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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 32ND INFANTRY DIVISION IN THE CAPTURE
OF BUNA, NEW GUINEA, 1 NOVEMBER 1942 - 2 JANUARY 1943, IN
THE PAPUAN CAMPAIGN

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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 32ND INFANTRY DIVISION IN THE CAPTURE
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INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of the 32nd Infantry Division in the Capture of Buna, New Guinea, 1 Nov. 1942 - 2 Jan. 1943, in the Papuan Campaign.

In order to give the reader a background for better understanding of the operation it is necessary to outline the plan of the Japanese in their bid for expansion.

The plan of the Japanese consisted generally of the following three phases:

1. The seizure of the Southern areas which are rich in resources; the attack on the U.S. Fleet in Hawaii, and the seizure of strategic areas and positions for the establishment of a perimeter to protect the Southern Areas and the Japanese Mainland (1)
2. Consolidation and strengthening of the defensive perimeter (2).
3. The interception and destruction of any attacking strength which might threaten the defensive perimeter. Concurrently with intercept operations the activation of plans to destroy the United States will to fight. By the successful accomplishment of the three phases of this plan the Japanese hoped to attain the goal of the war which was to make Japan self sufficient. (3).

In an attempt to carry out the aforementioned plan the Japanese were on the offensive throughout the Southwest Pacific. By the 23rd of January the Philippines, Singapore and the Dutch East Indies had all fallen and Japanese forces were occupying Rabaul in New Britain. (4)

(1,2,3,) A-1,p.3.; (4) A-2,p.1

A two pronged attack was then planned which was to control the southeastern part of New Guinea and cut the supply line from the U.S., to Australia. Neither attack was successful as American Naval Forces destroyed the convoy in what now is known as the Battle of the Coral Sea. (5). This set-back did not stop the Japanese, for in July they began landing troops, supplies and equipment in the Buna, Sanananda area on the Northeast coast of New Guinea. (6). In their thrust across New Guinea the Japanese were able to push within 32 miles of Port Moresby before being stopped by units of the Australian Army. (7). It was then that units of the 32nd Division in conjunction with Australian Army units pushed the Japanese back across the Owen Stanley Mountain range and ultimately destroyed the Japanese and their bases in Southeast New Guinea.

The 32nd Division was a National Guard division from Michigan and Wisconsin and had been inducted into Federal Service in October 1940. The division trained at Camp Livingston, La., and had taken part in the Louisiana and Carolina Maneuvers of 1941. With the advent of Pearl Harbor, units of the division were given many assignments of guarding vital installations in the New Orleans and Mississippi Valley area. (8). Shortly after assembling back in Camp Livingston the division was alerted for overseas and moved to Fort Devens, Mass., where extensive preparations were made for movement overseas. An advance party of the division consisting of the engineer Bn., and other key personnel of the division hqrs., left Fort Devens, and every one assumed the division was going to England. This proved to be wrong however for only the advance party arrived in England. Very suddenly after the advance party had sailed, the division was loaded on trains and five days later arrived in San Francisco. The division sailed from San Francisco, on the 21st of April 1942, and 27 days later began unloading in Adelaide, Australia. After approximately (5,6,7) A-2,p.1 (8) Personal knowledge.

3 months training the division was assembled in the Townsville area of Northern Australia and it was from here that the first units of the 32nd Division were dispatched to combat. (9).

Early in September when the Japanese threat to Port Moresby appeared most grave, two regimental combat teams of the 32nd Division were ordered to Port Moresby. The 126th Combat Team and the 128th Combat Team were each composed of one regiment of infantry, a platoon of the 114th Engineers, a Collecting Company, a platoon of the Clearing Company of the 107th Medical Bn., with three 25 bed portable hospitals, and a detachment of the 32nd Signal Company. The division artillery with howitzers of the Cannon Co., and about two thirds of the 81 mortars were left behind due to transportation difficulties. (10).

Failure in their attempts to capture Port Moresby was the first of the Japanese defeats which led to the end of the war. The attack had been started in July of 1942, and proceeded until September when Australian resistance stiffened and the Japanese were held. On 28 September in the face of strong Allied air attacks on their supply lines over the Mountains from Buna and Gona, and an Australian Attack on the front, the Japanese began retreating back up the trail over the Owen Stanley Mountains. (11).

