in the Philippines and on Okinawa.

National Guard

Each recognized state possesses a militia, now termed National Guard, which serves as the governor's military force in time of civil disturbances, natural disasters or other emergencies. Many of these state organizations predate the establishment of the United States and the regular army. During World War II, 39 states provided at least one rifle regiment and some as many as five; the territories of Alaska, the Hawaiian Islands, and Puerto Rico one, two and two respectively.

When the National Guard federalized in 1940 and 1941, its divisions were arranged under the old square division concept of two brigades of two infantry regiments each. Each of the nine rifle companies in each regiment was organized as in Plate B (see color section).

From February to September 1942 when the 27th Infantry Division reorganized, the 18 federalized divisions began converting to a triangular organization of three infantry regiments, which dramatically increased mobility as well as improved command and control. The 165th Infantry Regiment adopted these changes in September 1942. The new order met with some resistance and confusion at the platoon level, but soldiers soon recognized that three large, rather than six small squads provided greater scope for action.

Prewar equipment for National Guard infantry units consisted of equipment used in World War I. This 1927 picture shows soldiers posed clockwise from top left, with an 81 mm mortar, a soldier in firing position with a rifle grenade, an infantry howitzer, a water-cooled .30 cal. heavy machine gun, a soldier with a bipodless Browning Automatic Rifle (BAR). In the foreground stands a soldier with the M1903 Springfield rifle and bayonet. To his right kneels a grenadier throwing a defensive "pineapple" hand grenade.



The organization chart (see color plate B) shows a typical National Guard rifle company as it entered federal service in 1940. The company's combat power rested on three rifle platoons containing two sections of 26 divided into three squads of eight men, with armament consisting of pistols, rifles and Browning Automatic Rifles, which better suited the combat of World War I with two echelons of men in each platoon.

In 1941 and 1942, companies reorganized as described above into three rifle platoons each containing three squads of 12, plus a four-man headquarters element; a weapons platoon with a mortar section consisting of three 60 mm mortars, and a machine gun section containing two M1919A3 .30 cal. light machine guns. The "triangularization" enabled the platoon leader to use one squad to fix the enemy, one to maneuver to strike the decisive blow, and one to weight the main effort. At higher echelons, the third unit normally comprised the reserve.

During the 1930s National Guard armory life consisted of 48 drill periods spread out as a weekly drill lasting between one and a half hours and four, for which soldiers were paid one day's pay, payable every three months. On mobilization and during their two-week summer camp, guardsmen received the same pay as their regular army counterparts.

Drill itself consisted of a few hours of training, mostly drill, and some weapons firing on the armory shooting range, after which soldiers congregated in the company canteen to drink beer and play cards, or in the drill hall to watch various sports. Soldiers were dressed and armed from supplies left over from World War I: they were armed with M1903

Soldiers going 'over the top' during training in 1940. They wear World War I equipment, save for the canvas leggings replacing wrap leggings. Also note the massed formation which is symbolic of platoon drill of the 1920s and 1930s.

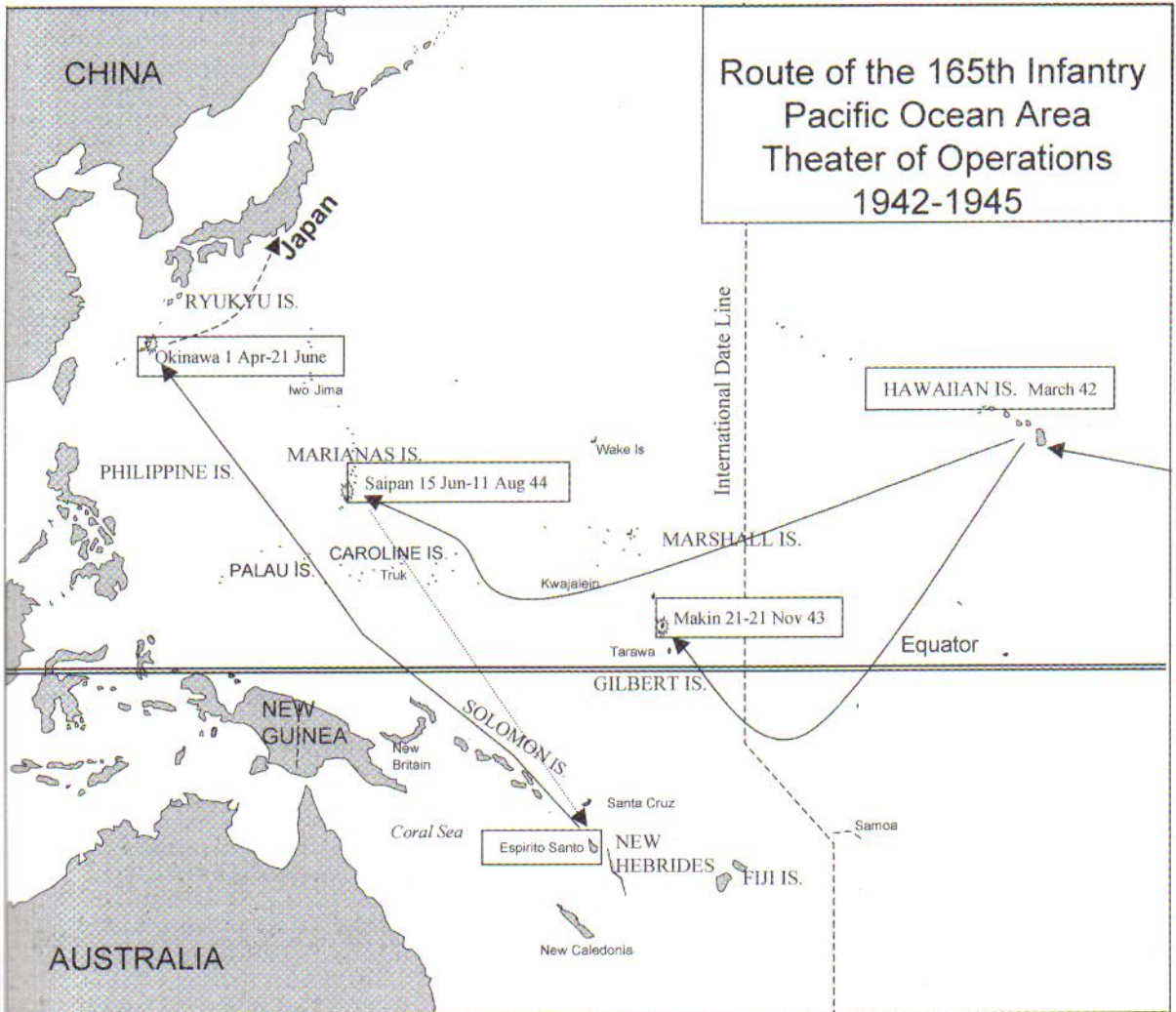


Springfield rifles, .30 cal. Browning Automatic Rifles, and .45 cal. pistols. Machine guns and mortars, though authorized, were rarely seen. In 1940, armory drills were boosted by 12, to 60 periods per year, and home station field training was also increased. For a newly recruited guardsman there was no basic training *per se*. He trained with the company drill sergeant until he knew basic soldiering, and then drilled with his squad or section thereafter.

When the regiments mobilized in 1940 and 1941, they conducted their soldiers through a 13-week period of mobilization training (eight hours per weekday, four hours on Saturday) that included two weeks of recruit, eight weeks of company, two weeks of battalion, and one week of regimental level training. Of the 572 hours, only 20 hours were devoted to close-order drill, and 111 hours to rifle marksmanship.

The 165th Infantry Regiment

The 165th (the "Fighting 69th") Infantry Regiment, New York National Guard, is the regiment in which our fictional/composite soldier enlisted during the summer of 1938. Michael O'Brien was born in May 1921 in



the Bronx, one of the boroughs of New York City. He was the youngest son of an Irish immigrant, and like the average family, had three brothers and two sisters, four of whom lived past age five. His father and three brothers worked in a nearby printing shop, as did Michael part-time after school. Once a weekend two weeks a year, his brothers drilled as members of the 165th Infantry Regiment, formerly the 69th Infantry of the American Civil War and World War I, which was headquartered at the 69th Regiment Armory located off Park Avenue on Lexington Avenue. In 1938, Michael was a senior in high school.

In 1938 the 165th Regiment consisted of a headquarters, three infantry battalions, three rifle companies, one machine gun company, a supply company, a howitzer company and a medical and chaplains detachment; recruits were primarily citizens of Irish descent from the boroughs of the Bronx and Manhattan. Traditionally, the regiment received Mass at St Patrick's Cathedral before marching in the St Patrick's Day parade every year. Some of the 165th's companies traced their lineage to the American Revolutionary War and 20 campaign streamers from the different wars adorned the regimental colors.

In October 1940 the 165th Infantry Regiment was federalized along with the other organizations within the 27th Infantry Division, New York National Guard. Regiments called their guardsmen, accustomed to their weekly drills and two-week summer camps, to the colors. What had been a welcome distraction and additional income now became all-important. Uncertain about the future, the soldiers left their families and jobs behind.

The 165th Infantry was sent to Fort McClellan, Alabama on October 25 to begin a period of intense training interspersed with furloughs and maneuvers. After the attack on Pearl Harbor, the regiment went on high alert, and transferred by train to Englewood California just eight days later. On March 8, the 165th Infantry sailed aboard the USAT *President Grant* for Hawaii, where the regiment, along with the remainder of the 27th Division, spent the next year and a half guarding the Hawaiian Islands and training for combat. In October 1943, the regiment began amphibious training, making several practice assaults against the island of Maui. On November 4, the men boarded the USS *Calvert* for their first combat action on Makin Atoll, Butaritari Island. Later, in June 1944, the 165th earned a richly deserved campaign streamer for its work on Saipan, and another in April 1945 for Okinawa. At war's end, the regiment was preparing for occupation duties on the Japanese main island of Honshu, but in December 1945 returned to the United States where it inactivated on December 31, 62 months after federalization and 46 months after shipping overseas.

CHRONOLOGY

During the 1930s and 1940s, most people received their information about world events through reading the newspaper and listening to the radio. Soldiers who fought in the Pacific, and their families at home, would have followed the below chronology as headlines.

- 1931**
Sep 18 Japanese Kwantung Army seizes Mukden, Manchuria.
- 1936**
Mar 7 Germans reoccupy Rhineland.
- 1937**
Jul 7 Sino-Japanese War begins.
Dec 12 Japanese attack U.S. and British gunboats in Yangtze River, sinking USS *Panay*.
Dec 13 Japanese take Nanking.
- 1938**
Mar 12 Germans march into Austria.
Jul 28 Soviet and Japanese forces fight in Far East.
Sep 29 Hitler and Chamberlain, meeting in Munich, agree to partition Czechoslovakia.
Nov 3 Japanese announce a "New Order in East Asia."
- 1939**
Mar 1 Germans enter Prague.
May 28 New Soviet-Japanese fighting erupts at Khalkhin Gol.
Sep 1 Germany invades Poland.
Sep 1 Marshall becomes U.S. Army Chief of Staff.
Sep 8 Roosevelt signs emergency proclamation expanding the Regular Army to 237,000 and increases the National Guard to 235,000.
Nov 3 U.S. Congress passes "cash and carry" amendment to Neutrality Laws.
- 1940**
Mar 30 Japanese establish puppet Chinese government (under Wang Ching wei) at Nanking.
Apr 9 Germans seize Denmark and invade Norway.
May 10 Germany invades Low Countries and France.
May 26 Allied evacuation at Dunkirk (to June 4).
Jun 22 France falls, armistice signed with Germany.
Jun 26 First U.S. embargo on war trade with Japan.
Aug 15 Eagle Day, Battle of Britain.
Aug 27 Authorization for federalization of National Guard for 12 months.
Sep 3 U.S.-British destroyers bases deal.
Sep 7 Blitz on London begins.
Sep 16 Roosevelt signs Selective Service Act.
Sep 22 Japanese forces move into Indochina.
Sep 23 Discharge granted to enlisted men who are sole support for dependents. (51,501 leave Guard, about 1 in 5.)
Sep 27 Japan signs Tripartite Pact.
Nov 5 Roosevelt elected to third term as president.
- 1941**
Mar 11 U.S. Lend Lease Act signed.
Jun 22 Germany invades USSR.
Jul 5 U.S. forces begin occupying Iceland.
Aug 9 Roosevelt and Churchill meet in Atlantic Conference; proclaim Atlantic Charter.
Oct 31 U.S. destroyer *Reuben James* sunk by U-boat.
Dec 7 Japanese attack on U.S. naval base at Pearl Harbor.
- Dec 8* U.S. bases in the Philippines and British bases in Malaya. attacked by Japanese; United States declares war on Japan.
Dec 10 Japanese take Guam; make first landings on Luzon, Philippine Islands.
Dec 10 Japanese sink H.M.S. *Prince of Wales* and H.M.S. *Repulse* off the Malay Peninsula.
Dec 16 Japanese invade Borneo.
Dec 23 Wake Island falls.
- 1942**
Jan 7 Siege of Bataan begins.
Jan 24 U.S. destroyers sink Japanese shipping in Makassar Strait.
Feb 22 MacArthur ordered to leave Philippines.
Feb 27 Battle of Java Sea ends Allied naval resistance in Dutch East Indies.
Mar 7 Japanese land in New Guinea.
Mar 9 Japanese secure Java, completing conquest of East Indies.
Mar 20 27th Infantry Division arrives in Hawaii. First division to arrive overseas in the Pacific since war's outbreak.
Mar 30 General MacArthur appointed Supreme Commander Southwest Pacific Area, Admiral Nimitz as Commander-in-Chief, Pacific Ocean Area.
Apr 3 Bataan surrenders.
Apr 18 U.S. (Doolittle) B-25 raid on Japan.
May 4-8 Battle of the Coral Sea.
May 6 Corregidor surrenders.
Jun 3-6 Battle of Midway.
Jun 7 Japanese invade western Aleutian Islands.
Jun 9 Japanese conquest of Philippines completed.
Aug 7 U.S. 1st Marine Division lands on Guadalcanal.
Aug 8 Battle of Savo Island.
Aug 24 Naval battle of the Eastern Solomons.
Sep 7 Japanese defeated in Milne Bay area, New Guinea.
Sep 12 Fighting on Bloody Ridge, Guadalcanal.
Sep 25 Allied counteroffensive opens on Papua New Guinea.
Oct 11 Naval battle of Cape Esperance.
Oct 26 Naval battle of Santa Cruz Islands.
Nov 12 Naval battle of Guadalcanal.
Nov 30 Naval battle of Tassafaronga.
- 1943**
Jan 22 Allies complete victorious Papuan campaign in Sanananda area.
Feb 9 U.S. forces complete Guadalcanal campaign.
Mar 1 Naval battle of the Bismarck Sea.
May 11 U.S. 7th Division lands on Attu.
May 30 Japanese resistance on Attu ends.
Jun 30 Operation Cartwheel (Rabaul) launched in Southwest Pacific.
Jul 5 Battle of Kula Gulf (Kolombangara).
Jul 12 Battle of Kolombangara.

