



MARINE RAIDER CORPSMEN OF WORLD WAR II



BACKGROUND

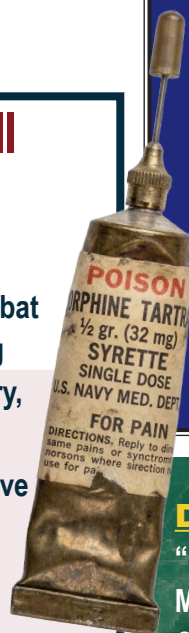
- In 1942, the U.S. Marine Corps established **Raider Battalions** ("Marine Raiders"). This elite unit was comprised of handpicked volunteers trained in **amphibious warfare**, **guerilla tactics**, and "living off the land."
- Marine Raiders are widely considered the **first** special forces unit in US history.
- During World War II, Marine Raiders **gathered intelligence** and **disrupted Japanese supply lines** in the Guadalcanal, New Georgia, and Bougainville campaigns and at the Battle of Makin.



Between 1942 and 1944, more than 300 hospital corpsmen served in four Marine Raider Battalions across the Solomon and Gilbert Islands.

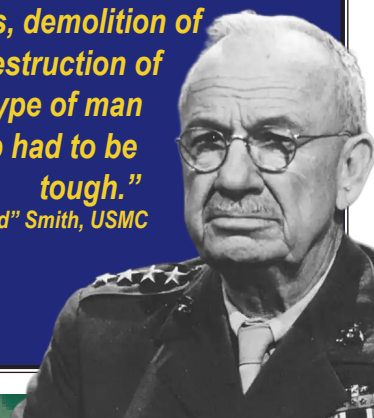
RAIDER MEDICINE OF WORLD WAR II

- Wherever Marine Raiders deployed, Navy corpsmen were alongside them, prepared to **treat gunshot wounds**, **administer plasma** and **morphine** (via syrette), and apply emergency tourniquets and splints under fire. Beyond combat trauma, **disease posed a constant threat** to Raiders fighting in the Pacific, most notably malaria, dengue fever, dysentery, filariasis, tropical ulcers, and ringworm.
- To maintain combat readiness and combat these pervasive threats, Raider corpsmen relied on a steady regimen of field interventions. **Atabrine (quinacrine)** was routinely administered to suppress malaria outbreaks, while **sulfa drugs (sulfonamides)** served as the primary defense against infection prior to the widespread availability of penicillin. To combat the severe tropical climate, corpsmen regularly distributed **salt tablets** across the Pacific Theater, replenishing vital sodium lost through heavy sweating and preventing debilitating heat cramps.



"We formed four Raider battalions, which did extremely useful work under hazardous conditions in the South Pacific. Selected men were specially trained and equipped for landing unobserved on enemy islands and performing all manner of tasks. These ranged from reconnaissance to surprise raids and attacks on enemy positions, demolition of installations and destruction of equipment. The type of man chosen for this job had to be tough."

~Gen. Holland "Howlin' Mad" Smith, USMC



DID YOU KNOW? The term "Gung Ho" was introduced to the Marine Corps by Lt. Col. Evans Carlson, head of the 2nd Marine Raider Battalion. The term comes from the Chinese words for "work" (Gung) and "harmony" (Ho) and, for Carlson, symbolized the spirit of complete cooperation, tolerance and equality in the unit.





NAVY MEDICINE FAST FACTS



HONORS

Marine Raiders were among the most highly decorated military units in history receiving **9** Medals of Honor, **141** Navy Crosses, **22** Distinguished Service Crosses, and **330** Silver Stars. Raider corpsmen were well-represented among these awardees receiving **eight** Navy Crosses and **24** Silver Stars.



Battle of Edson's Ridge,
Sept. 12-14, 1942

DEFENDERS OF EDSON'S RIDGE

- From **Sept. 12 to 14, 1942**, Lt. Col. Merritt "Red Mike" Edson led the 1st Marine Raider Battalion and the 1st Parachute Battalion in a heroic **defense of a crucial ridge** guarding Henderson Field (airfield) on Guadalcanal. Severely outnumbered, the Allied force endured relentless, violent nighttime Banzai charges, refusing to cede the strategic high ground and **preventing a catastrophic enemy capture of the airfield**.
- Side-by-side with the fighting Marines were the hospital corpsmen, whose courage under fire proved decisive. Embedded directly with frontline companies, these **Navy corpsmen repeatedly exposed themselves to intense fire** from all directions, even as their units were nearly surrounded, to administer critical aid and pull the wounded to safety. They are credited for helping to treat over **200 casualties** in this action.
- Their extraordinary heroism at Edson's Ridge earned the 1st Marine Raider Battalion's hospital corpsmen **15 combat decorations** for this single action alone (**eight Navy Crosses** and **seven Silver Stars**), standing as a testament to their valor in the face of near-certain death.

USS Thaddeus Parker (DE 369)

- Commissioned: Oct. 25, 1944
- Decommissioned: May 31, 1946
- Recommissioned: Sept. 21, 1951
- Decommissioned: Sept. 1, 1967
- Honors: One battle star



- The US Navy honored the Marine Raiders as namesakes for **30 warships**. These include the **USS Thaddeus Parker (DE 369)**, named after a hospital corpsman who served with the **First Raider Battalion**, Hospital Apprentice First Class Thaddeus Parker (November 13, 1923 – July 20, 1943)
- Parker was **killed in action** on New Georgia, Solomon Islands. He was awarded the **Navy Cross** (Battle of Edson's Ridge) and posthumously awarded the **Silver Star** (New Georgia).

A LEGACY LIVES ON...

- Though amalgamated into the **4th Marine Regiment** in 1944, Raider Battalions left a lasting legacy by demonstrating the effectiveness of **unconventional warfare** and inspiring the creation of more **specialized forces**. In 2014, as homage to the World War II Raiders, the Marine Corps renamed the Marine Special Operations Regiment the "**Marine Raider Regiment**."
- Today, World War II **Raider corpsmen** are considered the **ancestors** of Special Amphibious Reconnaissance Corpsmen (**SARCs**) and Special Operations Independent Duty Corpsmen (**SOIDCs**).

