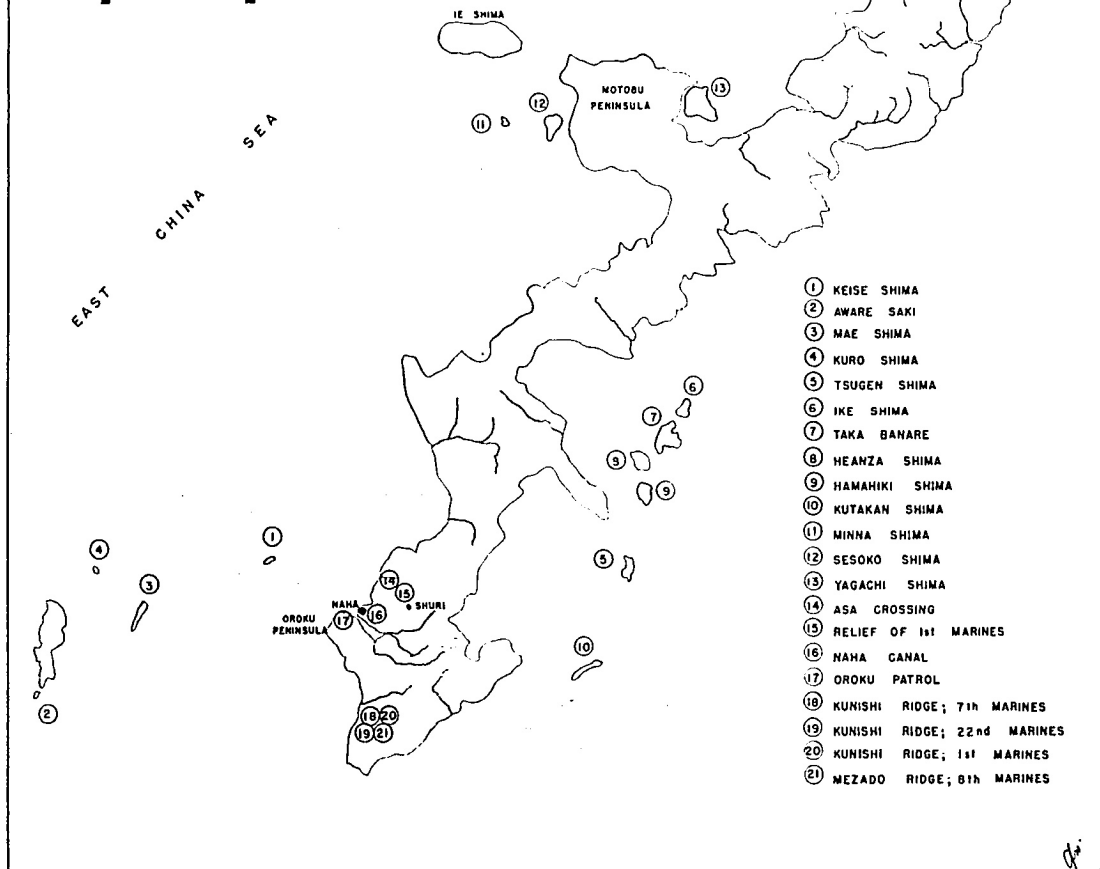


Night Operations On Okinawa



WITH THE EXCEPTION of a few small night patrols, the early years of the war in the Pacific found little activity on the part of marines during the hours of darkness. Usually the marines were intent upon "tying in" their lines by late afternoon in order to repulse the inevitable Japanese counterattacks and to discourage attempts on the part of the enemy to infiltrate through the lines. The average marine was prone to think somewhat contemptuously of the nocturnal prowlings of the Japanese. As the war progressed, however, instances of Marine night operations became more prevalent. During the campaign for Okinawa, night operations were used more extensively than ever before and the results were extremely gratifying.

In the course of the long Ryukyu campaign, marines of the III Amphibious Corps and the

Amphibious Reconnaissance Bn, FMF, Pacific, executed no less than 16 of these night operations. It is interesting to find that all of the night operations met with success.

At the close of the campaign for Okinawa, the Commanding General, III Amphibious Corps, reported to the Commanding General, FMF, Pacific, that:

"All night operations were characterized by the fact that they were performed in an orthodox manner. Previous training in such maneuvers and existing doctrines on the subject were employed and proved sound. Daylight reconnaissance, a limited objective of a prominent terrain feature, explicit orders for all echelons, noise discipline, and contact were all as prescribed in the training manuals. In every case surprise was

On Okinawa the Marines gained excellent results in their night

achieved and the night attack or movement was successful."

Generally speaking, the night operations on Okinawa may be classified as follows:

1. Night reconnaissance operations.
2. Relief of front line units under cover of darkness.
3. Pre-dawn attacks designed to gain an objective from which to launch subsequent daylight attacks.

