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Report on Merrills Marauders

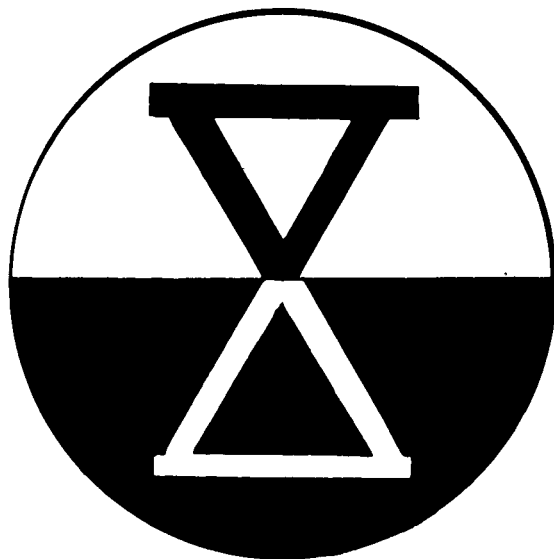
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COMBAT NOTES

NO. 12



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G-3 SECTION
X CORPS APO 909

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HEADQUARTERS X CORPS
APO 909 US ARMY

A. REINFORCED REGIMENT OPERATING AS A TASK FORCE

1. Tactical Principles Emphasized: Combat units in contact with the enemy must be prepared at all times to pass from the offensive phase into the exploitation phase. Exploitation is not only the natural culmination of a successful offensive action, but also may be the immediate result of counteroffensive action following a successful defensive action in which the organization of enemy forces has been shattered. This latter situation occurred late in May 1951 in the X Corps sector, when our defending troops, having grudgingly given up ground in a stubborn delaying action, had finally exacted such a toll of life from the attacking units that counteroffensive was initiated to take advantage of the enemy's disorganization. Coincident with this offensive, a reinforced infantry regiment was organized as a task force to advance rapidly along the UMYANG-NI - INJE - KANSONG axis to seize and secure KANSONG as a port for supply and cut off any enemy elements south thereof. (Map #1). The road over which the Task Force was to operate winds through one of the most mountainous areas in East-Central Korea. It follows narrow river valleys for most of its course and includes several tortuous mountain passes. The operations of this force, designated Task Force Baker, have been studied to record the outstanding lessons learned.

2. The Task Force: Task Force Baker, commanded by a general officer, was organized by attaching to an infantry RCT: One tank battalion, one company of combat engineers, a battalion of armored field artillery, a naval gunfire liaison team, two transportation truck companies, and a signal detachment. All of these attachments were an addition to those which normally operate with an RCT. This task force was assembled and organized in the vicinity of UMYANG-NI, DT2105, 25 May 51. (Map #1).

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3. The Advance to the River: The mission of securing a bridgehead across the SOYANG River from which the task force could launch its attack was assigned to another force. To accomplish this mission, a small task force consisting of an infantry battalion, two companies of tanks, four sections of AA artillery, a company of engineers and a battery of artillery was formed. This force was scheduled to move rapidly from HANGYE at 1300 hours on 24 May but was slow in getting organized, and the actual advance did not commence until 1600 hours except for an engineer reconnaissance party which moved out from positions north of HANGYE along the road to the river in the vicinity of UMYANG-NI. As a result of constant urging by higher field commanders, the remainder of the task force attacked at 1630 hours, and within the hour leading elements had reached the river. Constant failure on the part of unit commanders to grasp the spirit of the exploitation resulted in sluggish movement of armor and slow deployment of infantry to counter enemy resistance. This factor probably permitted some enemy elements south and east of the axis of advance to cross the HONGCHON - INJE road and thus escape envelopment. Strong follow-up elements, designated in X Corps OI No. 188 to move by motor, did not join the battalion task force until the following day, thus enabling additional enemy to infiltrate out of the trap during the night and early morning of 25 May.

4. The Initiation of Operations of Task Force Baker (See Map #2): Just prior to dawn on the morning of 25 May, a rifle company pushed across the SOYANG River to seize the high ground north thereof as a bridgehead. To support this operation, a tank platoon moved to DT206073 and established a road block at DT235075 to secure the right flank. These blocks were withdrawn at sunset. An armored patrol consisting of two platoons of tanks and a platoon of engineers moved across the river and secured a small airstrip at DT225063 between the river and the road. This patrol then continued

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to the west 2000 yards until it was halted by an estimated company of CCF. This enemy force was engaged and approximately 25 enemy were killed, 4 were captured, and several ammunition vehicles were destroyed while attempting to cross the river.

During the afternoon, one tank platoon was directed to proceed north as far as INJE. This patrol advanced approximately 1500 meters to DT235075, where it was stopped by heavy small arms and mortar fire, and returned to the perimeter at 1645 hours. The task force spent a relatively quiet night at the bridgehead, receiving only light small arms and 12 rounds of mortar fire.

5. The Follow Through: At this time the task force was consolidated, reorganized and a covering force consisting of one company of tanks, one infantry company, an artillery battery, a bridge platoon and a mine detector squad was established to lead the advance on the succeeding day. Traffic and road conditions, and enemy action which intermittently cut the MSR along which the task force was operating delayed the formation of the task force and reduced the time available in the assembly area for coordination of communications and fire plans.

The task force column was organized with one tank leading, followed by a tank dozer. These vehicles were followed by the remainder of the tank platoon. The tanks of the commander and the battalion CO were next in line, followed by the battalion command vehicle, a half-track. Another section of tanks, the Brockway trucks of the bridge platoon and a section of tanks followed in that order. Infantry were mounted on all tanks with the exception of the two that were leading.

The covering force moved from DT232069 through the friendly front lines at approximately 0400 hours and had advanced about 1000 yards when it encountered its first obstacle in the form of a bridge at DT232082 which apparently was not strong enough to

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carry medium tanks. The only available by-pass was blocked by a 3/4 ton truck which had been abandoned by the enemy. As the lead vehicles approached the block they detonated anti-personnel mines in the road without incurring casualties as no unprotected personnel were riding on these tanks.

This block was successfully moved and the column continued on the axis of advance. Another bridge at DT255104 also appeared inadequate to support tanks, therefore a by-pass had to be utilized. As the lead tank tipped forward to drop down into the river bed to negotiate a by-pass, it was hit on the top of the turret with an anti-tank rocket and the crew knocked out. The dozer tank attempted to pass the damaged vehicle but in so doing caught the dozer blade in an embankment. As the operator attempted to extricate it the hydraulic system failed. The by-pass was finally opened, however, by placing a new crew in the damaged lead tank and breaking down the shoulders of the stream bed with the tank tracks. This operation was further complicated by enemy small arms fire. The enemy, including the rocket team, was neutralized by the accompanying infantry which deployed and took them under fire and pioneer work improved the by-pass sufficiently to permit the covering force to continue.

The advance continued to the summit of the pass at DT268104, northeast of KARO-RI, before coming under heavy fire from mortars, small arms and anti-tank rockets. The lead tank was hit by an anti-tank rocket, wounding the tank commander and the leader. The driver abandoned his vehicle without locking the steering brakes and the tank rolled forward, out of control, into the draw along the side of the road. The second tank was forced to seek cover behind the crest of the hill. During this action, the infantry company deployed and successfully seized the high ground on either side of the pass. This tactic showed a marked improvement in battle performance as compared to the similar

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situation at HOENGSONG as described in Combat Notes No. 9.

While the tank column was thus delayed, the two infantry battalions farther back in the column were ordered to dismount and sweep the area to the right and left of the axis of advance. This action eliminated the threat to the advancing column and the covering force proceeded down the forward slope and into the town of INJE after neutralizing emplaced enemy to the left of the road on the forward slope by tank and machine gun fire. The town was entered at 1500 hours and by 1800 hours was securely held by the task force, as was the high ground to the north.

6. The Thrust: On 28 May, Task Force Baker attempted a rapid thrust along the INJE - KANSONG Road with a mechanized advance guard; the objective was KANSONG, 52 miles distant. The advance guard consisted of one company of infantry, one company of tanks, an engineer bridge platoon and a battery of armored field artillery, and was to precede the main body by fifteen minutes. Company L was substituted for Company I as part of the advance guard at the last minute due to heavy casualties in the latter company the previous day. This change caused Company L, with a TACP and artillery FO, to arrive at the IP just in time to join the remainder of the departing advance guard. The late arrival of Company L precluded any prior planning or coordination of combat arms or communications. Supply vehicles were intermingled with the tanks in the tactical column. The armored artillery battery was (so far forward) that much of its fire capability was nullified since it was impossible to render close support as the force became engaged. Riflemen rode on most of the tanks with exception of the two in the lead.

7. As the leading elements reached an exposed position at DT295169, (See Map #2, Note A), the two lead tanks were disabled by the enemy firing US 3.5 rocket launchers. Two hits were scored on each tank and the crews became casualties from small

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arms and mortar fire as they abandoned their tanks. A third tank was hit by a rocket but not disabled as the enemy poured in small arms, mortar, and artillery fire. The riflemen dismounted as tanks were rushed forward to engage the enemy from the flank. The infantry's entry into the action was delayed by heavy fire which also disrupted the tank-infantry communications to such an extent that the two elements were forced to fight essentially separate actions. The tanks fired against the flanks of the enemy positions while the infantry advanced and drove the enemy from the dominating ground at DT290170, (See Map #2, Note B). The advance guard suffered 57 casualties, including 8 KIA, the heaviest of any single action. Since the plan required a rapid advance, units moved forward each time there was a lull in firing.

8. Enemy resistance eased as the main body cleared the high ground west of the road at DT295157 and a battalion from another regiment cleared the high ground to the east.

9. The task force continued the advance on 29 May 1951, to DT305195, (See Map #2, Note C), for approximately 3000 meters, using more extended attack formations. Fire power and coordination between units were employed to greater advantage. Fewer troops were placed on the road and more on the high ground, and as a result casualties suffered were much less severe than the preceding day. A major cause for the casualties appears to have been inadequate dispersion and failure to properly dig-in when objectives were reached.

10. Action of an infantry regiment following Task Force Baker in consolidating the gains made by the task force materially assisted the advance by relieving it on objectives that had been seized; by attacking to enlarge those objectives - thus removing enemy fire from the road; and by the one battalion that attacked 28 May east of the road in conjunction with the task force to relieve enemy resistance to the advance guard. (See Map #3).

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11. Casualty reports are as follows:

a. Task Force BAKER:

<u>Date</u>	<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>Total</u>
26 May	3	31	34
27 May	10	41	51
28 May	18	104	122
29 May	<u>10</u>	<u>69</u>	<u>79</u>
Total	41	245	286

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b. Total for the follow-up infantry regiment, 26 - 28 May, were 9 KIA and 83 WIA.

