

COMBAT OPERATIONS IN NICARAGUA

Compiled by DIVISION OF OPERATIONS AND TRAINING

Engagements at Ocotal and Telpaneca—Attack on O'Shea's Patrol

Orientation (See map of Nicaragua)

WITH THE HOPE of bringing about an agreement between the regular government under President Diaz and the revolutionary government under Sacasa, President Coolidge in April, 1927, sent the Hon. Henry L. Stimson to Nicaragua as his special representative to arrange a peace between the warring factions. The result of the negotiations was an agreement between President Diaz and General Moncada (the principal commander of the revolutionists) to surrender all of their arms and munitions to the Marine Brigade, representing the United States Government. All factions, with the exception of bands of guerrillas commanded by "Generals" Sandino and Cabulla (revolutionists), surrendered their arms and ammunition. Sandino, as a subordinate officer under General Moncada, refused to abide by the terms of the Stimson agreement and, gathering together a large group of malcontents and elements of unsavory reputation, embarked on a mission of banditry. In July, 1927, the forces of the 2nd Marine Brigade were distributed in Nicaragua, as shown on the map, for the purpose of denying to these guerrilla bands the more important cities and towns. It is to be noted that no offensive measures had been undertaken by the Marines up to this time, but that our actions had been purely of a defensive nature.

Cabulla was killed by Captain Wm. P. Richards, U. S. M. C., on May 26, 1927, during a marauding expedition to Chinandega by Cabulla at the head of a bandit group.

Sandino and his followers had disappeared into the winds in the north-eastern part of the province of Nueva Segovia. It soon became apparent, however, that he did not intend to remain inactive.

At daybreak, July 16, 1927, Sandino, at the head of a group of bandits, numbering approximately 400, attacked the Marine detachment of 39 enlisted at Ocotal, commanded by Captain G. D. Hatfield, reenforced by a Guardia National detachment of 47 enlisted under the command of First Lieutenant Grover C. Darnall, U. S. M. C.

The final result of this attack, due in large part to the timely assistance of the air forces, was a severe defeat for the outlaw forces with heavy losses.

A combined force of Marines and Guardia under Major Oliver Floyd, which had left Matagalpa on July 15, arrived at Ocotal July 21, 1927, and remained in that vicinity for a time patrolling the surrounding country. Sandino's forces had apparently been badly disorganized after the Ocotal



fight and conditions were quiet. Floyd's column returned to Matagalpa but left garrisons at Ocotol, Jicaró, Somoto and Telpaneca. These garrisons were in effect, outposts, maintained to watch developments until the end of the rainy season, when more extensive activity, if necessary, would be possible.

Sandinó apparently recuperated rather quickly from the effects of his defeat at Ocotol and again exhibited his readiness to take the offensive by attacking Telpaneca on the night of September 18th, with a force of about 200. A combined force of Marines and Guardia commanded by First Lieutenant H. S. Keimling, U. S. M. C. (Captain, G. N. N.) repulsed this attack and inflicted heavy losses on the enemy.

The aggressive attitude of the outlaws was again demonstrated on October 9 when a patrol of 9 marines and 12 guardia under First Lieutenant George O'Shea was attacked by a force of 300 outlaws in the vicinity of Quilali. O'Shea's patrol was one of several sent out in an effort to locate Lieutenant E. A. Thomas, U. S. M. C., and Sergeant Frank E. Dowdell, U. S. M. C., aviators who had had a forced landing and were subsequently killed by bandits.

Reports of the participants in these three contacts are given herewith. Taken together these may be said to represent a phase of the operations in Nicaragua when Sandino was on the offensive.

The next phase was an offensive movement against Sandino which resulted in breaking up his fortified position of El Chipote. Reports of contacts connected with this subsequent phase will be published later.

Engagement At Ocotal

The following report of this engagement was made by the officer in command of the detachment at Ocotal:

Marine Detachment, Ocotal, Nicaragua.
20 July, 1927.

From: The Commanding Officer.

To: The Commanding General, Second Brigade, Managua, Nicaragua.

Via: The Commanding Officer, Fifth Regiment.

Subject: Attack on Ocotal, July 16, 1927.

1. At 1:15 a. m., 16 July, 1927, an attack on the city of Ocotal was launched by the forces commanded by one Augusto C. Sandino, one time general in the Liberal forces of Nicaragua, but now an outlaw and rebel.

2. Dispositions had been made for such an attack and the men, both Marines and Guardia Nacional, had frequent drills in quickly assuming their battle stations and always slept with arms and ammunition at hand.

The officers were standing watch and watch rather than the usual officer of the day duty and all slept fully dressed.