Aug 6	Battle of Vela Gulf.	Nov 24	United States begins B-29 raids on Japan.
Aug 15	U.S. force invades Kiska.	Nov 27	Fighting ends on Peleliu.
Oct 6	Battle of Vela Lavella.	Dec 15	19th Infantry and 503d Parachute Infantry Regiment invade Mindoro.
Oct 31	U.S. 3d Marine Division lands on Bougainville.		
Nov 20	U.S. 165th Infantry Regiment lands on Makin Atoll and Marine 2d Division assaults Tarawa.	1945	
Nov 25	Battle of Cape St. George.	Jan 9	U.S. Sixth Army invades Luzon with 46th, 37th, 6th and 43d Infantry Divisions.
Dec 26	U.S. 1st Marine Division lands at Cape Gloucester, New Britain.	Feb 3	U.S. Army reaches Manila.
		Feb 19	4th and 5th Marine Divisions followed by 3d Marines invade Iwo Jima.
1944		Feb 25	B-29 raid on Tokyo demonstrates effectiveness of incendiary bombs.
Jan 31	U.S. 4th Marine and 7th Infantry Division land on Kwajalein Atoll.	Mar 3	Japanese resistance in Manila ends.
Feb 17	22d Marine Regiment and 106th Infantry Regiment land on Eniwetok.	Mar 9	U.S. B-29s begin incendiary campaign against Japanese cities.
Feb 29	Elements of U.S. 1st Cavalry Division land in Admiralty Islands.	Mar 11	41st Infantry Division lands on Mindanao.
Apr 22	U.S. 24th and 41st Infantry Divisions land in Hollandia area, New Guinea.	Mar 18	40th Infantry Division lands on Panay.
May 18	163d Infantry Regiment lands on Wakde off New Guinea.	Mar 26	Fighting ends on Iwo Jima.
May 27	41st Infantry Division lands on Biak.	Mar 25	AMERICAL Infantry Division assaults Cebu.
Jun 4	Rome falls to advancing Allies.	Apr 1	U.S. Tenth Army, with 6th and 1st Marine Divisions and 7th and 96th Infantry Divisions invade Okinawa. 77th and 27th Infantry Divisions and 8th Marine Regiment follow landing forces.
Jun 6	D-Day: Allies land in Normandy France.	Apr 7	U.S. Navy planes sink Japanese battleship <i>Yamato</i> in East China Sea.
Jun 15	2d and 4th Marine Divisions, followed by 27th Infantry Division invade Saipan.	Apr 11	Japanese begin two-day kamikaze onslaught against U.S. ships at Okinawa.
Jun 19–20	Naval Battle of the Philippine Sea ("Great Marianas Turkey Shoot").	Apr 12	Roosevelt dies; Truman succeeds as president.
Jul 9	Fighting ends on Saipan.	May 2	Hostilities cease in Italy.
Jul 21	3d Marine Division, 77th Infantry Division and 1st Provisional Marine Brigade invade Guam.	May 9	VE Day, the war in Europe is over.
Jul 24	4th and 2d Marine Divisions invade Tinian.	Jun 22	U.S. Tenth Army completes capture of Okinawa.
Aug 1	Organized resistance ends on Tinian.	Jun 30	Luzon campaign concludes.
Aug 10	Organized resistance ends on Guam.	Jul 25	Organized resistance ends on Mindanao.
Aug 25	Aitape operation (New Guinea) ends in Allied victory.	Aug 6	Atomic bomb dropped on Hiroshima.
Sep 15	31st Infantry Division land on Morotai.	Aug 8	Atomic bomb dropped on Nagasaki.
Sep 15	1st Marine Division and (later) 81st Infantry land on Peleliu.	Aug 8	Soviets invade Manchuria; USSR declares war on Japan.
Oct 20	US Sixth Army invades Leyte with 1st Cavalry and 24th, 7th and 96th Infantry Divisions.	Aug 14	VJ Day, Japan surrenders, ending World War II.
Oct 23–26	Naval battle for Leyte Gulf.	Sep 2	Japan signs surrender documents on the deck of the USS <i>Missouri</i> .
Nov 7	Roosevelt elected to fourth term as U.S. President.		

ENLISTMENT: PREWAR AND PEARL HARBOR

Michael's story

Michael arrived at the 69th Regiment Armory with his older brother. The building was massive, reaching four stories and spanning almost a city block in downtown New York City. They walked through the massive semicircular archway and into the corridor. To their front was the drill hall, 210 by 160 ft, with high vaulted ceilings and hardwood floors. Attached to the hall was the four-floor headquarters for the regiment, comprising offices, classrooms, dining facilities and other support operations. They climbed past the floor containing the regimental headquarters with displays of past battle honors and the regiment's Civil War battle flag — the Gaelic motto *Riamh Nar Dhruid O Sapirn lann* ("Who

never retreated from the clash of spears”) under a sunburst and Irish harp on a field of green with clover, all symbolizing the regiment’s Irish heritage and service as the 1st Battalion, Irish Brigade. They arrived on the third floor which contained the 1st Battalion headquarters, company headquarters, supply rooms, arms rooms, classrooms and kitchens. The fourth floor was the same as the third except it was for the 2d Battalion.

Michael was only 17, and the minimum age for a guardsman was 18, but, with the Great Depression, limited enlistments, parents’ tacit permission, and sometimes older brothers in the same company, recruiting sergeants and officers sometimes turned a blind eye and enlisted young men before their time. The wink of his brother was all it took and Michael was soon filling out the necessary paperwork and being told of his enlistment bonus and subsequent pay for each drill, which as a private was a dollar a drill plus \$14 for summer camp. Michael, along with one other enlistee, raised his right hand and repeated the following oath: “I do hereby acknowledge to have voluntarily enlisted this 21st day of June, 1938 as a soldier in the National Guard of the United States and of the State of New York for the period of three years under the conditions prescribed by law, unless sooner discharged by proper authority. And I do solemnly swear that I will bear true faith and allegiance to the United States of America and to the State of New York, and that I will serve them honestly and faithfully against all their enemies whomsoever, and that I will obey the orders of the President of the United States and of the Governor of the State of New York, and of the officers appointed over me according to law and the rules and Articles of War.”

His brother shook his hand, as did the others witnessing the ceremony and the recruiting officer handed Michael his enlistment bonus of two dollars. The first sergeant escorted them to the supply room to draw uniforms and equipment. Here Michael received the standard allocation of: “Breeches, cotton; Coats, woolen; Drawers, cotton, Drawers, woolen; Hat, service with infantry cord, leggings, field; Overcoat, Raincoat, Shirts flannel, Shoes field, Stockings, Trousers, woolen; Trousers, elastic; undershirts cotton and undershirts elastic.” His field equipment consisted of a shelter half, pins and poles, a cartridge belt, a haversack and pack carrier, a canteen, canteen cup and cover, a steel bonnet and mess gear.

The only things that fitted properly were his campaign hat and leggings. Everything else was too large for a boy’s body and smelled of disuse and camphor, although it was obvious by the various mendings that the equipment had had previous owners. Every item, except his nearly new trousers and coat, was of World War I vintage and older than he was. The arms room contained Springfield rifles, Browning Automatic Rifles, and .45 cal. pistols, all left over from World War I. Machine guns and mortars, though authorized, were nonexistent.

Many of the company leaders were veterans of the World War I and long National Guard service. It was a spit and polish organization: officers and men well turned out in the uniforms of the day, with gleaming leather and spotless uniforms, but lacking in tactical acumen. Officers and NCOs took military correspondence courses to stay abreast, but had very little opportunity to polish their skills.



The first day of federalization for the 165th Infantry. Note the widely varied uniforms of the soldiers pitching camp. In the right center rear are the vehicles that have brought them here.

squad and not to become too well known. Like all privates, he saw his company commander and first sergeant at company formations and during inspections. For that matter, most just stayed out of any officer's way interacting with their superiors only when absolutely necessary.

Michael's next two years consisted of weekly evening drills and a summer camp of two weeks at Camp Smith, just across from the Military Academy at West Point, New York. Much of the time during training was spent drilling and parading. Retreat parades were especially memorable with the entire regiment formed in line, companies in column. Michael deep in the ranks of his company, could not observe much, but he could hear the music and officer's commands. With the formations at present arms, he heard the colonel command "Sound Retreat." At the last note of the bugle call the evening gun fired and the regimental band began playing the National Anthem as the color bearers struck the post flag.

In the summer of 1940, while debate in Congress and across the nation centered on the necessity of a peacetime draft and federalization of the Guard, the 165th maneuvered at DeKalb, New York. Newsreels in theaters showed German tanks and Stukas sweeping across France, and smiling Japanese soldiers marching through Chinese towns with flags in their rifle barrels. By the end of the encampment and the final parade reviewed by President Roosevelt, everyone knew they would soon be on active duty. They just did not know when.

In September and early October, many guardsmen with dependents requested discharge, and only intensive recruiting drives extolling the virtues of army life in the Guard kept the companies at some modicum of strength. When soldiers gathered on October 15 for induction, most of the men in the companies were new untrained recruits.

Entry onto active duty was more rigorous than enlisting in the National Guard. Before induction, the guardsmen took a comprehensive medical examination, as well as a battery of intelligence tests. Standing in line became a way of life: there was a queue for physicals, for aptitude tests, for uniforms, for meals, and for pay. Although many Guardsmen left service in September and early October, more were discharged who were not physically capable, who did not meet mental standards, or had dependents. Of the 90 or so soldiers in each company, only about 50 actually entered active service. After two years, Michael found himself promoted by his company commander to private first class, meaning an increase in pay of six dollars per month, and designation as next in command of his eight-man squad.

Discipline was also different from that of a full-time military unit. Subordinates during drills might very well be peers or supervisors during normal workdays, and discipline could not be too harsh or men would leave the unit. Although this was not a full-time unit, Michael learned early on to stay within the confines of his

2	0		4th through 8th digit allocated by Service Command. The lower the number – the earlier the entry on active duty.
		1	1st Corps Area (ME,NH,VT,MA,RI,CT)
		2	2d Corps Area (NJ,DE,NY)
		3	3d Corps Area (PA,MD,VA,DC)
		4	4th Corps Area (NC,SC,GA,FL,AL,TN,MS,LA)
		5	5th Corps Area (OH,WV,IN,KY)
		6	6th Corps Area (IL,MI,WI)
		7	7th Corps Area (MO,KS,AR,IA,NB,MN,ND,SD,WY)
		8	8th Corps Area (TX,OK,CO,NM,AZ)
		9	9th Corps Area (WA,OR,ID,MT,UT,NV,CA,AZ)

How to read World War II National Guard service numbers. Arizona (AZ) appears twice as it was split between two service areas.

Next, Michael and his comrades received their eight-digit Army Serial Number. Soldiers, standing in alphabetical order received sequential serial numbers. Brothers were separated so their numbers were not sequential. Being National Guardsmen, their numbers began with 2025, the first 2 representing Guard, then a 0 and the next 2 representing the 2d Corps Area of New York, New Jersey and Delaware, and the 5 showing they were among the first 50,000 Federalized Guardsmen in the area. Those arriving later would have different codes representing the regular army and draftees.

SERVICE (bugle) CALLS December 1941			
2. The following list of service calls is announced:			
Calls	Duty Days	Saturdays	Sundays and Holidays
Reveille, 1st Call	6:15 AM		7:15 AM
Marches	6:25		7:25
Assembly	6:30		7:30
Mess (Breakfast)	6:45		7:45
Drill, 1st Call	7:45		
Assembly	8:00		
Church Call			11:30
Sick Call	1:00 PM	11:00 AM	9:00
Recall, drill and fatigue	11:30 AM		
1st Sergeants Call	11:30		
Mess (Dinner)	12:00 Noon		12:00 Noon
Drill, 1st Call	12:50		
Assembly	1:00		
Fatigue	1:00		
Recall, drill and fatigue	4:00		
Guard Mounting, 1st Call	4:00	12:50 PM	12:50 PM
Assembly	4:10	1:00	1:00
Retreat, 1st Call	4:50		4:50
Assembly	4:55		4:55
Retreat	5:00		5:00
Mess (Supper)	5:15		5:15
Tattoo	10:00		10:00
Call to Quarters	10:45		10:45
Taps	11:00		11:00

Service (bugle) calls, December 1941.

On October 26, Michael's battalion boarded trains for the long circuitous trip to Fort McClellan, Alabama, arriving five days later. Fort McClellan was quite different from Camp Smith and the summer camps of the last few years. Tent life was the same, but tactical training and marksmanship replaced drill. Soldiers adjusted to the bugle calls which regulated their day. They filled out rapidly from exercise and a calorie- and carbohydrate-intensive diet. There was plenty to eat, with every soldier able to return for additional helpings in their mess kits. Michael learned early on to balance and eat out of his two-piece mess kit without spilling his food. The lid of the pan was designed so that it hooked by way of a ring on the handle to the pan itself, allowing a soldier one hand free to carry his carton of milk.

		Less than 4 years	Over 4 years	Over 8 years	Over 12 years	Over 16 years
1	Master Sergeant	\$126.00	\$138.60	\$144.90	\$151.90	\$157.50
2	Technical Sergeant or First Sergeant	\$84	\$92.40	\$96.60	\$100.80	\$105
3	Staff Sergeant	\$72	\$79.20	\$82.80	\$86.40	\$90
4	Sergeant	\$60	\$66	\$69	\$72	\$75
5	Corporal	\$54	\$59.40	\$62.10	\$64.80	\$67.50
6	Private First Class	\$36	\$39.60	\$41.40	\$43.20	\$45
7	Private	\$30	\$33	\$34.50	\$36	\$37.50
	Privates with less than 4 months service	\$21				

Pay of enlisted men of the Army as of September 16, 1940. The top row refers to number of years of service.

Training intensified as all the men began the process of becoming trained soldiers. The first two weeks were dedicated to uniform issue, basic soldiering, rifle marksmanship, and school of the soldier. The next eight weeks began with squad operations and progressed through company training, followed by two weeks of battalion training and one week dedicated to regimental training. Throughout the 13-week period, only 26 hours were devoted to drill, with 246 hours spent on tactical training and 111 hours on marksmanship. Training lasted eight hours Monday through Friday, and four hours on Saturdays, which were normally set aside for inspections. On Sundays, Catholic chaplains conducted field Mass.

Michael soon learned how to adjust the loop on his Springfield rifle's sling, so that the lower band passed around the right of the left wrist, and then round his left upper arm, with the loop so tight that the position was

Soldiers of the 165th attend mass during Second Army maneuvers. They wear a mixture of khaki and olive drab uniforms.



uncomfortable. However, with practice the discomfort soon passed. This convolution bound the sling to the left forearm to the rifle and to the ground so that it formed a dead rest for the rifle, with the wrist as its universal joint. It not only increased accuracy but also dramatically reduced the recoil of the Springfield. Although the soldiers used the sling during their firing practices, many could not see themselves using it in combat.

Rifles had to be cleaned immediately after firing and for three consecutive days thereafter because the corrosive propellant would rust the bore. Everyone knew that "A dirty or rusty rifle means that the soldier does not realize the value of his weapon and that his training is incomplete," and that it was the quickest way to lose pass privileges. Michael and the others were forbidden to take their Springfields farther apart than the bolt and magazine mechanism, and concentrated primarily on keeping rust and carbon out of the bore and chamber.

Training stopped in December, and the soldiers boarded trains back for holiday furlough in New York, with only a smattering of unmarried soldiers remaining to pull the necessary camp details. On return, they found that the first draftees from Selective Service were arriving in February. Everyone looked forward to their units being filled to wartime strength, not only for training, but to reduce the number of details that each man currently had to perform. Some Reserve officers from the ROTC also arrived to replace those officers who were either too old or could not sustain the training pace.

As soon as the first group of inductees arrived they were issued clothing and equipment and formed into uneven but manageable rows. Every inductee was senior to Michael in age, with some in their thirties.

Since Michael had been with the company for two years, and was a high school graduate his company commander selected him to assist in training the new draftees; almost all Irish Catholics from New York like him. The word was that the division commander had selected from the draftees all those with Irish surnames and assigned them to the 165th Infantry to carry on its Irish heritage. Just basically trained himself, Michael studied the manuals during the night so that he could instruct the next day. Everyone learned together.

One Monday morning, Michael and his squad mates formed up with full pack and gear. The company commander took the lead and set a swift pace for the company's first 15-mile march. Michael and some of the older hands realized the march was coming and had lightened their haversacks. Unfortunately for the "old timers," the end of the march culminated in a full field layout of equipment and tentage. Those who had "forgotten" to bring all their equipment had to dig the company latrines and kitchen garbage pit, while those more inexperienced at soldiering watched.

After participating in a mock St Patrick's Day parade, athletics and hearty celebratory toasts to the patron Saint of Ireland, Michael, his company and all units of the 27th Division began preparing for the season of maneuvers. Uniforms were still in short supply and there was a mixture of khaki and older olive drab uniforms in the formations. There was little heavy weapons training outside mechanical drill because there was a severe shortage of mortars and machine guns, so stovepipes and wooden facsimiles had to suffice.



An infantry rifle company advances during Second Army maneuvers. The soldiers carry World War I-era equipment.

Michael's division left Fort McClellan in the last week of May, beginning its period of field training in preparation for the fast-approaching Second Army maneuvers. Foot marches became the norm, as did establishment of field camps. The VII Corps staff handled battalion-level training for advance guards and conducting defenses, but Michael and his comrades at squad level got little out of the training outside observing the Tennessee countryside as they marched from one locale to another. There was a short break back to Fort McClellan to clean up, followed by a trip to the Alabama maneuver area for more training at company, battalion and regimental level. Here, Michael and his mates practiced overnight marches, where the only thing visible in the dark was the back of the man's head marching in front. Minds slept while feet marched. By the end of August, all was ready and the soldiers were loaded on to trucks for the long drive to Arkansas, the staging area for General Ben Lear's Red Army, of which the 27th Division was a part.

While Congress debated on extending the call-up of the National Guard, Reserve officers, and draftees, Michael and many others in every unit listened to discussions from their fellow soldiers on going AWOL if the measure passed. Many enjoyed listening to the song, "I'll be back in a year, little darling" and "OHIO" was a watchword which meant "Over the Hill in October." Soldiers scrawled the acronym on vehicles, latrine walls and any other available canvas. Many wanted to go back home to their businesses and their families. Some signed a petition to ask their congressmen to oppose the legislation proposed by the War Department to extend the service of the National Guard, Reserve officers, and selectees.

