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**THE PROBLEMS OF SMALL INFANTRY UNITS ON DETACHED SPECIAL  
MISSIONS.**

- (1) THE OPERATION OF THE 2nd BATTALION, 19th INFANTRY (24th Inf Div) NORTH WEST OF BULALACAO, MINDORO, P.I.  
21-28 JANUARY 1945
- (2) THE OPERATION OF THE 414th INFANTRY (Less 2nd Battalion), (104th Inf Div) IN THE SAALE RIVER OFFENSIVE AND THE CAPTURE OF HALLE, GERMANY
- (3) THE OPERATION OF THE 3rd BATTALION, 20th INFANTRY (6th Inf Div) IN A COMBAT PATROL IN NORTHERN LUZON  
5-22 JULY, 1945
- (4) OPERATIONS OF THE 65th REGIMENT (22nd Chinese Division) IN THE BATTLE FOR TARO, 29 DECEMBER 1943-30 JANUARY 1944

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## INTRODUCTION

The use of small, special forces operating behind enemy lines, is as old as warfare itself. An example of this type of operation is taken from early Greek history in the now familiar story of the Trojan Horse. You will remember that the Greeks had laid seige to Troy for many years but were unable to take the city. Finally, the Greeks manufactured a huge wooden horse, so designed that it would hold a hundred men and a stock of provisions. The Greeks then struck tents, marched down to the sea, and, as far as the Trojans could see, gave up the seige and departed, leaving the horse, with its hundred men inside, before the walls of the city. A Greek, left behind by the departing force, talked the Trojans into bringing the huge horse into the city. Long cables were attached to the horse and it was dragged into the city through a breach in the walls. That night, the Greek warriors descended from the horse, and captured and held strategic points in the city till the Greek main force, which had returned during the night, could disembark, march up from the beach and complete the capture of the city of Troy. (1)

As the tactics and strategy of warfare changed throughout the years, the purpose of special missions behind the enemy lines changed to include operations to seize and hold critical terrain until the main forces could move up, operations conducted for intelligence purposes, operations designed for destruction, operations designed to disrupt supply and communications lines, and operations to harass and demoralize the enemy as much as possible. (2)

Every student of military history is familiar with the exploits of "Jeb" Stuart's Cavalry in his daring raids behind the Federal lines during the Civil War.

(1)A-1,p.79; (2)A-8,p.18-19.

There are many instances in World War I where small, self supporting units were given special missions behind enemy lines.

The importance of this type of operation is great as evidenced by the fact that during World War II, all forces engaged used this type of warfare to some extent and in the United States and British Armies, we saw the organization of the U. S. Rangers and British Commandos, respectively. These were units specially trained for detached missions behind the lines of the enemy. The exploits of these units during the last war make up some of the most thrilling stories of heroic accomplishment of the war. (3)

Many times during the last war, the doughboy was called upon to undertake a mission of this type, and to the regimental, battalion or company commander in the line, a detached special mission, call it a raid, call it the operation of a task force, call it a long range patrol, meant that certain immediate problems presented themselves which were accentuated by the words " detached---special---mission." (4)

The purpose of this monograph is to discuss the problems of small infantry units on detached, special, mission, to determine the principles and techniques which apply, to show several historical examples of World War II, analyze and criticize them in the light of adherence to principles, and, lastly, to present certain conclusions based on the historical examples and on principles and techniques. This monograph will deal primarily with the problems encountered on a regimental level or below with emphasis being given to the infantry battalion.

For our purpose, let us say that a detached, special mission given to a force of this size may generally be classified as a raid. (5) FM 7-20 (Draft) describes a raid as, "An attack by a

(3)A-9 and A-13,p.64; (4) Writer's opinion; (5) Writer's opinion

force to accomplish a specific purpose within the enemy position, with no intention of holding the territory invaded. Raids may be executed within or beyond supporting distance of the parent unit, either in daylight or darkness. When the area to be raided lies beyond supporting distance, the raiding force is organized and operates as a task force". (6)

What, then, is a task force? Again FM7-20 (Draft) defines a task force as, "A temporary grouping of units under one commander for the accomplishment of a specific operation or mission". (7)

It is true that if we confine ourselves to the term "raid" in connection with an operation, we are, according to the definition going to, "Accomplish a specific purpose within the enemy position, with no intention of holding the territory invaded". The writer does not feel that normally, a task force of battalion (or similar) size is capable of seizing and holding ground for any length of time without support from higher headquarters, and that in an operation behind enemy lines, the force, as long as it operates alone, must either be continually moving, or plan an immediate withdrawal after accomplishing its mission. (8)

TYPES OF MISSIONS Before we set down any list of principles and techniques, it would be well to see what type of mission our task force might be called upon to perform;

1. Reconnaissance--A mission undertaken solely for the purpose of getting information. (9) With a task force the size of an infantry battalion, this type of mission would ordinarily be performed in conjunction with one or more types listed below.

2. Diversions and deceptions--These would be missions in direct or indirect support of larger operation. They might include attacks on isolated targets or on the flanks or rear of the enemy. (10)

(6)A-2,p.147; (7)A-2,p.142; (8)Writer's opinion; (9)A-9,p.531; (10)A-9,p.531 and 533.

3. Harrassing raids--Missions of this type would be undertaken to demoralize the enemy behind his own lines, to shoot up everything possible in a given area, and generally play upon the nerves of the enemy. (11)

4. Sabotage raids--These might include raids to destroy certain key installations such as factories, bridges, communication centers, munitions and supply dumps. (12)

These various missions may be accomplished not only by the foot march of the task force, but by an amphibious<sup>b</sup> landing, a motor march, or an air drop, and resupply may be accomplished by air. These facts are important because the commander's decision will often depend upon the method of getting to the objective and the possibility of resupply.

Now, with the definition of a task force and the description of a raid in mind, plus a knowledge of the type of mission we might reasonably expect the force to accomplish, we will discuss the principles and techniques which will affect the operation of our task force in enemy territory.

#### PRINCIPLES (13)

FLEXIBILITY The task force must be flexible in that it must be able to attack or defend in any direction at any time. (14)

ECONOMY OF FORCE The task force must have sufficient force to reach the objective and accomplish the mission. To use more than the minimum force necessary, however, reduces the flexibility and control of the unit and lessens the probability of surprise. (15)

SIMPLICITY We say that in training, and especially in combat, plans must be simple and easily understood. Since this is true, it is even more important that plans for a detached special

(11)A-9,p.531 and 535; (12)A-9,p.531 and 536; (13)A-3,p.15;  
(14)A-2,p.143; (15)A-2,p.143.



mission be understood down to the last man. In a normal situation in the lines, when plans are too complicated, they can be remedied by several methods. However if the commander of a task force does not keep his plans simple enough so they can be understood by everyone concerned, he has no remedy. Once he is behind enemy lines and has committed his force, that is it. He either wins or loses right there, and he may lose because his plan was not clear to his subordinates. (16)

COOPERATION The commander of a task force will usually have special units attached to him for the accomplishment of certain types of missions. Willing co-operation between all units of the force, both organic and attached, is absolutely essential for the successful completion of the mission. The principle of co-operation applies not only to the units but to the individuals of each unit. (17)

SECURITY The task force commander must be certain that continuous, all-around security is provided for, both during movement and while the force is halted. (19)

SURPRISE To surprise the enemy is important in any type of offensive or defensive combat. However, to a small unit operating behind enemy lines the principle of surprise is so important that without it an operation of this type probably will fail. (20)

THE OFFENSIVE Wars can be won by offensive action only. Similarly, our task force can accomplish its mission only by positive, quick offensive action. (21)

MASS The principle of mass applies to any unit, the composition of which includes two or more individuals. We apply the principle of mass whenever we, "concentrate superior forces, at the decisive place and time in a decisive direction." (22)

(16) Writer's opinion; (17) Writer's opinion; (18) Writer's opinion  
(19) A-2, p.145; (20) Writer's opinion; (21) A-2, p.146; (22) A-3, p.25.