From the standpoint of time, the first of these nocturnal missions to be accomplished were the landings made by the Amphibious Reconnaissance Bn of FMF, Pacific, under Maj James L. Jones, on small islands adjacent to the mainland of Okinawa. On three successive nights prior to Love Day, the battalion landed on and reconnoitered Keise Shima, Aware Saki, Mae Shima and Kuro Shima. None of these landings were opposed, nor were enemy personnel found. However, much valuable information along with hydrographic reports, was sent to CG, Tenth Army, the echelon under whose command the battalion was operating.

Later, during the night of 5-6 April, 1945, the battalion landed on Tsugen Shima and ran into considerable enemy opposition; here it suffered two men killed and eleven wounded. Information gained, however, helped in the planning for a minor assault operation in which a unit from the 27th Infantry Division landed on and seized Tsugen Shima after a bitter fight.

Next night, elements of the battalion landed on Ike Shima, Taka Banare, Heanza Shima, and Hamahiki Shima. As a result of this night's work, the Tenth Army found out what it wanted to know: that these islands, guarding Chimu Bay, and Nagagusuku Bay, were not enemy strongpoints. Later, troops from the 1st Marine Division made a thorough reconnaissance of the above islands and found the initial reports made by the FMF Reconnaissance Bn to be essentially correct, despite the fact that the missions were of necessity executed hurriedly.

After a reconnaissance mission on the island of Kutakan, the battalion moved to the northwest of Okinawa and during the night of 7-8 April went ashore on Minna Shima. This island, within easy artillery range of Ie Shima, was held pending the arrival of garrison troops and artillery units; the latter were to support the landing on Ie Shima by providing fire from Minna Shima.

Following a brief respite, the battalion, now under control of the 6th Marine Division, landed

on Sesoko Shima and Yagachi Shima, near Motobu Peninsula, where many civilians were found but no enemy.

In seven night operations the Amphibious Reconnaissance Bn, FMF, Pacific, gained valuable information about 13 islands and thus materially aided the planning of Tenth Army and III Amphibious Corps. Trained especially for this type of work, the battalion demonstrated that the basic rules of our training manuals which deal with night operations are fundamentally sound. Like all doctrine these rules work best when applied to a situation wherein properly trained units embark upon missions of suitable scope and character.

Although Maj Jones, the commanding officer of the battalion, was enthusiastic about the type of reconnaissance missions assigned his unit, he did point out one variance from the basic tenets of night operations that might have led to

serious difficulties: During the night of 27-28 March, 1945, LCVPs, waiting offshore for the return

of amphibious patrols from Aware Saki, were fired up by friendly LCIs engaged in picket duty. These LCIs had not been notified by higher echelon of the mission of the Recon Bn. Fortunately, no damage was done, but the incident emphasizes the necessity that "there should be explicit orders for all echelons."

In the tactical doctrine of our training manuals that deal with night operations, these factors are the ones most emphasized and which will tend to insure success, if properly understood and taken into account:

1. There should be a daylight reconnaissance made of the area immediately involved in the operation.
2. Preparations should begin during daylight.
3. A limited objective should be assigned; this should consist of a prominent, easily identifiable terrain feature.
4. There should be explicit orders for all echelons.
5. Noise discipline must be carried out.
6. Contact must be maintained.
7. When possible, fresh troops should be used.
8. The force involved should be limited in size.
9. Approaches to objective should permit silent movement.
10. Secrecy must be maintained if surprise is to be achieved.
11. There should be some directional aids (roads, fences, hedges, etc.)

By Capt James R. Stockman

Maps by Cpl C. F. Maguirk

operations by sticking to the manuals and orthodox procedures

Jap Night Operations on Okinawa

THE MARINES were not alone in planning night operations on Okinawa. The 32d Japanese Army attempted a night counterattack in force on 12-13 April and another one on 3-4 May. The interrogation report of Col Hirimichi Yahara, senior 32d Army staff officer captured at the conclusion of the campaign, throws some light on the enemy's analysis of the two attempts:

"The proponents of aggressive action finally were permitted to attempt a counter-attack on the night of 12 April. The failure of the venture strengthened Yahara's position as the spokesman of the conservatives.

"The 62d Division was still holding the line alone with the 22d Regiment of the 24th Division reserve in the Nishibaru area. On the night of 9 or 10 April plans were drawn up at a staff meeting calling for three battalions of the 22d Regiment and three battalions of the 62d Division to infiltrate, scattering throughout the area between the lines and the objective line, 1500 yards north of Futema. The sector lines ran through the center of the island, with the 62d Division on the west and the 22d Regiment on the east. Within each sector one battalion was to occupy the northern one-third, and the last battalion the southern third. The men were to hide in caves and tombs, awaiting a suitable opportunity to attack on 13 April.

