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JAPANESE NIGHT COMBAT

PART 3 OF 3 PARTS

SUPPLEMENT:

NIGHT COMBAT EXAMPLES

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MILITARY HISTORY SECTION
Japanese Research Division

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Example 1. Night Attack Against Mt Kungchangling by the 2d Division During the Russo-Japanese War. (Based on the Battle Report of the 2d Division, First Army.) (See Maps No. 1 and No. 2)

In early August 1904, Field Marshal Oyama, Commander-in-Chief of the Manchuria Army, ordered the First, Second and Fourth Armies to commence a mass offensive toward Liaoyang area before the arrival of powerful reinforcements for the Russian Army.

The First Army which had been conducting the operations along the Antung - Liaoyang Road since April of that same year had broken through the Russian forces in the vicinity of Mt Matienling and Mt Yangtzuling during June and July, and had been undertaking preparations for the next offensive operation against Russian forces which were firmly entrenched in positions in the Hungshaling - Tatientzu Sector. At that time, the First Army was composed of the Guard Division, the 2d Division, and the 12th Division.

Enemy positions confronting the First Army were semipermanent installations which had been constructed several months earlier. Located on top of rugged mountains and defended by four divisions, they were virtually invulnerable. Owing to the fact that the terrain in the vicinity of the battlefield consisted entirely of rugged mountains and deep valleys, it was extremely difficult for our forces to establish artillery positions, except in the vicinity of the Liaoyang Road. The strength of the positions, the terrain of the battlefield and ratio of strength were all favorable to the enemy and the only thing which could be considered unfavorable was the fact

that the position was extensive, having a width of more than 40 kilometers.

Maintaining close contact with all its subordinate divisions, the First Army had been studying attack procedures since mid-August and finally decided to commit its main body to a night attack and effect a break through in the center of the enemy position, taking advantage of a weak point. On 22 August, the Army issued an attack order which read generally as follows:

1. The Army plans to attack the enemy forces in the Taanpino and Liaoyang Road areas on the 26th, committing its main body and an element.

2. The 12th Division (less one mountain gun battery) will launch an attack on the enemy forces north of Mt Chipanling at dawn of the 26th.

3. Before daybreak of the 26th, the 2d Division (less the cavalry regiment and one field artillery battalion) plus one mountain gun battery of the 12th Division will attack the enemy forces disposed in the area between Mt Kungchangling and Hill 300, southwest of Tzekou.

4. Beginning at dusk of the 26th, the Guard Division together with the cavalry regiment and one field artillery battalion of the 2d Division will carry out an attack on the enemy forces in the vicinity of Tatientzu on the Liaoyang Road.

At that time, the 2d Division had concentrated its strength at a point about 10 to 15 kilometers from the enemy position and had been undertaking preparations for attack. The plan to employ the 2d Division in the night attack on Mt Kungchangling was decided prior to the issuance of the order and the 2d Division Commander had already directed all forces under his command to undertake terrain reconnaissance. Although the area between the friendly outposts and enemy

positions was extremely hazardous, owing to the fact that both friendly and enemy patrols and reconnaissance units were engaged in activities, by the 26th, most of the officers were familiar with the terrain in the vicinity of the attack objectives.

The enemy had constructed defensive installations along the crest line in the area extending from the high grounds north of Mt Kungchangling to Hill 300, southwest of the same sector, and it was estimated that its artillery positions were located near Mt Kungchangling. In addition, there were some defensive installations on the high grounds southwest of Hill 260 and south of Changchiakou. Enemy lookouts were stationed in the vicinity of Hill 260 and Changchiakou, and friendly patrols made frequent contacts. In the Mt Kungchangling area, enemy lookouts were posted on the high ground west of Kaochiakou. Skirmishes between small units took place occasionally in the Hochiaputzu, Titaiputzu, and Hsiawengputzu areas. The high grounds south of Kaochiakou were occupied alternately by the enemy and friendly forces. Also on Taheishan friendly patrols occasionally made contacts with enemy patrols. Reconnaissance indicated that the enemy's massed strength was located in the vicinity northwest of the ravines and Hill 300 in the Tzekou Valley.

Upon receipt of the First Army Order on 22 August, Lt Gen Nishi, commander of the 2d Division, issued the following order for attack on 24 August:

1. Before daybreak of the 26th, the Division will launch

attacks on the enemy forces located in the area between Mt Kungchangling and Hill 300 situated southwest of Tzekou.

2. After sunset of the 25th, the 3d Infantry Brigade (the 4th and 29th Regiments; plus two cavalry squads) will depart from Mt Wuchialing and the saddle north of Houwu, and before dawn of the 26th, will commence an attack on the enemy forces located in the area between the high ground approximately 1,500 meters south of the saddle of Mt Kungchangling and Hill 300 situated southwest of the sector.

3. After sunset of the 25th, the 15th Infantry Brigade (the 16th Infantry Regiment and the 2d Battalion of the 30th Infantry Regiment; plus one cavalry and engineer platoon) will depart from Hsihuangnikou, and before dawn of the 26th, will launch attacks on the enemy forces located between Mt Kungchangling and the high ground about 1,500 meters south of Mt Kungchangling.

4. The 30th Infantry Regiment (less the 2d Battalion) will be designated as the division reserve force and will concentrate its strength at Mt Santaoling before sunset of the 25th.

5. By sunset of the 25th, the 3d Cavalry Company (less one platoon and two squads) will assemble at Mt Santaoling.

6. Before sunset of the 25th, the Field Artillery Regiment (less one battalion) plus one engineer battalion will concentrate its strength in the area south of Hsihuangnikou. Later, it will follow the 15th Infantry Brigade, take a position in the area west of Hsikou and establish necessary installations.

The mountain gun battery assigned from the 12th Division will assemble at Mt Santaoling before sunset of the 25th. It will later proceed behind the 3d Infantry Brigade and establish positions in the vicinity of the high ground about 1,500 meters northeast of Hill 260. One engineer company will be assigned to assist the battery in the establishment of its positions.

The 2d Division Commander directed all officers and men to wear white armbands about 15 cm wide on their left arms during the night attack in order to facilitate identification.

Over-all Progress of the Night Attacks. (Based on the Battle Report of the 2d Division.) (See Map No. 2.)

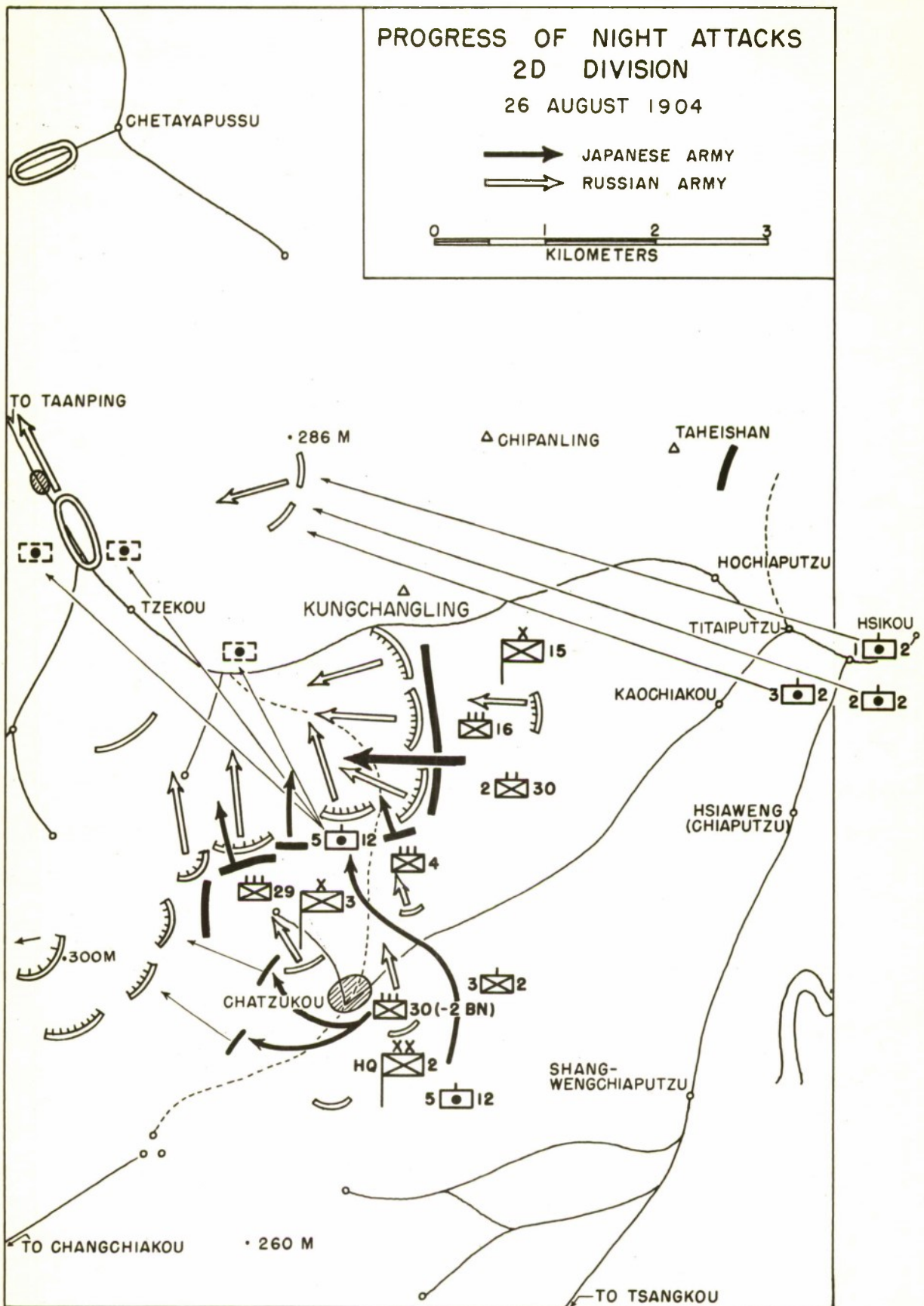
In accordance with the division order, all forces departed from

PROGRESS OF NIGHT ATTACKS 2D DIVISION

26 AUGUST 1904

→ JAPANESE ARMY
→ RUSSIAN ARMY

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KILOMETERS



the designated points after sunset on the 25th. The 3d Brigade concentrated its strength in the Shangwengchiaputzu area at 2100 hours and routed enemy lookout units stationed on the high grounds extending from Hill 260 to the area northeast of the hill. At 0130 hours on the 26th, it commenced an advance in the valley near Chatzukou in extended formation and about 0300 hours, it approached the crest line, extending about 2,000 meters westward from the grade-change point of the high ground situated approximately 1,500 meters south of Mt Kungchangling, with the 4th Regiment on the right and the 29th Regiment on the left.

The enemy was emplaced on the ridges of all the high ground in front of the 3d Brigade position. These troops opened fire on the 3d Brigade as soon as it reached the vicinity of Chatzukou, but the 3d Brigade did not return the fire and approached the enemy's main position utilizing the protection afforded by the valleys and spurs in the area. The difference in elevation between Chatzukou and the crest line where the main enemy position was located, was 100 to 180 meters. Despite the rugged terrain and steep grades, braving the heavy fire the 3d Brigade routed the enemy to the north and occupied the main positions about 0400 hours. The two infantry regiments suffered heavy casualties in this assault and the 4th Infantry Regiment lost its commander, Lt Col Yoshida.

The 15th Infantry Brigade massed its strength in the area west of Titaiputzu shortly after 2300 hours and approached the enemy

positions from the high ground west of Kaochiakou. Although the terrain in the area was rugged and the main enemy position was approximately 200 meters above the attacking brigade, the enemy offered only slight resistance and fired sporadically. The 15th Brigade succeeded in penetrating the enemy position without firing a single shot and had routed all enemy forces by about 0400 hours on the 26th, occupying the crest line extending about 1,500 meters southward from the south of the saddle of Mt Kungchangling.

It being a clear night with a full moon, objects were visible at a distance of 200 to 300 meters. For this reason our forces were subjected to enemy fire, however, it facilitated our movement. The moonlight made it possible for all friendly forces to reach their objectives in an orderly manner and to launch assaults without losing their bearings while advancing in the rugged terrain of this mountainous area.

Note: Some veterans say that the weather was partly cloudy and the moon was covered occasionally by drifting clouds. They claim that, although the night was of medium brightness, the visible range was approximately 150 meters. At all events, there is no doubt that it was a moonlit night.

The mountain artillery battery which was assigned from the 12th Division established its position near the high ground northeast of Hill 260 with the assistance of the 1st Engineer Company. The three field artillery batteries established their positions at the designated points and the division's reserve force assembled in the area south of Shangwengchiaputzu before dawn. Each force was prepared for battle after daybreak.

The casualties suffered by the 2d Division during this night attack are shown below:

Unit	Killed in Action		Wounded	
	Officers	NCO & Privates	Officers	NCO & Privates
4th Infantry Regiment	5	53	11	184
29th Infantry Regiment	3	69	13	201
16th Infantry Regiment		18	2	131
30th Infantry Regiment	1	10	2	38
Total:	9	150	28	554

Progress of the 4th Infantry Regiment. (Based on Speech by General Miura.) (See Map No. 3.)

Maj Gen Matsunaga, Commander of the 3d Infantry Brigade, planned to carry out the night attack by using as front line forces, the 29th Infantry Regiment on the left and the 4th Infantry Regiment on the right, with the 2d Battalion of the 4th Infantry Regiment in reserve. Under this plan, the forces were to commence the advance at 0200 hours on the 26th from the vicinity of Chatzukou and occupy the enemy position by 0400 hours.