### TECHNIQUES

The principles of war as outlined above, apply in and type of combat, The extent that they apply is dependent upon the technique employed by a commander in any given situation, toward the accomplishment of his specific mission. (23) Their application is manifested in the manner in which the unit accomplishes the missions of such functions as supply and evacuation, control, communication, attack and defense, co-ordination, and many others. It follows then that if we discuss these elements, which in reality are the commander's plan, together with the technique of the execution of that plan, we will actually tie in the relationship between principles and techniques as they apply to our task force. (24)

ORGANIZATION AND EQUIPMENT The composition of the task force will vary depending upon the type of mission assigned to it. Usually the commander of a task force of battalion or regimental size will be told what units will be attached to him for the completion of his mission. (25) If he does not consider the force adequate, he should make request to higher headquarters for additional personnel, special weapons, or supplies which he feels necessary. In any event, his force must be balanced and self sufficient enough to complete his mission. (26)

The organization of the force must be such as to permit maximum flexibility without hindering the accomplishment of the mission. In a battalion sized force, the commander obtains this flexibility by making the rifle company the nucleus of his command and making attachments to the rifle company so that he has several balanced units each capable of attacking or defending at any time any place along his column. (27)

The commander will usually prescribe the individual equipment

(23)A-2,p.152; (24) Writer's opinion; (25)A-2,p.144; (26)A-2,p.143; (27)A-2,p.143.

and weapons to be carried. He will probably include a large number of light automatic weapons, such as sub-machine guns. In an operation where absolute secrecy is demanded, the men may be ordered to carry knives or blackjacks. If the operation is to be conducted at night, special means of identification may be necessary. (28)

PLANNING AND CO-ORDINATION The order from higher headquarters will usually state the mission, the task force commander, the units which will compose the force, a general direction of movement, and a time limit for accomplishing the mission. It will then be left to the task force commander to accomplish all of the detailed planning, except in a mission which involves an air drop of the troops near the objective, or a journey over water to make an amphibious landing. In this case higher headquarters will ordinarily take care of co-ordination with the air force, or the navy if the navy provides water transportation. (29) Items which the force commander must consider in his planning are as follows:

1. Routes--The commander and his staff must make a detailed reconnaissance either ground, air, or by map to determine the route which the force should take. In some cases it may be necessary, due to the nature of the terrain, to split the task force and use several routes to the objective. In moving in enemy territory the commander must consider the fact that the best routes probably will not be the safest because the enemy will be using them also. He should consider very strongly, the possibility of using secondary roads and trails in an effort to gain complete surprise. Routes which afford good access to hostile mechanized attack should be avoided. (30)

2. Tactical Groupings-- Due to the fact that the task force is

(28)A-2,p.151; (29)A-2,p.144; (30)A-2,p.144.

vulnerable to attack from any direction, it is important that the commander arrange his subordinate units into complete fighting forces, insofar as possible, without losing sight of the overall accomplishment of the mission. (31) If the task force is split and more than one route is followed to the objective, this is even more important.

3. Supply and Evacuation--The problem of supply and evacuation is in direct proportion to the type of mission to be accomplished and the length of time necessary. If the task force is to move on foot to the objective, and several days are necessary to accomplish the mission, it will be necessary to increase the ratio of supply and medical personnel and material. It will also be necessary to furnish more protection to supply and evacuation installations from among the combat units. (32) The possibility of resupply by air must be considered by the commander if supplies will be difficult or impossible to move forward with the unit. (33) Friendly natives may be used by a force of this type as carriers, where the task force moves on foot to the objective.

4. Communication and Control-- Ordinarily the task force will be required to maintain communication with higher headquarters. This will normally be done by radio. Radio communication between subordinate units of the force should be maintained at all times. If the force sets up a temporary base of its own, wire communications should be set up, however radio will probably be the chief means of communication. Pyrotechnics may be carried for use in emergency. (34) If the force commander does not have enough radios of the type he believes necessary, he should not hesitate to request more radios from higher headquarters.

Because a task force the size of a battalion or regiment

(31)A-2,p.144; (32)A-2,p.145; (33)A-5,p.1 and 10; (34)A-8,p.25.

will form quiet a long column while on the move, the commander will have to de-centralize control to a large extent to his subordinate leaders, maintaining contact with them by radio. This makes it necessary that all subordinate commanders are fully aware of the complete overall plan of the force commander. After the objective is reached, the commander must be in such a position as to keep himself informed of the action as it progresses in order to make any changes in his plan, and to initiate a withdrawal after the mission is accomplished. (35)

5. Withdrawal--Plans must be made ahead of time to cover a route of withdrawal and a rallying point behind the enemy lines. Routes of withdrawal should be easily followed and rallying points should be easily identifiable. (36) It is an absolute necessity that each individual in the task force know the routes of withdrawal and the rallying point for the force as a whole because of the possibility of small units and individuals of the force becoming separated during a fight for the objective, or being cut off at any time during the approach to the objective. (37)

6. Security--The fact that the task force is vulnerable to enemy attack from any direction at any time makes the need for security of paramount importance. Where possible on the march, the commander should employ all reconnaissance elements available to the force, well out to the front and flanks. The reconnaissance elements should be provided with radio communication with the task force headquarters. Each subordinate unit must further be responsible for its own security. Before the force as a whole moves into any critical area along the route, the area should first be thoroughly scouted by security elements. While the task force is halted, a

(35)A-2,p.146; (36)A-8,p.22; (37) Writer's opinion.

perimeter defense is mandatory with outposts pushed well out in all directions and provided with radio communication to task force headquarters. (38)

EXECUTION OF THE PLAN All that is left for the commander to do now is to put his plan into operation, move out, complete his mission and return to his friendly lines. On paper it is simple but in combat it is another story. The success or failure of the plan depends to a great extent on the initiative and common sense of the commander and his subordinates down to the last man in the force. There are, however, certain points which the commander should keep in mind that apply to the accomplishment of the mission.

1. Surprise--The success or failure of a mission behind enemy lines will depend on whether the enemy is surprised. Surprise may be gained by one of two methods and the commander must decide which method will best suit his particular situation. He can gain surprise by moving rapidly, and hitting his objective before the enemy can concentrate his forces to stop the accomplishment of the mission. To use this method, the task force must be powerful enough to fight quickly through opposition encountered on the route back to friendly lines. The second, and best method if it is possible to use it, is to move secretly, by night if possible, keeping the enemy unaware of the presence of the task force until the objective is reached, and after the mission is complete, to withdraw in secrecy, by-passing any enemy force and not engaging in combat unless it is absolutely necessary to complete the withdrawal. (39)

2. Reserve--As in all types of combat the task force commander should hold out a reserve which is large enough to influence the action in a decisive manner. (40) This fact should be taken into

(38)A-2,p.145 and Writer's opinion; (39) Writer's opinion; (40) A-2,p.146.

consideration by higher headquarters when assigning a mission to the task force. (41)

3. Supporting Weapons--Because the commander tries to make balanced fighting units out of his subordinate element, supporting weapons are normally attached to these subordinate units. This is also necessary because often in a mission behind enemy lines, the subordinate units may be used as separate, independent forces in certain types of missions. (42)

4. Air Force Support--Because the task force on an unsupported mission<sup>W</sup> will not have the benefit of artillery from division or corps, the Tactical Air Force may be called upon to fly request missions in support of the task force. If air force assistance is available, it should be used, and a tactical air control party should accompany the task force. (43) The task force commander should not forget this valuable aid to the accomplishment of his mission and should not hesitate to request this support if he believes it will aid in the accomplishment of the mission.

Let us now look at four historical examples of the operation of detached special forces during the last war. Two of these operations are on a battalion level, taken from the Pacific Theater, one operation on a regimental level, from the European Theater, and one operation from the China, Burma, India Theater involving a Chinese Regiment in Burma.

(41) Writer's opinion; (42)A-2,p.146; (43)A-2,p.146.

THE OPERATION OF THE 2ND BATTALION,  
19th INFANTRY (24th Inf Div )  
North West of Bulalacao, Mindoro, P.I..  
21-28 January 1945 (44)

In October 1944, the U.S. Army attacked the Philippine Islands by making amphibious landings on the island of Leyte. The next step in the invasion of these Pacific Islands was the capture of the island of Luzon.

To help prepare for the invasion of Luzon, the 19th Regimental Combat Team of the 24th Infantry Division along with other units was withdrawn from the lines on Leyte and on 15 Dec. 1944, this group, known as the Western Visayan Task Force made an amphibious landing on the western shore of the island of Mindoro, a large island south of Luzon. The mission of the Task Force was to secure a beach-head near the town of San Jose and enlarge and hold the beach-head while engineer elements prepared an air base to be used in the invasion of Luzon.

It had been reported that there were some 200 Japanese troops in the vicinity of San Jose however the landings were un<sup>o</sup>apposed,<sub>A</sub> and for the next month the beach-head was enlarged and the engineers worked on the construction of air strips.

The 19th Infantry at this time held the southeast sector of the beach-head. Reports had been received that the Japanese garrison was located about five miles inland from the town of Bulalacao on the southeastern side of the island, and on 16 Jan., 1945, an officer of the 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry, and three guerrillas had been sent to determine the general location of these troops. He had reported by radio on the 19th of January that he had located the force in the general area as mentioned above.

On the evening of the 19th, the executive officer of the 3rd Battalion was ordered to report to Regimental Headquarters where

(44)A-16, Used as the only reference for this example.



the Regimental Commander informed him that on the 20th he would assume command of the 2nd Battalion. (From here on, in this narrative, we will be concerned with the 2nd Battalion only). The new commander of the 2nd Battalion and the Regimental Commander then reported to the Chief of Staff of the Task Force where information was given them concerning the Japanese garrison. They were told that the force had been located, that it was well equipped, armed with several machine guns, and had a powerful radio transmitter. The only maps of the area were a supply of 1/200,000 Manila Coast and Geodetic Surveys of the entire island of Mindoro. Task Force Headquarters knew nothing of the nature of the terrain. After receiving this information, the Battalion Commander returned to his CP. At this time, the Battalion was short 2 platoons of "F" Co which were on special missions.

