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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 3D BATTALION, 152D INFANTRY
(38TH INFANTRY DIVISION) IN ZIG ZAG PASS, BATAAN
LUZON, P. I., 29 JANUARY - 14 FEBRUARY 1945
(LUZON CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Regimental Supply Officer)

Type of operation described: BATTALION IN THE ATTACK

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INTRODUCTION

The following is a treatise on the operations of the 3d Battalion, 152d Infantry, 38th US Infantry Division, in Zig Zag Pass, northern Bataan, 29 January - 14 February 1945, following an amphibious landing on the Zambales coast of western Luzon, Philippine Islands.

Although the 3d Battalion had been overseas for over a year prior to this action, this was to mark their first large scale operation against the enemy. The battalion landed in Hawaii in January 1944 and spent six months in manning the perimeter of the island of Oahu. During interim periods here all personnel attended strenuous courses at a Jungle Training Center and spent long hours in basic and advanced amphibious warfare exercises. Units, down to and including companies, sent officers and NCOs to Transport Quartermaster Schools, where they learned the intricacies involved in combat loading of assault ships. (1)

In July of that year the unit sailed to New Guinea, landing at Oro Bay, where they were to spend most of their time loading and unloading ships. While here, however, intelligence personnel were given the advantage of ideal jungle conditions and received valuable experience in long range patrolling under the supervision of Australian instructors. Transport Quartermasters also received further training on mock-ups constructed within the division area. (2)

The battalion landed in Leyte near Tacloban early in December 1944. Here the mission consisted of combat patrolling as a screening force behind the assault troops operating against the enemy trapped in the Ormoc Corridor on the western coast of the island. The troops
(1, 2) Personal knowledge.

obtained their first glimpse of the ground forces of the Japanese. Those encountered could hardly be classed as formidable, however, since they were sick, undernourished and poorly equipped from days of wandering in the mountainous jungle after escape from the giant trap laid by Lieutenant General Walter Kruger's Sixth Army troops. (3)

GENERAL SITUATION - LUZON

In order to more thoroughly acquaint the student of military history with the following operation it will be necessary to review briefly the actions which occurred on Luzon prior to 29 January 1945.

Late in December a firm foothold had been obtained in the Philippines by General MacArthur's amphibious forces. Successful operations had been carried out on Leyte, Samar and Mindoro and the stage was now set for the offensive against Luzon. Consequently, on 9 January 1945, the Sixth Army landed with I and XIV Army Corps in the Lingayen Gulf area. (4)

By 29 January 1945, XIV Corps, composed of the 37th and 40th US Infantry Divisions, was breaking out onto the central plains and the leading elements had reached San Fernando, 40 miles north of the city of Manila. I Corps was containing the Japanese forces to the north. (See Map A) (5)

South of Manila, in the vicinity of Nasugbu and Tagaytay Ridge, additional pressure was to be brought to bear against the Japanese forces with the landing, by water and air, of the reinforced 11th US Airborne Division during period of 31 January - 3 February 1945. (See Map A) (6)

In conjunction with the advance of the Lingayen forces, at 0830, 29 January 1945, the XI US Army Corps made an unopposed landing on the coastal plain of the Zambales Province. (See Map A) This force, mounted in Leyte on 26 January 1945, comprised the 38th US Infantry Division, reinforced by the 34th Regimental Combat Team of the 24th US Infantry Division, 64th Portable Surgical Hospital, 592d Joint Assault Signal Company, 603d Tank Company and other supporting troops. Regiments of the 38th Division were the 149th, 151st and 152d. (7)

(3) A-2, p. 2; (4) A-4, p. 180; (5) A-1, p. 72; (6) A-1, p. 91; (7) A-3, pp. 9, 15.

