

The Brand of Iwo Jima

For those who were there, the memories are indelible

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A BOOK PUBLISHER, a Wall Street broker, the operator of a famous restaurant. You couldn't find a combination that says "New York!" more definitively than these three. But when the casual round of metropolitan life brings them together, or any two of them, a glance passes from eye to eye and they remember another time, another place:

A hell-hole of an island called Iwo Jima.

Today is the 20th anniversary of the assault on that tiny Pacific island, and the start of the Marine Corps' toughest, most costly and greatest battle.

Unforgettable Days

Three of the many New Yorkers who were there in those bloody days—and will never be able to forget it—are George Percy, of the Clark, Dodge & Co. Inc. brokerage firm at 61 Wall St.; I. Robert Kriendler, president of the "21" club at 21 W. 52nd St.; and Thomas H. Guinzburg, head of Viking Press.

Percy, at 45, was the oldest battalion commander on the island; Kriendler, then 28, was a major, personnel officer of the Third Marine Division; Guinzburg, 18, was a young replacement as the island chewed up manpower.

"What I remember best was the raw youth of so many of our boys; it was a place that made them men overnight—or killed them," Kriendler recalled the other day. "Timmy Guinzburg was one of those kids; I put him into action and he got through it, thank heaven."

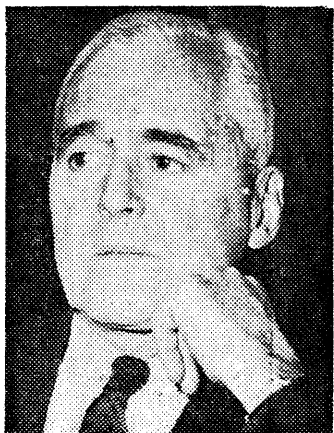
"What I remember," said Guinzburg, who hit the beach on D-Day after hours of riding around in little boats, "is fear—fear, and digging holes. I was just one of those thousands of kids right out of school who wanted to be a hero, and regretted it almost instantly. None of it makes sense any more."

Staggering Losses

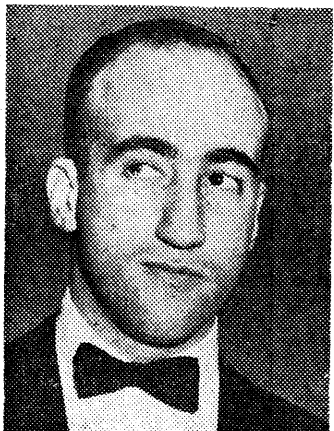
Guinzburg was a private first class. "Or maybe I hadn't attained that exalted rank yet on D-Day; maybe I was just a private. The thing I do remember was how few Japanese we saw on the island—there were thousands and thousands of them there, but they were dug in, hidden."

How many Japanese were there is attested by the casualty figures; the United States Marines lost almost 6000 men killed, missing or died of wounds; more than 17,000 others were wounded; an-

TOLL: 28,000 casualties.



GEORGE PERCY.



THOMAS H. GUINZBURG.

other 2600 suffered combat fatigue. With Navy and Army casualties added, the deaths totaled 6800; total casualties, more than 28,000. The Japanese had an estimated 21,000 men on the island; by the end, 20,000 had been killed, and the rest taken prisoner.

On D-Day-plus-3, when Maj. Kriendler went in, he remembers "The beaches were still littered with dead, with vehicles, with supplies that couldn't be brought forward. In the black volcanic ash, it was hard going; for almost every step forward, you'd slip back two."

Another thing he remembers is that whenever he sought Maj.

George Percy at his battalion headquarters with some message, he found Percy was "always up forward . . . he's an incredible fellow. . . I have never seen a man cooler under fire."

Percy, at his advanced age for a fighting man, had managed to get into the Marines only as a paymaster. Before Iwo Jima, in the island-hopping at Guam and Bougainville, he pulled a fast shuffle to get into a fighting mission, and then, to make it look right, wangled a confirmation from authorities back in Washington of his assignment to a combat unit.

The Close Shaves

He went ashore on Iwo a few days after D-Day. "My commanding officer had gone ahead to make contact with the pretty badly shot-up battalion we were relieving," he recalled. "Just at dark one night, I caught up with

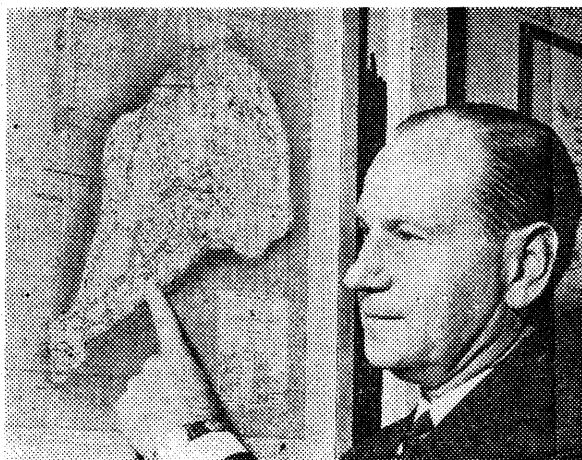
him as he was coming back in a jeep ambulance, a machinegun bullet through his knee. I said goodbye to him and took over the battalion. I must have been the oldest battalion commander on the island. Most of the others were 30, or even younger."

When Percy remembers Iwo, he remembers the close shaves, the split-second difference between life and death. There was a Japanese artillery shell that knocked the brass buckle off his belt, taking some skin from his stomach along with it. Another time there was a piece of shrapnel that hit a "big thick notebook in my breast pocket; I had some \$20 bills in the notebook, I don't know what I was doing carrying them around on Iwo, but they were chewed up as if rats had chewed them. I've kept them as souvenirs.

There was another time when he was talking to another officer,



BEACHHEAD: "It was a place that made our boys men overnight—or killed them."



I. ROBERT KRIENDLER.

moving around as one does in conversation. "We happened to change positions; he stood where I had been, I stood where he had been a moment before—and he got a direct hit in the chest from a Japanese knee mortar."

Above all, he remembers "No other island campaign was comparable to Iwo. It was awfully hard to take prisoners. . . ."

It was only a small island. But it was "the most expensive piece of real estate the United States has ever purchased. We paid 550 lives and 2500 wounded for every square mile," it is noted in "Iwo Jima," a book by Richard F. Newcomb, published today by Holt, Rinehart & Winston.

The Costliest Fight

The book tells the whole story of the Iwo Jima campaign, from both the American and the Japanese sides. The battle, which had been expected to last a week, perhaps two weeks, stretched out incredibly until the 25th of March when the last enemy strong point was overcome. It was the costliest fight in 168 years of Marine Corps history. But history records it was worth it.

Tonight, to mark the anniversary, the Third Annual Leatherneck Ball is being held as a dinner-dance in the grand ballroom of the Waldorf-Astoria. Gen. Graves B. Erskine, a former assistant secretary of defense, is honorary chairman; and Gen. Wallace M. Greene Jr., commandant of the Marine Corps, will be guest of honor. The ball will raise money to provide college scholarships for the children of Marines who were wounded or killed in combat.