Lt Col Yoshida, Commander of the 4th Infantry Regiment, deployed the 1st Battalion on the left and the 3d Battalion on the right,

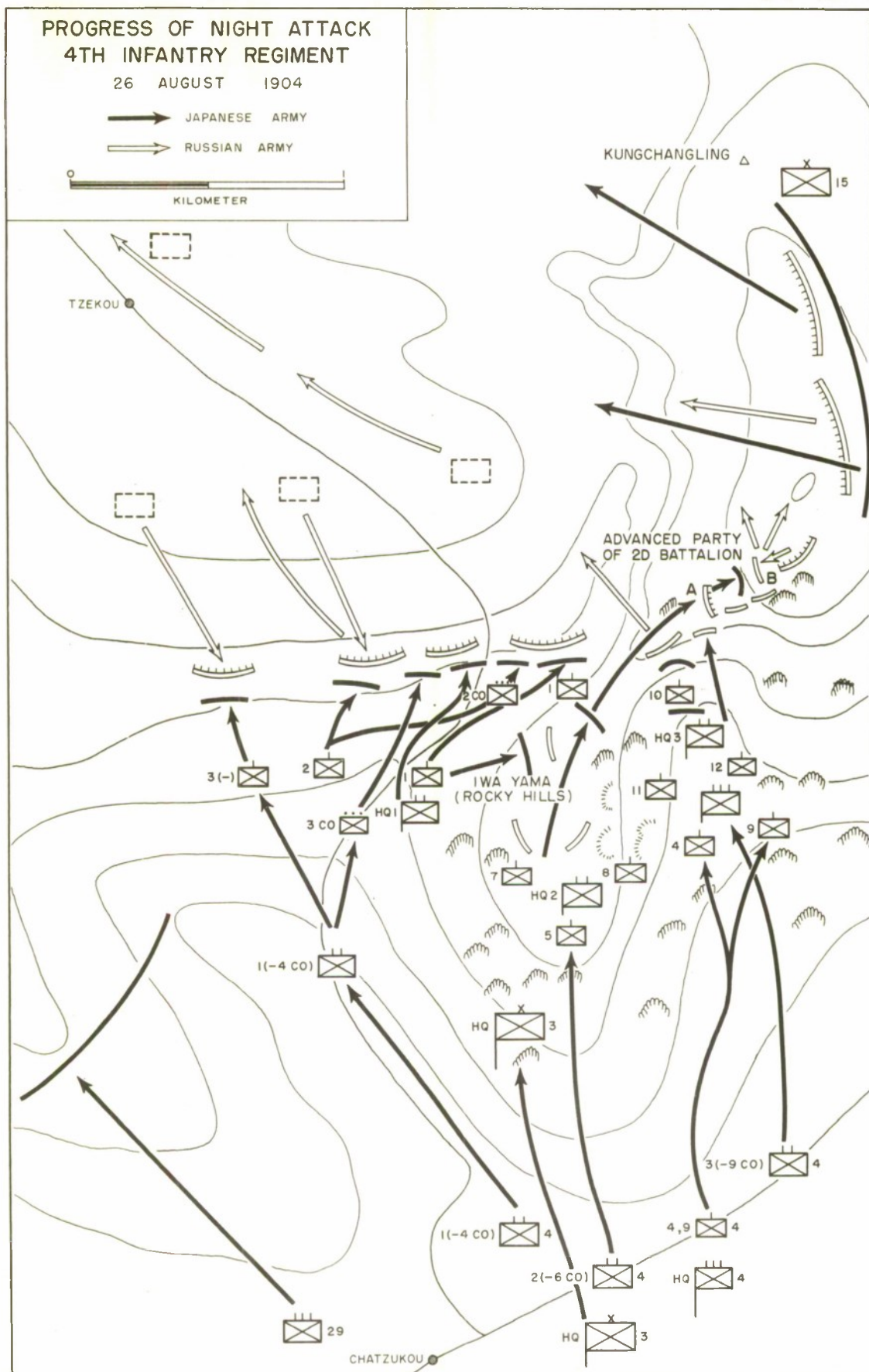
PROGRESS OF NIGHT ATTACK 4TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

26 AUGUST 1904

JAPANESE ARMY

RUSSIAN ARMY

KILOMETER



and ordered the forces to advance for the assault from both sides of Iwayama. Together with the reserve (the 4th and 9th Companies), the regimental commander followed the 3d Battalion. This assault disposition was employed because it was believed that it would be difficult for the enemy to station troops on Iwayama, a towering jagged mountain. (However, as soon as the two battalions of the 4th Infantry Regiment commenced the advance, enemy troops suddenly appeared on Iwayama and opened heavy fire on the flank of the two battalions. Therefore, Brigade Commander, Maj Gen Matsunaga, ordered the Brigade reserve (the 2d Battalion of the 4th Infantry Regiment less the 6th Company) to capture Iwayama immediately.

The 2d Battalion which had been eagerly awaiting the opportunity to take part in the battle, charged resolutely toward Iwayama. The 7th Company advanced along the central crest line, followed by the battalion headquarters and the 5th Company. The 8th Company, the front line force on the right, advanced by way of the right slope. Because of the heavy enemy fire and rugged terrain, it encountered considerable difficulty in advancing and the formation of both companies became confused. Nevertheless, the 7th Company finally scaled the summit, broke through the enemy lines and occupied the position.

1st Lt Miura (later, General Miura) adjutant of the 2d Battalion, who was inspecting the front line at that time, led the front line force and continued the advance along the crest line, accompanied by 1st Lt Nambu, 2d Lt Hosoda and approximately 60 men. To the right

front, the 10th Company of the 3d Battalion had occupied one crest line after losing the company commander and 30 men, either killed or wounded. Further to the front, several enemy positions were visible in the vicinity of Point A from which and enemy troops fired sporadically. The time was drawing close to 0400 hours, the time set as the deadline for capturing the enemy position and 1st Lt Miura decided to charge the position to the front.

After a brief, but fierce, hand to hand encounter in which Lt Miura was wounded, the enemy was routed and the position in the vicinity of Point B was captured.

Author's Observation

Of the many night attacks conducted during the Russo-Japanese War, the 2d Division attack on Mt Kungchangling brought about the most successful results. Although casualties were high, they could be considered as minor when compared with losses sustained in other engagements. The capture of Mt Kungchangling was the major factor in bringing about the total disintegration of the Russian Army positions. Among the principal causes of this success were:

1. Comparatively thorough preparations were made. Under the later concepts of highly developed night attack tactics, the preparations for night attacks undertaken by the 2d Division were far from adequate. Nevertheless, because reconnaissance of the enemy situation and terrain was conducted for several days prior to the attack, the officers were well acquainted with the terrain.

2. The moonlight greatly facilitated the movement of the assault force, although under the later concepts, it was generally believed that moonlight was disadvantageous to night attacks. This disadvantage was also recognized at that time, but owing to the fact that training for maneuvering under cover of darkness had not been intensive, it is assumed that the troops sometimes depended on moonlight to facilitate their movement during the night. As mentioned in the battle report of the 2d Division, the moonlight helped greatly in enabling the units move without losing their bearings.

3. Courageous acts of the officers were particularly responsible for the success of the attack conducted by the 2d Battalion, of the 4th Regiment. In other regiments and battalions, the courageous deeds of the officers were also instrumental in bringing about success.

In spite of the success of the night attack on Mt Kungchangling the Japanese Army was not entirely satisfied with the results. Study and deliberation were devoted to the following factors:

1. The success of the 2d Division was due to the fact that the Russian Army made no attempt to launch a counterattack. Had Russian Army carried out a full-scale counterattack, it was considered doubtful if the 2d Division would have succeeded in securing such a complete success.

2. During the day of the 26th, a heavy fog shrouded the entire battlefield and slowed down the assault and the pursuit action

of the 2d Division. In view of this, it was deemed unwise to commit the entire strength of the division to a night attack. It was considered that it might have been better to capture the enemy positions and strategic points in the vicinity of Mt Kungchangling by committing one regiment to the night attack and employing the rest of the division to exploit the battle success on the following day.

3. It was suggested that attack preparations were insufficient, considering the length of time available. Until sunset on the night of the attack, the 2d Division was located at a point approximately 15 kilometers from the enemy position and was, therefore, unable to obtain detailed information on the main enemy positions. It was considered advisable to select an attack preparation point nearer the enemy.

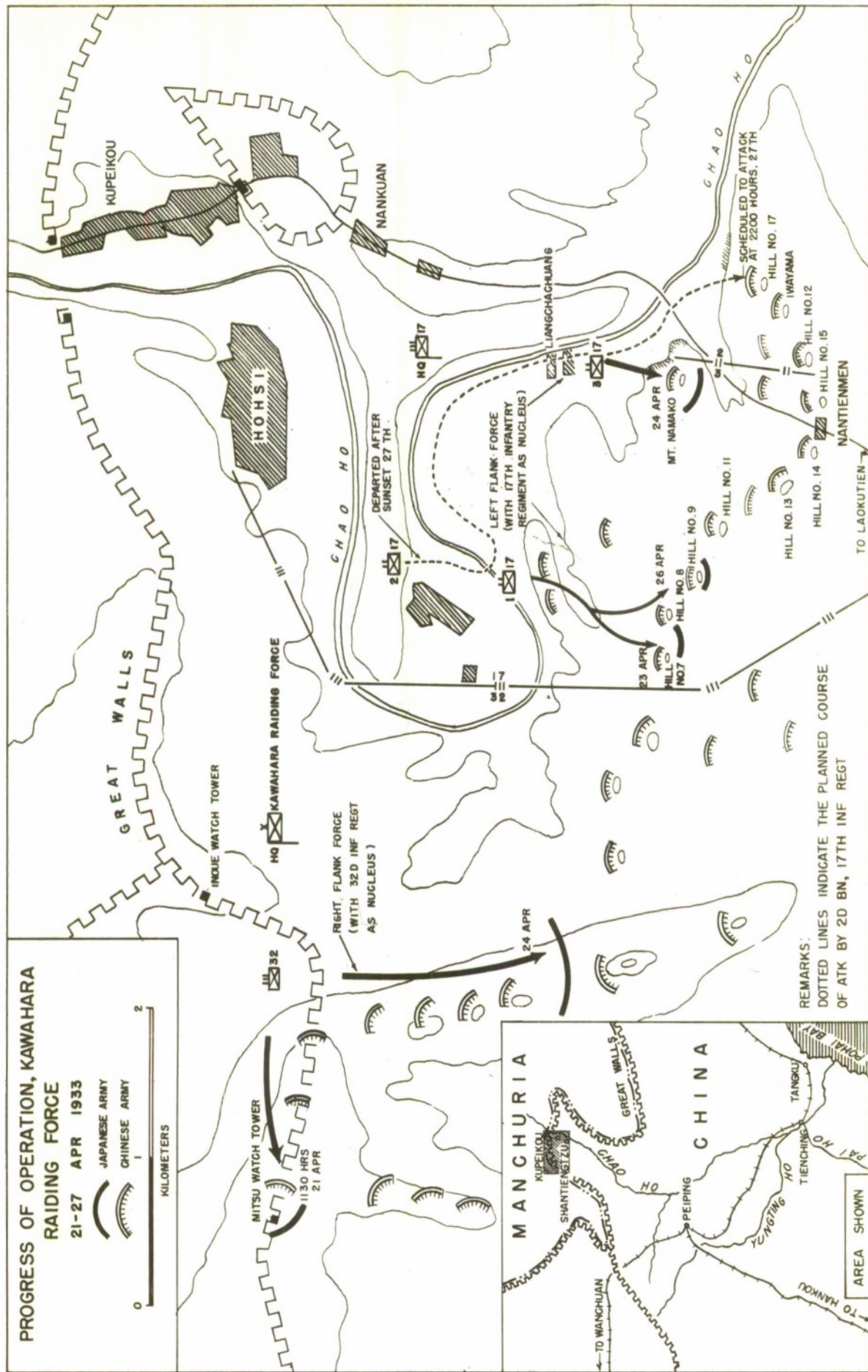
Example No. 2

Night Attack by the 2d Battalion of the 17th Infantry
Regiment in the Vicinity of Nantienmen, North China

(Based on the statements of Lt Col Amano, color bearer of the 17th Infantry Regiment and Col Furuya, commander of the Machine Gun Unit of the 2d Battalion, and the battle report of the 1st Battalion of the 17th Infantry Regiment.)

This night attack was carried out in the course of the operations conducted by the Kwantung Army in North China during the spring of 1933, immediately following the occupation of Jehol. On March 1st, the Kawahara Raiding Force of the 8th Division (commanded by Maj Gen Kawahara, Commanding General of the 16th Brigade and having the 17th Infantry Regiment as a nucleus) had launched an operation at daybreak and on March 10th occupied Kupeikou (approximately 110 kilometers northeast of Peking) on the south side of the Great Wall. (See Map No. 1)

For political reasons, operations were suspended until 20 April when the Kawahara Raiding Force was reinforced by the assignment of the 32d Infantry Regiment, building the force to five infantry battalions, two field artillery battalions and two engineer platoons. The opposing Chinese force was an army of six divisions and one cavalry brigade under direct command of Chiang Kai-shek. Since it was estimated that the fighting power of one division of the Chinese Army was equivalent to one infantry regiment of the Japanese Army, the enemy had about three times the power of the Kawahara Force. In addition, the Chinese had made good use of the time since the 10th



of March in setting up formidable defense positions in the sectors south and west of Kupeikou.

General Kawahara directed that the main attack be made on the enemy facing the 32d Infantry Regiment which was on the right front, and planned to annihilate the enemy in the vicinity of Nantienmen by advancing from Mitsu Watch Tower toward Shangtientzu. The 17th Infantry Regiment plus one engineer platoon and one tank platoon (less the 2d and 3d Battalions, which were disposed in the rear on guard duty) constituted the left flank force and was ordered to commence an attack from the bank of the Chao Ho (River) toward Laokutien.

At dawn of 21 April, both the right and left flank forces attacked simultaneously, and about 1030 hours of the same day, the right flank force occupied Mitsu Watch Tower, it then proceeded southward and succeeded in penetrating about three kilometers into the enemy position by the 24th, but a succeeding assault was brought to a standstill by the stiff resistance offered by the Chinese. On the left flank, the 1st Battalion captured Hill No. 7 on the 23d, and Hills No. 8 and 9 on the 26th. The 3d Battalion, which had been brought up to the front, captured Mt Namako on the 24th. However, two Chinese divisions facing the left flank force offered stubborn resistance and the attack on this front did not progress according to plan.

Great importance was attached to this operation because it was to be the final operation to be undertaken by the Kwantung Army during

the Manchurian Incident and the outcome was believed to have a significant military as well as political affect. Consequently, the 8th Division commander effected a gradual reinforcement of the force under the command of Maj Gen Kawahara and urged the early completion of the operation. On the 25th or 26th General Kawahara's staff expressed as their opinion, that it would be advisable to surmount the stalemate by occupying the key points in the Nantienmen area, cutting of the enemy's route of withdrawal. On the 26th, General Kawahara ordered the 17th Infantry Regiment to make preparations for a night attack on Nantienmen.

The commander of the 17th Infantry Regiment decided to employ the 2d Battalion which had recently been sent to the front. On the morning of the 27th he summoned the battalion commander, Major Toya, and all company commanders to the regimental headquarters, located south of Hohsi, outlined his plan and directed them to commence preparations for a night attack. The following attack order was issued at 1830 hours on the same day:

1. On April 28th the left flank force will break through the enemy position situated to its front and advance to the line linking Laokutien and Nantienmen with the high grounds to the east of Nantienmen.

2. The 2d Battalion (less half a platoon each of the 5th and 8th Companies and less one platoon of the 7th Company) plus two engineer squads will constitute the first line force on the left flank, and after occupying the line half-way up Hill No. 17 by dawn of the 28th, it will push on to capture Hill No. 12.

3. The 1st Battalion will constitute the first line force on the right flank and after routing the enemy confronting it, will occupy as many enemy positions west of Nantienmen as possible.

4. The 3d Battalion will constitute the first line force on the central front and, from its present location, it will conduct coordinated action with the assault of the 1st and 2d Battalions. Later, it will launch an attack directed against the high ground east of Nantienmen.

5. The line linking the east edge of Mt Namako and the west edge of Hill No. 12 will divide the operational areas of the 2d and 3d Battalions.

As indicated in the order, the 2d Battalion was only required to conduct a night attack against Hill No. 17 and to occupy a sector only half-way up the hill. (This was considered to be a reasonable objective for a night attack.) Although it was not indicated in the order, the time for the commencement of the attack was set for 2200 hours on the 27th and it was hoped that the forces would occupy Nantienmen by 29 April, the Emperor's birthday.

Although the Chao Ho (River) was only 30 to 40 meters wide and 50 to 80 centimeters deep, there was an unscalable precipice on the northern bank, leaving only two points where a crossing was possible. Since it was not possible to cross the river and proceed directly towards the objective, it was planned to ford the river soon after sunset and to proceed eastward along the southern bank of the Chao Ho, under cover provided by the 1st and 3d Battalions, advancing to a point north of Hill No. 17. The attack was scheduled at midnight. Although the battalion arrived somewhat later than scheduled, its advance to the point north of the hill progressed smoothly. The Chinese forces, considering it inconceivable for the comparatively small Kawahara Raiding Force to attempt an attack against their strong

positions were unaware of the battalion's advance and were completely unprepared.

The battalion commander disposed the 5th and 7th Companies on the front line and soon after midnight commenced the charge on Hill No. 17. (See Map No. 2)

Note: The battalions of the 8th Division not being on a wartime organization, were composed of three companies each.