GENERAL ALLIED PLAN

Based on the fact that the enemy was not making any attempts to reinforce his troops in the New Guinea Area, the Allied High Command of the Southwest Pacific Area made the following assumptions:

1. That the Japanese were concentrating all available land, sea, and air power on the operation now taking place in the Solomons.
2. The Japanese apparently felt that if they could win the battle for Guadalcanal and continue their advance to the

(9) Personal knowledge; (10,11) A-2,P.4.

south, to cut our supply line to Australia, he would be justified in his neglect of the New Guinea Area.

3. The High Command further felt that if we could exert immediate and aggressive pressure we might be able to defeat the enemy in the Papuan Peninsula and remove the threat to Southern New Guinea and Port Moresby. (12). In accordance with the foregoing assumptions it was planned for the 32nd Division under Command of Major General Edwin F. Harding to make a wide, secret envelopment to the South and East and attack in force the left flank of the enemy in the Buna area. This might cut off the Japanese main body in contact with Australian Army units who were pushing the Japanese back up the Kokoda Trail.

OPERATIONS OF THE 32nd DIVISION

During the month of October, and the early part of November, units of the division were in the process of moving into position for the attack on Buna. The 128th Infantry was flown from Port Moresby to a native constructed air strip at Wanigela Mission approximately 65 miles south of Buna on 14th - 18th October. From here they moved up the coast to Pongani where they were to construct an air strip for the landing of the 126th Infantry. The 126th Infantry less the 2nd Battalion and a part of the 1st Battalion, was landed at Pongani on 9th-11th November. (13). The 127th Infantry was flown in later to be landed at Dobodura and Popondetta only 10 miles from the front lines. This air movement was the first large scale airborne troop movement made by U.S. Forces in a theater of operations. (14).

By the evening of November 18th the 1st Bn., 128th Inf. was on the coastal track between Hariko and the Duropa Plantation; the 1st Battalion 126th Infantry was coming up from Oro Bay along the same route. The balance of the 126th Infantry was in position on the left in the vicinity of Inonda. The 3rd Battalion of the 128th Infantry

(12,13) A-2,p.5; (14) A-2, p. 20.

was split between Ango and the Grassy plain at Dobodura. (15).

Early on the 19th November the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 128th Infantry moved north along parallel trails to attack the Japanese forces on the east flank, which ran along the Simemi Creek. Both units advanced until they met rifle and automatic fire, then stopped.

Ground observation was impossible; jungle and swamp limited expansion of the front and prevented communication between the two battalions. With this first contact the Buna Operation really commenced. During the first weeks of the Campaign, units of the division felt out the strength of the enemy's positions, determined the general outline of his well camouflaged defensive works and attempted to penetrate the impassable swamps. (16).

On 20 November the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry arrived in the Buna area and went into the line to the right of the 1st Battalion 128th Infantry which was generally along the edge of Duropa Plantation. There was a general attack scheduled for the 21st of November; however due to a misunderstanding by the air support, the inability of front line units to mark their front, and the fact that the order to attack was not received by the front line battalions until after the scheduled H-hour the attack was a failure. (17).

The 2nd Battalion 128th Infantry was at this time moving up the Ango trail west of the impenetrable swamp. As the battalion neared the trail junction where the right fork goes to the Mission and the left fork to Buna Village they were stopped by fire from an enemy strong point. This trail junction became known as the Triangle and was the scene of some of the toughest fighting in the battle for Buna. (18). On the following day, the 22nd of November, the 2nd Battalion, 126th Infantry was released from Australian Army control and joined the 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry in its fight at the Triangle. This force operated together until the fall of Buna Mission (15) Map "A"; (16) A-2,p.27; (17) A-2,p.28; (18) A-2, p. 29.

and was known as the Urbana Force. On the east, toward the sea, the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 128th Infantry, 1st Battalion of the 126th Infantry and a separate company of the Australian unit formed a force which became known as the Warren Force. (19).

On the 24th of November the Urbana Force began an attack against the enemy strong point at the Triangle. This attack met with little success other than to definitely outline the Jap positions across the Ango trail. Company E, 126th Infantry made a wide envelopment to the left which gained approximately 500 yards and suggested that the Jap strong point could be cut from the west and north. Subsequent attacks of the Urbana Force were directed to the west and north of the Triangle position. (20).

