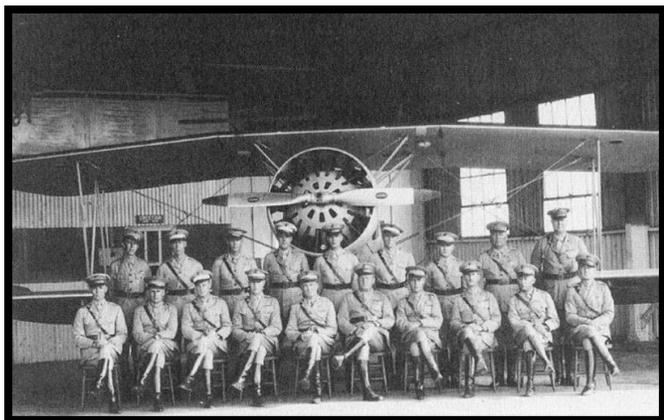
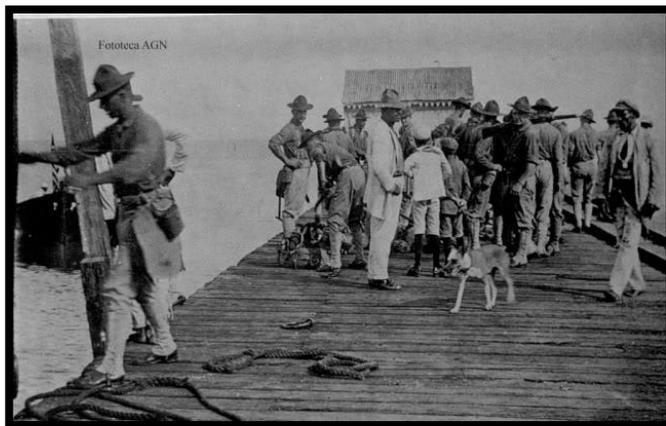


# The past and its instruments were but prelude....



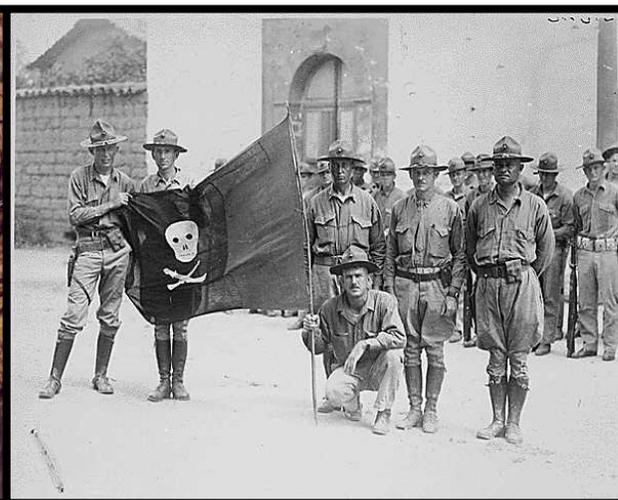
**Aircraft hanger Nicaragua, 1932**



**Dominican Republic 1916**



**Fort Reviere, Haiti 1915**



**Captured Sandino flag, Nicaragua 1932**



**Camp Elliot, Panama 1910**



**Marines hoist flag over Cuba, 1898**

By way of introduction and for the purpose of giving appropriate citation, both of these articles were published in the National Rifleman magazine.

As you read them, think of the exercise as an extension of something that began long ago with “Good mornin’ recruits! I’m Staff Sergeant Irons and I’m here to give you your first lecture on Marine Corps History. Do NOT fall asleep or I WILL kill you.”

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## Guns of the "Banana Wars" Part One

Using rifles, handguns and machine guns, marines fought in fierce battles in the Caribbean and Central America.

