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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 160TH INFANTRY, (40TH INFANTRY
DIVISION) IN THE VICINITY OF HILL 3155, NEGROS, P.I.,
15 APRIL - 15 MAY 1945. (SOUTHERN PHILIPPINES CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Regimental Supply Officer)

Type of operation described: INFANTRY REGIMENT ATTACKING IN
MOUNTAINOUS JUNGLE TERRAIN

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ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO. I

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Author's Note: The vast majority of source material for this monograph lies in the personal recollection of the author, plus reference to statements, action, or knowledge by individuals in a position to give corroboration.

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INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of the 160th Infantry Regiment, (40th Infantry Division), in the vicinity of Hill 3155, Negros, P.I., 15 April - 15 May 1945. (Southern Philippines Campaign). Major emphasis will be placed on problems of supply during the period under consideration.

Sometimes actual fact appears a gross parody of the normal - or even of the possible. The campaign in Negros Island (Occidental), particularly as it concerned the 160th Infantry Regiment, illustrates this peculiarity. A word or two should be in order as to how the regiment came to be snarled up in this singular mixture of comedy and tragedy - this "simple little clean-up action" - which cost the 160th a vicious loss in dead and wounded before it was over. (1)

On 9 January 1945, the 40th Infantry Division had made an amphibious landing in Lingayen Gulf and commenced the Luzon Campaign. This operation was concluded for the division two months later when relief was effected by the 43rd Infantry Division. In the interim much of the area sacred to the heroes of Bataan had been retaken from the enemy, and the 160th Infantry had been fully indoctrinated in the ferocity with which the Japanese defended mountainous terrain. (See Map A) (2) Hence it was almost with relief that this unit received word of the next operation, the proposed campaign in Negros Occidental. Such reaction was to be considerably modified during the next three months!

(1) A-3, p. 204; (2) A-2, p. 109.

THE GENERAL SITUATION

The campaign in Negros was dictated by a dual necessity. "Fourth largest of the Philippine Islands, Negros had been an important enemy air staging base during the Leyte operation. The island was also important for its many sugar centrals which the Japanese were using for the production of fuel alcohol, for the Insular sawmill at Fabrica on the north coast - largest hardwood mill in the world" (40th Infantry Division History), and for a certain limited production of foodstuffs. The final destruction of any Japanese supply potential for forces still engaged with the American 6th Army on Luzon, and 8th Army on Mindanao was of great importance. The psychological benefit which would result from restoring this immensely wealthy area to the Philippine people would add major support to the campaign in the Philippine Islands. (See Map B) (3)

Y - day for the 40th Division shore-to-shore operation from the island of Panay, whose principal plain had already been secured, was set for 29 March 1945. (4) One 40th Division Regiment, RCT 108, having been employed as a task force attached to X Corps in the Victor One operation in Mindanao, ^{the} 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment was attached to the division for the original purpose of making an air landing at time and place to be designated by the division commander. (5) Intelligence, deduced from air reconnaissance and reports from Philippine Guerillas, indicated prior to Y - day that the enemy was withdrawing from the coastal area and preparing extensive defenses in the western approaches to the central mountain mass of the island. (It is interesting to note that practically all reports from the guerillas were brought to Panay by the Philippine fishing fleet - which, since the Japs on Negros

5/11
5/11

(3) A-2, p. 126; (4) A-1, p. 27; (5) A-2, p. 126.

were commandeering a major portion of the catch as a vital food source, was apparently not suspect^{ed} as a channel of information for our forces. (6) The plan for the employment of the 503rd was therefore changed, and both this unit and RCT 185 made direct amphibious landings in the vicinity of Pulpandan. The 503rd moved to positions astride the Silay - Manzanares highway on the division left flank, while the 185th struck inland southeast from Silay. (See Map C)

On Y plus one RCT 160, minus 2nd Battalion, landed and took over the beach-head area Bacolod - Silay, division headquarters was established in Silay, and division rear in Bacolod. On Y plus two it became evident that the Japanese force was greater than had been anticipated; that considerable enemy strength was located in Concepcion; that danger of enemy flanking action existed on what the G-3 hoped was the division right. The word "hoped" is used with no derogation of the division staff - rather it indicates the extraordinarily fluid situation in the early stages of this operation. Hence on Y plus two-three the 160th was committed on the general axis (Bacolod - Silay) - Concepcion - Hill 3155, with view to containing the enemy and assuring his destruction or withdrawal to the east. (See Map C) (7)