On the 26th November most of the action shifted to the east where the Warren Force was operating. The 3rd Battalion, 128th Infantry was shifted east to assist the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry in an assault through the Duropa Plantation. This attack was preceded by a 15 minute low-level strafe, an 18 minute bombing of rear areas and a 30 minute artillery and mortar preparation. The attack jumped off as scheduled, however in a very short time it was evident that the preparation had not affected the enemy bunkers. Attacking elements of the 1st Battalion 126th Infantry were able to get close enough to the enemy positions to see that they were barricaded with oil drums and covered overhead with heavy logs. A solution of the Japanese defense system had not been affected as yet. (21). For the next three days action was limited to active patrolling in an effort to gain information of the enemy positions.

On November 30th the attack was resumed by both the Urbana Force and also the Warren Force. Units of the Urbana Force moved through the swamps to the line of departure during the night of 29-30 November and jumped off in the attack just prior to dawn on the 30th of November. This attack met heavy automatic weapons fire and

(19) A-2, p. 29; (20) A-2, p. 30; (21) A-2, p. 33.

suffered severe casualties; however at the end of the day they had made some limited gains. Company E, 128th Infantry, on the right, advanced along the west side of Entrance Creek and attempted to take the Coconut Grove, which lies along the Buna Village trail to the North of the Triangle. This they failed to do, and in time, the Coconut Grove was to prove to be as difficult as the Triangle. (22).

The attack on the 30th, by the Warren Force, was even less successful. The plan in general was for one battalion to attack west along the New Strip, and one battalion to attack North along the coast and through the Duropa Plantation. The reserve battalion was to be prepared to support either of the attacking battalions as the situation might demand. (23).

The attack which began at dawn was stopped almost immediately. "A" Company, 128th Infantry, attempting to advance through Duropa Plantation, ran into a series of bunkers on their right, and heavy automatic fire on the left, which stopped their attack completely. Repeated attempts to knock out the positions by mortar and 37mm fire failed and as a result the company dug in on the position which they now held. Company C, 126th Infantry, was stopped after advancing about half-way up the south side of the New Strip. Company B, 126th Infantry, was stopped after reaching the southeast spur of the New Strip. (24).

This position of the Japanese was extremely well organized and consisted of a series of bunkers; all supported by individual emplacements which were connected to the main bunker positions by a series of trenches. It was later discovered that another strong point in the vicinity of Simemi Creek Bridge was able to support the bunkers along the New Strip and through the Duropa Plantation. The excellent fields of fire between these mutually supporting positions made them well nigh impregnable and extremely costly to frontal assault. It was not until 18 December and with the assistance of tanks that the

(22) A-2, p. 33; (23,24) A-2, p. 34.

Warren Force was able to penetrate this position. (25).

On 2 December both the Urbana Force and the Warren Force launched attacks along the entire front. These attacks met with little success as neither force was able to penetrate the final protective fires. As a result at nightfall the Japanese strong points were as strong as ever and the lines remained virtually the same as when the first attack was launched. (26).

During the next three days a general reorganization took place. General Eichelberger and staff officers of the U.S. I Corps, arrived in the Buna area and took command of all allied forces in the area. Upon assumption of command General Eichelberger further reorganized and regrouped the forces. Major General Harding, C.G., 32nd Division, was relieved by General Waldron, the 32nd Division Artillery Commander. Colonel Clarence Martin became commander of the Warren Force. The 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, took over the line along the Simemi-Buna trail south of the bridge; 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, occupied the positions to the south of Duropa Plantation; and the 3rd Battalion, 128th Infantry went into reserve behind the right flank. Colonel John Grose was assigned as commander of the Urbana Force. With this shuffling of command and regrouping of units there was a reorganization of the supply system. As a result of this reorganization, supply, both by water and air was increased, and breakdown to front line units was expedited. During this supply buildup, Bren gun carriers, with Australian crews, arrived, and consequently plans were made for an attack to take place on 5th December. (27).

CORRIDOR TO THE SEA

On the morning of the 5th December, after an air strike and an artillery preparation, Company L, 128th Infantry, launched an attack in conjunction with the Bren gun carriers. The use of these vehicles proved a complete surprise to the enemy but he recovered quickly. Within 30 minutes the carriers were knocked out by Japanese snipers (25) A-2, p. 34; (26) A-2, p. 36; (27) A-2, p. 37.

who picked off the crews; and the vehicles completely immobilized by soldiers on the ground who dropped grenades over the sides. Fires from the bunkers pinned down Company L and by 1000 hours all remaining men had withdrawn to their original line. (28). The 1st Battalion 128th Infantry, had moved to the left of the 3rd Battalion and was to attack north across the southeastern end of the New Strip and to continue across the northeast spur toward the Duropa Plantation. Company A was successful in getting across the strip by noon and continued to advance toward the Spur. Company B, on the left, attempted to cross just west of the spur. Due to extremely accurate and heavy sniper fire they were not able to get across and at dark were still on the south edge of the strip.