By Kenneth Smith-Christmas

12/27/2012



*“Smedley Butler at Fort Reviere, Haiti” by Col. Donna J. Neary; courtesy of the National Museum of the Marine Corps.*

In the gathering gloom, and with its flat cars and boxcars filled with khaki-clad Marines, a narrow-gauge train rolled slowly to a halt in the Nicaraguan town of Masaya. Suddenly, more than 100 mounted Nicaraguan rebels rode up and down alongside the train in the dark, firing into the cars. The Marines’ commanding officer, Maj. Smedley D. Butler, fired his Colt revolver back at the rebels, and ordered his detachment of Marines to open fire. A thunderous fusillade of small arms fire burst from the surrounding windows and rooftops, as the engine picked up speed. Butler later described the scene in his autobiography, *Old Gimlet Eye*:

“A sheet of fire was spitting into the darkness on both sides of the road. Four hundred Marine rifles were popping with tongues of flame, and the sixteen machine guns were rattling out a staccato beat, the engines were screaming and puffing—all in one narrow little street, while the natives shot back at us from both sides of the street.”

This small action took place in 1912, during a “peace-keeping” mission that would later be known as the First Nicaraguan Campaign. Indeed, there would be many more such actions involving Marines in Central America and the Caribbean during a period that is now known as the “Banana Wars.” These small wars were fought for a number of reasons during the American ascendancy in the region between the Spanish-American War and 1934 when President Franklin D. Roosevelt withdrew the last Marines from Haiti. Some were pacification campaigns in support of American foreign policy, others were intended to protect the new Panama Canal, a few were directed at preventing the spread of German influence into the region, but most were launched to “protect American interests and citizens.” Since most of the “American interests and citizens” in the region were involved in the expanding tropical fruit industry, especially bananas, the name “Banana Wars” seemed to sum up the Marine Corps’ experience. The Marine Corps’ involvement in the region was interrupted by service in France during World War I,

so the Banana Wars really can be viewed in terms of the early (1903-1917) and late (1919-1934) campaigns.

The small arms used by the Marine Corps in the early Banana Wars include the M1905 and M1909 Colt revolvers, the M1903 Springfield rifle, the M1909 Benet-Mercie “machine rifle,” and the Colt M1895 “potato digger” machine gun. The M1911 pistol was also introduced and used to great effect in that period, and it and the “’03” rifle carried on as the principal arms used by Marines in the later Banana Wars, although the automatic weapons being used changed radically after World War I.

In 1905, two years after the first of the Banana Wars campaigns in Panama, the Marine Corps adopted its first completely USMC-specific firearm, a Colt revolver, to replace the Navy arms carried by Marine officers up to that year. Like its Army and Navy counterparts, it was chambered in .38 Long Colt, but it had a smaller grip profile than the 1902 military Colt revolvers and it sported checkered walnut stocks. Four years later, the Marine Corps followed suit with the Army and Navy in adopting a military variation of the popular Colt “New Service” revolver, chambered in an improved version of the .45 Colt—at that time the most powerful handgun cartridge available.

Experience in the earlier Philippine Insurrection and the Moro Uprising had taught the U.S. military establishment that the .38s stopping power was insufficient against a determined enemy. The Army and Navy revolvers were identical to the civilian version, with the exception of having a lanyard ring and markings on the butt, as Colt had refused to make any modifications to its standard handgun under the Army contract. However, Colt conceded to the Marine Corps’ insistence on a significant change for its revolvers.

The grip, again, was noticeably smaller than that of the civilian New Service revolvers and the M1909 Army and Navy models, and the walnut stocks had a rudimentary style of checkering. Both the M1905 and the M1909 had “USMC” and a serial number stamped into the butt, near the lanyard ring. Unlike the Army model, the number on the Marine Corps version was different from the actual factory serial number, which was found inside the crane housing. While the Army ordered more than 19,000 revolvers between 1908 and 1911, the Marine Corps purchased only about 1,300 guns. As was the case with all of the services, the Marine Corps abandoned the M1909 revolver in favor of the M1911 pistol, when the Corps adopted it in 1912. This semi-automatic pistol would play a major role in all of the subsequent Banana Wars, while many of the obsolete revolvers would find their way into the Haitian Gendarmerie, although the actual printed regulations of the Gendarmerie and its successor, the *Garde d’Haiti*, specified only .38-cal. revolvers.

The legendary M1903 Springfield rifle, affectionately known to Marines as the “’03,” would become one of the most revered battle rifles in history. Adopted by the Marine Corps in 1908, it supplanted the Krag-Jorgensen rifle, which had, in turn, replaced the revolutionary, but fragile, M1895 straight-pull Winchester-Lee in 1900. The rifle carried by Marines throughout the Banana Wars was in nearly all respects identical to those issued to the Army and the Navy, except that the Marine Corps designed and implemented an enlarged peep aperture on the rear sight, and a wider front sight blade. The Marine Corps also issued a larger front sight hood than the one supplied to the Army.