The draft extension was passed in August by one vote in the House of Representatives and signed in September by President Roosevelt, giving the Guardsmen and selectees another 18 months of active duty. In October, soldiers over 28 could ask for discharge, and Michael's brother took the opportunity to go home. Little did he know he would be recalled in December after Pearl Harbor, and although he tried to rejoin the 165th, he was assigned to a unit bound for Europe.

The Second Army maneuvers began in earnest on September 16, and the 165th Infantry fought battles throughout the pine forests northwest of Alexandria, Louisiana. Officers learned to deploy and maneuver their soldiers, while soldiers in squads mostly learned about field living at the basest level, experienced seemingly endless marches on dirt roads, and dealt with the attentions of ever-present mosquitoes and snakes.

Umpires adjudicated combat between the Red and Blue armies by considering manpower, armament and disposition of forces to decide which side had won or lost, and then waved different colored flags to tell one force to retreat. Michael and his comrades often found themselves marching to and fro with no idea whether they were winning or losing. The only way to tell who was winning was by reading the civilian newspapers from the nearby towns.

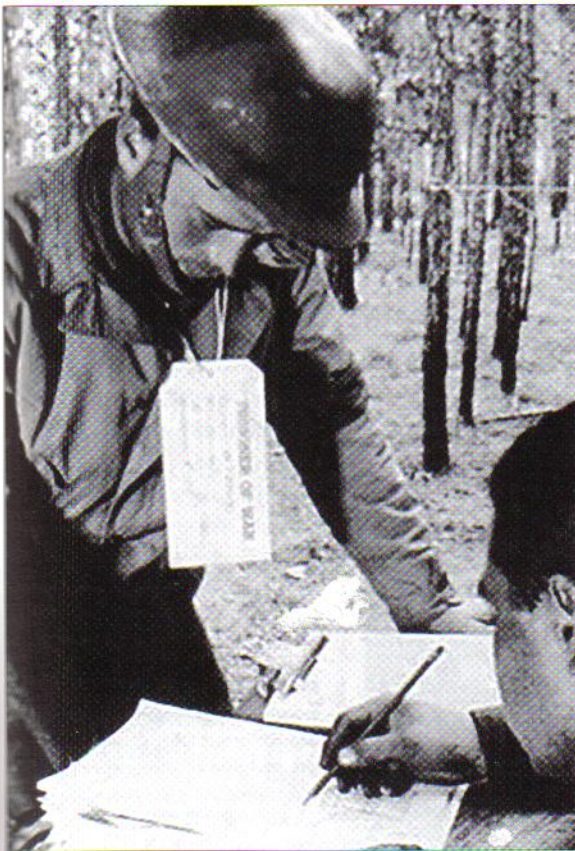
With maneuvers over, Michael's division returned to Fort McClellan, and the routine guard and details began again. With more than a year to go on active duty, there seemed little hurry to correct the deficiencies

found during the exercises. Large sumptuous Thanksgiving Dinners were held in company messes, and men prepared for their Christmas furloughs.

Michael first learned of the attack on Pearl Harbor while standing guard on a bridge along a deserted stretch of road: the sergeant of the guard brought another soldier to double the guard. Back at the barracks, soldiers gathered around any available radio to listen to President Roosevelt's speech to Congress asking for a declaration of war. "Yesterday, December 7, 1941 – a date which will live in infamy – the United States of America was suddenly and deliberately attacked by naval and air forces of the Empire of Japan ... Hostilities exist. There is no blinking at the fact that our people, our territory, and our interests are in grave danger. With confidence in our armed forces – with the unbounded determination of our people – we will gain the inevitable triumph – so help us God ... I ask that the Congress declare that since the unprovoked and dastardly attack by Japan on Sunday, December 7, a state of war has existed between the United States and the Japanese Empire."

Soldiers broke out arms and equipment, and officers and NCOs armed with clipboards went

During the 1941 maneuvers every aspect of warfare was practiced. Here a POW is interrogated. The Geneva Convention stipulated that while in the combat area, prisoners were allowed to keep their helmets and gas masks.



through detailed inspections and inventories of equipment. Those available attended Mass with a service for those who died at Pearl Harbor. On December 16, 1941, Michael and his regiment left Fort McClellan after 14 months, taking the Southern Railroad through Texas and New Mexico to Englewood, California. The rails were filled with military units moving, and it took a week to cross the country. Once there, Michael's company guarded an aircraft plant against sabotage.

January passed with soldiers living in tents, not eating with the relish they once did, and reacting to the constant myriad of rumors. This was not how Michael and his mates imagined war would be. Training began again in February, with soldiers using the M1 rifle for the first time. More inspections were held and preparation for overseas movement began. Soldiers who failed the overseas physical and for other reasons were dropped from the unit, and a large group of untrained inductees from California joined the company, the first members not from New York. On March 7, 1942, Michael and his unit moved to Pier 22, San Francisco, where Red Cross workers served coffee and donuts as they mustered before climbing the gangway and boarding the USAT *President Grant*. Michael's company filled one of the holds that had berths five high, with about 18 inches of headspace for each. The next day the ship set sail on a southwest course and joined a convoy bound for Hawaii.



Men in five-tiered bunks on a troopship. Although these men are Army Air Corps, as noted on the insignia of the sergeant on the topmost bunk, the conditions shown were typical of such transfers.

DEFENSE OF HAWAII AND PREPARATION FOR COMBAT 1942-43

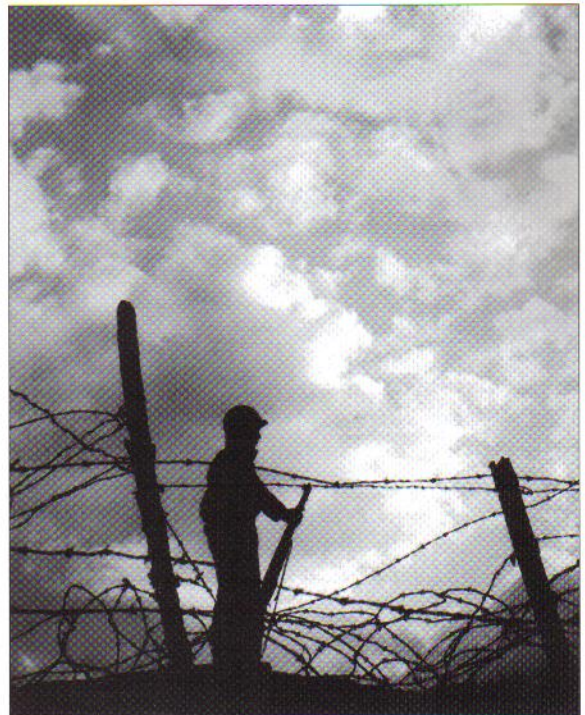
On March 16, 1942 Michael's company arrived on the island of Kauai, Hawaiian Islands and immediately began providing security and preparing beach defenses. For the next 20 months, the various islands were home to the 165th Infantry, who built beach defenses and guarded the islands against an invasion that never came. War here was different from on the mainland. There was less food to eat, as most of it had to be shipped from the Continental United States, and with the build-up of military traffic, there were not as many luxuries. Milk, especially was in short supply, and most of the food arrived in cans. There was an 1800 curfew: if soldiers were not on guard they had to be in their garrisons. At least initially, there were many instances of soldiers firing in the darkness at imagined targets, both offshore and on the beaches. Vehicle convoys driving under blackout conditions were especially dangerous and some soldiers were killed or injured in crashes.

Michael and his mates spent much of their time digging foxholes, building machine gun bunkers, and erecting concertina and double-apron barbed wire fences along all the beaches. About the only leisure activity was swimming in the surf, as in the beginning everyone worked seven days a week, stopping only to sleep. However, the high-intensity schedule died down and in May, they finally received day passes although these were limited towards the end of the month when there were numerous anti-invasion drills. Soldiers scrambled from their bunks to man the positions they had built along the coastline, hauling ammunition and weapons back and forth seemingly without purpose. Michael and the others were unaware of the great naval battles being fought at Coral Sea and found out about Midway only after the victory was secured.

Michael received his first daytime pass and immediately headed for one of the open bars in Kekaha. There was not much else to do. The whiskey was expensive, but it was better than the 3.2 'near' beer they had at their canteen, and in the end cheaper to get drunk on.

By June, everything had settled into a routine: a period of beach defense when soldiers lived near their positions without luxuries, followed by airfield defense with showers, a canteen, and other amenities. In August 1942 the company finally changed from the old Table of Organization and Equipment to one with three squads in three platoons and a weapons platoon. Squad leaders, once corporals, were now sergeants, and their assistants became corporals. Company weapons remained essentially the same, except now they carried the M1 rifle instead of the Springfield, and the weapons platoon had the authorized M1919A3 light machine guns and M2 60 mm mortars. The new M1 helmet and liner replaced the old-style M1917A1 steel bonnets. Everyone quickly found additional applications for the outershell: as a

A soldier stands guard, in the midst of barbed wire. He is wearing the M1 helmet and carries an M1 rifle.



shaving basin, something to boil water in, and as an expedient entrenching tool. On the negative side, they also found that it affected the needles in their magnetic compasses. Different uniforms also appeared for testing, and just as rapidly disappeared.

After six months of beach defense, the 165th began training for offensive combat operations, on both Kauai and Oahu. Some soldiers shipped to the officers' school at Fort Benning, while others attended the Hawaiian Department Ranger School. The first long marches through the mountains on Oahu left everyone gasping for breath, as the dramatic changes in altitude accompanied by the heat and humidity wasted even the heartiest soldier. Some soldiers could not take the grinding existence of an infantryman and were replaced, as were some officers.



ABOVE An early-type, one-piece camouflage uniform. This soldier carries a gas mask, a machete (on his left hip), and a K-bar (on his right).

LEFT A conditioning march in the Hawaiian mountains.

In May 1943, Michael's regiment began intensive instruction in amphibious operations, and spent weeks aboard amphibious transports practicing loading LCVs (Landing Craft, Vehicle), forming into waves and assaulting the Hawaiian islands of Kauai and Maui. In between they went through jungle obstacle courses, weapons ranges, and company problems. In June, there was a parade where the company received two silver rings for its guidon, the first for participation in the Revolutionary War and the second for participation in the War of 1812. Live fire maneuver exercises began in August, where soldiers assaulted objectives using live ammunition and overhead mortar, artillery and machine gun fire. During this high-risk training some of the regiment's soldiers were killed by "friendly" fire. Soldiers quickly learned from their own as well as others' mistakes.

Some squad leaders received the Thompson submachine gun that fired the standard .45 cal. round. Although it was hard to clean, difficult to maintain, and inaccurate at longer distances, the heavy bullet and high rate of fire made it a choice weapon in close combat. Michael also

practiced with the Mark 2 grenade; 2 oz of TNT, surrounded by a serrated cast-iron casing which gave it the appearance of a "pineapple." It had an effective bursting radius of about 30 yards, but small, casualty-producing shards could travel as far as 100 yards. Michael could throw one about 35 yards, about the norm for soldiers in his company. The drill was assume a good throwing position with the non-throwing side of the body toward the enemy, grasp the grenade with your thumb over the safety lever, pull the pin with the non-throwing hand, throw the grenade with an arcing motion, and immediately get behind cover. This worked well in practice on a range, but when faced with dense foliage and fellow soldiers on the right and left, often as not the exploding grenade wounded friend as well as foe.



The conditioning march: this rear view shows the M1928 haversacks carried.



The bayonet course. This soldier wears M1938 leggings, what appears to be the first pattern herringbone twill (HBT), and a white t-shirt. Here he practices attacking the 'enemy' with his M1 rifle, fitted with either an M1905 or M1942 bayonet.

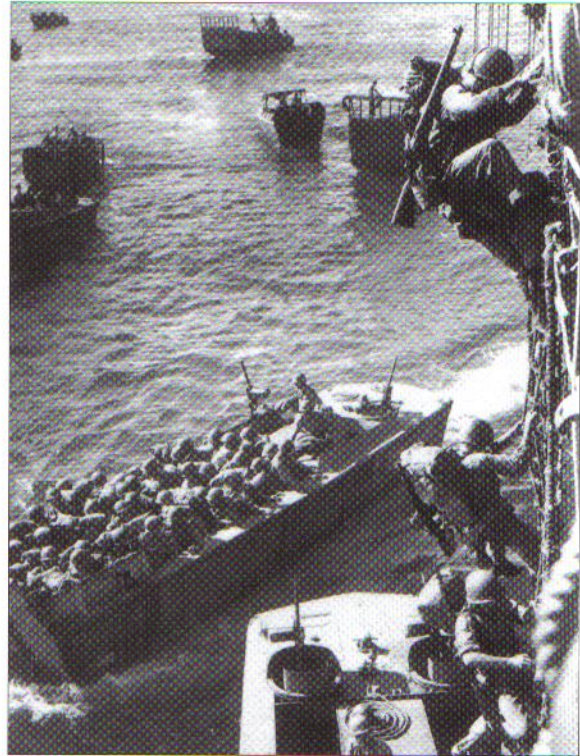
By late October and early November 1943, after extensive amphibious training aboard the USS *Calvert* and multiple practice landings on the beaches of Kauai and Maui, every soldier realized their stay in Hawaii was drawing to a close, and that they would soon be in action. On November 9, Michael's regiment set sail for Makin Atoll in the Gilbert Islands. When the *Calvert* crossed the Equator, Michael and the other 164 "pollywogs" of his company underwent the traditional naval rite and became "shellbacks" (person who has crossed the Equator by boat), after having paid the appropriate respect to Neptune.

MAKIN: FIRST BLOOD

By November 1943, Michael was a sergeant squad leader and had been on active service more than three years, entitling him to a 5 percent pay raise and a hash mark on the left sleeve of his service coat. The vast majority of his company had been on active duty for more than two and a half years. The combat which began November 20 was to be their first.

Michael's heart was in his throat every time he climbed down a cargo net. Although he kept his hands on the vertical ropes, he was always afraid the soldier above him would step on his hands and send him falling either to the deck of the landing craft bobbing below, or worse, between the hulls of the two vessels. There was a real skill to getting into the bobbing landing craft. About three rungs from the bottom of the net, Michael waited until the surge of a wave lifted the landing craft until he could step into the bottom. One had to time one's step, though: letting go when the LCV was falling meant a six-foot or more drop onto the hard deck, and with a heavy haversack, ammunition and weapon, this could result in injuries such as sprained ankles, dislocated backs or broken legs.

The second part was when the landing craft began their run-in to the shore, the waves lifting up and smacking down the bow with such violence that the soldiers inside felt as if their muscles were separating from their skeletons. An open mouth might very well result in broken teeth and a bleeding tongue. Saltwater spray drenched everything, while everyone aboard prayed they would ground on the beach, rather than on a bar and have to wade in from offshore – while avoiding the bullets they knew were coming.



The LCV (Landing Craft, Vehicle) was a small, wood-hulled vehicle carrier capable of carrying 36 soldiers, one 1-ton truck, or 10,000 lb of cargo.



Landing on Red Beach 1. Jagged rocks prevented LVTs from landing on the beach, and forced soldiers to go over the sides into deep water.

Michael's first combat landing was an anticlimax; the run-in was rough, but thankfully, there was no Japanese fire against the beaching LCVs. His company landed split between the second and third waves on Red Beach, but the LCVs grounded on coral reefs extending 20 yards from the beach, and were unable to push forward or even lower their ramps. Soldiers went over the sides into the surf chest and neck high. The coral was slippery and any misstep caused shredded HBT uniforms and gashed limbs. This was not as they had practiced, and instead of rushing off the beach, everyone clustered together as they worked their way through the rocks, and waited for the remainder of the company before moving into the tree line. Michael discovered that the cardboard surrounding the ammunition in the two bandoleers that he and every rifleman carried was wet and stuck to the ammunition clips, rendering the bullets useless until the cardboard was scraped off. Many of the soldiers dropped the bandoleers on the beach rather than spend time cleaning ammunition.

After reorganizing, they fixed bayonets and Michael's company moved forward in column of platoons along the trail heading to the center of the island. His platoon, last in order of movement, was greeted by about 50 Gilbertese wishing them a "Good Morning" in English. Surprised to see friendly faces, Michael and some of the others gave cigarettes to the adults and candy to the children and pointed them in the direction of the beach. After marching about 600 yards, Michael's company commander directed his platoons to drop their haversacks. Much lightened and encumbered now with only their weapons, ammunition, one third of a K ration and two canteens of water, the men continued toward the central part of the island. Whenever the occasional bullet whizzed over their heads, everyone ducked and looked to see where it came from – although most of the rounds were 'overs' from the 2d Battalion which had landed in the center of the island and was advancing toward them.

Everyone began digging in when they arrived at the designated reserve position; but it was in a marsh, and as the water table was too high, the slit trenches filled with water as soon as they dug them, so soldiers crouched and sat along the sides rather than occupy them.