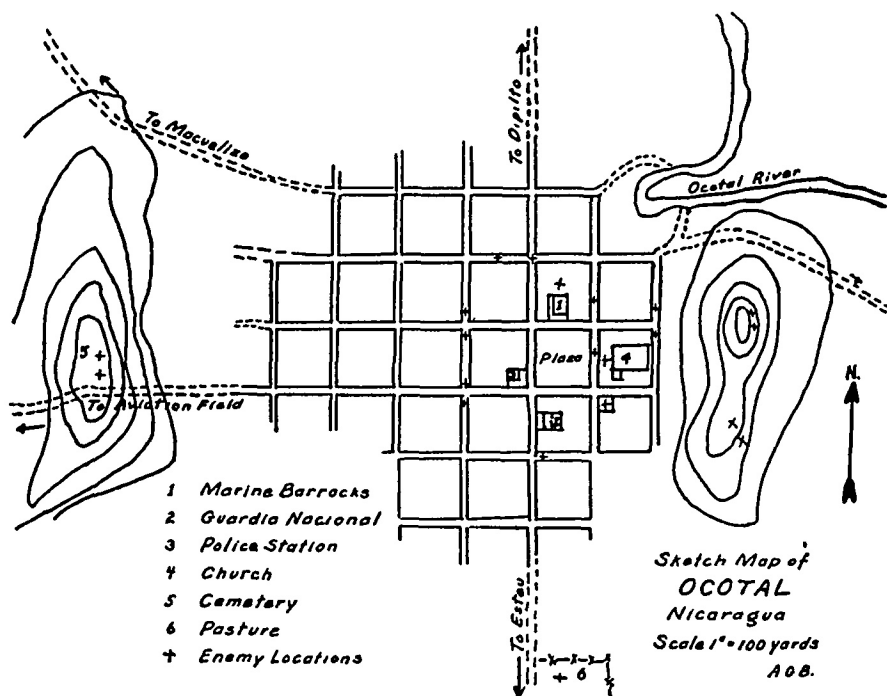
The sentry on post in front of the barracks, Private Brainard R. Williams, saw a suspicious movement in the street just beyond the officers' quarters and went to investigate. As he approached, he was fired upon by four men from the street corner one block west of the officers' quarters.

All men were dressed and at their assigned stations firing within three minutes from the time of the first shot and were receiving fire from all directions, and from well located snipers in addition.

The outlaws had evidently infiltrated into the town during the early part of the night and expected to effect a complete surprise.

The street on which our barracks is located was swept by machine gun fire from a position on a hill in prolongation of the street. Fire from this gun wounded Private Garrison.

The intersecting street between the barracks and the officers' quarters was swept by machine gun fire from a gun located in the Jefe Politico's office, and also by friendly fire from a machine gun located in the street in front of the barracks of the Guardia Nacional. The latter was being fired by Lieutenant Bruce in an effort to silence the enemy gun at the office of the



Jefe Politico. The officers had to pass through this barrage to join their organizations.

The initial attack slackened at about 3:00 a. m., when their bugles sounded assembly for a re-organization. At this time Sandino arrived from Mosonte and evidently changed the plan of attack. Two automatic rifles and some snipers kept up a desultory firing until the second attack was launched at about 4:00 a. m. and lasted until 8:10 a. m., when a bearer of a flag of truce approached with a message from Sandino and another from Sanchez. Firing was suspended while the truce bearer approached but all men remained at the ready with orders to allow no shifting of enemy troops or change of enemy dispositions while the notes were being read and replied to.

The notes were to the effect that we had put up a brave fight, that we would have guarantee of immunity, and that we were known to be short of water (an error on his part, for we had enough in government "guarro" tanks to last us two weeks); therefore if we would throw our arms in the street we would not be harmed, but if we did not surrender within sixty minutes, he would fire the town and show us an amount of rifle fire that we had never dreamed of before.

My reply was that Marines did not know how to surrender and that water or no water we would stick it out until killed or captured, and that

firing would be resumed as soon as the flag bearer had turned the nearest corner.

It was during the second attack that Private Obleski was killed by a sniper from an adjoining wall. This sniper was killed by Sergeant Ollie R. Blackburn with fire from his pistol and was found with four forty-five calibre bullet wounds in his head and neck.

Heavy rifle and machine gun fire continued until about 10:15 a. m., when two planes from Managua arrived, circled the town, caught our messages and fired bursts of machine gun fire.

One plane evidently returned to Managua at about 10:30 a. m., while the other remained until 11:00 a. m., assisting us by machine gun fire.

Five planes came over at about 2:35 p. m., firing machine guns and dropping bombs until 3:20 p. m., when they returned to Managua.

The air attack was the deciding factor in our favor, for almost immediately the firing slackened and troops began to withdraw.

A desultory firing was kept up until about 5:25 p. m., when it ceased, with the exception of some snipers behind a wall in front of the church. These snipers were bluffed into surrendering their arms by Lieutenant Bruce of the Guardia Nacional, who told them that they were entirely surrounded and would be killed. All but one of the seven dropped their arms and gave up, but one tried to run away and was killed by Privatae Ingram from a doorway in this barracks.

This was the last of the firing from either side and I took and sent patrols out through the town to locate snipers and count the visible dead, of which there were more than fifty in the streets alone, to say nothing of those that had died in houses and along the river.

