

# Death

By Patrick J. Mahoney III

He had tried to surrender. From behind a section of battered wall, he waved the Nambu with a piece of dirty white rag tied to the barrel, and I waited. Waited, with my Thompson leveled at that piece of white rag. We had long since learned of the treachery of the infamous Seventh Regiment of Imperial Marines, the pride of the Emperor, the giants of Nippon. They were giants too, in comparison to the usual run of Nips. These Banzai boys were all crowding six feet and over. Big fellas, and treacherous as a coiled cobra.

With due respect for my foes' repute, I dropped to my knees behind a small boulder. I shouted to him in broken Nip to throw the Nambu towards me and come out with his hands over his head. The first order he obeyed, but as he came from behind the wall, he held a Mauser machine-pistol in his right hand. It was shame he never had the opportunity to use it.

The Thompson roared its deadly staccato and the "honorable son" pitched forward on his face. I laughed. Imagine, trying to pull a stunt like that on an old-timer like me. I then went forward to retrieve the Mauser that my "friend" never got to use. It would look good on the kid brother's souvenir shelf in the den back home.

As I reached to pick it up, I heard a soft, dull thud in the sand behind me. I whirled, Thompson ready, head clear, body tense; there was no one there. Instead of a visible human enemy, there, not eight feet away, lay a black, ugly mode of death . . . GRENADE!

I froze, still crouched, staring wildly at it. Then, the explosi. . .

I saw the gates of Heaven shine  
With everlasting light;  
And then I knew that I'd got mine  
As he got his tonight.