Rapid implementation of the decision by the division commander proving successful, the division was, by 15 April, disposed in a five mile semi-circle from the positions of the 503rd at the left of the Lantawan plateau, through the Malisbog gorge, and around the base of Hill 3155 to the right flank of the 160th Infantry. (See Map C) (8) The Japanese forces disposed on the crests of the mountains facing this semi-circle included the 172nd Independent Infantry Battalion, the 102nd Division Transport Regiment, the 32nd Airfield Company, the 61st Anchorage Unit, the 355th Independent Infantry Battalion, and the 77th

(6) A-1, p. 45; (7) A-1, p. 36; (8) A-1, p. 39.

Brigade. Defensive positions were well prepared and heavily ^{mounted} gunned with automatic weapons, 90mm mortars, 20mm cannons, and various heavy-caliber weapons removed from wrecked airplanes and converted to ground use. (9) At this time the main effort of the division was being conducted by the 160th, for Hill 3155 was definitely the key to the enemy's holding of the great ridge line extending to the east, and the commanding position afforded by this terrain feature rendered prohibitive the cost of attempted penetrations by either RCT 185 or the 503rd Parachute Infantry. (See Map C) (10)

On this same date, 15 April 1945, an officer of the 160th returned to his regiment, following the completion of a singularly hectic and unpleasant assignment. He had been ordered to return to New Britain Island some three months earlier to clean up the division rear - rear echelon. His experience had been such that the frame of mind in which he reported back was not one to be recommended for the good and faithful disciple of true military procedure. His outlook on life was further distorted by the rumors which he had heard as to the rough-and-ready character of the new regimental commander, Colonel Raymond G. Stanton, who had assumed command about a month earlier. All in all, the reporting officer was so thoroughly on a "slow burn" that after presenting himself he stood and delivered a few choice remarks on rear echelons in general, and the 40th Division's in particular - as well as any and everything remotely connected with logistics! The colonel heard him out, and then remarked, "Well, Major, we'll kick that around a little later; at the moment you are the S-4 of this regiment." (11)

THE REGIMENTAL SITUATION

Combat during the retrograde movement of the enemy had been sporadically

(9) A-2, p. 132; (10) A-1, p. 40; (11) Statement by Colonel Raymond G. Stanton, commanding 160th Infantry, 15 April 1945.

violent, and a high percentage of casualties had been suffered in the determined and continuous pressure maintained by all elements of the division. But the assault of Hill 3155 suddenly became a terrible task for the 160th Infantry; in comparison with which previous action on the island appeared insignificant. In striking illustration of the importance of terrain, the regiment found itself attempting the continuation of an assault up an almost vertical mountainside one thousand feet high. The crucial character of the situation was augmented by the clearly evident fact that the success of the division mission was dependent on securing this objective. (See Map D) (12)

To the contrary of all rumors, Colonel Stanton proved a remarkable commander. His personality, force and directness, and superior judgment inspired willing support for his leadership. He had an uncanny capacity for placing his trust in subordinates from whom he could receive the most and best effort. He could be ruthless when necessary. The plan with which he proceeded to the capture of Hill 3155, while costly, was to prove successful; although with an intermediate stage which nearly upset all calculations. The 3rd Battalion was disposed around the lower left flank of the hill, and astride the Malisbog gorge, to secure that area against the Japanese counterattacks which were persistently delivered in the attempt to split the 160th from the 185th. In the five-day period centering around 13 April the 1st Battalion made repeated efforts to fight its way up some one of a dozen different attempted ascents of the main objective. Troops moved again and again to the attack while holding to trailing roots and branches in the thick mat of jungle undergrowth which clung to the precipitous slopes - in some cases men were actually climbing on each other. (13) During each such advance they were subjected to increasingly violent enemy rifle, machine gun, and mortar fire,

(12) Statement by Major General Rapp Brush, Commanding General, 40th Infantry Division, 14 April 1945; (13) A-2, p. 133.

More would be needed.