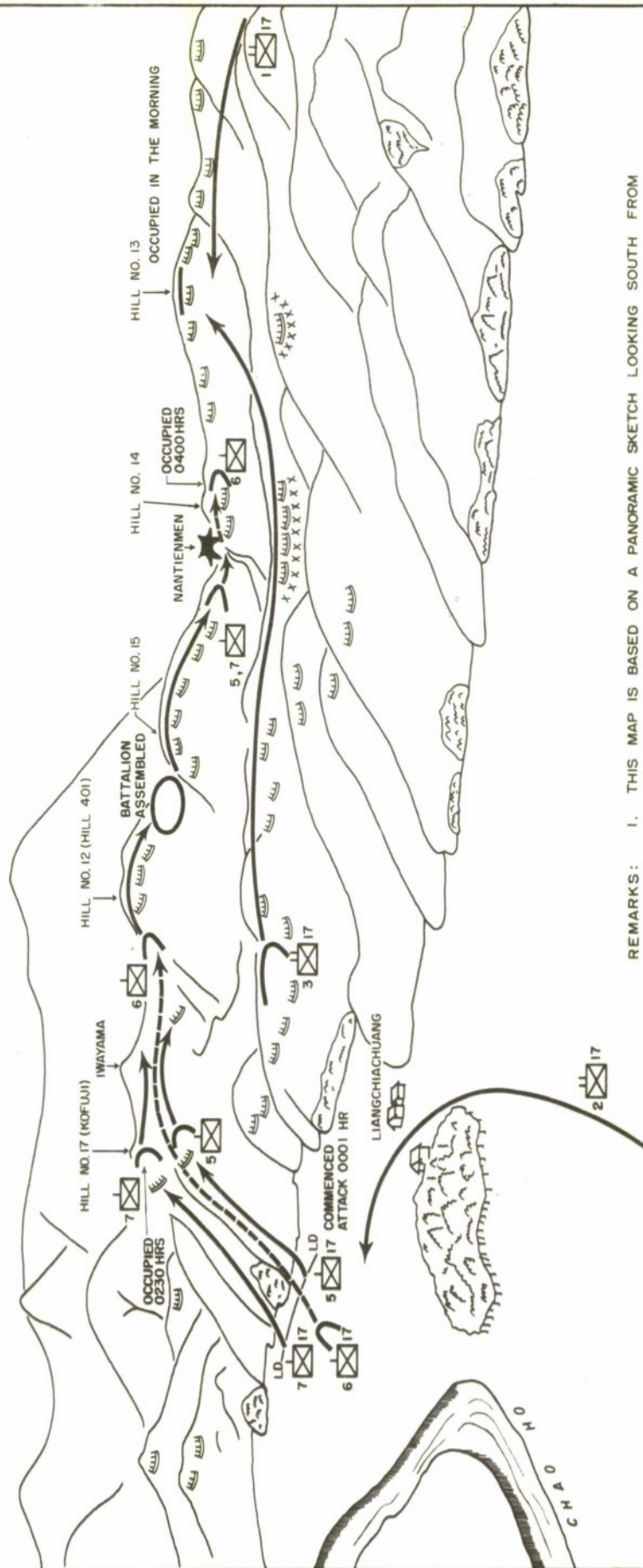
Most of the hills in this area, including Hill No. 17, had steep, rocky grades and could not be easily scaled. Nevertheless, the two front line companies charged up the steep, 210 meter slope and occupied the summit of Hill No. 17 at 0230 hours on the 28th.

As a result of the surprise attack the enemy was at first in a state of confusion, but later offered resistance, throwing hand-grenades and opening fire with rifles. After the main body of the 2d Battalion left Hill No. 17 in its drive westward, the Chinese launched an attack from the south in an attempt to reoccupy the hill. However, a machine gun unit remaining on the hill opened fire and the Chinese withdrew after suffering heavy losses.

Having succeeded in occupying Hill No. 17, the 2d Battalion continued its attack westward along the crest line, with the 6th Company, having leapfrogged the 5th and 7th Companies, acting as first line force. Although the crest of the rocky hills restricted the forces to single file passage, the first line force attacked one enemy position after another and occupied Hill No. 12. Later, the 5th and 7th Companies took part in the action and vied with the first line force

PROGRESS OF NIGHT ATTACK 2D BATTALION 17TH INFANTRY REGIMENT

28 APRIL 1933



REMARKS: 1. THIS MAP IS BASED ON A PANORAMIC SKETCH LOOKING SOUTH FROM VICINITY OF LIANGCHACHUANG.

2. THE ALTITUDE OF HILL NO. 17 APPROXIMATELY 210 METERS FROM THE PLAIN.

in taking the lead. The entire battalion advanced toward Nantienmen, crossing into the operational zone of the 3d Battalion. Unable to recover from the shock sustained at the outset of the battle and being subject to attack on the flank, the enemy retreated in disorder.

By 0400 hours on the 28th the 2d Battalion occupied an area approximately two kilometers in depth and had succeeded in capturing Hill No. 15, Nantienmen and Hill No. 14, west of Nantienmen.

Upon being informed of the success of the attack by the 2d Battalion, the 1st and 3d Battalions launched a coordinated assault and occupied Hill No. 13 on the morning of the 28th. With all hills east of Hill No. 7 in Japanese control, the Chinese forces facing the right flank force commenced a withdrawal. The unexpectedly great success achieved by the 2d Battalion in this night attack was the principal factor contributing to the victory of the Kawahara Raiding Force.

Author's Observations:

This night attack is a fine example of effecting a penetration by employing leapfrog tactics. The attack was not limited to the capture of key points in the enemy positions, but involved the defeat of an enemy of overwhelming strength by a small unit, paving the way for a successful operation by the entire force.

Factors contributing to the success of the operation were:

The operational plans were kept hidden from the enemy and the surprise attack was effectively conducted.

The timing of the movement of the 2d Battalion and the fact that the enemy situation was favorable for a surprise attack by the battalion.

Japanese forces were well trained and possessed high morale, and exploited fully the initial effect of the surprise attack by making a subsequent assault.

The Chinese force was given no opportunity to regroup and subsequent attacks, exerting constant pressure, overwhelmed the enemy by maintaining the favorable situation brought about by the initial surprise attack.

Example No. 3

Night Attack by the 14th Division on the Banks of the
Tatse Ho (River) in North China

(Based on Volume IV of the History of the China Incident,
Compiled by the Army General Staff and on statements by
Lt Col Ito, Commander of the 9th Company, 2d Infantry
Regiment.)

This night attack was conducted by the 14th Division of the First Army on the night of 21-22 September 1937 against Chinese positions on the right bank of the Tatse Ho (River), located north of Paoting. The First Army (composed of the 6th, 14th and 20th Divisions) was then under the command of the North China Area Army. At the beginning of the China Incident offensive, the First Army had destroyed the Chinese forces in the vicinity of Chochou on the right bank of the Yungting Ho (River), and was pursuing the enemy toward Paoting. (See Map No. 1)

The battle at Chochou commenced on 14 September 1937 and by afternoon of the 18th, the enemy was routed and the pursuit was progressing favorably. At this juncture the Army commander decided to have his forces occupy positions in the Paoting sector by maintaining the pursuit and extending it toward the sector west of Paoting. Accordingly, at 1800 hours on the 18th, he issued the following order from Army headquarters at Fengtai.

1. The 20th Division will launch an assault in the vicinity of Mt Shihpanshan through Ichou, advance to the vicinity of Fangshun-chiao and cut off the enemy's retreat.

2. The 14th Division will penetrate the enemy positions in the vicinity of Mancheng, advance to the sector west of Paoting and destroy the enemy.

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A vertical scale bar labeled "KILOMETERS" with markings at 0, 20, 40, and 60.



3. The 6th Division will attack the enemy to the front from the area of the Peiping - Hankow Railway and destroy the enemy after advancing to the vicinity of Paoting.

The Japanese knew that the enemy's prepared positions on the right bank of the Tatse Ho north of Paoting were of considerable strength, having been constructed about one month previously. Nevertheless, the First Army Commander decided to occupy them by exploiting the momentum of the pursuit. This was not only in line with the intentions of the North China Area Army Headquarters, but was based on the First Army's estimate of the enemy situation.

Information obtained through air reconnaissance and other means indicated that the enemy along the Peiping - Hankow Railway would abandon serious resistance in the vicinity of Paoting and instead attempt fresh resistance in the Huto Ho (River) sector in the vicinity of Shihchachuang south of Paoting. The Army concluded that while the enemy might offer some resistance in the vicinity of Paoting, it would be limited to supporting a general withdrawal.

Following the orders of the First Army, the vanguard of the 14th Division advanced in line with Kaolitien on the 19th and Laotsun on the 20th after routing the enemy to its front during the advance. On the 21st, the division was continuing the pursuit of the enemy toward the Tatse Ho in accordance with divisional orders issued at 2120 hours on 20 September:

1. According to air reconnaissance, no enemy elements can be seen in the vicinity of Paoting, while many trains are observed moving southward in the area south of Paoting.

2. The division will continue pursuit toward the portion of the Peiping - Hankow Railway line which lies between the Paoting area and Chenchiachuang Station.

3. The Right Pursuit Unit, (under the command of the 27th Infantry Brigade Commander and composed of the 2d Infantry Regiment; the 59th Infantry Regiment, less the 3d Battalion; plus one artillery battalion and one engineer company) will pursue the enemy toward the heights north of Mancheng through Tawangchuang.

4. The Left Pursuit Unit (under the command of the 28th Infantry Brigade Commander and composed of the 15th Infantry Regiment, less the 2d Battalion; plus the 50th Infantry Regiment, less the 2d Battalion; and two field artillery batteries and an engineer regiment) will pursue the enemy toward the vicinity of Changchuang through Tunghsikuangmen and Mt Nanlung.

5. The remainder of the Division will advance along the road connecting Mutsum, Chucheng, Tawangchuang and Mancheng.

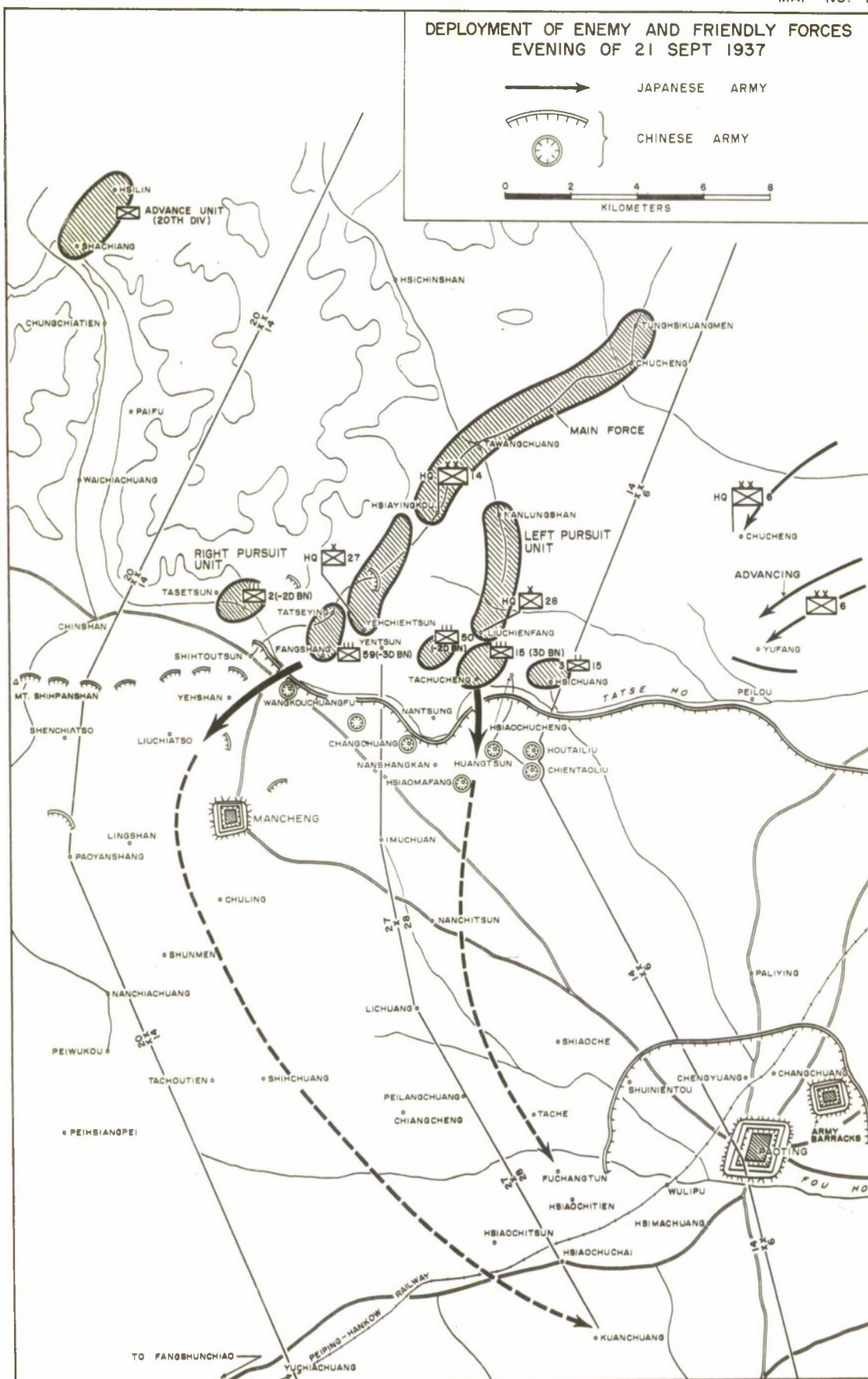
The Right Pursuit Unit advanced to the Fangshang - Tatseying line at 1830 hours on 21 September and reconnoitered the enemy situation and terrain on the right bank of the Tatse Ho, ascertaining the following conditions:

1. The enemy occupied a strong position in the sector on the right bank of the Tatse Ho.

2. Friendly artillery support would be difficult because of the terrain.

3. Fording the Tatse Ho would be comparatively easy.

The commander of the Right Pursuit Unit thought it advisable to penetrate the line of enemy positions to the front by a night attack. The two regimental commanders of the first line units concurred and the Right Pursuit Unit commander presented his views to the division commander, while ordering the two first line regiments to make preparations for a night attack. (See Map No. 2)



The commander of the Left Pursuit Unit had previously submitted a recommendation to the division commander to carry out the crossing of the Tatse Ho at night after passing the vicinity of Tawangchuang on the afternoon of the 21st. By having his first line troops advance to the line connecting Tachucheng and Hsichuang and reconnoiter the terrain and enemy situation, he had obtained information, which influenced him to decide on a break-through of the enemy positions located on the right bank of the Tatse Ho by a night attack, and ordered each unit under his command to make preparations for this action. His information indicated that:

1. The enemy occupied the entire area near the right bank of the Tatse Ho. In the vicinity of Huangtsun, they had constructed several lines of positions.
2. The Tatse Ho was about 50 centimeters deep and could be easily forded (Author's note: It was actually 80 to 100 centimeters deep).

The division commander, who reached Hsiayingkou at 1800 hours on the 21st, received the recommendations from the commanders of the Left and Right Pursuit Units as well as their estimates of the enemy situation. At the same time, he was given the following information regarding conditions:

1. The enemy confronting the division is probably the main body of the 25th Division and 2d Guard Brigade, plus elements of the 2d, 10th and 17th Divisions which had retreated from the Chochou and Chienchuntai areas. Total strength is estimated at over 10,000 men.
2. The enemy force had started construction of positions in the sector on the right bank of the Tatse Ho about one month before, with the apparent intention of making it a part of the left-flank defense of Paoting.

3. The enemy positions are constructed near the river bank and consist of a series of key points, making direct use of local settlements. In the vicinity of Huangtsun there are several lines of positions, the strategic parts of which are surrounded by wire-entanglements. Beach obstacles are placed along the bank of the Tatse Ho and mines are laid in the river.

4. The advance of the main body of our artillery and infantry units with heavy weapons have been greatly slowed owing to the muddy road conditions and the advance of troops carrying heavy equipment as well as transport units has also been delayed. Therefore, our ammunition supply is inadequate, while the greater part of provisions must be obtained from local sources.