Here then, over the now dry rice paddies, in the rough, mountainous jungle and along the Zig Zag Pass, officially known as Highway 7, was the stage for the operation in which the 3d Battalion, 152d Infantry, participated. (See Map B) Initially, it was an attack that closely followed the course of action of the Japanese assault against elements of the American forces in 1942. (8)

THE MISSION

The 38th Division was assigned its mission by XI Corps on 19 January 1945, barely a week before they were to embark for the target area. In reality, however, this order was a change in mission, as the Division had been staging for another operation since Christmas Day, 1944. By the time the new order was received, preparations at troop level for embarkation were practically completed. Otherwise, the target date would have been impossible to meet.

Field Order #3, Headquarters, XI Corps, 19 January 1945, directed the 38th Division to land in the southern Zambales Province, secure the airfield in the vicinity of San Marcelino and the naval base of Subic and Olongapo. Upon completion of the initial mission the Division was then to seize and occupy the general line, Dinalupihan - Hermosa, thus sealing Bataan from Northern Luzon and denying the enemy freedom of movement between the Pampanga Plains of Central Luzon and the Bataan Peninsula.

(See Map B) (9)

THE LANDING

Order of Battle estimates listed the enemy strength in the provinces of Zambales and Bataan at 12,800, with only one known unit, the 132d Airfield Battalion, being reported. This figure was based almost entirely on guerilla reports furnished the 38th Division by Eighth Army. Predawn reconnaissance elements put ashore dispelled a portion of these reports when they brought back word that the area throughout Zambales was unoccupied.

(8) A-2, p. 6; (9) A-5, p. 22.

Naval bombardment was therefore withheld and the assault forces were greeted upon landing by cheering Filipinos. (10)

Due to the narrow beaches the plan was to land regiments abreast, battalions in column. One battalion of the 151st was to land on the left flank to protect that portion of the beach head. Since the landing was unopposed, suffice to say here that all units were on their objectives by mid-afternoon 29 January 1945. For the overall plan of landing and D-Day objectives, see Map B. (11)

The 3d Battalion, landing second in column behind the 1st Battalion, reached their objective approximately 15,000 yards inland by 1400 and took up a battalion perimeter formation northwest of the San Marcelino airstrip. (See Map B) By night the motor vehicles had been landed and brought into the perimeter. (12)

During the night the battalion commander, Lieutenant Colonel (then Major) Harold B. Mangold, received orders to proceed south at dawn on Highway 7 and go into perimeter for the night approximately 2000 yards south of the town of Castillejos. (See Map B) He was to be prepared to continue south the following morning behind the 1st Battalion. This move was accomplished by late afternoon after covering 10 miles in the broiling sun. "K" rations were replenished and the units spent their second, and what was to be their last, quiet night for days to come in battalion perimeter. (13)

Meanwhile, the 34th Regimental Combat Team, under XI Corps control, had encountered only minor delaying forces in their drive south along Highway 7, and on 31 January were in contact with Japanese forces in strength at the entrance to Zig Zag Pass four miles east of Olongapo. (See Map C) For some unknown reason the enemy had not chosen to occupy his formidable defenses constructed in Subic and Olongapo. Nor had he demolished the critical bridges around the latter town, particularly the 100-yard span across the Kalaklan River. (14)

(10) A-3, p. 115; (11) A-3, p. 14; (12) A-3, p. 14; (13) A-3, p. 14;
(14) A-3, p. 15.

THE PLAN OF ATTACK AND TERRAIN

To clear the enemy from the highway and contain his forces in the Bataan Peninsula the 152d Infantry was now directed to relieve the 34th and continue through the pass to Dinalupihan 14 miles to the east. Another regiment, the 149th, was to proceed along an old native trail 10,000 yards to the north, contact XIV Corps in the vicinity of Dinalupihan, turn back to the west along Highway 7 and strike the enemy from the rear. (See Map C) Due to the narrow trail and thick jungle, this move was to be made without motor vehicles. Resupply would be by C-47's now based at the San Marcelino airstrip captured on D-Day. (15)

Accordingly, the 1st Battalion, 152d Infantry, advanced rapidly through Subic and Olongapo on 31 January with the mission of relieving the 34th Infantry and continuing the attack. The 3d Battalion was directed to follow in column and mop up by-passed enemy strong points. (16)

The terrain which now confronted the regiment was ideally suited for the defense. To the Japanese fell the advantages of observation, cover and concealment, available fields of fire and fixed fortifications.