When this rifle was first issued to Marines, the Marine Corps was not known, as it is today, for its marksmanship ability. In fact, the Marine Corps’ record in winning shooting competitions was rather dismal in the years prior to 1912. However, with the encouragement of Commandant George F. Elliot and other notable shooters, such as Charles H. Lauchheimer, Douglas C. McDougal, and future Commandant Thomas A. Holcomb, the Marine Corps very soon reached an enviable position in

competition shooting, which it has maintained to the present day. If one individual can be singled out for this success, it is Col. William A. Harllee. A tough, no-nonsense and outspoken Marine, Harllee not only significantly improved the Marine Corps' marksmanship program, but also encouraged civilian marksmanship and set the standard for Army marksmanship programs during World War I. Moreover, Harllee had been on the battlefield when accurate rifle fire really made the difference. As a sergeant in the Texas National Guard, he had successfully employed his Krag rifle during the Philippine Insurrection. While the Marine Corps did not have the opportunity to demonstrate its deadly long-range rifle shooting ability in the Banana Wars, as it had just prior to its advance into Belleau Wood during World War I, it is obvious from the after-action reports of these jungle fights that the insurgents nearly always suffered far more losses from Marine rifle fire than they were ever able to inflict on Marines. Engagements during the Banana Wars were most often short-range ambushes along footpaths and trails in a lush and forbidding tropical jungle.

The 16 machine guns described by Butler were Benet-Mercies and Colts, and were mounted on the flat cars and on the roofs of the boxcars forming the train rolling through Masaya. The Marine Corps had recently adopted the M1909 Benet-Mercie light machine gun or, as it was then known, "machine rifle." Developed by the Hotchkiss Co. in France, it was named for an American firearm designer, Laurence Vincent Benet (son of the noted U.S. Army Chief of Ordnance in the post-Civil War period and uncle of the celebrated poet of the same name, Stephen Vincent Benet) and the French head of experimental design at the Hotchkiss Company, Henri Mercie. The light machine gun was in use by cavalry units in France (in 8 mm Lebel) and Britain (in .303 British), and by the U.S. Army. Chambered in the standard American .30-cal. rifle cartridge, the clip-fed and shoulder-fired machine gun was supported in the front by a spindly bipod and in the rear by a butt-mounted, screw-threaded monopod.

The Benet gun played a significant role in the capture of two old, decaying, French-built forts—Dipitie and Riviere—in the 1915 Haitian campaign. The Benet guns were used to deliver a constant suppressing fire against Haitian Cacos, or bandits, who had ambushed a patrol of around 30 Marines near Dipitie, and were later used against those Cacos who had holed-up in Fort Riviere. One of the Corps' most capable chroniclers, Col. Robert D. Heinl, described the fight near Fort Dipitie in a 1978 *Leatherneck* magazine article:

"After dark, while the patrol was negotiating a mountain stream, a blast of rifle fire ripped out from the bush. Some 400 Cacos from Ft. Capois and nearby Ft. Dipitie, three miles east, had closed in. All night, the Marines were surrounded and under steady fire. Worse still, the bourrique (burro) carrying the one machine gun had been killed while fording the stream. To retrieve the weapon, Gunnery Sergeant Daniel Daly made his way through the Caco lines, located the dead animal, cut loose gun and ammunition and struggled back with them to the perimeter. For this feat, Daly received his second Medal of Honor. When day broke, rather than let the Cacos close the trap, Butler attacked with everything he had. The Cacos broke and ran."

