

General Subjects Section  
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT  
THE INFANTRY SCHOOL  
Fort Benning, Georgia

ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE  
1948 - 1949

THE OPERATIONS OF THE 2D BATTALION, 124TH INFANTRY  
(31ST INFANTRY DIVISION) NEAR MARAMAG, MINDANAO  
PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, 6-10 MAY 1945  
(Personal Experience of a Platoon  
Leader and Company Commander)

Type of operation described: INFANTRY BATTALION ATTACKING  
IN DENSE RAIN FOREST

Captain James R. Young, Infantry  
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO I

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Table of Contents.....	1
Bibliography.....	2
Introduction.....	4
The General Situation.....	6
The Battalion Plan of Attack.....	7
The First Attack.....	8
The Second Attack.....	9
The Third Attack.....	11
The Fourth Attack.....	14
Analysis and Criticism.....	17
Lessons.....	19
Map A - Philippine Islands	
Map B - Mindanao	
Map C - Sayre Highway	
Map D - Colgan Woods, The First Attack	
Map E - Colgan Woods, The Second Attack	
Map F - Colgan Woods, The Third Attack	
Map G - Colgan Woods, The Final Attack	



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A-1 History of the 31st Infantry Division (TIS Library)
- A-2 The Field Artillery Journal (October 1945)  
"Perimeters in Paragraphs" (TIS Library)
- A-3 The Field Artillery Journal (September 1945)  
"Perimeters in Paragraphs " (TIS Library)
- A-4 The Field Artillery Journal (August 1945)  
"Perimeters in Paragraphs" (TIS Library)
- A-5 The Field Artillery Journal (July 1945)  
"Perimeters in Paragraphs". (TIS Library)
- A-6 The War with Japan (January to August 1945)  
Department of Military Art and Engineering  
U. S. Military Academy, West Point, N. Y., 1946  
(TIS Library)
- A-7 Report of the Commanding General, Eighth Army, on the  
Mindanao Operation, Victor V (TIS Library)
- A-8 History of World War II  
by Francis T. Miller, Litt.D., LL.D (personal  
possession of author)
- A-9 War Department General Order No. 38, dated 20 April 1946  
(personal possession of author)
- A-10 War Department General Order No. 24, dated 4 March 1947  
(personal possession of author)
- A-11 General Order No. 146, Headquarters 31st Infantry  
Division, dated 12 September 1945 (personal possession  
of author)
- A-12 General Order No. 156, Headquarters 31st Infantry  
Division, dated 20 September 1945 (personal possession  
of author)
- A-13 The War Reports of General George C. Marshall,  
General H. H. Arnold, Admiral Ernest J. King (TIS Library)
- A-14 "Children of Yesterday; History of 24th Division"  
by Valtin (TIS Library)
- A-15 Report of The Commanding General, Eighth Army, Palawan  
and Zamboanga (TIS Library)
- A-16 40th Infantry Division, World War II (History)  
(TIS Library)
- A-17 "Concise History, World War II" by Shugg (TIS Library)
- A-18 "Surf and Sand"; Saga 533rd Engr. B & S Regt.  
Armory (TIS Library)



- A-19 "Guerrilla Resistance Movements in P. I."  
Confidential Book A. F. Hq. SWPA (TIS Library)
- A-20 "Rpt. of Leyte Opn., Oct.-Dec.44"  
Confidential Book, U. S. 6th Army (TIS Library)
- A-21 "X Corps, Leyte-Samar-Mindanao", Dec. 44-Dec. 45  
U. S. at War (TIS Library)
- A-22 Army and Navy Register, 7 July 1945, page 9  
(TIS Library)
- A-23 General Order No. 87, headquarters 31st Infantry  
Division, dated 16 July 1945 (personal possession  
of author)



THE OPERATIONS OF THE 2D BATTALION, 124TH INFANTRY  
(31ST INFANTRY DIVISION) NEAR MARAMAG, MINDANAO,  
PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, 6-10 MAY 1945  
(Personal Experience of a Platoon  
Leader and Company Commander)

INTRODUCTION

This is the story of an attack on a woods, a position defended by a determined force instructed to hold at all costs. The unit that successfully overran the opposition on its fifth attempt, and plays the leading role in this monograph, is the 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry Regiment, 31st Infantry Division.(1)

In order that the reader may thoroughly understand the situation, and the physical condition of the 2nd Battalion upon entering the fight described herein, it will be necessary to dwell on actions of higher units prior to 6 May 1945.