Highway 7 snaked its way from Olongapo across three miles of flatland and into a defile flanked by rugged, thickly forested mountains. For the next eight miles the road looped and twisted in a series of blind-angle approaches, hairpin turns and steep grades, around and between completely dominating hills. On the tops and sides of these hills the Japanese located their defensive works which consisted of intricate entrenchments, individual fox holes, tunnels and carefully sited machine gun emplacements, pill-boxes and dugouts. (See Map C) (17)

Another contributing characteristic to the narrow defensive belt was the Santa Rita River which coursed laterally on the north and then cut south, crossing the highway in rear of the enemy's main positions. The banks of the river formed vertical cliffs varying in height from 40 to 100 feet. To the south the saddle between the highway and Familiar Peak was

(15) 1-2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31, 32, 33, 34, 35, 36, 37, 38, 39, 40, 41, 42, 43, 44, 45, 46, 47, 48, 49, 50, 51, 52, 53, 54, 55, 56, 57, 58, 59, 60, 61, 62, 63, 64, 65, 66, 67, 68, 69, 70, 71, 72, 73, 74, 75, 76, 77, 78, 79, 80, 81, 82, 83, 84, 85, 86, 87, 88, 89, 90, 91, 92, 93, 94, 95, 96, 97, 98, 99, 100

covered with thick undergrowth and considered impassable. (See Map C)

Of particular interest to the student from a tactical standpoint is that very little of the foregoing was known by unit commanders, even G-2, prior to the assault on Zig Zag Pass. Maps issued were of 1/50,000 scale and photos were not obtained until 3 February. The latter revealed little, however, because of the thick undergrowth. (18)

THE ATTACK ON ZIG ZAG PASS

At 1500 on 31 January, after his units had cleared Olongapo, the 3d Battalion commander received word that the 1st Battalion was passing through the leading elements of the 34th approximately 1000 yards to the east. Shortly thereafter he was informed that both units were being subjected to heavy mortar and artillery concentrations and that fire was being received from Hill A. (See Map C) He was directed to shift his battalion north of the highway and envelop the right flank of the positions now holding up the advance of the 1st Battalion. (19)

With Company L leading, the battalion moved up a draw about 600 yards north of the highway, and as they neared the jungle the lead scouts came under fire from the northern slopes of Hill A. The company commander started his supporting machine guns forward but was directed to hold up because the 1st Battalion had patrols operating in that area. A patrol was then dispatched from Company L with the mission of contacting these patrols or the enemy. Because of approaching darkness this patrol was recalled into the battalion perimeter which was formed near an old logging site north of the highway. (See Map C) The patrol leader reported that the undergrowth was so thick that the patrol had covered less than 400 yards in two hours. During the night the enemy made two unsuccessful attempts to filtrate into the position. (20)

Another attempt by the 3d Battalion to outflank the positions on Hill A progressed slowly throughout the next day. This maneuver necessitated

(18) A-3, p. 117; (19) A-3, p. 16; (20) Personal statement, 15 Dec 47 by Lieutenant Colonel Harold B. Mangold.

hacking and chopping the thick bamboo undergrowth to make trails and by 1800 the units stopped to prepare for the night approximately 300 yards northwest of Hill A. (21)

At approximately 1830 the 152d Infantry received word from Division that an estimated battalion of the enemy had been sighted in the Pass by an artillery liaison plane. The Japanese were advancing toward Olongapo on the road in the vicinity of Hills B and C. (See Map C) This information prompted the regimental commander to order the 3d Battalion back to their perimeter of the night before to cover the sector north of the highway. The 2d Battalion, mopping up by-passed positions south of the road, was employed on the right flank. The Regimental CP Group tied in with the 3d Battalion. These positions offered excellent fields of fire to the edge of the jungle and effectively covered the highway in the event of a breakthrough of the leading battalion's positions. (22)

