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THE LUZON CAMPAIGN
9 JANUARY 1945 - 4 JULY 1945

Lt. Orvil T. Smith, Infantry
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO II

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INTRODUCTION

The Southwest Pacific Forces were on the move toward the final objective - the home islands of Japan. One major step in this move was the invasion of Luzon. A general review of the situation prior to this invasion will aid in understanding the importance of Luzon to the war effort. During 1944 many operations had been launched against strategically located islands along the communication routes used by Japan in her control of the many and widely separated bases gained in the war. The success in stopping and turning back the Jap invasions to the south had changed the tactics of the war in the Pacific from a defensive to an offensive method of warfare. This change in tactics was further insured by the capture of such strategic areas as New Guinea, the Central and Northern Solomons, the Carolines, the Mariannas, Leyte, and by Naval victories in the Battles of the Philippine Sea, and Leyte Gulf.

The need for bases from which to operate large Naval units and land based aircraft had been a primary consideration in mapping the offensive war against Japan. Since "leapfrog strategy" had proven so successful in all other operations in the island warfare against Japan, only those strategic operations necessary to establish and support such bases were planned in the overall advance north along the "Island Route". The mop-up of bypassed enemy forces not in the direct route of communication could be accomplished later at the convenience of the Allied Forces.

The overall plan utilized all possible forces of ^{the} Army, Air, and Navy to speed up ^{the} offensive action in an effort to disrupt enemy communications, isolate all major enemy forces, and prevent reinforcement of any stronghold that would slow up the advance. Because of the great distance involved, many amphibious operations were supported by Navy Air in close support of

ground units until sufficient land bases could be prepared and utilized.

By 1 January 1945, Eighth Army Headquarters had moved into Leyte in preparation for operations against the enemy in the central and southern portions of the Philippines. The landing on Mindoro afforded bases from which Eighth Army could feint toward Southern Luzon as a screen for the main effort to be made at Lingayen Gulf on the west side of Central Luzon by Sixth Army on 9 January 1945. (1)

SITUATION OF THE ENEMY

(See Sketch No.1)

According to information available, the enemy forces on Luzon numbered 235,000. Intelligence estimates indicated approximately 50,000 troops in the Central Plains area with approximately 26,000 in the Manila area. Strong enemy forces were suspected in the vicinity of the planned beachhead area with a concentration of forces in the San Fernando (La Union) area. Units identified were the 8th, 103rd and 105th Divisions, the 58th and 61st Independent Mixed Brigades, and the 2nd Armored Division. (2) Enemy navy and air strength had been reduced in effectiveness to small scale operations of a suicidal nature. (3) The possibility of enemy reinforcements in land, air, and naval strength from the home islands of Japan and the continent was given some credence both by the U.S. Seventh Fleet and the U.S. Sixth Army when planning the assault on the beaches of Lingayen Gulf. The possibilities of enemy air attacks were considered probable from fields located in a radius of 100 miles of the landing beaches. Such fields as Lingayen, ^aVigan, Cabanatuan, San Fernando and others were in easy striking distance, with Clark Field and its satellites, Nichols, Nielson and others considered as definite danger areas.

(4)

(1) R-1, p. 10; (2) R-1, p. 8 - 10; (3) R-1, p. 5; (4) R-4, p. 2.

TERRAIN

The island of Luzon has four important terrain features to be considered in planning an offensive operation. A large central plain, extending east and south from the Lingayen area to Manila is bordered by mountain ranges; the east by the Sierra Madre, and on the west by the Zambales. North of the Lingayen area, the Island is very mountainous with deep valleys running north and south. Many defensive positions had been prepared in all mountains in anticipation of an invasion. These positions were frequently made by improving numerous natural caves. Many all weather streams could be used to good advantage by defending forces in all sectors of the island. Good communication lines were restricted to a very limited number of improved highways and railroads in the more open terrain of the island, except for connecting links through some of the mountain passes. All known highways were extremely important to either the defender or attacker because of difficult cross country movement and the seasonal rains which restricted movement of equipment to hard surfaced roads. The road net in the vicinity of Lingayen was considered of primary importance. This fact helped to influence the selection of landing beaches in the Lingayen area. (5)

GENERAL SITUATION

The operations on Luzon Island, Philippine Islands, were designated as the "M Operations". The first, designated as the "M-1" (Lingayen Gulf) was assigned to the Sixth Army.

The Sixth Army, commanded by General Walter Krueger, had been directed to plan and coordinate the amphibious movement and landing in the Lingayen Gulf area. Planning for this operation had to be carried on while Sixth Army was still committed to operations on the island of Leyte.

(5) R-1, p.8.