Around 1400, Michael's squad was sent out on patrol to find bypassed Japanese. They began on the road but soon took to the bush on either side when they heard the distinctive hissing whistle of Japanese Model 98 .25 cal. rounds passing by. Michael and his men felt intimidated by their first taste of enemy fire, which although not heavy, was enough to keep them alert.

The thick brush created gaps between individuals and units, and provided openings which enabled the Japanese to infiltrate the rear areas, causing great consternation and breakdowns in weapons discipline. Units in the rear firing at infiltrators often pinned down the advancing Americans in the front lines with fire.

The dense terrain on Makin Atoll made it very difficult to maintain contact to the left and right. Note the soldiers are carrying M1928 haversacks and canteens.



The worst part about never having been in combat was the uncertainty of what to expect, as Michael's senses were not yet accustomed to notice that which would keep him alive. No amount of training in Hawaii could teach what it was really like to be under fire. The only time they had experienced overhead rifle and machine gun fire before was when pulling targets on the rifle ranges and when crawling under barbed wire on the infiltration course. This day, none seemed remotely similar.

Soldiers quickly learned to tell the difference in sound between the .30 cal. weapons of the Americans and those of the Japanese. The only disconcerting note was that the M1 carbine sounded too much like the Japanese rifle. Soldiers firing their carbines into the bush many times found themselves hugging the earth, trying to avoid returning M1 and BAR fire.

Although most of the snipers were on the ground, Michael and his squad spent much of their time searching the treetops of palms. After careful study they found they could spot sniper roosts by looking for signs on the tree trunks and ground. The Japanese notched the trunks for easier climbing, and cached rifles, water, and sake in the fronds. They marked the trees they had equipped with palm fronds located just off the ground. All a Japanese soldier had to do was run to the tree, knock down the identifying fronds, and climb the tree using the notches to find everything waiting for him. And all a GI had to do was to look for the fronds and notches.

The company moved forward again when all the patrols returned and set up a nighttime perimeter on the battalion's right flank in the corner of the tank trap and the beach, with one company on their left and another behind them to their west. Michael and the others were tired and stressed, and expected the next day to be worse. They had woken well before dawn, had made their first combat landing, had marched through marsh and jungle and had eaten little all day. Many did not properly dig their positions, and although it was hot and muggy, no one took off their HBT shirts because their white T-shirts were very conspicuous in the dark green jungle. Perhaps the prevailing thought was "God, if you only let me live



Soldiers of the 165th prepare to enter the jungle from Red Beach Makin Atoll.

Palm fronds litter the floor of this forest partially destroyed by naval gunfire. The soldiers are now without their M1928 haversacks.



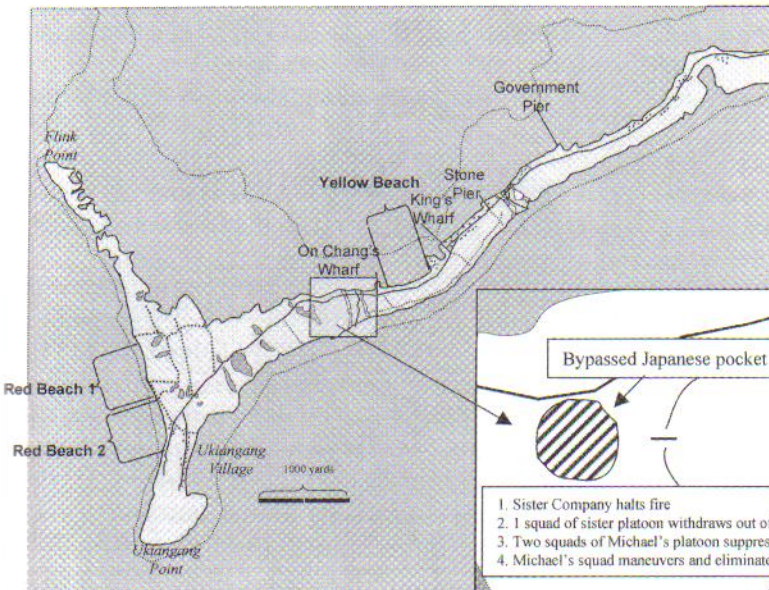


Soldiers digging foxholes under palm fronds on Makin Atoll. One soldier pulls security while the others work with shovels.

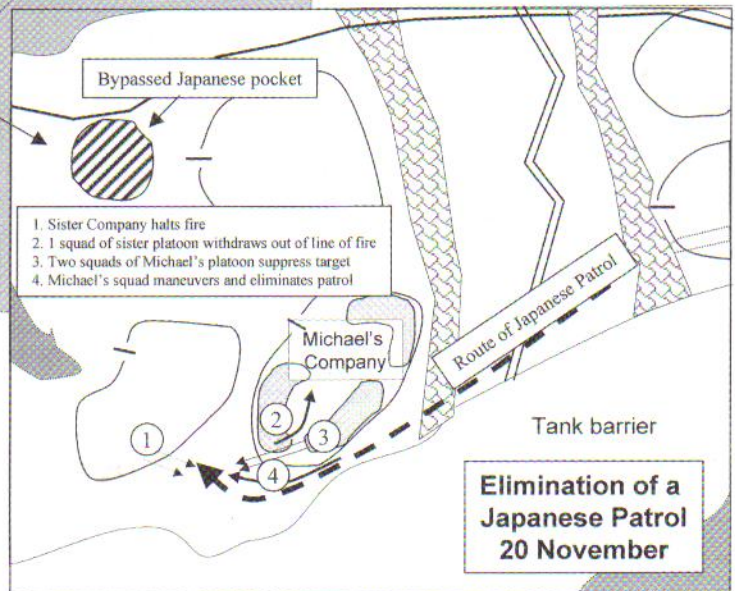
provoked Japanese grenades and rifle fire. Calls of "Medic," and "Hey, Charlie, where's my buddy?" broke through the stillness throughout the night.

until tomorrow, I'll guarantee that this damned foxhole will be deeper by morning." Everyone bedded down for the night without their knapsacks, although no one was sleeping. Company leaders warned the men not to talk or cough so they did not give their positions away.

During the night, the Japanese used various subterfuges to find the American foxholes. One came close to the perimeter whispering "Hey, sarge." Someone shot him, but the firing gave away the American positions, which were soon peppered by rifle fire and hand grenades. Michael's platoon also reacted with rifle fire to exploding firecrackers, which



Makin Atoll, Butaritari Island, November 20-22, 1943.



One Japanese patrol slipped along the ocean to a position between Michael's company and the company positioned just behind it. This group kept up a patter of small arms fire throughout the night. The companies responded by engaging each other while trying to eliminate the Japanese. There was no fire discipline.

When dawn broke, Michael saw the Japanese in a small depression just 20 feet away and began firing at them, as did positions up and down the line and across the way in the other company. There was an immediate danger of Americans killing Americans – and some soldiers in both perimeters fell killed or wounded by someone's fire, Japanese or American. Bullets thudded into the earth, tree trunks shredded and a rain of leaves and palm fronds fell onto the soldiers huddled in their foxholes. The indiscriminate shooting died only after Michael's platoon leader contacted the other company, and had one of the squads from another platoon pull back. Then, while two squads from Michael's platoon kept the Japanese heads down, Michael took his squad, bayonets fixed and adrenalin pumping, around the enemy flank using fire and maneuver until they were close enough to finish the action with bayonets.

Bayonet training took over, and Michael lunged at the nearest soldier with his rifle stock in close to his right hip, with a partially extended left arm, and guided the point of the bayonet into the enemy soldier's body, quickly completing his arm extension as his leading foot struck the ground, hearing the moan, and withdrawing his bayonet by twisting it to the right and pulling out along the same line of penetration. It was just like the bayonet range, except that this time the bayonet was stained with bright red blood. The shock of what he did came later. There were no prisoners and only one Japanese soldier escaped.

Later that morning the companies along the western tank ditch received heavy machine gun fire from the north shore of the island across the tank trap into the 1st Battalion positions. What they did not realize was that it was 'overs' from American LVTs (Landing Vehicle, Tracked) firing their machine guns at what they thought were Japanese positions in the shipwrecks offshore.

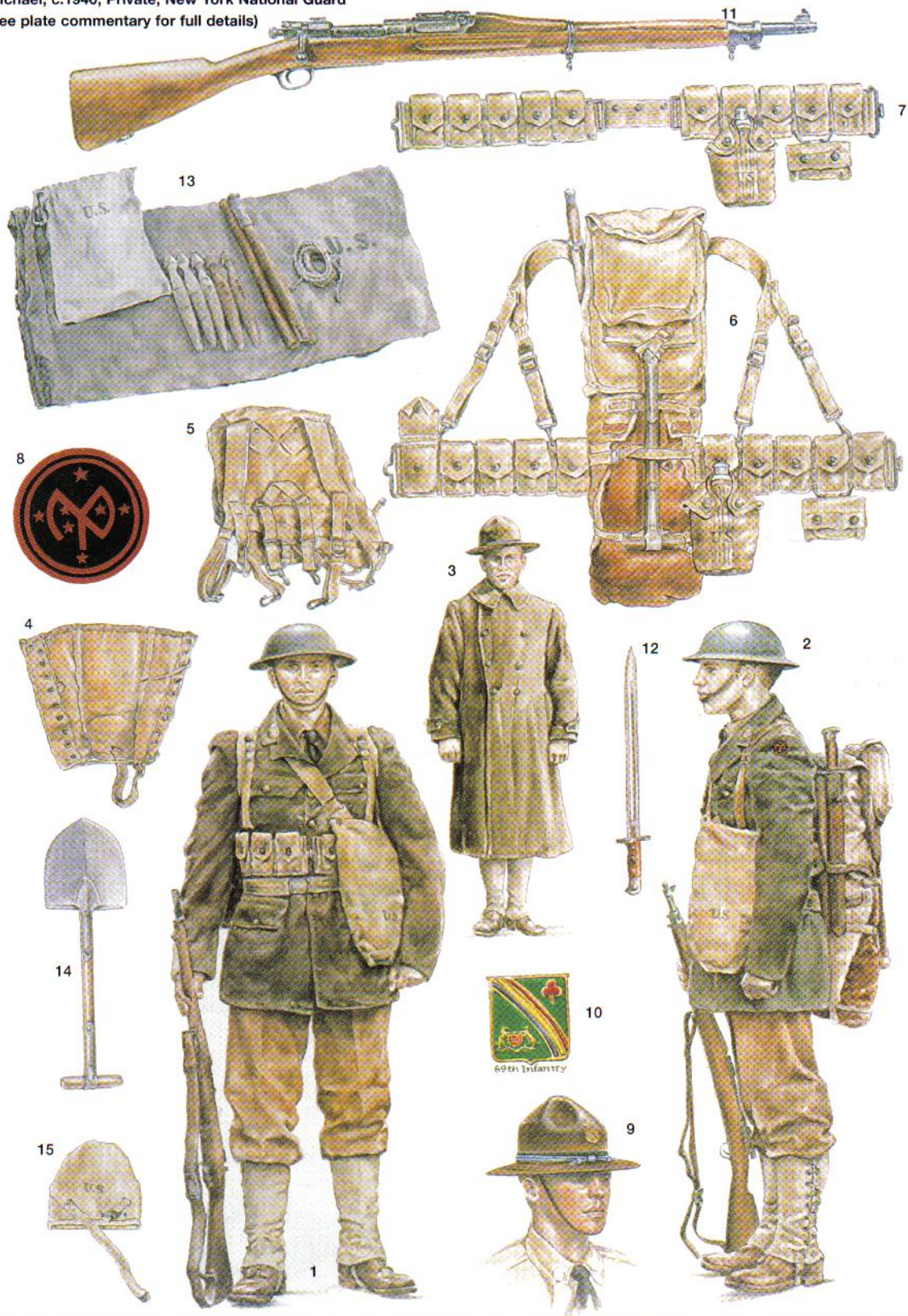
When the company moved later that day to the front lines near the Stone Pier, the previous feelings of intimidation were replaced more by a nervous anticipation. Michael's company followed behind the M3 Lee tanks of the 193d Tank Battalion, with their short 75 mm gun in the hull and 37 mm gun in the turret, but they soon passed them when they became bogged in a traffic jam. The roads were filled with vehicles.

There seemed to be too many vehicles for the small island. Michael saw regimental and battalion vehicles ranging from 2 ½-ton trucks to the ever-present GP (Jeep), artillery prime movers from the 105th Field Artillery Battalion, tanks from the 193d Tank Battalion, as well as vehicles from the many different companies supporting the operation.

Michael's company halted behind the lead elements and formed a screen across the island in anticipation of forward companies pulling back into nighttime defensive positions. Later in the afternoon, Michael heard soldiers in the forward companies breaking through brush on his right and left and digging in for the night.

This second night, using lessons learned from the night before, word went out to use grenades instead of rifle fire against Japanese probing the perimeter. During the night, there was a lot of activity outside the

Michael, c.1940, Private, New York National Guard
(see plate commentary for full details)



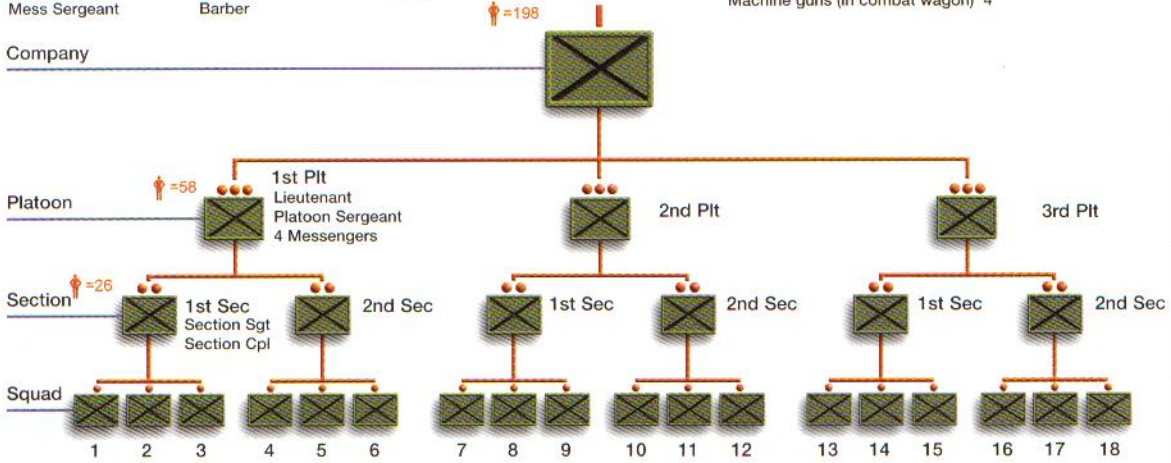
Rifle company organization (National Guard) 1938-41 (before triangularization)

Company HQ staff
(24 in total)
Captain
First Lieutenant
First Sergeant
Mess Sergeant

Signal Sergeant
Supply Sergeant
Headquarters Clerk
Armorer
Artificer
Barber

Buglers (2)
Cooks (4)
Messengers (4)
Riflemen (3)
Tailor

Company weapons (total)
Pistols 18
Rifles 162
Grenade launchers 18
Automatic rifles 18
Machine guns (in combat wagon) 4



Squad composition

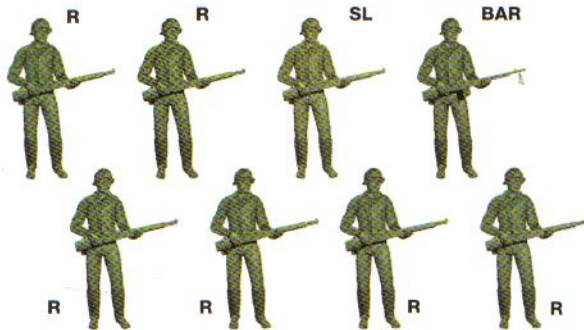


Table of squad weapons

Soldier	Rank	Weapon
SL	CPL	Springfield M1903
BAR	Sp6	Browning Automatic Rifle
R	PFC	Springfield M1903/Garand M1
R	PVT	Springfield M1903
R	PVT	Springfield M1903
R	PVT	Springfield M1903
R	PVT	Springfield M1903
R	PVT	Springfield M1903

Key

SL = Squad leader
BAR = Browning Automatic Rifleman
R = Rifleman

Company weapons



U.S. pistol, Cal. .45, M1911A1



U.S. carbine, cal. .30, M1



U.S. rifle, cal. .30, M1903 "Springfield"



U.S. rifle, cal. .30, M1 "Garand"



U.S. M1918A2 Browning Automatic Rifle



U.S. submachine gun, cal. .45, M1 "Thompson"



Browning machine gun, cal. .30, M1914A4



Mortar and mount, 60 mm, M2

1



2



3



Eliminating a sniper (see plate commentary)

D



KEY

Company all-round defense in dense terrain, used to limit enemy infiltration and attack from the rear

