ST. PAUL'S SCHOOL

Davao had been on their feet for thirty-six hours. They had fired 500 rounds of 5-inch ammunition and had dealt with numerous kamikaze attacks. They started another bombardment mission, their thirtieth in thirty days, moved in too close to shore and stuck on Ose reef. Other destroyers were trying to get them off when Japanese shore batteries opened fire. The Longshaw was soon hit and badly damaged, but her forward batteries continued firing. Then her magazine exploded and fires broke out. Fire fighting parties worked below decks until the pressure gave out. All the survivors including many wounded were taken off. Then the Longshaw was sunk by American gun fire. Eighty-three of her officers and men, including Willard Walker, were killed in action.

FRANK RUSSELL WHITTLESEY
1940

Russell Whittlesey, whose uncle, Lt. Col. Charles Whittlesey, commanded the famous Lost Battalion in the First World War, went overseas in April, 1942, as a Pfc. in the 1st Marine Raider Battalion. On his way to the Pacific, he wrote to his mother:

"I now know very clearly what I'm here for and am very glad that I didn't wait. . . . What I'm fighting for is to give the United States a chance to grow out of the tinsel and glitter period and be able to attain a calm, unhurried outlook, and to achieve a position of prominence in the world so strong that it will command respect and will be able to get rid of the tin-horn, chest-beating, three-foot high shysters and mate out a fair, educated and thoughtful justice. This may sound high flown, but it's pretty clear to me, . . . needless to say, I also am fighting out of an overwhelming gratitude. . . . There never has been a more fortunate and a more spoiled guy than I. . . ."

Thoughtfulness and sincerity early characterized Whittlesey. Those who had seen him grow up at the School were impressed by the rapidity with which he emerged from a shy boyhood into a maturity of friendly interest in people and in the place. He greatly enjoyed Yale also, took an active part in the life there and had many devoted friends. But by that time his interests had expanded beyond the limits of any one place or even of his own country. He decided to enlist, and left college in the middle of his Sophomore year. He
began his Marine Corps training January 28, 1942. On August 7 he landed on Tulagi, and four or five days later on Guadalcanal.

Two years afterwards Lt. Col. Samuel B. Griffith, 2d, who was Executive Officer of the 1st Raider Battalion on Guadalcanal, wrote:

"Whittlesey was killed on the night of 13–14 September when the Raider Battalion was defending Lunga Ridge against repeated Japanese attacks. The battle... was without question the most decisive land battle in the fighting for possession of the air field on Guadalcanal, and to the boys who were killed there that night we all owe a debt which I think very few people appreciate.

"... Whittlesey had been promoted to Corporal and was a squad leader. At the time he was killed, he was trying to help a seriously wounded comrade."

Whittlesey’s death is described in a letter from Pfc. Edgar Shepard:

"... Russ and I were attached to each other as no other people could ever be. We lived together several months before seeing action and shared everything from small bits of food to each other's personal affairs and feelings. Being scouts, we were alone together a great deal and learned to depend upon each other. I knew his past life like a book, the food he liked best and even his favorite music and songs. We went through several battles together, never leaving each other's side..."

"We had just returned from the raid on Toruboca and set up positions on a ridge... At dusk we were ordered to advance several hundred yards into the jungle and dig in at the edge of a lagoon, which the Japs were expected to cross to reach Henderson Field. All was quiet until about 9:00 o'clock except for the movement of small animals in the lagoon and surrounding jungle. A half moon hung on the horizon and then we could hear the Japs cautiously advancing. They reached the far edge of the lagoon. The word was passed to hold our fire until they started crossing. Then all hell broke loose, the jungle was lit up like a stage, battle cries broke out from both sides above the screams of dying and wounded men. We were outnumbered five to one and were soon hand to hand. After about thirty minutes, I was hit and dropped to the ground. Russ stood over me and fought like a madman. I asked him to leave me and he only said, 'Go to hell, Shep!' Things began to quiet down and reorganization began. Russ worked over me about an hour, trying to stop the blood flow, tearing his shirt into strips for bandages. His rifle had been shot from his hands and mine had fallen into the lagoon and all we had were knives. With Russ's assistance I could walk a bit. My right lung being punctured made it difficult to breathe; the bullet had penetrated both my arms which made them useless. We found ourselves behind the Jap lines and we had to go through to get to our own outfit. Moving along a narrow trail, we ran head on into a Jap patrol, and Russ instead of getting away, chose to die fighting to save my life. He dropped me to the ground and stood with knife in hand and the three Japs charged him with bayonets. With the cool art of a true Marine, he used certain tricks (we had often practised together) to kill the first two and the third one stabbed him in the back with a bayonet. He fell and the Jap ran. He put a finishing touch on the two Japs and lay down beside me. He was hit in the stomach several times, of which I was not aware. He said, 'Well, Shep, I guess this is where we came in,' and smiled, and began to try to hum his favorite tune, 'I'm getting Tired so I Can Sleep.' Then he just went to sleep. I put my hand on his heart and I started crawling toward the Jap lines. By some miracle of God, I reached the hill and a corpsman gave me a shot and I went to sleep.

"I'm in training again and in perfect condition. I swear by God to avenge the death of the best pal I ever had before I'm another year older."