In view of these conditions as well as the fact that the 14th Division had been concentrating on night attack training, the division commander approved the plan submitted by the commanders of the two pursuit units. He determined to penetrate the enemy positions to the front by dawn of the following day and then begin the pursuit of the enemy toward the sector southwest of Paoting. The division commander realized that it would be extremely difficult to deploy his units in front of the enemy positions that evening and then carry out an attack the same night, inasmuch as there was not time to make adequate preparations. However, he concluded that any delay would afford the enemy time to make preparations and, having sufficient confidence in the superiority of his first line troops and their fighting experience, he decided to carry out the night attack.

In accordance with his decision he issued the following order at 2000 hours on the 21st of September:

1. The once routed enemy now occupies positions in the sector on the right bank of the Tatse Ho. The 20th Division is pursuing the enemy toward Mt Shihpanshan and the 6th Division, on the left bank of the Tatse Ho, is preparing for an assault against the enemy on the right bank.

2. This division is to break through the enemy positions to its front by dawn tomorrow and immediately launch a pursuit of the enemy toward the sector southwest of Paoting.

3. The Right Pursuit Unit will break through the enemy positions to their front by dawn tomorrow and advance to the sector on the right bank of the Tatse Ho. With the arrival of daybreak the said unit will launch a pursuit of the enemy toward Kuanchuang by way of Chiangcheng.

4. The Left Pursuit Unit will break through the enemy positions to their front by dawn tomorrow and advance to the sector on the right bank of the Tatse Ho. With the arrival of daybreak the said unit will launch a pursuit of the enemy toward Fuchangtun by way of Nanchitsun.

5. The operational boundaries for the Right and Left Pursuit Units will be the line connecting Yentsun, Imuchuan, Lichuang, Peilangchuang, and Hsiao-chuchai, with the border line itself included in the operational zone of the Left Pursuit Unit.

6. The Cavalry Unit will concentrate in the right rear of the Right Pursuit Unit and advance to the sector on the right bank of the Tatse Ho at daybreak. It will then advance to the sector south of Paoting, severing the enemy's route of retreat.

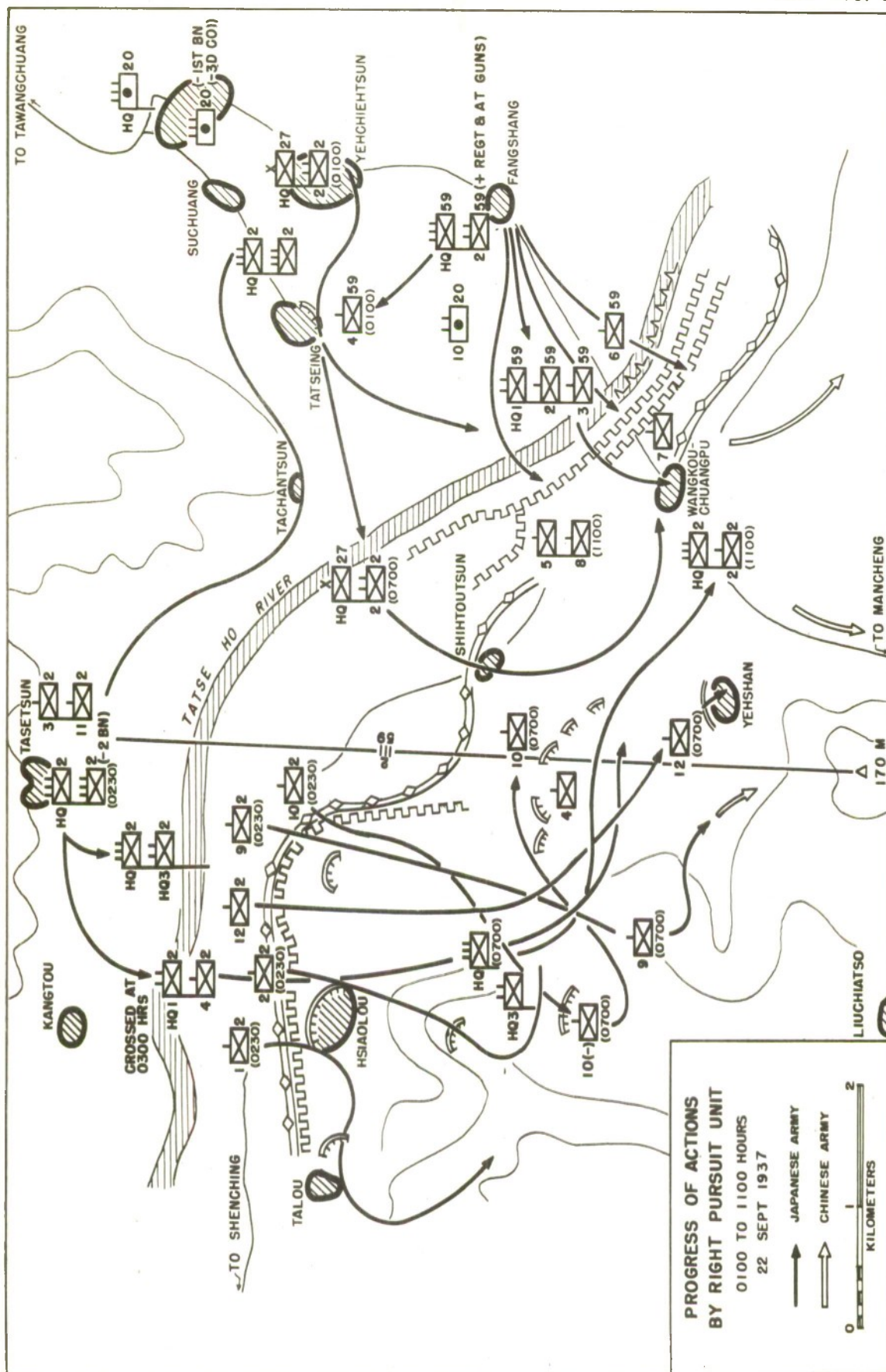
7. The main body of the 20th Field Artillery Regiment will advance to the vicinity of Tatseying and come under the command of the Right Pursuit Unit Commander.

8. The 2d Battalion of the 15th Infantry Regiment will constitute the reserve force. It will depart from its present position at 0300 hours on the 22d and advance to Fangshang.

Attack of the Right Pursuit Unit. (See Map No. 3)

The commander of the Right Pursuit Unit, upon receiving the order from division, issued the following order at Yehchiehtsun at 2100 hours of the 21st:

1. The Right Pursuit Unit will start from the line of the Tatse Ho at 0100 hours of the 22d proceed toward the enemy's main positions located above the Tawangchung - Mancheng Road, carry out a night attack, penetrate the enemy's main positions, and pursue the enemy toward the southwestern sector of Paoting, during and after daybreak.



2. The 2d Infantry Regiment (less the 2d Battalion) on the right front line, will prepare for the attack on the line of the Tatse Ho south of Tasetsun, will cross the Tatse Ho at 0100 hours and carry out a night attack against positions south of Tasetsun. Advancing into Liuchiatsun, it will exploit gains toward the Shunmen area after daybreak, and then advance to the Peiping - Hankow Railway, cutting off the enemy's retreat.

3. The 59th Infantry Regiment (less the 3d Battalion) on the left front line, will prepare for an attack against the positions at Shihtoutsun. It will cross the river at 0100 hours, advance to the line formed by the western saddle of the heights north of Mancheng by daybreak, advance at dawn to the Peiping - Hankow Railway, through the sector west of Mancheng, and cut off the enemy's retreat.

4. The Artillery Battalion will occupy positions in the vicinity of Fangshang by 0500 hours of the 22d and with its main force, support the left front line regiment in order to exploit gains.

5. The loading and firing of artillery pieces is strictly prohibited during the night attack.

The 2d Infantry Regiment, the right first line unit, crossed the Tatse Ho in the sector south of Tasetsun at 0300 hours of the 22d. The 59th Infantry Regiment, the left first line unit, decided to make a night attack against the enemy's position at Wangkouchuangpu after crossing the Tatse Ho from Fangshang. This decision was made upon receipt of intelligence from the engineers that the river above Shihtoutsun was deep and the banks were swampy, making passage difficult.

At 0200 hours the commander of the Right Pursuit Unit received the following report from the 59th Infantry Regiment on the left front line.

The regiment crossed the Tatse Ho in the vicinity of and to the north of Wangkouchuangpu and came close to the enemy positions, but was detected by the enemy. The regiment attempted to penetrate enemy positions by a determined assault. However, since the positions are strong and difficult to penetrate, the regiment is engaged in a fierce battle. The depth of the Tatse Ho is more than one meter.

At that time no firing could be heard from the combat area of the 2d Infantry Regiment on the right front line, and since communication with this regiment had been severed, its situation was unknown. However, the commander of the Right Pursuit Unit was fully confident of the success of his unit.

At about 0300 hours the commander of the Right Pursuit Unit received a report from the commander of the 59th Infantry Regiment stating that owing to strong enemy positions the regiment was still unable to penetrate and desired the prompt and thorough neutralization of those positions by artillery and other heavy weapons. Around 0430 hours, the commander of the Right Pursuit Unit received a report from the commander of the 2d Infantry Regiment that the night attack had progressed satisfactorily and that the regiment had seized the heights north of Mancheng. At dawn artillery units occupied the positions on the southern side of the isolated hill north of Yehchieh-tsun and directed harassing fire upon the rear of the enemy on the hill north of Mancheng and in the vicinity Wangkouchuangpu.

At 0520 hours the commander of the Right Pursuit Unit received a report from the 2d Regiment intimating that the regiment was disposed on the hill north of Mancheng and requesting that artillery fire in that area be suspended. In view of this development in the area of the right front, the commander decided to exploit gains from this area, and advanced with the reserve force after crossing the Tatse Ho north of Shihtoutsun.

With daybreak, elements of the 2d Infantry Regiment began to attack the flank and rear of the enemy positions in the vicinity of Wangkouchuangpu.

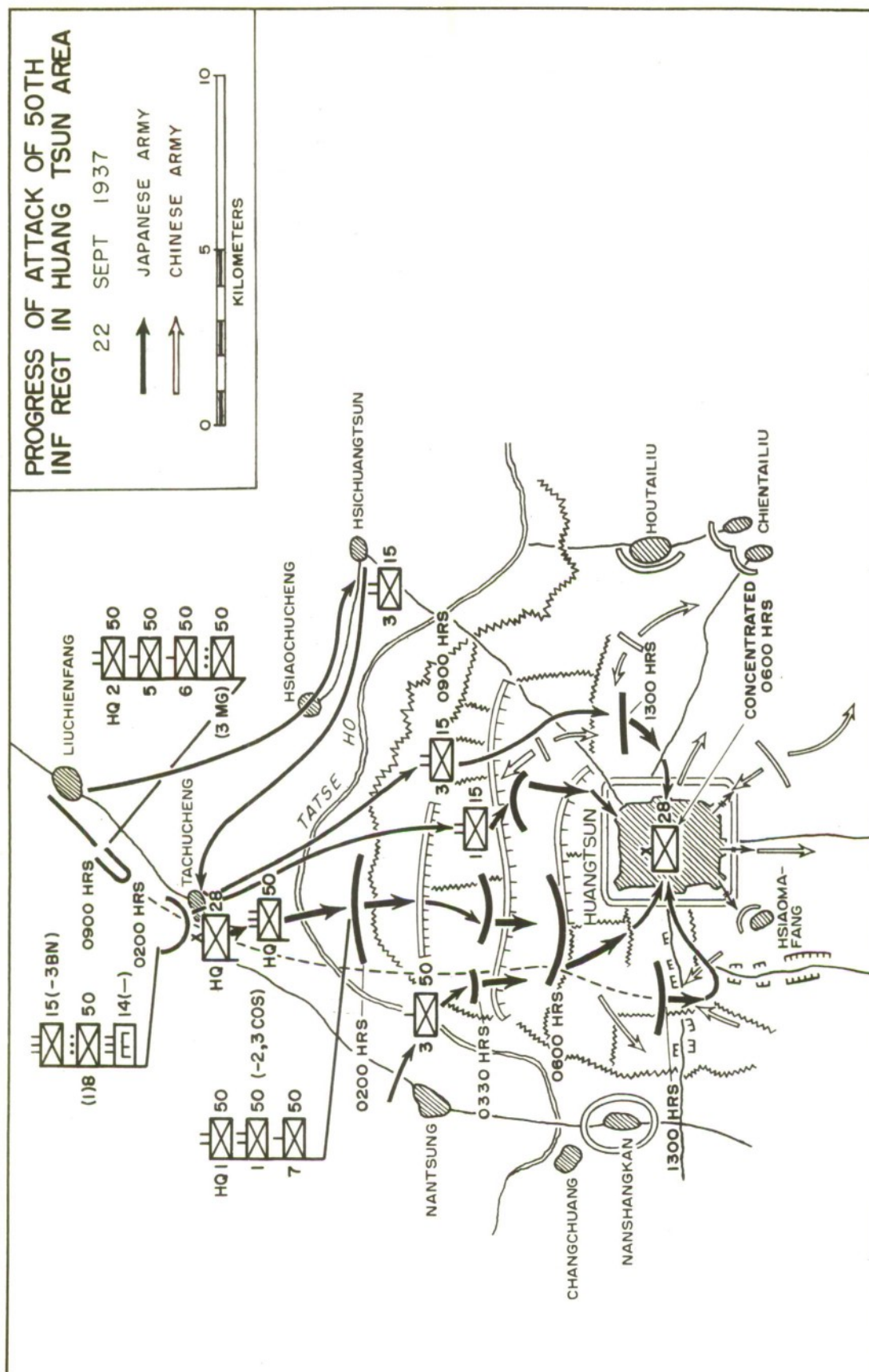
The 59th Infantry Regiment on the left front line had been fighting at close range since the previous night. At daybreak the regiment closed in under the supporting fires of artillery and heavy weapons and occupied the positions. After a desperate battle and despite mounting casualties, the regiment was able to seize the rear position of the enemy in the vicinity of Wangkouchuangpu in cooperation with the 2d Infantry Regiment which had outflanked the position. It was then about 1130 hours and the regiment immediately concentrated in the vicinity of Wangkouchuangpu to prepare for further pursuit.

Attack of the Left Pursuit Unit. (See Map No. 4)

At 2000 hours on 21 September, the commander of the Left Pursuit Unit received a report from the commander of the 50th Infantry Regiment that the regiment was planning to attack the enemy to its front and advance toward Huangtsun by having elements cross the river in the vicinity of Nantsung while the main body crossed from the vicinity of Tachucheng at 2300 hours. The commander of the Left Pursuit Unit issued the following orders:

1. The Left Pursuit Unit intends to cross the Tatse Ho in the vicinity of Tachucheng at 2300 hours of the 21st.

2. The 50th Infantry Regiment will cross the river at 2300 hours with elements from the vicinity of Changchuang while the main body, from the vicinity of Tachucheng, will advance to attack toward the vicinity of Huangtsun.



3. The 3d Battalion of the 15th Infantry Regiment will secure Hsichuang village by 2300 hours and concentrate as many troops as possible in the area northwest of that village and be prepared to support the attack by the 50th Infantry Regiment.

4. The commander of the 15th Infantry Regiment shall advance to Tachucheng with the entire strength presently under his command (less the 4th Company and the 3d Battalion) by 2300 hours and prepare to meet further developments in the situation.

5. The Artillery Unit shall advance to the vicinity of Liuchienfang early in the morning of the 22d, and prepare to respond to further developments of the situation.

In the area occupied by the main body of the 50th Infantry Regiment the troops on the front line advanced close to the left bank of the Tatse Ho from the vicinity of Tachucheng about 2200 hours of the 21st and at 2320 hours crossed the river in the face of intense enemy fire and advanced to the bank occupied by the enemy.

At 0030 hours of the 22d, the commander of the Left Pursuit Unit received the following report from the commander of the 50th Infantry Regiment on the left bank of the Tatse Ho:

"Our casualties on the front line seem to be great. I am now going to the front for inspection. It will be most effective to have troops of the 15th Infantry Regiment cross the river immediately from Hsiaochucheng and launch an attack against the enemy."