Units designated to participate in this operation were widely scattered throughout the many areas recaptured from the Japanese in the Southwest Pacific. This disposition presented a tremendous problem in logistics and operational planning. The U.S. Third and Seventh Fleets were to transport and support the operation in conjunction with Allied Air Forces. (6) In view of the slow progress in the preparation of air fields on Leyte and Mindoro, both the Allied Air Forces and Allied Naval Forces recommended the postponement of S-Day from 20 December 1944 to 9 January 1945. Plans for coordination with all forces in support of the operation was delegated to the Commanding General, Sixth Army. (7)

MISSION

Sixth Army's missions were "(a) to land in the Lingayen - Damortis - San Fernando (La Union) areas of Luzon; (b) to establish a base of operations, including facilities for uninterrupted naval and air operations; (c) to advance southward and seize the Central Plains - Manila area; and (d) by subsequent operations, as directed by General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area, to establish control over the remainder of Luzon." (8)

TROOP LIST OF SIXTH ARMY FOR THE LUZON CAMPAIGN

Hq. Sixth U.S. Army

Hq. I Corps (initially with the 6th and 43rd Inf. Div. assigned)

Hq. XIV Corps (initially with the 37th and 40th Inf. Div. assigned)

6th Infantry Division

25th Infantry Division (initially in Army reserve)

37th Infantry Division

40th Infantry Division

43rd Infantry Division

158th Inf. Reg. Combat Team (initially retained under Army control)

13th Armored Group (initially retained under Army control)

(6) R-1, p.1; (7) R-1, p.5; (8) R-1, p.5.

Due to information of three additional enemy divisions arriving on Luzon the following units were assigned to Sixth Army (9) to arrive in the Lingayen Gulf area as follows:

112th Cavalry RCT S / 18
1st Cavalry Div S / 18
32nd Inf. Div. reinforced S / 18
33rd Div. reinforced S / 30
41st Div. reinforced S / 32

FINAL PLANNING

S-Day missions of I Corps were: "To land on S-Day in the Dagupan - Mabilao area of Lingayen Gulf with the 6th and 43rd Divisions abreast and attacking vigorously, to destroy hostile forces encountered, seize and secure the Army Beachhead within the Corps zone of action; to protect the Army left flank; to seize and hold the Dagupan bridge until relieved by elements of the XIV Corps; to establish and maintain contact with XIV Corps; and to be prepared to seize and secure crossings of the Agno River within the Corps zone of action (10)."

S-Day missions of the XIV Corps were: "To land on S-Day in the Lingayen area of Lingayen Gulf with the 40th and 37th Divisions abreast; to attack aggressively, to seize and secure the Army Beachhead within the Corps zone of action; to protect the right flank of Sixth Army; to establish and maintain contact with I Corps; and to be prepared to seize and secure crossings of the Agno River within the Corps zone of action." (11)

All intelligence agencies worked in close coordination with the Navy to effect the fire plans for pre S-Day "softening-up".

(9) R-3, p.2; (10) R-1, p.7; (11) R-1, p.7.

Navy and Air preparations on all installations in the Lingayen Gulf area had been in progress since S - 2. On S-Day, the beaches to be assaulted were shelled with rockets and guns of naval boats.

The over water movement was effected on schedule with all elements of the Task Force arriving in Lingayen Gulf by the morning of S-Day. Enemy surface opposition had caused no damage to the Task Force, however enemy air attacks had sunk three ships, seriously damaged thirteen, and slightly damaged fourteen. Most of the aerial attacks were of a suicidal nature. (12)

ASSAULT LANDING - M-1 OPERATION

(See sketch No. 2)

Following the final heavy naval bombardment of beaches, I Corps landed with two Regimental Combat Teams abreast on beaches in the Mangaldan - San Fabian - Mabilao area of Lingayen Gulf beginning at 0930 on 9 January 1945. No enemy opposition was encountered on the beaches, however in the afternoon some enemy artillery fire harassed unloading operations of the Regimental Combat Team on the left. By the end of the day, I Corps had occupied an area approximately 20,000 yards in width and 8,000 to 9,000 yards in depth. (13)

The landing of XIV Corps was uneventful except for heavy surf and a "wet" landing in the Lingayen - Birmaley area. As in I Corps, two ^{inshore} Divisions landed abreast, each with two reinforced Regiments abreast, each Regiment with two Battalions abreast. By 2400 S-Day, XIV Corps had pushed inland, seized Lingayen Airfield and continued inland without opposition. By 2400 the beachhead was extended approximately 6,000 yards deep by 14,000 yards wide. (14)

Both I Corps and XIV Corps continued to expand the beachhead. Very little contact had been made with the enemy except on the Army left flank (12) R-1, p.15; (13) R-1, p.17; (14) R-1, p.18.

(I Corps Sector) in the Mount Alaya - Amlong area. The landing beaches in the XIV Corps area became "unusable" after S-Day because of heavy surf. The unloading of the XIV Corps equipment and supplies in the I Corps area caused congestion of the beaches and lateral road net leading into XIV Corps area.

By 16 January 1945, the Army Beachhead was secured and regrouping was accomplished for the continuation of the Army Mission. Due to the strong enemy forces believed to be in the mountainous area north of the beachhead positions, it was necessary to hold the left flank line with a strong force. Units (25th Inf. Div., 13th Armored Group, and 158th RCT) ^{where?} in Army reserve landed 11 January 1945 in the vicinity of Mabilao and proceeded to predetermined assembly areas.