This disposition, route of attack plan, it should be clearly shown on map.

plus a deluge of hand grenades. Finally, after suffering a casualty total which reduced Company "A" to thirty-five effectives, Company "B" to forty-seven, and Company "C" to about sixty, the battalion secured a position approximately one hundred yards from the final crest of the hill. (14) In this action eleven officers were casualties. Four were killed, of whom the first was 1st Lt. John W. Dolan, in whose honor this hill was named. Almost immediately upon the accomplishment of this "vertical penetration" these troops were surrounded by the enemy on all sides except for a small section of the route of advance which was simply too steep for the enemy to hold on. Continuous assault against the perimeter was maintained by the Japanese; food, water, and ammunition for the little force was practically exhausted. (See Map D)

Supply was at once attempted through air drops from division artillery liaison planes, and was partially successful. But in order to hit so small a target the drops were necessarily made from an altitude which rendered a plane simply a "sitting duck" for Jap weapons of all kinds. The plane carrying the officer who had been the S-4 of the 160th Infantry up to this time was shot down. This means of supply had to be abandoned. Incidentally, there was evidenced here something of the ferocity displayed by the enemy during this campaign. The pilot of the downed plane was instantly killed. But the S-4 was thrown clear, and though wounded, attempted to crawl away from the wreck. The Japs chopped his head off with bayonets there and then. (15) (Thereafter G-2 received no prisoners for interrogation from this regiment.)

The new S-4 found in this tactical and logistical impasse all the necessary ingredients for a nightmare which promptly relieved him of

(14) Personal knowledge, Statement of Lt. Col. H.A.E. Jones, commanding 1st Battalion, 160th Infantry, 15 April 1945; (15) A-2, p. 133; A-3, p. 202.

*How did they assault
from where?
what route?*

any memory of previous troubles. (16)

EXAMPLES OF SUPPLY PROBLEMS

After a short talk with the regimental commander, and a half hour with the S-3, the supply officer departed for Bacolod, accompanied by a vivid impression of the way in which the colonel had said, "You will supply those men." (17) Upon arrival in the city - what the Japs had left standing - he encountered the first touch of good fortune in which no struggle on his part was involved. Service Company, especially the supply section, was in splendid shape. It was operating at nearly T/O & E strength, with ample equipment, and had a complement of thoroughly trained, combat-experienced, intelligent, and willing personnel. It was an instrument for the accomplishment of logistical tasks comparable to a transit for engineering. (18)

Finding no need to be concerned with problems in the function of his own organization, the S-4 first did some violent thinking on the mission with which he was faced, and then called the Motor Transport Officer, the Company Commander, Service Company, and the Warrant Officers of supply and motor maintenance for a conference on the plan which he believed might be successful. The results of that conference were spectacular. (19)

The plan was basically simple. The beleaguered 1st Battalion simply had to be supplied. Air drops and normal ground supply channels could not be used; abnormal ground supply channels would have to be devised. Ants run a supply chain which is sustained by sheer volume of individuals - could humans? The problem at once resolved itself upon the satisfactory answers to three questions: (1) Was it possible to secure enough men to act as carriers? (2) Could they be protected? (3) Could
(16) (17) (18) (19) Personal knowledge.

means be devised to aid a man carrying any kind of load to climb those awful slopes? (20)

Other than personnel of Service and Headquarters Companies every soldier in the regiment was engaged in fighting. Hence there was no troop source of men for carrying parties. A call was put out in Bacolod for a Philippino influential with the local population. Shortly there appeared an individual who, with his family, had been hidden in the hills throughout the period of Japanese dominance of the island. He had lived for a number of years in the U.S.A., was a graduate of Northwestern University, and spoke fluent English, Spanish, Tagalog, and Visayan. This man provided the answer to our first question. By 2400 that night he had rounded up one hundred fifty of his countrymen who agreed to accept the dangerous employment as bearers. (21)

The first element in the matter of protection was undertaken by a singularly hard-boiled master sergeant in Service Company who had been, for fifteen years prior to the war, at once a member of the Los Angeles Police Department, and a National Guardsman in Service Company of the 160th Infantry. He simply selected eight men in the company who were particularly "spoiling for a fight", armed them with pistols and tommy-guns, and gave them a mission whose simplicity was in line with other classic examples of brevity in military directives, --- "You're a body-guard - and you'll see to it that no Jap b--d gets himself a gook!" A potent supplement to the action of this detachment was developed the next day by the platoon leader of the Company "D" 81mm mortar platoon. (to be later described) (22)

The development of physical climbing aids was solved by the Motor (20) (21) (22) Personal knowledge.