12. The above described operation emphasized the need for the following corrections in combat methods:

a. The advance guard must be organized properly even on short notice, so that proper coordination and establishment of communications can be effected for combat. Leadership must be aggressive and ever present.

b. Tank action was sluggish and inhibited in obsession "to follow the engineers" who were clearing mines that the enemy "had not had time to place". ✓

c. The task force was organized for rapid advance (pursuit tactics) and was slow in changing its formation and tactics to meet the enemy dispositions when contact was made. Because of this, units made physical advances along the road in some cases without clearing the dominating terrain on either side of the route of advance with fire and/or maneuver. ?

d. Small units although properly aggressive in their advance, failed to prepare the way properly with fire support, and failed to disperse and dig-in when the local objectives were secured.

e. Heavy equipment - Because craters and other obstacles were anticipated, bridging and unarmored supply vehicles were intermingled with tanks near the head of the column. This delayed the

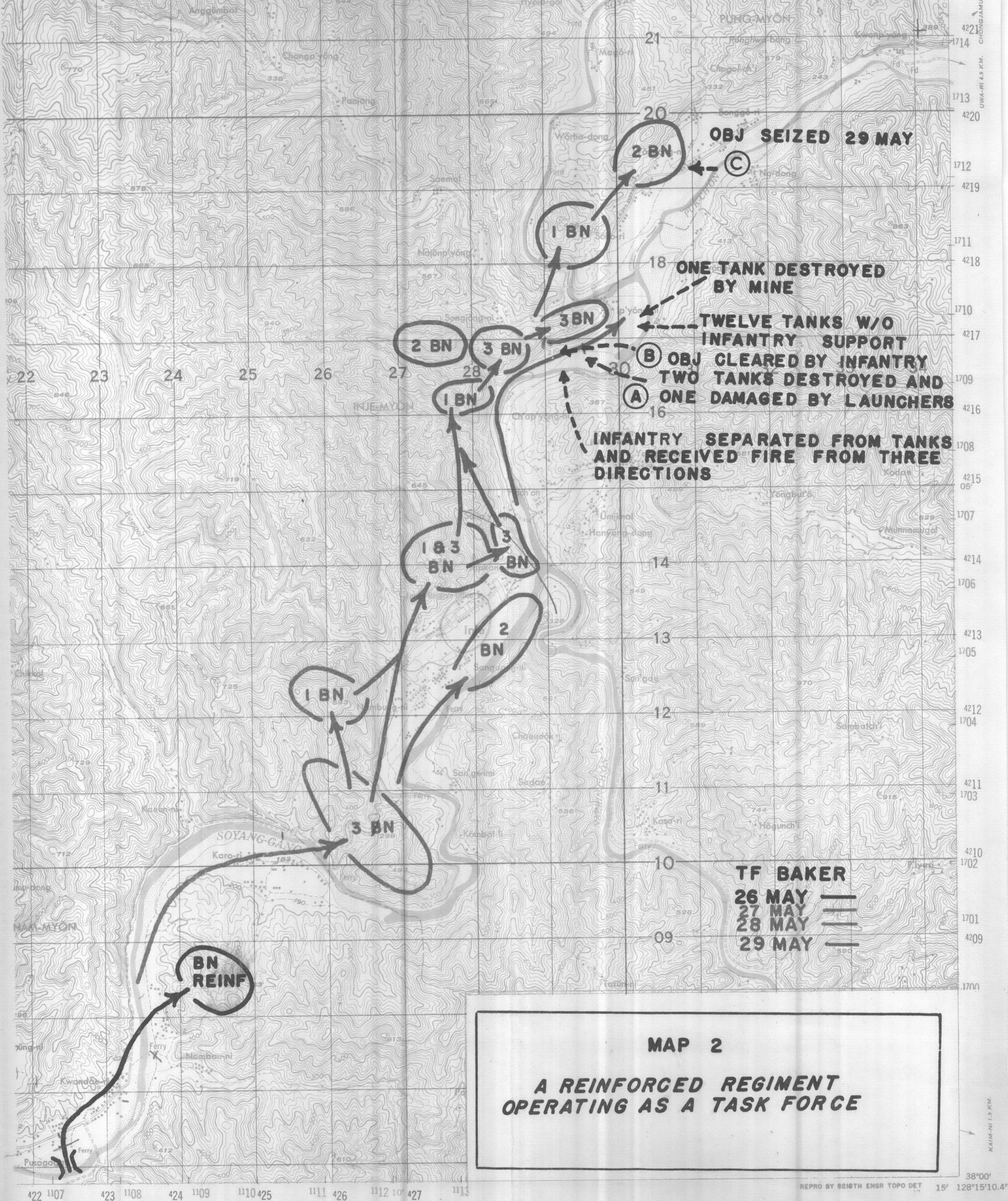
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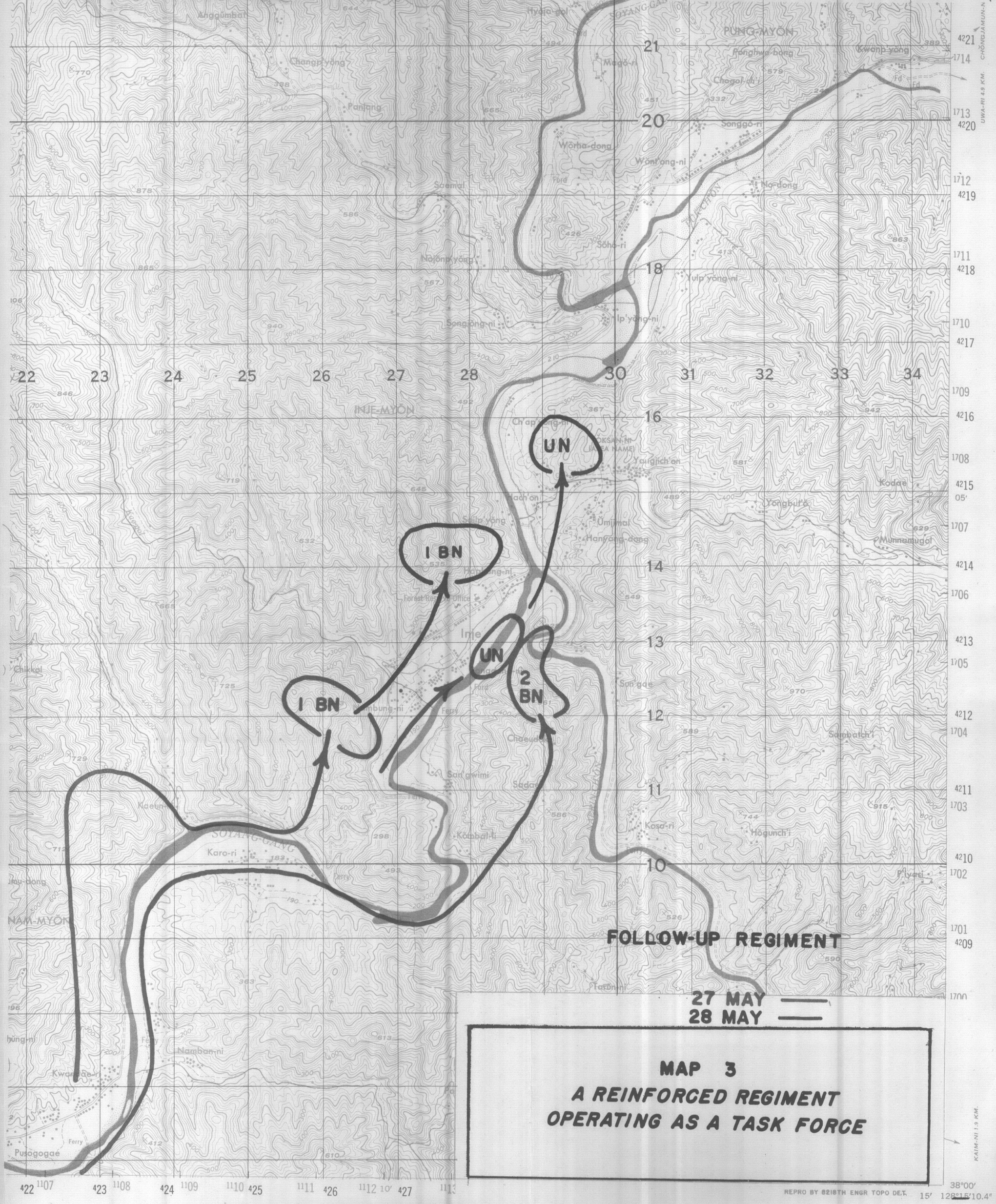
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tanks from getting to the head of the column, where they could deploy and properly utilize their cross-country mobility.

f. Some of the armored artillery was too far forward to properly support the action by indirect fire.

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MAP 3
A REINFORCED REGIMENT
OPERATING AS A TASK FORCE

27 MAY —
28 MAY —

-bong
-ch'i
-ch'ŏn
-dong
-gang
-gol (-
-hyŏn
-koga
-kol (-
-li (-m
-lyŏng
-ni (-li
-ri (-li
-ryŏng
-tong (-

Kangwŏn
1. Yae
a.
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Report by Major John M. Jones on Merrill's Marauders, undated, together
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14 July 1944.

Dear General Weems,

I have not written before this time primarily because I did not have anything of great interest about which to write and secondarily because I was in a position where I was unable to write for several months.

At the present time I am at the South East Asia Command Headquarters holding down the job of Director of Public Relations (United States). My former chief, Lt. Colonel James Warner Bellah, is back in the States for an assignment with the Army Ground Forces, I believe. He told me before he left that, if there was a vacancy in the position in which he was to be located, that he would send for me. I can assure you that those thoughts are still slipping around in the back of my head.

I have had, during the past five months, the most interesting experience that I could imagine. I was assigned in January to the staff of Brigadier General Frank D. Merrill in two capacities: One as Officer Observer and the other as Public Relations Officer in charge of a group of correspondents who were to accompany his forces in the field. As you probably know, Colonel Charles N. Hunter, Lt. Colonel William L. Osborne, Major Tom P. Senff, Captain Samuel V. Wilson and Major Caifson Johnson, all from Benning, were a part of the volunteer force which General Merrill was to lead in operations behind the Japanese lines. I was with them throughout the entire operation except the last few days when I was evacuated by liaison plane.

General Merrill's operation was perhaps the most interesting military operation in the Pacific this year. I kept a careful diary of everything that happened and I was in the G-2 Section of the staff which enabled me to have a complete picture all of the time. General Merrill moved with his forward maneuvering unit so that we were always in a position to get the details of even small unit operations.

I spent some little time with one of the battalions on one occasion and had the opportunity to go on a number of small patrols.

I saw all of the above mentioned people in action and I can assure you that you can be proud of what they did. Approximately ninety percent of the junior officers were graduates of the Infantry School and by the majority of the senior officers were graduates of the Advanced, Basic, or Communications Course.

My Diary comprises about 45,000 words and is now in the hands of General Stilwell before being released to G-2 in Washington. I am planning to write a short book based on the Diary if General Stilwell decides I can use enough of the real story.

While we were in the field, we often talked about you and our happy days at Benning. General Merrill knows you well and admires you greatly. I believe that "Daddy" Weems is probably the best-known officer in the United States Army for almost everywhere I go, when Benning is mentioned, your name pops into the picture and the fact that I had served on your staff is a recommendation which I value greatly.

I don't know whether you know just what the opportunity was you were making available to me last October when you gave me the chance to take this assignment. It has been invaluable experience no matter what I do in the rest of my military life and I have made friends among people whom I would never have had the opportunity to know or understand except for you.

I am recuperating at the present time from a case of dysentery and am enjoying an excellent climate and good food. However, if the chance were ever offered me to serve with you again, sir, I can assure you that I wouldn't hesitate an instant. I have often wondered whether you remained at the Infantry School or whether you had got a division. I am sure that it would take a unit larger than a division to hold the officers that had served with you in the past and who wanted to serve with you again.

Please give my best regards to Colonel Kron and my other friends at Benning.

Sincerely yours,

(s) John M. Jones

P.S. Col. Hunter was wounded at Myitkyina Burma but never left his command -- got hit in the neck by a sniper.

NOTES

By Major JOHN M. JONES, Infantry


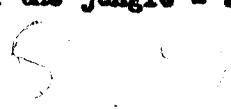
1. Train plenty of messengers - not just any man, but a soldier with guts that will take a message over dangerous country at night and get it through.
All messengers should be taught to ride a horse. (If available, Basic Cavalry)
2. SCR 536 is good on the drop field, on marches and in bivouac area, but very little use in combat due to range limitation. SCR 300 is tops for combat - each platoon could use one. Their range of 3 miles in the jungle covers most tactical situations. SCR 284 is splendid for units more than 3 miles apart but not more than 15.
3. In the jungles the tommy gun is tops - Junior Officers should carry them - you need something with stopping power and a fast rate of fire - your ranges usually are less than 40 yards - sometimes 10.
4. An extra canteen cover for carrying 2 or 3 grenades is good. Some heavy weapons men should carry incendiary grenades to destroy mortars if you have to abandon them quickly; flame thrower teams should carry an incendiary grenade in case their flame thrower doesn't ignite - throw the incendiary grenade and shoot the oil on it.
5. For perimeter defense plenty of grenades are essential - especially at night.
6. Every man should have some guide or pamphlet to get information from natives - an interpreter for each platoon should be provided if the natives actually go with a Combat Team on an independent operation.
7. Some simple map should be provided for every soldier. Not only for possible use in case he becomes lost but to orient himself on the situation.
8. In the jungle a kukri or machete is about 50% as useful as the dah. *a B. M.*
9. No one takes vitamin tablets in the jungle - why not use that space in the jungle 1st aid kit for a small can of foot powder.
10. "K" ration should be supplemented with "C" ration or the meat component as often as once a week. One pound of rice per man per week would also help - however they get tired of it if they get it too often.