It was too near darkness for me to search the town, but from the number of dead seen, the number of funerals held daily since then and the increased size of cemetery, I believe there were at least three hundred dead from all causes, in addition to the wounded, which it is impossible to get check or even an estimate on.

Our total casualties were one dead and one wounded of the Marine Corps, three wounded, one seriously, and four captured of Guardia Nacional.

Of the known dead of Sandino's forces Ruffo Marin was the most important, Juan Calendras next and I have received conflicting reports as to Simon Jiron, "Pichingo"; some claim to have identified his body and others claim he is still alive.

Sandino's forces, I believe, amounted to about four hundred and were augmented by about one hundred here in town, a fact evidenced by practically every Liberal family in town being in mourning.

All Conservative homes and business places were looted and several Conservative personal enemies were killed by the invaders.

Private Obleski was buried with military honors at 6:45 p. m., July 16, 1927, in rear of our barracks and a cross and fence erected over his grave.

I have nothing but praise for the officers and men, both Marine Corps and Guardia Nacional. All fought like veterans and the members of the First Company, Guardia Nacional, are worthy to serve side by side with any military organization, any time, anywhere. The presence of this organization saved us from being in a very serious if not fatal position.

I have a number of citations for exceptional gallantry under fire for officers and men of both organizations, principally Lieutenant Bruce of the Guardia, Lieutenant Darnall of the Marine Corps and Guardia, Lieutenant Bliesner of the Marine Corps, and several enlisted men of both organizations. These citations will be formally listed in another communication.

G. D. HATFIELD.

An Enemy Field Order

Sandino's written orders for the attack on Ocotal are given herewith.

(Note: At the time of the attack, no Marine planes were at the landing field.)

PLAN TO ATTACK OCOTAL.

Colonel P. Sanchez H.

The Companies of Chiefs, Colonel Sanchez and Mayor Quezada.

SHALL ATTACK: The first one to the Constabulary and the second to the Yankees in their quarters.

Colonel Simon Jiron and Captain Colindres shall attack the aviation camp and shall put five pounds of dynamite in the machine of each one of the airplanes, shall also dig five holes in the camp, and shall put five pounds of dynamite in each one, with five feet of fuse to each one and then everything will be thrown far up into the air.

General Salgado, shall be in charge of driving out of the houses all of the responsible people who may be hidden.

Each soldier has the obligation of bearing two rifles equipped that is to say, his and one more; likewise every company shall carry the greatest possible amount of war implements.

The attack shall be Friday at One o'clock a. m., next day being Saturday.

We shall depart from OCOTAL at 6:00 a. m. in the direction of SAN FERNANDO.

It is prohibited to drink liquor and the one who does so I shall receive it as if it were an outrage to our country.

RUFO shall be hidden in the road to HONDURAS.

Ten members of Salgado's company will remain at the entrance to TOTOGALPA to OCOTAL.

LET IT BE COMPLIED.

/s/ A. C. SANDINO.

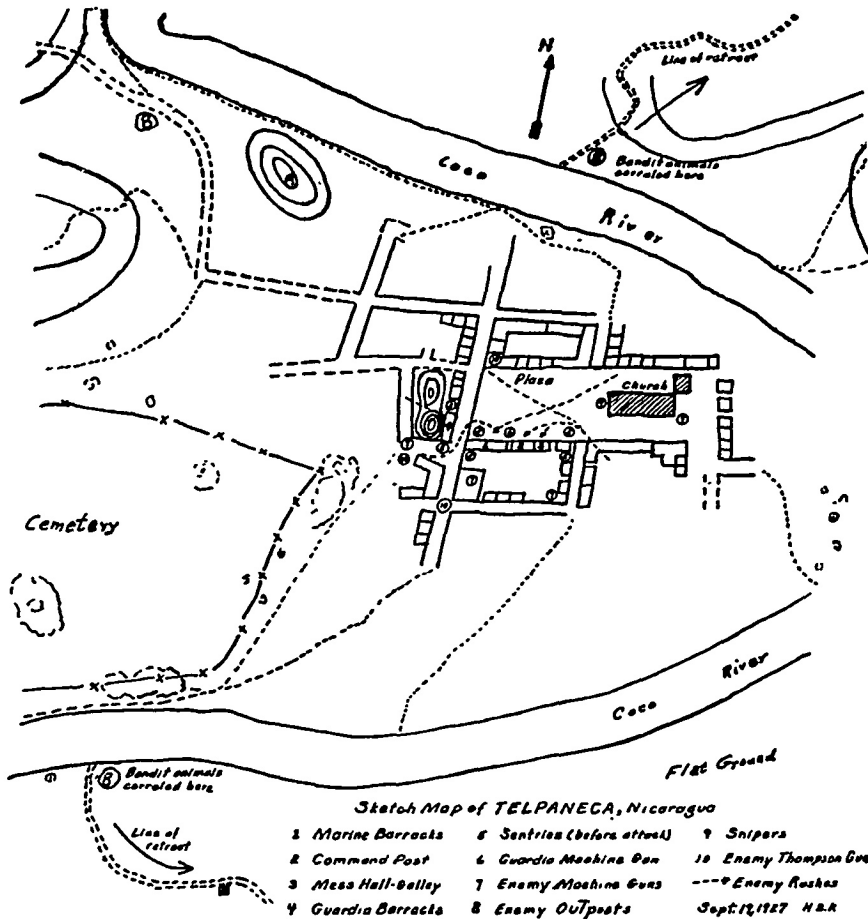
Engagement At Telpaneca

The following account of the engagement at Telpaneca was written by the officer in command, First Lieutenant H. S. Keimling, U. S. M. C. (Captain, G. N. N.).