Shortly before 2000 the enemy artillery and heavy mortars began pounding the positions with unusual accuracy. Spasmodic infiltrations were reported from several positions on the edge of the perimeter, but it is believed that fire from Company M's machine guns and the 81mm mortars discouraged any attacks on a large scale. The fire from these machine guns also enabled the enemy to accurately locate the battalion positions in the darkness. Casualties inflicted that night on the 3d Battalion included the commanding officer of Company K, Captain Thomas Yasm; his executive officer, Lieutenant Vincent Kimberlin; the battalion S-3, Lieutenant James Cunningham; and the heavy weapons company commander, Captain James Vest. (23)

The next morning, 2 February, the battalion was ordered to by-pass the 1st Battalion which was now probing at Hill A, and continue the advance along the north side of Highway 7. In conjunction, the 2d Battalion was directed to advance south of the road. The battalion moved out with Company L leading. Minor pockets of Japanese which had infiltrated during the night were eliminated and by noon the battalion had reached a position along the

(21) Personal statement, 15 Dec 48 by Lieutenant Colonel Harold A. Mangold, (22), (23), Personal knowledge.

highway approximately one-half mile beyond the 1st Battalion CP located in a saw mill south of Highway 7. (See Map C) (24)

Here the road wound into a giant horseshoe, which, at the far end, etched into a ridge forming near vertical cliffs. To the north was a steep, bamboo covered hill mass and to the south a deep gorge cut its way toward Familiar Peak. (See Map C)

Company L, sent north through the horseshoe, was given the mission of clearing the enemy from the hill and to destroy any forces covering positions on Hill A. (See Map C) Company K was directed to dispatch a patrol to the eastern half of the horseshoe to uncover possible enemy positions which may be blocking the highway. (25)

Both efforts bore fruit. Consistently using flame throwers well forward, Company L advanced through the jungle maze and succeeded in clearing ~~weathered resistance~~ to a point approximately 300 yards north of the open end of the horseshoe. (See Map C) When it was learned that the 1st Battalion was beginning to place heavy concentrations of mortar onto Hill A, the company was ordered to rejoin the battalion in the lower bend of the road. This decision was further prompted because of the difficulty units consistently encountered in locating their positions while operating in the jungle away from the highway. (26)

Meanwhile, Company K, advancing along and north of the winding road, encountered two strongly defended pillboxes about 300 yards up the eastern shank of the horseshoe. (See Map C) The battalion assault team was immediately brought forward and the positions eliminated before operations ceased because of darkness. During the mopping up phase of this action a sketch map was captured and promptly dispatched through intelligence channels. The sketch was returned on 7 February in the form of an interpreted overlay and memorandum from the Division G-2. The overlay revealed the main enemy defenses in Zig Zag Pass west of the Santa Rita River (See Map C) and later action attested to its accuracy. Classification

(24) A-3, p. 18; (25) Personal statement, 15 Dec 47, by Lt Col Harold E. Mangold. (26) Personal statement, 15 Dec 47, by Lt Col Harold E. Mangold.

given the map by the enemy had been "Most Secret". (27)

At day light on 3 February patrols were dispatched from the perimeter to clear the booby traps and flares installed the night before for security. Preparations were being made to continue the advance to the east when the battalion commander was informed that the 34th Infantry, under XI Corps control, would pass through and relieve his unit. Upon being relieved he was to withdraw to the vicinity of his first night's perimeter near the logging site. When the 1st Battalion, 71th Infantry, passed through his position and continued toward the east, they ran into such heavy resistance and heavy mortar concentrations from Hills B and C (See Map-3) that both units became jammed in the restricted area. Due to the resultant confusion, the 3d Battalion was directed to spend the night in place. On 4 February it withdrew to the logging site where the next two days were spent reorganizing. (28)

The 3d Battalion reentered the Pass on 6 February and relieved the 2d Battalion, 34th Infantry, in the vicinity of "S" curve beyond the horseshoe. (See Map C) During the past two days the 34th had committed all three battalions in unsuccessful attempts to break through what now appeared to be the enemy's main line of defense. The Japanese had repulsed repeated tank supported infantry attacks by the use of ⁴lunge mines and had inflicted heavy casualties on the 34th during head-on assaults against Hill C. (See Map C) (29)