THE DRIVE INLAND

The 158th Regimental Combat Team was committed on the left flank and after two days, was attached to I Corps and further attached to the 43rd Division. To prevent a counterattack in force on the Army left flank and to allow I Corps to continue the drive inland and south to the Central Plains, Sixth Army attached the 25th Division to I Corps with orders to employ the 25th Division in a drive to secure the key road net in the Urdaneta - Binalonan - Pozorrubio area. (15) This mission was completed by 18 January 1945.

From continued stiff enemy resistance and intelligence reports, it was evident that enemy forces were in such strength on the left (north) flank of I Corps as to jeopardize the beach supply positions in the army area if constant pressure was not maintained against them. Enemy resistance to the advance of the right Division of I Corps and to XIV Corps was very light.

To take advantage of the enemy weakness on the right, Sixth Army
(15) R-1, p.21.

directed XIV Corps to advance across the Agno River and drive on Clark Air Center. Since Army reserve was not strong enough to prevent a successful counterattack should the enemy gain the initiative on the left, both I Corps and XIV Corps were directed to maintain contact by extending the right flank of I Corps and slowing down the left flank of XIV Corps. In conjunction with this drive, I Corps was directed to continue the attack on all enemy positions along the Army left (north) flank.

Action by XIV Corps from S-Day (9 January 1945) to 22 January 1945 was characterized by very scattered enemy resistance and extensive patrolling to determine the location of strong enemy defenses. By 22 January, XIV Corps had completed preparations for the drive on Clark Air Center. Because of vulnerability of the left flank, it was decided to drive forward with the 40th Division on the right, and echelon the 37th Division along the left flank. (See note*)

Heavy enemy resistance was encountered in Bamban. Enemy positions were situated in the mountainous area west of Highway 3 (used as the guide for the route of advance) necessitating a slow and costly operation to dislodge cave positions, defended by an enemy determined to hold out at all costs. After three days of heavy fighting, the enemy had been pushed back into the Zambales Mountains about 5000 yards, allowing communications to continue along Highway 3.

On the left flank of XIV Corps, the 37th Division had advanced to an area south and east of Fort Stotsenburg - Clark Air Center. From the position occupied by XIV Corps, a coordinated attack on Clark Air Center was to be launched exploiting an enemy weakness in the zone of action of the 37th Division.

I Corps operations against strong enemy positions along the left (north) flank were successful in capturing the commanding ground in the

* For routes inland and disposition of forces see Sketch No. 3.

Rosario area. This vantage position was considered adequate to insure effective defense of the Army base in the Lingayen Gulf area.

With the arrival of two Divisions (32nd Inf. Div. and 1st Cavalry Division reinforced by the 112th Cavalry RCT) in the Lingayen Gulf, Sixth Army planned to launch an offensive to the south with Manila as the objective. To accomplish this plan, the 32nd Infantry Division was attached to I Corps. With the 32nd Division, I Corps would be able to continue the offensive on the left (north and east) and launch a drive to the southeast in the Central Plains.

The 1st Cavalry Division reinforced by the 112th Regimental Combat Team was landed, and assembled in the Guimba area. This mobile force and the scheduled landing of XI Corps (8th Army) just north of Subic Bay on 29 January 1945, would allow Sixth Army to launch the drive for Manila down the Central Plains without delay.

Operations in the XIV Corps zone of action on 28 January 1945 included the capture of Clark Air Center and an attack on Fort Stotsenburg by the 37th Division.

The capture of San Manuel (on the east flank) was significant in that the Japanese committed the greater part of a tank regiment in an attempt to hold the road net emanating from this town. This armored force was one of the largest employed by the enemy in defending Luzon. Most of the Japanese 2nd Armored Division was committed in very small (platoon or company) counterattacks. (See note)

Operations of Sixth Army against the enemy positions impeding an all out drive on Manila were speeded up in an effort to isolate enemy strong-points and consolidate the routes of communication. The opposition in and around Fort Stotsenburg was light, however many enemy land mines and

NOTE: Many armored vehicles were dug in and used as pillboxes, even when adequate supplies were available to the enemy forces. (16)

(16) R-1, p.27.

artillery fire opposed the advance, but the 37th Division succeeded in driving the enemy into the mountains west of Fort Stotsenburg by 30 January 1945.

THE M-7 OPERATIONS

The M-7 Operation was launched on 29 January 1945 by XI Corps (under Eighth Army control) on beaches in the San Antonio - San Narcisco - San Marcelino area. The mission of the XI Corps was to secure the airfield in the vicinity of San Marcelino, the Naval Base on Subic Bay, and drive across Northern Bataan Peninsula to make contact with elements of XIV Corps. (See sketch No. 4). The combat units involved in this operation were the 38th Division, 34th Regimental Combat Team and other combat and service units. (17) The landing and seizure of all towns in the vicinity was unopposed. The following day XI Corps passed from Eighth Army to Sixth Army control with no change in the assigned mission. All phases of the mission were accomplished with light enemy resistance except in the Zig Zag Pass area on Highway 7. Fighting in this area continued against well dug in enemy positions in mutually supporting caves and pillboxes.