Maintenance Warrant Officer. The ingenuity of this Warrant Officer in the salvage and use of Japanese equipment and in the procurement (through means best known to himself) from the Navy and other sources, had already developed a shop layout superior in many respects to that of the Ordnance Maintenance Company. Using reinforcing steel from the blasted buildings of the town he prepared a large number of ring-headed "pitons" or spikes. These were linked in varying numbers and spacing by ropes, to be used by the carrying party as a sort of web in the worst places on the mountain climb. (23)

Immediately following the conference with his assistants, the S-4 proceeded to a reconnaissance of the route. The insanity of this expedition was of high order. The climb was hazardous by day; this was night, and it was raining so hard that falling water actually seemed a weight on the climber. Twice he was completely lost and found himself among the Japs. When the crest was almost reached, he was greeted by rifle fire and hand grenades from his own comrades, the exhausted men of the 1st Battalion. This ended the officer's attempt to close in the battalion perimeter. The reconnaissance, however, was a success; he knew that humans could make the ascent. (24)

At 0600 the next morning the carrying party was assembled at the base of the "thousand steps", as this hill-climb came to be known. Daylight was clear, the storm had lifted, the big gamble was on. Flanked by the Service Company tommy-gunners, the little Filipinos with their big loads commenced the climb. The bearers were divided into two groups; thirty men with loads, and thirty without. Those without loads were to serve as climbing helpers, piton handlers, and anchor men, as well as relief carriers. Three hours later food, water, and ammunition were going (23) (24) Personal knowledge.

into the hands of the troops whose position had seemed so hopeless, and the S-4 was demanding of the commander of Company "C" what the hell he meant by shooting at him the night before! (See Map D) (25)

The "mutual-admiration" session was short-lived. There were casualties to be evacuated. Also, the carrying party was spread out over most of the route up the mountain; the last hundred feet had been traversed by spreading Filipinos, touching each other, hanging to ropes, and passing loads from one to another. Furthermore, the Jap was recovering from the surprise of our first attempt at supply, and would soon be assaulting the route with every possible means. (26)

Six of the most seriously wounded men were taken out that morning. The method adopted was crude, and a little rough on the patient, but it was effective, and no aggravation of wounds resulted. Each casualty was wrapped into a bundle of tree limbs cut from what remained of the blasted forest in the 1st Battalion perimeter, and came down the mountain looking like half a cord of wood. These bundles were lowered from Filipino to Filipino, each bundle held by ropes from above and also by guide ropes from the flankers. Sliding, scrambling, falling, - the whole party, with the wounded soldiers, got off the hill. Casualties included one Filipino killed, one Service Company man injured by American artillery, firing to keep the Japs down, and several individuals suffering from sprains, contusions, and abrasions. (27)

Immediately following the descent, the S-4 went to the 1st Battalion C.P. with a request for protective fires for the supply route. Lt. Col. Jones, 1st Battalion Commander, approved the request, and the plan evolved included placement of the platoon in a position on the rounded lower slopes of the mountain chain where direct observation of every burst would (25) (26) (27) Personal knowledge.

be possible. The six mortars were carefully sited and laid so that each half of the platoon could fire a "scissors" of search on alternate sides of the route. (28)

During the balance of the period before the assault was renewed, at least one supply and evacuation trip was made each day. Replacements were also sent up. Each trip was made at a different time of day, and the "scissors" mortar fires were frequently laid down when no trip was being made. Also, great changes were gradually effected in the physical character of the route. Steps were cut and revetted in a tight zig-zag through the upper part. To accommodate this, the vertical fires of the mortars were laid a little wider apart. The engineers also bulldozed a diagonal trail from a quarter of a mile to the left up about two thirds of the way. (29)

It must not be thought that all of this met with no reaction from the enemy. On the contrary, his attempts to disrupt each trip, and to destroy the supply route were conducted with suicidal frenzy. No estimate can be made of the number of Japs who died on or near that vital lane. It is of record, however, that after the end of the war the Japanese commander, General Kono, stated that when our forces were first surrounded on Hill 3155 he had been certain that they would soon be liquidated and that this would be the limit of American interference with his final plan. Such plan was to hold one force, including his headquarters, in Yamoto valley, high in the mountains, and to send out strong detachments to reconnoiter the areas Himmugean River to Fabrica, San Carlos Hacienda, and the upper Bago River, with an ultimate concentration in whichever appeared most suitable for lasting defense. (See Map B) By so doing, he anticipated keeping at least two American divisions engaged, as well as considerable portions of our Navy and Air Force. In