At 1200, 20 January, the Battalion Commander received warning orders to prepare to move his Battalion to Bulalacao. He reported immediately to Task Force Headquarters where he was given verbal orders to proceed by water that afternoon to Bulalacao and from there to find and destroy the enemy force north of Bulalacao. He would be given ten days to complete the mission. He would be provided with an SCR 193 radio and two operators and would report daily to Task Force Hq. The Air Force would be available to fly request missions.

After receiving his orders, the Battalion Commander returned to his CP and issued orders to his staff and company commanders. These were substantially as follows;

1. Location of the enemy--vicinity of Bulalacao.
2. Mission as stated above.
3. "H" Company would exchange four of its heavy machine guns, and would leave four 81 mm mortars behind.
4. Battalion Headquarters Company would leave the antitank

platoon behind as a rear detachment plus one man from each company.

5. On arrival at Bulalacao, one platoon from "E" company would outpost the town and set up security patrols. The rest of the Battalion would immediately unload supplies and move them to dumps which would be designated by the Battalion S-4.

While the Battalion Commander was issuing his order, an officer from Philippine Civil Affairs Unit reported that he had been ordered by Task Force Headquarters to accompany the Battalion. He carried with him money with which to hire civilian labor. The Battalion obtained 20 miles of W-150 wire and 3 extra SCR 300 radios from Service Company which were delivered to the boats.

The Battalion moved out at 1500 (See map A) on the 20th in five LCIs and one LCM, and arrived at Bulalacao early on the morning of the 21st, where it was met by the officer from "E" Company who had originally been sent to find the Japanese unit. He had succeeded in engaging two manyan guides. He was unable to give an accurate account of the distance to the enemy force because he had been led to them on a round-about route. He stated that the terrain was rough but passable. He had located an OP and had observed the enemy all during the morning of the 19th.

The Battalion Commander decided to move out as soon as possible and in the meantime, the Philippine Civil Affairs Officer was instructed to locate and hire as many men as the S-4 might need to act as carriers. The few civilians who came into the town during the day were very much surprised to see the troops, which indicated that their presence was not known outside the town. A civilian was located to accompany the Battalion as an interpreter. This man was the principal of the local school, and a graduate of the University of the Philippines. He proved very valuable to the Battalion later.

The Battalion Commander called a meeting of his staff and

company commander about 1200, told them that the Battalion would move out at 1300 and would bivouac that night near a coal mine. (See map A) The present outpost, a platoon from "E" Company would move out as advance guard followed in 15 minutes by the balance of "E" company which would also have security out. Following, would be "G" "Hq", and "H" companies with "F" Co bringing up the rear and acting as rear guard. A three man patrol would be sent out from "E" company to reconnoiter the Battalion right flank. The A and P Platoon would remain at Bulalacao to provide security for the SCR 193 radio and the ammunition and supply dumps. It would also guard the supply trains. The 2nd Platoon of "H" Company would leave its heavy machine guns with the A and P Platoon and would furnish additional ammunition bearers for "H" Company. Wire would be laid from Bulalacao as the main body moved forward. One of the extra 300 radios was given to the leader of the advanced guard.

There were two trails leading toward the objective, one generally following the Bulalacao River valley and the other, further west, leading through the mountains, (See map A) After much argument between the two native guides as to which was the better trail, the Battalion Commander decided to move up the valley trail because supply would be easier and movement would be faster.

At 1300 the advance guard moved out followed at 1315 by the main body. The guide who had suggested using the valley trail was with the advance guard. By 1630 the Bn. had moved about four miles and the advance guard commander reported that he was about two miles from the coal mine. He stated that his trail frequently ran along the river. As the Battalion Commander had not seen the river during the march, and as the terrain was becoming increasingly rougher, he became aware of the fact that the guide had led

the main party along the mountain trail. Not wishing to lose any more time he decided to move on and have the advance guard bivouac at the coal mine and rejoin the Battalion the next day. About 1800, the Battalion came into an area which was suitable for bivouac, and a perimeter defense was set up.

The Battalion Commander decided that the next day, the 22nd of January, the Battalion would remain in bivouac, and reconnaissance patrols would be sent out to determine how far the unit was from the enemy, and to check the trails to the front. Patrols would also be sent out to reconnoiter the flanks. The S-4 was called by phone and instructed to bring up 1 1/3 rations the next day.

At 0630 the morning of the 22nd, the patrols moved out. Up till this time no enemy had been seen by any members of the Battalion. However about 1300, a single shot was heard on the right of the trail in front of "E" Company. The Company Commander took a half squad to investigate and found that the two man outpost had disappeared.

They were finally located and said that while they were eating their lunch they were fired upon by a Jap and had hurried back to tell the company commander. This was a serious blow to the Battalion Commander for he felt that surprise was now lost. As a precaution, the S-2 contacted the former advance guard of the Battalion which was coming up in the rear of the main body following the telephone wires. He told the Lieutenant in command to be careful and to join the Battalion as soon as possible.

About 1500, the scouts of this party spotted a group of Japs in a clearing. They appeared to be very careless and the Lieutenant had an opportunity to deploy his <sup>5</sup> squads and open up with everything he had. After a short fire fight, thirteen dead Japs were counted. The Lieutenant thought he had counted fourteen

in the group. (The Battalion S-2, using his head, later sent an officer back to the area and the fourteenth Jap was found about fifty yards from the rest of the group. He had been wounded and had crawled this distance before dying).

An officer led patrol, one which had been sent out that morning, reported about 1700 and the patrol leader stated that he had located the Jap Force and had observed them for about an hour. He estimated that it would take the Battalion till 1600 the following afternoon to reach the area. He also stated that he had not heard the firing from the rear of the Battalion earlier that afternoon.

The S-2, believing that the single Jap who surprised the outpost was from the same group that was later wiped out, was of the opinion that the Main Jap Force had not been alerted and could still be surprised.

The Battalion moved out at 0630 on 23 January and proceeded until late afternoon at which time it halted near the house of several natives. At this time the interpreter from Bulalacao was called forward and learned from the native chief that it was his farm and village that the Japs were occupying. The interpreter stated that he knew of the reputation of this chief and that any information he gave could be relied upon.

The chief had been to the Jap bivouac area and had seen five machine guns. There were three trails leading into the bivouac area. The Japs had an OP on the river valley trail which they manned only during the day. The village was located on high ground to the northeast. With this information supplied by the chief, the Battalion Commander decided to put a block on all three trails by moving into position that night and attacking the next morning along the trail on which the unit was now located. The chief agreed to guide whatever troops were to go into position that

night. This having been decided, a suitable bivouac area was selected (See map B) and the Bn. commander and his staff, together with the interpreter and the chief, sat down to form detailed plans for the attack. (At this point, the writer would like to quote, as given by the author, the description of the above mentioned trails) "The trail the unit was on continued to the northeast for about 1000 yards and then climbed a steep hill where it joined the by-pass trail. To reach the valley trail TJ#2 (See map B) it would be necessary to move down the present trail and turn right at the next trail junction (TJ#4 See Map B). From trail junction #1 turning to the left would lead to the northwest and trail junction #3."

After discussing the situation, the following plan was decided upon. (Again quoting from the author)

- "1. Block trail junction #2 by sending one rifle platoon of "G" Company reinforced by "G" Company's light machine guns to that trail junction via the by-pass trail at 2000, 23 January, 1945.

2. Block trail junction #1 with "G" Company.

3. Block trail junction #3 with "F" Company which would (a) act as a reserve, (b) protect the left flank of the battalion and cover the rear of "E" Company, and (c) catch any enemy by-passed by "E" Company in the attack.

4. Attack the enemy rear with "E" Company, which was at full strength, southeast from trail junction #3.

5. "H" Company's mortars would support by fire from positions along the by-pass trail between trail junctions #1 and #3.

6. The Battalion Command Post and Aid Station would be located along the by-pass trail between trail junctions #1 and #3.

The supply train had arrived that evening from Bulalacao with 1 1/3 ration. The Battalion had on hand 1/3 ration and

with the rations brought in by the supply train, would have enough to last through breakfast of the 25th of January.

A message was sent to Task Force Headquarters at San Jose through the base at Bulalacao requesting an air strike at 1100 on the 24th. The only map the Battalion Commander had was a 1/200,000 as previously mentioned, and because he did not know his exact location on the ground, a request was also sent for an artillery liaison plane to fly over, 30 minutes before the air attack, carrying an SCR 300 radio. The idea was that the liaison plane would locate the target, would then intercept the Air Force planes and guide them into the target, which would be marked by white phosphorus fired by the 81 mm mortars.

The night of the 23rd, everything went according to plan. The platoon from "G" Company reported itself in position at 0100 on the 24th. About this time a message was received from Task Force Headquarters approving the air strike and setting the time for 1230.

The morning of the 24th, the Battalion moved out and each element got into position according to plan. The Battalion Commander and his staff found an excellent OP and spent about two hours studying the enemy through field glasses. (See map B) The enemy apparently did not suspect the presence of the Battalion in the area. At 1230 the liaison plane arrived, was able to establish communication, and located both the friendly troops and the target. At this time the platoon at TJ#2 fired several shots and reported that two enemy had been killed.

