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MILITARY MONOGRAPH

TITLE: An Infantry Regiment in the Attack - Jungle Terrain.

SCOPE: A study of the influence of jungle terrain on the principles of employment of an infantry regiment in the attack. The 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, attack on Kapatalan Sawmill, Luzon, P. I., 7 May 1945, is described as a combat example.

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SECTION I

INTRODUCTION

"The natural formation of the country is the soldier's best ally." - Sun Tzu. 1

In the defense of Southern Luzon the Japanese regarded terrain as their greatest ally. The Art of War, written by Sun Tzu in 500 B. C., is the military classic of the Chinese; however, it is held in even higher reverence by the Japanese.² The ability of the Japanese to use the mountainous jungle regions of Luzon to the best advantage furnishes many excellent examples to be studied in order to learn the art of jungle warfare. The attack of the 7th Cavalry, 1st Cavalry Division, to reduce the enemy defenses in the vicinity of Kapatalan Sawmill was influenced chiefly by the nature of the terrain. In describing this operation emphasis will be placed on the tactical principles employed by the regiment to seize the objective.

At the time of this operation, the author was S-3 of the 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry, and therefore in a position to write of the events that took place. As will be brought out, this attack was an important cog in the wheel of events that led to the successful conclusion of the Southern Luzon Campaign. A study of this action will be of primary benefit to junior leaders who should know the peculiarities of infantry action in jungle terrain. It was one of the rare instances when the regiment was employed in a coordinated attack on limited objectives, usual engagements being on the platoon and company level.

1. Major Thomas R. Phillips, Roots of Strategy, p. 19.

2. Ibid. p. 19:

The use of the term "infantry" in speaking of cavalry tactics will need clarification for those readers not acquainted with the tables of organization and employment of the 1st Cavalry Division - Special. The word special in the title of the division was applied after the square-type organization was changed to include certain infantry elements, making for an organization more suitable for continued dismounted action. The division was composed of the 1st Cavalry Brigade (5th and 12th Cavalry Regiments), and the 2nd Cavalry Brigade (7th and 8th Cavalry Regiments). Each regiment had two rifle squadrons (battalions), and a provisional squadron. The organization of the regiments were as follows:

1st Squadron

A, B, and C Troops.
D (weapons) Troop.

2nd Squadron

E, F, and G Troops.
H (weapons) Troop.

Provisional Squadron

Headquarters Troop.
Service Troop.
Weapons Troop (regimental).

Normal attachments to the regiments were a platoon of engineers, a field artillery battalion, and a platoon of 4.2 inch heavy mortars. In addition to these units, the 7th Cavalry had attached for the Kanat-alan operation a portable surgical hospital unit and a forward air control party. The employment of these attached units will be described later in the text. In summary, the 7th Cavalry engaged solely in dismounted actions throughout the campaigns and was employed in the same manner as other infantry organizations in the Pacific Theater.

SECTION II

SITUATION AND PRELIMINARY OPERATIONS

The road to Tokyo for the 7th Cavalry was made long and difficult to traverse by the many natural and enemy-made obstacles which the regiment encountered during the island to island campaigns of the Pacific Theater. Not the least imposing of these temporary impasses was the Kapatalan strongpoint which had been organized by Japanese forces to delay the capture of Southern Luzon. (Refer to sketch #1 to follow general situation.) Consistent with his policy of defending the mountainous areas on the various islands, General Yamashita, who was the overall commander of the Japanese forces on Luzon, organized a series of strong positions east of Manila extending northward from Laguna de Bay along the western slopes of the Sierra Madre Mountains.³ Note that Southern Luzon comprises that area south of a line Manila-Infanta and that the road through Kapatalan is the northern of only three routes reaching the east coast. Kapatalan, therefore, was one of the main blocking positions in this sector of the Yamashita defensive line.

To understand why the capture of Kapatalan was necessary in attaining the final objective in Southern Luzon, which was Infanta, it will be necessary to show the progress of XIV Corps at this time. Operations of the XIV Corps during the period 23 April through 30 June 1945, fell into three categories: operations to complete the destruction of enemy forces in the Bicol Peninsula; operations to break up resistance in the Mt. Malepunyo area and the area south of Laguna de Bay; and operations to destroy

3. After Action Report, Luzon Campaign, 6th Army, p. 2.

enemy forces in the Infanta area northeast of Laguna de Bay.⁴ The latter mission was assigned to the 2nd Cavalry Brigade.