(28) Ref. Lt. Col. H.A.E. Jones; Personal knowledge; (29) Personal knowledge.

notes are with troops (Clayton not on map - comment?)

this he might well have been successful. (30)

Upon realization that the handful of men on Dolan Hill were not to be bested off, that this terrain feature dominated his otherwise secure defense lines, and that it was being supplied and strengthened as a base for further assault by American forces, he became so concerned that he actually directed the commander of the 172nd Independent Infantry Battalion, one Colonel Yamaguchi, to personally lead raids on the supply line. Such raids provided the only means, other than mortar fire, by which the enemy could hope to destroy American operation. The terrain rendered any distant attack by flat trajectory fire impossible. (31)

The supply operation just described, though the most crucial of problems facing the S-4, was but one of a total which permitted no rust to accumulate on the mental machinery.

The morning after the commencement of supply on the hill, the 1st Battalion commander decided that barbed wire for the perimeter was essential. The regimental commander agreed. Tactically this was a very sound idea. Practically it had a slight drawback; there was no wire available to the division. The G-4 and the Division Engineer were quite emphatic about it. There wasn't any, there hadn't been any, and there wasn't going to be any! Following the last phone call, the S-4 stopped swearing to draw breath. Then stepped into the picture the Filipino previously mentioned as the procurer of carrier personnel. He knew, with up-to-the-minute knowledge, practically every square inch of Negros Occidental. It was established later that he was the individual principally responsible for the reports reaching the division on Panay via the fishing fleet. He stated positively that the Japs had used wire in

(30) Statement of Major General Rapp Brush, C.G., 40th Inf. Div., June 1946;
(31) A-2, p. 136; A-3, p. 201; Statement by General Taseal Kono, Japanese Army, Commander on Panay-Negros, 30 August 1945.

protecting a rendezvous and supply point in the barrio of Guimbalaon.

(See Map C)

This little village, on the left of the earlier zone of action of RCT 185, had been cleaned out by air attack and by ground assault during the opening stages of the Negros operation. But now, according to Sandoval, the Filipino, the Japs had returned, about a hundred of them. Knowing the proclivity of the Philippine people to exaggerate, the S-4 was not too concerned over the enemy, which in his estimate could not be much more than a foraging party that had managed to slip out either around or through lines at the front. Furthermore, the C.O. had said, "Wire", and the Supply Officer was more concerned with that dictum than he was over the prospect of tangling with a few Japs. Selecting a few more of the supposed "non-combat" soldiers of Service Company, and borrowing some M.P.s from the Provost Marshall, the S-4 set out for Guimbalaon as fast as the trucks would roll.

At Guimbalaon information was obtained from a few frightened Filipinos in the vicinity that the place had become a sort of base-of-operations for a considerable detachment of Japs. This enemy group was raiding the countryside; killing, burning, stealing, and sending stolen food stocks back up into the mountains with small parties each night. (It may be deduced that certain aspects of the overall situation were still definitely "fluid".) In the fire fight which promptly ensued, the Japs were driven off, leaving four dead, and two wounded. The wire found at the spot was then uprooted, and rerolled in small rolls. The remaining shacks were fired. The wire-recovery group was back in Bacolod by 1730. The wire was on its way up Dolan Hill the next morning. (32)

The basic problem of getting supplies up to the general front was
(32) Personal knowledge; Ref. Lt. Col. J.G. Ruckle, P.M., 40th Inf. Div.

*M. S. R.
should be shown*

constantly aggravated by what had to be used for an MSR. The last mile of the approach to that front lay over the broad, bare, gently rounded slope lying between the Malisbog gorge and the extremely broken terrain to the south. (See Map D) This area was completely exposed to enemy 20mm direct fire, and to 90mm mortar fire. Further, the incessant rains had rendered the entire slope a viscous sheet of mud. Hence, the MSR wasn't a route at all. It was, each day, the course a truck driver might pick to escape enemy fire and the deepest of the mud. Bull dozers from the engineers, the "cats" which were included in the special T/O & E of the regiment, and the M-7s of Cannon Company were as busy in that area, sneaking out trucks, as the trucks were in trying to haul supplies. Even the tracked vehicles were frequently bogged down.