Three P-47s appeared at 1330, the white phosphorus rounds were fired, the liaison plane rose to intercept the fighters and they flew right on. The enemy began to react to this commotion but apparently still did not know the location of the American units.

The Battalion Commander, not wishing to expose his troops to a possible attack by our own planes, sent a message in the clear to Task Force Headquarters at 1420 requesting that the air strike be cancelled and asking for an immediate reply. At 1445 a message was received to the effect that the air strike had been cancelled and "E" Co. was directed to move out immediately after a mortar preparation on the target area. Disorganized by the mortar fire, the Japs tried to escape toward the mountains only to find that the main effort of "E" Company was coming down their line of retreat. From his OP, the Battalion Commander, by radio, directed the action of all units to make certain that his own troops would not be firing into each other, (See map B) and by 1800, mopping up had been completed and the Battalion was going into bivouac.

That night several more Japs who had been by-passed were killed by machine gun fire from "F" company. During the night, Headquarters and "H" Companies moved into the objective area.

The Battalion had been told to capture the Jap radio, however it had been badly damaged by the mortar fire. Quite a supply of Ordnance material was captured including an American made transit. A brief case was taken from the body of the Japanese commander which contained in detail, the disposition of all units of the Western Visayan Task Force. The Radio Section of the Battalion salvaged all possible parts of the Jap radio for return to the Task Force.

The 25th of January was spent in patrolling near the objective area where several more Japs were killed and one was captured. The prisoner confirmed the belief of the Bn S-2 when he stated that a foraging party of 14 men had been sent out several days before and had not returned. The Battalion Commander had intended to start for Bulalacao on the 26th, but information given by the prisoner to the effect that there was another Group of about 20



Japs some distance away, changed this plan. A force was sent out to locate and destroy this group. About two hours after the unit had moved out, the scouts located some Japs coming toward them. An ambush was set and the entire group of nine Japs was killed. However, the remainder of the group, if any, could not be located.

On the morning of the 27th of January, the Battalion moved out for Bulalacao, its mission complete. Japanese casualties were 89 killed and one captured. The 2nd Battalion suffered one casualty, a man cut on the lip by a grenade fragment. Arriving at Bulalacao the same afternoon, the Battalion Commander found the officer from the Philippines Civil Affairs Unit had cleaned out the school making it ready for use.

Later that afternoon, the LCIs and LCM returned, the Battalion and its supplies were loaded aboard and the next morning the 2nd Battalion rejoined its Regiment at San Jose.

#### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISMS

In the opinion of the writer, there are three main reasons for the success of the 2nd Battalion in this operation.

1. Before the Battalion was sent on the mission, Task Force Headquarters, to confirm reports that it had received concerning the Japanese force, sent an officer on a scouting mission to definitely pinpoint the enemy force. This officer was equipped with a powerful radio and as soon as the Japs were located, the information was immediately available to the Task Force. Further, this same officer accompanied the Battalion on its mission. The Battalion Commander was given a definite mission, was given time to complete the mission, and was given a sufficient force to do the job. He was also given assistance in the form of a Civil Affairs Officer who greatly assisted the Commander in the accomplishment of his mission.

2. The most important reason for the success of the mission was the planning, coordination, and common sense showed by all members of the Battalion in the accomplishment of the mission. To begin with, the Battalion Commander made a sound decision when, realizing that the move would probably take him over rough terrain, he ordered that the Antitank Platoon, four 81 mm mortars, and four heavy machine guns be left behind. Note, however that he still had four heavy guns and two 81 mortars with him until he reached Bulalacao, at which time after making sure that the move would be over rough terrain, he wisely left the four guns at Bulalacao for protection of the communications and supply dump. In his initial order to his subordinates, he made certain that proper security was provided for upon the arrival of the Battalion at Bulalacao, even though he knew that he would probably be able to land unopposed. The security measures taken by the Battalion as a whole contributed greatly to the success of the operation. The decision of the Battalion Commander to remain in bivouac during the 22nd of January was sound, as it gave him an opportunity to send out patrols to locate the Japs and form a definite plan for the attack.

The Battalion S-2 showed his initiative and common sense when, after the two outguards of Company "E" had been surprised by a lone Jap on the afternoon of the 23rd, he called the platoon leader, moving up to join the Battalion and told him what had happened and to be careful. This call by the S-2 probably had much to do with the fact that a short time later, this platoon was able to surprise and kill all fourteen Japs of a foraging party. The S-2 again showed his common sense when he sent an officer back to look for the fourteenth Jap. Finding this Jap lent much strength to the Battalion Commander's plan to attack based on the assumption that the Japs could still be surprised.

The Battalion Commander planned a simple, yet effective attack and during the attack he remained where he should have been; at the point where he could control the action of his Battalion.

3. One point which accounted for much of the success of the operation was the complete lack of security of the Japanese force. Had the Japs posted outposts on the trails leading to their bivouac area, it would have been difficult, if not impossible to have surprised them. The Japanese Commander probably believed that his position back in the hills was security in itself and if he did, it only goes to point out that to forget security is to invite disaster.

Mention must be made of the failure of the air strike. To analyze this from the beginning, the fault was probably that of both the Task Force Headquarters and the Battalion Commander in that neither apparently gave much thought as to the method of carrying out the strike if one was made. When the Battalion Commander decided that he needed an air strike, his plan to obtain it, while unique, probably would have worked, had not the Air Force planes been late. This incident supports the idea that where a unit on a separate mission expects to use air support, the unit should be provided with a Tactical Air Control Party.

THE OPERATION OF THE 414th INFANTRY  
(Less 2nd Battalion), (104th Inf Div)  
IN THE SAALE RIVER OFFENSIVE AND THE  
CAPTURE OF HALLE, GERMANY (45)

We have all heard of the drive of the 3rd Armored Division through Germany in the spring of 1945. This Division, operating as part of the U. S. VII Corps in conjunction with the 104th Infantry Division, and 1st Infantry Division, had crossed the Weser River on the 9th of April, 1945 after the 415th Infantry, 104th Division had established a bridgehead off the east bank of the river. At this point, the 3rd Armored Division with the 414th Infantry attached, was given the mission of by-passing the southern portion of the Harz Mountains and capturing the city of Nordhausen. At the same time, the 1st Infantry Division attacked to the east and north to clean out all enemy in the Harz Mountains.

The general mission of the 104th Division had been to follow behind the 3rd Armored Spearhead to mop up points of resistance that had been by-passed by the armored elements.

The 3rd Armored arrived in Nordhausen on the 10th of April after running into practically no enemy opposition. (The German forces directly east of the Weser River had, for the most part retreated east and north into the Harz Mountains).

The move to Nordhausen left the left flank of the Division exposed, so the 413th Infantry, 104th Division was ordered to the left flank along the southern edge of the mountains to hold the enemy in the mountains. This was quite a large bite for the 413th Inf. to chew and the Division Commander, realizing this, requested that the 414th Infantry be detached from the 3rd Armored Division and revert to Division control. The 414th Inf (with which we are concerned in this example), was detached from the

(45)A-17, (used as the only reference for this example)

3rd Armored Division which prompted VII Corps to momentarily hold up the advance of 3rd Armored.

On the 12 April, 1945, the Division Commander, 104th Infantry Division, acting on order from VII Corps, ordered the 414th Infantry (less 2nd Battalion) to form a task force with the mission of crossing the Saale River, some fifty-three miles to the east, and capturing the city of Halle. The task force was to be ready to move out at 0800 on the morning of the 14th.

At this time the Headquarters of the 414th Infantry was located in Nordhausen. (See map C) From here, the regimental commander (now task force commander) made his plans. For this mission he was given the 750th Tank Battalion (less one company); 817th Tank Destroyer Battalion (less two companies); Company B, 329th Engineer Battalion; 386th and 802nd FA Battalion; Battery B, 555th AAA Artillery Battalion; 104th Reconnaissance Troop; and Company B, 87th Chemical Battalion. At first glance, this seems like a sizable force, however as we will see later, much of this force was not used in the actual operation.

Because of the limited time given to the Commander he was forced to make his reconnaissance largely from a map study. He determined that the objective was about 53 miles to the east with much of the route to be covered located in enemy territory. The terrain presented no obstacle, being generally flat and rolling. As almost the entire city of Halle, (Germany's tenth largest city) lay on the east bank of the Saale River, the Commander realized that regardless of his approach, he was going to have to make a river crossing before he could capture the city. The river in this part of the country was from 200 to 300 feet wide and had an average depth of ten feet.