The forces that invaded the Philippines under the command of General Douglas MacArthur consisted of two Armies: the Sixth Army commanded by General Walter Krueger, and the Eighth Army commanded by Lt. General R. L. Eichelberger. The X Corps, part of the Eighth Army, commanded by Major General Franklin C. Sibert, was given the mission of liberating the island of Mindanao, less the Zamboanga peninsula which had been secured by the 41st Division. It was decided to use two Divisions initially in the accomplishment of this mission: the 24th Infantry Division, commanded by Major General Rosco B. Woodruff, and the 31st Infantry Division, commanded by Major General Clarence A. Martin. (2) (See Map A)

The 24th Infantry Division landed 17 April 1945 on the west coast of the island at Parang. They drove inland, meeting light resistance, and by 27 April had reached Digos,

(1) A-1, p. 55; (2) A-7, p. 18 and 32.



20 miles south of Davao, on the opposite side of the island.

(3) (See Map B)

On 22 April 1945, five days after the initial landing, the 31st Infantry Division landed in the previously secured area of Parang, and pushed inland by roads and waterways to Cotabato. The next day the 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry, was directed to spearhead the Division's advance into the interior. (4) This operation was aimed at securing the Sayre Highway, thereby cutting the main supply route and line of communications between the two enemy strongholds at Davao in the south and Cagayan in the north. (15) (See Map B) During the period 26 April 1945 to 6 May 1945, the 2nd Battalion was in constant contact with the enemy.

On 6 May we find the regiment in the vicinity of Kibawe, supported by a company of 4.2 chemical mortars, but minus its artillery support. (6) Due to burned out bridges and the rapid advance of foot troops, the artillery had not been able to remain close enough to frontline units to provide support. The 1st and 3rd Battalions were in the vicinity of the junction of the Sayre Highway and the Kibawe-Talomo Trail. The 2nd Battalion was approximately 1000 yards to the east on the Kibawe-Talomo Trail, where for 3 days they had been fighting a suicidal force endeavoring to withdraw across the Pulangi River. The regiment was ordered to resume its advance north along the Sayre Highway. The 1st Battalion leading was followed by the 3rd Battalion. The 2nd Battalion, after being relieved on the Talomo Trail by elements of the 155th Infantry, followed the 3rd Battalion.

A few hundred yards up the road, the 1st Battalion hit  
(3) A-7, p. 18 and 32; (4) A-1, p. 53; (5) A-11; (6) A-1, p.55



what was afterward known as "Colgan Woods", named for Chaplain Colgan, who was killed while administering last rites to a soldier. (See Map C)

#### THE GENERAL SITUATION

"The Japanese were completely and effectively dug in, in positions astride the road in Colgan Woods in a line extending to the northeast of Lake Pinilay. These positions had been prepared well in advance, and were completely camouflaged. The pill boxes were the spider type with connecting tunnels, so that they could be passed within a few feet and not seen." (7) The area was covered by thick underbrush, observation was very limited. (8) "Frequently the Japanese let our personnel pass, and then raised out of the ground to shoot from the rear. An entire morning's fighting by the 1st Battalion netted a gain of only 300 yards"; (9) however, B Company had succeeded in getting through the woods to the point where the road ran out of the woods to the north, but was pinned down in this position, and was unable to move for four days. (10) (See Map D)

