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On a recent sleepless night we got to thinking about some of the Marines and their wives who had New Bern as their temporary home during World War II.

Forgetting the bad eggs (and there weren't as many as complaining folks would have you believe) we recalled a host of wonderful friends. They are scattered, in some instances, to points unknown now, but in that unknown somewhere we hope they have found the happiness they deserve.

None was finer in those dark days, 15 years ago and more, than Sgt. John Teppe. You probably passed him on the street dozens of times, never knowing that here was heroism at its best.

Just 21, he didn't look the part of a hero. Mild-mannered—almost effeminate in his neatness, the blonde, smooth-faced serviceman wasn't exactly what movies and TV programs picture as the typical leatherneck of that era.

John was with the first raiders who landed on Guadalcanal, and the figures he gave us later speak for themselves. Of the one thousand Marine—950 enlisted men and 50 officers—in the first force, only 40 came off the island alive. Twenty of these 40 were critically wounded, and one of the worst was Teppe.

Jap machinegunners had drilled his right leg full of holes from his knee to his hip. Three bayonet stabs in his back bearly missed the heart. A scalp wound from another bayonet thrust caused him to lose an awful lot of blood.

Somehow, he managed to survive it all. His condition, and that of one of his comrades, was so bad that they couldn't be moved back from the front lines for some time. Eventually, he was flown to Melbourne, Australia. Later he was transferred to a hospital in California, and then, at long last, to Cherry Point.

For bravery at Grassy Knoll, where the Japanese had to be literally blasted from caves, he was awarded the Silver Star. After Bloody Ridge he was given the Oak Leaf Cluster.

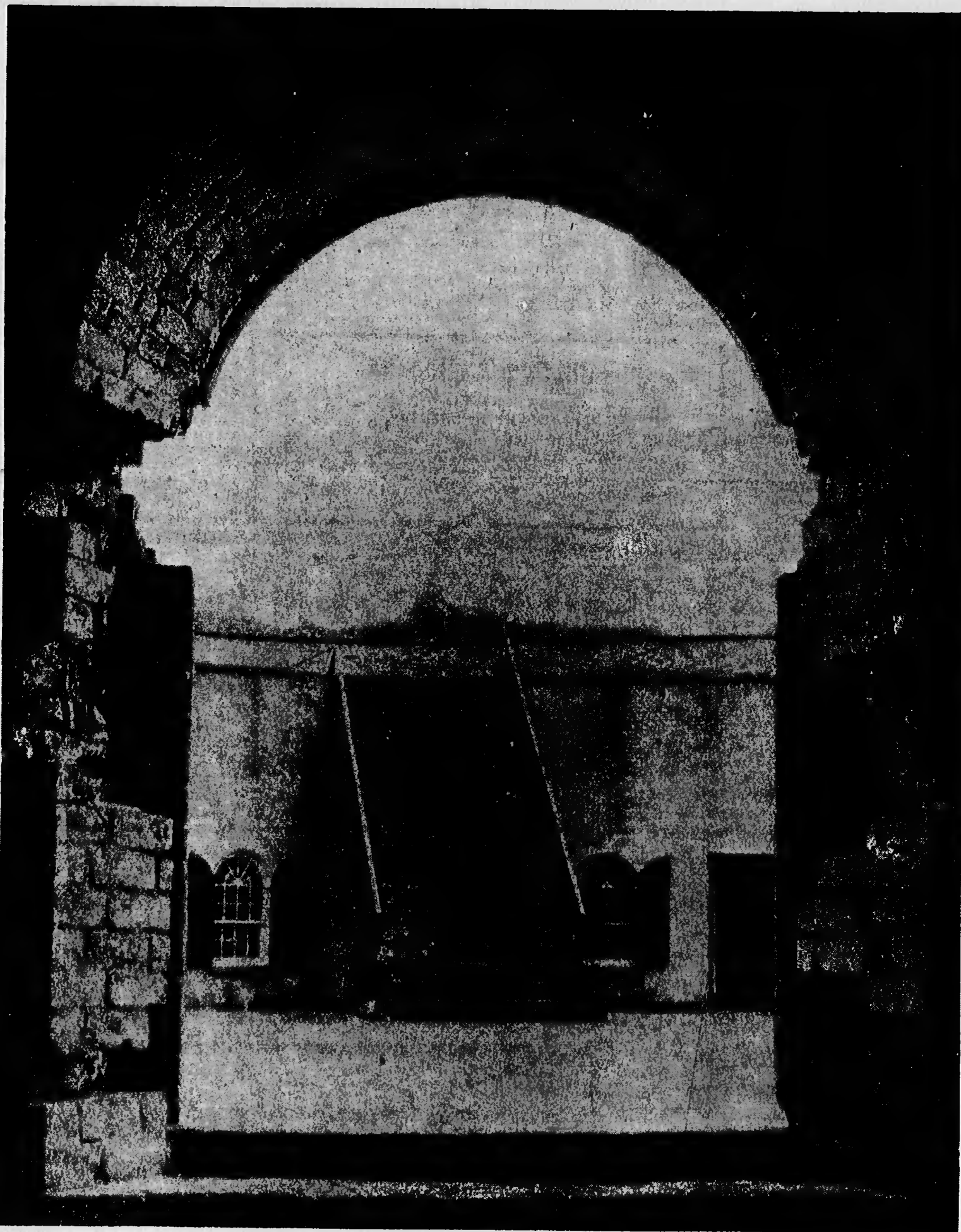
When John entered action in the Pacific, he weighed 167 pounds. When he came out of it, he weighed 118. For 36 days and nights, he and his fellow Marines were subjected to constant bombardment from the sea, from the air, and from the hills.

Incidentally, Capt. Jimmy Roosevelt (the President's son) was with the first raiders. Teppe told us he was a great soldier—asking no special favors and taking more than his share of chances.

Another Marine we will never forget was Pfc Raymond Smith, who hailed from Bedford, Mass. He and his wife, Ida, spent their first months of marriage in New Bern.

A raider with the Fourth Marines, he saw action on Guadalcanal, Guam, Pelu, Munda and the Mariannas. He received campaign ribbons for

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Where there are landmarks  
Memories will last,  
This doorway at Fort Macon  
Is your gate to the past.