Company command post

Adjacent company

Boundary (platoon/company)

Squad position

Listening post

x 3 60mm mortars

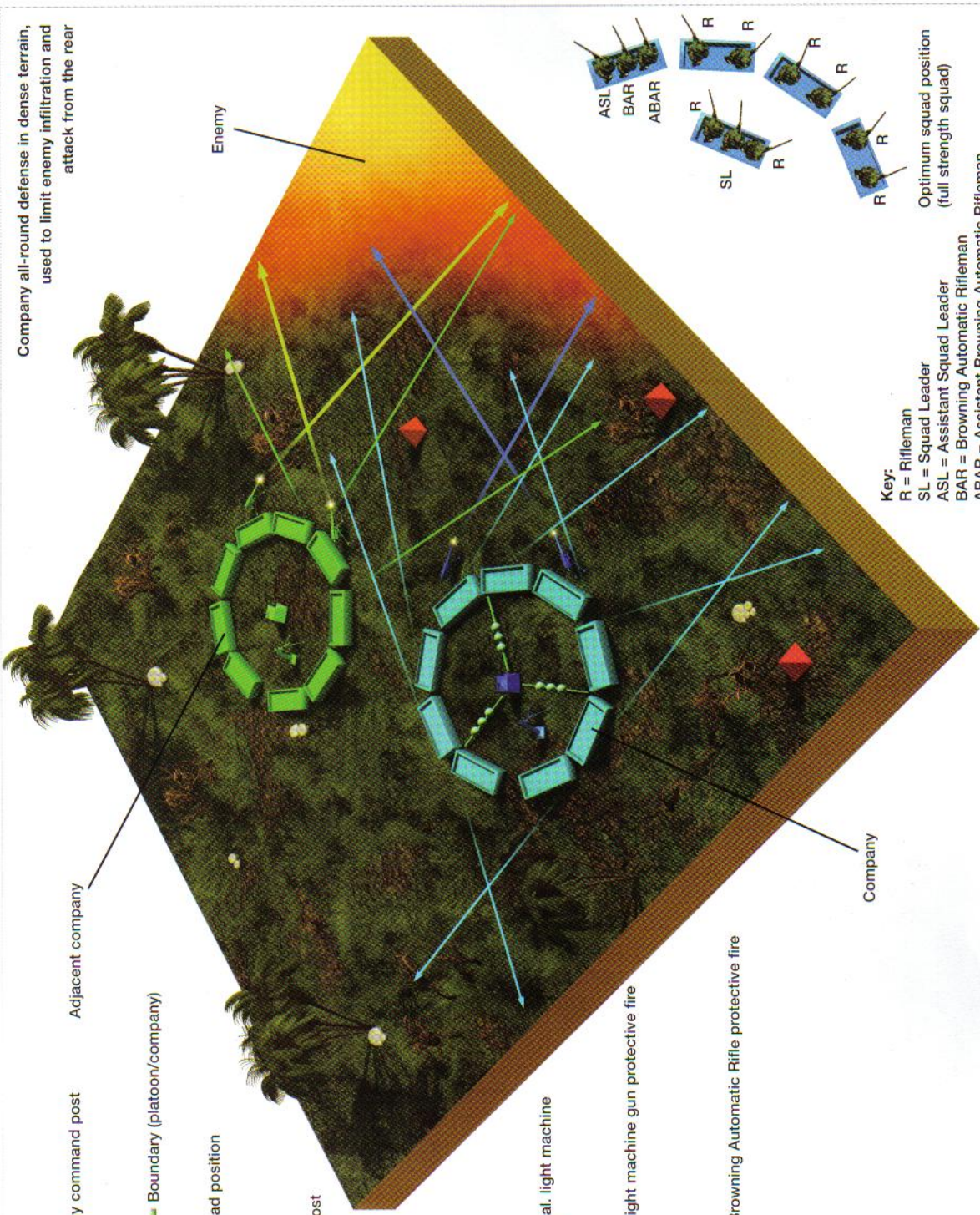
.30 cal. light machine gun

Light machine gun protective fire

Browning Automatic Rifle protective fire

Enemy

Company



Key:

R = Rifleman

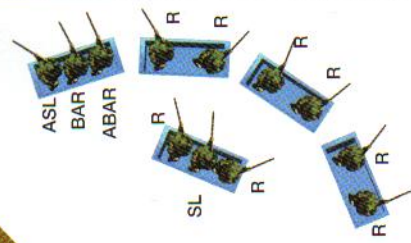
SL = Squad Leader

ASL = Assistant Squad Leader

BAR = Browning Automatic Rifleman

ABAR = Assistant Browning Automatic Rifleman

Optimum squad position (full strength squad)





Michael's squad engages a Japanese patrol, Makin, November 1943

Digging a two-man foxhole

Irregularly piled soil and spoil



TOP VIEW

Branches and bush placed in 'growing' position



FRONT VIEW (ENEMY)



SIDE VIEW



Cut-out for foot room

REAR VIEW

Michael, Okinawa, 1945
(see plate commentary)



company perimeter, but the only casualty in Michael's company was sleep. Snipers, hand grenades, and shells from the Japanese Model 10 50 mm grenade launcher, commonly referred to as a "knee mortar" kept everyone awake again. Although warned to use grenades instead of rifle fire, soldiers in the platoons returned fire with no definite result apart from alerting the Japanese to their position.

The first night soldiers had tried to stifle their coughs by biting on handkerchiefs and sleeves. The second night the medics provided a concoction of codeine, glycerin, alcohol and coconut juice to keep them quiet. Even if their throats were not sore, everyone sipped on what must have been a mind-numbing cocktail just in case.

Soldiers quickly learned from their experiences. Many found the admonitions about keeping their weapons clean were correct. Sand and rust quickly accumulated in magazine wells and weapons chambers, jamming rifles and machine guns. Only constant attention kept them clean. Flamethrowers did not work because the batteries got wet and would not spark, and there was not a mechanical method to ignite them. K ration cooking with the GI cooker carried in the canteen covers, or burning the cardboard ration box proved adequate to heat soldiers' rations. By the end of the second day soldiers realized their tall M1938 canvas leggings were too long and chafed their legs, especially since they never seemed to dry. Many cut them down so that they came just over the calf muscle. Later, the Army shortened the legging to this size (with eight eyelets instead of 12). Many also dyed their white T-shirts brown with coffee, not waiting for the Army solution after they were home.

Michael's company was relieved by another company early on the third day, and moved to King's Wharf where everyone, except the mortar section and two squads of infantry, one Michael's squad, boarded LVTs to conduct an amphibious flanking movement down the coast and behind the Japanese lines. The men left behind went to work collecting company equipment discarded the first day.

In the afternoon, Michael watched as the company marched down the road toward him. They had gone 3,000 yards by LVT, landed and formed a blocking position and killed or captured 45 Japanese forced onto them by the frontal attack of the 3d Battalion.

Equipment secured, Michael's company, the remainder of the 1st Battalion and the 2d Battalion loaded on to LSTs (Landing Ship, Tank) and transferred to their respective ships in the harbor. Michael's first combat was in the past. The three days' combat had taught him many of the finer aspects of staying alive; and although the three years of previous training was good, it was not the same. Casualties had been light, his company suffering only a few killed and his platoon only a few wounded. Only 113 men of the 3,000 or so landing with the 165th Infantry Regiment were battle casualties, of which only 32 were killed, one of whom Michael learned was Colonel Gardiner J. Conroy, the regiment's senior officer who had been its commander since 1940.



An infantryman crouches down, his first taste of sniper fire.

SAIPAN

Returning to Hawaii on December 2, the 165th moved to Hut City, Schofield Barracks and later to Bellows Field to rest, relax and perform base security. Here Michael celebrated his fourth Christmas on active duty with Christmas dinner in the mess hall and Mass at the regimental chapel.

Training resumed in January, with an emphasis on jungle training, where many of the lessons learned on Makin were incorporated into the school's instructional plans. In February, Michael's unit began amphibious training again, from rubber boats to the newer LCVPs (Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel) and during exercises on shore they practiced methods of eliminating Japanese fortified positions.

In March, the 165th celebrated its second year overseas; some new replacements arrived for the unit, but not many. They celebrated St. Patrick's Day in fine company fashion, with games, beer and drinking of the regimental cocktail which consisted of one part Irish whiskey to two parts champagne, although the ingredients were in such short supply every man received only a sip. Michael and the others stood a regimental review where medals for the Makin operation were awarded.

The unit then had more amphibious training around the island of Maui – scene of many previous practice landings. Michael felt as though he knew every rock and tree near the training site, and maps were not needed. All he had to do was tell his men “we'll be setting up our squad position at the fork in the road with three taro plants,” and they knew where to go.

There was a regimental formation for church service on Mother's Day. Michael was surprised that it was not a Mass, but he knew that both the regiment's and his company's composition had changed. By May 1944, he would bet that almost 40 percent of the regiment was from someplace other than New York, with a good portion non-Catholic. The New York Guardsman flavor remained, however, as most of the officer and NCO leadership had been with the unit since the 69th Street Armory, although there were many Reserve officers serving alongside the remaining National Guard officers. Four of the seven company officers were veterans of Makin and Guard and Reserve. As for the enlisted leadership, a good percentage of the noncommissioned officers were draftees, although most were still from the New York area. There were a few long service Regular Army soldiers, but they were all privates, with most having been busted in grade and coming to the company from other units in Hawaii.

On May 30, the men of the 165th conducted memorial services for their fallen comrades and on May 31 boarded the USS *Harris* at 1300. Before dawn the next morning the *Harris* set sail and soldiers waited below decks for permission to go topside to catch a last glimpse of what they called the Paradise Isles. After the initial “abandon ship” drill, the ship's intercom system blared forth with the message, “Good morning, this is the Captain of the ship speaking. This task force is out to capture Saipan, Tinian and Guam.” More briefings followed as the days passed. There was a brief delay at Kwajalein Atoll for supplies and mail, something that cheered everyone up immensely.

Conditions aboard the transport were poor. There was little room and no space large enough to accommodate company-sized briefings, so platoons took turns poring over the terrain models, listening to the

intelligence briefings and preparing for combat. There was no room to conduct physical training, and the days at sea without exercise weakened everyone. Michael and the others were stacked five deep in the hot and humid holds, or if lucky on deck under blankets and shelter halves. To pass the time, soldiers painted camouflage patterns on their helmets and lined up with the company barber for buzz-cut haircuts. There was no need for long hair in combat.

Operation Forager, Saipan, Marianas Islands

The *Harris* arrived in the target area on the morning of June 16, and the soldiers sat and stood on its decks watching from afar the battles along the beaches and the shelling of inland targets by the supporting battleships, cruisers, and destroyers. Michael and the others knew full well they would soon be too immersed in their own troubles to watch others.

At approximately 1800 that day, about two-thirds of Michael's company, including his squad, loaded three LCVPs, believing they were heading straight to the beaches. Instead, they spent six miserable hours aboard the bouncing little craft waiting for word as to which beach they were to land on. It was nearly midnight before the ramps lowered and the wobbly-legged men stepped onto the shores of Saipan. They marched along the beach in a long open column of twos, threading around the destruction and supplies littering the beach. Exhaustion already setting in after almost 24 hours awake, they found the assembly area about 0400 and proceeded to dig their foxholes and await the rest of the company. The remainder of the company arrived early in the morning and at 0730 jumped off in its first assault, its right flank against the coast.

Michael's platoon was in support of the lead platoons, clearing Japanese positions bypassed during the attack. Initially, their task focused on three bunkers just offset from the beach which were well protected by thick overhead cover and interlocking fields of fire. Michael and the others could suppress with rifle and BAR fire, but could not get close enough to destroy them. Soon engineers and an amphibian tank mounting a 37 mm gun arrived. While each squad suppressed their designated bunker, the tank and engineers moved from bunker to bunker. Michael's squad along with the tank first suppressed the Japanese in the bunker with rifle, cannon and machine gun fire. The engineer carrying the flamethrower maneuvered close enough and squirted liquid fire onto and into the bunker, forcing the Japanese away from the apertures. Then one of Michael's soldiers tossed a satchel charge built of blocks of TNT after it. After the explosion, the engineer ran close and squirted flame directly into the bunker, filling it with an oily fire. When the bunker cooled, soldiers entered to check for any information they might find.

The attack continued up to the ridge overlooking Aslito airfield, where Michael's company, hit by automatic weapon and cannon fire as well as Japanese infiltrating between them and the adjacent company, withdrew from the hill by leapfrogging platoons. After laying down suppressive fire, Michael's squad was the last to

Saipan, June 17, 1944. Engineers flame the last of three bunkers. The two soldiers at right bottom are medics with the engineers. One wears two medical pouches with suspenders, the other carries a collapsible litter.



pull back, with the company commander last off the ridge and close behind. Once off the ridge the soldiers fell back almost to the morning's starting point. Company casualties for the day were four dead and 18 wounded, or almost two full-strength rifle squads.

The next 17 days went much like the first day: an attack for several hundred yards, met by mortar, artillery and machine gun fire driving soldiers to ground; the elimination of the Japanese bunkers holding them up, or recoiling without success. Some days Michael's company took its objectives, some days not. Some days there were heavy casualties, some days not. Some days, at least initially, they took prisoners.

All the men knew that they, their company, and their friends were being worn down by the prolonged combat. It appeared to be a never-ending cycle: an all-round alert at first light; clean weapons while others guard, then exchange roles; the platoon leader gets the day's order from the company commander and assigns missions to each squad; the jump-off; attack; more casualties and offensive combat, once the enemy or someone up the chain decides the company goes no farther, then halt and prepare the perimeter defense. Digging foxholes, soldiers half-awake, half-asleep except when the Japanese try to infiltrate, all through the night until first light when it begins all over again.

Every afternoon before it grew dark, Michael's company would halt and prepare for what they knew was coming later: Japanese probes of their position, night attacks, and infiltration. Before the deep darkness fell, the company pulled into an all-round defensive perimeter, with the company commander assigning defensive sectors to each platoon, as well as positioning the light machine guns. The platoon leaders designated squad positions and fields of fire for the automatic weapons so that the machine guns and BARs were locked into protective crossfires around the perimeter (see color plate E).

The soldiers grouped themselves into two- and three-man foxholes, with the assistant squad leader or squad leader with the BAR. Just before night fell, those unlucky enough to be chosen for listening post duty began their trek 50-100 yards in front of their platoon, where they would listen for sounds of the Japanese preparing to attack. There they selected a position hopefully in defilade to the company,



Soldiers waiting to advance.

A company advances in a column with security on right and left. The first soldier, probably an NCO, carries an M1 with fixed bayonet, and wears the M1928 haversack, infantry cartridge belt, K-bar and jungle aid kit.





A bazookaman and his loader fire at a target on Purple Heart Ridge during mopping up operations.

hooked their sound-powered telephones to the field wire they had strung behind them and turned the volume low and the buzzer to off. It was safer to stay out quiet and hidden than it was to try to make one's way into the company perimeter when everyone had a finger on the trigger.

After several days of attack, Michael's company might get a day in battalion reserve to rest, maintain weapons and equipment and to fill in the blank leadership positions caused by casualties; in some cases privates first class became platoon sergeants. Unfortunately, many times this day off lasted only a few hours, because the company had to quickly saddle up and march to assist another company in trouble or to fill a gap in the line.

There were no replacements beyond those just lightly wounded enough to require a night's stay at the battalion or regimental aid station, and the company's front-line strength dropped from about 165 to probably fewer than 100. Some squads and platoons were much harder hit than others. Michael's squad had been fortunate so far, with few casualties, although the soldiers were spent. Michael remembered little of the past few days. They all seemed to merge together – attacking up hills and ridgelines called Love Hill, Purple Heart Ridge, Kagman Point, Papako Ridge, Karabara Pass and Hill 760, the last overlooking Tanapag harbor; and clearing bunkers and caves of Japanese; capturing Aslito airfield. He could not put a date on any of these, he only knew that he had been there.

Michael only remembered the extraordinary. About nine days into the fight they had received a much longed-for gratuitous issue of cigarettes, and another day they watched P-47s land for the first time on Aslito airfield. He also remembered his first sergeant being wounded, but that was in the recent past. After almost 20 days on Saipan, infantrymen, soldier and Marine, wild eyed and bearded, all had the look and smell of death. The body moved, but the mind was numbed. Little things were significant – a night's sleep without being sniped at, the next meal, the next sunrise, or just surviving. Long-time friends had fallen and been forgotten, at least for now.

Finally on July 5, Michael's company went into regimental reserve several thousand yards behind the front lines. The platoons immediately prepared a perimeter defense, but there was no sniper fire, and the soldiers could take off their blouses, sit in the sun, clean their equipment, and read their mail. One of the Catholic chaplains arrived and conducted Mass and non-denominational services for others. Both were well attended. Everyone knew they were going back up on the line the next day for what they hoped was the final push.