"At 1100 hours 6 May the regimental commanding officer ordered the 3rd Battalion to by-pass the fight of the 1st Battalion, and to secure Maramag Strip No. 1, some 1½ miles to the north. Early that night the 3rd Battalion was around the fight, and astride the road 300 yards north of 'Colgan Woods'. The battalion resumed its advance next morning, and, after a Banzai attack by an estimated two companies, which caught the battalion in the flank and caused heavy casualties on both sides, secured Maramag Strip by 1200 hours." (11)

The 1st Battalion, now so depleted as to lose a large

(7) A-1, p. 55; (8) Personal knowledge; (9) A-1, p. 55; (10) Personal knowledge, statement of Captain George Dillinger, Commanding Officer, Company B, June 1945; (11) A-1, p. 55.



portion of its combat effectiveness, was relieved by the 2nd Battalion; B Company, obviously, had to remain in position where they were pinned down. (12)

#### THE BATTALION PLAN OF ATTACK

The battalion commander decided to commit E Company on the left of the road, G Company on the right of the road, and to hold F Company in reserve. One platoon of heavy machine guns from H Company was attached to E Company and the other machine gun platoon was to support the attack from positions on the road by denying the enemy the use of the road. The latter employment proved useless. While the Japanese could be seen crossing the road, the battalion commander would not allow the machine guns to fire, for fear of hitting B Company. The 81mm mortar platoon, under battalion control, was to fire "on call" missions. This platoon had to cut trees in order to obtain mass clearance. The 4.2 mortars were to fire concentrations prior to the attack from positions some 500 yards to the rear of the battalion. (13)

Particular attention was given to the fact that B Company was on the far side of the woods, some 800 yards distant. B Company was contacted by radio, and informed of the impending attack. All units were instructed to control their fire, so we would not be firing on our forces. There were no other supporting fires available to the battalion. (14)

The machine gun platoons of H Company were carrying two water-cooled machine guns each. The 81mm mortar platoon had only two of its six mortars. Each of the rifle companies was carrying one light machine gun and one 60mm mortar. With the

(12) Personal knowledge; (13) Statement of Lt. Col. Robert S. Fowler, Battalion Commander, June 1945; (14) Personal knowledge.



exception of one bazooka and one flame thrower carried by the ammunition and pioneer platoon, all heavy and bulky equipment had been left behind.

The company commanders and platoon leaders were not given the opportunity to make a reconnaissance prior to the initial attack. The orders issued at battalion and company level were brief and incomplete. The initiative and imagination of junior officers and non-commissioned officers were taxed to the utmost in completing their plans. H-hour was to be 1300 hours.

#### THE FIRST ATTACK ON COLGAN WOODS (6 MAY)

"Approximately one hour prior to H-hour, the battalion commander was notified that regiment had asked for and received the support of a squadron of Marine SBD dive bombers." (15) Plans were quickly made for the squadron to drop 100-lb. bombs on Colgan Woods. The bomb drop was followed by the 4.2 and 81mm mortar concentrations. E and G Companies were given the order to attack. E Company on the left advanced with two platoons abreast as skirmishers. Upon reaching a point about 100 yards in the woods they were pinned down by machine gun fire. The foliage was so thick that the exact location of the machine gun or guns could not be determined. Time and again E Company tried to advance. The support platoon was committed on the left, but they were pinned down by the same fire. E Company suffered several casualties, including one of the platoon leaders. (16) (See Map D)

G Company on the right fared no better. They also advanced about 100 yards into the woods when they were pinned down by machine guns and small arms fire. Again the foliage

(15) A-1; (16) Personal knowledge



and underbrush were so thick that exact enemy positions could not be determined. Every time a man moved he drew fire. The enemy had placed snipers in the trees, and while several of these were located and shot, it was impossible to overcome the demoralizing effect they had on the men. The need of something larger and with more destructive power than 100-lb. bombs and 4.2 mortars was definitely felt by both front line companies. (17) G Company, after committing its support platoon, found it could not advance any further without suffering a very high casualty rate. (18) (See Map D)