At 1100 on 6 February, the 38th Division Commander, Major General H. C. Jones, visited the 3d Battalion command post in the Saw Mill and directed Lieutenant Colonel Mangold to move down the highway with a section of tanks to effect a breakthrough. It was believed at the time that the enemy had pulled back from Hill C after the assaults by the 34th Infantry. (30)

Accordingly, Company 1 was ordered to advance astride the highway.

(27) From copy of memo and sketch, personal possession of Lieutenant Colonel Mangold; (28) A-8, p. 18; (29) A-8, p. 20; (30) Personal statement to USA A. M. B. Mangold

with one platoon, supported by a section of tanks, directly on the road. As the platoon and tanks rounded the last curve in the "S" and approached the defile between Hills B and C, (See Map C) they were ambushed by Japanese troops from both sides of the road. In the ensuing battle both tanks were knocked out and Lieutenant A. R. Bell, the platoon leader, was killed. The company was forced to withdraw. (31)

Realizing the folly of continuing head-on assaults against the enemy position, Lieutenant Colonel Mangold now moved Company I, with Company M's machine guns, to positions on a knoll north of the "S" curve. Companies K and L were moved to the south and east of the horseshoe bend. The 81mm mortars were placed in the "S" curve north of the highway. (See Map C) In order to fire on Hill C the tubes were given maximum elevation. At 1500, following an airstrike with Napalm bombs and a heavy artillery and mortar preparation, Companies K and L assaulted the hill from the southwest. By late afternoon the position had been overrun with the exception of a small pocket containing two pillboxes next to the road on the near slope. (32)

The enemy was not long in retaliating against this penetration of his position. While Companies K and L were engaged in mopping up on Hill C, heavy enemy 120mm mortar and artillery concentrations were received all along the "S" curve. Mortar ammunition in a trailer belonging to Company D, 152d Infantry, ignited by a direct hit during the action, added to the holocaust. Casualties to the 3d Battalion from this fire included a complete mortar section and nearly half of the battalion aid station personnel. Ambulance support from two clearing companies was required to evacuate the wounded after counterbattery artillery had silenced the enemy's guns. (33)

Regarding this action, here are a few facts which will be of particular interest to the student of military history:

1. The focal point of the enemy's fire was approximately the center of the "S" curve. (See Map C)
2. At this point a trail led north behind the knoll on which Company I had taken positions to support the assault on Hill C. All units fighting north of the highway used this trail junction to

sonal knowledge.

start their hand-carrying parties with supplies to the forward elements. Casualties also were evacuated over this trail and were picked up in ambulances at the junction.

3. Within a 300 yard radius of this junction were located the 3d Battalion CP, aid station and mortar positions.

4. The trail junction and all forementioned installations were in defilade from Hills B and C. (34)

Little time was wasted the next morning in clearing out the remaining pocket on Hill C. The battalion's 81mm mortars placed a five minute concentration of WP on the position which caused the Japanese holed up in the pill boxes and surrounding entrenchments to break and run across the highway toward Hill B. (See Map C) The machine guns of Company M opened up at 300 yards and killed 20 of the enemy caught in the open. (35)

The remainder of that day, 7 February, was spent mopping up close in positions on either side of the highway. Company I and the Company M machine guns, from their positions north of the road, assisted the 1st Battalion which had taken Hill A after three days of heavy fighting, and was now assaulting the northern half of Hill B. (See Map C) Airstrikes were continued in support of the assaulting troops. (36)

On 8 February Companies K and L moved north of the highway to permit the 151st Infantry to continue the assault toward the east, abreast of the 152d Infantry on the north. The remainder of the day and all of the next was spent in methodically mopping up on the southern half of Hill B and close-in positions. During this period numerous caves, emplacements and isolated pockets were reduced. All positions overrun were demolished to prevent further use by the enemy during his habitual night infiltrations. On 10 February the 3d Battalion was withdrawn to the saw mill area to replace the 2d Battalion as Division reserve. (37)

(34) Personal knowledge; (35) Personal statement, 15 Dec 47, Lieutenant Colonel Mangold; (36) Personal knowledge; (37) A-8, p. 24.