The Force Commander decided to split his Task Force and form two smaller Task Forces, building them generally around the 1st

and 3rd Battalions 414th Infantry. Attached to the 1st Battalion (which was to be called Task Force Clark) were Companies B and C, 750th Tank Battalion; one platoon of the Light Tank Company, 750th Tank Battalion; one platoon of Company A, 817th TD Battalion; 104th Recon. Troop; and 386th FA Battalion. The 3rd Battalion, 414th Infantry (to be called Task Force Rouge) would have attached, two platoons of the Light Tank Company, 750th Tank Battalion; two platoon of Company A and Recon. Company, 817th TD Battalion; 802nd FA Battalion; and Company B, 87th Chemical Battalion. Remaining under control of the Force Commander would be the remainder of the Task Force.

The missions assigned to the two smaller task forces by the Task Force Commander were to attack straight to the east and seize any opportunity to cross one of the numerous bridges over the Saale River near Halle, drive on into the city, splitting it in as many parts as possible, and reducing these groups as soon as they were cut off. Task Force Rouge would lead, followed at a fifteen minute interval by Task Force Clark. The Task Force would be mortORIZED and the infantry would ride on the tanks.

The line of departure for the attack was to be the city of Reistedt which was the point farthest east, held by friendly forces. (See map C) This city was being held by the 415th Infantry, 104th Division. Till they reached the line of departure, the two task forces would remain in column. At the line of departure, the forces would split, Task Force Clark turning to the <sup>s</sup>woutheast following the main road to the city of Zscherben, from there to the Saale River, across the river and into the city. Task Force Rouge would continue to the northeast to Nieteleben, across the river and <sup>into</sup> into the city. (See map C)

On the 12th of April, the 3rd Armored Division started moving again to Sangerhausen where it turned northeast and crossed

the Saale River at Friederberg. This move was completed on 13 April.

The 415th Infantry, after it had been passed through by the Task Force was to continue to follow the Task Force and mop up any enemy resistance by-passed by the Task Force.

The Task Force moved out at 1200, 14 April. The move went very much according to plan with Task Force Rouge encountering slight enemy resistance in the vicinity of Eisleben and Task Force Clark meeting practically no trouble till it reached Zscherben where it ran into artillery fire from the vicinity of Halle. At 1800, both task forces were at a point where they could see the river and the city of Halle. Here they got a rude surprise.

THE BRIDGES HAD BEEN BLOWN. The Task Force Commander, realizing that to attempt a crossing at this point would be very costly, if not impossible in the face of expected heavy resistance, contacted the Commander of the 104th Infantry Division and explained the situation. The plan of attack was changed. At 0800 the next morning, the 415th Infantry would move up and take over the present location of the Task Force. The Task Force would turn around, move back to the west, then to the north and cross the river at Friederberg, where, you will remember, the 3rd Armored Division had crossed and had established a bridge. After crossing, the Task Force was to go into an assembly area in the vicinity of Dessel and attack Halle at 0800 the next morning from the north.

This move was accomplished the night of the 14th despite the fact that there had been no reconnaissance of the route, there were no guides, the force had to be turned around practically in the face of the enemy, and communications, especially between the infantry and tanks was very poor.

0800, 15th April found the force ready to attack with Task

Force Rouge still leading, followed by Task force Clark. The two forces moved off swiftly down through Wettin and arrived on the outskirts of Halle at 0900. (See map C) Having met little resistance so far, it appeared that the force might have little difficulty capturing the city, however, it was in for a surprise.

As the head of Task Force Rouge hit the vicinity of the Zoological Garden and Anger Street, it ran into the German main line of resistance. As Task Force Rouge became engaged in the fight at this point, Task Force Clark swung to the left, and took up the fight generally abreast of Task Force Rouge. (See map D)

It might be well to note at this point that the Task Force Commander had held out no reserve and that at this time, all of his forces were engaged in the fight.

The infantry, which had been riding on the tanks was by now dismounted, and the battle quickly became one of small infantry tank teams, each fighting its own individual battle.

Another point of interest was that the Task Force Commander had decided that there would be no artillery or air support used for the attack as most of the buildings of Halle were of brick or masonry construction and the Commander felt that it would be to his disadvantage to knock them down. This left the Task Force with the guns on the TDs and tanks plus the fire of the 81 mm mortars and machine guns of the infantry units.

Fighting continued throughout the 15th without much advantage gained by the attackers. The night of the 15th, Task Force Clark was ordered to swing to the east, turn south, and encircle the city. This move was designed to cut off the exits to the enemy in this direction, and also to prevent reinforcements from reaching the city. Task Force Clark moved out the same night, establishing road blocks as it moved (See map D) and by daylight the next morning had completed the encirclement with the exception of one



street which was blocked later that morning. This encirclement by Task Force Clark left the German forces pretty well cut off because, as you will remember, the 415th Infantry now occupied positions directly west of Halle across the Saale River. (See map D)

The job of fighting through the city was left up to Task Force Rouge. The action continued to be one of small infantry tank teams with "I" Company generally following Reil-Bernberger Street, "K" Company on its right and "L" Company on its left.

The city normally had a population of around 210,000 and this had been swelled by the German civilians who had been driven to the east by the Allied Armies. The hostility of the civilians, plus the fact that the Task Force did not have adequate Military Government Units, added to the general confusion and made the fighting more difficult.

On the morning of the 15th, 10,000 pamphlets had been dropped on the city telling the people of Halle to surrender or the city would be destroyed. That same afternoon, the famous German submarine commander of World War I, Count Von Luckner was located by an American newspaper correspondent, and after a conference between the Task Force Commander, the 104th Infantry Division Commander and Von Luckner, he agreed to carry a message to the commander of the German forces in the city, calling for unconditional surrender. The Task Force Commander was certain that Halle either would be surrendered or declared an open city, so he ordered Task Force Clark and Task Force Rouge to cease fire at 1800. The plan did not work as the German commander refused to surrender, however, he agreed to withdraw his forces to Linden Street, in the southern portion of the city, thus sparing the bulk of the city.

With no surrender, Task Force Rouge started hammering away

again on the 16th. By night fall on the 16th, Task Force Rouge had fought its way to a line generally along the water tower, University Street and the end of Bernberger Street. (See map D) At this time the German commander made his withdrawal to Linden Street. As the German force withdrew, Task Force Rouge took time out to reorganize, resupply, and get a hot meal and a little rest.

The morning of the 17th, Task Force Rouge moved out very cautiously, not knowing whether the German commander had kept his word. Very little resistance was met during the day and about 1900, the German were contacted in hastily organized positions along Linden Street. After contact was made Task Force Rouge stopped and resumed the attack on the morning of the 18th. Moving slowly ahead against determined resistance, they gradually closed the trap. Task Force Clark had the Germans blocked on the south and east; the 415th Infantry sat directly across the river on the west.

The attack was pushed all day the 18th, continued at 0600 on the 19th, and at 1055 on the 19th of April, the German forces surrendered.

In this operation the Task Force captured about 4,000 prisoners. Losses to the Task Force were light with none captured.

#### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISMS

One of the probable lines of action taken by a commander in forming a task force, is to take the subordinate units of his force, in this case the infantry battalions, and to build around them, using attachments given to him for the mission, balanced forces capable of independent action. This was one of the main considerations of the Task Force Commander in this operation. We see that Task Force Rouge and Task Force Clark were very flexible units, one being used to assault Halle and one being

used to surround the city and block the exits. One important point to be noticed in this operation was the flexibility of the Main Task Force as a whole. The overall coordination of the Task Force was very good and all units were very aggressive in their attack of the city. They had to be to make the operation a success, for there were glaring weaknesses in the overall plan. Another fact in favor of the attackers was that this operation was conducted at a time when, for all practical purposes, the Allied Forces were in pursuit of the Germans and the enemy was generally fighting a delaying action.

The plan of the Task Force Commander to have his two smaller task forces move swiftly to the east, capture a bridge, and move into the city across the bridge was a good one except for the fact that he failed to consider the possibility that there might not be any bridge when he got there. He had no alternate plan to take the city in case the bridges were blown, and had not the 3rd Armored Division established a bridgehead further to the north, much time would have been lost figuring out a way to get across the river.

It seems to the writer that an undertaking involving a river crossing and the capture of a city of some 210,000 population, is a little bigger job than a Task Force of this size can ordinarily accomplish. This may be the reason the Task Force Commander did not hold out a reserve but, after contact was made, threw all his forces into the fight hoping to knock out the defenders in a hurry. As has been stated before, the technique of accomplishing a mission will, to a great extent, depend on the Commander's estimate of the situation. To say that it was a mistake in this case not to hold out a reserve would be wrong because the operation was a success, however,

had the Germans resisted more stubbornly, it would have been very difficult for the Commander to have provided that extra punch that would have meant the difference between success and failure.

The decision not to use artillery or air support in the capture of Halle was sound, because it would have made it difficult for the tanks and tank destroyers to move through the streets after the buildings had been knocked down and the rubble piled up in the streets. Also, it would have made the German defenses harder to crack.

Surprise was lost as the Task Force approached the west bank of the Saale River, however, the ability of the Task Force to turn around, move over unfamiliar roads and attack from a different direction certainly was a surprise to the Germans and deserves a word of commendation. This flexibility, together with the determination, aggressiveness, and teamwork of the Task Force as a whole, (even though they had not rehearsed) were probably the deciding factors in the capture of Halle and show that a Task Force on a separate mission is capable, by swift determined action, to overcome great odds in the capture of an objective.