Shortly before dark on 6 May the battalion commander, without committing his reserve company, ordered both E and G Companies to withdraw to the edge of the woods. There the battalion formed a perimeter defense for the night. (See Map D) Both of the forward companies had been forced to give up the ground they had gained. During the night the 4.2 and 81mm mortars, and all the companies' 60mm mortars, fired into the woods at irregular intervals. The night passed without incident. (19)

#### THE SECOND ATTACK ON COLGAN WOODS (7 MAY)

The morning of 7 May the company commanders were told that the battalion would attack at 0900. The attack would be preceded by the Marine SBD dive bombers dropping 500-lb. bombs, and, as before, 4.2 and 81mm mortar barrages. (It seems appropriate to mention at this point that the battalion was completely supplied by air. Due to the excellent performance of duty by all supply personnel, the battalion was not at any time hampered because of lack of ammunition or other supplies. Evacuation

(17) Personal knowledge; (18) Statement of Captain Pharis, Commanding Officer, G Company, 6 May 1945; (19) Personal knowledge.



was also by air.) (20) E Company, which had suffered the most casualties the previous day, reverted to battalion reserve. G Company was to attack on the left and F Company on the right. One platoon of heavy machine guns was attached to G Company, the other to remain in position on the road as before. (21)

G Company jumped off as scheduled and was able to advance only a few yards farther than E Company had the previous day. (See Map E) The company commander committed the support platoon around the left, but they too were stopped by a heavy volume of fire from the enemy. G Company found itself in the same situation as E Company had the evening before.

F Company, on the right, commanded by an aggressive officer, attacked vigorously, and succeeded in getting nearly half-way through the woods before being slowed and finally stopped. (See Map E) The F Company Commander sent a runner to battalion, requesting that mortar fire be placed in front of his company. This request was refused because only 400 yards now separated F Company and B Company on the far side of the woods. Had the exact position of B Company been known, the mortar support could have been given to F Company and the 2nd Battalion might have advanced through the woods that day.

The heavy machine gun platoon leader on the road observed a good many enemy crossing the road from the left to the right. These Japanese were apparently being shifted to support the forces holding up the advance of F Company. The platoon leader requested permission to fire on these enemy, but permission was refused for fear of hitting B Company.

(20) Personal knowledge; (21) Personal knowledge.



Since the Japanese were shifting some of their strength across the road, the battalion commander decided that G Company should make an all-out effort to push through the weakened defenses on the left. This effort was preceded by fires from the 4.2 mortars and the 81mm mortars. The firing of these concentrations evidently gave warning to the Japanese that an attack was developing on the left, as they immediately moved their men back across the road. G Company was not able to advance. (22)

F Company, which was some two to three hundred yards ahead of G Company, began to receive heavy fire on its left flank, from the Japanese across the road. Almost simultaneous with this fire they were hit on the right flank by a force estimated to be a company. F Company, after a bitter fight, was withdrawn from the woods on battalion order. The dead and several wounded men were necessarily abandoned in the woods. (23)

The Japanese, after forcing F Company to withdraw, concentrated on G Company, and at approximately 1700 hours the battalion commander ordered G Company to withdraw to the edge of the woods. The battalion occupied the perimeter defense positions prepared the night before. For the second consecutive day the battalion had fought all day without advancing, and without committing the reserve company. F Company's initial success was not exploited. The mortars again fired at intervals during the night. (24)

#### THE THIRD ATTACK ON COLGAN WOODS (8 MAY)

It was decided that more preparatory fires than had previously been used would be a great help in overcoming the

(22) Personal knowledge; (23) Statement of Captain Jess L. Goodman, Commanding Officer, Company F, June 1945; (24) Personal knowledge.



Japanese positions. Upon contacting higher headquarters, the battalion commander was told that artillery support was not yet available. However, if the battalion commander desired, the Marine SBD dive bombers could drop 1000-lb. bombs, and/or napalm bombs.