To accomplish the mission of seizing Infanta and yet stay within the XIV Corps boundary, it was necessary to land elements of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade in the Infanta area of Lamon Bay and approach Infanta from the south, or to reach the east coast of Luzon, traveling overland south of the Kaliva and Agos Rivers from Siniloan to Binangonan Point. The available maps indicated a secondary road from Siniloan, Famy, Kapatalan Sawmill, to Binangonan Point; however, this road proved to be a narrow, rutted, muddy wagon trail, the condition of which was not enhanced by the rains which came about the middle of May. There were two reasons favoring an effort over the Famy-Infanta Road. First, it would be less of a risk to establish a beachhead in the vicinity of Binangonan Point with troops that had cleared their way through the jungle from Famy than it would be to make an assault landing in an area that was known to be strongly occupied. Intelligence reports indicated that the last remnants of the Japanese forces in the Infanta area were well organized. Second, the march from Famy would cut the escape routes through the Sierra Madre Mountains that were being used by the Japanese to evacuate from Batangas and the Bicol Peninsula.

On 20 April 1945, the 7th Cavalry (less the 2nd Squadron), found itself in Siniloan, prepared to lead the thrust to Infanta. The 2nd Squadron, still engaged in the Mt. Malepunyo area, rejoined the regiment in time to participate in the Kapatalan Sawmill attack on 7 May 1945.

4. After Action Report, Luzon Campaign, 6th Army, p. 69.

In the attack the 7th Cavalry, reinforced by one squadron of the 8th Cavalry, was committed. The remaining elements of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade, after closing in on the Japanese forces in the Mt. Malebunyo area, protected the XIV Corps left boundary by patrolling the area near Santa Maria. This, in brief, presents the XIV Corps dispositions and sets the stage for the action in the Famy area and for the deciding attack on Kapatalan Sawmill. Thus, it can be seen that this engagement was important to both the capturing of Infanta and the dissipation of the enemy forces in Southern Luzon.

In an assembly area near Siniloan, on 25 April 1945, the regiment made hasty preparations to undertake its new mission. (Refer to sketch #2 in following the action of the Kapatalan Attack.) It was hoped that an uninterrupted march to the east coast of Luzon and then to Infanta would be possible. So with as much energy as troops could muster after two months of continuous close combat in a very strenuous campaign, the regiment moved out on the approach march. The road as far as Famy was dry and level. The going was easy, allowing Famy to be taken without resistance; however, preliminary map study had caused a question mark to be placed on the approaches to the high ground just beyond Famy. As was feared, scout reports of this high ground proved that it was strongly held. The familiar sound of intermittent rifle fire was soon heard, and front line elements reported that the forward advance was stopped. It was soon realized that the regiment had made contact with an organized position, and lateral reconnaissance was ordered to test the enemy flanks.

Lateral reconnaissance broadened the front and anchored both of the flanks on the two rivers, the Romero and the Lagunlan. The banks of these rivers were found to have very steep and wooded slopes, and even though small patrols did attempt crossings, their reports indicated that the terrain was so densely wooded and had such a lack of landmarks that travel far into the Sierra Madres either to the north or south would be impossible. It was readily apparent that a push between the two rivers was necessary and that the flanks would be safe with but a few guerrilla patrols as security.

As this is an account of the main battle around the Sawmill, the small skirmishes that were necessary to gain the main battle positions will be mentioned only briefly. Suffice to say, it was no small task to gain high ground which faced the enemy main line of resistance. In this position the advance was stopped and the regiment was ordered to adopt a mobile defense. How this order was executed will be described later. Coupled with the fact that the enemy had stopped the advance, the 2nd Squadron had not yet been relieved from its mission in the Mt. Malepunyo area. It was not believed sound to commit the 7th Cavalry at this time without a reserve. Not only were the remaining elements of the 2nd Cavalry Brigade already committed elsewhere, but the entire 1st Cavalry Division was covering a frontage of over 100 miles. The 7th Cavalry was to hold its present position and under no circumstances become decisively engaged.

During the period from 25 April to 7 May 1945 the regiment carried out the mobile defense by sending out reinforced platoons on patrols to feel out the enemy position. It has already been stated that the patrol area was between the Romero and Lagunlan Rivers. These patrols, reinforced with machine guns, mortars, and artillery observers, carried out reconnaissance in force. They had two missions. One mission was to determine as much as possible about the enemy position, and the other was to inflict a maximum amount of casualties on the enemy. These patrols did much to pinpoint the enemy main defenses for the artillery and mortars.