Unclassified IAW 380-5
14 May 09 90

- ✓11. A drop of one can of fruit juice and $\frac{1}{2}$ pound coffee per man per week would help - he would drink the fruit juice on the spot and carry the coffee.
- X ✓12. 10 in 1 rations whenever the unit is stopped for more than a day helps morale.
- X ✓13. The short wrap type leggings are very good for jungle wear. They keep out leeches and are easy to put on and take off. Most men cut G.I. Leggings off $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way up. The regular legging is too high on the leg for most men.
- X 14. A spoon and the bottom of your mess gear is enough where you have to carry your own pack and rations for long periods.
- X ✓15. A drop of toilet paper in each ration would be a good thing. Irritation almost always develops from using leaves.
- X 16. Men should be trained to keep their heads up when they hit the ground - what they see sometimes would make them move before they get shot and would also enable them to see the enemy first, sometimes.
- X 17. Be sure your code clerks and radio operators are well trained - it is better to have a good operator who can't shoot than a good shot who is only a fair operator.
- X 18. Some of the most valuable men in our outfit were the Nisei Japanese interpreters not with battalion and regimental headquarters but with a platoon in contact on the perimeter. The Japs talk loudly sometimes before they attack - On several occasions the Japanese interpreters told us exactly what the Japs were shouting and enabled us to get set for an attack from a certain direction. Once an interpreter caused the Japs to attack into a trap by shouting orders to them.
- X 19. Always have somebody else read your messages to check the meaning before sending them out. Sometimes important things are left out even though you are thinking about them.

20. It is easy to teach a man to look for different type shoe prints on a trail. On two occasions a suspicious looking shoe print caused us to surprise the Japs whereas if we hadn't noticed it they probably would have surprised us.
21. Marching at night in the jungle is very difficult for men over good trails - over fair or poor trails it is almost useless and is practically impossible for animals.
22. When ordered to get animals off a trail quickly - take them off in pairs - they go better and don't bray so much.
23. If a man is busy under fire he doesn't get so scared or nervous - what is bad however is to sit without anything to do but listen to them whistle over.
24. 81 mm mortars are very accurate and can be fired safely 50 to 100 yards in front of our front line. H.M. Heavy is good for close-in work.
25. The Jap is no suicide soldier - He will run and retreat if surrounded and once you get him on the run he is not nearly so effective.
26. The best defense against snipers is to move fast - When you hit the ground crawl a little further and keep your head up to see what's going on.
27. If your arches are O.K. you will like jungle boots as they are much lighter than G.I. shoes.
28. Always carry an extra piece of silk rope (get from parachutes after an airdrop) You always have to tie something on to your pack - and silk rope will untie easily.
29. A G.I. shovel is worth its weight in gold when you start digging. Two Colonels dug with helmets and knives while I dug with my shovel once when the shells were coming over. That is something I guarded with my life. Also if a man has no shovel the chances are he won't bury his body waste.
30. Many men throw away helmets before they have been under shell fire - after that they never throw them away. Although they won't stop a bullet they frequently change its course and they will stop fragments. No one ever uses the chin strap under his chin - hook it on the back of the helmet out of your way but don't cut it off - you'll need it when you want to carry water in your helmet.

- X 31. Insist that men don't dig foxholes near trees - either dig away from them or cut them down - tree burst are responsible for many unnecessary casualties.
- X 32. Watch your men carefully to see that they halazone their water - if they fail to one time and get away with it, then first thing you know they never halazone water and brag about it till somebody comes down with dysentery. Educate them to the value of atabrine and halazone - mans good friends in the jungle.
- X 33. The "K" ration tastes good as long as you are doing hard physical work - after that it is nauseating.
- X 34. Flexible celophane bags to carry your maps in are invaluable. The top of your helmet is a good spot for mosquito head net(seldom used) and the map you are using.
35. Practically everybody used a horseshoe type pack - rations in the pack and the blanket and panocho in the horseshoe.
- X 36. It pays big dividends to have men and officers know as much about the situation as possible - an officers meeting in the field should be arranged so that they can get the news to their officers and men that day - before it becomes history.
- X 37. The few officers who took enough interest in their men to write a short letter to a mans family found that it produced amazing results in morale. A letter from his platoon leader when a man is promoted or does a good job has a good effect on the whole platoon - the word gets around.
- X 38. See that someone in every platoon carries an oil stone when you go into the field. They are worth their weight in gold to a man with a dull knife.
- X 39. We drove a mule in front of us over a trail we thought might be booby trapped. It was, and the mule was killed.
40. Expect knee mortar fire within 3 minutes from the time you hit Japs. It is amazing how quick and how accurate they are with the knee mortar.
41. An S.O.P. for various situations is a good thing even though you don't use it - Somehow it gives both men and officers confidence.

- x 42. If you do march at night a compass tied on the back of a mans pack helps keep the column together - especially on a dark night. The phosphorescent lines stand out clearly.
- x 43. If you are in or near enemy territory don't walk around at night even to relieve yourself. There is always a trigger happy guy who shoots first even though you are miles from the enemy.
- x 44. The Japs taught us a good trail block - It is in the shape of an "S" with the trail running across the middle - automatic weapons on the humps and ends if available. Riflemen are scattered in between. 
- x 45. Field glasses were almost never used by us in the jungle - and then only to look for snipers in trees. 
46. One of our patrols took the same route that a previous patrol had used and ~~were~~ ambushed. The Japs are cagey - they will follow a patrol sometimes for long distances then set an ambush in case it comes out again.
- x 47. Close order drill and a full field inspection one day after coming off the front lines snapped one of our battalions back into shape quick. They had lost Non-Coms and Officers and had been fighting steadily for two weeks. Their discipline and morale was low and they were tired and very sluggish - They were mainly veterans of Guadalcanal and New Guinea and considered themselves above this sort/^{of thing}-(close order drill)- although they objected strenuously they did it with snap - and the outfit benefitted greatly. It gave the new platoon leaders, platoon sergeants and squad leaders a chance to see what their men looked like and to give them a few orders. I believe practically every man in the organisation recognized the excellent results obtained.
- x 48. The new plastic oil filled wrist compass is excellent - preferable to the new oil filled lensatic compass because it appears to be more waterproof and is easier to read.
49. The Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon should have one more animal to carry a 60 mm mortar and ammunition. At the present time it has no machine guns or mortars.

- X ✓ 50. G.I. wrist watches don't stand up in the jungle. We need a good waterproof wrist watch with an easily read face.

Recognition of Jap Shoe Print Prevented AmbushNorth Burma-25 February 1944

At 1115 hours the Orange Combat Team Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon under the command of Lt. Logan E. Weston was moving over a trail from Ndaung Ga to Hsang Ga. The lead scout, Corporal Werner Kats, a veteran of Guadalcanal, saw some tracks on the trail that resembled Jap footprints by the pattern of the sole. Kats alerted the patrol with a hand signal and Lt. Weston came up to look over the tracks. Kats, closely followed by Lt. Weston, advanced cautiously and when Kats turned a bend in the trail, he saw an unarmed Jap standing about thirty yards up the trail. The Jap smiled and motioned him forward. As his arm came down two light machine guns opened on Kats from each side of the trail. Kats was crouching low and when the shots were fired, he hit the ground firing at the Jap as he fell. A fire fight developed and Lt. Weston's platoon withdrew leaving one dead Jap which Kats had killed on the trail. Kats had been wounded by a bullet that grazed his nose and left cheek. Sergeant Gomes, the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon medical aid man, quickly fixed Kats up and the patrol moved back to report their information and to continue their reconnaissance. Cpl. Kats had won the honor of killing the first Jap and was also the first Marauder wounded in combat.

* * * *

At about the same time a patrol from the second battalion Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon under the command of Lt. William C. Grissom was entering the village of Lanam Ga. Private Robert W. Landis of Youngstown, Ohio, was the lead scout. Suddenly an unseen Jap machine gun opened fire from about fifty yards away. Landis was instantly killed. The I & R patrol engaged the Japs and found that a platoon was well dug in on some high ground in the village. As the Japs had several machine guns covering the place where Landis was killed, the I & R patrol was not able to recover his body, so they withdrew, reported their information by runner and threw a block on the trail north of Lanam Ga to protect the columns which would be passing that way.

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Defense of an Airdrop Field Behind the Japanese Lines.North Burma-27 February 1944

The defense for the drop fields was worked out by Colonel Hunter and

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consisted of the following plan:

1. The I & R platoon blocks each end of the trail at least one thousand yards from the field.
2. One Rifle Platoon defends from 0° to 180°.
One Rifle Platoon defends from 180° to 360°.
3. Machine Gun sections box the field with fire lanes out.
4. Mortars prepare barrages in front of the platoons blocking the trail, on approaches to field and on field itself.
5. The defense position will be dug in and mules kept in ditches or covered positions.
6. One air liaison officer will report to Lt. Fleming at Regimental Headquarters one hour before the scheduled air drop for aircraft identification.
7. The Regimental Command Post will be due north from the center of the field until further notice.

CLEARING THE DROPPING FIELD

1. One Rifle Company will be used for labor on the dropping field.
2. After the drop, men rush on field, cut chute cords, remove chutes and hide them in woods so they can't be seen from the air.
3. Bundles marked for Regiment or not marked at all will be placed at the Regiment stake on the field. Supply officers work in their own area making distribution of bundles dropped in their area.
4. Mules will drop loads in their bivouac area. Mules will be returned to drop field with three men per mule - one to hold mule - two to load. Take mule on field quickly, load it and get off.
5. Each Combat Team will have one SCR 536 with an operator at their stake.

* * * *

When Fired On, Hit the Ground - But Keep Your Eyes Open

North Burma-3 March 1944

At dawn all battalions were on the move towards Wabantun. The third battalion's lead scouts were cautiously moving up the trail near Waga Ga when a Jap patrol opened fire on them from the opposite side of a small open field. The lead scout fell to the ground and the Japs, thinking he was killed, rushed forward. The scout raised up and fired a full magazine from his tommy gun killing two Japs and putting five others to flight, - and the third battalion moved on.

check diary again

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For an Alert in the Jungle -
Save Time by Leading Mules to Cover in Pairs

North Burma-3 March 1944

A Missouri mule, or any mule for that matter, doesn't like to be dragged off the trail suddenly where he can't see the other mules - and when a

male with three hundred pounds on his back says no - well, it's plenty tough to change his mind. Finally the system of taking the animals off in pairs solved the problem and the mules took cover satisfactorily.

* * * *

Sometimes Japs Play Dead

North Burma-4 March 1944

Lt. Ted Hughes, Commanding Officer of I Company, had his company deployed on the east side of the dropping field and airstrip at La Gang Ga. Some of his automatic weapons covered a slightly used trail from the north leading to the river which ran near the drop field. About 0830 hours a platoon of about twenty to thirty Japs and one Mambu, or light machine gun, attacked the field from the north along the trail Lt. Hughes was covering. Lt. Hughes' guns opened up and the Japs returned the fire using their knee mortar. After the first burst of fire, Private Thibadeaux, a machine gunner, was wounded in the arm. Sergeant Jack Mayer, a machine gun squad leader, was wounded in both arms, one leg and his back by a hand grenade but both men stuck to their guns, firing until their assistant gunners would get to them. Sergeant Mayer's assistant gunner was Pfc. Adam J. Land of Baltimore. He was wounded in both legs by a grenade a minute after taking over the gun but he stuck to his gun for twenty minutes until the attackers were driven off. One Jap raised right up in front of him to throw a grenade. Lang riddled him with a long burst from his gun. Lt. Hughes got on an SCR 536 and directed mortar fire on the Japs for five minutes before they ran, leaving ten dead on the field.

Lt. Hughes and a small patrol went forward to search the Jap dead and in one small area, they counted five bodies. When they returned to that spot a few minutes later, they found only four bodies. As three separate men counted the bodies, it appeared that one Jap playing dead got away. The word got around the perimeter and I doubt if that will happen again.

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Patrolling on Horseback

North Burma-5 March 1944

The first battalion sent out patrols in all directions during the day. One patrol consisted of Lt. William C. Evans, the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon leader of Red Combat Team, and Sergeant Hawk, one of the best scouts in the entire unit, and one other man. They were mounted on horses, riding up a

shallow river about four hundred yards northwest of Wesu Ga when they were suddenly surprised by rifle fire from a distance of twenty feet. Both Lt. Evans and Sergeant Hawk rolled from the saddle into the water crawling on the bottom while the Japs peppered the place where they went under. Lt. Evans' horse was killed and he was shot in the hand. Sergeant Hawk got a crease across his cheek and a bad bruise on his back where a bullet hit the saddle. The Japs fired about forty shots into the water. Finally both Lt. Evans and Sergeant Hawk came up. The other man was behind them and had galloped off into the jungle as the Japs continued to fire. All three got back safely a half hour later. A heavy patrol was sent to the spot to take care of the Japs. They had however disappeared into the jungle and could not be found. It was believed that they were a party making their way back from the north trying to reach their forces at Walumbum.

* * * *

A Mule Saves a Man's Life

North Burma-5 March 1944

At 2400 hours we withdrew toward Wesu Ga over the same trail we had cut two days before. Although we didn't think the enemy knew about the trail, we decided to drive a mule ahead of us just in case the Jap had planted a few booby traps. We hadn't gone more than half a mile when the mule exploded a heavy land mine killing him instantly.