Thus the third attack on Colgan Woods was planned. The battalion would remain in its defensive positions while the bombs were being dropped. During the firing of the mortar concentrations, the battalion would move as far forward as safety would permit, and attack immediately upon the lifting of the mortar fire. G Company and a platoon of heavy machine guns on the left, F Company on the right, E Company in reserve. H-hour, 0900 hours.

The Marine planes did a wonderful job. They came in on schedule, dropped both 1000-lb. bombs and napalm bombs in the woods. The 2nd Battalion, about 200 yards from where most of the bombs fell, suffered several casualties from the bombs. In addition to physical wounds, the heavy explosions close to our own troops seemed to mark the breaking point for several men, thus there were several cases of psycho-neurosis and complete battle fatigue. (25)

F Company, entering the woods on the right, met stiff resistance, but advanced about 100 yards into the woods. (See Map F) There they were stopped and could advance no further. The company commander committed the support platoon, but still was unable to move. At this point, he requested mortar fire, which was again refused. The company commander recommended the battalion reserve be committed around his right. This recommendation was disapproved. F Company made no further advance the remainder of the day. (26)

(25) Personal knowledge; (26) Statement of Captain Jess L. Goodman, Commanding Officer, Company F, June 1945



G Company on the left advanced about 100 yards into the woods, to the same relative position they had reached the previous day. (See Map E) Here a heavy fire fight followed, but G Company was unable to advance. Two of the platoon leaders were casualties. The support platoon was committed, but they were unable to advance. The heavy machine guns were useless in the dense forest, so the machine gun platoon was employed as another rifle platoon. They, too, were unable to advance. The company commander, realizing that further advance was impossible, ordered the company to hold its present position. He placed the executive officer in command, and went to the battalion command post, to ask the battalion commander to change his tactics. The request was refused, and the battalion commander ordered the officer to return to his company and resume the attack. Just as the company commander reached his company he was shot. The company executive officer and the heavy machine gun platoon leader were the only officers left in the forces in the woods on the left of the road. These two officers planned the next maneuver. By now quite a bit had been learned about the Japanese defense. It was known that they had suffered casualties. The Japanese officers apparently had excellent control of their forces. As long as our troops did not try to advance, they drew no fire. Snipers were in the trees, but they fired only when all the Japanese weapons fired, so they could not be located. All the Japanese apparently opened and ceased fire on order. It was decided that the main thing holding up the advance of G Company was the Japanese machine guns. These guns seemed to be echeloned in depth. It was thought that if these guns could be located and destroyed, the company could advance. One machine gun was located. Effort



was made to destroy the gun by small arms fire and hand grenades, but to no avail. Battalion was requested to send a bazooka or a flame thrower to G Company. The battalion S-2 arrived with the flame thrower and a flame thrower team was organized from the personnel of G Company. It was planned for all troops to lay down a heavy volume of fire while the flame thrower team would crawl forward under the fire and knock out the machine gun. The machine gun was destroyed, and the flame thrower team was unscratched, but the battalion S-2 was killed and the acting company commander was evacuated as a mental case. The heavy machine gun platoon leader assumed command and sent a runner to battalion to notify the battalion commander that he had assumed command of all forces on the left of the road, and was awaiting orders. The battalion commander's reply was "Keep punching". After destroying the machine gun, G Company advanced about 15 yards before being stopped by another machine gun. This gun was knocked out the same way as the first one. This system of advancing was slow and costly; however, by 1700 hours 8 May G Company had advanced about 400 yards into the woods. (See Map F) It was at this time that the battalion commander again ordered his companies to withdraw from the woods, and to occupy the perimeter defense positions. Again the companies were ordered to give up the ground they had gained. Again the advance of a company was not exploited. Again the reserve had not been committed. The Japanese were content to let the battalion spend the night peacefully in fox holes. (27)