THE OPERATION OF THE 3rd BATTALION,  
20th INFANTRY (6th Inf. Div.)  
In a combat patrol in Northern Luzon  
5-22 July, 1945. (46)

18 April, 1945 found the 20th Infantry, 6th Infantry Division ordered into the city of Manila, capitol of the Philippine Islands, to garrison duty. The Regiment had participated in the fight for Manila from the initial landings on the island of Luzon till this point, and on the above date came under the control of the Provost Marshal of the city, and was put to work doing MP duty, handling traffic control and guarding city buildings. Replacements were gradually obtained and Regiment was rebuilt almost to full strength.

On 1 June, the Regiment returned to the control of the 6th Division. The Division then returned north heading for the Cagayan Valley, a large fertile valley in Northern Luzon where the Japs were being pushed and were expected to make a stubborn last stand in defense of the island. Early in the summer, elements of the 6th Army had pushed the Japs far into the hills of Northern Luzon and control of the action passed over to the 8th Army, as 6th Army was pulled out of the lines to prepare for the expected invasion of the Japanese homeland. Thus, it was left to the 8th Army to complete mopping up operations on the island. One of the units which passed to 8th Army control was the 6th Division and with it, the 20th Infantry.

At this time, the 20th Infantry was located in the vicinity of Highway 5, south of the village of Ilagan, with the 3rd Battalion, 20th Infantry located at Ilagan. (See map E)

Highway 5, was an excellent road, however, from Ilagan east to Palanan Bay, the roads varied from very poor, unimproved roads to wide trails cut through dense undergrowth. The country east

(46)A-18, (used as the only reference for this example)

from Ilagan was generally rolling until the Sierra Madre Mountains were reached. These mountains formed a chain along the entire east coast of Luzon, and the only way to get to the east coast of the islands from Ilagan, was to go over or through the mountains.

On 5 July, the 3rd Battalion relieved elements of the 37th Division and began guarding Highway 5, bridges, and conducting patrols to the south and east of Ilagan. The same day, Company "I" 3rd Battalion was given the mission of moving east from the village of Naguilian and capturing the village of San Mariano. Company "I" moved out in 2 1/2 trucks about half way to their objective where they were forced to dismount, because the unimproved road became a trail about five miles from the objective. The Company moved out on foot the last five miles and after a short fire fight, the town was captured. This town of San Mariano eventually was used as base for the future operations of the Battalion. (See map E) It was located on the west side of the Pinacauan-de Ilagan River and in the middle of a wide horseshoe bend in the river. The river at this point was some fifty yards wide and waist deep.

It is believed that a detailed explanation at this time, of the territory covered by the 3rd Battalion, would help the reader in understanding the operations which were to take place. Across the river, east of San Mariano, rose a cliff some hundred feet high. The narrow trail which from here on was the only road and led up over the top of this cliff. East of the cliff a level plateau extended to the Disabungan River, which was about the same size as the river at San Mariano, and on to the village of Abbatuan which sets at the foot of two hills about four hundred feet high. These two hills are covered with dense undergrowth and east of them stretched another plateau which extended clear to the foothills of the Sierra Madre Mountains. Most of the

country in the mountains was very rough, unexplored and unmapped.  
(See map E)

On 6 July, "K" Company, located in Ilagan was ordered to move down the east bank of the Pinacaun-de Ilagan River to San Mariano and contact "I" Company. "K" Company was to clear all enemy resistance in its path. The mission was accomplished in three days and on the 9th of July, "K" Company joined "I" Company in San Mariano. (See map E)

From the move of "K" Company, it was determined that supply was going to be problem in any operation leading to the east. "K" Company, after it left Ilagan for San Mariano was supplied first by carrier and then by water. The supply by water was accomplished by the Regimental S-4 bringing supplies down the Pinacauan-de Ilagan River in a dukw. This was started after a carrying party, composed of civilian carriers were accidentally wounded by the firing of one of "K" Company's machine guns. Attempts to secure carriers for several days after this were futile and it was finally decided to transport supplies as far as San Mariano by water.

During the period of 6-9 July, "I" Company pushed patrols out to the east. These patrols ran into no organized resistance and mopped up several small parties of Japs and captured a few prisoners. One of the patrols reported that it had been as far east as the town of Dibuluan. This report later led to some action which the Battalion had not anticipated, and could have had disastrous results.

On 8 July, the Battalion recieved an order to send a reinforced platoon east to Palanan Bay, a distance of about forty-five miles. The patrol was to reach the coast and return, destroying all enemy in its path.

The Battalion Commander decided on the following plan to

accomplish the mission. "I" Company, now in San Mariano, would leave one platoon in the village to set up a supply base and furnish protection for the carriers. The remainder of the Company would lead the patrol as far as Dibuluan and establish a strong point at that place. "L" Company would then move down the trail, pass through "I" Company at Dibuluan and move to Ambabu. From Ambabu, a platoon (to be chosen later) reinforced by one light machine gun, one 60 mm mortar, both with crews, and three men from Battalion Intelligence Section, would make the trip over the Sierra Madre Mountains, to Palanan Bay and return. This platoon would be accompanied by one hundred carriers, if they could be obtained.

Regimental Cannon Company was to move two self-propelled howitzers over the road east from Highway 5 toward San Mariano, (See map E) moving as far as possible and supporting the operation as long as it was within range. Due to road conditions it was decided that it would be impossible to move artillery close enough to support the mission.

For communication, the Battalion forward CP at San Mariano would have an SCR 300 and an SCR 694. The 694 would be to communicate with the rear CP on Highway 5. The 300 would be used to communicate with the advance elements of Company "I". Company "L" would also be equipped with the SCR 300.

The Battalion A and P Platoon would stay behind and try to make the road between Highway 5 and San Mariano passable for small vehicles.

Little was known of the enemy situation east of Dibuluan but it was suspected that the Japs would be found in strength as the Battalion pushed to the east.

"I" Company moved out on 9 July accompanied by Filipino guides who had never been over the Sierra Madre Mountains but



had volunteered to lead the patrol. No flank security was put out and the formation consisted simply of single file, scouts out twenty-five yards in front and an interval of about two hundred yards between platoons. By mid-afternoon, the Disabungan River was crossed and "I" Company reached Abbatuan to find that, although the village was empty, it showed signs of recent enemy occupation. The Company moved out onto a stretch of flat, open ground extending to their front for about a thousand yards where the trail disappeared up a heavily wooded hill. The leading platoon of "I" Company had moved about a hundred yards when they were pinned to the ground by automatic weapons fire coming from the hill to their front. Fortunately, for "I" Company, the enemy had opened fire too soon for the 2nd Platoon to be pinned down. This platoon withdrew to the high ground to the north and returned the fire of the Japs. When this was done, the 1st Platoon managed to maneuver to the rear and reach defiladed positions. (See map F)

At this time it was learned by radio that the two howitzers from Cannon Company were in position just west of San Mariano and that the Cannon Company platoon leader and the Regimental I and R Platoon were on their way forward moving to contact "I" Company. The Battalion S-3 who was with "I" Company decided not to wait for the arrival of the platoon leader but, in order to get fire immediately on the enemy, to adjust fire himself. The SCR 300 radio carried by Company "I" would not contact the gun positions, so the fire commands had to be relayed through the CP at San Mariano. Guessing at the range and direction, he called for a round of smoke, and was able to adjust the fire from there, eventually putting effective fire on the enemy positions.

The I and R Platoon arrived later that evening and the men of Company "I" did not seem too overjoyed to see the platoon as

there seemed to be a feeling among the men that the I and R Platoon was used by Regiment to "check up" on the rest of the units.

"L" Company was now moving up and "L" and "I" Companies bivouaced that night just north east of Abbatuan. (See map F)

It is interesting to note that Dibuluan, the village reported by a patrol of "I" Company to have been cleared, had not yet been reached.

On the morning of 10 July, Company "I", with support from "L" Company and the two howitzers, moved out and took the Japanese position, killing 12 Japs and suffering no casualties. (See map F) From the extent of the Jap positions it was estimated that the force in front of Company "I" numbered around one hundred and that the majority had withdrawn during the night leaving a small covering force. Moving more cautiously now, Company "I" reached Dibuluan on the evening of the 10th. Company "L", following closely, moved in the same evening, and both Companies formed a perimeter defense for the night. (See map E) That evening, from the bivouac area a small group of Japs was sighted, a squad from Company "I" with a light machine gun attached was sent out, and killed several of this group.

On 11 July, no forward movement was made. The day was spent patrolling the flanks of the trail to determine if there were any more enemy positions which would be encountered to the east. During the day, an Alamo Scout Team was contacted. The leader of the team could give no information of the Japs and was heading west having been out of supplies for over a week.