This was a busy period for the Regimental S-2, who had the job of plotting the well camouflaged enemy line. His chief sources of information were higher headquarters, which furnished information on the general trends of the enemy tactics; reports by Philippine natives, who had watched, and in some cases, had been forced to help construct the Japanese defenses; the artillery liaison cub plane, which was used not only for fire adjustment missions, but for reconnaissance flights by regimental staff personnel; and of equal importance, patrol reports. Map coverage of the area was inaccurate. All that were available were 1:50,000 sheets, which were classified as unreliable. The regiment was dependent upon the individual troopers who had been rotated as much as possible in patrol assignments to accurately describe the ground over which the attack was to be made. Aerial photographs were requested and did arrive in time to be of benefit in planning for the attack.

At this time it will be well to bring out what was learned of the enemy. It was known that the Japanese defense of Luzon was built, to a major degree, around three main factors: the employment of an armored division, the tendency to form conglomerate combat organizations and to intermingle units, and that cave and tunnel warfare constituted an important part of the Japanese defense.⁵ In this case armor was lacking, but their cave system was extensive. Out of small units and stragglers evacuated from Manila and Southern Luzon, a well organized and disciplined force had been formed. In the early stages, the Japanese had decided that they could not afford a decisive battle on the central plains of Luzon, and that a withdrawal into the mountains to fight a long delaying action was the better plan.⁶ The Kapatalan position, which had been prepared long before the landings on Luzon, defended one gap in the Sierra Madre Mountains and was a link in one of the main defensive lines along the entire mountain range. A hodge-podge enemy force was assembling at Infanta, and an air strike on that area destroyed all available shipping and prevented the planned evacuation of those forces into Northern Luzon via water.⁷ At Kapatalan was a main delaying detachment of about battalion size, which had the mission to protect the Infanta forces from an attack from the west. Further, this force presented a barrier at the mountain approaches which allowed the enemy forces to use the native trails in the interior of the Sierra Madres in their flight northward.

5. Intelligence Summary, Enemy on Luzon, Hq. 6th Army, Introduction.

6. Ibid. p. 1.

7. Ibid. p. 15.

The Japanese "Manual for Defenses Against Landings", published by the Japanese General Staff Headquarters and Inspectorate General of Military Training, outlined several principles to be followed in organizing a position, which were adhered to at Kapatalan. The following are quotations from a 6th Army intelligence report on extracts of this manual:

"Centers of resistance for units of battalion size were to be constructed in underground positions on high ground. They were to be self-sustaining, and organized not only for all-around defense but even for internal defense against possible breakthroughs. Artillery was assigned to battalions and companies and placed within positions. Level terrain where our tanks and other mechanized equipment could be employed was verboten to the Japanese... (It specified) Yugeki, mobile attack, tactics, the suicide penetration squads, the individual soldier with demolition kits..." 8

The Japanese at Kapatalan used some type of heavy mortar which was fired for the most part after dark and without too much effect. Enemy artillery was not used, but liaison pilots reported the location of narrow gauge tracks that led into one of the tunnels. This track could very well have been used to move an artillery piece in and out of the cave. This would have been in keeping with the Japanese tactics of assigning artillery to battalion size positions.

The cave and tunnel systems built around the Sawmill were extensive. All of these caves and entrenchments were constructed along the same lines. Military intelligence reported as follows:

"Not only were these defenses used as firing points, but living quarters were built underground and in many instances the positions were interconnected, enabling the enemy to go from one to another without appearing above ground. Supplies were stored in the caves, and blast walls constructed to protect the interior from bomb and artillery hits." 9

8. Intelligence Summary, Enemy on Luzon, Hq. 6th Army, p. 21.

9. Ibid. p. 27.

The larger tunnels measured 100 feet in length and 10 feet in diameter. Each tunnel was constructed so as to curve away from the entrance faces. That the caves were interlocking was a well-known fact even before the ground had been taken. Many times patrols were able to fight their way to a known enemy position only to find it unoccupied but also untenable due to fire from mutually supporting positions. By comparing the size of the relatively small force believed to be opposing the regiment with the number of known cave openings, it was believed that skeleton squads held two positions by moving between them to meet an attack. It was finally determined that the high ground in front of the Kapatalan Sawmill consisted of six predominant hills each entrenched and undermined by underground tunnels. This meant that the ground would have to be taken by capturing each one of these mutually supporting strong-points simultaneously.

Captured enemy documents revealed that the enemy forces consisted of elements of several larger units. An extract of the 6th Army Order of Battle Report of units in the Infanta area is noted below:

<u>Place Last Located</u>	<u>Unit</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Strength</u>
Infanta	Manila Naval Defense Force, incl 31st Special Base Unit.	6/45	13,000
Cavite Province	111 Gyoro Cons Bn.	5/45	850

All of the above forces were navy personnel who had earlier in the campaign been responsible for the defense of Manila and were known for their tenacity in holding out against an enemy superior in numbers.

