

To reach American lines, the beach-battle survivor has to swim four miles in shark-infested waters. He is able to make it, but the battle for Guadalcanal will get much worse - for both sides.

Although Marines have captured the under-construction airfield, the Japanese high command has not given up Guadalcanal. They send six thousand soldiers to continue the battle.

The airfield is named Henderson Field, in honor of an American who died at Midway. While the Allies plan to use the airfield, to aid their efforts in the Pacific, the Japanese plan to take it back.

On August 18, 1942, the first Japanese reinforcements reach Guadalcanal. Their leaders believe the Allied forces on the island are small in number and situated near the airfield.

Contemptuous of their enemy - especially after their country had crippled the American fleet at Pearl Harbor - Japanese soldiers are unafraid. They believe they are superior to all others and can make up, in spirit, what they might lack in materiel.

On the 19th of August, a group of Marines are walking toward an orange grove. Hoping to find some fruit, to supplement their meager food supplies, they are unaware that Japanese reinforcements are now on the island. They are also unaware that their food-seeking mission will put them in direct contact with wire-laying enemy soldiers.

This time, the Browning automatic rifle helps the Americans win the skirmish. But a more serious fight, known as Battle of the Tenaru, will start two days later.

The island becomes an unbearable place, for both sides, on the 21st of August. Bayonet charges seem unending, from the Japanese, but the Americans have superior firing power. The finger of one dead Marine is frozen on the trigger of his rifle as he posthumously fires another 200 rounds.

Then ... a Japanese grenade explodes in a pit where two Americans are seriously wounded. Despite their injuries, the Marines work together to keep firing.

Eleven hours after the fighting began, 34 Marines and 777 Japanese soldiers are no longer alive.

See, also:

[Guadalcanal - War in the Pacific, Part 1](#)

[Guadalcanal - War in the Pacific, Part 3](#)

[Guadalcanal - War in the Pacific, Part 4](#)

[Guadalcanal - War in the Pacific, Part 5](#)

Credits:

Clip from "Shootout - WWII: Guadalcanal," online courtesy The History Channel.

Writers:

Amy Huggins, Arthur Drooker and Darryl Rehr

Series Directors:

Amy Huggins, Brian Coughlin, Douglas Cohen, Laura Verklan and Tony Long

Series originally aired:

2005

Series released on DVD:

A&E Home Video, May 2007

See Alignments to State and Common Core standards for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicAlignment/Guadalcanal-War-in-the-Pacific-Part-2>

See Learning Tasks for this story online at:

<http://www.awesomestories.com/asset/AcademicActivities/Guadalcanal-War-in-the-Pacific-Part-2>