As a partial solution to the difficulty trucks were dispatched from cover at the lower end of this "Hell's-Half-Acre" in groups of five or six, bumper-to-bumper, and lashed together with chain. Each such train or "truck-block" was preceded by two pilot vehicles, first a 1/4 Ton, then a 3/4 Ton. If the pilot vehicles got through, the trucks followed in "compound" second gear - wide open. If a lead truck stuck, those behind still had power on the ground, and vice versa. With this scheme, only two truck blocks were stuck during the following weeks. (33)

Three or four days after the S-4 commenced trying to be one, the regimental commander elected to advance the C.P. Such advance was certainly indicated by the tactical situation, but the only possible locations were tactically impossible. The choice was between crowding into the tiny fringe of banana trees which marked the site of the 1st Battalion C.P., close to the edge of the Malisbog gorge, or somewhere out on the open slope. The first at best provided meager concealment for even the Battalion installations, the second would only invite target practise by (33) Personal knowledge.

Jap gunners. The instructions which the supply officer received from the C.O. comprised a masterpiece of simplicity, "S-4, I'm going to move the C.P. to there." With this he pointed to the central forward portion of the bald slope. (See Map D) (34)

At dawn two days later the command post was located in a shell-proof shelter in the spot indicated. The materials for this shelter came from a bombed and ruined sugar mill in Bacolod. This mill had been constructed with a large number of concrete pillars supporting the upper portions of the structure. A number of these were ringed round with TNT and Prima Cord. When blasted, they broke up sufficiently to permit cutting the reinforcing steel with torches. With the bottoms free it was a simple matter to yank them with a "cat" until the tops cracked enough to again use a torch to cut the steel. At the same time large gangs of Filipinos were at work tearing up the narrow gauge tracks in the mill to get the rails. While the crews were working in the mill, three bulldozers were employed the first night to excavate a hole thirty feet wide by sixty feet long, and eight feet deep in the desired location. The Japs apparently failed to spot the hole as anything worth the expenditure of ammunition, for during the ensuing day no fire was laid on it. All our troops were kept strictly away during daylight hours. On the second night the salvaged posts were set up in this hole at appropriate spacing. Rails were placed on the posts for stringers or rafters, and a roof of rails was then laid on the rafters. These roof rails were placed alternately "T" up and "T" down. Sheets of corrugated galvanized iron and tarpaper were then spread over the rails. Finally the earth from the hole was leveled off by the bulldozers over the whole structure to a depth of about four feet. The entire job was done under cover of darkness. By

(34) Personal knowledge; Ref. Col. R.G. Stanton.

daylight nothing showed except a slightly elevated mound of earth, which the rains were rapidly causing to look like all the rest of the surrounding mud. (See Map D) (35)

The Japs either failed to recognize the new terrain feature, or else decided that it was impervious to the fire of any weapon at their disposal. Not one shot was fired at it. The only excitement which ever occurred around this installation resulted from the explosion of a "short" round of our own artillery. This landed about six feet to the left and forward of the regimental aid station, which was later built as an annex to the command post. Fragments came in through the side of the aid station and wrecked a brand new sterilizer which the surgeon had just installed. He was so furious that he almost had to be evacuated as a class "A" psychopathic case. (36)

During the period with which we are concerned the normal procurement of normal classes of supply presented no problem. Nearly all items were available, the Quartermaster functioned with remarkable efficiency, and the supply echelon of the regiment was immediately adjacent to the installations of division rear. But the abnormality of existence for the men of the 160th had been far too long continued. With the exception of brief periods on transports, three quarters of the personnel had not tasted anything appetizing in over two years. Laundry facilities were practically non-existent. Except for limited and irregular P.X. supplies there was almost no opportunity for purchase of anything, and as everyone knows, when men are paid they wish to buy. With the assistance of Sandoval and his helpers, the whole northwest area of the island was combed for farmers who would sell fresh foods, for women to work in a laundry, and for the small products of artisans in leather, wood, cloth and metal. For

(35) Personal knowledge; (36) Personal knowledge; Ref. Major Glen E. Jones, Regimental Surgeon, 160th Infantry.

the next thirty days fresh eggs twice a week were provided for a good number of the men (on the basis of first reports as to what the Filipinos could spare it was planned to furnish the regiment with other fresh foods, but the division surgeon published an order restricting the consumption of anything but eggs to Army issue.) A laundry was improvised in the ruined sugar mill and fifty women worked there; many others took laundry work into their homes in Bacolod. A wide variety of curios and novelties poured into the supply office, to be distributed throughout the regiment by the most expeditious means. (37)