A little past 0100 hours, the commander received the following report:

"Wire entanglements are strung in front of the enemy positions to the front of the 4th Company, the extreme left flank of the front line of the regiment. It is requested that wire-cutters be sent to us without delay."

The commander of the Left Pursuit Unit immediately dispatched an engineer platoon with wire-cutters to that front and attached it to the 50th Infantry Regiment.

The enemy offered stubborn resistance relying upon the several lines of strong positions. However, front line troops captured enemy positions one after another by hand-to-hand combat, and at about 0300 hours they approached the third line of positions which was the main line of resistance. Meanwhile, the enemy steadily intensified his resistance and even launched frequent counterassaults. Friendly and enemy battle fronts became entangled and confusion reigned.

As casualties on the front line mounted steadily and many officers, including company commanders, were killed in action, the battle situation did not permit optimism. Despite the critical situation, the regiment launched repeated assaults.

In view of the intensity of the battle being waged by the 50th Infantry Regiment, the commander of the Left Pursuit Unit ordered the 1st Battalion (less the 4th Company) of the 15th Infantry Regiment to participate. At about 0330 hours right flank units, which had already captured the third line of enemy positions, were continuing fierce attacks and enemy losses mounted. The 1st Battalion crossed the river from the vicinity of Tachucheng at dawn, participated in the battle of the extreme left wing, and advanced toward the northeast corner of Huangtsun. The 3d Company of the 50th Infantry Regiment which had advanced from the Nantsung area established liaison with the right wing of the regiment and attacked the enemy to their front.

At daybreak, the situation developed remarkably, and the troops gradually pressed the enemy in the vicinity of Huangtsun. The right flank units and the main body of the 1st Battalion of the 15th Infantry Regiment rushed into the village of Huangtsun at about 0600 hours from the vicinity of the town's west gate and from its northeast corner, respectively.

The commander of the Left Pursuit Unit immediately ordered the units which had been awaiting further orders in the vicinity of Tachucheng to advance toward Huangtsun.

However, the enemy continued stiff resistance near Nanshangkan, Hsiaomafang, Houtailiu, and Chientailiu, and prevented the rear units from crossing the river and advancing into Huangtsun. The commander of the Left Pursuit Unit ordered the 3d Battalion of the 15th Infantry Regiment to break through the enemy positions between Huangtsun and Houtailiu and to advance to the sector southeast of Huangtsun.


At about 0930 hours the 3d Battalion repulsed the enemy, advanced to the designated line, and the Left Pursuit Unit, concentrated its units at Huangtsun at about 1300 hours and made preparations for further pursuit.

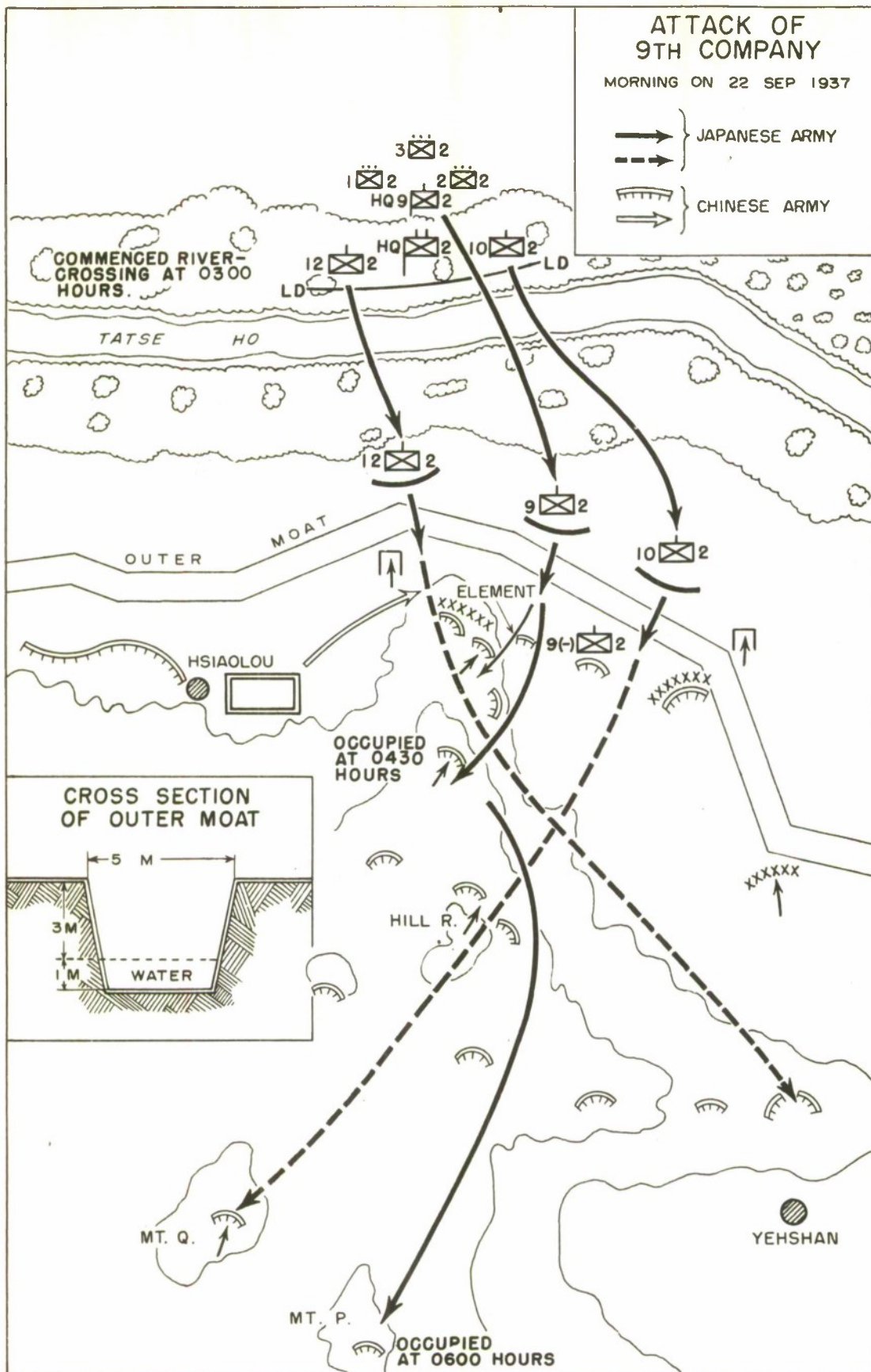
Personal Experience of the Commander of the 9th Company (ex-Lt Col Ito) of the 2d Infantry Regiment. (See Sketch)

The 9th Company held a position as the second line assault unit of the left first line battalion of the 2d Infantry Regiment at the beginning of the night attack. (See Map No. 3) The strength of the company at that time was 168 men equipped with 150 rifles,

ATTACK OF 9TH COMPANY

MORNING ON 22 SEP 1937

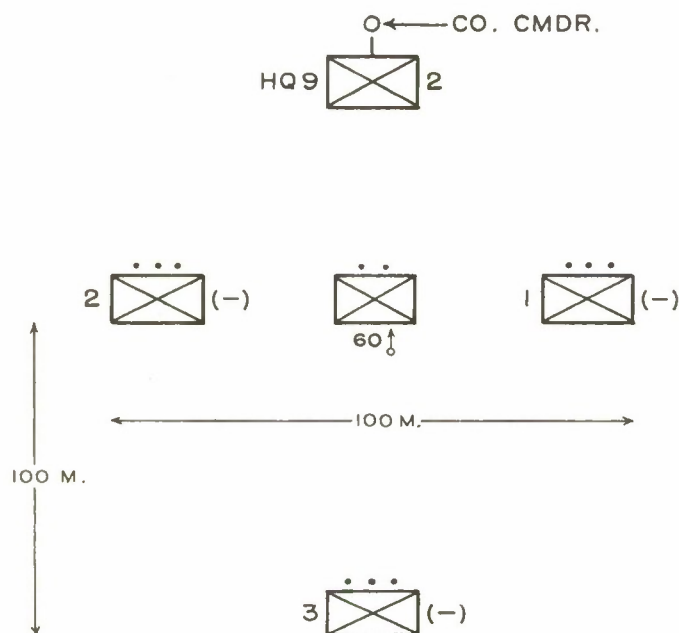
 JAPANESE ARMY
 CHINESE ARMY



6 light machine guns, 6 grenade-throwers, and about 300 hand grenades.

While the time for crossing the Tatse Ho given in the Right Pursuit Unit Commander's order was 0100 hours of the 22d, much time was consumed in shifting from Yentsun to the crossing point and preparing for the crossing and it was 0300 hours when the 3d Battalion started to cross Tatse Ho. Though the banks of the Tatse Ho prevented free movement of troops because of numerous marshes, the thick growth of willows and reeds provided cover for easy approach to the enemy. During the crossing, the unit received no fire from the enemy, while the moon clearly illuminated Mt P and Mt Q, which were the targets of the attack.

At about 0330 hours, immediately after crossing the river, the unit suddenly received fire from the enemy. The 9th Company Commander immediately deployed his troops into open formation and ordered them to advance.



At this time the 10th and the 12th Companies on the front line were forced to halt their advance, and communication with battalion headquarters was severed. The commander of the 9th Company ordered his company to advance between the other two companies charge into the enemy position.

When the 9th Company approached the enemy position, it unexpectedly encountered a large outer moat. The company commander ordered steps dug in the banks and jumped into the moat. With the moonlight brightly illuminating the water, the enemy delivered intense flanking fire. Nevertheless, the officers and men who jumped into the moat, following the commander, made footings on the slope on the far side. "Those who have climbed lower ropes," "Push up the hips of those climbing," "Beware of counterattack," - "Remember flank defense," were among the orders issued by the company commander standing in the moat.

Following some 10 subordinates, the company commander climbed out of the moat and rushed into the enemy position without waiting for the entire company, and then broke through into the enemy's position on R Hill. It was 0430 hours. After taking R Hill, an inspection revealed that there were only three casualties.

At R Hill the commander of the 9th Company prepared for the next attack while awaiting the concentration of the company. The regimental commander arrived at R Hill, approved the plan of the commander of the 9th Company for occupying Mt P and when the main body

of the 9th Company had completely assembled, the company bore down upon the enemy on Mt P, threading through gaps in the enemy positions, taking advantage of the dim light of dawn. The company occupied the mountain at 0600 hours.

During this period, though the noise of enemy counterattack with reports of rifles were heard from the rear and flanks, the enemy seemed to have been thrown into confusion and little resistance was offered. The 9th Company owed its success in occupying Mt P chiefly to the rapidity of its penetration.

Author's Observations

The outstanding feature of the night attack of the 14th Division against the Chinese positions on the southern bank of the Tatse Ho was that it was launched by almost an entire division to achieve a complete breakthrough of the enemy positions. This was the first example of such a large scale night attack since the Russo-Japanese War. The gains made by the 14th Division, on the night of the 21st, were exploited by the 6th and 20th Divisions, which made daylight attacks on the 22d.

In reviewing the success of the 14th Division, the enemy situation is of primary interest. Despite the fact that the enemy positions were strong, having been constructed just one month previously, the disposition of troops was inadequate. The positions along the Tatse Ho had an overall length of about 45 kilometers and, according to Japanese defensive tactics, the manning of such a line would

normally require about three divisions, but the enemy's effective strength was only about 10,000 men (the equivalent of about two-thirds of a Japanese division). Of these, a considerable number were committed to the direct defense of Paoting.

Of only slightly less importance was the high standard of training of each unit of the 14th Division and the high morale and confidence of its personnel, gained through the fighting in the vicinity of Chouchou.

A contributing factor was the advantage taken of the momentum of the pursuit. Had the start of the attack been delayed, pending arrival of heavy infantry weapons and the artillery, perhaps no choice would have remained but to adopt the plan to initiate the attack on the 23d as originally planned by the 6th Division. The results of the battle testify to the accuracy of the estimate of the 14th Division.

The competitive spirit among the divisions, which was especially noticeable during the early phases of the China Incident, undoubtedly motivated the 14th Division in launching its night attack on the 21st, in order to be the first division to cross the Tatse Ho and advance toward Paoting.

The Japanese Army, in selecting night attack targets, sought principally those targets which were conspicuous and readily accessible. Consequently, in many cases, the attack was directed toward enemy strong points. The results of this action show the advantage of directing attacks against the weaker parts of the enemy positions wherever the conditions permit easy and sure approach actions.

Example No. 4

Night Break-through by the Main Body
of the First Army at the Beginning
of the Chungyuan* Battle, May 1941

(Based on operations records compiled by the Demobilization Bureau, the May 1942 issue of the monthly publication of the Army Officers' Club (Kaikosha), data possessed by Senior Officer Lt Col Kanda of the First Army and the statements of the 37th Infantry Group Commander, Lt Gen Nakajima.)

In the spring of 1941, in the southern part of Shansi Province, a strong Chinese Army had strongholds in the Chungtiao Mountains and in the southern part of the Taihsing Mountains. Detachments from this force frequently invaded the Japanese occupied areas and not only disturbed public order, but threatened attack. The total strength of the army was estimated at 24 divisions (168,000 men).

The Chungtiao Mountain area was rugged country with mountains as high as 2,500 meters, lacking in communications and being an inhabited area it presented difficulties for any military movements.

The Japanese First Army (36th, 37th and 41st Divisions and the 9th and 16th Independent Mixed Brigades), which was assigned garrison duty in Shansi Province under the North China Area Army, made plans to destroy the Chinese Army and advance its security patrol line to the Yellow River. Both the North China Area Army and the China Expeditionary Force supported the operation. The Commander-in-Chief of the CEF dispatched the main body of the 33d Division from Central China and it was placed under the First Army commander. The North China Area Army commander committed the 21st and 35th

* Code name given to operational area. (See Monograph No. 178, Page 221.)

Divisions which were under his direct command. (The operational concept of the North China Area Army is shown on Map No. 1.)

The First Army was to attack from the direction of Shansi Province and the 21st and 35th Divisions, under the direct command of the Area Army were to attack from Honan Province.

In accordance with recommendations of the First Army, the date for the attack was established as 7 May 1941.

The First Army divided its operational zone by a line running from Changma to Yuanchu, planning to direct the main effort to the western sector. In order to inflict maximum losses on the enemy, it was determined to utilize 39 out of a total of 47 battalions in the western sector and maintain a strength ratio of 70 per cent against the nine Chinese divisions (50,000 to 60,000 men) in the sector.

Note: In past offensive operations against the Chinese it had been usual to conduct operations with a ratio of about 30 per cent of the Chinese strength.