The movement east continued on the 12th, with Company "L" moving out. Company "I" furnished one squad to act as "point" for Company "L". The squad was to move with Company "L" for two hours and then return to Company "I" at Dibuluan. Shortly after

leaving Dibuluan, the "point" was fired upon just after crossing a small stream. The "L" Company Commander quickly built up a base of fire, and with two squads moving up and down the stream, made a double envelopment and overran the Jap positions. Several Japs were killed and four prisoners taken. One of the scouts from "I" Company was wounded and was immediately started back by litter, being carried by the Filipino carriers and accompanied by the rest of his squad. The trip back took two days to complete. Company "L" continued on to Ambabu, arriving on the 13th of July. It was from here that the reinforced platoon was to continue to Palanan Bay, a distance of some 20 miles, much of it over the mountains (See map E).

The 3rd Battalion received orders at this time to hold its present positions. Patrolling was continued without incident till the 18th of July at which time, the Battalion was relieved by elements of the 32nd Division.

#### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISMS

In analyzing this operation which actually turned out to be a series of company operations, the most noticeable thing which comes to the mind of the writer was the lack of security measures taken by "I" Company in their march from San Mariano to Abbutuan. It is true that a patrol had earlier reported the trail clear as far as Dibuluan, however that report was no excuse for "I" Company to move out without taking proper security measures. When the Company reached Abbutuan and found evidence of recent enemy occupation, it certainly was about time for the Company Commander to get out a reconnaissance party and find out what was in front of him. Had the Japs entrenched east of Abbutuan held their fire until both platoons of "I" Company were out in the open, the Company undoubtedly would have had a tough time getting out of the hole. After this experience, note that both "I" and "L" Companies took better security measures. "I" Company was lucky

that it had a second opportunity.

With the poor security measures shown, had the Japs been aggressive and in some strength, it would not have been too difficult a job to have cut "I" and "L" Companies in two and caused many casualties before help could have been obtained from Company "K" which remained at Ilagan.

The tactics of all units which became engaged in a fire fight were sound, and co-ordination between companies and platoons was good.

It is believed that "I" and "L" Companies should have laid wire as they moved forward, to be used as an alternate means of communication. It is very doubtful if the SCR 300 radios used would have provided the necessary communication especially if a platoon had actually been sent to Palanan Bay as had originally been planned. Due to the line-of-sight characteristics of the SCR 300 radio, it would have been impractical to have employed it after crossing the Sierra Madre Mountains.

Movement of the two howitzers of the Cannon Company as far east as possible certainly paid off because they were able to support Companies "I" and "L" in the fight east of Abbutuan.

The platoon which was to be sent over the Sierra Madre Mountains was to be supported by 100 carriers, "If it was possible to obtain them". The writer believes that the Battalion Commander certainly would have been justified in asking for an air drop to supply this platoon.

The method of the Regimental S-4 used in bringing supplies from Ilagan to San Mariano down the river in a dukw, was certainly practical and shows that almost any scheme for the supplying of a unit in this type of fighting will work if a little initiative and common sense is used.

There seemed to be some distrust of the men of the Regimental I and R Platoon, by the members of the 3rd Battalion. The men should be shown the importance of this valuable unit and a good time to have shown that importance would have been in this operation. The fact that Regiment had not previously notified the 3rd Battalion that the I and R Platoon was being sent up to "I" and "L" Companies made it more difficult for the 3rd Battalion to supply the units because here were some twenty-five men they had not counted on.

OPERATIONS OF THE 65th REGT.  
(22nd Chinese Division)  
In the Battle for Taro,  
29 Dec. 1943-30 Jan. 1944 (47)

In 1942, the Japanese conquered Burma, forcing the Allied Armies to retreat to India. One of the units retreating, the Chinese 22nd Division, had been caught in the Fort Hertz sector off Northern Burma by the monsoon and only about nine hundred men of the whole Division escaped to India. The survivors of this Division plus the remnants of the Chinese 38th Regiment ~~— five missing —~~ (with which we are concerned in this example) was built. This Regiment received replacements and trained for over a year in India at which time they were moved to the vicinity of Ledo, in India, just across the border from northern Burma.

At this time, October, 1943, the now famous Ledo Road was just a trace across Burma. Some construction had been completed south and east of Ledo but for the most part, the work still had to be done. To protect the construction of the road across Burma, to China, General Stilwell had been given among other forces, two Chinese Divisions, the 38th and 22nd, which were ready now to start operations.

On 26th October, the 38th Division pushed off from Tagap to clear Northern Burma. They managed to reach a point a short distance past Shingbuiyang where they met stiff Japanese resistance during the month of November and there they stayed.

The 3rd Battalion, 112th Regiment of the 38th Division had been sent on a separate mission to protect the right flank of the Division and had dug in at Tara Ga.

On Christmas day, 1943, we find the 65th Regiment along with

(47)A-18, (used as the only reference for this example plus conversation with Lt. Col. Donald C. Wilson, and Major George B. Jordan both members of Advanced Officers Class #1 and who were formally stationed in the China Burma India Theater).

the rest of the 22nd Division about 19 miles from Ledo and ready to go. With the help of American Liaison Officers they were completing their training. Moral was high and the unit wanted another crack at the Japanese. The same day, the Division Commander announced that one Regiment of the Division was to be sent on a special mission. The 65th Regiment was chosen for the job.

On 27 December, the Regiment was alerted for a move by truck to Shingbuiyang, the move to start on 29 December. Each Battalion was to have 30 2 1/2 ton trucks attached for the move. The distance from Ledo to Shingbuiyang was about 107 miles, most of it over rough, mountainous country, with the new road still one way in some places and washed out in others.

The mission of the 65th Regiment was not given to the Regimental Commander at this time. He was simply told to move his Regiment by truck to Shingbuiyang.

It might be well to look at the organization of the 65th Regiment at this time. It was composed of 3 Infantry Battalions, each with a Headquarters, three Rifle Companies, a Machine Gun Company, an Antitank Platoon, and an 81 mm Mortar Platoon, (The Antitank Platoon was armed with 2.36" rocket launchers); a Supply Company, which furnished porters and carrying parties; an Antitank Company; a Headquarters and Headquarters Company; and a Medical Company. The Antitank Company was armed with 8-37 mm antitank guns towed.

The Regiment was well equipped with Model 1917 U.S. Army Rifles, Bren Guns, Cal. 30 Heavy Machine guns, "Tommy guns", 60 and 81 mm mortars, Boyes Antitank Rifles, 2.36 Rocket Launchers, 37 mm Antitank Guns and Hand Grenades. During this operation, no ammunition was ever received for the Boyes Antitank Rifles and ammunition for the rocket launchers was

received much later.

The Regiment's communication consisted of 4 V-100 radios (which corresponded to our SCR 284), 10 SCR 195 radios, and 30 EE-8 telephones.

With each Regiment went three American Officers who were to act as liaison between the Regimental Commander and General Stilwell who was the overall Commander in Burma. Their duties included giving advice to the Chinese Commanders and keeping General Stilwell informed as to the true situation which sometimes was apparently somewhat different than reported by the Chinese. They also handled supply requirements for the Chinese. Each American Officer had his own radio team in direct contact with General Stilwell's Headquarters.

Regimental Headquarters and 1st Battalion pulled out of Ledo on 29 December and the 2nd and 3rd Battalion left on 30 December. The move of the 2nd and 3rd Battalions was scheduled to start at 0800, however as the trucks pulled up to load the troops, the men simply filled up the trucks. With no organized method of loading, much confusion resulted. When the trucks were full, the leader started off and everyone followed. There was no traffic control along the road and the units halted when the commander became tired. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions arrived at Shingbuiyang on the evening of the 31st of December, having covered the distance of 107 miles in something like 35 hours, stopping at Tagap to bivouac on the night of 30-31 December. (See map G)

On New Years day, the Division Commander issued his attack order to the 65th Regiment. The Regiment was to move out, relieve the 3rd Battalion, 112th Regiment, which as you will remember was "protecting" the right flank of the 38th Division, to destroy all Japanese in the area, and to proceed on orders to carry out the original mission of the Division which was to protect the right



flank of the trace of the Ledo Road. The 3rd Battalion 112th Regiment at this time reported that it was encircled by a superior force of Japanese.

Due to the fact that the road ended here, the Regimental Commander ordered that all vehicles and the 37 mm Antitank guns be left behind at Shingbuiyang which was to be used as a base for the operation. The men of the Antitank Company would be used to augment the carrying parties. Supplies would be carried forward from Shingbuiyang and the American Liaison Officers also made arrangements to have supplies air dropped along the route.

On 2 January, the Regiment moved out with the order of march 2nd Battalion, 3rd Battalion, Headquarters Group and 1st Battalion. Three days later, after much confusion, becoming lost, and cutting new trails, the Regiment arrived at a river where supplies were to be air dropped. (See map G) Leaving the 2nd Battalion to receive the supplies, and provide security for them the Regiment moved on with the 1st Battalion leading. Progress was slow as the trail being followed was an old one and required much pioneer work to get through.

There was some evidence of Jap patrolling as the Regiment moved along and the Japanese were undoubtedly alerted to the presence of the Regiment in the area. On 10 January, the Regiment again stopped on the banks of a river and during the 11th, 12th, and 13th received supplies, again air dropped. (See map G) On the 14th, the Regiment moved out. It was met at this time by a member of the OSS Force operating in the area who told the Commander that a Jap force had been alerted and was moving up from Taro to meet them.