Meanwhile the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry was attempting to penetrate the bunkers near the bridge over Simemi Creek. Initially, fires from mortars and 37 forced the Japanese out of some positions near the bridge. However, when A and C Companies advanced to assault the position they were met by heavy machine gun fire from their left flank, which forced them to withdraw approximately 200 yards south of the bridge. After attempts to destroy the strong point by artillery had failed, B Company tried to bypass the position by infiltrating southwest of the bridge. This attempt was halted by impassable swamp and as a result no further advance was made during the day. (29).

On the Urbana front, plans had been made for the 2nd Battalion 126th Infantry, to attack toward the sea in an attempt to cut off Buna Village from Buna Mission. After an artillery and mortar preparation the Battalion jumped off at 1030 hours and for the first 30 minutes met little opposition. The Cannon Company, 128th Infantry, which was acting as a rifle company, was on the left and as they came into the open they were met by heavy mortar fire. All attempts to move were met by machine gun and mortar fire and as a result no further advance was made in their zone. Company E, 126th Infantry, in (28) A-2, p. 38; (29) A-2, p. 29.

the center, and Company G, 126th Infantry, on the right, continued the attack and by 1330 hours one platoon of G company had reached the sea. The platoon took up a position on the beach from which they were able to cut the Mission from the Village area. This platoon was reinforced by two platoons of F company, 126th Infantry, and by dark the position was firmly established. For the first time since the beginning of the campaign the Japanese Mine had been broken. (30).

For the next week, activity was limited to patrolling throughout the entire front. These patrols were important in that they continued to probe the enemy lines in an attempt to locate weak points.

Japanese units made several counterattacks on 6th December in an effort to eliminate the corridor. These attacks were repulsed and the units of the Urbana Force continued to hold the corridor. The units of the Urbana Force were greatly reduced at this time and in urgent need of replacements or relief. Relief of the Force was made possible by the arrival of the 3rd Battalion, 127th Infantry. This battalion had been flown from Port Moresby to the Dobodura Area on the 9th of December. On the 11th of December the 3rd Battalion 127th Infantry relieved the 2nd Battalion 126th Infantry. After spending two days in patrolling and getting oriented as to the Japanese position, the 3rd Battalion, 127th Infantry, launched an attack against Buna Village. Most of the enemy had withdrawn before the attack and as a result the battalion overran the position in less than an hour. (31).

ACTIONS OF THE WARREN FORCE (14th December to 2 Jan.)

The patrolling of the previous week had established the outline of the defenses in the Duropa Plantation and bridge areas. Accordingly, the three American battalions began to make preparations for a new attack. For three days these battalions edged forward as close to the Jap strong points as possible. On the evening of 17th December,

(30) A-2, p. 40; (31) A-2, p. 43.

eight tanks of an Australian Armored Regiment were brought up close to the front, under cover of a mortar concentration, which was fired to cover noise of the mortars. Early on the morning of 18th December our front line troops withdrew some 300 yards to allow an artillery preparation to be fired. During the firing of this preparation the 2/9 Battalion of the Australian Army passed through our troops, and at 0700 hours, with the lifting of the artillery, jumped off in an attack which was closely supported by the tanks. This attack was successful to a certain degree and within a little over an hour the Battalion had reached Cape Endaiadere. (32). After reaching the Cape, they then attempted to attack north along the coast and through Duropa Plantation. Here the attack bogged down when the battalion ran into bunkers which had escaped the artillery preparation. Two of the tanks were knocked out, and by 1100 hours, all attacking elements were stopped. (33). Company C, of the Australian battalion had attempted to take the Northeast spur of the New Strip. The tanks were able to destroy several bunkers with direct fire by 37~~44~~ but the infantry was unable to support them as enemy fire from the other bunkers kept them pinned down. The 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, was committed on both flanks of the Australian company and with their combined efforts were able to force the Japanese to start withdrawing. At the bridge, the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry made no advance.