At about one a. m., 19 September, 1927, bandit groups numbering about 200, under the command of Colindre, Estrada, Salgado, Diaz, Thomas Migado, Sanchez, and Rameriz attacked Telpaneca. The town was blanketed by a heavy fog which permeated the buildings. Battle stations were taken immediately after the explosion of a dynamite bomb in the rear of the Marine quarters. Pvt. Irwin, on post in rear of Marine quarters, killed the bandit who had set off the bomb.

The bandits laid heavy rifle, machine gun and Thompson gun fire on the rear of Marine and Guardia quarters, followed by dynamite bombs and hand grenades. The front of the quarters was peppered by Thompson gun fire followed by rushes of riflemen with machete men in the rear of them. Two groups rushed right up to the doorway of the two small buildings occupied by the cooks and messmen and the office building where I was at the time and which was designated during an attack as the Command Post. As I reached the doorway, Sgt. Eadens shoved me back, saying, "Here they come," and shot a bandit whose rifle was pointed at me. As the bandit staggered back, he shot Pvt. Glaser, U. S. M. C., who was going to his battle station. Pvt. Irwin coming up in the rear of Pvt. Glaser commenced firing into the group of bandits, who then fell back. Thompson gun fire was directed on us. When Pvt. Glaser was hit, Sgt. Eaden and I grabbed him and dragged him into the office. He was hit again before we could get him inside. Eaden and I took turns guarding the door and bandaging and attending to the wounded man. I then left Sgt. Eaden in charge with orders to guard the front and went outside. I appointed men to take command in different parts of the Marine and Guardia quarters and ordered them to have the men fire as fast as possible for ten minutes and then to fire at flashes caused by the enemy rifle fire. I told them to see that the men took aim and conserved their ammunition. After the first fifteen minutes everybody settled down and shot like veterans. Both the Marines and Guardias had excellent fire control and discipline.

I directed Private Macon, the Lewis machine gunner, to use traversing



fire across the plaza. While I was alongside of Pvt. Morris he said, "Look at the bozo coming down the hill, skipper." We watched the bandit throw something in the Guardia quarters. The next instant it was thrown out by Raso Salamanda, who then shot the bandit. Another form was seen moving down the hill but no Marines fired as they each had their own sector and would have fired into the Guardia quarters. Raso Cuenca, G. N., got mad at all the bombs exploding around his battle station, so he proceeded to leave the building under heavy fire and shot the next bomb thrower coming down the hill, receiving a slug in his foot in return. The bandit kept going towards the Lewis machine gun emplacement to drop his bomb when Pvt. Morris called out, "Who is that, a Guardia?" Raso Luis Huerta said "No, un bandito." Pvt. Morris let him have it and the machine gunner finished him.

I was recalled to the command post and got there in time to throw some grenades at a group making a rush under fire toward the rear of the building. Several bandit groups fired by commands and did some pretty good

shooting. The word was passed that the Lewis machine gun was jammed. Before I could say a word, Sgt. Eaden gave me his rifle and said, "Captain, guard the door, I'll fix it," and did so in the open, under fire, without any shelter. The machine gunner grabbed his own rifle and fired rapid fire, trying to imitate a Lewis. Some of our Thompson guns gave a little trouble. Sgt. Eaden went around and swabbed them out each half hour when I would pass the hour of the morning. There was no trouble after that.

Two dynamite bombs were thrown through the roof in rear of Guardia quarters. Raso Pedro Saballos threw one of the bombs out the building, receiving wounds to his hand from the explosion of same. An unknown Guardia threw out the other. So the bandits would not hear my commands to the Guardias, I passed the word for Raso Luis Huerta to report to C. P., which he did under heavy fire. I sent Raso Huerta several times with verbal messages to the Guardias. He always came back with a smile. I then posted him to guard the front of the C. P. and look after the wounded marine till I came. Found everybody at the post and in the best of spirits, passing jokes and firing at the enemy's rifle flashes. I told Pvt. Morris to get an automatic rifle and clean up the outside of the rear of the Marine quarters as I suspected some bandits who had sneaked up in the beginning of the attack were there and could not get away. Out of the door he went unconcerned to the enemy's fire, accomplished his mission and returned. Over in the Guardia quarters I saw Raso Rafael Romero (cook) while under fire keeping the Guardia detachment well supplied with hot coffee.