In describing the riverside ambush, Lt. (later Gen.) Adolf B. Miller noted in his diary that: "I had commanded the rearguard with the machine gun. When we opened up on them with the Benet, they sure were surprised." Miller, one of the Corps' earliest machine gun officers and author of the first Marine Corps manual for the Colt "potato digger" machine gun, went on to immortalize the Benet-Mercie machine rifle in yet another variation of the familiar song of the American Civil War, "Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, the Boys Are Marching." (This tune is also well-known as "Jesus Loves the Little Children," and a version, "Damn, Damn, Damn the Insurrectos," that was sung during the Philippine Insurrection, includes the phrase, "And beneath the starry flag, we'll civilize 'em with a Krag".) When Miller penned the lines, "And beneath the broiling sun, let 'em have the Benet Gun," in his own parody, entitled

“Damn, Damn, Damn the Haitian Cacos” and recorded on the first page of his diary, he was simply continuing a musical tradition. When Butler successfully attacked Fort Riviere a few weeks later, he had two Benet guns under the command of Lt. John Marston, and according to an account by another participant, Lt. Thomas E. Thrasher, those two guns kept the Caco bandits on the fort’s ramparts fully occupied, while the rest of the detachment surrounded and assaulted the old French fort.

The next year, in July 1916, less than four months after the *New York Times* had announced that the Army and Marine Corps were already in the process of abandoning the Benet-Mercie in favor of an American-made version of the British Vickers machine gun, Cpl. Joseph Glowin was blazing away at rebels in the Dominican Republic with his Benet at the battle of Guayacanas. Trying to force their way through a stoutly held rebel strongpoint, the Marines brought up several light machine rifles. Glowin was wounded twice, but stayed at his gun, earning the Medal of Honor. As noted in the *New York Times* article, the Benet gun was notorious for jamming, and Glowin’s gun jammed, as did the others being put into action. When rebel fire wiped out the crews of the light guns while they were trying to clear the jams, 1st/Sgt. (later Brigadier General) Roswell Winans brought up a Colt gun on its wheeled carriage and opened fire. After a while, it, too, jammed and Winans was awarded the Medal of Honor for standing in full view of the enemy while clearing the jam. With two more Colts brought in the fray, the suppressing fire was enough to enable the Marines to take the rebel position at the point of the bayonet.

The Navy had adopted the Colt “potato digger” machine gun (so called for the pumping action of its gas lever under the barrel) in 1895, and had loaned four guns to the Marine Regiment that landed at Guantanamo during the Spanish-American War. Chambered in .276 or 6 mm Lee Navy, the machine gun served the sea services well during the Spanish-American War (reportedly turning the tide of battle at Cuzco Wells), in the Philippine Insurrection and in the Boxer Rebellion. With the standardization of rifles throughout the services, starting in 1900, those machine guns in the hands of the Navy and Marine Corps were re-chambered to .30 Army (.30-40 Krag), and later some were even converted to fire .30-’06 Sprg. ammunition. The machine guns in the Marine Corps’ inventory (and those sometimes manned on shore by Navy “blue jackets”) were taken ashore both on tripods and on wooden wheeled mounts, depending on the requirements of the particular campaign, as contemporaneous accounts refer to both types of mounts being used in several early actions of the Banana Wars.

However, in the end, it was not the guns in the hands of the Marines, but the dedication and resolve of the men in khaki behind them that made the difference. As is still true today, when the Marines of the Banana Wars were facing incredible odds, tense situations, and deplorable conditions, they still maintained control over the situation, prompting war correspondent Richard Harding Davis’ famous quote, “The Marines have landed, and the situation is well in hand.”

*The author thanks the staff of the Marine Corps History Division, the National Museum of the Marine Corps, and the Marine Corps Archives for their wholehearted and enthusiastic assistance in the preparation of this article.*

**“SEAT UP BACK THERE, DAMN IT. THERE’S MORE AND YOU HAD BETTER PAY ATTENTION....”**

# Guns of the "Banana Wars" Part Two

**The Lewis, Thompson, BAR and M1917 water-cooled machine gun, along with the M1903 Springfield rifle and M1911 pistol, played a significant role in the Banana Wars.**

By Kenneth L. Smith-Christmas

1/23/2013



*In "Banana War Ambush" by Marine Corps Artist Col. Charles H. Waterhouse, USMCR, (Ret.), a lone Marine with his '03 Springfield fights for his life on a jungle trail. "Horse Marines" were in evidence throughout the Caribbean and Central America during the "Banana Wars."*

A squad of Marines crept quietly forward through the hot, steamy and tangled Haitian jungle, index fingers hovering near the triggers on their weapons. Captain Jesse Perkins, himself a seasoned veteran of jungle engagements since the 1899 Samoan campaign more than 20 years before, silently signaled to his men and pointed out the hideout of the Haitian Caco bandit chieftain, Benoit de Batrville.