"The main advantage of the attack was that it would prevent the use of Blue [i.e., American] Naval Gunfire or artillery since the area would be occupied simultaneously by Blue and Japanese troops, thus enabling the Japanese to fight upon their own terms, i.e., hand-to-hand combat. On the other hand, the 22d Regiment was unfamiliar with the terrain. As it turned out, this factor accounted for the complete failure of the attack.

"Col Yahara opposed the attack and succeeded in reducing the forces participating to four battalions.

"The attack was launched as scheduled. As Col Yahara had predicted, the battalions of the 22d Regiment were bewildered by the terrain and by dawn had made only 500 yards. They were forced to retreat, suffering heavy casualties. The 62d Division battalions fared somewhat better, one battalion advancing to TA 8378 remaining there throughout the day of 13 April and returning that night with low casualties.

"On about 20 April, the Japanese began to move troops north in anticipation of a Blue landing in the Yonabaru area. The 62d Division, reinforced on the right (east) flank by the 22d Regiment was holding a line from Onaga-Kochi-Hill 187 to the Machinato airfield. Even the blindest staff officer was growing aware that Blue forces would eventually break through any defenses the Japanese could establish. As yet the Japanese had not suffered crippling casualties and in the opinion of many officers the time was ripe to strike a "decisive" blow.

"Gen Cho, Chief of Staff, always a proponent of aggressive action, was instrumental in the decision to stage the counter-attack. Cho was vigorously supported by Fujioka, CG of the 32d Division, who expressed the general desire of his men to fight the decisive action in the 62d Division zone of defense. Col Yahara opposed the attack as being premature but was over-ridden.

"The plan was ambitious. The 23d and 26th Shipping Engineer Regiments were to effect counter-landings on the west and east coast respectively during the night of 3-4 May. On 4 May, the 24th Division (89th Regiment on the east, 22d in the center, and 32d Regiment on the West) were to launch an attack with Futema as the objective. The 44th Independent Mixed Brigade was to follow the 24th Division bearing west to the coast, thus cutting off the 1st Marine Division. The 62d Division did not participate in the attack.

"It was, it is Col Yahara's opinion, the decisive action of the campaign. The Japanese were so weakened by its failure that they lost all hope of taking any further offensive action. On 5 May, Gen Ushijima called Col Yahara to his office and, with tears in his eyes, declared that he would in the future be guided by Yahara's decisions."

On American night tactics Col Yahara made this comment:

"American night attacks were particularly effective, taking the Japanese completely by surprise. The Japanese had so accustomed themselves to ceasing organized hostilities at nightfall, and, except for the ubiquitous Kirikomitai, reorganizing and relaxing during the night that attacks in these hours caught them both physically and psychologically off-guard."

12. There must be good leadership on all levels.

The first night attack of any consequence launched by a Marine unit on Okinawa took place at 0300, 10 May. After seizing all of northern Okinawa, the 6th Marine Division was ordered to take over the west portion of the Tenth Army line in southern Okinawa. Initially, the zone of action assigned the division was suitable for a regiment; the 22d Marines moved up to positions south of Machinato on the high ground north of the Asa river where it relieved elements of the 7th Marines on 8 May. On the right flank lay the sea, to the left the 1st Marine Division, now fighting for Hill 60, Dakeshi Ridge and cleaning up the Awacha pocket. There was no room for maneuver to the left; to the front there was a natural barrier, the Asa river; beyond it lay a line of hills, heavily fortified by the enemy. MajGen Lemuel C. Shepherd, Jr., was faced with the problem of crossing the river before he could launch an attack in his zone of action. Orders from Tenth Army, modified by III Amphibious Corps, designated the hills south of the Asa as the objective line to be reached before 11 May, the date set for a coordinated drive to overwhelm Japanese Gen Ushijima's fortress stronghold based on the Shuri hill mass. To carry out its part, the 6th Division had to secure these hills to be on its proper line of departure for the big attack.

THE decision reached by the staff of the 6th Division was to cross the Asa at night, seize the first high ground to the south immediately, and continue the attack. Patrols crossed the Asa on 9 May and reconnoitered the south side; one firefight resulted.

The area occupied by the 22d Marines on 8-9 May was under constant observation by the enemy. His guns, in sporadic bursts, harassed the troops in their positions each day and night. To attempt to move any sizable body of troops down from the hills into the valley of Asa, in order to cross the river during daylight hours, was unthinkable. With his artillery and mortars sighted in on this area, and with unlimited observation, the enemy could have easily decimated any company, battalion, or regiment that tried to cross. In deciding to cross the river in force under the cover of darkness, Gen Shepherd was aware of the fact that although such a scheme held dangers, it would be cheaper, probably, in terms of men's lives than a daylight crossing.