Acting Corporal Justo Salamanca, Rasos Luis Huerto, Luis Sanchez and Salomon Cortes jumped a Thompson gun operating against their quarters but had to withdraw when group attacked them with hand grenades. They accomplished their mission, however, as the gun was withdrawn from that sector.

The fog started to raise at about 2:30 a. m., and got lighter about 4 a. m.

The enemy started to withdraw their dead and wounded about 3 a. m. Their general line of retreat was to the northeast and southeast. Everything was all quiet at 5:00 a. m.

The bandits had about 140 men in the attack on the quarters of the detachment. Other groups were posted on all the roads and trails leading into town. A general reserve with all their animals was on the other side of the Rio Coco. The enemy's riflemen went into battle with about 50 rounds of ammunition apiece.

A search of the town showed that a Thompson gun was operated from the plaza in front of the Marine quarters, one from the southeast side of the church, two from either side of street corners south and toward rear of Guardia and Marine quarters. Another was operated on a slight rise toward

the southwest of the Guardia quarters. I believe that the bandits had three Thompson guns and moved them from one sector to another. One Lewis machine gun was operated near a building south of the Marine and Guardia quarters. Another was operated from a hill on the main road 300 yards from town (N. W.). A number of dynamite bombs and hand grenades were found in the town. An average dynamite bomb had about 25 sticks of dynamite. All the captured munitions and explosives were thrown into the Rio Coco.

I believe I have overlooked a number of heroic deeds and cannot express myself enough to do justice to the bravery of the Telpaneca Detachment.

Our casualties were:

1 Marine killed; 1 marine mortally wounded—died same day.

1 Guardia, seriously wounded.

Statement of Private L. C. Handzlik, U. S. M. C.

On the morning of September 19, 1927, the Marines and Guardia Nacional under the command of Lt. Keimling, when asleep in their quarters, were attacked by a gang of bandits, which were under the rebel leader, General Sandino. This attack took place at one o'clock in the morning when it was so dark you could not see very far in front of yourself. The first thing that woke us up was a hand-made bomb which was exploded in the rear of our quarters. The first rifle shot fired was fired in the storeroom, where the cooks and messmen were asleep. The first shot had hit Pvt. Russell, who was sleeping near the front door. This same shot went through his bed and through mine, missing me by a few inches. Pvt. Russell after he was wounded jumped up and grabbed his rifle and fired three shots and was shot again right near the heart. He laid down his rifle and went to his bed to lay down and die, which he did about three or four minutes after the fight started.

Lt. Keimling, who was in charge, slept in the next room and as soon as the fight started he was on the job, just as any Marine officer would do, if not better. He cheered the Marines and the Guardia Nacional as much as any man could in the position we were in. All night long you could hear Lt. Keimling give out orders, exposing himself to the enemy, finding out where the snipers were and giving orders where to find them. The heaviest firing was done on the quarters of Lt. Keimling. This fight was sure a hard one on us men, but we stood it through, and sure would have loved to see them stay for awhile after it got light so we could have showed Sandino our marksmanship. The heaviest attack of the enemy was on the rear of our quarters, as they had quite a few houses and trees and shrubbery to hide behind. You could hear the machete men congregated around the buildings, clattering their matchettes against the building, yelling "Este por Marinós," "Viva la Sandino," "Muera Estados Unidos."

They had one machine gun firing at us from the west of the building and a Sub-Thompson machine gun with their rifle men were firing from the opposite end of the building firing on us. On the southwest corner of our quarters, there are two houses situated there where there was a gang estimated to be from 40 to 50 men hollering and cussing the Marines. From these two buildings, they were throwing their hand-made bombs and firing a Thompson and Lewis machine gun. They had thrown about 30 or 40 bombs from that position and had their rifle men strung along a line from the building on the west to the buildings on the southwest. In the front of the building I cannot say very much as my post was toward the rear of the building, although I know they had two Lewis machine guns and two or three sub-Thompsons firing from that point.

Our battle stations which were strung out in the three rooms occupied by the Marines were eleven men in the main barracks, five men in the office and five men in the storeroom. When the fight started every man was at his post, some of the men had to come down from the main barracks to their battle-stations, which were under heavy fire by this time. Pvt. Glaser, who was killed, came down from the main barracks to the office, which was his post, and was shot as he was entering the room. Immediately Lt. Keimling and Sgt. Eadens, exposing themselves to the enemy, grabbed Pvt. Glaser and put him on a bunk so he could rest easy and during all the fighting he was calling for water, which was given to him by either Lt. Keimling or Sgt. Eadens, who were taking chances of being hit by the enemy.

Sgt. Eadens was in the office and had to go up to the main barracks; he asked for someone to guard the door. Lt. Keimling said, "Give me your rifle; I'll guard the door," which he did till the fight was over. Pvt. Rud-dock, who is an automatic man, was stationed with me at the rear door of the storeroom, which we did to the best of our ability. Cpl. Carlsons and Pvt. Nichols were stationed at the front door, which they guarded to the best of their ability. The men in the office, Lt. Keimling, Sgt. Eadens, Pvs. Foote and Irwin fought to the best of their ability. The main barracks which had eleven men fought to the best of their ability.