* * * *

A Patrol Experience

North Burma-5 March 1944

Lt. Wilson, White Combat Team Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon leader, was leading two of his sections on a reconnaissance and combat patrol two and one half miles north of Shinak Ga at about 1000 hours when the scout in the center of his patrol saw something resembling a horse's tail move near a small stream parallel to the trail. Lt. Wilson quickly crept up to the river bank. When he got about fifteen feet from the river bank two Jap soldiers opened fire with rifles and threw hand grenades. One grenade landed within five feet of Lt. Wilson and blew his helmet off and several fragments hit his pack but did not injure him. A section leader opened up on the two riflemen, killing one. Lt. Wilson heard a noise on his left and saw one Jap trying to get away on a horse. He shot him with his carbine then shot the horse. By this time, his patrol had closed in and was spraying the bushes. The Japs fled leaving two dead including a Jap Major, and blood on the bushes indicated that some of those who escaped were

wounded. Lt. Wilson had a critique on the spot. He showed his tommy gunners that they could have gotten the other two horses if they had moved faster.

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Withdrawal Across a River Under Attack

North Burma-5 March 1944

Six hundred yards north of Walawbum, Lt. Weston's Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon began taking a heavy pounding from Jap mortars just after daylight. At 0730 hours he was attacked from the north - at 1030 from the north-east - a little later from the northwest. The Japanese Wasei interpreter with Lt. Weston heard the Jap orders for attack at different points and his warnings enabled Lt. Weston to shift automatic weapons to the point of attack. The Jap knee mortar fire was close and very accurate. At 1100 hours, Lt. Weston was surrounded on three sides by superior forces of Japs and almost out of ammunition. He calmly asked his Combat Team Commander to let him direct mortar fire on the Japs. This was quickly arranged - the mortars firing from La Lang on one thousand yards away. Some casualties were inflicted on the Japs for screams could be heard after an E.E. light burst in a tree near the river bank. Major Lew saw that his Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon was getting into a Jap trap so he decided to get it out as quickly as possible. He told Lt. Weston to withdraw under the cover of a squad on the river bank and a smoke barrage on the Jap positions overlooking the river. Weston's men took off their undershirts and put them on the river bank to mark the flanks of the place they were going to cross so the squad on the opposite bank could cover them. Then he called for smoke and started withdrawing a few of his men to the river bank, letting them infiltrate across under the protective fire of the Browning Automatic Rifles on the opposite bank.

The Japs had anticipated this withdrawal and had placed two Namby near the bank. The BARs opened on them however and the Namby didn't fire more than ten shots at the men withdrawing. A few men from each side of the perimeter withdrew at a time. BAR and tommy gun men were last. The Japs were throwing mortar fire on the perimeter all the time. The first four men to cross carried litters made of jackets stretched on bamboo poles on which they carried two badly wounded comrades. When they reached the opposite bank, the Medics took the wounded and dressed their wounds even though bullets were flying about and mortar shells were bursting in the water ten to twenty yards away.

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Lt. Weston was the last man to cross the river followed closely by the Japs. The withdrawal had been a success - perfectly coordinated plan - communications by 500 radio had been maintained all the time.

One of Lt. Weston's snipers, Chief Janis, a full-blooded American Indian, had picked off five Japs who had crept to the river bank and were firing at close range at the infiltrating members of Weston's Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon.

* * * *

Jap Attack at Walaumbun

North Burma-6 March 1944

The Japs opened fire on the Orange Combat Team just after dawn. By 1015 hours they were throwing medium artillery into the perimeter and a constant stream of mortar fire. Orange was well dug in with logs over their foxholes and trees overhead had been chopped down. The animals however were not so fortunate and the shelling took a toll of eight killed and several badly wounded by 1200. Orange answered the fire with a heavy barrage of mortar fire on the Jap concentration area behind the village and took a good toll of casualties from among the Japs still unloading from trucks - one 81 mm. H.E. light was seen to burst in the bed of a truckload of Japs throwing bodies in all directions.

Sergeant Andrew Pung of Malden, Mass., climbed thirty feet up into a tree in his platoon perimeter with a 536 radio and directed mortar fire and told his platoon leader exactly what the Japs were doing enabling him to warn the platoon before an attack. Finally a tree burst stunned him and he dropped his radio. His canteen was blown off his belt but he got down safely though he was deafened for a few days. Sergeant Carl Hammond of Cleveland, Ohio, hit a land mine just outside the Orange perimeter. It blew him six feet in the air. He had powder burns and couldn't hear for an hour but otherwise was o.k. He said, "I was really scared. It made a crater as big as a foxhole".

At 1430 hours the Japs started shelling the airstrip at La Lang Ga and the shells were passing directly over General Merrill's Command Post. This artillery appeared to be either 105 or 150 mm. The Japs shot two at a time indicating they were using two guns. The shelling was heavy for fifteen minutes. Then we would get a ten minute break. Some men didn't have foxholes and between rounds, the dirt flew as they dug with helmets, bayonets and mess gear. Few men had shovels - any available would have sold for \$100.00 each at least.

The first battalion which had moved directly behind the Regimental Command Post at La Gang Ga was taking the brunt of the shelling and were losing quite a few animals and some men. Liaison planes kept landing to pick up the wounded. They earned the eternal admiration of every man in the 5307th that day. Crews of men rushed on the airstrip filling shell craters after each barrage then rushed off before the next barrage came over. In the middle of the shelling about 1800 hours a Pfc. from the first battalion was digging a foxhole near the river bank at La Gang Ga - about fifty yards from General Merrill's Command Post. As he turned around to dig in the opposite direction, he saw two Japs peering through some bushes about six feet away. They threw a hand grenade - he ran, then rolled on the ground. The grenade rolled over the river bank and exploded. He got up and again escaped. The grenade explosion brought other men in the area to the scene. Pvt. Frank Weber, of the Pioneer and Demolition Platoon of the second battalion, Pvt. Gerald Perma, a Brooklyn M.P. who scorns a helmet, wearing only a wool cap through rain or shine, and Private George Walulen, a muleskinner, attacked the two Japs with M-1 and tommy guns and riddled them before they had a chance to get their rifles up. The excitement caused by the Japs near the Command Post during the shelling was electric. Other men started firing at supposed snipers. However, no other Japanese bodies were found in the area.

At 1800 hours General Merrill had to go through the artillery impact area to see Colonel Mottswell C. Brown who had arrived at Wesu Ga with some of his tanks operated by Chinese crews. It took an hour to go a half mile, but the General and his party finally made it. A conference was held at the Chinese Battalion Commander's Command Post, who had just arrived to occupy Walawbum when and if we took it. Late intelligence information indicated that the Japs were falling back rapidly from Maingkwan but were trying to bottle up our force with a regiment to the north and large reinforcements from the south. General Merrill decided that we would pull back to Wesu Ga at 2400 hours. The tanks would continue to operate against the main Japanese forces to the north as they could not cross the river to Walawbum to support our attack. Orders were issued to the third battalion to pull back to the south of Wesu Ga at 2400, and the second battalion was to pull back to the northeast side of Wesu Ga at 2000; the first battalion was to hold the drop field at Wesu Ga and the area to the northwest of the town.

General Merrill and his party moved back to his Command Post at dusk. The shelling continued. He ordered an immediate move to Wosu Ga and the Command Post moved out at 1830 in the midst of scattered artillery fire all over the La Gang Ga area. Our lack of artillery was felt by everyone. We knew that we had to have something to combat the Jap artillery.

At 1800 hours the Jap artillery was located and pin-pointed at six hundred yards at 290° and one mile at 220° from the Orange Combat Team perimeter. Dive bombers were directed on it but after the bombing, the guns opened rapid fire on the Orange perimeter opposite Walawbum and the Jap mortars kept up an ever-increasing rate of fire on the entire perimeter. Orange expected an attack and was all set. Our automatic weapons were silent as were the Japs but mortars on both sides kept up a steady barrage.

At 1715 hours a reinforced company followed by another company in line of skirmishers under cover of everything the Japs could throw tried to cross the river. There was much shouting of Banzai! Surrender! Banzai and a lot of Japanese words as officers prodded the men forward and in some cases led them waving swords. Not a shot was fired by the Marauders until the first wave was about forty yards away and had reached the water. Then all hell broke loose from across the river bank - machine guns opened full automatic, Tommy guns, BARs, mortars, everything that would fire was turned on the Japs. The river was suddenly full of bodies and still the Japs charged on. The Marauders in the face of blistering Jap mortar, artillery and machine gun fire kept calm and fired till their gun barrels were red hot. It seemed that the Japs had decided that they must storm our position or die - and that is just what they did. Our men were waving their arms yelling, "Come and get some more of it, you yellow son-of-a-bitches!" "Tojo eats shit" etc.

The two heavy machine guns low on the river bank swept the river with murderous bands of fire. Corporal Earl E. Kinsinger, gunner on Guadalcanal, and Corporal Joseph de Orio were the gunners. They fired five thousand rounds each in the course of the attack. Ammunition began running low and the Japs continued to attack on the flanks. A rush call for ammunition brought five mule loads from Khaki Combat Team on the run, but before it arrived the attack was broken and dead Japs were choking the shallow stream in front of our position. Chief Janis, a sniper, lay close beside one of the machine guns and picked off eight Japs who almost got within grenade-throwing range of the machine gun positions.

Private John G. Grosse, Jr. told the machine gunners where to fire when the dirt started coming in on them from ricebats aimed at their pill box. Someone said a Jap yelled, "Roosevelt eats shit!". In reply to a Marauder who yelled, "Tojo eats shit!" Then the Marauder yelled back, "Tojo eats corned beef. The Jap replied, "Eleanor eats powdered eggs!"

The spirit of the men during the attack was awe-inspiring. They didn't notice the shells whizzing by or the mortars exploding in the perimeter. Some of them stood up and shook their fists, imploring the Japs to come on.'

After the attack, artillery shelling started again but finally petered out by 2200 hours. The third battalion quietly evacuated their positions at 2400 hours and withdrew to the Wesu Ga area. A number of the boys who were on Guadalcanal, New Georgia and the fighting in New Guinea said that it was the heaviest attack they had ever seen and that the Japs threw more lead at them than they had ever seen before. In the attack he had seven men wounded but not one man killed. At least four hundred Japs were killed, not counting those killed by mortar fire beyond the river bank.

The Japs had tried to get us to fire our automatic weapons all day but Major Lew knew what they wanted. The Japs did not fire theirs until the main attack late in the afternoon.

Sergeant Louis Oliver of Princeton, Kentucky, is a backwoods marksman and squirrel shooter who shoots empty cartridges out of his platoon sergeant's hand as a stunt. He fired only twenty seven shots with his M-1 but says he is sure he got nine Japs. Another sniper who did a good job is a little fellow by the name of Peter Forty. His friends call him P-40. He has been shot at by his own men because he looks like a Japanese, but he got several, he says, in the big attack. He was shot in the shoe. His sock was torn but his foot was not touched.

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Jap Shoe Prints

North Burma-13 March 1944

Lt. Wilson's Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon advancing several miles ahead of the main column saw fresh Jap shoeprints on the trail and a few minutes later slipped up on a group of Japs sitting around a fire just off the trail about four miles north of Iabauyang. Creeping up as close as possible before opening fire, they completely surprised the Japs killing four of them

Burmese. The surviving Japs ran, abandoning everything and crossed the Tinkrung River.

* * * *

Japanese Trail Block

North Burma-14 March 1944.

The Red Combat Team led out towards Tabauyang and fought eight engagements in one and a half miles. The Japs had two heavy machine guns, two light machine guns and several knee mortars. They used the ground well and their tactics were astutely adapted to the ground they were fighting over. The country was rough and it would be easy to get lost within ten yards of the trail. The Japs probably knew we had a superior force, but, by pinning our lead squad down, then throwing in knee mortar shells fast before we could support it, they successfully stopped our advance. A few minutes later when our mortars went into action and an enveloping force was cutting behind the Jap flanks and rear, they moved back a few hundred yards and dug in again.

Approximately one company of Japanese was operating against us on the trail and our scouts reported that the Japs had brought up supplies from the Jambu Bun area, a few miles to the west, and that they had evacuated thirty wounded during the night. Lt. Colonel William L. Osborne, Commander of the first battalion, pulled the White Combat Team back to Bench Marker 918 for the night and left the Red Combat Team in contact with the Japs. As these delays would vitally affect the schedule of his attack near Shadusup, he decided to cut a trail around the Japs the next day even though the going would be extremely tough.