THE LANDING AT NASUGBU

On 31 January 1945, the 11th Airborne Division, less one Parachute Regiment, landed at Nasugbu against light enemy resistance, due principally to surprise. (See sketch No. 4) Strong enemy resistance was encountered on 2 February 1945 along the road leading north. This opposition was knocked out in a one day battle and the drive toward Manila was continued. A parachute landing ^{where?} of the 511th Parachute Regiment in front of the advancing Division increased the speed of the column and brought the Division up to strength. By 8 February 1945, contact had been made with elements of the XIV Corps (1st Cavalry Division) in the outskirts of Manila. The (17) R-1, p.30.

Division passed from Eighth Army to Sixth Army control on 10 February 1945 while in the southern outskirts of Manila.

CAPTURE OF MANILA

(See Sketch No. 4)

Clearing of the Fort Stotsenburg area released the 37th Division (less one Regimental Combat Team employed in destroying the enemy forces which had withdrawn to the eastern foothills of the Zambales Mountains west of Fort Stotsenburg) for the drive on Manila. Another force, the 1st Cavalry Division reinforced, was committed in a drive south toward Manila along Highway 5. By the morning of 2 February 1945, the 1st Cavalry Division had made contact with the 37th Division at Flaridal.

Action by I Corps had advanced the Army left flank to include Highway 5 at San Jose. This action further restricted any north-south movement of the enemy and placed the Corps in a position to better protect the left flank of XIV Corps.

Elements of the 6th Division bypassed an enemy strongpoint at Mmoz on the north and south sides. Here, again, the enemy committed a small armored force (one company) in a hopeless defense of an area that was easily bypassed and could be reduced at the convenience of the attackers.

The drive on the city of Manila was spearheaded by the 1st Cavalry Division in an enveloping move through Santa Maria and Novaliches to the northeastern section of Manila (Grace Park). Because of the employment of many elements of the Division to protect the long line of communication, only a small force could be used in an offensive against the strong defenses in the city.

The attack of the 37th Division on the right was slowed down by blown bridges and strong enemy delaying action, but the outskirts of Manila was reached by 4 February 1945. The following day, Bilibid Prison was captured and a strong line was established along the Pasig River.

Enemy defensive positions had been well organized throughout the entire business district. Almost all enemy held buildings were defended from all floors with careful coordination of fire at street intersections, and in some buildings enemy artillery was emplaced in the second floor. Strongest defenses within the city were in the Intramuros (old Walled City).

Prior to 7 February 1945 elements of the 1st Cavalry Division had captured Novaliches Dam and the Balara Filters which supplied a large part of the Manila water supply. On 7 February 1945, the assault crossing of the Pasig River was made by the 37th Division. The crossing was not accomplished by the 1st Cavalry Division until 10 February 1945. The boundary between Divisions was established with the business district and the Intramuros in the 37th Division zone of action. By 12 February 1945, the 1st Cavalry Division had reached Manila Bay and made contact with the 11th Airborne Division driving in from the south. 1st Cavalry Division was occupied for the next four days in driving the enemy back into the Intramuros and clearing the coastal area.

The 37th Division was slowly driving the enemy into Intramuros by an enveloping move to Manila Bay on the south and then north to drive on Intramuros in a pincer movement.

The 11th Airborne Division had captured the Cavite Naval Base, Nichols Field, Ft. McKinley Annex, and established a line to the east extending from South Manila to Laguna de Bay at Haganoy by 17 February 1945.

Due to the strategic importance of opening Manila and Batangas Bays to Allied shipping, (18) Sixth Army reallocated units to XIV Corps and ordered this Corps to launch an all out offensive against the enemy in the mountains east of Manila and the southeast area of Luzon (south of Manila). The 37th Division was released from XIV Corps control and assigned to Sixth Army Headquarters for the final assault and mop-up of Intramuros and the

(18) R-1, p.39.

Port area. The regrouping of units was designed to shorten communication lines and consolidate zones of actions to effect maximum control. Hard continuous fighting had cleared Manila and the adjacent areas of enemy by 4 March 1945.

On 21 February 1945 XI Corps assumed tactical responsibility for all operations in the Bataan area, the Zambales Province, and the area west and northwest of Fort Stotsenburg. The 40th Division, operating in the Fort Stotsenburg area, passed to XI Corps control 21 February 1945 with the mission of continuing the mop-up of this area.

