

THE SECRETARY OF THE NAVY
WASHINGTON

The Secretary of the Navy takes pleasure in commending the

THIRD MARINES, THIRD MARINE DIVISION

for service as follows:

"For outstanding heroism in action against enemy Japanese forces during the invasion, seizure, occupation and defense of Empress Augusta Bay Beachhead, Bougainville, Solomon Islands, from November 1 to December 22, 1943. In action against the enemy for the first time, the THIRD Marines landed on an extremely wide front in the face of perilous surf and beach conditions and through flanking fire of hostile machine guns, anti-boat guns, mortars, small arms and artillery from heavily entrenched positions on Cape Torokina and Puruata Island. Pressing forward through almost impenetrable jungle and swampy terrain, this Regiment completely reduced the intricate system of mutually supporting Japanese pillboxes, bunkers, fire trenches and foxholes which constituted the Cape Torokina defense, and secured its portion of the objective by evening of D-Day. Shifted to the left flank of the beachhead, the THIRD Marines smashed a Japanese counter-landing and drove steadily forward despite difficulties of terrain, supply and communication and, developing the main enemy position in a meeting engagement on the Numa Numa Trail, completely wiped out the Japanese 23rd Infantry. In continuous action as a front line regiment for a total of fifty-two consecutive days, the gallant men and officers of the THIRD Marines, by their skill in jungle warfare and their aggressive fighting spirit, contributed greatly to the success of the campaign and enhanced the highest traditions of the United States Naval Service."

All personnel attached to and serving with the THIRD Marines at Bougainville from November 1 to December 22, 1943, are authorized to wear the NAVY UNIT COMMENDATION Ribbon.

JAMES FORRESTAL

Secretary of the Navy.