* * * *

Japs Harass an Air Drop Field

North Burma-17 March 1944

Our patrols had located some Japs in the area near where the battalion was bivouaced. Colonel Osborne, smelling a rat, moved the battalion to another location. At 0730 hours the drop planes came over and as they started dropping, the Japs opened up with mortar fire on the bivouac area from which Colonel Osborne had just moved the battalion. The Japs withdrew before we could get to them. No trail could be found on which they could have escaped, so apparently only a few had cut their way through and then had withdrawn by the same route.

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Select Your Air Drop Field With Care

North Burma-17 March 1944

The air drop was only partially successful due to nearby hills and the planes had to stay up pretty high. Consequently quite a lot of the grain, which was free dropped, went over the hillside and was lost. A number of parachute loads also went over the side of the hill but were searched out and found.

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If You Have Native Guides, Use Them

North Burma-20 March 1944

The first battalion marched over difficult trails to Nprawa where our lead platoon hit a Jap machine gun blocking the trail. We had one man killed and two wounded before the gun and crew were wiped out by mortar fire on their block.

Other Japs in the block apparently withdrew and our platoon moved forward in close pursuit. These were the first casualties that we had suffered that could be traced to language barriers. As we moved out of Jaiwa Ga with Kachins accompanying our lead scouts, the Kachins started muttering some unintelligible lingo - our interpreter was not around and the man tried to feed the Kachins or give them cigarettes when they started jabbering. Actually they were trying to tell us that the Japs had a block somewhere along the trail we were then using but before our interpreter came up, our advance scout ran into the Jap ambush. We were lucky only to lose one man killed. If the Japs had waited a few minutes more they could have had a much bigger target. The men learned a lesson, and from then on whenever a Kachin had something to say we got an interpreter.

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Cut Your Own Trail for Surprise in the Jungle

North Burma-22 March 1944

We left Hpauchye Ga with Lt. Harry B. Coburn's platoon leading. About four miles southwest of Hpauchye Ga our land patrols hit a Jap ambush. We had one man killed and two wounded but not seriously enough to be evacuated. Continued southwest on the trail and hit the same Japs who had withdrawn up the trail and had put in another block. It appeared that the Japs were pulling a delaying action again, so Lt. Coburn cut down a stream bed for about four miles cutting a trail most of the way. The going was very tough but progress was being made.

Lt. Coburn's advance scouts smelled out a Jap block at a stream junction, crept silently up on it and killed seven Japs resting near foxholes while the rest

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of the Japs ran into the jungle. Lt. Coburn took up the Jap position intact and rested his men. While resting in the Jap position, the Japs came back in strength and Lt. Coburn's platoon killed four more of them. A reconnaissance down the trail which led from the stream junction showed the Japs had a block with machine guns and a dug-in perimeter so Lt. Coburn led his platoon down the river around the block and late in the afternoon bivouaced along the river banks. As the Japs seemed to have blocks on all the trails in this area, Colonel Osborne decided to cut his own trail for he considered it extremely important that we have as little contact with the enemy as possible from now on in order to gain the element of surprise at their objective.

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A Reconnaissance in a Jap Camp

North Burma-27 March 1944

Lt. Wilson reported to Major Johnson about 1400 hours that his Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon had reached the Nam Kung River and that the Japs were in that general area in considerable numbers. Many Japs were seen in bathing, and further down the river some were gremading fish. It appeared to Lt. Wilson that there was a Jap camp on the other side of the river between the river and the road. Major Johnson ordered him to break up his unit into two patrols - one to reconnoiter down the Nam Kung River from the stream junction with the Chengun River, and the other patrol to reconnoiter up the river from that junction. Lt. Wilson personally led the patrol which reconnoitered the area north of the stream junction. After a careful investigation along the river bank he decided to cross the fifty yard wide river taking one man with him and attempt to get a better idea as to the size of the Jap camp and the location of their defenses, and also to find out if the river was fordable. Slipping quietly into the water about two hundred yards up the river from the Jap camp, Lt. Wilson with a carbine and Sergeant Perlee Tintary with a tommy gun held their weapons over their heads and waded as rapidly as possible in the swift flowing stream. As they waded up to their necks in the middle of the stream, a signal from the man left on the riverbank brought their attention to an armed ^{patrol} ~~patrol~~ walking towards the bank which they were approaching. Lt. Wilson and Sergeant Tintary strained every muscle trying to reach some bushes on the riverbank before the Jap patrol reached the bank. They succeeded in crawling into the bushes only a minute before the patrol passed.

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then moving on to the water's edge and filling canteens, then departing by the route they came - much to the relief of Lt. Wilson and Sgt. Tintary. Cautiously peering out of the bushes they wormed their way on the ground into the Jap camp, which was spread out in a woods between the river and the road. They estimated that a company at least was bivouacked in the area that they were in and it appeared that there was another camp to the south. Finally crawling to the road they found it undefended and saw Japs casually walking on the opposite side. Working their way back to the river by a different route they observed great stores of food and clothing in baskas and under canvas tents. Reaching the river they waded in and made their way across as another Jap patrol reached the water's edge, but apparently they didn't see them only fifty yards up the river.

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The Fight at Shadusup

North Burma-28 March 1944

At 2400 hours Major Johnson waded the river at the point where he had decided to make the main crossing - a lone Jap sentry about seventy five yards down the river was walking up and down carrying a smudgy lantern. Satisfied that the river could be forded, Major Johnson returned to his Command Post on the east bank. In the meantime Colonel Osborne ordered the Red Combat Team to cover the east bank of the river. The Chinese 113th Regiment remained bivouacked on a hill about a mile northeast of the river in readiness to occupy the positions when the first battalion pulled out.

At 0300 with Lt. Philip S. Weld's platoon leading and Lt. Weld the lead man, the White Combat Team moved out silently, and slowly waded across the river. By some stroke of luck, not a Jap sentry was encountered and the platoons slipped into place before daylight. Radio contact by SCR 300 and SCR 536 was maintained. As dawn began to break and little fires started to pop over the Jap camp, the signal for the attack was given over the radio by Major Johnson. The Marauders swept through the Jap camp. Consternation and confusion do not half way describe the scene. Half dressed Japs without guns ran amuck - some with guns fired wildly - the Marauders with bayonets and grenades killed many. The first Japs seen were at a semi-permanent latrine and they broke and ran, shouting excitedly. They were mowed down by a tommy gunner. Lt. Meredith Caldwell's platoon was the first to reach the main road and they were hardly there before a Jap truck from Kamaing came up the road. Three Japs in the cab started to jump when they saw four tommy

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guns aimed at them but had no chance as a second later, the cab was riddled. The truck proved to be loaded with Jap uniforms and underwear and with a few sacks of rice thrown in. The truck was a Jap copy of the Ford truck, model 1935. The Japs in the bivouac area by this time were in full alarm and were beginning to offer some resistance. The Marauders in the camp proper were stopping to eat the cooked rice and fish which some of the Japs had left cooking on small fires and were already changing into the new Jap underwear. The camp proved to be well-supplied with guns, equipment and food but the Marauders didn't have time to inspect it as they had orders to dig in a perimeter on the main road, to block all supplies from Kamaing to Shadusup and to withstand the inevitable counter-attack, which wasn't long in coming.

By 0700 hours Jap snipers were firing at men digging and at anyone walking on the road. Lt. Weld's platoon at the northern end of the Jap camp was putting in their perimeter and were making an effort to cross the river at the top of the V-bend when they were fired on by Japs. Lt. Weld's platoon pulled back but left two wounded on a sandbar under heavy Jap machine-gun fire. Sgt. Allan H. Oberoy located one of the Jap machine guns across the river, then exposed himself by running up and down the riverbank to draw fire so as to find the best place to cross to get the wounded men out. Bullets were landing six inches behind him as he ran. He then directed mortar fire at the Jap machine gun. A mortar platoon leader saw the plight of the men on the sandbar and spotted the Jap guns - they threw a barrage of H.E. light on the Japs, then some smoke and more H.E. light while Lt. Weld and another man waded to the sandbar and brought back the two wounded. The main Jap telephone line paralleling the road was out by a man throwing a shovel on a rope over the wire, pulling it down and cutting it. Apparently the Marauder's attack had hit very close to the Jap artillery positions for within two hours after the attack, the Japs opened up on the Red Combat Team on the east side of the river. Apparently the artillery was too close to fire on the perimeter dug on the road, but by mid-morning the Jap artillery, 150 mm. and 75 mm. were keeping up a steady barrage - later another battery of artillery opened up at point-blank range on the perimeter. The Japs were turning their attention from the Chinese to the north to the Marauders who were threatening their rear. The Chinese, taking advantage of this, attacked continuously and made good progress towards Shadusup.

By noon the Japs were attacking the perimeter from the north but were

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repulsed with heavy losses. At about 1300 they attacked from the west under terrific artillery support but were cut down by our machine guns by scores - all afternoon attacks by one or two platoons continued always from a different point and all at a great loss to the Japs. During the night the artillery continued to fire both on the Red Combat Team on the east side of the river and the White Combat Team on the main road. Sounds of trucks unloading reinforcements could be heard all night - and the artillery was being moved also. We returned their fire with heavy mortar concentrations on the road where they were unloading troops from trucks on known positions they were defending. Our men in the perimeter were a bit jittery and threw grenades at the slightest noise. The Japs fired machine guns intermittently all night.

29 March 1944

During the pre-dawn hours, according to plan, the Chinese 118th Regiment moved in, platoon by platoon into the perimeter established by the White Combat Team. By 1000 hours, the move was complete and the White Combat Team had moved up the Changun River about a mile to where the Seagraves Hospital Unit was located. The Chinese pack artillery opened up on the Jap positions on the morning of the 29th.

The Japs were relatively quiet.

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"Ding How!"

North Burma-13 March 1944

As we approached Pabun our lead scouts carrying red and blue rags on their caps as an identification sign felt very fortunate that they had them there as the Chinese have a habit of standing silently behind a tree until you get about ten feet away, then yelling "Halt!" or something that sounds like that in Chinese. You look at the tree only to see a barrel pointing in your direction and a finger on the trigger.

A quick "Ding How!" usually will do the trick but it makes you mighty jumpy to pass a few of these fellows and fail to see them until you have passed by, then have them chuckle and call out "Ding How".

* * * *

Elephants Don't Like Mules

North Burma-17 March 1944

The Command Group and second battalion departed at 0730 hours and 0830 for Tate Ga. The third battalion received a large food drop here at 1000 and used

elephants belonging to O.S.S. to help clear the field. The elephants had to be kept clear of the mules as their mutual distrust of each other created a panicky situation if either was driven close to the other - so mules worked at one end of the large field and elephants at the other.

After today we were destined to have elephants near us practically all the time and the funny situations which developed when accidentally they ran head on into each other furnished a great deal of humor for the camp. It wasn't so funny to the Mahout carried on the back of the elephant on the dead run through bamboo groves and thick jungle until the elephant figured he was safe. Nor was it funny to the muleskinners who were towed in the opposite direction and could be heard swearing at a rate never believed possible even for a muleskinner.

After a few almost disastrous experiences, a system was worked out whereby the mules or elephants were led a few yards off the trail separately and faced so one species couldn't see the other pass by.

* * * *

Fight at Inkangahtawng

North Burma-24 March 1944

An hour before dawn Colonel McGee's situation looked like this: his perimeter was dug in north of the town about a quarter mile and about three to four hundred yards east of the main road. His east flank rested on the river covering the crossing.

Shortly after dawn the Japs started moving about. They could be heard to the north, to the south and to the west. Colonel McGee sent two reinforced platoons out to envelop the village but they hit fortified positions to the north and to the south of the village and were rapidly becoming involved in a heavy action. Colonel McGee ordered them back into the main perimeter by radio. Lt. Hensell D. Witton, Platoon leader of F Company on the west flank of the perimeter, was attacked heavily from the road about 0700 hours. The Japs crept through the Kunai grass and seemed to assemble in small groups about fifty yards from our perimeter; then there was much shouting and loud talking and you could hear them charging through the underbrush straight for our perimeter.

We had been mortared heavily for fifteen minutes but now firing slackened as the enemy got closer. All of a sudden you could see one man here, another there, through the brush. Then they burst upon us about twenty yards from our perimeter. Everybody was calm. Then one shot rang out and the whole perimeter opened on them. Corporal James Phillips was on the extreme west flank of the peri-

meter - the closest man to the Japs. He saw three Japs - one heading directly towards him yelling "Bansai!" and waving a sword in one hand and holding epistol in the other. Phillips fired a shot into the Jap at fifteen yards but he kept coming, until his body was almost cut in two. His Head fell on the parapet of Phillips' foxhole. His sword was in two pieces, shot in two by the .45 calibre bullets. Phillips reached for another magazine only to find all of them empty. Carrying a hand grenade with the pin flattened so it would almost fall out, he ran about ten yards to his squad leader's fox hole, grabbed some ammunition and ran back in a few minutes.