OPERATIONS OF I CORPS DURING THE BATTLE FOR MANILA

*Needs
my reference.*

While drives to the south and east had met with the most success in the zone of action of I Corps, units on the north and northwest flank had been successful in establishing control of commanding terrain and road nets in the mountainous area along the north and east of the Central Plains Corridor. During the month of February 1945, continuous fighting along the entire front in I Corps zone had determined the strong points and plan of defense in North Luzon. Key to the enemy defense system was the Balete Pass - Santa Fe area on Highway 5 and the Villa Verde Trail. Hard continuous fighting in the Rosario area by the 43rd Division and 158th Regimental Combat Team made it highly desirable to relieve these units for a rest and reorganization. This was made possible on 10 February 1945 by the arrival of an additional Infantry Division (33rd) in the Lingayen Gulf area. The need for a highly mobile reserve in Sixth Army was seen; as stiff enemy resistance all along the northern boundary was encountered by all units engaged in driving into the mountains north of the Central Plains. On the right flank of I Corps, the Sixth Division had driven so far south that control of this division was transferred to XIV Corps, then operating east and southeast of Manila. Other unit assignments placed the 43rd Division and 158th Regimental Combat Team in Army reserve when relieved by the 33rd

Division.

Operations in the northeast sector of the Central Plains had opened the road net to the east shore of Luzon. With the capture of Rizal and Bongabon, the left flank of Sixth Army became the north front and the Philippine Sea divided the east flank into a north and south sector. In the mop-up of this general area, I Corps had defeated the Japanese 2nd Armored Division and destroyed almost all enemy armor encountered. This action was considered unusual since all of the armored strength was used in small "piecemeal" counterattacks of company strength or less. Many of the tanks were dug in and used as strong gun emplacements. (19)

After successful operations in the east Central Plains, I Corps turned north and on 22 February 1945 launched an all out offensive against enemy forces in Northern Luzon and the Cagayan Valley. Slow progress was made on all fronts because of well fortified positions that were mutually supporting. Main routes of advance were the Kennon Road, Villa Verde Trail and Highway 5. (See sketch No. 6)

THE ISOLATION OF BATAAN AND THE ASSAULT ON CORREGIDOR

(See Sketch No. 4)

Operations of XI Corps during the period 6 February to 4 March had knocked out enemy resistance in the Zig Zag Pass area and opened Highway 7 to traffic and completed the isolation of Bataan from the Zambales Mountains and the Central Plains. A landing in the Mariveles Bay by one Regimental Combat Team and a drive along the east coast of Bataan by another Regimental Combat Team was designed to seize control of Bataan Peninsula and permit the opening of Manila Bay to Allied shipping. Subsequent operations, supported by Naval and Allied Air Forces, were planned for the capture of Corregidor and other small islands in the Bay. The offensive action on Bataan followed a heavy bombardment by the Navy and (19) R-1, p.44.

Air Forces. The drive down the east coast was launched on 12 February 1945 by elements of the 1st Regimental Combat Team (released by I Corps for this operation) with half the distance to the southern tip of Bataan being covered in one day.

On 15 February 1945, the landing was made in Mariveles Bay against only light enemy resistance. The following day, this force linked up with the 1st Regimental Combat Team which had driven in from the north.

The assault on Corregidor was launched by air on 16 February 1945 with a drop of the 503rd Regimental Combat Team on the "Topside" parade field and golf course. A beach landing was effected at San Jose by the 3rd Battalion, 34th Infantry. Enemy on the island outnumbered any "wild guess" of the Allied Headquarters, resulting in a much delayed mop-up of the island. Organized resistance in the many cave emplacements was not reduced until 27 February 1945.

Enemy resistance on Bataan was very light, characterized by enemy forces withdrawing into the mountains. All enemy positions were prepared for defense to the west. Organized enemy resistance ended by 20 February 1945.

Sixth Army directed the reassignment of the 40th Division from XIV Corps to XI Corps on 21 February 1945. Following heavy bombardment by Air Force B-24s, the 40th Division launched a coordinated attack on 23 February 1945 against organized enemy positions west of Fort Stotsenburg. After two days of fighting, enemy forces were reduced to unorganized enemy pockets.

FACTORS AFFECTING NEW PLANS

By 4 March 1945, organized enemy resistance was divided into three general sectors of Luzon: Southern Luzon - east of Manila south to San Bernardino Strait; Western Luzon - Bataan, the Zambales mountain area and the small coastal plains west of the Zambales; Northern Luzon - that

portion lying north of Lingayen Gulf, Central Plains, and Dingalan Bay.

Sixth Army was in a very good position to continue offensive action against all three enemy forces simultaneously, since all Army zones of action were connected by good road nets. Further action on Luzon can best be followed by discussing each sector separately.

OPERATIONS IN SOUTHERN LUZON

(See Sketch No. 5)

Regrouping of units within XIV Corps was effected by Sixth Army on 5 March 1945 with XIV Corps responsibility for the area east of Manila passing to XI Corps and units employed in this area (6th Division and 1st Cavalry Division) were to be transferred to XI Corps. Since the operations of the 38th Division in Bataan had decreased to very small unit engagements, elements of the 38th Division relieved the 43rd Division in the area west of Fort Stotsenburg. XI Corps was directed to effect the relief of the 1st Cavalry Division by the 43rd Division on or before 15 March 1945. The 1st Cavalry was to prepare for a drive to the south with early relief of the 158th Regimental Combat Team contemplated.