With the elimination of the enemy positions on Hills B and C, the advantage of terrain now fell to the assaulting troops. (See Map C) To the front the Japanese defensive belt continued to be disposed in depth but each ridge to be encountered was successively lower in elevation until reaching the Santa Rita River. East of the river the terrain again formed rugged, steep, jungle-covered hill masses. (38)

The Division commander now evolved a coordinated assault toward the east to effect a junction with the 149th Infantry, which had contacted XIV Corps in the vicinity of Dinalupihan on 5 February and had now advanced westward to within 2500 yards of the Santa Rita River. His forces driving eastward were disposed as follows: to the left flank 300 yards north of the highway, the 1st Battalion, 152d; next in line with its right flank on the highway, the 1st Battalion, 151st; south of the highway, the 2d Battalions, 152d and 151st, in that order. The 3d Battalion joined in the assault when they were again committed on 11 February to fill a gap which existed between the two battalions north of the highway. (See Map C) About midafternoon the same day the 3d Battalion was given the zone responsibility of the 1st Battalion, 151st, when that regiment was relieved and assembled at Olongapo to prepare for another mission. (39)

By nightfall 11 February, the battalion had advanced against stubborn resistance and occupied the ridge just west of a hair-pin curve in the highway. (See Map C) Companies K and L joined perimeters on the hill next to the road while Company I occupied the ridge 150 yards to the north. That night Company K accounted for 50 enemy dead by tossing hand grenades down the slope of the hill into the Japanese as they shouted and chattered in preparation for an attack against the position. (40)

With Companies I and K abreast, K on the right, the battalion continued the attack on 12 February. Company L followed the assault and mopped up in caves and by-passed positions. The leading elements advanced methodically behind mortar and artillery preparations to reach

(38) Personal Statement (39) Ibid, pp. 21, 24-25 (40) Personal Statement, Lieutenant Colonel Kenneth Brewer, BN 2d Officer, 23 Dec 47.

night positions within 600 yards of the blown bridge over the Santa Rita River. (See Map C) During that day vast stock piles of rice, ammunition, clothing dumps and a dump of new enemy flamethrowers were captured. (41)

MISSION ACCOMPLISHED

On 13 February the battalion was given the mission of crossing the Santa Rita River and seizing the high ground on the north side of the highway. (See Map C) Concurrent with this attack, Company G, 152d Infantry, was to dispatch a wire-laying patrol to the north and east to contact the 149th. The battalion commander, after a preliminary reconnaissance, decided to smoke the hill mass with his 81mm mortars and cross the river behind this screen with two companies. (42)

Both missions were accomplished. At 1120 Company G contacted Company A, 149th, and tied in with the latter's wire line, thus providing communication between the two forces. By late afternoon Company L was in possession of the objective north of the highway. The advance had not been easy. Enemy snipers were active during the steep climb and frequent halts had been necessary while patrols dislodged them from their camouflaged posts. Company L had been stopped in their ascent on the left and while this opposition was being contained, Company K by-passed to continue the attack. After knocking out three pillboxes sited to cover the highway to their south, the company began preparing perimeter positions on the objective, about 500 yards east of the river. (See Map C)

While the men were constructing their night defenses, fire from two machine guns swept the area from a position just outside the perimeter. Lieutenant Kimberlin, recovered from wounds received earlier, and now commanding the company, grabbed a BAR and slipped into the thick undergrowth to silence the machine guns. He was joined by an enlisted man armed with an automatic carbine. The two men succeeded in outflanking the position (41) Personal knowledge; (42) Personal statement, 23 Dec 47, Lieutenant Colonel Brewer.