Attack On O'Shea's Patrol

The following report was submitted by First Lieutenant G. J. O'Shea of the attack made on his patrol:

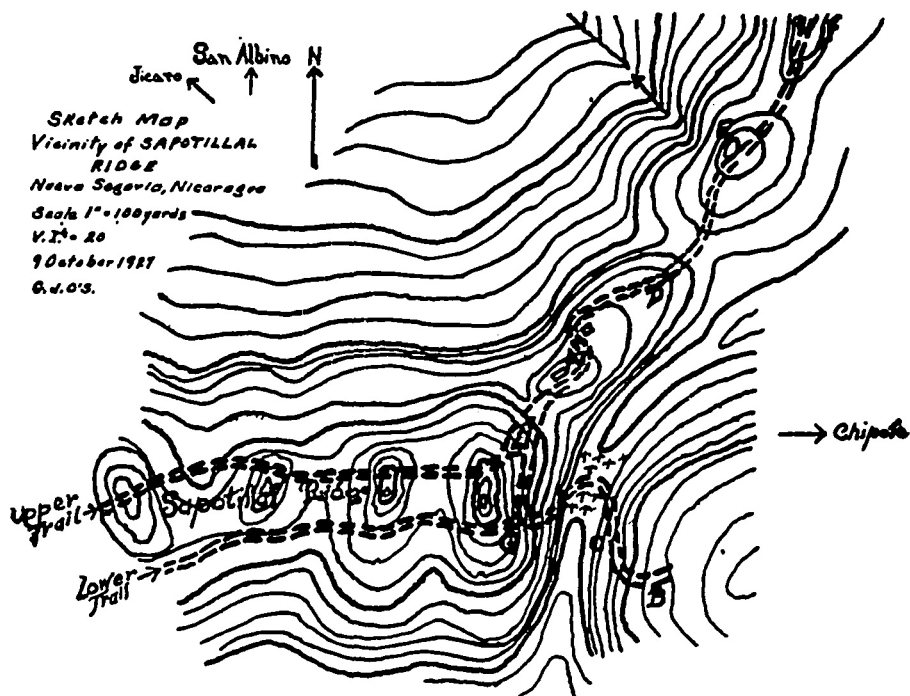
At about 11:30 a. m., Saturday, 8 October, word was brought here by plane that Lieut. Thomas and his observer had crashed into the side of a hill near QUILALI and that both were unhurt. A Ham Map of Nicaragua was also dropped to me showing the location of the plane, which indicated it to be about 3 miles N. W. of QUILALI. At that time there was a patrol of ten men enroute from here to OCOTAL with all our good saddle

animals. A mounted guard immediately went out to overtake them and two planes arriving a short time later were asked to intercept them. They returned to JICARO at 3:30 p. m. with the animals in a worn-out condition due to their haste in returning, so that they would have been useless for a long patrol had I waited for them.

Meanwhile realizing that haste was important, since the aviators were in grave danger, I took eight marines (all the available men able to stand the trip), ten Guardia Nacionales, and Dr. J. B. O'Neill (since I believed it likely that aviators would need medical treatment), borrowed four horses and one mule, and with three days' rations proceeded at 12:45 p. m. by forced march toward QUILALI. At 7:00 p. m. we reached a point 7 miles N. W. of QUILALI, having marched 18 miles, and halted for the night. The men were at that time in an exhausted condition, six of the Marines and several of the Guardia being weakened by a recent attack of malaria. Had I more exact information as to the location of the plane and the road to follow, I would have rested a few hours and pushed on that night. Before leaving JICARO, I had told the men that I expected to have a fight to get to the plane, but I expected to reach there before any great number of the enemy could assemble.

At 6:45 a. m., Sunday, 9 October, we proceeded toward QUILALI and at 8:00 a. m. reached a point 3 miles N. W. of QUILALI. I could obtain no information concerning the wrecked plane from inhabitants and therefore halted and waited for the planes to arrive. When planes arrived, they indicated for me the area where the wreck was located. It was about 3 miles north of us in a direct line but to reach it we had to make a long circuit, marching back about $3\frac{1}{2}$ miles and then following along a ridge of difficult mountains. It took $3\frac{1}{4}$ hours marching to reach the place and meanwhile the planes had to leave us because of shortage of gasoline.

The mountain on which the plane crashed is called SAPOTILLAL. Before reaching it, we met a woman and a boy, both of whom separately told us that the plane was there but they knew nothing of the aviators. Before starting up the hill, I halted the patrol and gave the hill a close scrutiny. No movement or anything suspicious could be noted. The trail wound around the side of the hill with the hill rising steeply to our left. We were about 100 yards up when the advance guard was fired on from the trail ahead. We halted, took the best cover available and returned the fire. The hill was occupied by about 200 bandits, who seemed to be well armed and had plenty of ammunition. It was my intention to go forward and take the hill, when we began to receive heavy fire from a hill to our right and rear, and distant about 100 yards. About ten dynamite bombs were thrown close to us at this time from above. Men above us were yelling to those on the other hill to fire lower, and on the other hill, they were directing them to drop dynamite bombs on us.