The Marines were anxious to find de Batrville, since, after the death of Charlemagne Peralta—at the hands of *Garde d'Haiti* Lt. Herman Hanneken and his .45 M1911 Colt pistol a few months before—he became the chief Caco in what has now become known as the Second Haitian Campaign. In order to bolster his mystique and aura of invincibility among his rag-tag followers, de Batrville had cannibalized a mortally wounded Marine serving as an officer in the *Garde d'Haiti*,

Lt. Lawrence Muth. After ambushing Muth's patrol a few weeks previously, the bandit chief had cut out and eaten Muth's heart, while smearing Muth's brains on the stocks of his men's rifles, ostensibly to improve their marksmanship.

Gunnery Sergeant Albert A. Taubert moved into position among the jumbled rocks at the entrance of a cavern, with his M1911 .45 Colt pistol in hand. Taubert, a holder of the Navy Cross, the Distinguished Service Cross, the Italian Medal of Valor and the French *Medaille Militaire* for his actions during the battle of Soissons in World War I, had volunteered for duty in Haiti so that a married comrade could remain at the Portsmouth Navy Yard. Suddenly, de Batrville appeared in the mouth of the cave, firing his .38 Colt revolver at the squad of Marines. Taubert stepped forward and returned fire, blowing a hole through the Caco chief's gun belt and killing the bandit leader. For this feat, he was awarded a second Navy Cross, and it signaled the end of the 1919-1920 Second "Caco" War. Taubert kept the bandit chief's gun and holster rig as a trophy of war.

The Marine Corps had adopted the U.S. Model of 1911 pistol in 1912, and the officers who went ashore at Vera Cruz, Mexico, during the 1914 intervention carried them in both versions of the M1912 holster—mounted and dismounted—with "USMC" stamped on their flaps. In the first Haitian campaign of 1915, several Marines were awarded the Medal of Honor while armed with .45 pistols. The most famous of those was Smedley Butler, who received his second Medal of Honor for bursting through the decrepit brick-walled drainage ditch of a derelict French fort that was serving as the hideout for a band of Cacos and, with only two Marines beside him, engaging scores of bandits with his pistol. The M1911 pistol

served in every action during the Banana Wars from Vera Cruz to the final withdrawal from Haiti and Nicaragua in the early 1930s. During the Second Nicaraguan campaign, some Marines carried their pistols in long, specially converted M1916 holsters, also marked “USMC.”

The term “Banana Wars” referred to a series of interventions, nearly all by the U.S. Navy and Marine Corps, in the Caribbean and Central America in the years between the Spanish-American War and the mid-1930s. While there were several valid reasons for these various interventions, the major justification was the “protection of American property and citizens” from the vagaries of popular uprisings and civil war in those countries. Since the “American property and citizens” were, for the most part, involved in the tropical fruit industry—mainly banana plantations—the informal name served as an understandable catchall term.

As noted in the first installment of this series, although the service pistol and rifle—the M1911 Colt pistol and the M1903 Springfield rifle—served throughout most of the early Banana Wars and through all of the later campaigns, the automatic arms used in the Banana Wars changed dramatically after the Marine Corps’ experience in World War I. Whereas the pre-World War I campaigns in Cuba, Nicaragua, Mexico, Haiti and the Dominican Republic were fought by Marines armed with Benet-Mercie machine rifles and Colt “potato digger” machine guns, starting with the second Haitian “Caco” War in 1919, Marines were supported in the later Banana Wars by the rapid fire of the Lewis light machine gun, the Browning Automatic Rifle, the Thompson submachine gun, and to a lesser extent, the Browning M1917 water-cooled machine gun. All of those arms then served into at least the early days of World War II, and some even into the early 1960s.

Finally dismayed at the fragile and unreliable Benet-Mercie machine rifle, the U.S. Army opted to replace it, and its obsolete M1904 Colt-Maxim heavy machine gun, with the British-designed Vickers machine gun in 1915. However, the Vickers was a heavy, tripod-mounted, and water-cooled gun. In 1917, the U.S. Navy decided to adopt the Lewis light machine gun, which was then being manufactured by the Savage Arms Co. in Utica, N.Y., for the British. An American invention, but produced and used overseas because of a long-standing dispute between the inventor, Col. Isaac N. Lewis, and the U.S. Army’s Chief of Ordnance, the American version of the bipod-mounted, shoulder-fired machine gun was chambered in .30 U.S. (.30-’06 Sprg.)