A drive east and southeast by the 11th Airborne Division and the 158th Regimental Combat Team opened up the Batangas and Balayan Bays with only light resistance except for strongpoints in the Mount Muntingtabig area on the Calumpun Peninsula. The 11th Airborne Division, in a drive south, parallel to the 158th Regimental Combat Team was held up by heavy enemy resistance in the hill masses east and southeast of Lake Taal. Considerable time was consumed in knocking out these fanatically defended "strongpoint type" defenses. In operations previously scheduled, the 1st Cavalry Division cut all communication lines between the enemy forces in the mountains east of Manila and the enemy south of Laguna de Bay.

Continued operations south of Laguna de Bay further proved the disorganization of forces. On 23 March 1945, the 1st Cavalry Division

relieved the 11th Airborne Division and the 11th Airborne Division moved south and west to relieve the 158th Regimental Combat Team. Sixth Army planned a landing in Legaspi area utilizing the 158th Regimental Combat Team reinforced, in this operation. Authority for the coordination of plans with Naval and Air Forces necessary to land and support this operation was delegated to the Commanding General, XIV Corps. All plans were coordinated, and neutralizing preparations by Air and Navy units preceded the landing on 1 April 1945. The landing was unopposed and movement inland was speeded up since only light resistance was encountered in the vicinity. The only strong resistance in the Ricel Peninsula was centered in a hill mass around Mount Cituinan just southeast of Camaling. By 17 April 1945, all enemy resistance was reduced in the Sorsogan Province (bordering the San Bernardino Strait on the west). All islands in the waters adjacent to the zone of action of the 158th Regimental Combat Team were declared clear of enemy by 14 April 1945.

With contact imminent by the drive of the 1st Cavalry Division south and the drive north by elements of the 158th Regimental Combat Team, Sixth Army released control of the 158th to XIV Corps on 22 April 1945.

Resistance south of Laguna de Bay was bitter where organized enemy positions were encountered, but the 11th Airborne and 1st Cavalry Divisions pushed south rapidly, overrunning opposition or bypassing strongpoints to be mopped up by small forces detached enroute.

Since operations in this sector were of a mop-up nature, Sixth Army directed XIV Corps to assume control of operations in the Infanta area and continue mop-up operations against all enemy in Southern Luzon except the mountainous area east of Manila which was in the zone of action of XI Corps. This mop-up operation continued through 15 June when XIV Corps was relieved of all responsibility in Southern Luzon. All units in Southern Luzon came under the control of XI Corps with missions to continue

mop-up operations in their assigned zones.

Enemy positions in the mountains east of Manila were defended by a well organized, well equipped force. Enemy emplacements and fortified positions necessitated slow and costly assaults by the 6th and 43rd Divisions of XI Corps. Prior to the relief of XIV Corps in this area, enemy strongpoints were known, but XI Corps continued to probe these fortifications for weak points. The northern and southern flanks had been determined and strong offensives launched along the entire line by 15 March 1945. XI Corps continued to push forces to each flank in an effort to speed up operations but the nature of the terrain and enemy suicidal defense of all positions prolonged the capture of such important objectives as Ipo Dam. By systematic reduction of the many strong points in the "Shimbu Line" (so called because of the Japanese leader) and the employment of all available forces, the enemy positions in this area were reduced or isolated into small strongpoints. On 17 May 1945 XI Corps captured Ipo Dam intact and reduced all other strong enemy opposition in this area.

OPERATIONS IN WESTERN LUZON

Simultaneously with operations in the mountains east of Manila, XI Corps directed the drive of the 43rd Division against strong enemy positions in the mountains west of Fort Stotsenburg. On 11 March 1945, XI Corps directed the 38th Division to take over the zone of action of the 43rd Division. The 43rd Division then reverted to Sixth Army control. Remaining enemy resistance in this area was disorganized from lack of communication between strongpoints but each position was self sufficient for a sustained defense. All enemy resistance in this area was not reduced until 30 April 1945. Extensive patrolling and one enemy strongpoint reduced was the extent of operations in the Zambales Mountains and the Bataan Peninsula.

XI Corps launched a number of small scale shore to shore operations to clear the small islands in Manila Bay while continuing operations in the Zambales Mountains. These forces encountered typical enemy resistance emplaced in caves on islands that were still occupied. Enemy positions had to be reduced almost individually but all islands were captured and Manila Bay was completely cleared by 16 April 1945.

OPERATIONS IN NORTHERN LUZON

(See Sketch No. 6)

According to captured enemy documents, General Yamashita (Commander of all enemy forces on Luzon) planned to employ the bulk of his forces in the mountains of Northern Luzon and the Cagayan Valley. (20) Further plans indicated the launching of a strong counterattack against the left flank of American forces at a time when lines of communication were extended south through the Central Plains.