After the attack by Australian troops on 18 December had caused the Japanese to abandon their positions, our units were able to move forward approximately 300 yards along a 1,000 yard front. On the following day, 19 December, the 3rd Battalion, 128th Infantry, continued to advance along the north side of Simemi Creek. The 1st Battalion, 128th Infantry, in mopping up along the north edge of the New Strip were able to assist the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry, in eliminating the bunkers on the east side of the Creek. This time they were successful and by noon on the 20th of December, U.S. forces (32) A-2, p. 46; (33) A-2, p. 46.

were at the bridge. (34). Crossing the bridge was still a problem as the Japanese had destroyed the center section and cross fire from positions on the West bank prevented engineers and pioneers from doing any repair work. Several attempts to cross were halted and it was not until the 23rd of December, when by outflanking the Jap positions with the 2/10 Battalion of the Australian Army that the 1st Battalion, 126th Infantry was able to cross. (35).

After crossing the bridge, the three battalions west of Simemi Creek were in position to continue the advance up the old strip. It took five days for the battalions to clear the old strip. The entire area was covered by bunkers located in the center, along the northern edge and several more in a group at the northwest end of the runway. These bunkers all proved extremely stubborn; however by using tanks, artillery concentrations and direct fire of Australian 25 pounders, the bunkers were eliminated and on the evening of 27th December allied units had reached the northwest end of the old strip. (36).

On the 28th of December, a pivoting movement took place which changed the direction of attack to the north and through the Government Plantation. Here enemy resistance stiffened and the attack was held up until more tanks could be brought up to lead the assault. Due to a misunderstanding as to the line of departure, coordination between tanks and infantry was not attained and the two became separated. The Japanese allowed the tanks to pass through their first line of defense and then reoccupied the positions in time to stop the infantry. Rather than attempt to take the Jap positions without support, allied units held up on their present positions and awaited reinforcements. By the night of 31st December sufficient reinforcements had arrived and the attack was planned for the next day. On 1 January the 2/12 Battalion of the 18th Australian Brigade jumped off in an attack supported by tanks. Less than an hour after the jump off the Australian unit had reached the sea just south of Giropa Point. In conjunction with the 3rd Battalion, 128th Infantry (34) A-2, p. 48; (35) A-2, p. 50; (36) A-2, p. 51.

the attack was continued south through the Government Plantation. These moves proved successful and by the evening of 2nd January only a couple of small pockets remained to resist. The 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 128th Infantry eliminated these pockets on the 3rd of January. (37).

ACTIONS OF THE URBANA FORCE (14th December to 2 January)

The 2nd battalions of the 126th and 128th Infantry, lacking support of armored vehicles, had been making fair progress in their particular area. On 15th December, the 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry, launched an attack against the Coconut Grove which commanded the Buna Village trail to the northwest of Triangle. This attack was successful and by nightfall the battalion had surrounded the grove, and on the 16th of December were able to break through to Entrance Creek. It was considered imperative that the Triangle be taken before we could launch a direct attack on Buna Mission. Consequently, for the next four days continuous attacks were launched but all in turn were repulsed. Every type of support available was tried but the strong point continued to hold out. When it became apparent that the Triangle could not be taken by direct assault, it was decided to by-pass it, leave enough troops to contain it and continue the attack to the sea. (38). In the course of the next three days, units of the 127th Infantry established a bridgehead well to the north of the Triangle on Entrance Creek. On the 24th of December the attack was again resumed by I, G, and L, companies of the 127th Infantry. These units became separated because of the extremely high Kunai grass and I, and G, companies, ran into strong Japanese positions which halted their attack. One platoon of L company was able to break through and get to the beach. (39). The Japanese closed behind the forward elements and what men survived, withdrew

(37) A-2, p, 53; (38,39) A-2, p. 55.

during the night. The attack was resumed on 25 December and the attacking companies, A and F, of 127th Infantry, reached the road junction in the Government Plantation about 700 yards southeast of Buna Mission. Although a Japanese attack from their rear destroyed the weapons platoon of A company, the force was able to hold on to their gains. The fighting was exceptionally heavy for the next three days as units of the 127th Infantry attempted to regain contact with A and F companies. On the 28th of December this contact was established and the force cleared the north half of Government Gardens. This action cut off the Japanese in the strong point at the Triangle. In an attack on the Triangle the next day it was found that all enemy forces had withdrawn. When the position was examined, it was found that there were 18 bunker positions, all mutually supporting and connected by communication trenches. (40). Although the key enemy strong points had now been eliminated, it was four more days before the actual capture of Buna Mission. On the afternoon of 28th December, K company, 128th Infantry, attacked across Entrance Creek in an attempt to push the attack on the Mission. Due to accurate and heavy enemy fire the attack was repulsed. (41). On the 29th of December, B company, 127th Infantry, extended the corridor to the sea. This corridor again cut the Japanese position and isolated the Mission from the force at Giropa Point. Early in the morning of 31st of December, E company, 127th Infantry, and F company, 128th Infantry, waded Entrance Creek and were able to get on the opposite bank without alerting the Japanese. Shortly afterward advancing troops alerted the enemy and they were able to halt the attack. The 1st Battalion, 127th Infantry, which had been attempting to envelop the enemy's left flank, was discovered and stopped along the beach. On the afternoon of the same day, a patrol from the 2nd Battalion, 128th Infantry, made contact with the Warren Force. (42). Action on 1 January was limited to patrol activity and (40,41) A-2, p. 57; (42) A-2, p. 59.