10. Intelligence Summary, Enemy on Luzon, Hq. 6th Army, p. 163.

11. Ibid. p. 163.

The Gyoro Units were the suicide boat units that had been recognized for their fanatical attempts to destroy Allied shipping. The Kanatalan operation also proved their worth as land fighters. Troops were not harrassed by the much publicized "banzai attacks". Earlier campaigns had caused the Japanese High Command to realize that this type of attack was extremely unprofitable; however, one enemy patrol did manage to penetrate through the lines and blow up a section of the Famy-Infanta Road.

To illustrate the aggressive spirit of the individual Japanese soldier, one patrol from the 1st Squadron captured a diary which had an entry that read somewhat as follows:

"Why don't we attack. We have plenty of ammunition and rations. We have repulsed the enemy advances at every point. Our esprit is high. Now is the time."

Even in this stage of the Luzon campaign the individual Jap soldier refused to admit defeat and believed that reinforcements would arrive in time to drive the American Forces from the Philippines.

In addition to the enemy made fortifications, the terrain had to be considered as a natural obstacle. Mention has already been made of a few of its aspects, but more should be said of the topography and of its effect on the operation. For the most part, this section of the Sierra Madre Mountains is a dense jungle, approximately twelve miles wide, with only a few rice fields and native huts to break the monotony of the forest. The rivers and hill masses could be studied from a cub plane, but the foot soldier's line of vision ended with each curve in the native trails. Usually the first indication of the enemy in this type of terrain was the sharp

crack of a rifle from a well camouflaged foxhole at very close range and then explosions of the accurately placed fire of the knee-mortar. Movement, besides being restricted laterally, was very slow. Patrols were unable to cover a distance of more than 500 yards because of the imminence of enemy contact. Scouts were very cautious and painstaking in their advance. Vehicular traffic was limited to the Famy-Infanta Road. Three-quarter ton weapons carriers and jeeps were used for supply as the road was too narrow to permit heavier trucks to turn around.

It will be noted that the main position of the 7th Cavalry was on a knife-like ridge that paralleled the axis of advance. The main enemy position was across the road and faced the direction of attack. The terrain that could be used for maneuver took the shape of an hourglass; friendly positions formed the base; the narrow defile near the bridge on the road, the stem; and the enemy position, the top half. This meant that all troops making the assault would have to pass through the narrow defile at the bridge before deploying.

In addition to the lack of suitable ground from which to launch the attack, repeated air strikes had a definite effect on the nature of the terrain. During the period of mobile defense the regiment had made full use of available air support against the enemy cave and tunnel positions. Fighter bombers carried mixed bomb loads of na-palm and general purpose bombs. It is doubtful whether the general purpose bombs had a direct effect on the enemy defenses; however, by the time of the attack, the incendiary effects of the fire bombs had burned most of the natural

cover off of the objective hills. This made the task of the assaulting troops that much easier. In the defense of an organized position of this kind the Japanese always employed the use of air guards to report to their underground troops when the air attack had lifted.¹² Ground troops advancing under the protection of air cover always found the enemy ready to defend. It was impossible to achieve local surprise with air strikes; however, pinpoint bombings were attempted in an effort to seal the tunnel entrances. Pilots had to bring the aircraft in very low to strike targets in the draws. In doing this they took great risks both from ground fire and from the deceiving mountain contours. On one occasion, the fearless Jap air guards refused to take cover during an air strike and brought down by rifle fire one of the P-38s.

Targets were marked for the air by two primary means. The artillery cub plane would hover over the area to be bombed as the pilots in the heavier aircraft watched. The cub plane would then actually lead the flight in on the first run to show the direction in which the run was to be made so as not to endanger friendly troops. Radio communication from the cub plane through the forward air controller to the bomber aircraft made operating by this method possible. Artillery smoke rounds were also used to mark the targets, particularly when the general purpose bomb was dropped.

Continued patrol activity soon had its marked effect on the regiment. It will be remembered that the 7th Cavalry up to this time had available only one line squadron on which to call for patrols. Troops were

12. Intelligence Summary, Enemy on Luzon, Hq. 6th Army, p. 29

about 75% strength. Troop commanders, in order to send out full platoon patrols and yet effect some rotation of personnel, used all available men including cooks and clerks. Therefore, when the order was received to launch a coordinated attack on the Kapatalan Sawmill on 7 May 1945, there was a determination to get through to the east coast and then to Infanta as rapidly as possible. The 2nd Squadron joined the regiment prior to this attack, and individual troopers who had been pushed back from the enemy positions so many times with their small patrols, felt that these reinforcements would permit the 7th Cavalry to take Kapatalan.