Shortly after dark on 9 May, the 6th Engineer Bn began the construction of a footbridge on the Asa Estuary. The footbridge, intended for the use of the 3rd Bn, was completed shortly before 0300 on the morning of 10 May and a few troops crossed it before it was destroyed by a Japanese suicide demolition team. It is obvious then that

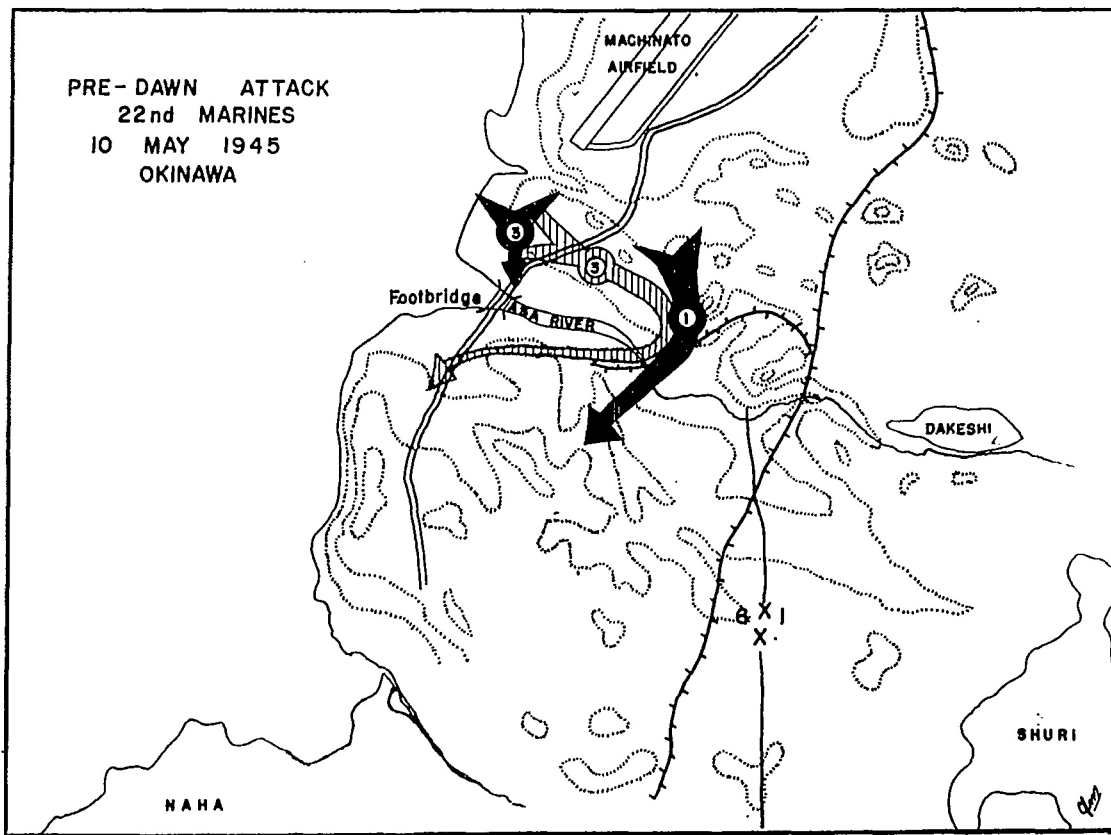
the attack was not an out-and-out surprise to the enemy. The partial loss of the surprise element, however, did not prevent the two assault battalions of the 22d Marines from crossing the river prior to dawn; daylight found them fighting for the regiment's first objective. By night, the regiment held a bridgehead about 1400 yards long and 300 yards deep. It was in position to launch its drive toward Naha.

Many of the desirable features for a night attack were not present in this operation. The element of surprise could not be wholly attained, although no pre-attack artillery barrage announced the jump-off. Unfortunately, there was some illumination by adjacent units. The main provisions mandatory in such an attack were well executed. Objectives were easily discernible and understood by the assaulting troops. Each unit understood perfectly its mission and the extent of its zone of action. A Jap counter-attack in force after daylight, and before the river was bridged so that supporting troops and weapons could cross, might have placed the attack in jeopardy, and conceivably could have spelled failure. That such an attack did not materialize may be traced to our heavy artillery and naval gunfire, as well as air strikes, which prevented the enemy from massing any sizable group for such a counterattack. This left the assault battalions free to devote their energies to their primary task—the seizure of the first hills and ridges.

By using a night attack, then, the 22d Marines were able to cross the Asa river in force and commence offensive operations at dawn where a daylight crossing would have meant heavy casualties from observed enemy fire on pre-sited areas. In addition, by crossing before dawn, the assault battalions had a maximum number of daylight hours in which to fight for their objective.