Patrol marched via upper trail to house at A, then back and along trail to C. Bandits opened fire from B. Other bandits, coming along lower trail occupied positions at G. These were driven back over hill and patrol proceeded to D, meeting a third group there. Heavy machine gun fire was received from hill E. Patrol advanced to hill E, driving enemy back to F, then turned left down ravine. Entire terrain covered with heavy brush.

I considered that if we went forward we would be completely cut off and that our ammunition would soon run out. In order to save ammunition, I gave orders not to use automatic fire. I decided to turn back and fight our way through the smaller force. There were about 100 of them occupying the hill and the road we had just come over, and we could hear more coming in the distance, yelling as they came. We attacked this band and drove them over the hill. Rifle and hand grenades were of great assistance. We received heavy fire from our rear during this attack, and Sergeant Porfirio Melendez, Guardia Nacional, was shot through the head and instantly killed. A dynamite bomb exploded halfway between Pvt. 1st R. R. Welch and myself, who were about 10 feet apart, but did not injure either of us. Dr. O'Neill dropped back of his own accord, waited for a rush from our rear, and broke it up with a hand grenade, killing three or four. Private McKenzie, who was assigned to guard the rear, dropped behind and killed three with his Thompson gun. One of these was obviously a leader. Corporal Neel accurately placed rifle grenades where groups of enemy were ahead of us and materially as-

sisted in clearing the way. I was leading with hand grenades, and since the brush along the road seemed to be full of the enemy it was necessary to throw them only a short distance. At one time while I was trying to pull a pin from a grenade, Pvt. Struck shot and killed a bandit who was sighting in on me about ten yards distant. In the hollow between the two hills, Pvt. Green killed two men hiding in a banana grove and wounded a third, all of whom had dynamite bombs in their hands. The Guardia behaved splendidly. One of them continued to fire his rifle after half of the barrel had been blown off. The entire patrol were cool and deliberate in their actions, advancing under cover where possible and taking careful aim before firing.

In that manner we got out from between the two bands and they ceased firing. One horse with rations, one loaded with blanket rolls and a horse and mule with saddles were killed. One horse remained. We took a trail leading about north which would run into a road for SAN ALBINO. We proceeded about 200 yards and encountered another band of about 75 marching toward us, evidently reinforcements coming in. We were on a slight rise and halted. They attacked immediately. The trail was narrow and the brush thick on either side, so that it was not possible to deploy. Dr. O'Neill, Pvt. Golak and myself received and broke up the attack, forcing them to retreat to the next hill.

The bandits in our rear had reorganized and were closing in. Believing that our only way out lay ahead, I decided to push forward. Dr. O'Neill at his own request led this attack. We were held up by heavy machine gun fire until a rifle grenade killed the machine gunner. Private Francisco Gutierrez, Guardia Nacional, was shot through the forehead by machine gun. We pushed forward about 200 yards. The enemy hid in the brush as we advanced and fired from very close range. Dr. O'Neill with Private Welch in the lead did great work in clearing these men out. Dr. O'Neill had taken a rifle and belt from a dead Guardia and killed at least two during this advance. Private Juan Benavides and Luis Bustos, Guardia Nacional, were killed, one shot through the heart and the other through the stomach.

We halted after advancing about 200 yards and hearing additional reinforcements coming for the band ahead of us, decided as a last resort to take to the bushes. I had hesitated to do this because of the thick brush, the danger of becoming split up and lost, and our unfamiliarity with the country. Our guides had left during the fight and I had lost my compass.

At 5:45 p. m., having fought $2\frac{1}{2}$ hours, we turned left and went down a very steep ravine. We apparently slipped out from between the two forces without them knowing it. Going down the ravine we took one bandit prisoner, fully armed and equipped. We were afraid to shoot him for fear of giving away our position. He ran into us accidentally. We followed this ravine until we found a small stream and followed the stream until midnight. At 6:00 a. m., October 10, we resumed travel until we reached JICARO

river about 8:00 a. m. and followed it upstream to JICARITO, where we took the main road to JICARO, arriving there at 11:30 p. m.

The distance traveled by this route was about 30 miles. The difficulties of travel cannot be accurately described. At times we had to leave the stream and cut our way over steep hills through heavy brush to get past a bad spot in the stream. We were without food from 6:00 a. m., the 9th, until planes dropped rations the afternoon of the 10th. We arrived at JICARO, suffering from exposure and complete exhaustion, bruised, cut up by thorns and bitten by insects.

A very conservative estimate of the total number we engaged is 400, and I believe that it may have run well over that number. During both phases of engagement we were under heavy fire and it is a miracle that we did not suffer more casualties. That the casualties were all Guardia cannot be explained in any way, as they fought side by side with the Marines, who were equally exposed.