On July 6, nine men remained of the original 12 in Michael's squad. The squad had all been very lucky in the days since June 17, with only two battle casualties and one injury, none serious. For this operation, Michael's was the extreme right squad in the company, tied in with C Company on the left for the assault on the gulch ahead. If all went well, his platoon would cross the high ground north of the gulch, disappear over the crest and be above and behind the Japanese-occupied caves on the opposite face.

The slopes leading to the gulch looked like a tilted washboard, with what seemed to be drainage ditches cut into the sides. The near slope was a bit more gentle than the far one, with broad-trunked trees and huts that appeared to be made of straw about 30–40 yards apart.

Michael listened to the crump of the 60 mm and battalion 81 mm mortars against the opposite slope about 200 yards ahead. On signal, everyone began moving down the hillside, moving in rushes from cover to cover. Without gunfire, it was eerily quiet. Then, Michael heard off to his left a series of explosions and saw smoke in the straw huts. The entire company line went to ground while the explosions continued for about 15 minutes and then stopped. Michael and the soldiers on the right flank watched soldiers in the center crawl up and peer into the huts. Soon the word passed that about 60 Japanese soldiers had put grenades to their abdomens and committed suicide.

Just as they began moving again, Japanese sniper fire began pattering against the hard-baked ground. Everyone jumped into the ditches for protection. Yelling, Michael got his men moving again, but everyone stopped when they saw the men in Charlie Company pinned down. They waited for a tank to free Charlie, but the tank only made it halfway down the slope without getting a bearing on the enemy position. Michael's platoon again began moving over the ridge. Walking up and down over the washboard, they missed the camouflaged Japanese trench dug into the gulch about 25 yards away. All hell broke loose when a Japanese machine gun on the opposite ridge opened up and a hail of rifle fire from the trench caught Michael's squad in a crossfire.

Within moments, two of Michael's men were casualties, one hit in the leg and another more seriously injured. The attack halted; but Michael was so preoccupied with directing his squad that he was oblivious to the danger, unaware that everyone else was face-down in the dirt. He had to do something about his squad's position, but there was not much he could do except see that the two wounded were pulled out of the line of fire. One required immediate evacuation, but the heavy fire made that suicidal. Michael knew that his commander had stressed pushing the attack forward and for soldiers to return later for the wounded, but Michael had seen wounded soldiers mutilated by bypassed Japanese and wouldn't have that happen to his own men.

When he saw friendly machine gun and mortar fire landing on the slope ahead and in the gully, he realized this was the time to get his wounded out of harm's way. He called for help and with one of the nearby riflemen, grabbed an arm of the more seriously wounded man and ran for the crest. Michael and the soldier were almost at the ridge's crest when a bullet passed through Michael's hand, the wounded man's shoulder and the rifleman's chest, killing him instantly and spraying a gout of blood. Michael felt no immediate pain, just a sudden shock, and then numbness as they all fell to the ground. He wondered if this was a bad one.



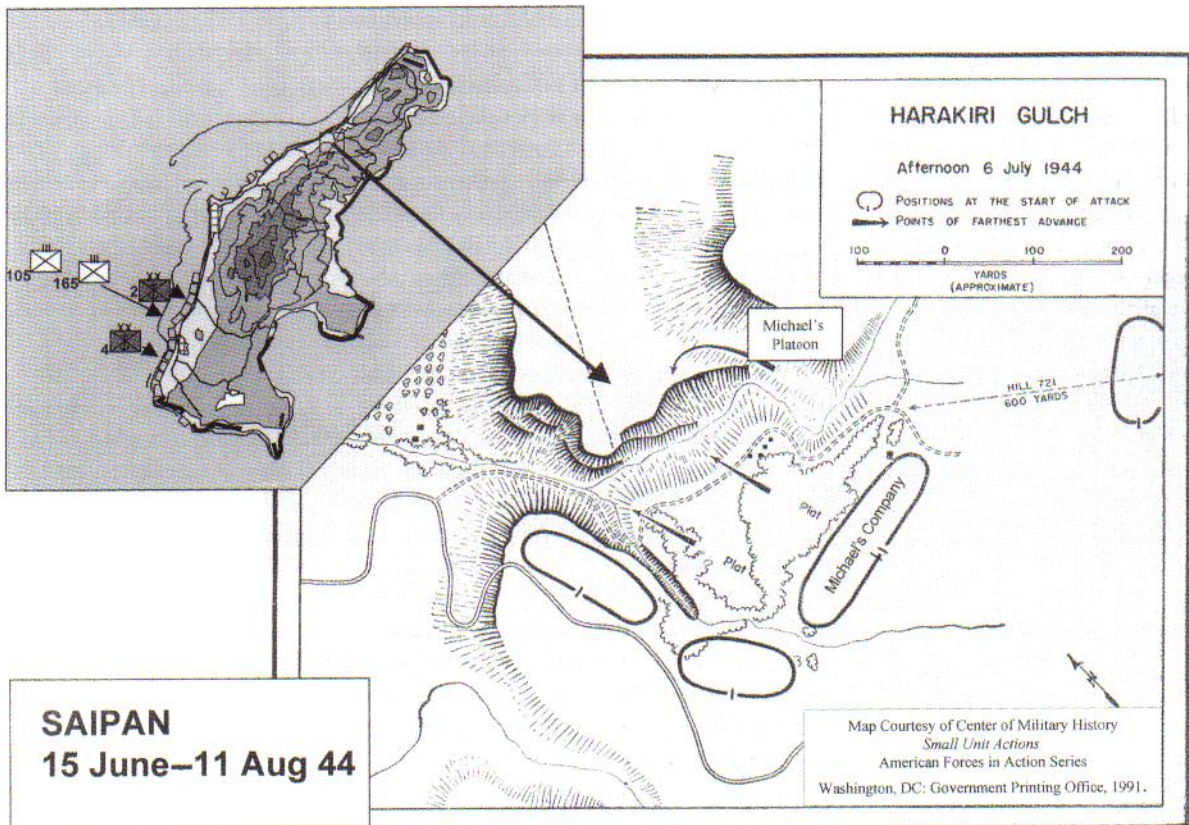
Saipan. The combat infantryman.

Michael dusted his wound with Sulfa powder and pulled his compress out of his first aid kit, holding the package between his wrist and thigh and ripping it open with his unwounded hand. He opened the compress and pushed it against his wound to stanch the spurting flow of blood, which he knew was arterial bleeding. He then opened and wrapped his second compress on the exit wound, tying the bandage as best he could around his hand. He looked around for the platoon medic, who should have been there treating the wounded. Michael had no way of knowing he had been killed.

Through his haze, Michael watched as his assistant squad leader pushed the remaining five men of the squad forward onto a part of the ridgeline hidden from the Japanese fire, although the squads to the right and left were pinned down. Two men crawled to the lip of the crest and began rolling grenades down on the Japanese position. Reacting quickly, the Japanese soon pinned them down with return fire. The rifleman carrying the squad's M1903 Springfield with grenade launcher joined them, crawling into a firing position where he could engage the enemy below. He was killed before he got one round off.

Michael watched as his assistant squad leader gestured towards the BAR man to lay down a suppressive fire so that the two men could withdraw. What remained of the squad fell back to the location of the wounded man who had not been evacuated and could go no farther because of the heavy fire. Suddenly one of the men jumped up and bounded over and down the ridge in the direction of C Company, with rifle fire following him. He was still on his feet when he disappeared from view.

Harakiri Gulch.



A few moments later the platoon guide appeared with two soldiers to help drag Michael and the other wounded to safety, and then went back and provided covering fire for the remainder of the squad to withdraw.

While Michael was being treated at the company aid station before being evacuated, he realized that the soldier who had jumped across the ridge was not there, and begged that someone go back for him. The company commander refused at the time, but later when it was dark two lieutenants and six men went back down into "Harakiri Gulch" and found the soldier with a man from another company hiding in the bushes. Both had given up hope. Michael's squad member died of wounds at the aid station, the other lived.

Before Harakiri Gulch, Michael's squad numbered nine, only three short of full strength. By late afternoon, only three remained with the company. Of the others, three were dead, two of whom had been guardsmen with the company while it was at the 69th Regiment Armory, and three wounded. A squad that had trained and lived together for three years was gone.

By nightfall, Michael and the other wounded had processed through the battalion aid station where his wound was dressed, then to a beach hospital, on to an amphibian and finally on to a "Green Dragon" LST outfitted as a hospital. Although his wound was relatively minor, there was no place on shore during the battle where he could have surgery and recuperate, so when the LST left for Kwajalein Atoll, he went with it, hoping that he would not have to return.

The aftermath on Saipan

Although the battle was over, some sniping still occurred and patrols walked the terrain looking for hidden Japanese troops. Not much else occurred outside routine duties, care and cleaning of equipment, and a half-day training schedule. Otherwise the company was very subdued, and still far below strength. The depleted squads of between four and six men, with no new faces, impressed upon the remaining soldiers just how bad the fighting had been and emphasized the loss of their buddies.

Japanese equipment, arms, and ammunition littered the landscape and was piled high in dumps. Leisure activity besides bathing in the surf and playing poker, included walking over the battlefields, where soldiers talked through their actions. For Michael some trips were just bad memories. The company also set up weapons ranges where all the soldiers practiced using Japanese weapons and worked with the enemy mines and booby traps. Soldiers listened to the news over the short wave radios and followed the war's progress in Europe and the Pacific.

Saipan turned sickly with the coming of the rainy season, as shell holes, tree stumps and depressions filled with water, allowing mosquitoes carrying dengue fever to breed prolifically. Many soldiers, physically and emotionally weakened by the campaign, wound up in hospital, and although many returned within two weeks, they remained sick and weak for some times afterwards.

Michael boarded a resupply ship and returned to his unit on Saipan in August. He arrived just in time to attend his company's memorial service for their fallen comrades at the cemetery in the Saipan Bowl. To ease the grief caused by the loss of so many wounded and fallen, the regimental chaplains conducted daily services.

In late September, Michael paid a last visit to his friends at the 27th Infantry Division Cemetery before boarding the USAT *Robin Doncaster* en route to Espiritu Santo in the New Hebrides.

CASUALTIES AND MEDICS

Michael was one of the lucky ones: his injury was not considered life-threatening and he was given medical attention relatively quickly. When he was pulled back to the lee side of the crest, Michael saw the litter bearers preparing to carry a more seriously wounded soldier back to the battalion aid station and the company medic coming closer. All were armed. In the PTO, the medics carried side arms or carbines to protect themselves and their patients. They wore the same equipment as medics in other theaters but they did not wear the protective Red Cross, because of the Japanese habit of targeting medics.

The medic's presence was a great comfort, because everyone knew that "Doc" left no one to die on the battlefield. The medic smiled, pulled out a morphine syrette, which contained 25 grains of morphine and looked like a miniature toothpaste tube with a sealed end, and used the needle attached to the syrette to puncture the seal before inserting it into Michael's thigh and then pinning the empty syrette to Michael's shirt collar. Michael immediately felt pain relief, euphoria, and a mellowness of spirit he thought long lost. After rebandaging Michael's hand, Doc filled out an Emergency Medical Tag (EMT), with Michael's name and serial number, the nature of the wound, the approximate time he was wounded, and the treatment so far given. He attached the tag through a buttonhole in Michael's blouse, helped him to his feet and began walking him and the others down the hill toward the battalion aid station.

At the aid station casualties from companies throughout the battalion sat quietly and lay waiting to be seen among the bloody bandages and clothing littering the floor. A lieutenant walked among the wounded with the senior aidman, sorting who could be bandaged and sent back to the front, and who needed treatment further back. More morphine syrettes were utilized as necessary. Many times the combination of exhaustion and morphine put injured soldiers to sleep until they woke in the field hospital.

The battalion surgeon examined Michael; he did not change the dressings the medic had earlier applied, but he started a plasma drip. One of the medics taped Michael's fingers around a splint and immobilized the injury by taping Michael's arm to his chest. He recorded his actions on the EMT and sent Michael to join the other wounded waiting for transportation back to the clearing station. Soon medics with a jeep and stretchers loaded him and the others for the trip to the clearing station, where they were again triaged to decide who remained in the field hospital and who boarded the hospital ships in the harbor.

Medics in the POA lift a casualty up a steep ridge. Note the 1944 style plywood pack board, personal weapons and lack of Red Cross armbands. Unlike the MTO and ETO, in the PTO there were no noncombatant privileges afforded medical personnel.



Had Michael suffered a less damaging wound, he might have spent a few days at the adjacent field hospital and then been sent back up on the line, not because he was completely healed, but because his bed was required by someone else. Instead, he boarded an LCP from the field hospital, but the craft grounded on the reef and he and the others trans-shipped to another craft, to a hospital LST, and finally to one of the transports now being used to transport the lightly wounded. On board ship, Michael's wounds were dressed again, but it was only when he arrived at a general hospital on Kwajalein Atoll that he received specialized surgery on his hand. The hospital had over 1,000 beds and staff and equipment equal to any hospital in the United States.

For a soldier expected to take more than 90 days to recover, Kwajalein Atoll would have been a stopover point en route to a hospital in Hawaii and probably later a hospital in the Continental United States. Again, it was a matter of bed space; it was important to free the bed space near the battlefield, so casualties were evacuated to clearing stations and hospitals as quickly as possible. Every wounded soldier left in theater, meant one less bed for a future wounded soldier. Dependent upon his recovery, the soldier might be redeployed as a limited-duty soldier with an organization in the States, or discharged and assigned to a Veterans' Administration hospital until recovered enough to go home.

Other soldiers became psychoneurotic casualties, suffering from what was commonly called "combat fatigue," a condition which manifested symptoms mimicking such serious disorders as manic depression, schizophrenia, and Parkinson's disease. Had Michael been stricken with combat fatigue and sent back from the front line (tactical situation permitting), he would have received hot food, a cool shower and the chance to shave. He would then have seen a psychiatrist who would have sedated him with sodium amytal, which prevented nightmares from interfering with rest. Those not responding to treatment within 36-72 hours were transferred to hospital ships. During the battle on Saipan, 74 percent of the 272 patients with battle fatigue from the 27th Infantry Division returned to duty by the end of the battle.

REST AND RECUPERATION

Michael's company debarked from the USAT *Robin Doncaster* on October 7, 1944 and were hit immediately by the heat and humidity of Espiritu Santo. They climbed onto trucks and moved to one of the coconut plantations about 10 miles away from the naval base. There was little there besides the palms, so Michael and the others set to building their living quarters. The beaches were made up of coral with the consistency of broken glass. It was nothing like Hawaii, with its women and reasonably free-flowing alcohol. Here was 3.2 'near' beer if you could get it, as well as an active trade in real or manufactured Japanese battle souvenirs which could be bartered for hard alcohol and other



Wounded soldiers, closely spaced in a landing craft, wait to be ferried to a floating hospital.

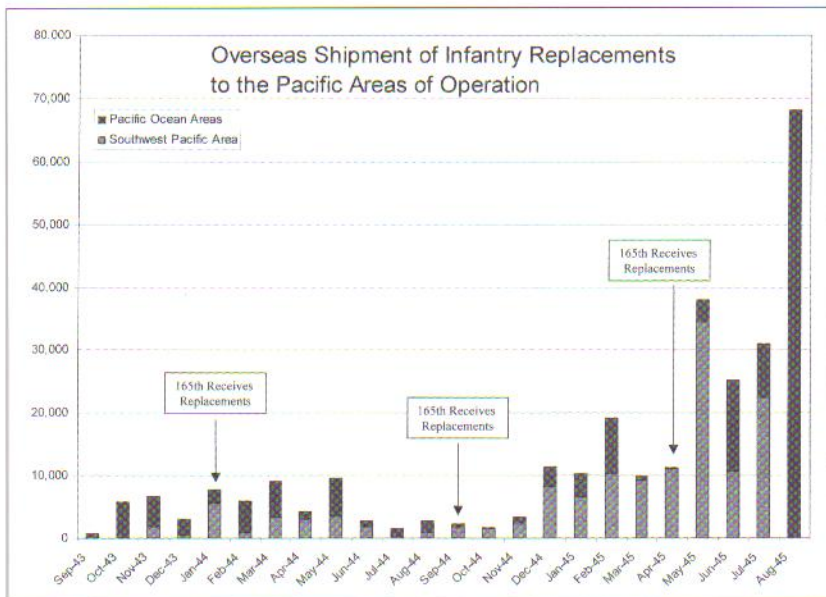
creature comforts. Orders came down from regiment to sew the divisional patch on their cotton khakis. The only real benefit to being veterans of Saipan was that Michael and his comrades received fresh meat which was in extremely short supply.