CHRONOLOGICALLY, the next important night operation took place during the night of 13-14 May when the 5th Marines relieved the 1st Marines in an area that was right under the nose of the Japs.

By 13 May the 1st Marines had fought into the low ground west of Dakeshi Ridge and northwest of Wana Ridge where the enemy was emplaced in great strength and with numerous weapons at his command. Unfortunately, the 1st Marines had no good ground for maneuver; the troops were under constant enemy observation from their left flank and left front. Forward progress was virtually impossible and what little was made occurred on the extreme right of the regiment's zone of action where a railroad embankment gave some cover from the intense enemy fire.



After 13 straight days of action, the regiment was weary and depleted in strength. It was time for it to be relieved. MajGen Pedro del Valle, CG of the 1st Marine Division, ordered the 5th Marines to relieve the 1st Marines in the latter's positions on the front line during the night of 13 May. Before moving up, the relieving battalions of the 5th Marines sent reconnaissance parties to determine the best routes forward and to study the positions of the 1st Marines. Beginning well after midnight, units began to move up into position with a few men of the 5th effecting the relief at a time. By dawn of 14 May all three battalions of the 1st Marines were relieved and the 5th Marines were in position ready for the day's attack. This relief could not have been accomplished during the hours of daylight and under the very nose of the enemy without risking heavy casualties.

During the early morning hours of 29 May the 22d Marines executed a night operation in order to cross the east-west canal that divides the city of Naha. On 28 May the 6th Marine Division had found its front lines somewhere in the shape of the letter "L." Forming the long axis was the 29th Marines facing the hills to the south that overlooked the Kokuba river. To the right and facing southeast was the 22d Marines, forming

the short part of the L. Barring their forward progress was the Naha Canal, an inconvenient but not insurmountable object. At this time Gen Shepherd ordered his division's attack reoriented, with the emphasis to be placed on the attack of the 22d Marines.

To launch their attack on 29 May, the 22d Marines were ordered to put an assault battalion across the canal under the cover of darkness in order to avoid needless casualties. A daylight crossing would have placed the assault companies in an extremely vulnerable position. As usual, the enemy had excellent observation of the canal area from Telegraph Hill, (the regiment's first objective), and from the high hills across the Kokuba river to the south.

Soon after nightfall on 28 May members of the 6th Engineer Bn began to construct footbridges across the Naha Canal at three points. The work was done swiftly and silently; at 0420 the little bridges were completed. Ten minutes later "A" and "B" companies of the 1st Bn 22d Marines, began to cross. Immediately upon reaching the other side, the companies reorganized and at 0500—just prior to dawn—began to attack. The enemy was completely surprised and for thirty minutes offered no resistance. After that there was sporadic rifle and machine gun fire

but the enemy had lost the opportunity to inflict heavy casualties upon the 1st Bn during the two periods when its troops were exposed; (a) during the crossing of the canal and (b) during the reorganization on the opposite bank. Although there was some intense fighting during the day, the pre-dawn crossing and dawn attack led to the capture of more ground than would have otherwise been possible, and with less cost in lives.

DURING the evening of 1 June, LtGen Roy S. Geiger, CG III Amphibious Corps, asked MajGen Shepherd, CG 6th Marine Division, to study the practicability of a shore-to-shore landing on Oroku Peninsula. Plans were laid immediately for an amphibious reconnaissance of the peninsula. In order to make its final decision, the G-3 section of the Division sent a night patrol across from Naha to the northwestern tip of Oroku to probe the Japanese defenses, to examine the beaches, and to estimate the strength of the enemy deployed in this area.

Maj Anthony Walker, in command of the Reconnaissance Co, divided the patrol into four 4-man units, each with its own plastic boat and its particular mission. The teams were to land abreast in the southern shore of the estuary. First the beaches would be examined and then the defenses based near the mouth of the wide northern corridor; the patrol was to check on defensive installations, roads, and movements of troops.

Well after dusk, and before moonrise, on 2 June, the patrol started out. The crossing of the estuary was uneventful although it appeared that surprise might not be achieved. Despite instructions issued early in the day that star shell illumination would not be fired until the patrol returned, one ship failed to get the word and fired several star shell rounds while the little plastic boats were being paddled across the broad entrance to the estuary.