The Regiment moved ahead and on 17th January, approaching a small river, the leading elements were fired upon by rifleman machine guns and mortars, the fire coming from across the river

to their front. This small river flowed directly across their front and emptied into the large Chindwin River which the Regiment had been following. The trail led across the small river and directly into the positions from which the fire was being recieved. The 1st Battalion immediately built up a line along the river and the 3rd Battalion and Regimental Headquarters filled in behind and completed a perimeter. (See map H) Here, the Chinese troops seemed to be content to stay. They dug in on the positions and returned the fire which was estimated to be coming from a force of company size. This condition continued till the afternoon of the 18th, at which time the Regimental Commander issued his attack order.

The 1st Battalion was to hold its present position. The 2nd Battalion which had been left behind at the first drop zone had been ordered to rejoin the Regiment and upon arrival would make a wide envelopment to the left and hit the Japs on their right flank, pinning them against the Chindwin River which was a formidable barrier. Machine guns would be sited to cover the Chindwin to stop any Japs attempting to escape across the river. The 3rd Battalion would move to the left of the 2nd Battalion, making a wide circle leaving small parties on all escape routes to kill any Japs which might get through the 2nd Battalion.

This plan proved very sound as we shall see later. However, the subordinate commanders of the Regiment seemed to be at a loss as to its execution when it was explained by the Regimental Commander. The usual Chinese tactics upon meeting the enemy, were to dig in and wear the Japs down until his forces were so reduced that an assault could be risked, or until the Japs decided to withdraw.

At this time another drop field was set up to recieve additional ammunition and the Regiment settled down to await the

arrival of the 2nd Battalion. The 2nd Battalion arrived on 20 January and on 22 January moved out to the rear and to the left cutting a trail as it moved. Shortly after, the 3rd Battalion moved out to carry out its part of the plan. (See map H)

These units were in position on the 25th, and at this time the Regimental Commander had another surprise for the Japs. One battery of 75 mm pack howitzers had been brought in by pack animals and had been man-handled into positions to support the attack. (See map H)

The 2nd Battalion had detached an encircling force from the Battalion to swing around and go into position to the rear of the Japs.

The encirclement was indeed complete. The 1st Battalion sat in position to the Japanese front. The 2nd Battalion was on the Jap's right and in his rear. The 3rd Battalion was cutting all escape routes on his right and Chindwin River on his left, covered by machine gun fire, formed a barrier which he could not cross.

All the fires of the Regiment were now poured into the Japanese positions. Whenever a group of Japanese attempted to escape they were cut down by elements of the Regiment. As night approached, patrols were sent into the Japanese positions to determine the results of the day's action. This type of fighting continued though the 26th and 27th of January and on 28 January, the Chinese Troops assulted the positions and killed the few Japs remaining alive. 323 dead Japs were counted in the area. The Chinese had 8 men killed or missing and total casualties numbering between 70 and 80. The 3rd Battalion had killed 38 more Japanese who had attempted to escape. From a Japanese diary captured some weeks later, it was determined that between 70 and 80 Japs had escaped.

The mission was not yet complete and the 1st Battalion was

sent to Taro to mop up any Japs on the way, and to relieve the 3rd Battalion, 112th Regiment. The relief of the 3rd Battalion was accomplished by a platoon, and the 1st Battalion was now ready to move on with the rest of the Regiment. The Regimental Commander, anticipating the orders to follow, moved his three Battalions into position to continue protection of the road which was to be built across Burma to China.

#### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISMS

In this operation, the Japanese force was surprised for two reasons. The first was that the Japs underestimated the strength of the 65th Regiment moving to the south. The second reason was the use of sound tactics by the Chinese Commander in sending his 2nd and 3rd Battalions to the left to encircle and cut off the Japanese force. This sort of an attack was apparently not expected by the Japanese due to the fact that the ordinary Chinese tactics were, upon making contact with the enemy, to stop where they were, dig in and fight a war of attrition with little thought given to a swift frontal attack or an envelopment.

That the Chinese did not lack determination to accomplish their mission is shown by the fact that one battery of pack howitzers was moved by animal from Shingbuiyang and then man-handled into position to support the attack.

The Regiment was successful in receiving supplies and ammunition by air and the sites selected for the air drops showed that even in the mountains and jungle, open areas, suitable for air dropping supplies can be found.

The Regimental Commander was continually planning ahead as shown by the fact that, as soon as the 1st Battalion had relieved the 3rd Battalion, 112th Regiment, he maneuvered his Regiment so that when orders were received to continue to the south and east, the 65th Regiment was in position.

The Japanese made the fatal mistake of underestimating the ability and strength of the 65th Regiment. Had they credited the Chinese with the ability to make the envelopment which was made, and planned their defenses accordingly, the 65th Regiment might have had a hard time succeeding in their mission.

In this operation, the Boyes Antitank Rifles carried by the Chinese were useless because no ammunition was ever recieved for them. On a mission of this type, a commander must utilize his available manpower to the fullest extent possible and where it is known that a weapon will be useless due to lack of ammunition, that weapon should be left behind.

Both the motor move from Ledo to Shingbuiyang, and the foot move from Shingbuiyang south to contact with the Japanese, showed little evidence of planning. With no prior reconnaissance, the Regiment wasted three days, cutting its way through the jungle, often backtracking, and becoming lost. This fact emphasises the absolute necessity for prior planning and reconnaissance before making a movement into unknown territory.

### CONCLUSIONS

In general, we may say that a task force composed of an infantry regiment or smaller unit, plus any necessary attachments, accomplishes its mission mainly by the use of speed, flexibility, and surprise, and where necessary, a pre-planned, orderly withdrawal to friendly lines.

*Long + involved*  
The main point that a commander of this type of unit must keep in mind is that the enemy must be surprised either by a quick, powerful thrust to hit him and withdraw before he can gather a superior force either at the objective or between the task force and its friendly lines, or by stealthy, hidden movement, keeping the enemy completely in the dark as to the presence of the force until the objective area is reached.

In order to gain speed, flexibility, and surprise, the commander and his staff must plan in detail such items as routes, tactical groupings of subordinate units, security, supply and evacuation, co-ordination and control, and the actual assault on the objective.

As in any type of combat, the success or failure of a small infantry unit on a detached, special mission, will depend to a great extent on the initiative and common sense shown by the commander and his subordinates.

One of the most important aids to the commander of this type unit is the fire support which may be rendered by the Tactical Air Force, and also the possibility of supplies being dropped to the force by air.

The use of a high percentage of light, automatic weapons is highly desirable, and conversely, heavy towed weapons, armor, and weapons requiring a large amount of comparatively heavy ammunition may have to be left behind, especially if the force moves on foot to the objective.

Higher headquarters in assigning a mission of this type, should give the commander a large enough force to do the job, and enough time to complete the mission. Where possible, higher headquarters should take steps to definitely locate an enemy force before sending a unit on a mission to destroy that force. This would apply where the unit was to be sent out to destroy an isolated pocket of enemy resistance. Higher headquarters should give all the assistance possible toward the accomplishment of this type of mission and should not put the burden on the force commander to determine, and request such extra support as will be necessary to accomplish the mission.

*Long  
winded  
thoughts*

Detailed planning is vitally important because it is the small, seemingly unimportant details which often make the difference between success and failure. It should be noted that in each of the historical examples presented in this study certain items, some of them very trivial on the surface, could have changed the result of the entire operation. For example:

1. The operation of the 2nd Battalion, 19th Infantry on Mindoro Island might have had entirely different results if the Japanese had been able to rally their forces after they became alerted by the failure of the air strike. The immediate cause of this failure was that the Air Force planes were late but the real cause was the fact that no prior arrangements had been made as to the possibility of sending a tactical air control party on the mission. If this had been done, it is probable that continuous liaison could have been maintained between the Battalion and the Air Force.

2. In the operation against the city of Halle, the task force commander did not have an alternate plan for crossing the Saale River and when he found the bridges blown, he would

have had a difficult time crossing the river and attacking the city had not the 3rd Armored Division been successful in making a crossing further to the north.

3. In the operation of the 3rd Battalion, 20th Infantry on Luzon, "I" Company forgot the important fact that a unit moving in enemy territory must, while on the move, continually must keep reconnaissance elements out to the front and flanks.

how? 4. Because of no prior planning or reconnaissance, the Chinese 65th Regiment wasted much time and undoubtedly depleted the fighting strength of the Regiment during the motor march from Ledo to Shingbuiyang and the foot march south from Shingbuiyang to contact with the Japanese.

It is the belief of the writer that every combat commander should have training in performing this type of operation for in reality, any detached, special mission is a specialized operation calling for detailed planning and the use of special personnel. The commander must be taught to realize that supply and evacuation of wounded will be a problem. He should be trained in the method of being resupplied by air. He must be made to realize that in operating behind enemy lines, continuous all-around security is a must.