There was only scattered rifle fire as he returned to his hole but when he got back, the Jap officer's sword, pistol and pocketbook had disappeared. Another Marauder almost fifteen yards away saw them and risked his life dashing out to pick them up. Such will we do for souvenirs. A few moments later another attack hit the same spot. This time Private Gerald A. Bryant, a Browning Automatic Rifleman, was firing when his gun jammed and failed to eject. Bryant said he was "scared as hell" as the Japs were yelling like a thousand-tongued chorus and were running in every direction. Dropping his automatic rifle he threw three hand grenades as his assistant rifleman, Private Julian Bell, fired with his M-1. Bryant took his gun, ran to the rear and knocked the empty cartridge out with a cleaning rod, slipped in another magazine, tested the gun and ran back to his hole.

The Japs next attacked the Pioneer and Demolition platoon under Sergeant Willy from the North. He was attacked hard and often for almost three hours but repulsed each attack. Lt. Philip Piassia was badly wounded in one attack by bullets in the head and shrapnel in the foot while he was moving back to the battalion Command Post with information he had gathered around the perimeter. He fell during the hottest part of one attack and somebody yelled for the medics.

Lt. Piassia yelled "Stay back! I'll crawl to you". Corporal Harry Fosshine, a medic, ran back and got a stretcher and two men then ran to where Lt. Piassia was lying. Disregarding his own safety, Fosshine dragged him into the perimeter, bandaged his wounds and sent him to the rear on a litter.

At 0830 hours the Japs opened up with another artillery battery at very close range. It sounded like a dual purpose anti-aircraft and anti-tank gun. It was really bad because you heard two explosions almost as one. The Japs by now were throwing a continual artillery and mortar barrage in the perimeter. We answered with mortars but felt the need for artillery support greatly. Colonel McGee called for fighter bombers in a 4-X radio message to General Merrill. Within

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two hours the first planes were overhead and they took a terrible toll on the Japs as they bombed and strafed the enemy positions as directed by our air liaison officers over the air ground radio. They strafed the artillery from 1030 hours until 1530 hours and Colonel McGee took this chance to get all his animals except ammunition trains across the Mogaung River to Tigranmyang for evacuation to Shraw.

The Japs had attacked from north, south and west almost continuously from 0700 hours this morning and only one Jap had got into the perimeter. He stuck his bayonet into a Marauder's foxhole and the Marauder grabbed the end of it as he couldn't get his own gun up fast enough, then jumped out of his hole twisting and turning the rifle with the Jap on the other end. A Browning Automatic Rifleman in the next foxhole tried to shoot the Jap but he couldn't fire without hitting the Marauder who happened to be a big man. With a sudden lurch the Jap dropped the gun and ran toward his perimeter and the BAR man got his chance. He mowed him down before he had taken ten steps.

In the afternoon the Japs slipped as close to the river as they could and attacked from the south. They hit Lt. Robert Shearer's platoon hard under a heavy mortar and machine gun barrage following a heavy artillery barrage. They were repulsed but the sound of trucks unloading indicated they were getting reinforcements. Colonel McGee had orders not to get out off under any circumstances and had received a message from Colonel Hunter that a battalion of Japs appeared to be moving north from Kamaing. By this time his ammunition supply was low and the usefulness of continuing the block was lessened by the slow Chinese advance on Shadusup so he decided to withdraw under fighter cover (to keep down the artillery) at 1630.

This was accomplished successfully and the second battalion pulled through, Khaki holding the bridgehead on the Mogaung River, and marched into Ngahgahtawng where they bivouacked for the night. Before pulling out Colonel McGee sent two platoons ahead to block all trails to the east and booby trapped everything in the perimeter. A count showed that our casualties were two killed and twelve wounded and the Japanese known dead ran to over two hundred. The Japs made sixteen separate charges on our perimeter with a platoon or more of troops each time.

* * * *

Kachin-American Combat Patrols

North Burma-25 March 1944

At 1800 hours a Kachin woman came running into the village in a state of great excitement. Zingtaung Naw, the guerilla leader, talked with her. She

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old him that some soldiers had jumped from the trail and torn her basket off her back as she was walking from the paddy field to the village. Zing sent three of his Kachin guerillas to investigate. They returned fifteen minutes later with the report that about four hundred yards down the trail, they heard voices that might be Chinese or Japanese and saw two gun barrels sticking out of the bushes a few feet from the trail. Zing took a party consisting of ten Kachins, Captain Jones, Lt. Higgins and two M.Ps. to investigate. Before leaving, General Merrill warned us to be sure they were not Chinese before we fired. Zingtawng Haw, the greatest guerilla leader in Burma, the man who is reputed to have killed more Japanese than any other man in India or Burma was leading the patrol. He carried a tommy gun with a drum magazine and his barefooted guerillas carried everything from U.D. guns to muzzle loaders.

Filing out in single file without a sound, the column moved about two hundred yards before it stopped; and then Zing went into action. Quietly he indicated from a diagram drawn on the ground that he wanted three of them to slip around to the rear of the place the Japs or Chinese were supposed to be located. He peeled off another group of three to go around the other side. Then he motioned to the Kachin who saw the guns to lead the way down the trail. We moved slowly and cautiously, every eye alert and every ear cocked for a sound that would tell us something. I heard a slight rustle in the underbrush to the right and swung my gun around to look face to face with a water buffalo. At least five people had that buffalo covered. Crouching close to the ground, peering into each bush, we moved down a draw then up over a little knoll. On the other side of this knoll, our lead scout came back to tell Zing the guns were just over the crest of the knoll ahead of us and that the Chinese or Japanese were still there.

We crept closer and could hear a twig snap and occasionally a voice but it was quite dark by now and it was impossible to identify the voices as Japs or Chinese. Zing decided that in view of the difficulty of identifying them in the dark and the fact that we couldn't get closer to them without getting in their field of fire, that he would leave four men to watch them. We were to come back at dawn - surround them and have our Jap interpreter with us to find out if they were Japanese. As we returned to Nhpum Ga we left most of the Kachins to block the trail between the unknown enemy and our Command Post at Nhpum Ga.

It was dark when we reached Nhpum Ga at 2000 hours. We found that another woman and her small child were working in that same paddy field where the first woman

had been, and that they

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had not returned. We spent a tense night and just before dawn the next morning, the same patrol moved out in the same formation to surround the unknown people and deal with them according to plan. The tactical plan was the same. Finally we got to the place we had stopped the night before and crept slowly forward. At the crest of the knoll where the guns could be seen the night before, there was nothing to be seen. Not a sound was heard. Zing started one of his guerillas down the trail to attract attention, but not a sound was forthcoming. The man walked into the position occupied the night before and signalled us forward. Our party closed from four sides on an empty trap.

They had pulled out an hour before we got there. I thought Zing was going to kill the scouts he had left to watch them when they told him the Japs, as they proved to be, had milled about and got away before they could call him. There were two machine gun emplacements and Japanese cigarette packages scattered about. Several .25 caliber rounds, scraps of cooked yams and about five bivouac areas where at least ten men each slept during the night marked the place.

Jap shoe prints could be found on the soft muddy trail leading towards the river so we continued in that direction for two miles to no avail. At the paddy field we found the woman's jacket and a garment belonging to the child which the woman's husband identified. A basha at the paddy field was torn up and the floors raised. Apparently the Japs were hungry and were searching for food. They were traced to the river where they turned south.

As we had no force available at Nhpum Ga to follow them, we returned to Nhpum Ga and reported to General Merrill. He notified Orange Combat Team to be on the lookout for them.

General Merrill's Command Post was lucky that we didn't hit those Japs for there was at least one platoon and Kachin reports later proved a company was in that area. We had about fifteen Kachins and eighteen Marauders at Nhpum at that time and no machine guns or mortars. The Japs apparently didn't know we were anywhere near them. The woman and child were never heard from again but were believed to have been taken for guides by the Japanese or possibly killed.

* * * *

Smith and Weston Patrol Action

North Burma-27 March 1944

Lt. Logan E. Weston, Orange Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon leader and Lt. Warren R. Smith, Leader of the fourth platoon of L Company, led their units

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in a patrol action best described in their own brief report to Colonel Hunter at Auehe on 27 March:

On the 24th of March at 1100 hours Lt. Weston's Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon proceeding from Manpin to Packum to install road blocks on all trails south of Packum, to be in place by 1200 hours.

1145 hours Lt. Smith's rifle platoon proceeding from Manpin to Warong to establish road blocks on the Warong-Tatbum trail.

1300 hours Lt. Weston's platoon took up positions to block trail by ambush of any enemy proceeding north on Kamaing-Packum trail.

1730 hours Lt. Smith's platoon took up positions with Lt. Weston's as he was unable to reach Warong that night.

25th March-1145 hours Lt. Smith's platoon arrived in Warong and established an ambush to block all trails up from Tatbum towards Warong.

1410 hours. Estimate thirty Nips hit Lt. Weston's ambush on the Warong-Packum trail. Twelve Nips killed, one knee mortar knocked out, five of our animals wounded by mortar fire. Lt. Weston, the fighting preacher, had a narrow escape - a knee mortar shell landed four feet from him. It was a d/4.

1430 hours. Lt. Smith received a message from scouts that three large groups of enemy coming up trail from Tatbum towards Warong. Order of march was one hundred followed by two hundred, followed by one hundred and fifty.

26th March 1020 hours. A reinforced platoon of Japs hit Packum trail ambush, were completely surprised. Known dead twenty eight, one knee mortar knocked out, one mule loaded with pack artillery killed. A dog with lead scouts of Japs pointed to one of our positions. (MG)

1025. Approximately one hundred Japs were completely surprised on the Tatbum ambush, known killed eighteen, one knee mortar knocked out.

1030 hours. On Tatbum trail Nips withdrew to small valley. We laid a mortar barrage on them. Losses unknown.

1115 hours. Main body of Japs started an envelopment of our flanks on both trails by passing our ambushes.

1130 hours. Both of our ambushes withdrawn up trail towards Auehe. During withdrawal, Japs hit our right flank. Browning Automatic Rifles went into action covering withdrawal.

1215 hours. Arrived at Auehe, set up perimeter.

27th March 0930 hours. Our battalion arrived at Auehe relieving me. Awaiting further orders.

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poor quality due to
the poor quality of
the **original**.

Shelled on the TrailNorth Burma-28 March 1944

At 0600 hours Khaki Combat Team which was strung out along the trail to Nhpum Ga one mile north of Aushu pulled out followed closely by the Blue Combat Team of the second battalion. At 0630 hours the second battalion perimeter at Aushu still had had no contact with the Japs and the spirits of the men were lifting as they prepared to move towards Nhpum Ga. Battalion Headquarters followed by the Green Combat Team was slowly filing up the trail out of Aushu when two loud explosions were heard and a moment later, a loud whistle as every man hit the ground.

The Jap artillery had opened on them from the vicinity of Warong. The first two rounds were about two hundred yards to the right of the trail but right on the north edge of the village. A moment later two more came whistling over a little closer, This time the column got up and started moving faster.

Colonel McGee ordered the Pioneer and Demolition platoon and a machine gun platoon to cover the withdrawal and he radioed on his SO⁸ 309 to the Blue Combat Team commander to keep his men and animals moving rapidly. Just as the tail of the Green Combat Team column cleared the outskirts of Aushu, a shell burst close by wounding one man and several animals.

The Japs had not got their barrage on the trail - and then all hell broke loose. They threw a steady stream of shells into the area. One shell made a direct hit on a heavily loaded infantryman and he was blown to bits. Another shell hit a tree and the shrapnel hit several men. Fortunately none were injured seriously. These men were physically tired. They had marched seventy miles in three days, made one hundred and eight river crossings, fought off sixteen separate Jap charges and had been soaking wet all the time.

Now they were caught in a place no commander ever wants to be caught in - an artillery shelling during a withdrawal and the Japs apparently were getting observation to adjust fire on the trail although our rear guard had not seen a Jap so far.

Colonel McGee radioed the Khaki Combat Team to move as rapidly as possible so that his Green Combat Team could get over a little crest that would give them some cover. The trail from Aushu to Nhpum Ga is two and one half miles of hard climbing. The trail was slick as glass and ankle deep in mud. Animals slipped and fell, had to be unloaded to get them on their feet, then reloaded. It takes a brave man to do that during a shelling but it was done several times.