#### THE FOURTH ATTACK ON COLGAN WOODS (9 MAY)

The plan for the attack on the morning of 9 May was no different than the plan for the day before, except that H-hour (27) Personal knowledge.



was to be 0800 hours. The Marine SBD dive bombers again dropped 1000-lb. and napalm bombs. The 4.2 chemical mortars and the 81mm mortars laid down a heavy volume of fire. It was nearly 0900 hours before G and F Companies jumped off. Due to heavy fog the planes were late in dropping the bombs. (28)

F Company reached the same position it had withdrawn from the night before, but was unable to gain any yardage the rest of the morning. G Company found that the positions it had knocked out the previous day had been reoccupied. It was stopped after an advance of approximately 100 yards. (29)

At 1130 hours, the division commander, accompanied by the regimental commander, arrived in the area. They informed the battalion commander that the 149th Field Artillery Battalion was going into position, and would be ready to support the 2nd Battalion at 1400 hours that day. Plans were made for an all-out effort to overrun "Colgan Woods".

F and G Companies were withdrawn from the woods. G Company, whose strength was about forty men, was sent around the fight to Maramag Strip to join the 3rd Battalion. The acting company commander reverted to H Company. Company L, almost at full strength, was sent from the 3rd Battalion to join the 2nd Battalion.

The plan for what proved to be the final assault on "Colgan Woods" was for the Marine SBD dive bombers to start dropping 1000-lb. bombs and napalm bombs at 1330 hours. At 1400 hours the artillery would fire concentrations. Since the woods was so dense, and the enemy so well dug in, a large percentage of the artillery fire was delayed action fuse. (30) During the firing of the artillery concentrations, the companies moved into position. F Company, with a platoon of heavy machine guns, (28) Personal knowledge; (29) Personal knowledge; (30) Personal knowledge.



moved around to the left side of the woods until they were facing the flank of the Japanese positions. (See Map G) Here the company lined three platoons abreast as skirmishers. L Company, employed in a like manner, joined the right flank of F Company and extended to the south. E Company, with three platoons abreast, was lined on the south side of the woods, facing the enemy positions. Upon the lifting of the artillery fire, F and L Companies advanced on line, laying heavy fire to their front by firing from the hip and throwing hand grenades at opportune targets. The two companies advanced through the woods to the road, crossed the road and continued the advance. E Company now started through the woods from the south, and advanced through the woods till contact was made with Company B. The woods had now been gone over, as with a fine tooth comb, first from west to east, then from south to north. The battalion was positive that no living Japanese remained in "Colgan Woods". No prisoners were taken.

The battalion formed a perimeter defense around the woods, and a quiet night followed.

The morning of 10 May brought the news that the regiment would be passed through by the 155th Infantry, as soon as "Berlin Woods" was cleared of the enemy. At about 1200 hours the battalion had cleared "Berlin Woods" of a few scattered Japanese. The 2nd Battalion then prepared a perimeter defense astride the road, in the cleared area just north of "Berlin Woods". (See Map G) "At 0400 the following morning approximately 100-150 Japanese made a two-hour Banzai attack on the 2nd Battalion perimeter. Just as the attack ended the Commanding General, Eighth Army, landed on the Maramag Strip a few hundred yards away, and walked over to inspect the 72 dead Japanese piled in front of the position. Orders and other doc-



uments captured near Kibawe indicated that the enemy force had been the 1st Battalion, 74th Infantry. Identification tags, taken from the enemy dead after the banzai attack, definitely identified them as of the 74th Infantry." (31)

"On the afternoon of 13 May, the 155th Infantry passed through, and for the first time in any action we were behind friendly troops." (32) For the second time in 15 days, the 2nd Battalion was given credit for annihilating an enemy battalion.

#### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In making an analysis and criticism of the action, first consideration will be given to the effectiveness of the enemy's defense.