A curious feature of these negotiations developed almost at once. The Filipinos had little interest in money. Their experience with the worthless paper currency forced on them by the Japs was still fresh in mind. Also, the economic structure of the community was so distorted by the war that money of any kind was of little value in the procurement of goods or services. One commodity was in universal demand - soap. And soap became the medium of exchange for transactions with the S-4 of the 160th Infantry. However, the supply was limited. Also, the Philippine desire was for toilet soap rather than the harsh issue variety. The regiment was canvassed, and hundreds of forgotten or unused Christmas package cakes were brought to light. These, plus what was available in the ration supplement issue proved sufficient, and a "soap treasury" was established. It was quite entertaining to watch the Filipino head-man gravely paying off long lines of men and women with various pieces of soap. (38)

In a general consideration of logistical activities in this period there must be noted a number of items, less dramatic but equally important.

(37) Personal knowledge; Ref. Lt. Col. J.G. Ruckle; (38) Personal knowledge; Ref; Lt. Col. John K. Wright, C.O. 115th Combat Engineer Battalion.

Div Rear?
The terrain, the weather, and the frequent Japanese raids had made it impossible to locate the regimental supply installations anywhere near the combat echelon. In addition, the quartermaster rolling stock was badly depleted, and was hard put to take care of supply for the balance of the division. Hence, as previously mentioned, the 160th supply section was located almost immediately adjacent to Division Rear. This, while excellent from the procurement angle, necessitated a thirty-two mile round trip from the base supply to the troops. Every pound of supplies had to be hauled by organic transportation of the regiment. An excellent concrete highway lay between Bacolod and Talisay. From Talisay to Concepcion there was a road of sufficient character to have been indicated on maps; though drivers frequently and profanely expressed doubts of the map makers' good faith. From Concepcion to the Imbang Diotey river the route was over the remains of a Carabao cart trail. From just beyond that river to the battalion areas there was nothing but mud. (See Map D) Tremendous effort by the engineers, plus the "truck-block" expedient previously described, were required to maintain a schedule of deliveries. The cost in vehicle break-down was enormous. (39)

The motor maintenance shop which Warrant Officer Huff had built up included lathes, turret-lathes, metal bending machinery, drill presses, complete generator and arc welding sets, a forge, a wheel and frame alignment outfit, and a considerable additional assortment of tools and equipment; none of which had ever appeared on the T/O & E of the infantry regiment. The skill of this warrant officer in salvage, improvisation, and "borrowing" was matched by his uncanny knowledge of just how much labor a man could stand. He kept that shop operating on a twenty-four hour basis - occasionally he must have gotten thirty hours

(39) Personal knowledge; Ref. Lt. Col. John K. Wright, C.O. 115th Combat Engineer Battalion.

out of a day! In addition to the equipment described, the unit was also in possession of a huge Kenilworth wrecker, which the present S-4 had discovered abandoned in the mud of the Metabelese river in New Britain. Overhauled and reconditioned, this item proved of vital importance on Negros. (40)

With the shop and the wrecker, W.O. Huff swore he would keep enough transportation rolling to supply the regiment. He did. In so doing he included the strangest collection of internal combustion vehicles that ever operated out of any one headquarters. The range of supplements to the normal was from a 1928 Chevrolet, salvaged from the Japs, to a four ton Diamond "T" which the engineers had said he could have, "if he could make it run." Some of the regimental two and one half ton trucks began to look like the bleached skeletons of animals in the desert - but they ran. Day by day the boneyard of "salvaged" vehicles alongside the shop grew larger. Withal, each day there were trucks to carry the supplies; there were crews to go out and drag in the vehicles that failed. (41)

An interesting part of the general transportation problem was the matter of hauling men, the Filipino members of the carrying parties. Current thought on the number of men to be carried in the two and one half ton army truck favors a total of twenty-five. The average Filipino is not too big, but even so, it was somewhat surprising to see sixty or more of them in, on, and "around" one of these vehicles going up the road. (42)

Since the aggregate personnel of the three rifle companies of the 1st Battalion had been reduced to less than the normal strength of one company, and the 3rd Battalion was at about one half its assigned total, the bulk of class I and II requirements was materially reduced. The (40) (41) (42) Personal knowledge.