The preceding paragraphs have discussed in some detail the events during the period 25 April to 7 May 1945. Because the regiment was placed on the defense for this length of time it had more than the normal delay usually given to units between the approach march and the assault phases of an attack. The fine reconnaissance work accomplished did much to further the success of the attack. Just prior to the attack the regiment was inspected by the Commanding General, 6th Army, and the word to go ahead was given.

SECTION III

THE ATTACK

During the night of 6-7 May the 2nd Squadron, 7th Cavalry, moved into an assembly area behind the front line positions of the 1st Squadron. Actual movement toward the objectives began at dawn with the 1st Squadron in the lead. It moved in a column of troopers through the defile at the bridge and then deployed generally in a line of troops along the east bank of the Lagunlan River. The 2nd Squadron followed as far as the bridge but continued up the road to a position at the foot of the ridges bordering the road. Even though these positions were very close to enemy contact there was adequate cover and concealment, and these positions allowed for an immediate assault following the air and artillery preparations. In the attack, the 1st Squadron was responsible for the three objectives in the right zone, while those in the left zone were assigned to the 2nd Squadron. The 1st Squadron, 8th Cavalry, was in regimental reserve.

The operation was so timed that when the troops were in position the dive-bomb attacks began. These were followed by a heavy artillery preparation fired on all of the objective hills. Due to the close proximity of the first objectives to the attack positions, the division artillery and regimental mortars were charged with providing close in fire support, while the corps artillery concentrated on the last hill row. When the air finished their mission, the regimental supporting weapons fired a thirty-minute concentration with such violence as to remove any doubt in the minds of the defenders that their task would be an easy one.

During the intense preparatory fire, a shift by one of the supporting elements from one concentration to another caused Troop B, 1st Squadron, to come under particularly heavy friendly fire. Tree bursts on top of the troops which were not dug in assessed heavy casualties. This incident is mentioned to stress the high degree of accuracy and experience that is necessary in firing artillery support in jungle terrain. Only minor changes in either deflection or elevation may mean the difference whether artillery or mortar fire is in support of or at friendly troops. Particularly, this incident is mentioned to pay tribute to a well disciplined and combat experienced troop that was able, in spite of the casualties caused by the fire of its own supporting weapons, to reorganize in a matter of minutes and carry out its assigned role in the attack.

Once the initial preparations were concluded, assaults on the slopes were characterized by swift and aggressive movements. Rifle fire eliminated those individuals who dared to expose themselves above their dug-outs to resist the advance. Each troop, on capturing its objective, supported the advance of adjacent troops. Those troops having two hills to capture left enough force to hold the ground taken until rear elements arrived to mop up. As had not been the case in the last two weeks of patrolling, the cavalymen had the satisfaction of being able to occupy a position and see friendly uniforms across the draws.

Up to this time repeated reference has been made to the six hills which, if taken, would give the regiment control of the objective area.

There were actually seven hills. The discrepancy between the information contained in the preceding paragraphs and the ground formation as shown on the operations overlay has been allowed to remain unexplained until now for a definite reason. It was not until this stage of the attack that this hill was discovered. Cub plane reconnaissance, studies of aerial photographs, and reports by scouts who had managed to work their way into the area, had all failed in pinpointing this defensive position. Even though it tied in very closely to another hill, it was an objective that had to be taken in order to secure the neighboring positions.

The location of this seventh hill was a deciding factor in causing the regimental commander to commit the reserve squadron. Prior to this time the attack had developed rapidly. The 1st Squadron, by fire and movement, advanced in the right zone, capturing its three objective hills by noon. One troop of the squadron continued the advance, pursuing enemy elements that had withdrawn along the high ground south of the Sawmill. The remainder of the squadron continued to organize the ground which had been captured. Both of the above operations continued throughout the afternoon. The 2nd Squadron attack in the left zone had proceeded according to plan. Two troops attacking abreast had quickly seized the three hills in their zone and engaged in cave sealing operations. The squadron commander, who also had been given the mission of enveloping the Sawmill area on the north to cut off the enemy retreat, dispatched his reserve troop around the left flank of the enemy position to secure the high ground in the vicinity of the nursery. It was about the middle of

the afternoon when these two missions were accomplished. It was at this time that leading elements discovered the heretofore hidden pocket of resistance on the seventh hill. This position produced a heavy volume of fire that repulsed every attempt to capture it.