To those waiting for the patrol to return, it seemed at the time that the attempt might have failed. A few hours after the boats had disappeared in the darkness on their way to the peninsula, there came the sound of mortars and a few sharp bursts of small arms fire. By 0300 the last boat had returned; the reconnaissance was successful. Each team had accomplished its mission, and none had lost a man. One team had a brief brush with a Japanese patrol as it came back to the beach. Small arms fire was exchanged and the Japanese pumped out a few rounds of mortar fire, searching aimlessly for the marines. The other teams had walked along the roads past uneasy groups of civilians and near Japanese installations where they could hear soldiers talking or eating. Intelligence gained by this patrol indicated

that the northern part of Oroku Peninsula was occupied by the enemy, but not in great strength. The proposed landing beaches were not ideal but could be used. On the basis of this intelligence, the G-3 section drew up its plans and Gen Shepherd ordered an amphibious assault at dawn on 4 June. The landing, made by the 4th Marines, was successful and the Japanese on Oroku were taken by surprise, initially. The results achieved underline the desirability of conducting a night reconnaissance when specific intelligence data is not otherwise available.

At 2030, 11 June, orders were received by the 1st Bn, 7th Marines, to continue the attack to seize Kunishi ridge, a heavily defended position, at 0300, 12 June. Efforts to get across the open compartment on 11 June had failed; the valley between Tera and Kunishi was swept by enemy fire of all types. A night attack was the only alternative. The 1st Bn's commanding officer called the commander of the 2d Bn, 7th Marines, and made arrangements with the latter in order to coordinate the attack of the two battalions. Initially each battalion was to send one company across the fire-swept valley to seize and hold the ridge in the regimental zone of action. So that the attack would be oriented correctly a road in the right of the 1st Bn's zone was to be used for a guide.

Moving up along the little road, Co C contacted Co F of the 2d Bn at 0225 and the two assault companies of the two battalions went forward slowly and met no resistance while climbing the ridge. The Japanese were caught by surprise. Co C killed about ten of the enemy and managed to get its 3d Platoon set up on a line before the Japs could offer resistance. The 2d Platoon tried to extend to the east on the left of the 3d Platoon but by this time the Nips cut loose with a mortar barrage and forced the platoon to withdraw back to the 3d Platoon.

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

REQUESTS for more troops came back from Co C and the battalion began to ferry six men in each tank from Co A. Although the trips were slow and few, due to enemy fire, about a platoon got over this way and built up a line on the left of Co C. At 1300 the valley was smoked and Co B and Co G of the 2d Bn, in an attempt to reinforce the ridge moved forward simultaneously. Tanks were out to support the advance. No enemy artillery or mortar fire was

received but machine gun fire crisscrossed the valley, pinning down the advancing troops and forcing them to withdraw to await the cover of darkness.

Co F had attained the ridge with the same ease that marked C's attack, but Co G, like B, tried crossing the valley three times that day only to be driven back by heavy enemy fire. Under the cover of darkness, the 2d Bn moved both G and E across the valley and up on the ridge to form a tight perimeter with F and the 1st Bn B, and the remainder of A crossed at the same time, and before midnight all the rifle companies of the two battalions were holding the ridge.

DURING the afternoon of 13 June, the 2d Bn. 1st Marines, was given a warning order calling for an attack on Kunishi Ridge at 0500 on the following morning. Arrangements were made for supporting fires from tanks, M-7's, 37's and 4.2 mortars, artillery and naval gunfire. The ridge was known to be held by a sizable force. The nearest adjacent friendly units consisted of the Army on the left in the town of Ozato and elements of the 7th Marines now on the western part of Kunishi Ridge, but about 300-400 yards west of the regimental boundary.

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

After a half hour artillery preparation well to the front (lack of observation would not permit the fire to be brought down close to the troops), the assault companies, E and G, commenced to move forward. By 0500 Co E had its assault platoons on the topographical crest of the ridge, but by this time the enemy was aware of the attack and commenced firing in such heavy volume that the remainder of the company could not advance to join the platoons on the crest. Co G had moved out behind E and by 0530 had its 3d Platoon tied in on E's left flank. From the defilade afforded by a low ledge on the side of the ridge, the 2d Platoon was fed forward, one or two men at a time, and built up a line on the left of the 3d Platoon. By this time the men on the ridge found their positions precarious. They were receiving enemy fire of all types from their front and flanks, and from the canefields to the rear snipers plagued them. The enemy in the fields below and to the rear of the platoons on the ridge denied all the ground between the assault and rear elements. Casualties began to mount and the battalion

turned to the only hope that was left—the tanks.

Enemy 47mm fire made the route to the ridge very dangerous for the tanks, but they managed to cross the open approaches and commenced to evacuate the most seriously wounded men first, taking them up through the escape hatches. Each tank brought up food, water, and ammunition and then carried wounded back to battalion aid stations on the return trip.

The plight of the assault companies on the ridge is not connected in any way with the night attack. The ridge, heavily defended, was a serious obstacle that had to be reduced. In order to get at close grips with the enemy and yet not lose too many men while crossing the unprotected approaches to the ridge, there was only one suitable method of attack. The ease with which Co E succeeded in seizing the topographical crest of the ridge justified the use of a night attack. It is surprising that the artillery preparation did not warn the enemy; that it did not, may be explained by pointing out that a great deal of artillery fire was used at intervals every night. Surprise was certainly achieved in this case.