and killed the 12 members of the crew. The remainder of that night was spent in comparative quiet. To the east, approximately 800 yards, the leading elements of the 149th were in perimeter. (43)

On 14 February, Company K advanced toward the east with the mission of contacting the 149th Infantry. South of the highway, Companies E and F, 152d Infantry, had crossed the river and were attached to the 3d Battalion for operational control to assist in the joining of the two forces. Company K proceeded with caution through the thick jungle to avoid becoming involved in a fight with their own units. At 1330, after meeting only minor resistance, the company made contact with the 2d Battalion, 149th, approximately 300 yards north of the highway and 1200 yards east of the river. (See Map C) Mopping up along the road was concluded by 1600 that afternoon and the battle of Zig Zag Pass was over. (44)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

Considering the fact that this operation marked the first combat for the majority of the participating units, it is the opinion of the author that the destruction of the Japanese forces in Zig Zag Pass was accomplished in a minimum of time. And while many casualties were no doubt caused by a lack of recent intense training in jungle warfare, after a study of the enemy's scheme of defense in the Pass it is not inconceivable that the Japanese could have held out indefinitely against a vastly superior force. Be as it may, by 14 February the 38th Division had accounted for 1846 enemy dead and taken 18 prisoners, thereby removing the greater part of the 39th Japanese Regiment from the Order of Battle. (45)

For comparative purposes, the casualties in the 3d Battalion during this operation included 16 officers and 221 enlisted men, killed or wounded; two officers and 12 enlisted men, died of wounds, and one officer and 64 enlisted men, non-battle injuries. A large percentage of the non-battle wounds were bamboo cuts, sprains and broken

(43) Personal Statement, 23 Dec 47, Lieutenant Colonel Brewer; (44) I-3, p. 20; (45) I-3, p. 40, 41.

bones. Only 12 of the latter evacuations resulted from battle fatigue or psychiatric disorders. (46)

Several factors which contributed to the success of this operation are apparent to the student:

1. The selection of an initial landing site away from the main defenses of the enemy enabled the assault troops to gain a firm foothold without the confusion and difficulty of reorganization which accompanies an opposed landing.
2. The decision to envelop the narrow defensive belt in Zig Zag Pass by sending the 149th Infantry around to the north and east to strike the enemy from the rear, was a simple, but wise maneuver. This movement effectively divided the enemy's forces and prevented him from bringing the full strength of his positions to bear against the attackers at any one time.
3. Relieving the 34th Regimental Combat Team of any responsibility in the Corps beachhead and sending it rapidly south on Highway 7, caught the enemy off guard and prevented him from manning his prepared defenses along Subic Bay.
4. The capture intact of all the main bridges between the beachhead and Zig Zag Pass by this maneuver reduced the period of operation by several days.
5. The rapid capture of Olongapo permitted the amphibious forces to divert incoming supplies from the San Narciso area to the Port of Olongapo on D plus three, thus insuring a shorter supply distance for unit transportation.

After initial contact in force was made with the enemy in Zig Zag Pass, it is believed repeated orders to drive through along the highway cost the 3d Battalion and other units needless casualties. While little other than that gleaned from guerilla reports was known of the enemy

defenses initially, it was logical to assume that the Japanese had excellent observation all along the highway and that critical points would be accurately plotted for artillery and mortar concentrations in his planned defensive fires. The captured enemy sketch map and later action proved this to be true.

The 3d Battalion commander, Lt. Colonel Harold H. Mangold, had this to say of the operation, "For the first six days we were not given any boundaries, objectives or zones of action; our only orders being to continue the attack to the east. It seemed to me, they (higher headquarters) were trying to break through the pass by brute strength alone, giving no attention to maneuver. They piled up three and four battalions along the road to await commitment when there was only room for one." (47)

More time for reconnaissance should have been given the 152d Infantry when they were directed to proceed approximately ten miles, pass through the 34th Infantry and continue the attack on 31 January 1945. The difficulties which caused both relieved and relieving units to be jammed up by fire from the enemy could have been alleviated by directing relief in place by a company at a time and permitting sufficient time for the battalion and company commanders to make a reconnaissance prior to an attack.