Somewhat ahead the word was passed "Move faster"; then a little later

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again "Move faster". Men were practically running up hill - falling to the ground only when a shell burst close to them. The word passed up the line - Medics and riding horses to the rear. Some men became excited at that. Then came a call for a certain rifle platoon near the middle of Green Combat Team to fall to the rear. The more panicky interpreted that to mean the Japs were attacking. They didn't stop to think that they had heard no rifle nor machine gun fire, so they moved faster-becoming more exhausted and more excited.

The shelling increased in intensity and was amazingly accurate. Wounded men screamed out from the side of the trail for help - for it was easy to pass by and not see a man ten feet from the trail. Brave deeds became the order of the day - one medic heard there might have been a wounded man left by a tree just out of Auehs - he walked back almost one half mile leading a horse, calling out and searching for the fellow.

He found him dead beside the trail.

But on his way back he found another man limping along with half the calf of his leg missing and a hunk out of his arm. Calmly binding his wounds, he put the wounded man on the horse and led him out. The rear guard followed the column at 200 to 500 yards and still couldn't find any Japs but the shelling searched right up the trail.

* * * *

Digging in Under Fire

North Burma-28 March 1944

When Colonel McGee reached Npum Ga, General Merrill ordered him to hold Npum with his battalion while the third battalion built and held the air strip at Hsamshingyang, two and one half miles further north. Regimental Headquarters would be at Hsamshingyan where all wounded were to be evacuated.

As they talked, Major Bernard Rogoff, second battalion surgeon, quickly set up an aid station in front of a basha near the center of Npum Ga. Already four or five wounded lay on improvised litters where medical aid men examined their wounds and gave them morphine. Major Rogoff, one of the coolest men under fire I ever saw, calmly started on the most serious cases and an orderly line of patients was soon getting plasma and being moved to a more quiet place on the edge of the village awaiting evacuation. A number of psychoneurosis cases were coming in now. One man, a big burly fellow with a Tommy gun, was shaking violently all over, tears streaming down his face. He cried, "Major, I'm not afraid, damn

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it. I tell you, I'm not afraid - I just can't stop shaking."

Others in worse shape jumped and screamed each time a shell went off and the shells were getting closer all the time. The second battalion column came up the hill into Nhpum Ga on the run. Some of the men were too exhausted to speak; others were carrying wounded or holding them on horses. One man passed out as he reached the aid station. With all the confusion and terror of a shelling that you are unable to combat, the vast majority of the men, despite everything, were plodding along doing their jobs. It was those men who quickly whipped the top of the hill at Nhpum into a veritable fortress that was destined to withhold two weeks of all the Japs could dish out.

Colonel McGee called his combat team commanders together. They made a quick reconnaissance of the hill and decided the rough boundaries for the perimeter. Then Colonel McGee sent word to his rear guard at Kauri to hold there until forced to withdraw and then to booby trap the trail. They replied they had already used up all their prepared booby traps between Auehe and Kauri but were improvising.

The village of Nhpum Ga sits atop a mountain but is also surrounded by knife-like mountains on the east and southeast. To the north the ridge continues up and down for one half mile, then there is a gradual descent to Hsamsingyang to the south. It is down hill 300 yards, then up hill 300 yards to Kauri to the south, but there is a high hill near Kauri, to the east there is a sharp decline cut by numerous ridges leading to the river about one mile away.

The perimeter had to be in about a figure eight to hold the high ground and to hold the water hole at the bottom of a little hill, the other side of which it would be doubtful if we could hold. The division of the perimeter roughly developed into Blue Combat Team taking from 90° to 220° and Green Combat Team taking the rest. (See diagram of Company and Platoon positions). Colonel McGee quickly saw that his difficulty was going to be to hold with one battalion all of the perimeter he had to hold in order to have a strong position and he worked to remedy this for the next few days. The Combat Teams made their own reconnaissance and by 1030 hours, the entire battalion was digging in their position as the above diagram shows.

In the meantime General Merrill who had been sick for a few days under a doctor's care was practically carried to his Command Post at Hsamsingyang.

The situation looked better. We were evacuating our casualties from our new air strip at Hsamsingyang and the third battalion was setting up a defense

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of the strip expecting an attack or at least a shelling, for we were "within" range of the Jap guns. At 1700 hours General Merrill suddenly became very sick and the doctor advised that he be evacuated to the Twentieth General Hospital for examination. He, however, said he would not go until every wounded man was out and then only for an examination. Colonel Hunter advised General Stilwell of the situation and a radio message came right back "Evacuate General Merrill at earliest possible moment thought safe". The General would not go however as wounded from the second battalion were still waiting for evacuation.

At Kauri the rear guard of the second battalion was still holding at 1830 hours. However about 1845 hours the Japs began shelling Kauri heavily and our patrols were hit by overwhelming numbers of Japanese on all sides and at 1400 hours, the Japs started a general attack on the perimeter of the rear guard which actually was no more than a heavy trail block. The rear guard withdrew under cover of their automatic weapons and pulled into the perimeter at Npum. The Pioneer and Demolition platoon leader reported that he believed the Japs had a reinforced battalion moving north. At 1600 hours the men were still digging in, clearing fire lanes and getting everything set for the expected attack. At 1605 hours the Japs opened with a hard artillery and mortar concentration right in the perimeter and a few moments later, they attacked the first platoon of E Company which held the extreme southern point of the perimeter. They were repulsed with losses. Our mortars opened up now and the observer soon had a barrage on the Jap concentration areas to the south along the trail. The attack was not heavy as compared to later attacks - it consisted mainly of feeling out our perimeter - finding our automatic weapons and hunting for a soft spot. We used rifle and tommy guns mainly - and waited to see what the Jap would do.

All night the Japs kept throwing an occasional mortar or artillery shell in the perimeter - apparently to keep us awake. The men were so physically exhausted however that they took advantage of each lull to catch a little sleep. Most of the men dug two-man foxholes and one man slept standing or sitting up while the other remained on guard.

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Jap Feeding Habits at Npum Ga

North Bussan-29 March 1944

At Npum Ga where the second battalion is dug in the Jap artillery opened at daylight and mortar fire opened a few minutes later. At 0600 hours the Jap machine guns opened up and the Japs attacked from the southeast but

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were repulsed with losses. At 1000 hours and 1500 hours they repeated the same procedure except the attacks came from the southwest and due south. The Japs moved very close to our perimeter on the south and west flanks and all day they could be plainly heard moving about and preparing for an attack. However at nightfall they pulled back and started digging. One of our scouts found a note on a dead Jap which read, "Cook rice at 2100 hours at Warong and bring up to forward troops".

Apparently the Japs were feeding much like the Chinese do - that is, their cooks prepare rice for a platoon or company, roll it in balls, wrap it in banana leaves and carry it in baskets slung on a bamboo pole right up to the front line.

* * * *

Kachin Ambush

North Burma-30 March 1944

At Hsamsingyang the air strip was so muddy, only a few planes were able to land. No contact with the Japs was made to the east or to the south towards Nhpun Ga but to the southwest one of our Kachin patrols reported the Japs were active and that Japs were seen one half mile southwest of the air strip. Father Stuart said the Kachin patrols had the Japs really confused with the variety of their ambushes.

The Japs have been ambushed by Kachins many times using panjis or sharpened sticks on the side of the trail to impale them when they run to the flanks to envelop the Kachins. The enemy got wise to the way the Kachins set traps for them to run into when they sprang the ambush. Accordingly a few days ago near Warong when the Kachins ambushed a Jap patrol, the Japs didn't run to the flanks as usual but fell down and hugged the ground along the trail and opened heavy fire on the Kachins. The Kachins were forced to withdraw due to superior fire power. The next day the same ambush was laid further up the trail and the Japs hit it - hit the ground and opened fire.

The Kachins withdrew, firing occasional shots as they filtered up the trail. The Japs thinking the Kachins had completely withdrawn, got up and proceeded down the trail, but when they got a few feet, a Bren gun opened on them from the rear. Now it is the Japs' next move in the battle of ambush.

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60 mm. Mortars for Close-in WorkNorth Burma-1 April 1944

At Nhpum at dawn we were all set for the usual attack but 0700 hours came - and 0800 came and still no attack. However our patrols found that the Jap had dug in on high ground east of the waterhole so we let him have a nice mortaring. At 0900 hours the artillery started again. This time it seemed very close - probably from Kauri, one thousand yards away or possibly from Aushu only two and a half miles away.

Following the barrage the Japs attacked from the east and the northeast and were repulsed. Our 60 mm. mortars were worth their weight in gold now. Our mortarmen lay the 60's right in the front of the Jap perimeter only thirty yards from our perimeter and they hit their holes with a tree burst many a time. The 60 mm. mortar is perfect for close work and a good mortar crew can actually put them down a stove pipe if they have a little ammunition to play with. We used the 60's when the Japs attacked and fired them at range as short as seventy five yards with good results. (How?)

Jap Ambush and Trail BlockNorth Burma-1 April 1944

At the air strip the Orange Combat Team moved up the trail and attacked the Japs along the main trail all day. The Japs withdrew again - but showed more determination to hold ground. Their selection of ground to defend was excellent. It appeared that a Jap officer kept some distance behind the front troops marking emplacements for automatic weapons. The Japs used a clever S-shaped trail block with Nambus on the humps and ends which could fire cross fire usually both up and down the trail. A few riflemen were in foxholes between the Nambus and some were scattered back along the trail. The Japs truly used man and ground to maximum advantage and forced us to be extremely careful about envelopment. In some cases they estimated where we would envelop and got a machine gun there to hit us in the flank.

Nisei Leads the Japs into a TrapNorth Burma-2 April 1944

Sergeant Roy H. Matsumoto, a Nisei Japanese interpreter, proved invaluable to the second battalion during this siege at Nhpum Ga. He and other Nisei inter-

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protectors were placed at strategic points around the perimeter where they could hear the Japanese talking and shouting before an attack, and frequently were able to give us a little warning of what they were going to do.

Sergeant Matsumoto crawled out close to the Jap perimeter every night and sniped at Japs. He listened to them talk and secured information. He usually returned just before dawn. Last night however he returned about 2300 hours and reported to Lt. Edward A. McLogan that the Japs were going to attempt to cut off a part of the perimeter that Lt. McLogan was occupying. Lt. McLogan's perimeter stuck way out on a nose of ground that sloped down hill. It was difficult to defend but so far they had held it mainly because they wanted to deny the defilade it would offer the Japs if we pulled back to the crest of the little ridge.

Sergeant Matsumoto said the Jap plan was to creep up as close as possible to the perimeter before dawn, then rush the little nose, which about twenty men were holding. Lt. McLogan figured that it might be possible to give them a surprise. He decided to pull his men back to the crest of the ridge, concentrate tommy guns and BARs along that side of the rise, booby trap the foxholes they were leaving and let the Japs attack the nose of ground, take it and then be annihilated by his automatic weapons.

At dawn everybody was set. Sergeant Matsumoto was in a two man foxhole overlooking the nose of ground with a tommy gun. Suddenly there were shouts of Banzai! Death to the Americans! Die! Banzai! and a hail of hand grenades hit around the nose of ground as a reinforced platoon swept up the hill. A moment later they were sticking bayonets in foxholes, firing wildly, shouting and grenading everything that looked like a gun emplacement.

Their sudden occupation of the nose started them. They charged up the hill, an officer leading them carrying a sword (which later proved to be a beauty). Lt. McLogan held his fire till they got within fifteen yards of his perimeter. Then tommy guns, Browning automatic rifles, grenades - everything - opened at once. The Japs were falling like flies. Another platoon or part of a platoon was following the first platoon and they started hitting the ground - jumping in our booby trapped foxholes. Then Sergeant Matsumoto shouted in Japanese "Charge! Charge!" and they charged. Thirty minutes later fifty four dead bodies were counted on that slope including two officers.

Sergeant Matsumoto became a legendary character overnight.

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poor quality due to
the poor quality of
the **original**.

Attack on a Jap StrongpointNorth Burma-4 April 1944

Major Lew, the Commander of the Orange Combat Team, had the following plan of attack: At 1530 his Pioneer and Demolition platoon would move down the east side of the mountain to the valley below and have a sham battle among themselves. Carbines, which sound something like an Arisaka, would represent the enemy while tommy guns and M-1s would represent the Marauders. It was hoped that the commotion would draw Jap attention and mortar fire while his main attack moved along the trail.