By September 1944, Michael, along with about 75 percent of his division, had been overseas for two and a half years. Like the others, he felt he would live the rest of his life on some God-forsaken island, never again experiencing the familiarity of home: shoveling snow, taking a taxi, the smells of the city, and home cooking. Some soldiers who won the regiment's monthly draw for one of the few limited furloughs went home for 90 days, although most of that was spent traveling. One of Michael's friends computed that at the going rate, the last man would get his furlough in 1949! Everyone was both happy and envious when their friends left, even though they knew most would try hard not to return, hunting assignments in the United States or working towards a compassionate discharge. Anything to keep from coming back.

Michael and the other members of his company learned through letters from home, enclosing the September 18, 1944 issue of *TIME Magazine* and newspaper articles, that their division had supposedly performed poorly on Saipan. Bitterly, they felt that their performance was well reflected by the butcher's bill of a casualty list. Their companies, platoons, and squads had been just as hard hit as had the Marines they had fought alongside. Three months after the battle, many rifle companies remained below 50 percent strength.

There was a change in company leadership: the captain who had led Michael's company through Makin and Saipan, and his executive officer both left to become staff officers in the battalion headquarters. A new commander and other officers joined. Some of the company NCOs, including the first sergeant, received commissions as second lieutenants, and others received promotions. Michael was happy to remain a squad leader. Sometimes, when he thought of Saipan, he wished that he only had responsibility for himself.

Overseas shipment of infantry replacements to the Pacific Areas of Operation.



In November and December, 57 replacements arrived to fill many of the vacancies, but the company was still short about 40 soldiers from its authorized strength. The soldiers still in hospital remained on the company roster until they had been away 60 days, so there were fewer soldiers actually present than what the paper strength showed. The recovered wounded slowly trickled in, but for every two casualties, only one returned, the other too seriously wounded for further service. With four new men, Michael's squad

increased to eight, with one man still in hospital. Even with everyone available, Michael lacked three men for a full squad.

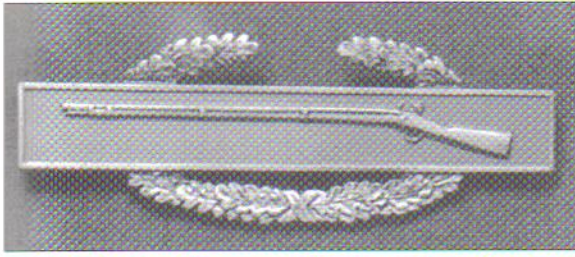
Training in October was rigorous, intense, and professional. Michael and the others were battle-hardened and their training on Espiritu Santo was more a honing of skills, in marked contrast to the period before their first fight on Makin, when they were only basically trained and thought they knew everything. Everyone requalified with their weapons and familiarized themselves with the company machine guns and mortars. They went through another jungle training school. Michael switched weapons from his faithful M1 to the Thompson submachine gun. Although not as accurate at long ranges and a real pain to clean and maintain, he wanted the firepower for close-in engagements.

Battle-wise officers set time aside for Michael and other NCOs to train their soldiers, and who now knew what to emphasize to the new soldiers, although the real test was combat itself. They practiced squad battle drills, day and night patrolling, map reading, demolitions, mines and booby traps, and the employment of the flamethrower. Once squad training finished, they progressed to platoon, company, and battalion exercises that included fire and maneuver, attack, tank-infantry-artillery exercises, stream-crossing exercises, and more jungle and amphibious training. Michael and the others also practiced moving and attacking at night, which seemed doubly dark in the interior jungles of Espiritu Santo. It wasn't hard keeping soldiers awake because they had all heard of the headhunters and pythons inhabiting the jungle and didn't want to be supper for either.

The oppressive heat of January through March 1945 felled many soldiers, and tropical skin diseases were rampant. Soldiers who had survived Makin and Saipan without injury either found themselves in hospital recuperating or on their way home.

Michael remembered one exercise especially well, or at least its aftermath. The soldiers had been dragging back to camp in rout step, finding it difficult to put one foot in front of the other in the heat. The regimental band greeted them with "Garryowen," giving a lift to everyone's step and automatically putting every soldier in step with the other, even though many believed themselves too tired to be motivated by music.

When they were not training, it seemed they were parading. Reviews, parades and awards ceremonies occurred monthly. It was not so bad if one was watching or receiving a medal, but standing in formation in the heat was grueling. Everyone was happy, though, when their unit and friends received the recognition they deserved. Michael received a Bronze Star and could have worn five medals: the Bronze Star, Purple Heart, Good Conduct Medal, National Defense Service Medal, and Asiatic Pacific Service Medal with arrowhead and two service stars. However, most of the infantrymen wore only their Combat Infantryman Badge, and left the medals and ribbons in their boxes. The prevailing thought was that anyone could get a medal but only a combat infantryman could wear the badge. The posthumous awards to soldiers brought back bitter memories. Of the 42 Silver Star and Bronze Star medals awarded members of Michael's company for Saipan, 15 were posthumous.



Combat Infantryman Badge.

In early March, there was a final ceremony where the 165th's three battalions received the Combat Battalion Infantry Streamer, signifying that 65 percent of the battalions were recipients of the Combat Infantryman Badge. On March 19, in the midst of a driving rain, Michael and the others boarded the USS *Missoula* for landing exercises at Turtle Bay and travel to Okinawa.

THE LAST BATTLE: OKINAWA

This was not an assault landing like Makin or a six-hour LCVP ride at night like Saipan. Michael and the members of the battalion combat team climbed down cargo nets into the bouncing LCVPs, formed waves and then headed for the enemy-free Hagushi Beaches, landing on Brown Beach just after lunch. Soldiers munched on assault lunches that contained hard candy, chocolate bars, gum, cigarettes and matches. However, they were shocked by the cold drizzling rain, unprepared as they were after three years in the tropics. Many wished they had the woolen shirts they wore in 1941.

Also, unlike the two earlier battles, the unit was not at full strength, with the company numbering 152 rather than the authorized 193. Michael's squad stood at 75 percent strength, or nine out of 12 before a shot was fired. This did not seem to matter: if the rumors were true they would act as the Ryukyu Islands garrison, detailed with mopping up.

Michael's company spent the next nine days patrolling the rear areas for bypassed Japanese, capturing some and killing others. There was a lot of talk about a new weapon some of the members of the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon were carrying. It looked to many like one of Buck Rogers' ray guns, with a large dish mounted beneath an M2 carbine and a large flashlight on top with a power cable leading to a metal box carried in a backpack. They called it a "Sniperscope" for good reason, and the Army had developed it for the sole purpose of thwarting Japanese infiltration. Using this weapon, a soldier could see in the dark

to a range of about 70 yards, with objects appearing in the scope in various shades of green. About 30 percent of the total Japanese casualties inflicted through rifle fire during the first weeks of the Okinawa operation were from the sniperscope and M2 carbine.

Michael's squad pulled security occasionally for the sniperscope teams. Although they were heavy and bulky, it was nice to sit in a concealed position and watch the green images of Japanese soldiers creep forward. A quick blast of automatic fire and another enemy soldier lay dead. After a few nights they discovered that rain and night illumination tended to cut down the scope's efficiency.

Soldiers peer into the undergrowth, while searching for Japanese in thick terrain. They are armed with M1 rifles and carbines. Typically, each soldier carries two canteens.





Riflemen relax for a moment, while advancing in thick undergrowth.

Word arrived that they were moving forward to launch an attack against Japanese positions guarding Machinato airfield. Michael's company's objective was the Gusukuma village, just down a ridge and across a gulch. Total distance was about 800 yards. Orders were to move forward and bypass any Japanese resistance. With open terrain quite unlike the dense vegetation of Saipan, it appeared they might be on the airfield by that night.

Just before the attack began the next morning, mortar fire wounded Michael's company commander. The executive officer assumed command and started the company forward at 0730, driving straight down the crest of the ridge into a pocket formed by high ground on three sides and the village on the other. They attacked through a maze of pillboxes and tunnels, knocking out each in

turn with techniques perfected on Saipan using flamethrowers and explosives. By early afternoon Michael and the others were at the nose of the ridge, but heavy machine gun fire forced them left across the road and into the railroad cut for cover, which they followed down to a deep gulch. Both the road and railroad bridges were blown and the Japanese had perfect fields of fire down the length of the narrow ravine from the ridge and the pocket.

Several soldiers threw smoke into the ravine, and while the Japanese fired blindly, the men crossed the ravine in pairs. But once they crossed the gulch they were on their own. The walls were too steep for any vehicles to cross. Forming on the hill on the other side, the infantrymen continued forward until the company was on a grass-covered, treeless hill just east of Gusukuma. Without tank support, heavy fire pinned them down, and as it was growing late in the day, they began digging in for the night. For ten days, until they were relieved, they fought for Gusukuma.

There was a little resupply during the night. Soldiers in carrying parties brought forward water cans, ammunition and rations over a thousand yards of rough terrain. The extra BARs and Thompsons the squads now carried were good for night defense, but resupplying them over extended distances posed a real problem. A BAR could fire the equivalent of more than a 96-round .30 cal. bandoleer (weighing 9 lb) in a minute and a Thompson could go through several .45 cal. 30-round magazines, each weighing more than 1½ lb, in the same amount of time. An M1, for that matter, firing three to four eight-round clips, each weighing $\frac{3}{4}$ lb, added to the resupply problem. With 30 or so soldiers in Michael's platoon, armed with M1s, BARs, and Thompsons, this amounted to a daily requirement or basic load of about 474 lb of .30 cal. and 33 lb of .45 cal. ammunition.

The wounded were carried out the same way, by bearer. There were no tanks or self-propelled mounts to help them push forward. As the men clustered under cover, a few rounds of mortar and artillery fire slammed into the village in front of them. It wasn't much, but with other fighting elsewhere, it was all they could get. Michael's platoon moved

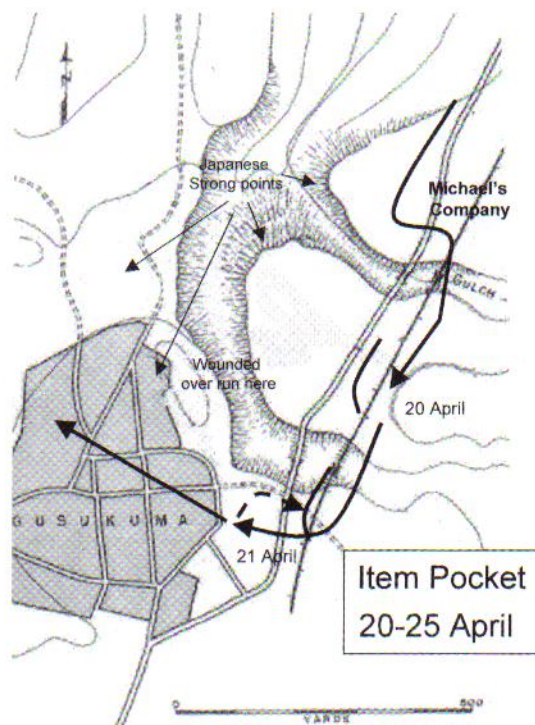
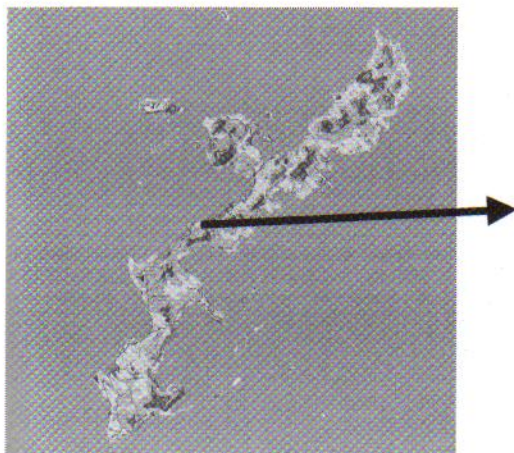
forward in an inverted wedge formation with two squads forward and one behind in support. There was little fire from the town and opposing ridgeline until they had crossed the road onto a bare rise just east of the village. Then all hell broke loose: Japanese machine guns from their front, left and right flanks opened up, pinning them in crossfire. Caught in the open between the village and the road in the killing ground between the interlocking fires of at least four machine guns, the two options were to go forward, or pull back. Michael's inclination was to pull back and try again later, but his platoon leader had other ideas, and motioned his squads to continue forward. The attack became a crawl: they positioned, then rushed to the next cover, with movement measured in feet rather than yards.

After about four hours of slowly moving forward, Michael had part of his squad clustered in the wrecked house on the village perimeter and the remainder under cover behind them. Miraculously, only one man was wounded, although there were casualties from other squads on the open ground. The word came to tie in with adjacent squads and wait for the company on the right to come up. Everyone began digging in and preparing for the night, fully expecting Japanese infiltration and mortar barrages.

About 2100, Japanese mortar and artillery fire began landing throughout the area. Michael and the others had never experienced such a heavy barrage on Saipan. This was like a never-ending series of lightning flashes and thunder as rounds exploded around them. The barrage went on for hours and then for an instant the air was deathly still. The shrill yells of a large Japanese force attacking someone over on their right rent the silence and then, in the muzzle flash of machine

Okinawa combat pocket.

OKINAWA
1 April – 21 June 45



guns and rifles, it appeared that hundreds of enemy soldiers were boiling out of the pocket and northern half of the village. All Michael's squad could do was sit hunkered down in their holes and wait for the attack to hit them, firing at Japanese close by who were visible in the flashes. It did not seem to be going well for the Americans on their flank, and they watched as the men retreated up the hill. Although not in heavy contact, word passed for Michael and the others to fall back to the support platoon's line. No one slept that night.

The next morning they saw smoke and heard grenades going off in the gulch followed by screams. Some of the wounded Americans who could not be evacuated the night before had hidden in caves. The Japanese attacked them with grenades and lit fires at the entrances of the caves. They shot those who crawled from the caves, while those who stayed within suffocated. Coursing through the minds of those listening to the slaughter was the thought, "No prisoners."

The next few days blurred into the haze of carrying ammunition and water forward at night, supporting other companies' attacks on the pocket, adjusting mortar and artillery fire on Gusukuma, and finally assaulting and clearing the village in a vicious day-long battle of hand-to-hand fighting. Opposing enemy fire from the ridge cut off any means of retreat, so Michael and the others went forward. Casualties were high. There still were no tanks, and the ridge on the other side of Gusukuma was riddled with caves and tunnels. The only way to destroy the enemy within was to dig them out, or seal them in, both methods calling for the infantrymen to close with the Japanese.

To Michael and the others conducting the clearing, it seemed as if time flew; to those watching it stood still. The men scanned the ridge sides looking for what might be caves and taking turns at being the lead man. When Michael's turn came, he crawled forward until he could see inside the cave, watched for a few minutes, and then motioned the others to cover him while he crawled adjacent to the cave's mouth. With the others prepared to cover him, Michael took a deep breath, ensured his tommy gun was on "fire," pivoted into the cave entrance and fired a long burst into the depths, and then pivoted back to the side. He then took a pineapple grenade, pulled the pin, released the safety lever, counted to three and tossed the grenade inside. He knew the grenade fuze was supposed to be five seconds. He also knew from experience that some of the fuzes were cut as short as three seconds by indifferent factory workers. Nevertheless, that was the chance he had to take, else the Japanese might throw the grenade back out. After the smoke and debris cleared, he watched and listened at the opening for any signs of movement. Satisfied, he then motioned the engineer to come up with his explosives, usually 30 or 40 lb of TNT, watched him set them and then they both backed off. When the dust cleared, Michael climbed over the rubble to see that the cave mouth was sealed tight. Then the squad moved on to the next cave.

Ten replacements joined the company in the middle of the fight for Gusukuma, one new man going to each squad. Michael had never received

Infantrymen shelter behind a tank from incoming artillery in the combat pocket.



replacements in combat before, and really did not know what to do with the new soldier, except to pair him with a veteran and tell him to watch what everyone else was doing, and not to do anything stupid. There wasn't much else he could do.

The fighting for the pocket continued for several more days. At the end tanks came up and assisted in clearing the remaining caves. On just about the last day, Michael watched Private First Class Alejandro Ruiz, one of the soldiers who had joined them on *Espiritu Santo*, clear what remained of the pocket by himself after watching seven of his squad mates wounded by a hidden pillbox. He charged the pillbox with a BAR, climbed on top of it only to find his weapon didn't work. He killed one Japanese soldier using the BAR as a club, then climbed down the bunker and ran back to obtain another weapon. He charged the pillbox again, killing everyone within, and then proceeded to move from cave to cave, destroying each one as he came to it. Ruiz was later awarded the Medal of Honor for this heroic action, the highest award for valor the United States can bestow. He was the only member of the 165th Infantry to receive such distinction in World War II.