SOON after the capture of Oroku Peninsula, the 6th Marine Division was called upon to take an active part in the final drive to the southern coast of Okinawa. The situation confronting the division on 16 June was much like the one on 8 May when the 22d Marines took over the western portion of the III Amphibious Corps line near the Asa river. Again the 22d Marines was chosen as the first regiment of the 6th Division to enter the lines for the final drive and it was a coincidence that the regiment was relieving elements of the 7th Marines, just as it had done near the Asa. In order to effect the relief and passage of lines, it was necessary to execute a night operation.

The 7th Marines were fighting on the reverse slope of Kunishi Ridge and were suffering from serious supply and evacuation difficulties resulting from heavy enemy mortar, artillery, machine gun and small arms fire which blanketed and crisscrossed the valley between Tera and Kunishi. It was virtually impossible to cross this valley except with tanks. All troop movements had to be effected under the cover of darkness. Troops on Kunishi were supplied by emergency airdrops, and casualties were carried out in tanks.

On 16 June Col Harold C. Roberts, CO, 22d Marines, held a meeting of his battalion commanders and issued his warning order which called for the 1st and 3d Bns to relieve elements of the 7th Marines on Kunishi Ridge prior to dawn on 17 June, and to be prepared to launch an attack at 0700.

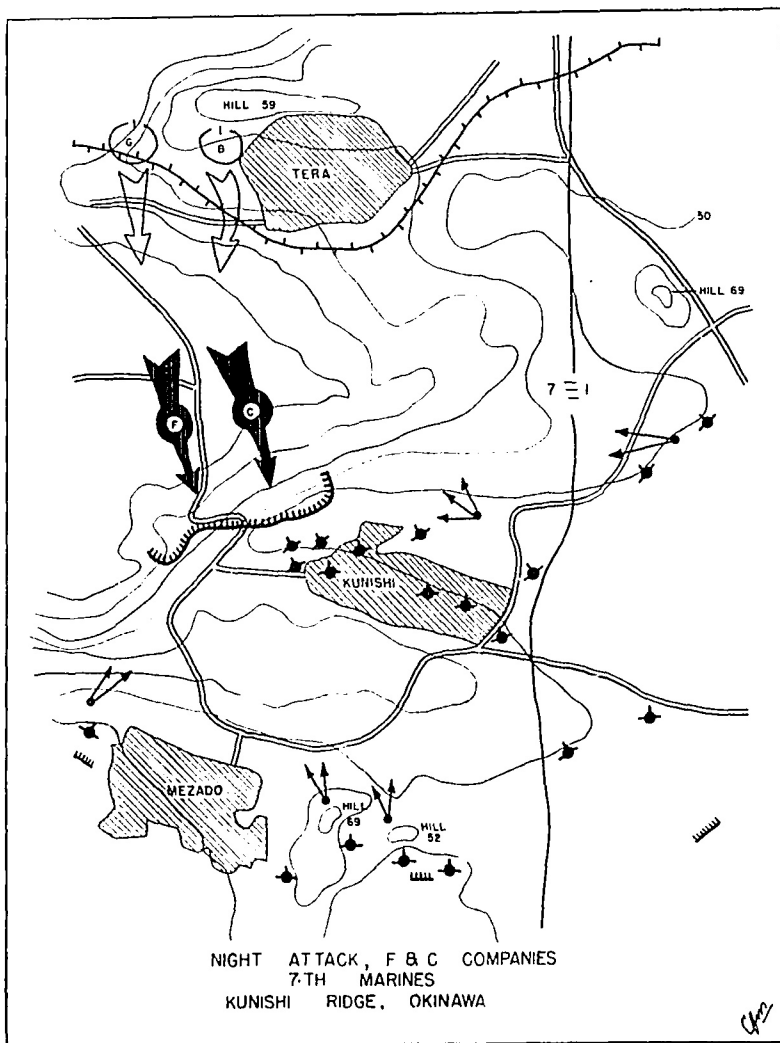
The battalion commanders then sent preliminary reconnaissance parties to find the best

routes forward. The day of 16 June was spent in preparation for the forward movement.

At 0300, 17 June, the two battalions commenced to move quickly across the valley south of Tera and up on Kunishi Ridge. Noise discipline was excellent; nothing happened to warn the enemy of the movement of troops. By 0515 the reliefs had been completed and the 22d Marines began to use supporting arms to soften up the targets on the day's objective line. Promptly at 0700 the two assault battalions attacked to seize Mezado Ridge. A successful night operation paved the way for a satisfactory daylight attack.