Because of the stiff and continuous drives launched against these elements to the north by I Corps after the initial landing in Lingayen Gulf, the enemy did not launch such a counterattack. After Highway 5 was cut by elements of I Corps, the last enemy communication route to the south was closed. This forced a change in plans for the forces in Northern Luzon. General Yamashita planned to defend key control points in the Balete Pass area and approaches along Highway 11 to the city of Baguio.

By 5 March 1945 plans were made by I Corps for an all out coordinated drive on the Balete Pass by the 25th Division on Highway 5 and the 32nd Division on the Villa Verde Trail. On the left, the 33rd Division was to continue the drive on Baguio along Highway 11 and north along the west coast of Luzon in an effort to gain contact with guerrilla forces (commanded by Col. Russel Volckman, USA) operating in the northwest area.

(20) R-1, p.29

This Guerrilla Force (Northern Luzon) had been active since S-Day under Sixth Army control in Northern Luzon and the northern end of the Cagayan Valley. Sixth Army directed I Corps to employ this force in a drive east southeast toward Bontoc situated on Highway 11 north of the enemy stronghold in the Baguio area.

Operations against the Balete Pass and Villa Verde Trail positions were slow because of terrain unsuited to resupply and cross country movement, heavy rains, and fanatical enemy resistance in strongly fortified enemy defenses.

Steady advances, though slow, were made by all elements of I Corps. The 33rd Division had pushed a battalion north to contact the Philippine Guerrilla Forces, Northern Luzon, at San Fernando (La Union) on 20 March 1945. This linkup gave Sixth Army control of the west coast and the north coast east to the Cagayan River. To exploit the gains made by the 33rd Division in the San Fernando (La Union) area, Sixth Army released the 129th Regimental Combat Team of the 37th Division to I Corps control on 26 March 1945. Continued attacks by elements on I Corps' left (west) flank had moved this flank to within artillery range of Baguio by 6 April 1945. Advances by the Guerrilla Forces, Northern Luzon, had located the enemy north flank along Highway 4. As the drive for Baguio continued, it became evident that the enemy was withdrawing from the Baguio area leaving a strong covering force to defend the city.

Operations on the right of I Corps in the Balete Pass area had continued with slow and costly advances. Utilizing heavy air bombardment and napalm, the 25th Division captured Balete Pass on 13 May. The attack was continued to capture Santa Fe and the junction of Villa Verde Trail with Highway 5.

On the left, I Corps directed the 33rd Division to make a final assault on the city of Baguio and continue the drive toward the Cagayan Valley.

Sixth Army decided to put as much pressure as possible against the enemy weakness on the left, so a request for release of 37th Division (in garrison at Manila) was made to Headquarters Southwest Pacific Area. The request was granted and this division passed to I Corps control by 11 April 1945. I Corps committed the 37th Division in the Baguio area to speed up operations on the left flank.

By 5 May 1945, the Baguio area was considered clear of enemy, so I Corps directed the 33rd Division to relieve the 37th Division in this area in preparation for committing the 37th Division on the right front. The Philippine Guerrilla Forces, Northern Luzon, had continued to drive against enemy positions north of Baguio near Besang Pass on Highway 4. This was determined to be the enemy north flank except the defenses in the Northern Cagayan Valley. This Force was driving into enemy territory with marked success on all areas except the Cervantes - Besang Pass area. Operations against enemy communication routes were reducing enemy effectiveness and more than made up for the poor supply and lack of adequate supporting weapons. In the overall plan for breaking the enemy defensive positions into isolated sectors, Sixth Army assigned this force to I Corps control for better and continuous coordination.

By the end of May, organized enemy resistance in the Balete Pass - Imugan (Villa Verde Trail) - Santa Fe area was broken and the concentration of the 37th Division in this area for a drive in exploitation of this breakthrough, was complete. I Corps directed all forces to increase pressure in all zones of action to prevent the enemy from shifting reserves to bolster any weak points found. To insure this plan, Sixth Army released the 6th Division to I Corps.

During the period 1 June to 9 June, all units of I Corps advanced against weakening resistance. The strong point on the northwestern front (Besang Pass) was weakening in front of the drive launched by the Philippine

Guerrilla Forces, Northern Luzon. This drive overran the enemy positions on 13 June and continued along Highway 4.

The advance of the 37th Division up Highway 5 was entering lower Cagayan Valley by 14 June 1945. With the 6th Division moving into the Bagabag area, Sixth Army directed I Corps to launch a drive up the Cagayan Valley with the objectives of reducing enemy forces in the valley and the capture of Aparri.

In the Bagabag area, the 6th Division was continuing mop-up operations and drives to the west and northwest. These drives were held to slow gains, and each advance indicated the intention of the enemy to defend his mountain stronghold to the end.