At the end of April, Michael's unit was relieved by members of the 1st Marine Division. The smell of burnt, rotting, and decomposing flesh had filled their nostrils for so long that they had grown used to it. After a bath in the ocean to wash off the grime and the sweat, the putrid smell of decomposing bodies and the sweet smell of death had returned. After a few days' rest, they returned to patrolling the rear areas for Japanese. In mid-May everyone learned the war was over in Europe. However, the fighting continued to rage on Okinawa, and with soldiers still dying, the good news did not have the same impact as it did elsewhere. The Okinawan monsoon, known as the "plum rain season," arrived and took much of the smell from the air. The roads turned to mud, and green began to sprout where brown had once been.



ABOVE An infantryman with a child. Most soldiers showed an affinity towards children, especially after witnessing so much death.



LEFT Messing in the open in Okinawa.

Going Home

Things changed with the announcement that soldiers with more than 85 points or service credits were being sent home. Soldiers everywhere began adding up their points, figuring on the backs of C ration boxes just how many they had. Every soldier who had traveled overseas in February 1942 had more than 100 points of service and overseas credit alone. Moreover, adding in campaigns, medals, wounds and children, some had as many as 150 points. This contrasted with the soldiers who had arrived in November–December 1943 who had on average 21 service, overseas and combat credits.

One of the problems, however, was that almost 75 percent of Michael's division had been overseas since 1942, meaning that most soldiers and the vast majority of unit leaders had more than enough points to go home. To ensure everyone was treated fairly, those with the highest points and most overseas time departed first. This included most of the men who arrived in Hawaii in March 1942, and Michael and 17 other members of his company numbered among them. Michael celebrated his seventh year of service and his 24th birthday on the ship heading home. He had almost five years of active service when he was discharged in August 1945.

Group	Remarks	Michael's points
1. Service Credit	1 point per month in the service since September 16, 1940	$65 \times 1 = 65$
2. Overseas Credit	1 point per month overseas since September 16, 1940	$50 \times 1 = 50$
3.a. Combat Credits	5 points for every Bronze Service Star (battle participation stars)	$3 \times 5 = 15$
b. Decorations	5 points for the first and each additional award of the following for service performed since September 16, 1940 (Distinguished Service Cross, Distinguished Service Medal, Legion of Merit, Silver Star, Distinguished Flying Cross, Soldier's Medal, Bronze Star, Air Medal)	$1 \times 5 = 5$
c. Number of wounds	5 points per wound as recognised by award of Purple Heart	$1 \times 5 = 5$
4. Parenthood Credit	12 points per child under 18 years up to a limit of three children	0
TOTAL		=140

Adjusted Service Rating, based on a number of factors including time in service, time overseas, combat service, and parenthood (War Department Press Release May 10, 1945).

The next groups to leave were those soldiers with 105 points, and then 85 points. By September, the vast majority of members of Michael's old company and regiment were replacements fresh from the United States.

On September 2 Michael sat at a bar in New York City and listened to President Truman's address to the nation. "We shall not forget Pearl Harbor ... We think of those whom death in this war has hurt, taking from them fathers, husbands, sons, brothers, and sisters whom they loved. No victory can bring back the faces they longed to see. Only the knowledge that the victory, which these sacrifices have made possible, will be wisely used, can give them any comfort. It is our responsibility – ours, the living – to see to it that this victory shall be a monument worth of the dead who died to win it."

Michael remembered with fondness and regret those buried in the island cemeteries on Makin, Saipan and Okinawa, and tipped his Jameson's in respect to his fallen comrades.

The 165th Infantry Regiment deployed overseas in February 1942, had entered combat on 21 November 1943 and had suffered casualties commensurate with other regiments deployed to the Pacific. It came home in December 1945 and furlled its colors at least temporarily on 26 December. Not even a handful of the men present in October 1940 came home with the regiment's colors. The remainder were earlier evacuated for wounds or injuries, or were high-pointers shipped home on furlough in May and June 1945.

The average infantry regiment in the Pacific Theater of Operations lost 25 officers and 365 enlisted men killed and 57 officers and 1,091 enlisted wounded. In approximately six months of combat, the 165th Infantry Regiment suffered 31 officers and 409 enlisted men killed, and 65 officer and 1,412 enlisted wounded, the majority being lost in June 1944 (Saipan) and April 1945 (Okinawa).



The 27th Infantry Division Cemetery on Saipan.

165th Infantry Regiment battle casualties in the Pacific Theaters of Operation.

	OFF KIA	EM KIA	OFF MIA	EM MIA	OFF WIA	EM WIA	Total battle casualties
Makin 20-22 Nov 1943	5	27	0	0	7	74	113
Dec 43							113
Jan 44							113
Feb 44							113
Mar 44							113
Apr 44							113
May 44							113
Saipan June-July 1944	15	168	0	2	31	667	996
Aug 44							996
Sept 44							996
Oct 44							996
Nov 44							996
Dec 44							996
Jan 45							996
Mar 45							996
Okinawa April- August 1945	11	194	0	4	27	671	1903

KEY

- KIA = killed in action**
- MIA = missing in action**
- WIA = wounded in action**
- OFF = officers**
- EM = enlisted men**

The price of success in the Pacific amounted to 96,034 battle casualties in the 20 U.S. Army infantry divisions deployed to the Pacific Area (including the 1st Cavalry Division but not including Marine divisions). In 660 months of infantry regiment combat, there were 22,660 killed; or 23 percent of total battle casualties.

US infantry divisions in the PTO and their battle casualties.

Division	Component	Organized/ federalized	Arrived overseas	First combat	Deaths	Wounded	Captured
Philippine (1)	RA	1921	1921	Dec 1941	n/a	n/a	n/a
32	NG	Oct 1940	14 May 1942	Sept 1942	2002	5627	1
Americal (2)	RA	May 1942	24 May 1942	Oct 1942	1168	3052	1
25 (3)	RA	Oct 1941	1 Oct 1941	Dec 1942	1500	4190	2
41	NG	Sept 1940	13 May 1942	Dec 1942	962	3504	0
43	NG	Feb 1941	30 Oct 1942	Feb 1943	1414	4887	2
7	RA	July 1940	11 May 1943	May 1943	2337	7258	2
37	NG	Oct 1940	11 Jun 1942	June 1943	1348	4861	1
27	NG	Oct 1940	20 Mar 1942	Nov 1943	1849	4980	1
6	RA	Oct 1939	29 July 1943	Jan 1944	517	1957	0
1 Cav	RA	1918	11 July 1943	Feb 1944	971	3311	1
93	AUS	May 1942	7 Feb 1944	Mar 1944	17	121	0
24 (4)	RA	Oct 1941	1 Oct 1941	Apr 1944	1691	5621	6
40	NG	Mar 1941	1 Sept 1942	Apr 1944	748	2407	1
33	NG	Mar 1941	12 July 1943	May 1944	524	2024	1
31	NG	Nov 1940	24 April 1944	July 1944	415	1392	1
77	AUS	Mar 1942	30 Mar 1944	July 1944	1857	5935	1
81	AUS	Jun 1942	24 Aug 1944	Sept 1944	517	1942	0
96	AUS	Aug 1942	26 Sept 1944	Oct 1944	2038	7181	5
11 Abn	RA	Feb 1943	25 May 1944	Nov 1944	620	1926	0
38	NG	Jan 1941	21 Jan 1944	Dec 1944	785	2814	0
98	AUS	Sept 1942	19 April 1944	none	0	0	0

Notes

- (1) In the Philippines 7 December 1941, destroyed 9 April 1942
- (2) Formed from the units of Task Force 6814 (51st Brigade Headquarters and infantry regiments from Illinois, Massachusetts and North Dakota National Guard)
- (3) Stationed in Hawaii, December 7 1941
- (4) Stationed in Hawaii, December 7 1941

MUSEUMS

National Museum of the Pacific War (Admiral Nimitz Museum)
P O Box 777, Fredericksburg, TX 78624 Phone
830/997-4379
World Wide Web [http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/
park/nimitz/nimitz.htm](http://www.tpwd.state.tx.us/park/nimitz/nimitz.htm)

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COLOR PLATE COMMENTARY

A: MICHAEL, CIRCA 1940, PRIVATE, NEW YORK NATIONAL GUARD

Michael (1 and 2) wears an ill-fitting M1926 service uniform, service shoes and M1938 canvas leggings (4, although World War I-style wrap puttees may have been equally typical). In cold weather he would wear the long, enlisted man's overcoat (3). On his head is the M1917 "dishpan" helmet, and he carries the M1910 haversack (also shown from "inside" view, 5) in marching order, with M1910 pack carrier containing his bed roll, and the service gas mask. A schematic (6) shows the proper positioning of equipment. The M1918 cartridge belt, with M1910 canteen and cover and first aid pouch attached, is detailed separately (7). The patch on Michael's left shoulder is that of the 27th Division (8). The alternative M1911 campaign hat outfitted with infantry branch cord is depicted too (9). The metallic crest badge pinned to the front is that of the 165th Infantry (10).

Among the items of equipment carried and shown are the M1903 Springfield rifle (11), the M1905 bayonet (12). The WWI quarter shelter when put together with three others made a complete tent. The tent equipment, laid out for display (13), contains a tent, three poles, five pins and guy ropes. Also shown are the M1910 entrenching tool (14) and canvass cover (15), for "digging in."

B: ORGANIZATION AND WEAPONS OF A RIFLE COMPANY

The rifle company in the square division was composed of three platoons (top of diagram). Lacking the mortars and machine guns of the later weapons platoon, the company commander had only to lead his rifle platoons. Each platoon contained two rifle sections of three squads.

Each squad (middle of diagram) contained eight men and a Browning Automatic Rifle, giving the company 18 BARs. With 58 men in a platoon, the units were well suited for attrition-style combat, and platoons attacked with one section behind the other. When the divisions triangularized, platoons shrunk to three squads, although squad strength increased to 12 men.

In 1940, rifle company weapons (bottom of diagram) consisted of the M1903 Springfield rifle, the M1911A1 automatic pistol, the M1918A2 Browning Automatic Rifle, and four heavy machine guns kept with the company trains for defense. Later, with the addition of a weapons platoon, M2 60 mm mortars and M1919A4 .30 cal. air-cooled machine guns and the heavy machine guns moved to the battalion heavy weapons company. The M1928 Thompson submachine gun was located in battalion pools for distribution on an as-needed basis.

C: FITNESS AND TRAINING, HAWAII, MAY 1943

1. "I do push-ups every morning and my body's a rock." Soldiers are shown here performing exercises in formation. The normal uniform was the white undershirt,

HBT trousers, and shoes. 2. A soldier negotiates a barbed wire obstacle known as a double-apron fence. Chicken wire has been thrown over the fence to aid in crossing. The soldier is equipped with an M1 rifle and cartridge belt, and wears heavy leather gloves. 3. Soldiers leap obstacles on a bayonet assault course. In line with standard practice they wear the olive drab plastic helmet liners for training (without the protective steel exterior used in combat): they also wear infantry cartridge belts and carry the M1 rifle and M1942 20 in. bayonet.

D: ELIMINATING A SNIPER

1. Contact is made. "When we were fired upon by snipers, we immediately hit the ground and took cover." 2. Locate Sniper. "As soon as the sniper's position was discovered the squad leader designated two or three men to work their way around the flank of the sniper and eliminate him." 3. Suppress Sniper and Maneuver. "The balance of the squad, from their positions, engaged the sniper or snipers by fire, and covered the movement of the flanking group. This eliminated the practice of everyone firing at random at the spot from which they believed the shot or shots had come and removed the possibility of our men firing at one another in the thick undergrowth." 4. Flankers eliminate the sniper.

E: COMPANY ALL-ROUND DEFENSE IN DENSE TERRAIN

This was used to limit enemy infiltration and attack from the rear. The perimeter consisted of two platoons facing forward and one rearward with their flank squads bent back to tie in with the adjacent platoon. The mortar, headquarters section and aidmen were located in the center of the position. The two light machine guns, as well as attached heavy machine guns from the weapons company, were emplaced with interlocking fields of fire across the company front, supported by adjacent BARs that fired along the same line when the machine guns were reloading or changing barrels. Where possible, soldiers dug two- and three-man positions (see the Optimum Squad Position detail, bottom right). Bayonets and trench knives were kept in close proximity for close-quarter fighting if a Japanese soldier rolled into the foxhole.

F: MICHAEL'S SQUAD ENGAGES A JAPANESE PATROL, MAKIN, NOVEMBER 1943

It is the morning of the second day of Michael's combat experience. The Japanese officer leading the patrol attacks with his samurai sword, but he and all but one of the privates with him will die in this encounter. Michael makes his thrust at a Japanese private with the M1 and M1905 E1 Bayonet. Training taught the infantryman to thrust the rifle from the hip and drive it into the enemy. The bayonet was then twisted and withdrawn along the same line. Although seen by many as old-fashioned, most infantrymen in the Pacific Area of Operations kept the bayonet fixed to the muzzle of their rifle.

G: DIGGING A TWO-MAN FOXHOLE

This plate shows the dimensions and function of a two-man foxhole as per period regulations. The soldiers could crouch in the bottom of their hole when shells were bursting nearby. Although the rifle company infantry manual recommended one-man foxholes because two-man positions were easily

collapsed by tanks, the war in the Pacific and the constant Japanese infiltration necessitated two- and three-man positions.

H: MICHAEL, OKINAWA, 1945

Michael's dress, equipment and demeanor have changed dramatically since 1940. Although only 24 years old, he is by now a combat hardened veteran, on whom the stress of combat has taken a heavy toll (1 and 2). He wears late war HBTs, and 1943 buckle top combat boots. He carries the M1 Thompson submachine gun with 30-round stick magazine. Attached to his M1936 pistol belt are three-pocket submachine gun pouches, two canteens with covers, and the jungle first aid kit. A Mk II A1 fragmentation grenade is hooked into his shirt pocket. Across his chest he bears an ammunition bag for additional magazines. On his back, he carries the M1936 musette bag strapped over his shoulders like a haversack.

The M1 Thompson, Michael's weapon of choice, is shown in exploded detail (3). Also shown is one round of .45 cal. ammunition (4). The "Sniperscope" rifle (as described in the

narrative) is also shown (5). This comprised a US carbine with suitable mountings to take various models of infrared night-sighting devices. No open or conventional sights were provided. Developed in 1943 to defeat the infiltration tactics of the Japanese, it accounted for c. 30 percent of total Japanese casualties suffered by smallarms fire during the first week of the Okinawa campaign. A detail shows the infrared screen on the front of the sniperscope (6). The correct firing position is shown too (7). The M2-2 flamethrower (8), an improved version of the M1A1 introduced in 1944, was powered by compressed air and fueled by a mixture of gasoline and naphtha. It was very effective in neutralizing pillboxes, bunkers and caves. The satchel charge (9) consisted of a non-electric blasting cap inserted into one of eight blocks of Demolition block C-2, each of which was equivalent to 3 lb of TNT: also shown are a time fuze and fuze igniter (11). These were placed inside a satchel or bag (various types are shown), secured and projected. A sketch shows how it could be thrown at the enemy (10).

GLOSSARY

- AUS** Army of the United States
- BAR** Browning Automatic Rifle
- CBI** China-Burma-India
- CO** Commanding Officer
- EMT** Emergency Medical Tag
- FM** Field Manual
- GI** General Infantryman
- HBT** Herringbone Twill
- KIA** Killed In Action
- LCV** Landing Craft, Vehicle
- LCVP** Landing Craft, Vehicle, Personnel
- LST** Landing Ship Tank
- MIA** Missing In Action
- NCO** Non-Commissioned Officer
- NYNG** New York National Guard
- PAO** Pacific Area of Operations
- POA** Pacific Ocean Areas
- PSG** Platoon Sergeant
- PTO** Pacific Theaters of Operation
- ROTC** Reserve Officers Training Corps
- SWPA** Southwest Pacific Areas
- XO** Executive Officer

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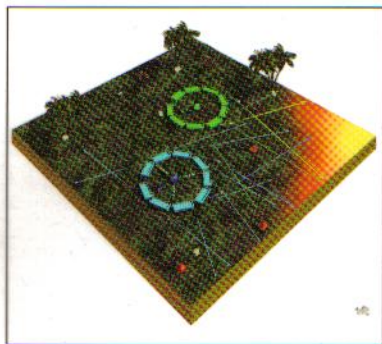
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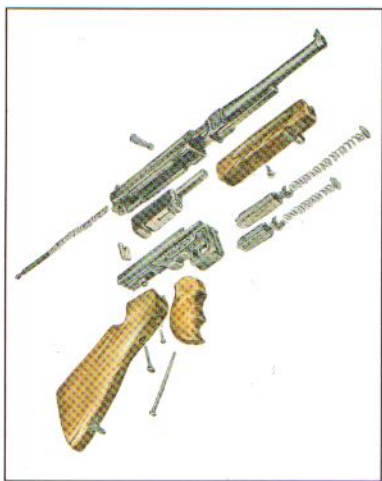
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