The Japanese at all times took full advantage of the cover and concealment available, thus confusing and bewildering our troops. The determined, and even fanatical, defense by the Japanese caused many American casualties, and stopped the advance of our troops for six days. The Japanese battalion commander, who surrendered to the 2nd Battalion after the war, stated that even though his battalion had been annihilated, it accomplished its assigned mission. The Japanese snipers in the trees did not cause many casualties, but the harassing fire was responsible for much mental anguish on our part.

The enemy, by echeloning his machine guns in depth, sacrificed mutual support to some extent, thereby weakening his defenses.

In considering our own forces, it is immediately apparent, that, when a unit must accomplish its mission without the support of artillery, the task becomes increasingly difficult. The 4.2 mortar, while an effective weapon, was not able to

(31) A-7, p. 40; (32) A-1, p. 56.



replace the artillery in its direct support role.

The use of tactical aircraft in close support of ground units tends to boost the morale of our troops, and most certainly had a demoralizing effect on the enemy.

Company commanders and platoon leaders, for reasons unknown at this time, were not given the opportunity to make a reconnaissance prior to the 2nd Battalion's attack. The orders issued at battalion and company level were incomplete and did not contain sufficient information to execute, effectively, an attack. These factors resulted in an attack which could have been disastrous, had not all squads, platoons, and companies been accustomed to operating with each other.

The advance made by F Company, commanded by an aggressive and capable officer, on 7 May, was nullified when the battalion commander ordered the company to withdraw. On 8 May, the advance made by G Company was likewise nullified. The officers and men of both companies, F and G, felt they should not give up ground they had fought so hard to take. This type of action on the part of commanders not only results in unnecessary casualties, but lowers the morale and esprit de corps of the unit.

At this time it is impossible to determine the reasons the battalion commander did not commit his reserve company. It is true that the men in the reserve company needed rest, but it is believed that both time and life would have been saved had E Company been committed to exploit the advance of F Company or G Company.

Credit for a job well done goes to all supply personnel in the regiment. Supply and evacuation were accomplished entirely by air during the operation. The task was a difficult one, but the battalion was well supplied throughout.



Four times in succession the battalion attacked "Colgan Woods", using nearly identical plans. The enemy very easily anticipated each move and shifted his forces accordingly.

Lack of judgment was displayed when G Company's commander went to the rear, leaving his unit engaged with the enemy. The battalion commander was entirely correct in ordering the officer back to his unit.

The employment of the heavy machine gun platoon as riflemen proved satisfactory. G Company was extremely short-handed and welcomed the added strength.

The Marine SBD dive bombers rendered excellent close support and demonstrated their ability to coordinate closely with other services. The 50 tons of bombs dropped by these bombers certainly contributed toward the success of the operation.

(33)

The 721 rounds fired into "Colgan Woods" by the 149th Field Artillery Battalion, proved, in the opinion of the writer, to be the most important contributing factor towards the achievement of success. (34) War Department General Order No. 38, 1946, awarded the 2nd Battalion, 124th Infantry, the Presidential Unit Citation for its part in the Mindanao campaign. (35)

#### LESSONS

1. When necessary, bomb safety lines can be closer to friendly troops than the prescribed limits.
2. Units may be supplied completely by air without impairing combat efficiency.
3. Evacuation by air is an improvement over evacuation by ambulance or other ground vehicles.

(33) A-1, p. 152; (34) A-1, p. 152; (35) A-9.



4. The same pattern or plan of attack should not be used several times in succession.

5. A unit commander should not leave his unit while it is engaged with the enemy.

6. Heavy weapons platoons, when necessary, may be employed as rifle platoons.

7. The flame thrower is a deadly weapon.

8. Units suffering heavy casualties should be relieved periodically for reorganization.

9. Proper use of cover and concealment gives the using force a definite advantage.

10. If possible, front line units should not "run off" from their supporting artillery.

11. If at all possible, a reconnaissance by platoon and company commanders should be made before an attack.

12. Orders may be brief, but should also be clear and to the point.

13. The success of a front line company must be exploited.

14. Units should not be ordered to give up ground gained, except when absolutely necessary.