A question may arise in the mind of the reader as to the slow progress of the attack. In ground distance the troops had covered only about 1000 yards. Actually the attack was quite rapid for movement in jungle terrain. Even though na-palm bombs had cleared the top growth of the vegetation, thus permitting better visibility, the matted debris of fallen trees and the thickets entangled in rock formations, made walking difficult and afforded excellent cover for the enemy foxholes. Every foot of the ground had to be searched and each fanatical, or fearlessly determined Japanese soldier rooted out and killed. They did not surrender.

The attack had bogged down in the face of the last objective, and the reserve was committed in the left zone to take over the initial objective area of the 2nd Squadron which, with the exception of the seventh hill, had been reported to be secure. This permitted the 2nd Squadron Commander to move his entire force to the nursery area and more effectively block the enemy retreat. The troop which had already reached the nursery reported no enemy in force, but also reported that the area widened out to such an extent that a more sizeable force would be required to cover all of the escape routes. The regiment would have to fight any enemy that escaped from the Sawmill again in Infanta.

Thus, with the 2nd Squadron organizing the ground in the vicinity of the nursery, with the 1st Squadron digging in on the hills which it had captured, and with the 2nd Squadron, 8th Cavalry, eliminating the last of the enemy in the left zone, night closed in on the attacking troops. The 1st Squadron troop, which had been pursuing enemy stragglers over the high ground south of the Sawmill, was ordered to return to the squadron position for the night. The troop commander had reported that no suitable defensive positions could be found at his advanced position, and since the troop was not engaged with an organized force, there was no purpose in holding the ground which had been gained so far south of the axis of advance. With the exception of the one small enemy force which defended their cave emplacements on the seventh hill, the regiment had captured all of the high ground overlooking the Sawmill from the west in the day's attack. There remained only the high ground east of the Sawmill to be taken before it could be reported that the Kapatalan strongpoint no longer existed; however, with the main defensive positions captured, all further resistance was to crumble before the advance continued the next day.

During the night the troops were harassed by sporadic rifle and knee-mortar fire, but once again the accuracy of the 75mm howitzers proved their worth in a close support role. Their delivery of fire fifty yards in front of friendly troops was not uncommon. On that night they fired so close that friendly troops felt fragments from the shell bursts, but they forced the enemy to stay within their cave positions. There was certainly no Jap infiltration parties at work in the area.

The next day, 8 May 1945, in the face of only scattered resistance, 7th Cavalry troops swarmed over the remaining ground in the Sawmill area to insure that no organized force remained and then consolidated the bulk of the regiment at the Nursery in preparation for the advance to the east coast of Luzon.

It might be said that up to this time that the engineers were just along for the walk; however, they had foreseen the role that they were to play and were well prepared to do the job. While riflemen guarded the entrances to the tunnels that had been located and were discovering many more, the engineers set about to dynamite enough dirt to seal them over. The actual amount of explosive that was used in this area was not recorded, but the engineer platoon working from their supply vehicles, which by this time could use the road as far as the Sawmill, spent the better part of two days on this mission. Of the estimated 300 enemy believed to have been in the area only a relative few were counted dead or thought to have evacuated their positions. ¹³ The uncounted majority were probably sealed in their own cave defenses.

Although this narrative ends with the capture of the Kapatalan Sawmill, there was no rest to be had here for the 7th Cavalry. They soon resumed their march over the Famy-Infanta Road. In brief, little opposition was encountered before the foot troops reached the east coast, substantiating the fact that the Sawmill was organized as the Japanese main delaying position defending the approaches to the Sierra Madres in the Southern Luzon sector.

13. Bertram C. Wright, *The 1st Cavalry Division in World War II*, p. 151

SECTION IV

SUMMARY

The study of this combat example has followed in general the normal phases developed by an infantry regiment in the attack of an objective: approach march, engagement and preliminary reconnaissance, assault, reorganization, and pursuit. Military intelligence, particularly concerning the terrain, has been stressed to show how jungle terrain influenced the operation and affected the principles of employment. This example has illustrated five important principles which will be briefly noted in summary.

Adequate time must be devoted to ground reconnaissance. In more open type terrain, objectives can be more readily recognized. In closed terrain movement is slow, both as a result of the many natural obstacles and because of the need for caution against an enemy that may defend behind every tree and bush. Patrols require time to pinpoint the defended ground, make sure of the enemy flanks, and to prepare to lead the assault after the enemy defense has been neutralized by supporting fires.

Air support is limited. This limitation is imposed by the close proximity of assaulting troops, the confusing nature of the densely covered growth of the ground contours, and by the nature and extent of enemy emplacements. Jungle warfare is characterized by a deeply entrenched type of resistance. The construction of the caves and tunnel systems at Kapatalan were a part of the Japanese doctrine of defense and not just the plan of the local commander.