A fairly accurate count of the number of enemy known to be killed or mortally wounded brings it to about 40.

Every Marine and every Guardia did more than his share and every one of them did something exceptional.

Separate recommendations for awards for bravery will be submitted later. I believe that this group of eight Marines and six surviving Guardia deserve the reward of a decoration as much as anyone ever before deserved it.





Ocotol, Nicaragua, from the southeast



Marine Barracks, Ocotal, Nicaragua

Building occupied by Capt. Hatfield's detachment during attack of July 16, 1927.



La Paz Centro, Nicaragua

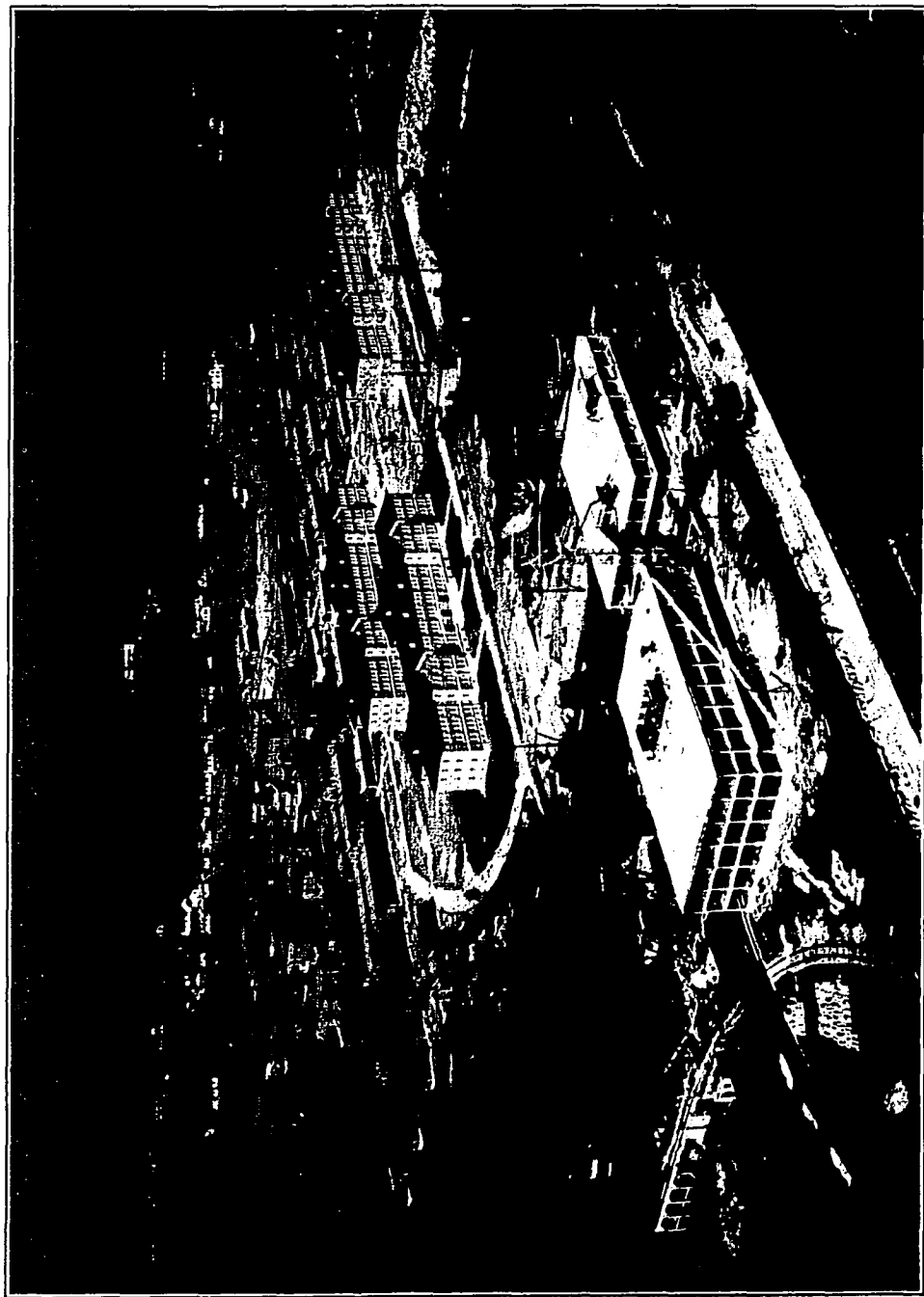
Capt. Buchanan was killed by a shot from the house on the extreme right, during the attack of May 16, 1927. A report of this engagement was published in the January, 1929, issue of the GAZETTE.



Fokker Transport Planes in Service in Nicaragua
 Note also the tractor and trailer used for overland transportation



Marine Mounted Patrol in Nicaragua
 Pictures on this and opposite page taken by Major Edwin N. McClellan,
 U. S. M. C.



Airplane View of Marine Barracks at Quantico, Virginia, showing new construction