Unit commanders were limited in map reconnaissance by the dearth of large scale maps and aerial photographs. The latter were not issued prior to the attack and difficulty was encountered in locating positions and making map studies of the terrain from the 1/50,000 scaled maps available for the western half of Zig Zag Pass. (48)

Napalm bombs and White Phosphorous shells proved very effective in removing the thick foliage growing over the enemy defenses. Pillboxes and covered caves were easily singled out and assaulted once the natural camouflage was burned away. The morale effect, both to the enemy and our own troops, cannot be overlooked in the use of these potent munitions. During the operation 193,050 gallons of Napalm, 243 tons of bombs

(47) Personal statement of Lt. Colonel Harold H. Mangold, 3d Battalion, 152d Infantry, 1st Cavalry Division, 117.

and 1, 728,000 rounds of calibre .50 ammunition were expended in air strikes. (49)

Despite the fact that the men and officers of Company K were tired and exhausted after taking their objective east of the Santa Rita River 13 February, the company commander can be criticized for not sending out a screening force while the unit was preparing its perimeter for the night. The prompt dispatch of patrols into the jungle, in addition to having one man on guard while two men dug on the three-man slit trenches, was usually done when preparing for the night, and the same procedure in this situation would have prevented the enemy from getting near the company perimeter.

The enemy was quick to reoccupy ground he had lost once the assaulting troops withdrew for any reason. The 34th Infantry gained a foothold on Hill C on 4 February but withdrew to the "S" curve to reorganize after suffering heavy casualties from its head on assault against the position. The Japanese quickly took advantage of this and reoccupied the entire hill which had to be retaken on 6 February. On one other occasion, 4 February, the 1st Battalion, 152d Infantry, gained the top of Hill A after suffering heavy casualties, but was forced to move back because the battalion intrenching set was not taken along. This position was retaken the following day by the same unit against stubborn resistance. (50)

An observation on the previous training of the 3d Battalion must be noted here. While its contribution to the war effort was no doubt great in the performance of stevedore duties at Oro Bay, New Guinea, late in 1944, it is believed that many valuable training hours were taken from the troops and junior officers. These hours could have been spent profitably in the nearby jungle in the perfection of unit tactics.

To summarize, nothing new in the way of enemy tactics or weapons was encountered in this operation.

(49) A-3, p. 11; (15) Personal statement, 10 May 47, Lt Col Mangold.

the Japanese would have recognized the same fanatical night "banzai" charges; infiltrations which were characterized by shouting and the calling of names of American troops from the surrounding jungle, and the stubborn, determined defense put up by the individual enemy soldier as he stayed in positions which had been by-passed. It is the opinion of the author that the enemy's defenses laid in the mountainous terrain of northern Bataan presented one of the most difficult to be encountered by American troops in the Pacific Theatre. The men of the 3d Battalion learned many lessons in their initial combat and probably many of those mentioned below will serve as re-emphasis to the combat veteran.

LESSONS

1. Troops used in jungle warfare require special training.
2. Fire and maneuver are prime considerations in jungle warfare and development for an attack is a lengthy process.
3. Jungle restrictions on observation affect reconnaissance, employment and range of weapons, and the use of supporting fires.
4. Speed is essential in gaining possession of critical bridges and terrain features.
5. Captured documents and prisoners of war are a prolific source of enemy information.
6. In attacking a strong defense in depth limited objectives must be given.
7. Holding ground once gained is less costly in lives than retaking the same ground after a withdrawal.
8. Large scale maps are essential to unit commanders during an operation in a restricted area.
9. Intrenching equipment must be immediately available once an objective to be occupied is gained.
10. Napalm and White Phosphorous are effective in revealing positions hidden by natural vegetation.

11. Covering forces are essential to security during the occupation of an objective.

12. Psychiatric disorders among combat troops fighting a fanatical enemy can be effectively reduced by good leadership.

MAP "A"

LUZON SITUATION 29 JAN 45