The front was only one hundred and fifty yards wide. It consisted merely of the top of a long ridge with the Japs on one end and the Marauders on the other. Major Lew's mortars were set up to lay down a close in barrage with 81 mm. heavy ammunition to try to penetrate some of the Jap pillboxes and also because the M.E. light would be hitting too close to our own front line troops. Captain Burch, Commanding Officer of the assault company making the attack, was employing three platoons in a U-shaped formation. The bottom of the U would be his center platoon with the two flank positions echeloned out as close up to the Jap position as possible. Colonel Beach, the Third Battalion Commander, planned to have his air liaison officer direct the planes on the Jap strong points for fifteen minutes of bombing and strafing and then open with the artillery at point blank range. At the same time his mortars were to pulverize the closed in positions. At a signal over the radio, the artillery and mortars would cease firing and Burch's company would rush the Jap positions before they could recover from the shock of the artillery barrage. Then we would do the same thing over again, consolidating after each attack.

At 1600 hours Khaki Combat Team informed Colonel Hunter that they were engaged with the Japs and were temporarily pinned down by mortar and machine gun fire.

At 1530 the ruse fight at the bottom of the valley to our west got under way. It sounded real and five minutes later the Japs started throwing mortar fire in that direction. At 1545 the planes were circling and Lt. Paulson was directing them on to a target not more than one hundred and fifty yards in front of our front line. They made several passes from east to west and at 1555 they strafed and bombed the target. At 1605 our artillery opened up at point blank range and the mortars followed in a moment. What happened next can best be told from the 30 300 radio net that was used to actually direct the attack. The force commanders were:

YUMA - Lt. Colonel Charles E. Beach, CO, third battalion.

LUKE - Lt. Colonel George A. McGee, Jr., CO, second battalion (surrounded in Nhapun Ga, one mile south of third battalion).

LEW - Major Lawrence L. Lew, CO, Orange Combat Team.

BOSTON - Major Edwin J. Briggs, CO, Khaki Combat Team.

BURCH - Captain Clarence O. Burch, CO of company making the assault.
(He was with center platoon).

TOM - Lt. Theodore T. Chanelas, CO of Burch's right flank platoon.

VIC - Lt. Victor Weingartner, CO of Burch's left flank platoon.

"Low from Yuma, Low from Yuma - come in Yuma"

"Low to Yuma-go ahead Yuma"

Low from Yuma-the 'fatboys' (artillery) will open at 1600-your mortars at 1605 and the jump-off your decision-Roger on that"

"1605-Yuma from Low-come in Yuma"

"Yuma to Low-go ahead low"

"Yuma from Low - the 'fatboys' are raising hell with the pillboxes on the right slope of the hill - a direct hit on one - Japs ran from another - have the 'fatboys' hit that machine gun firing two hundred yards to the west of their present target then swing their barrage up the slope of the hill - we are preparing to push off"

"Low from Yuma - Roger Roger"

Low to Burch - come in Burch"

Burch to Low - go ahead Low"

"Low to Burch - shove off boy and good luck"

"Burch to Low - Roger on that - Roger"

"Burch to Tom - come in Tom"

"Tom to Burch - go ahead Burch"

"Burch to Tom - shove off and be sure to cover that little draw on your right with at least one squad"

"Tom to Burch - Roger on that - the Japs are running from that pillbox to my front - our snipers got one sure and lobbed a 60 mm. or two on them - believe we got some more"

"Burch to Vic - come in Vic"

"Vic to Burch - go ahead Burch"

"Burch to Vic - did you hear my message to Tom? - same applied to you - shove off and keep your eyes open for each other"

"Burch from Vic - Roger - I understand you"

"Burch to Lew - come in Lew"

"Lew to Burch - go ahead Burch"

"Burch to Lew - have shoved off - am now moving my Command Post forward with center platoon - no enemy firing yet"

"Lew to Burch - Roger on that - and close in fast"

"Yuma from Boston - come in Yuma"

"Boston from Yuma - go ahead Boston"

"Yuma from Boston - have Luke fire three rounds of 60 mm. two hundred yards due west of perimeter - I am close but can't locate him"

"Boston from Yuma - Roger on that"

"Yuma to Luke - come in Luke"

"Luke to Yuma - I heard Boston and will fire in three minutes - Japs are pressing us from the north - ask the bombers to drop a few and strafe four hundred yards north of Nhpum on that little ridge."

"Luke from Yuma - Roger on that"

(A separate radio net worked the planes and Yuma reached over and told his air liaison officer what he wanted. The air liaison officer gave the planes overhead the target)

"Tom from Burch - come in Tom"

"Burch from Tom - go ahead Burch"

"Tom from Burch - the Japs are rolling hand grenades down on the squad near the trail - can you throw some rifle grenades on them?"

"Burch from Tom - we just threw three hand grenades - I don't believe these Japs are throwing them - I'll tell Bill (squad leader) to watch out - we're almost to the crest of the hill so don't fire on us"

"Tom from Burch - Roger old boy"

"Burch from Lew - come in Burch"

"Lew from Burch - go ahead Lew"

"Burch from Lew - your left flank is too far down the hill - the Japs are moving out so move that flank up fast"

"Lew from Burch - Roger on that"

"Lew to Yuma - come in Yuma"

"Yuma to Lew - go ahead Lew"

Lew to Yuma - how about that mortar ammunition? - we need some 81 badly"

"Lew from Yuma - the supply train is passing my Command Post now - will be with you in a minute"

"Yuma from Lew - Roger on that - Roger-r-r"

"Burch from Tom - come in Burch"

"Tom from Burch - go ahead Tom"

"Burch from Tom - we're over the top of the ridge on our way down - three pill boxes are blown to hell - bloody Jap uniforms all over the place and one Wambu machine gun blown up - looks as if the Japs are in strength on next hill - we're drawing inaccurate small arms fire and a little knee mortar - put some 'fatboys' on that hill but be damn sure it's on the hill"

"Tom from Yuma - Roger on those 'fatboys' - good work fellow - keep going"

"Burch from Lew - are you on the trail yet"

"Lew from Burch - we are one hundred yards past the trail - there are no Japs on the east side of the trail - Japs have moved out of their positions - will be at top of hill in five minutes"

"Yuma to Lew - come in Lew"

"Lew to Yuma - go ahead Yuma"

"Lew from Yuma - have you moved anything up to occupy the ground you have taken"

"Yuma from Lew - I am moving a platoon up now - how about the ground we are leaving"

"Lew from Yuma - O.K. - I'll occupy it with muleskinners"

"Boston from Yuma - come in Boston"

"Yuma from Boston - go ahead Yuma"

"Boston from Yuma - you are coming in 3 x 3 (poor radio reception) - have you contacted Luke yet?"

"Yuma from Boston - we've hit Jap perimeter - they have machine gun covering this area - can't get at them with mortars - am trying rifle grenades now - looks like I may be held up here"

"Boston from Yuma - tell Luke to put pressure on that spot - if necessary try further south"

"Yuma from Boston - Roger on that - it's getting dark down here - we'll start digging in soon"

"Burch from Tom - come in Burch"

"Tom from Burch - go ahead Tom"

"Burch from Tom - I am pinned down by heavy machine gun fire from west side of hill - artillery is hitting too high on hill to do any good - my flame thrower is way round on my right flank trying to knock that gun but doubt if he can get close enough - am going to pull up to a little knoll ahead and dig in as it's almost dark"

"Tom from Burch - good work - we may be able to help you when we get our mortars set up - I see that machine gun - Roger on digging in"

"Burch to Lew - come in Lew"

"Lew to Burch - I heard Tom - over"

"Burch to Lew - I am held up by a position on the next hill - like the positions we just took - believe we'll have to have those 'fatboys' in close again - it's almost dark - I am reorganising and digging in."

"Lew to Burch - fine work - I am coming up with the supply train now"

"Burch to Yuma - have one and one - one killed - one wounded that I knew of"

"Yuma to Burch - send him right back - we'll notify a plane to stand by"

"Yuma from Burch - Lew hit by Jap sniper - suggest you come down at once - our perimeter is set up and we're digging in"

"Burch from Yuma - Roger - am on my way"

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Jap Night Attack

North Burma-5 April 1944

About midnight at Nhpum Ga there was a little noise in the Jap perimeter to our west. Sergeant Matsumoto slid quietly out of his foxhole and moved slowly towards the Jap lines where he could hear the voices a little plainer. He returned to the perimeter with the news that he believed the Japs were getting ready to attack. A heavy rain had just fallen for about twenty minutes and the water still dripped from the trees and bamboo overhead. Our perimeter was strong on the west flank and there was very little to do except alert the men and wait.

Suddenly at 0200 hours the Japs attacked - rushing madly towards the perimeter. A wave of hand grenades went out to meet them but some Japs actually reached the perimeter and were killed by tommy gunners. One Jap fell dead in the foxhole of a man he never saw. The startled Marauder hadn't seen the Jap either as he was facing the other way. The slightest movement drew fire and even though the Japs were repulsed, not a man slept for fear a wounded Jap lay close enough to the perimeter to shoot or throw a grenade.

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North BurmaFight of 7 April 1944

At 0830 hours we zeroed in our artillery, a battery of four heavy machine guns, a battery of four 81 mm. mortars using H.E. heavy. We pinpointed these thirty yards in front of our own troops. Then we zeroed in a battery of 81 mm. mortars for H.E. light about two hundred yards in front of our position and finally zeroed in a battery of four 60 mm. mortars firing for three hundred yards along the main trail which was the Japanese supply route.

At 0900 hours the set up for attack was the same we had used on the 4th.

Our communication set up was a little different. We had sound powered wire to each of the two flank platoons - radio net from company commanders, combat team commanders, battalion commanders and also for mortars.

Sound powered wire to the forward artillery observer was used part of the time. The rest of the time he used SCR 300. Flares were to be used only for an emergency - red for stop firing - green for lift firing.

The plan was to use a one hundred round artillery barrage at Jap strong points thirty yards ahead, following a dive bombing and strafing attack. Use of the H.E. heavy at the same point was simultaneous; H.E. light shooting from two hundred yards out and working back towards our own perimeter. 60 mm. mortars to fire at a medium rate along the Jap supply route.

After a fifteen minute artillery barrage and seven minute 81 mm. mortar rolling barrage, the attack was to jump off under heavy machine gun support.

At 0930 hours the attack went off exactly as planned. In the first attack we only gained fifty yards but by adjusting the barrages on to Jap strong points the total advance for the day was three hundred yards.

Three of the dead Japs found along the trail were using M-1 rifles and one Jap was wearing G.I. jungle boots.

The Japs got smart after the first barrage and ran back up the trail fifty or sixty yards to prepared positions - then when the barrage was lifted, they ran back to their weapons and opened fire. Our lead scouts noted this and after the next artillery barrage they picked off four running back to their guns.

Orange Combat Team fired the following ammunition in today's attack:

<u>Rounds</u>	<u>Type</u>
220	81 mm. H.E. light
210	81 mm. H.E. heavy
322	60 mm.
156	75 mm.
12,000	30 caliber machine gun

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The Japs take clothing off their dead. They must be short of clothing.

Each Jap strong point has all around perimeter and they are using high spots for strong points - not low ground as they sometimes did in the Southwest Pacific

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Don't Take the Same Route Twice

North Burma - 15 April 1944

At Nhpum Ga patrol actions continue in all directions. A patrol from the first battalion got within sight of a former Jap artillery position at Kauri and saw piled of empty shell cases. Before they could get to the position, a few Japs showed up with a Hambu.

A few hours later another patrol made the mistake of taking the same route the first patrol had used to investigate the enemy position. The Japs ambushed first the/two men - killing an officer and wounding an enlisted man. This taught the entire command a lesson that they knew, but let slip: - Never use the same route twice.

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Always Go Armed When Flying

North Burma-16 April 1944

The situation at Nhpum Ga remains the same. At 1600 hours an L-5 with from Sergeant Acker aboard took off/the air strip. Sergeant Acker was acting as artillery observer for our two gun battery which was preparing to fire on Jap positions at Kauri. As the plane gained altitude to cross a high ridge west of the air strip, it touched a tree and crashed up. One hundred men searched the area for the plane. It was found about 1700 hours.

Sergeant Acker was painfully injured and the pilot was dead. As neither the pilot nor the sergeant was carrying a gun, they could not aid the search by firing to reveal their position. Colonel Hunter gave an order that in the future all Galahad personnel would carry a gun when flying.

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Close Order Drill in the Jungle

North Burma - 20 April 1944

The third battalion had been in the front lines for two weeks solid fighting. They had suffered a number of casualties among officers and non-commissioned officer. To whip them back into the best fighting trim, Colonel Hunter ordered them out of

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the line, gave them extra rations, some new clothing and shoes and ordered that they have a full field inspection and one hour of close order drill the next day.

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