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Iwo Jima Loudspeaker: Capt. 'Squeaky' Himself

From Iwo Jima, William Hipple, NEWSWEEK war correspondent, sends this story of the man responsible for getting ashore the 640,000 tons of supplies required in the first month of the campaign.



Captain Carl "Squeaky" Anderson, Beachmaster

One of the most familiar human sounds in any Central Pacific operation is a rasping, oath-throwing voice with a rich Scandinavian accent which booms out over the loudspeaker on the invasion beaches. The voice threatens, gives orders with no reservations, pleads, and intimidates. It is the voice of a Navy captain, Carl E. (Squeaky) Anderson, the force, or senior, beachmaster—the man who unloads the ships and keeps the supplies rolling in.

Squeaky was at it again on Iwo Jima, battling the enemy mortar fire, artillery, snipers, mines, high surf, loose sand, and terrible terrain to bring in the men and equipment necessary to defeat the Japs on this desolate island.

Captain Anderson is a squat, bald 57-year-old who was formerly a salmon-cannery operator in Seldovia (Squeakyville), Alaska. Iwo Jima, he says is the worst beach he's ever had anything to do with. He's had to do with nine of them, to be exact, in the Aleutians, Gilberts, Marshalls, and Marianas.

"I must repeat, I'm yust about to go crazy here," he insisted. "We get the Japanese firing for days onto the beach, smashing the boats. We got to watch out for mines all the time. The wind changes and the surf, 10 to 12 feet high, beats up against the small boats until they're battered to pieces. When the first LST's beached, the shells were flying all around and the bulldozers under fire had to cut down drifts so we could unload. The trucks kept getting stuck in the loose sand. We had to use bulldozers to pull them out and to put down the steel matting so as they could travel."

He held his bald head with his hands and cried: "What a headache!"

Actually, his staff will tell you, Squeaky thrives on problems of this sort. He will scream and growl at a man, but when that man gets something done, Squeaky will come back and smile and bawl out a few kind Swedish phrases.

Captain "Squeaky"

No Talk, Talk: I went up to Captain Anderson's command post, which was dug into the sand on the beach, and talked with some of his junior staff members. Squeaky stalked up in wet clothes with his pants rolled halfway up his stocky legs.

"Cease talking now. Stop talking. No talk, talk. Come on now, get going. Yust think about the beach, beach, nuthin' else." He scowled at me. Then he laughed: "Hey, don't let it get you. I'm not as tough as I sound."

I went out in a boat with Squeaky. As we left the beach we were inundated by the surf. We pulled up along side of an LSM and Squeaky screamed: "What's the matter? You been drifting out here for two hours. Get in there and unload."

Cowering, the skipper of the LSM shouted back that he'd been waved off the beach.

"I don't give a damn," Squeaky yelled. "Yust go in there and if anybody tells you any different, tell 'em Squeaky said for you to. Now get going. Do you hear me?"

We went on to the other landing ships and to the control boats and patrol craft. Everywhere Anderson's bull voice scared people and kept things moving. He always ended by shouting: "Do you hear me?" In a voice that the Japs must have heard on the north end of the island.

Squeaky has fourteen loudspeakers along the beach, through which he gives the orders to unload the ships and the working parties. Amid the seeming confusion and disorder, the supplies and equipment keep flowing in until they stretch out for miles.

Asked for the secret of his success, Squeaky grunts: "Success, huh. I get so much hell from the Admiral I yust pass it on. Then we get things done."