preparations for an attack to take place on 2 January. On the 2nd of January, a combined attack jumped off which had the mission of destroying the Japanese pocket at Giropa Point and then push forward to clear the mission area. As the attack progressed it was noticed that many Japanese were trying to escape by swimming, using small boats and rafts. These escapees were all destroyed by patrols and aerial strafing. The balance of the Japanese force withdrew to the north and by 1600 hours B company, 127th Infantry had secured Buna Mission. On 2 January, organized resistance had ceased, the enemy was destroyed, and the Buna area had been taken. (43).

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In making an analysis of this operation many factors must be considered before any criticisms are made.

The Japanese in their fight to retain the Solomons were neglecting to give their forces in New Guinea proper support. To take advantage of this, speed was essential, and as a result, proper planning was not possible.

Supply was extremely difficult due to shortages of transportation. Shortages existed in practically every item of equipment. Shipping by water was handicapped by the fact that no suitable harbor was in the Buna area. This made it necessary to transload from transports at Milne Bay into small luggers which in turn attempted to skirt the coast line up to the Buna area. Many of these luggers were destroyed by Japanese air action and P T type boats. Air drops were difficult due to inability of ground troops to mark locations in the jungle. Approximately 50% of all supplies dropped were destroyed because of breakage as parachutes were not available in sufficient quantities. Practically every requisition was considered urgent and in establishing priorities much confusion and delay was encountered. Medical supplies were particularly short and as our knowledge of

(43) A-2, p. 59.

tropical diseases was limited many casualties resulted. Medical evacuation was dependent on air transport which in most cases was exceptionally good. Casualties for the operation were high; however in considering the inexperience of our troops; the condition of climate and terrain and the enemy against which were operating they cannot be considered excessive when compared to the tactical and strategic value gained.

This operation was the first combat for the 32nd Division in World War II. They were fighting an enemy who was experienced, battle wise and fanatical. The terrain was exceptionally difficult and very definitely favored the defender. The climate added to the difficulties as the action took place in the season when rainfall, humidity and temperature are highest. In my opinion one of the most serious handicaps to the division was the lack of artillery support. Had it been possible for the division to have normal artillery support I feel this action would have been shortened considerably. Only one American 105 Howitzer ever arrived to support the operation. The Australian units had only nine pieces of varied caliber, none of which had sufficient ammunition supply. The use of tanks was restricted by the terrain, however in the instances where it was possible to use them good results were obtained and particularly so when supported closely by infantry.

LESSONS

1. Japanese Army was not invincible and could be defeated in his own element.
2. The Japanese Army had previously been considered offensive minded, yet in this operation they proved to be outstanding defensive fighters.
3. Jungle operations most definitely need the support of artillery and other heavy weapons.
4. Special training and special equipment are needed for successful jungle operations.

5. Air supply and evacuation, though difficult, is entirely feasible and with proper planning, build up, and coordination is capable of supporting ground units.

6. Due to dense undergrowth and foliage, special means must be employed to mark front lines for aerial support.

7. Control of all units is difficult.

8. Most any type of movement is greatly restricted.

9. Air photos of little value. Patrolling must be continuous to gain information of the enemy.

10. Small unit training is of vital importance and should stress small unit tactics.

11. Leadership^{is} important at all levels yet must be outstanding in small units.

12. Communication equipment needed modification and waterproofing to be satisfactory for jungle operations.

13. The intermingling of several units from different regiments created great confusion and resulted in a lack of coordination and cooperation which in turn was a primary cause for many of our attack failures.

14. General MacArthur stated, "the outstanding military lesson was the broadened concept of the use of air power both offensively and defensively".