demand for ammunition of all varieties, however, was extraordinary. The besieged force on Dolan Hill alone consumed 492, 611 rounds of caliber .30 in one week! A further enormous expenditure of class V resulted from the calm way in which the regimental commander and Lt. Colonel Nickell, the C.O. of the 143rd Field Artillery Battalion, worked out fire plans calling for twice as much ammunition as the trucks of that battalion could hope to haul. There was just one organization which could handle the load - the 160th Infantry. Huff and his drivers did it; to an average of 1033 rounds, or 29.4 tons per day. (43)

Statistics at best are cold; they show nothing of the "blood, sweat, and tears", the furious, sleepless, sustained drive which an aroused group of American soldiers can bring to a given task. Cold though they be, the figures for this operation, coupled with the attendant circumstances, should provide a fair basis for appreciation due to the "unhonored and unsung" men of the supply section of the 160th Infantry.

10 May, 1945 marked the commencement of a tremendous air-artillery strike at the enemy defenses on Dolan Hill and the connecting ridges. This operation had been in planning for two weeks, and included every organic and attached weapon which the division could bring into action, as well as over one hundred bombing sorties by planes from Army, Navy, and Marine Corps. It was continued intermittently for four days. On 15 May the 3rd Battalion moved through the 1st to the assault, ^{where} under cover of heavy artillery fire. The four-day preparation had been terrific in effect. The once dense jungle vegetation was completely cleared; not a leaf remained on the bare tree stumps; forty enemy pill boxes were found blasted to bits; over two hundred enemy dead were discovered. Minor fire fights developed in isolated localities, but the dazed remnants of the enemy force were unable to resist the occupation, and by 1500 this costly

(43) Personal knowledge; Ref. Col. R.G. Stanton.

Office Memorandum • UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

TO : Colonel Tyler

DATE: 12 Aug 55

FROM : Colonel Brown

SUBJECT:

Here is a dandy monograph which brings out the need for ingenuity - improvisation - advance planning, and courage on the part of log personnel.

MCB

LESSONS

Among the lessons to be drawn from experience in this operation, the following appear salient:

1. Lack of knowledge relative to any terrain within the scope of action in a planned operation should be an immediate source of concern to the staff.

2. Estimate and plan must be based not alone upon the normal, reasonable, or probable; allowance and incidental planning must be made for the bizarre and abnormal.

3. The value of a staff is measured by how thoroughly its coordinated effort becomes an extension of the commander's own thought process. In pure theory, with the perfect staff, this would mean invariably correct decisions (subject only to acts of God), resulting with complete logic from the staff work.

4. Loss of the benefits of surprise may be compensated by the courage and determination with which troops drive through to an objective.

5. The most important attribute of command is the ability to select subordinates in whom trust should be placed - then to trust them.

6. The acuteness of problems of evacuation increases in a geometric progression as combat is extended into jungle and mountainous terrain.

7. Failure in combat resulting from failure in logistics is almost as certain as death and taxes. [A most striking addition to examples in history will be illustrated by the war in the Pacific. Had the Japanese army maintained a logistical support comparable to that of the Americans, it is entirely possible that the United States would have been forced to a peace favorable to Japan long before the advent of the atom bomb.]

8. Morale and the capacity for sustained effort among the service groups of the infantry regiment will at times be decisive in the success or failure of regimental action.

9. The exercise of ingenuity and initiative is never so great a premium as in support of fighting men; the pay-off is in lives saved.

10. Any workable expedient is a success; commanders, particularly those concerned with supply, must anticipate expediency as a vital aid to success in mission.

11. Cooperation by the civil populace of occupied territory is of extreme importance to the support of combat operations.

12. Money, regardless of its recognized value, is not necessarily a medium of exchange in a war-torn community.

13. The use of skills by military personnel is by no means limited to the scope of entries on the Form 20; it may be extraordinarily extended under the spur of necessity.

14. Officers charged with responsibility for given operations must restrain the tendency to nervous impatience, and avoid harassment of competent subordinates.

15. Despite the forebodings of psychologists and psychiatrists, the American soldier, individually or collectively, is capable of overcoming the most heartbreaking difficulties. Given leadership and inspiration, he will demonstrate this fact as well today as at any time in the history of the United States.

not covered