Firing 47 rounds out of its distinctive top-mounted drum magazine, the air-cooled Lewis gun quickly became a favorite of Marines. Although the Marines’ Lewis guns were taken away from them and replaced with the questionable French Chauchat automatic rifle shortly after landing in France, those Marines patrolling the Caribbean islands during World War I kept a lid on local unrest with their Lewis guns. When the second Caco revolt broke out in Haiti in 1919, Lewis guns were used in many of the actions. In addition, many of the Marines’ aircraft were also equipped with Lewis guns mounted on Scarff rings in the “rear seat.” Both Marines and the *Guardia Nacional de Nicaragua* used Lewis guns in Nicaragua during the late 1920s and the early 1930s. The Guardia was yet another native constabulary very much similar to the *Garde d’Haiti* and the Dominican National Guard that the Marines had instituted in those countries. As in Haiti and the Dominican Republic, these native constabularies were, for the most part, armed with obsolescent Krag rifles, and officered by Marines on detached duty. The first of the famed Coco River Patrols, led by the noted Marine, “Red Mike” Edson, carried Lewis guns on its grueling expedition by boat up Nicaragua’s unpredictable and dangerous Coco River, but Edson later opted for Thompson submachine guns on the final push against the Sandinista rebels.

In his book, *Chesty*, one of the Corps’ best historians, Col. Jon T. Hoffman, recounts an ambush in Nicaragua involving the legendary duo of Lewis B. “Chesty” Puller and “Ironman” William A. Lee, in

which Lee was wounded, but when he recovered during the battle, Lee: “[S]truggled to a pack mule and retrieved the unit’s Lewis gun. The guardia lieutenant then demonstrated equal parts determination and marksmanship as he employed the weapon with telling effect against the rebels. His accurate bursts cooled the ardor of the bandits and incoming fire began to die off. Puller seized the advantage Lee had won. The company commander jumped to his feet, called for a charge, and dashed uphill toward the right half of the enemy line. His guardias followed. The Sandinistas in front of them fled.”

Although the Lewis gun was largely replaced by the M1919 Browning light machine gun in the late 1930s, Marines of the Fourth Regiment—recently arrived from long-time service in Shanghai—were still manning their Lewis guns as late as 1942, during the defense of the Philippine island of Corregidor.

Marines enthusiastically embraced the M1918 Browning Automatic Rifle, commonly known as the “BAR,” when it was introduced into the American Expeditionary Forces in the autumn of 1918. Although its only combat use in France by Marines was literally on the last night of the war, the Marine Corps put the selective-fire rifle to good use during the Banana Wars, and had even more success with its successor, the variable-fire M1918A2, in World War II and the Korean War, until it was finally phased out shortly before the Vietnam War. Firing the standard service rifle cartridge from a 20-round detachable magazine, the BAR gave the extra firepower needed in the brief and violent ambushes that had become the hallmark of the Banana Wars.

Perhaps the most notable use of the BAR during that period was in the hands of Marine Cpl. William R. Button, who was serving with a detachment of Haitian *Garde d’Haiti* as a lieutenant. In a story that would be considered as unbelievable were it to be seen today in movie theaters, Button, his commanding officer, Marine Sgt. Herman Hanneken (Captain, *Garde d’Haiti*) and 10 native gendarmes, bluffed their way into the camp of the bandit chief, Charlemagne Peralta, during a battle that the two Marines had orchestrated in order to draw Peralta out of hiding. When Peralta chose to avoid the battlefield and stay behind in camp while the fighting raged a few miles away, this small group successfully passed through several Caco outposts, disguised in part by the Marines’ faces and hands being covered in burnt cork. Button even evaded a comment about his BAR from one of the Cacos, and responded to the question in the local patois, a mixture of French and African Creole. Upon reaching the Caco camp, Hanneken quickly dispatched Peralta with his pistol, while Button, assisted by the loyal gendarmes, kept the Cacos at bay throughout the night with accurate and heavy BAR and rifle fire, thus preventing the bandits from reclaiming their chief’s body.