The Chinese Fifth Group Army and the Eightieth Army had constructed comparatively strong positions on a front extending about 100 kilometers from south of Changma to a point on the Yellow River east of Pinglu. The depth of the position was about ten kilometers with wire entanglements and pillboxes on the first line. The First Army planned to effect a double envelopment of the enemy positions and to cut off routes of retreat by utilizing the Yellow River as a barrier and by dispatching raiding units which would block all

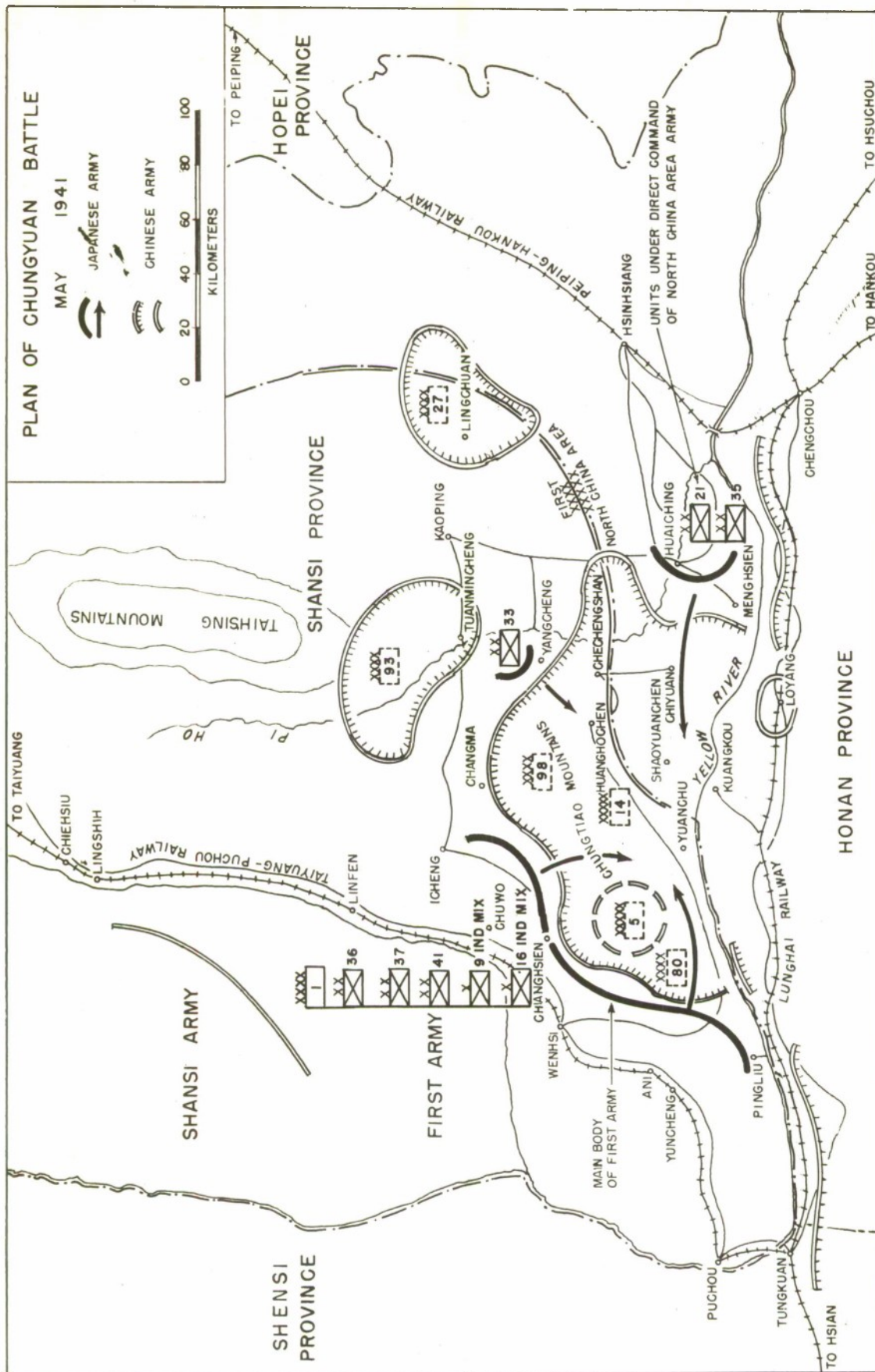
MAY 1941

JAPANESE ARMY

CHINESE ARMY

KILOMETERS

	0	20	40	60	80	100
100	100	100	100	100	100	100
90	90	90	90	90	90	90
80	80	80	80	80	80	80
70	70	70	70	70	70	70
60	60	60	60	60	60	60
50	50	50	50	50	50	50
40	40	40	40	40	40	40
30	30	30	30	30	30	30
20	20	20	20	20	20	20
10	10	10	10	10	10	10
0	0	0	0	0	0	0



possible river crossing points. After completing the envelopment, repeated mop-up operations would be conducted within the enveloped zones.

In accordance with that concept, the First Army Commander issued the following order: (See Map No. 2)

1. After sunset of 7 May, the 33d Division (seven infantry battalions and six mountain artillery batteries) will attack the enemy in the sector east of a line between Changma and Yuanchu from the vicinity of Yuncheng and advance to the area east of Yuanchu.

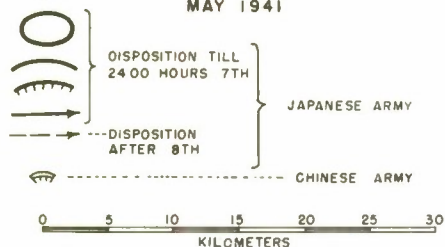
2. The 16th Independent Mixed Brigade (five infantry battalions and two mountain artillery batteries) will destroy the enemy in the area east of Pingliu. Powerful raiding units will occupy crossing points of the Yellow River and cut off the enemy's routes of withdrawal.

3. The 37th Division (ten infantry battalions, six mountain artillery batteries, three 10 cm howitzer batteries and two mortar companies) and the 41st Division (nine infantry battalions, six mountain artillery batteries, three 10 cm howitzer batteries and six heavy field artillery batteries) will make attack preparations at Yuncheng and at the sector west of Changma as an outer enveloping force. After sunset of the 7th, they will effect a surprise attack, penetrate the enemy position and advance to the Yellow River at top speed. The two divisions will maintain close contact and establish an outer enveloping zone after which they will change direction to the northwest and the north to destroy the enemy within the zone. The two divisions upon penetrating the enemy's line, will rush effective raiding units to each Yellow River crossing point to cut off the enemy's routes of withdrawal.

An element will be dispatched to secure key points on the route of advance of the main body to contact and destroy the retreating enemy.

4. The 36th Division (nine infantry battalions and nine mountain artillery batteries) and the 9th Independent Mixed Brigade (six infantry battalions, three mountain artillery batteries and one mortar company) will make preparations for attack at Wenhsi and in the sector west of Chianghsien, respectively. They constitute the inner enveloping force and will, after sunset of the 7th, effect a surprise attack upon the enemy position and drive a wedge deep into the enemy line. After establishing the inner enveloping zone both

PLAN OF BREAK-THROUGH BY THE MAIN BODY OF THE FIRST ARMY MAY 1941



units will advance to the north and destroy the enemy within the zone. In conducting the wedge attack on the enemy positions, an element of the raiding unit will be dispatched in advance to the key points within the enemy line to secure and expedite the execution of the annihilation operation.

5. The Army Reserve Unit (one and a half infantry battalions) will be at Chianghsien and with the development of the operation, will advance to the sector north of Yuanchu.

To accomplish the plan, the First Army Commander issued precise instructions:

1. Penetration speed

The penetration front of each division will be limited to about two kilometers. Each division will constantly maintain its strength in depth and, by rotating the first line strength, continue penetration attacks without surcease both day and night. Until the envelopment is established, effort will be concentrated entirely on penetration, no attempt will be made to expand the front laterally.

Note: In the past, the usual tactics of a Chinese force when attacked by the Japanese Army was to withdraw, avoiding decisive battle. Therefore, to contact the Chinese Army, it was essential to cut off its route of withdrawal and establish an envelopment by rapid advance.

2. Assault support

The assault will be supported by brief massed fires of small arms. Artillery preparation and assault support require more than one hour to be effective and then the effect of surprise is lost, allowing the enemy to withdraw and reducing battle successes even when the attack is successful.

Note: Lt Gen Shinozuka advocated the preparation and support of assaults with brief mass small arms fire, particularly in situations such as this where it was difficult to transport weapons heavier than heavy machine guns to the front line because of the rugged terrain. Therefore, for the attack on the enemy's first line position he directed an assault with mass surprise fire of light machine guns and rifles. Although artillery supporting fire was planned, it was directed to minimize the time for the preparation to about ten minutes.

3. The conduct of attack

To penetrate about 10 kilometers through the enemy main line of resistance and to exploit the initial effect of the surprise attack, it will be advantageous to utilize as many night hours as possible.

Note: Lt Gen Shinozuka, normally critical of the efficacy of night attacks and close-quarter combat considered it expedient in this case to effect the assault under cover of darkness.

All First Army units exerted utmost efforts to complete operational preparations, giving attention to the dissemination of information on operational procedures and tactics to all officers and conducting training in night penetration and raiding techniques. Particular emphasis was placed on the training of those units (one infantry company from each battalion) responsible for the disruption of the enemy's routes of withdrawal and those assault units charged with the penetration of the enemy positions.

Every effort was made to collect and disseminate detailed information on the enemy positions and surrounding terrain as well as the terrain of the route of advance, the names of the villages and distances between them. Individuals and units checked and prepared their weapons, ammunition, operational materials and equipment. The number of light machine guns in the first line units were increased and each man was equipped with a rope to aid in mountain climbing. Operational preparations progressed as planned and were completed by noon of May 7th.

At 0900 hours on the 7th, strong, dust laden northwesterly winds

reduced visibility to about five meters, effectively concealing attack preparations. Because of the dust storm and the reduced visibility the attack, which had been scheduled for sunset (1900 hours), was slightly advanced.

Each division was divided into two assault units which minimized their attack fronts and penetrated the enemy positions in column formation. In the beginning the enemy's resistance was very strong, but as a result of the rapidly effected break-through the enemy command was confused and organized resistance weakened as the attack progressed.

Each unit continued its assault until the morning of the 8th, maintaining its attacking strength by successively leapfrogging fresh troops into the first line positions. In ten hours the assault units succeeded in making a ten kilometer penetration.

In accordance with the plans of the First Army, units continued their advance, steadily overcoming enemy resistance, and within 35 hours after the commencement of the attack, they had completely established the outer envelopment zone and within 41 hours, the inner envelopment zone was completed.

The Yellow River crossing point at Yuanchu was secured by a raiding unit within 21 hours after the start of the attack and other crossings were subsequently secured.

After completing the envelopment, the main body of the First Army changed direction to the northwest and north and attacked the

enemy from the rear. Later it changed direction again and began mop-up operations toward the Yellow River. As a result of repeating the dividing and mop-up tactics, the First Army was successful in destroying the bulk of the enemy within the envelopment.

Losses inflicted on the Chinese were: Prisoners - 30,000, Dead - 41,000. Captured equipment included: Field and mountain guns - 28, Mortars - 124, Heavy machine guns - 161, Light machine guns - 528, Rifles - 13,081. Japanese losses were 553 officers and men killed, 1,804 wounded.

Break-through Plan of the 37th Division. (Based on the statement of Lt Gen Kichisaburo Nakajima, Left Flank Force commander of the 37th Division.)

During the attack preparations the 37th Division assembled the commanders of infantry and artillery regiments and battalions under its command and conducted on-the-spot training for about one week at a point 500 to 1,000 meters from the enemy position under the direction of Maj Gen Nakajima, Infantry Group Commander. The officers wore enlisted men's uniforms and particular attention was paid to conceal intentions from the enemy. After this on-the-spot training, more detailed training was conducted at each regiment and battalion.

The outline of the break-through plan and disposition of the 37th Division is shown on the following map:

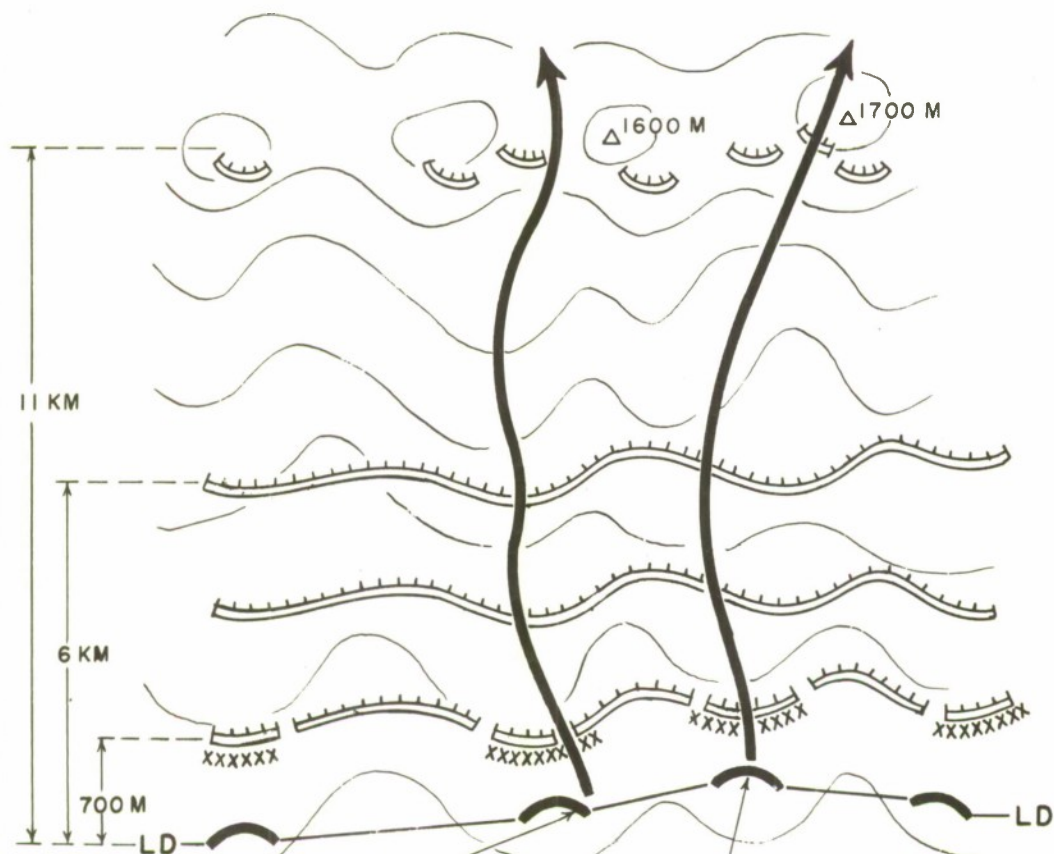
BREAK THROUGH PLAN AND DISPOSITION OF THE 37TH DIVISION EVENING 7 MAY 1941



JAPANESE ARMY



CHINESE ARMY



LEFT FLANK FORCE

RIGHT FLANK FORCE

HQ 37 DIV
 226 (-1ST BN)
TWO 225

227 (-1ST BN)

37TH DIVISION 2D LINE FORCE

225 (-2 COS)
I 227

The divisional order was as follows:

1. On the 6th, one day before the commencement of the attack, the 37th Division will advance to the vicinity of the front line position, 700 meters in front of the enemy, under cover of darkness and complete attack preparations at the line by noon of the 7th.