Narrow frontages must be assigned. Jungle combat is marked by concentrated pockets of resistance. All effort is massed to reduce these strongpoints. Small groups of enemy that hide in the jungle recesses are by-passed and thereby cut off from supply. Patrols will finally eliminate them should they attempt to raid rear command posts or supply dumps. In this case the Japanese concentrated on the hills in front of the Sawmill. Their battle positions were close together and were mutually supporting. The attack was in enough strength and on a narrow frontage to enable the assaulting troops to cover the objective area without fear of flanking fire.

Mop-up units must closely follow the assaulting troops. Had the forward elements stopped to seal the entrances to the caves and search the ground which had been captured, the enemy would have had time to occupy in more strength the next hill on the route of advance. By leaving the task of reorganizing the captured ground to supporting troops valuable time was saved.

Pursuit is limited. An important feature of the Japanese tactical doctrine was the counterattack after dark. For this reason troops made every attempt to organize captured ground in time to dig prepared positions for the night. It is not implied that valuable ground gained is to be abandoned to insure a good defensive position; however, in ordering pursuit the capability of the unit to organize its new position before dark must be considered and the value of the pursuit to the continuance of the mission must be determined.

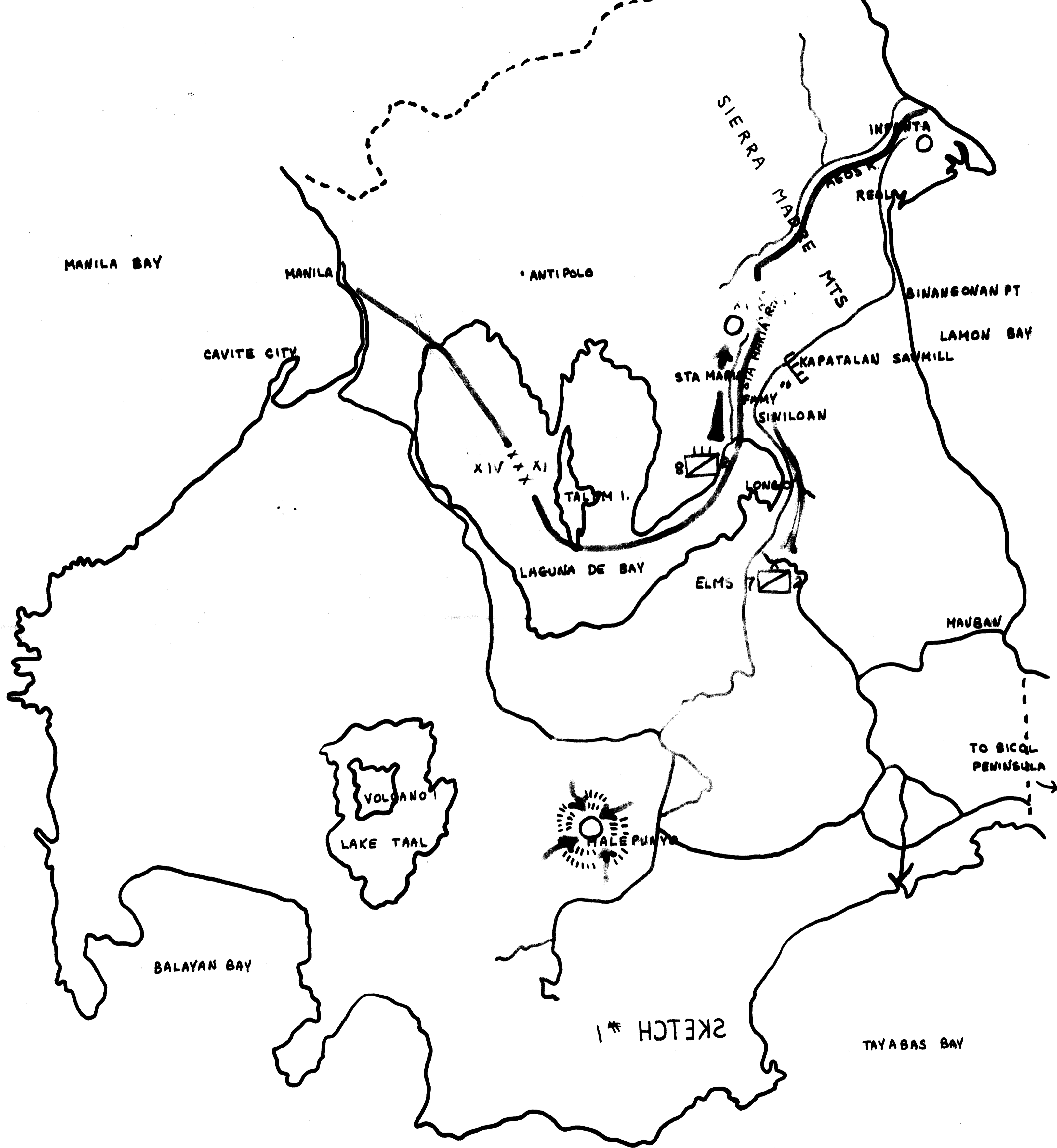
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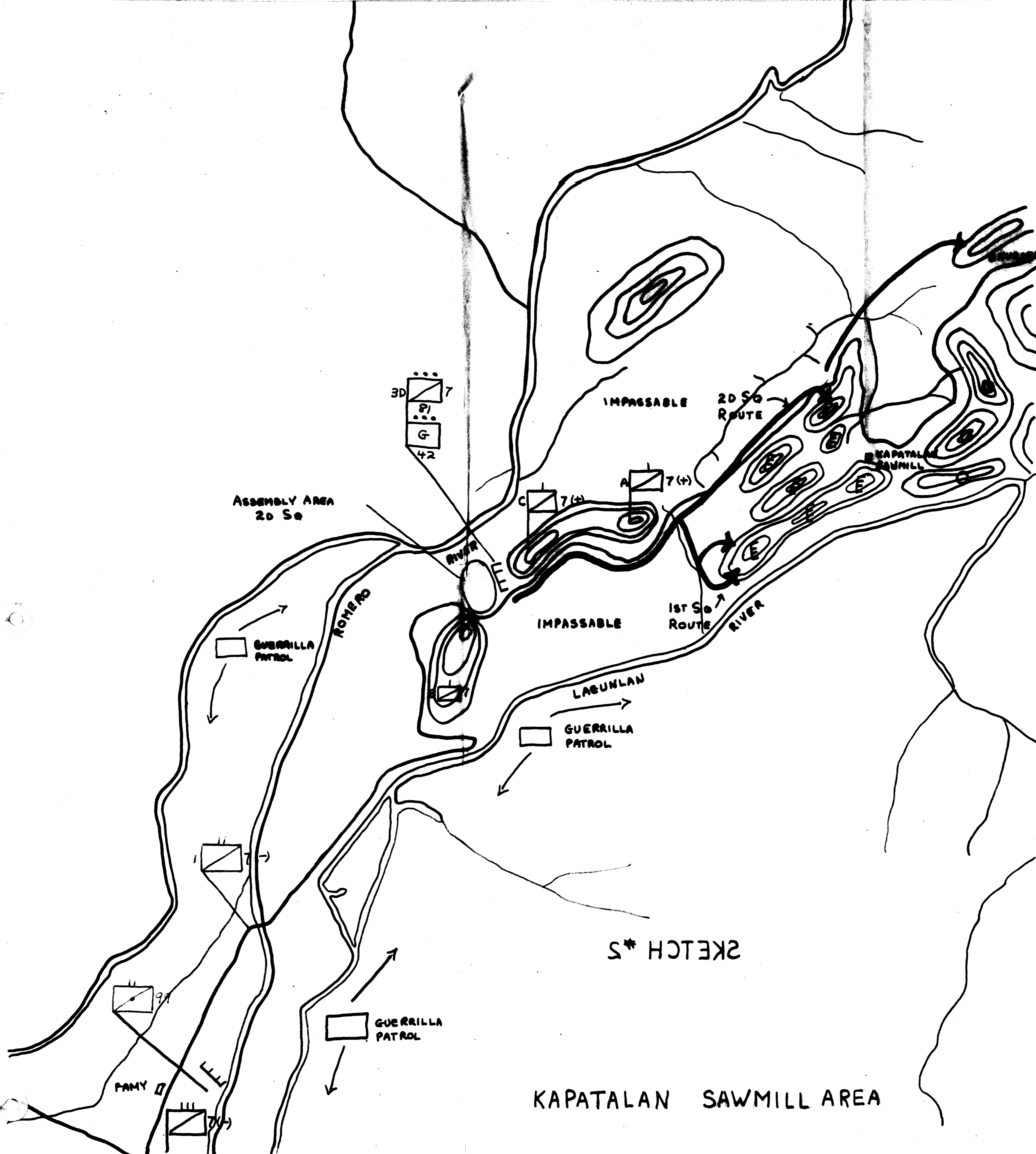
After Action Report, 6th Army. Dates covered, 9 Jan 45 through 30 June 45.

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SOUTHERN LUZON

— ROADS
 - - - CORPS BOUNDARIES & ROUTES OF ADVANCE



KAPATALAN SAWMILL AREA