In this instance, it is noticeable that the 22d Marines were able to plan and prepare for a night operation according to the principles laid down in our training manuals. Planning began a sufficient length of time in advance so that the area to be crossed could be reconnoitered and studied. The assault battalions had opportunity to find out exactly where they were going, how to get there, and what to do after they got there. The valley between Tera and Kunishi could not have been crossed by any body of troops during daylight hours without incurring extremely heavy casualties. By crossing it at night, a fresh regiment was in position on 17 June, ready to continue the attack with its assault units intact.

In order to continue its drive to the coast, the 1st Marine Division needed fresh troops to put into the line. On 15 June, the 8th Marines, one of the regiments of the 2d Marine Division, landed on Oroku Peninsula and passed to the control of the 1st Marine Division. Initially, the 8th Marines took up positions 2000-4000 yards north of Itoman. The day of 16 June was spent in this area, and next morning the regimental command post was moved south to Tera. Orders were then issued to the 2d Bn to relieve the 2d Bn, 7th Marines, on Mezado Ridge prior to



0700, 18 June, and be prepared to continue the attack toward Ibanu Ridge at that hour. During the same night the 3d Bn, 8th Marines, was ordered to relieve the 3d Bn, 7th Marines, on Kunishi Ridge.

The area between Tera and Kunishi Ridge was still under enemy fire and to cross that valley during daylight hours was to invite needless casualties. Shortly after midnight, the 2d Bn, 8th Marines, commenced to move forward from its bivouac area far to the north of Tera and by daylight had relieved the 2d Bn, 7th Marines, on Mezado. In the meantime the 3d Bn, 8th Marines, had effected the relief of the same battalion of the 7th on Kunishi.

At 0700, the 2d Bn jumped off in attack toward Ibanu according to plan. In the reliefs and passage of lines, involving the movement of four battalions, there were only a few casualties. With dawn, Gen del Valle was able to continue the drive to the south with fresh troops on the

line and fresh troops in immediate reserve. By virtue of using a night operation, it was possible, therefore, to not only maintain the momentum of attack, but to increase the pressure in a very economical manner. The 8th Marines found no difficulty in following the precepts laid down in training manuals in conducting this night operation.

A study of night operations conducted by Marine units during the Okinawa operation reveals that:

1. Orthodox methods are good methods.
2. A correct estimate of the situation is a major contributing factor toward success.
3. Night operations need not be confined to highly specialized units.
4. Such operations afford echelon commanders with an excellent tactical device.

5. Present doctrine is quite satisfactory for the training and indoctrination of troops.

In planning a night operation, the S-3 or G-3 will do well to keep in mind four factors. One, in a sense, is a constant; the rest are highly variable. The constant is, of course, the "Book." The importance of its rules governing night operations, particularly the military Big Three—direction, control, and surprise—cannot be overestimated. The three variables are: (a) the enemy (b) own troops (c) terrain.

In that part of the Marine Corps Hymn that goes, "In the air, on land and sea" one can easily imagine the implication, "by day or night." The extensive use of night operations during the Okinawa Campaign seems to prove it. US & MC

Armed Forces Leave Act

THE "Armed Forces Leave Act of 1946" legislation (HR 4051) granting terminal leave to enlisted men was signed recently by the President.

Under the bill evolved by a conference committee, unused leave may be accumulated from 8 September 1939 through 31 August 1946 not to exceed 120 days, including terminal leave already taken by officers, but after 31 August all members of the armed forces will be limited to a maximum of 60 days of terminal leave.

Leave will be accumulated, as before, at the rate of 2½ days a month.

Settlement and compensation will be made entirely in cash when the amount due is less than \$50, in the case of any enlisted man discharged, separated, or released from active duty prior to 1 January 1943, and in cases of death or mental incapacitation in which dependents would collect.

In the case of leave accumulated as an enlisted man, it will be paid on the and in cash to the full extent of any balance." The bonds will be non-negotiable, will mature in five years, but may be used at any time in payment of premiums or in payment in conversion of a government life insurance policy.

In the case of leave accumulated as an enlisted man, it will be paid on the "Basis of the base and longevity pay applicable" on the date of his discharge if discharged before 31 August 1946, or on 31 August 1946 if not so discharged, and an allowance computed at the rate of 70 cents a day for subsistence, plus in the case of enlisted men of the first three grades with dependents on 31 August 1946, or former enlisted men with dependents at the time of discharge if prior to that date, an allowance computed at the rate of \$1.25 a day for quarters."

In the case of leave accumulated as a warrant or commissioned officer, it will be paid on the "basis of the base and longevity pay and allowances" applicable to each man on 31 August 1946.

In the future, reenlistment furloughs up to 90 days will be deducted from "leave accrued during active service prior to reenlistment or charged against any leave which may accrue during future active service or both." Leave accrued during service prior to retirements made after enactment of this law "may be carried over to the period of service after retirement."