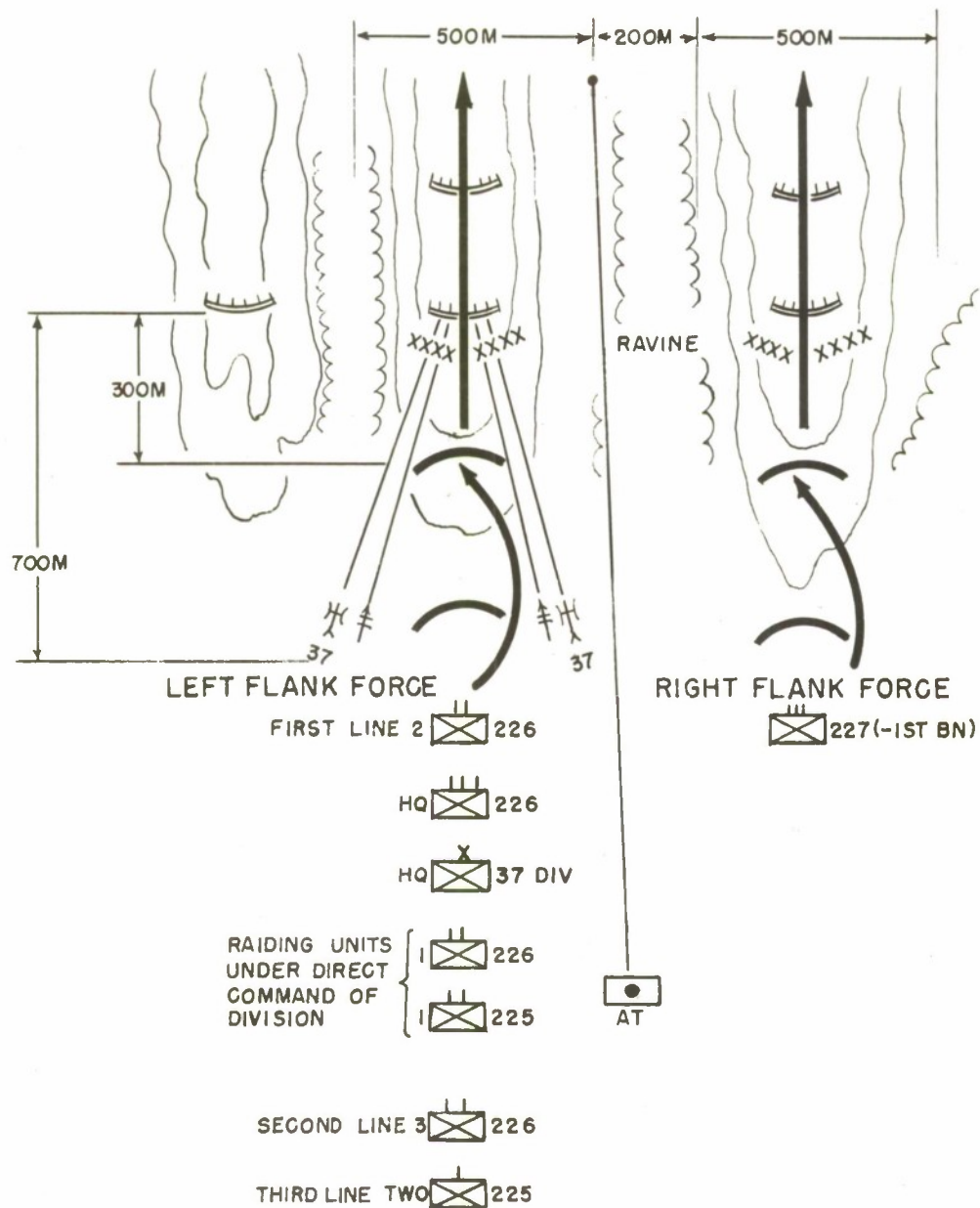
2. At sunset, it will further advance its attack preparation line to about 300 meters of the enemy position and launch an assault just before darkness. Prior to the assault surprise fire will be delivered for about 10 minutes with all the artillery, infantry guns and machine guns. Direct assault support fire will be delivered with infantry guns; the artillery will fire mainly on the rear positions and targets in the vicinity of the crest line.

The two flank forces will advance to the crest line (saddle between Hills 1600 and 1700) by dawn of the 8th. Three raiding units (each unit consisting of one battalion) under the direct command of the division, will advance to a point just behind the front line and in accordance with the command of the flank force commanders, will leapfrog the flank units at this line and assault their designated targets.

The disposition of the Left Flank Force (226th Infantry Regiment) was as shown on the following map.

DISPOSITION OF LEFT FLANK FORCE
OF 37TH DIVISION
EVENING 7 MAY 1941

 JAPANESE ARMY
 CHINESE ARMY



REMARKS:

THE DEPTH OF THE RAVINE BETWEEN THE FLANK FORCES WAS
150 TO 200 METERS.

Since the attack front of the Left Flank Force was a crest line about 500 meters wide, the strength deployable on the first line was about one company. The Left Flank Force commander ordered the first line battalion to penetrate about 11 kilometers to the saddle of Hill 1600 by dawn of the following day, at which time the second line battalion was to move into the first line. In accordance with his instructions, the first line battalion commander assigned the following leapfrog attack disposition:

1. As the first line unit, A Company will penetrate the enemy position six kilometers along the crest line.

2. B Company will be the second line unit and will relieve A Company at this line and advance to the saddle of Hill 1600 by dawn of the following day.

3. C Company will be the third line unit, and will be prepared to reinforce or relieve B Company.

To effect the break-through, the Left Flank Force commander particularly stressed the following points to his subordinates.

1. Assault fire will be employed in the first assault; however, a later assault will be conducted without fire, and hand-to-hand combat will be effected.

2. After capturing the enemy position, units will pursue and overtake the routed enemy and storm the rear positions.

3. No consideration will be given to the enemy remaining on the flanks of the break-through. Even if enemy units on the flank deliver fire, the advance will be continued without halting or firing.

The break-through was conducted almost as planned. Although stubborn resistance was met initially, the first line battalion succeeded in capturing the saddle of Hill 1600 by about 2300 hours on

the 7th - much earlier than planned. Because of the speed of the break-through, the enemy was confused and resistance from the second line positions was comparatively weak.

Author's Observations

While the Chungyuan Operation cannot be considered a large-scale operation, compared with other operations conducted against the Chinese, the objective was completely attained and the results of the battle were extensive in comparison with the strength committed. From that standpoint the operation is without parallel. From the standpoint of tactics, it is an excellent example of a night break-through using leapfrog tactics and the procedure of developing a break-through to effect a complete envelopment and subsequent annihilation of the enemy forces.

The assembly of maximum strength, operational preparation based on a new and cautious concept, effective and careful direction, thorough dissemination of operational procedures to all subordinate units and the supply of necessary operational material and equipment are contributed to the success of the operation.

A more immediate reason for success was the break-through in depth. The attack objective was not to capture key points in the enemy position but to break completely through the entire enemy position area. The wedge penetration upon a very narrow front and the leapfrogging by second and third line attack units were conducted for the first time in a large-scale operation, this was made possible

because of the fact that the Chinese positions were disposed both in depth and width with strength widely dispersed. The result of the operation proved that it was effective to use such tactics in an operation of that size.

Since support fire was delivered at the beginning of the attack, the opportunity for complete surprise was abandoned. However, since the operational concept and date and time of attack had been completely concealed from the enemy the operation might well be termed a strategic surprise attack.

The tactics employed by the First Army, against an enemy disposed in both depth and width, proved correct. Particularly wise was the continuing of the advance without consideration for flanking fire, this method proved advantageous in that it gave the enemy no time to reorganize. The conducting of a brief period of assault support fire at the beginning of the attack also proved effective.

Paramount among the reasons for the success of the operation was the well planned attack preparations of each force under the First Army. Information of the enemy situation and terrain was collected in detail and disseminated to all officers and detailed training was conducted. The First Army commander considered that operational preparation was a prerequisite to victory and took several months for the completion of preparations. Unlike other Japanese Army commanders, Lt Gen Shinozuka personally directed the tactics and operational preparations whenever necessary. Although such direction sometimes caused command difficulties, it is now believed that his personal interest and attention was one of the most important factors in the success of the operation.

Example No. 5

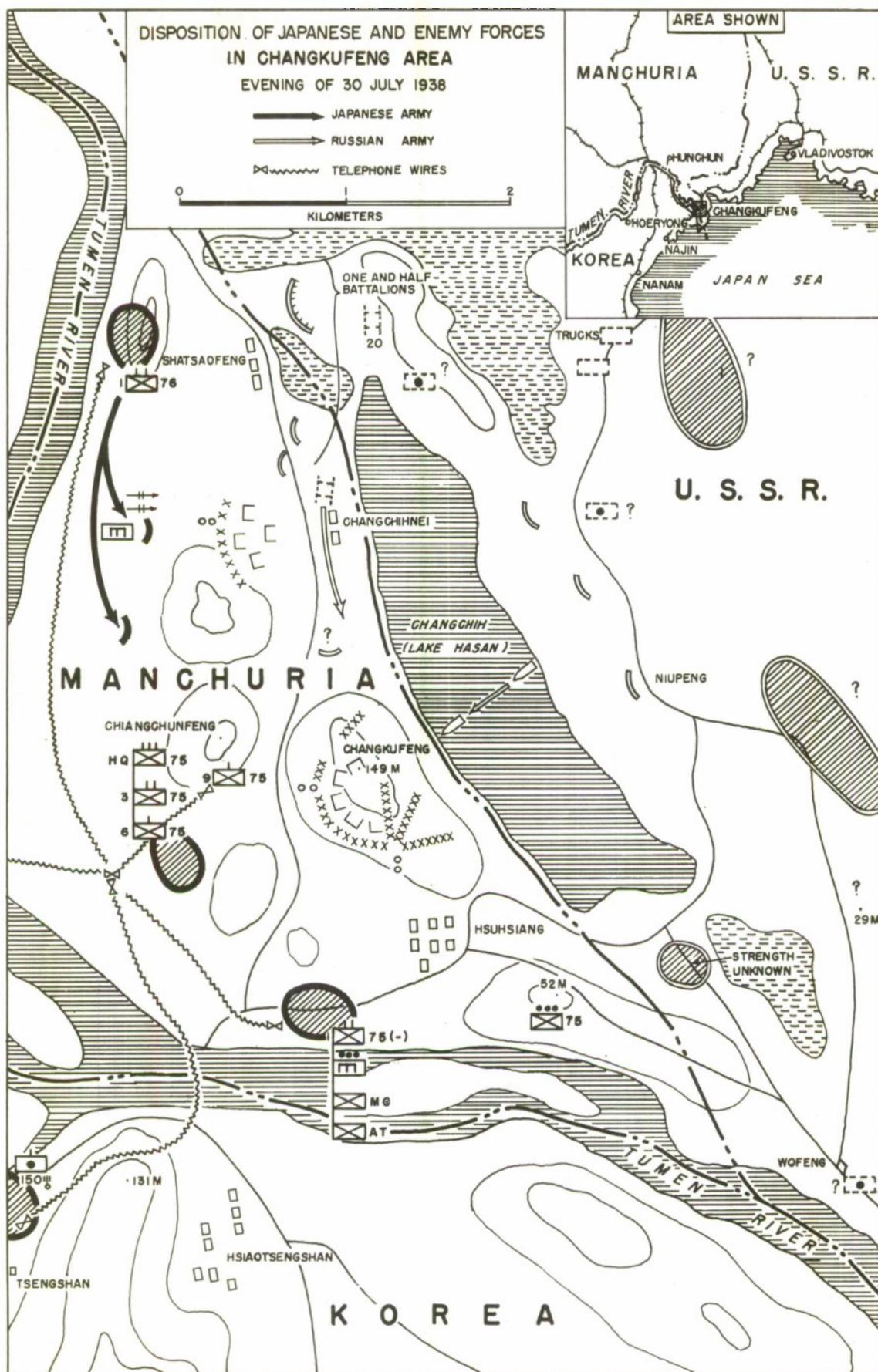
Night Attack by the 1st Battalion of the
75th Infantry Regiment Against Changkufeng (hill)
in July 1938.

(Based on battle reports of the 75th Infantry
Regiment and Charts and Maps of "The China
Incident", Volume I)

On 9 July 1938, the Soviet Army dispatched a small force to Changkufeng (hill) and began construction of positions and a gradual build-up of strength. Although settlement of the matter was being attempted through diplomatic channels, in anticipation of the possibility of the failure of diplomatic settlement the Korea Army, which was in charge of the border defenses in that vicinity, ordered the 19th Division to move to the vicinity of Changkufeng on July 17th. (See Map No. 1)

In compliance with orders, the 19th Division (Headquarters at Nanam) advanced to the Tumen River with the 75th Infantry Regiment from Hoeryong as advance unit. However, in accordance with instructions from the Government and the Army High Command, the division took no action but remained in the sector along the right bank of the river for approximately ten days. On the 27th, the Korea Army ordered the division to return to its original stations.

On the 29th, the Soviet Army began to construct positions across the border, near the village of Shatsaofeng. The Korea Army immediately cancelled the return of the 19th Division and ordered it to secure Chiangchunfeng (hill) and the hill southwest of Shatsaofeng. On the



night of 29 July the entire 75th Infantry Regiment crossed the Tumen River and assembled in the vicinity of Chiangchunfeng (hill) by 0700 hours on the 30th. The regimental commander inspected the situation and concluded that settlement of the incident was impossible without the employment of military force. He ordered the 1st Battalion to commence preparations for a night attack against Changkufeng (hill) and at 1430 hours called all unit commanders to the southwestern base of Chiangchunfeng and issued orders for the night attack against Changkufeng:

1. The enemy is constructing defense installations on the line connecting Changkufeng (hill) and the village of Shatsaofeng.

2. The regiment will conduct operations to annihilate the enemy along a line extending north and south of Changkufeng.

3. An element (company size) of the 1st Battalion with attached antitank and regimental gun units will secure Hill No. 52 in the Wofeng (village) area and at 0100 hours on the 31st will launch an attack toward Changkufeng from the direction of Wofeng.

4. At 0100 hours on the 31st the 10th Company will attack in the area along the crest line at the northern foot of Changkufeng and disrupt the enemy's route of withdrawal.

5. Both attack units will make advance preparations. To avoid firing upon friendly troops, no advance north of the wire entanglements will be made after the capture of the enemy position at Changkufeng.

6. The 3d Battalion (less the 10th Company, plus the 6th Company) will assemble as the regimental reserve at the northwestern foot of Chiangchunfeng by 2300 hours today. The 6th Company will prepare for a night attack upon Changkufeng from the Chiangchunfeng front at an opportune time.

Matters concerning concealment of plans, the use of green flares as a signal of success and the pass words Shojiki (honest) and Yumo

(brave) were also mentioned in the order. After issuing his instructions, the regimental commander encouraged each unit commander as follows: "The secret of success of a night attack lies in a strict ban on the use of firearms and the carrying out of a daring assault. It is also necessary to act at the risk of ones life."

The regimental commander determined to direct the attack from Hill No. 52. About 1600 hours on the 30th, the commander of the 19th Division arrived at Chiangchunfeng and, observing the overall situation, expressed his approval of the plans. Great importance was attached to this action since it was the first battle of the Japanese Army against a Soviet force and the most efficient battalions were selected for the action and every possible attention was given to details which might assist in insuring victory.

At that time, the 75th Infantry was on a peacetime organization with its strength and equipment being about half the wartime organizational strength.

Each battalion was composed of a headquarters, three rifle companies, a machine gun company and an infantry gun platoon. The strength of each rifle company was about 100, organized into two platoons.

T/O and E of 75th Infantry Regiment
30 July 1938

Classificat- ion Unit	Personnel							
	Colonel	Lt Col (Major)	Captain	1st Lt (2d Lt)	Warrant Officer	NCO	Private	Total
Regimental Headquarters	1	2		3	1	7	53	67
1st Battalion		1	3	4	2	45	338	393
2d Battalion		1	1	4	3	42	339	390
3d Battalion		1	2	4	2	37	338	384
Regimental Gun Unit				1	2	5	80	88
Antitank Gun Unit				1	1	4	47	53
Total	1	5	6	17	11	140	1195	1375
Remarks: 1. Personnel of the Medical, Veterinary, Intendence and Ordnance Departments are not shown.								