The drive up the Cagayan Valley was fast developing into a race against a thoroughly disorganized and retreating enemy. To block the last enemy escape route from the Cagayan Valley, a small Ranger Force (known as the Connolly Force) had been sent on an enveloping move along the west and northern coasts to capture the town Aparri and block the northern escape route. To reinforce this force, Sixth Army directed an Airborne Battalion Combat Team be formed from the 11th Airborne Division and dropped in the vicinity of Aparri on 23 June 1945. This drop was very successful and once landed, I Corps combined the two forces under one command for the drive south down Cagayan Valley. Link up with the 37th Division was made on 27 June 1945. Extensive mop-up operations continued in the Cagayan Valley until the enemy forces were destroyed or scattered into small groups. By 30 June, the Cagayan Valley was open to transportation. A large number of enemy had escaped into the mountains east of the Cagayan Valley but these forces were disorganized, poorly equipped and were not capable of resisting an organized operation.

PLAN FOR MOP-UP OF LUZON

In compliance with orders of Headquarters Southwest Pacific Area, Sixth Army regrouped forces leaving the 37th Division in the Cagayan Valley, the 6th Division driving into the mountains of the Kiangan stronghold, the 32nd Division driving into this same area from the southwest and the Philippine Guerrilla Forces, Northern Luzon, driving on this stronghold from the north. As of 0001, 1 July 1945, all missions of I Corps in the north and XI Corps in the south passed to the XIV Corps. (For disposition of friendly and enemy forces and zones of action on 1 July see Sketch No. 7) All responsibility for offensive action and administration of forces committed to action as of 1 July 1945 passed from Sixth Army to Eighth Army. Responsibility for all tactical operations on Luzon was delegated to XIV Corps by Eighth Army. Because of the scattered location and stable zones of action, XIV Corps conducted operations in the mop-up of small enemy groups by use of strong patrols while a coordinated attack was planned against the stronger positions. Use of air striking power was employed to a great extent and after a short drive, almost all strong enemy resistance was reduced. By 4 July action against the enemy was moving very rapidly to a close.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In the analysis of the Luzon Campaign, many very important factors are worthy of comment.

no analysis Planning for an operation on such a large scale must be sound strategically, tactically, and logistically. This operation was very well planned and carried out with the minimum change in plans once the operation began. *How?*

no analysis Coordination and cooperation was attained between the Air, Ground and Naval Forces throughout the entire operation. *How?* Close coordination and cooperation between all units and echelons of command was a direct

contribution to the success of the operation with the minimum loss of time, materiel, and personnel.

Good internal routes of communication afforded Sixth Army a decided advantage over the limited routes of communication between strategically located enemy forces throughout the island.

The poor evaluation of terrain in some instances cost the enemy much needed time in shifting his forces to better defend an area or reinforce a weak spot in his defensive positions. An example is the Agno River, a natural barrier, which was defended by very small enemy groups. This river defense would have denied the Central Plains to Sixth Army for sufficient time to allow a strong counterattack on the left flank.

The enemy's use of armor was a direct violation of a very essential principle of war - that of mass. By committing the Japanese 2nd Armored Division piecemeal and digging tanks in for use as pillboxes in defense, the principles of mass and offensive were violated.

Lack of timely consolidation of enemy forces allowed the Sixth Army to cut routes of communication between large forces and thereby isolate each group, preventing mutual support either by fire or reinforcement.

The waging of ^{defensive} war by defense cannot bring victory to the defender, yet no large scale counterattack was launched when all tactical principles dictated such a move at the time Sixth Army lines of communication were extended to the limit in the Central Plains.

Logistical support of an operation such as this requires constant planning and close coordination. The effectiveness of the logistical support is evident by the constant shifting of units to bring continuous pressure against the enemy on widely separated fronts. The fact that offensive tactics were employed on all fronts over terrain that was adverse to troop movement and resupply without a serious breakdown in supply is sufficient evidence of careful, continuous, and efficient logistical supply.

LESSONS

This operation in itself is a lesson in combat leadership from Army level down to very small unit leaders. Some of the more obvious lessons are:

1. Careful planning and coordination are essential to success in launching an invasion on enemy shores whether it be large or small.
2. Cooperation between Army, Navy, and Air Forces is essential when a minimum of time, equipment and personnel is available.

3. The value of air superiority was demonstrated in the overwater move to Luzon. Loss to Allied Forces from enemy air was very costly (3 ships sunk and 13 seriously damaged); more significant because enemy air power was reduced to very small scattered forces in this area.

4. Sustained defense is costly in personnel and equipment with no appreciable gains by the defender unless time is more important than all units involved.???

5. Wide variance in terrain requires careful consideration and flexibility of plans at all echelons of command.

6. Training in almost all types of warfare must be considered in all unit training, since units employed in the Luzon Campaign encountered almost all types of operations. (Airborne, assault amphibious landings, mountain fighting, jungle warfare, open terrain where movement and armor can be employed to great advantage, river crossings, attack on a fortified city, fortified positions and many others).

7. Valuable information can be obtained from guerrilla forces operating behind enemy lines.

8. Friendly people of an enemy occupied country can be used to great advantage as guides, scouts, and reinforcements for fighting forces with great success.