In spite of the BARs effectiveness, the most immediate solution to the ambush problem in what became known as the “Second Nicaraguan Campaign” was the Thompson submachine gun. Developed during World War I as a “trench broom” by a retired Army Ordnance officer, Brig. Gen. John Taliaferro Thompson, the “Tommy Gun” fired the standard .45 ACP pistol cartridge from either a 50-round drum or a 20-round “stick” magazine. Marines were well acquainted with the new gun by that time as they were using it to guard the U.S. Mail in 1926, shortly before shipping out to Nicaragua and China with Thompsons in 1927. Marine Gen. Richard M. Cutts had designed its familiar muzzle brake—the “Cutts Compensator.” Moreover, Marines had been testing and evaluating the submachine gun and its early 100-round magazine at Quantico in the early 1920s. The Thompson gun proved to be an invaluable asset in the Nicaraguan jungle, and was usually carried by a non-commissioned officer at the “point” of a Marine patrol or a combined force of Marines and native constabulary.

Although the Thompson submachine gun was often employed by Marine patrols throughout northern Nicaragua, perhaps its most constant use in that country was with Company M of the Nicaraguan *Guardia*. The officer commanding Company M was none other than “Chesty” Puller, arguably one of

the most well-known Marines of all time, who was ably assisted by his second in command, “Ironman” Lee. Company M (for “Mobile”) had been formed to take the fight directly to the rebels by means of continual and aggressive patrolling, and, with most of the command being native Indians from northern Nicaragua, they succeeded. While the standard shoulder arm for all of the native constabularies was the .30 Army Krag rifle, several of Company M’s men were issued Thompson submachine guns, as well as BARs, M1903 Springfield rifles equipped with rifle grenades and, as recounted earlier, Lewis guns. Although Puller apparently preferred the BAR to the Thompson, both were used to great effect in the scores of fighting contacts that Company M had with the Sandinistas.

Accounts of Marine patrols also often refer to Thompson guns and their effectiveness. Conversely, whenever the Sandinistas captured American or *Guardia* weapons, especially automatics, they also put them to good use. Author Ivan Musicant tells one such story in his book, *The Banana Wars*, about a Marine patrol commanded by Capt. Robert Hunter that ran into a Sandinista ambush: “Within minutes a heavy volume of rifle and automatic fire from at least 100 guerillas in the ravine and atop a hill to the left front opened on the point . . . . A corporal fell dead. The navy hospital corpsman picked up the dead man’s Thompson submachine gun, but being unfamiliar with the piece, could not fire. Hunter grabbed the gun. On his way back to the crest, Hunter stopped and in a standing position, fired into the bandits and felled two of them, but in turn was shot in the chest by a bandit Thompson at a range of 50 yards.”

Patrolling through the Nicaraguan jungles by foot or by horseback was not the kind of war in which heavy water-cooled machine guns could readily be deployed. However, there were instances in which M1917 Browning machine guns played a significant role. During the epic defense of the Nicaraguan town of Ocotal, the commanding officer, Capt. Gilbert Hatfield, directed the gunners firing the detachment’s lone heavy Browning at the attacking rebels. Although known primarily for the orchestrated dive-bombing attack that lifted the siege, Ocotal was a fierce battle on the ground, and the work of the lone Browning gun was recognized as being one of the contributing factors to the success of the Marines and *Guardia*. Later, when several Marine columns were closing in on the bandits’ main defensive position, El Chipote, there were several clashes in which the Marines brought Vivien-Bessieres rifle grenades, Stokes mortars, and even a 37 mm anti-tank gun into action in addition to heavy Browning machine guns.

With all of that firepower and weaponry, however, it was the courage and dedication of the Marines and their native allies that determined the final outcome in the hundreds of small actions throughout the Banana Wars. The lessons learned from fighting in an arena of tropical disease, while suffering horrendous heat and humidity, subsisting on scant rations, and being in near-constant action paid great dividends for the Marines of World War II during their drive across the Pacific.

*The author thanks the staff of the Marine Corps History Division, the National Museum of the Marine Corps, and the Marine Corps Archives for their wholehearted and enthusiastic assistance in the preparation of this article.*

**“DISMISSED!!!”**