T/O and E of 75th Infantry Regiment (Cont'd)

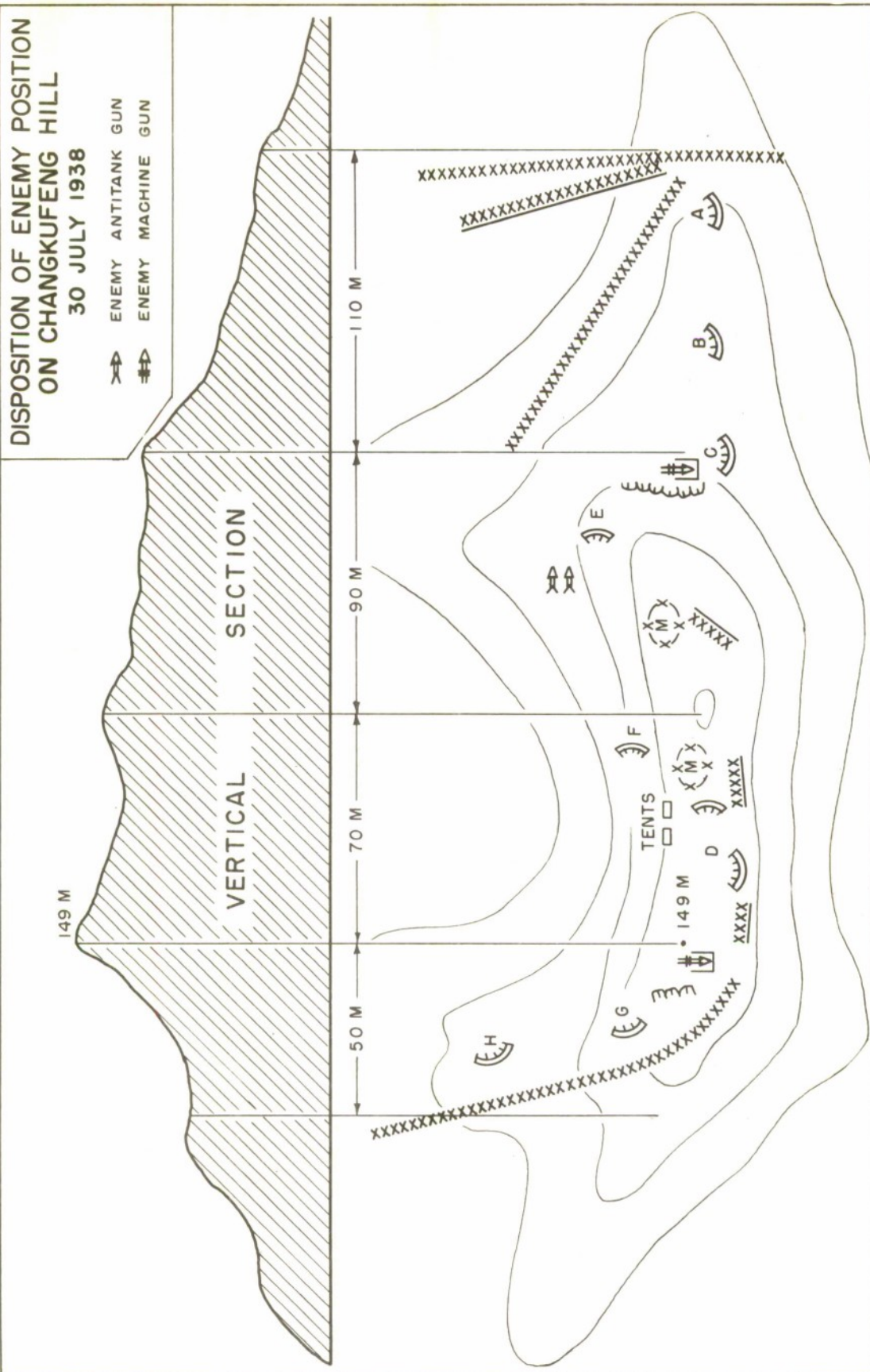
Classificat- ion Unit	Weapons						
	Rifle	Grenade discharger	Light ma- chinegun	Heavy ma- chinegun	Battalion gun	Regimental gun	Antitank gun
Regimental Headquarters	53	1					
1st Battalion	230	19	12	6	2		
2d Battalion	240	19	12	6	2		
3d Battalion	233	19	12	6	2		
Regimental Gun Unit						2	
Antitank Gun Unit							3
Total	756	58	36	18	6	2	3

The Soviet force defending Changkufeng (hill) numbered approximately 300, equipped with two antitank guns, eight heavy machine guns, about ten automatic rifles, and 20 hand grenade throwers. Considering that the front was only a little over 300 meters wide, the armament was comparatively heavy. Furthermore, the position was strong, two heavy machine guns were installed in covered gun emplacements and during the attack it was discovered that there were mine fields between Positions C and D. The enemy artillery with an estimated 20 guns was east of Lake Hasan. (See attached sketch)

The attack was planned to be conducted in complete darkness between 2130 hours (moonset) and 0408 (sunrise). Actual visibility at the time of the attack was approximately ten meters, with a maximum visibility along the crest line of 40 meters.

Reconnaissance had indicated that the eastern and western slopes of Changkufeng were generally steep and that near the top the slope became steeper and very rough. In addition, there were many cliffs on the northwestern slope. Movement would be comparatively easy only on the southeastern slope, although in that area there were cliffs which would necessitate frequent halts and rests. Due to the rugged character of the terrain there were many dead spaces near the top which could not be covered by the Soviet emplaced weapons. However, they were covered by means of rifle grenade launchers.

The Changkufeng area was all quiet at noon on the 30th. Enemy patrols were sighted occasionally in front of the 3d Battalion position



although there was no patrol activity in front of the 1st Battalion.

At 2310 hours on the 30th the 1st Battalion reached the line of departure and commenced moving forward. By 0020 hours on the 31st the battalion had succeeded in breaching two lines of enemy obstacles in front of Position A and had completed its assault preparations on the south side of the first line of obstacles. (See Map No. 2)

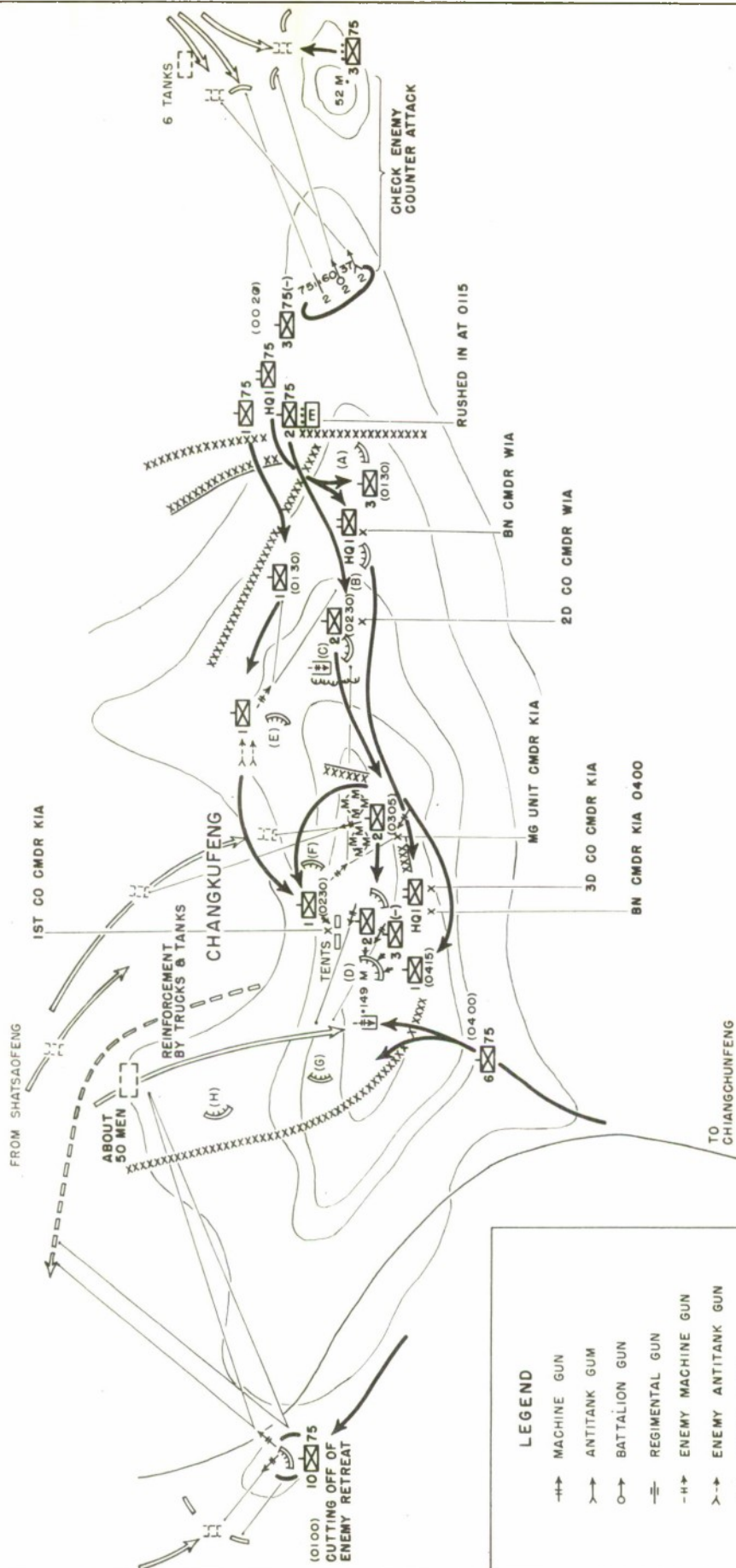
At 0115 hours the 1st Battalion commenced an attack through the breach in the wire entanglements with the 1st Company on the right flank, the 2d Company (plus one engineer platoon) on the left and the 3d Company (less one platoon-half its strength) as the reserve. When the first line troops reached the second line of wire entanglements, military dogs disposed in front of the Soviet position began barking, the attack was exposed and the enemy opened fire with all available weapons.

Despite the heavy fire, the 1st Battalion continued to approach the enemy position without returning the fire in accordance with their orders. Major Nakano, the battalion commander, was severely wounded but continued to advance.

The 1st Company, on the right flank, advanced up the eastern slope of Changkufeng and rushed Position E, with its antitank installations, occupied it and attacked the camp site. Captain Yamada, company commander, was killed at about 0230 hours and command of the company was taken over by 1st Lt. Inagaki, senior platoon leader, who succeeded in occupying the vicinity of the camp site by 0300 hours.

PROGRESS OF NIGHT ATTACK OF 1ST BATTALION
31 JULY 1938

JAPANESE ARMY
RUSSIAN ARMY



LEGEND

- Machine Gun
- Antitank Gun
- Battalion Gun
- Regimental Gun
- Enemy Machine Gun
- Enemy Antitank Gun
- Enemy Tank

On the left flank area, the enemy intensified their fire and steadily resisted at Positions A, B and C. Japanese losses increased. Captain Sakata, 2d Company commander, was wounded at Position C at 0230 hours. Captain Kitahara, commanding the Machine Gun Unit, was delivering heavy fire against the enemy from a point about 20 meters from Position D but, at 0305 hours he also was killed. These losses caused the attack on the left flank to be temporarily suspended.

In the meantime, while the 1st Battalion was engaged in its attack on Changkufeng, one enemy company with several tanks attacked the platoon of the 3d Company which was holding Hill No. 52. Although the platoon was successful in disabling three tanks, the enemy continued the attack until dawn when the platoon counterattacked the decimated enemy company and drove it back in confusion.

In view of the critical situation, the reserve platoon (3d Company), entered the attack on Position D. Advancing on the left of the 2d Company it approached within about ten meters of the enemy position but was slowed down by the steep slope. The enemy began a heavy hand grenade attack and at 0330 hours, the company commander, 1st Lt. Nakajima, was killed and the platoon discontinued the attack. At 0400 hours the battalion commander, who had been severely wounded, was commanding the battle from a position in the rear of the left flank company. As he was about to assault the enemy position with men from the left of the 2d Company he was hit by a hand grenade and killed.

Colonel Sato, the regimental commander, on Chiangchunfeng was observing the battle situation. Worried because the flare signifying success had not been given by 0200 hours, at 0215 he ordered the 6th Company to attack Changkufeng from the direction of Chiangchunfeng. The enemy intensified its fire and shortly thereafter the regimental commander received the following message from the 6th Company:

"Request artillery support at dawn. The battle situation at 0400 hours is extremely critical."

Captain Sakata, commander of the 2d Company, although severely wounded was commanding the 1st Battalion. The 1st Company moved to the left flank of the first line after overrunning the campsite and gave support to the left flank units. The enemy was sending reinforcements on trucks and tanks from the direction of Shatsaofeng and enemy troops were sighted scaling the northern slope of Changkufeng.

Captain Sakata attempted a last assault with the 1st and 2d Companies. The 2d Company penetrated the enemy position on the southern tip of the summit and engaged in hand-to-hand combat. The 1st Company approached the rear of the hilltop position from the west slope. As a result of the coordinated attacks, the enemy suddenly began a withdrawal from their positions and their reinforcements withdrew to the north in confusion. At 0410 hours the 1st Battalion succeeded in capturing the hilltop.

The enemy artillery immediately started shelling the 1st Battalion forces on the hill; however, it began to rain very heavily and the

enemy suspended fire.

Enemy personnel losses totalled about 300 killed and wounded. Two antitank guns, four heavy machine guns, six light machine guns, six automatic rifles and six rifle grenade throwers were captured and seven tanks destroyed or damaged.

Japanese casualties were also high; four officers, including the battalion commander and three out of four company commanders were killed as were 30 enlisted men. Three officers and 96 enlisted men were wounded. This loss of approximately one-third of the battalion strength was sustained principally as a result of the enemy hand grenade attack.

As a result of this engagement, the Japanese Army learned a number of things about the Soviet Army. It was obvious that night security of the Soviet force was not adequate, although it was noted that military dogs were used successfully in giving the alarm. It was also noted that the Soviets did not employ reconnaissance patrols in all areas and that there were no standing patrols in the vicinity of the wire entanglements. Regarding the Russian reactions during the attack, it was observed that upon learning of the attack they opened fire at random with all available weapons, very much in the manner of the Chinese, and Japanese losses by this firing were comparatively light. The Soviets also cheered and shouted as they fired, revealing their positions to the attackers.

The Soviet use of tanks was also of interest. Although some

tanks were used in action at night, most of them seemed to have been established in fixed positions and used as defensive strong points. In this attack, most of the Soviet tanks were disposed half-way up the east slope of Changkufeng and were able to deliver heavy fire upon the attacking troops. Soviet hand grenade attacks were particularly effective and it was deemed necessary for the Japanese Army to improve grenade attack tactics.

Author's Observations

The Changkufeng Incident involved the first fighting by a Japanese Army force against the Soviet Army and was the first and most famous night attack since the Russo-Japanese War.

The 1st Battalion of the 75th Infantry Regiment broke through the entire depth of the enemy position, and after three hours of desperate fighting, finally succeeded in capturing the summit of Changkufeng. The success of the attack is attributed to the strong fighting spirit of the officers and men of the battalion and their thorough training. From a strategic viewpoint, it should be borne in mind that although the Soviet position consisted of several lines, its entire depth was only about 300 meters. Consequently, the capture of the summit was the end of the battle, a big factor in the success of the attack. Since the 1st Battalion had expended its entire attacking power when it captured the summit, if there had been one more enemy position, it is doubtful if it would have been possible for the battalion to have

captured it.

In connection with night attacks, consideration should be given to providing artillery support. Although successful, this attack was conducted with only infantry without artillery support, and the summit was captured with difficulty and later than originally planned. Had there been artillery support to check enemy reinforcements, the battalion could have effected its victory more easily and with fewer casualties.

Example No. 6

Night Attack by the 228th Infantry Regiment Against the Kowloon Line, North of Hong Kong, December 1941

(Based on the record of operations compiled by the Demobilization Bureau, the collection of examples of small-scale fighting published by the Inspector General of Military Training in August 1943 and statements of veteran officers.)

In South China, the Twenty-third Army had been conducting operational preparations, since November 1941, with the aim of capturing the British positions in Kowloon with an attack by the 38th Division and the Army artillery unit. With the outbreak of war against Great Britain and the United States on 8 December, commencement of action was ordered at 0300 hours.

On the morning of the 8th, the advance unit of the 38th Division crossed the Chinese-British border and by evening of that day the first line unit had advanced to the Mt Tamaoshan line, a strategic point in front of the enemy's main position.

The Twenty-third Army commander believed that the enemy would offer full-scale resistance at the main defense line and, at 0900 hours on the 9th, he issued an order concerning attack preparations on the main position, with the principal attack to be made against the hill southwest of the Chengmen Reservoir.

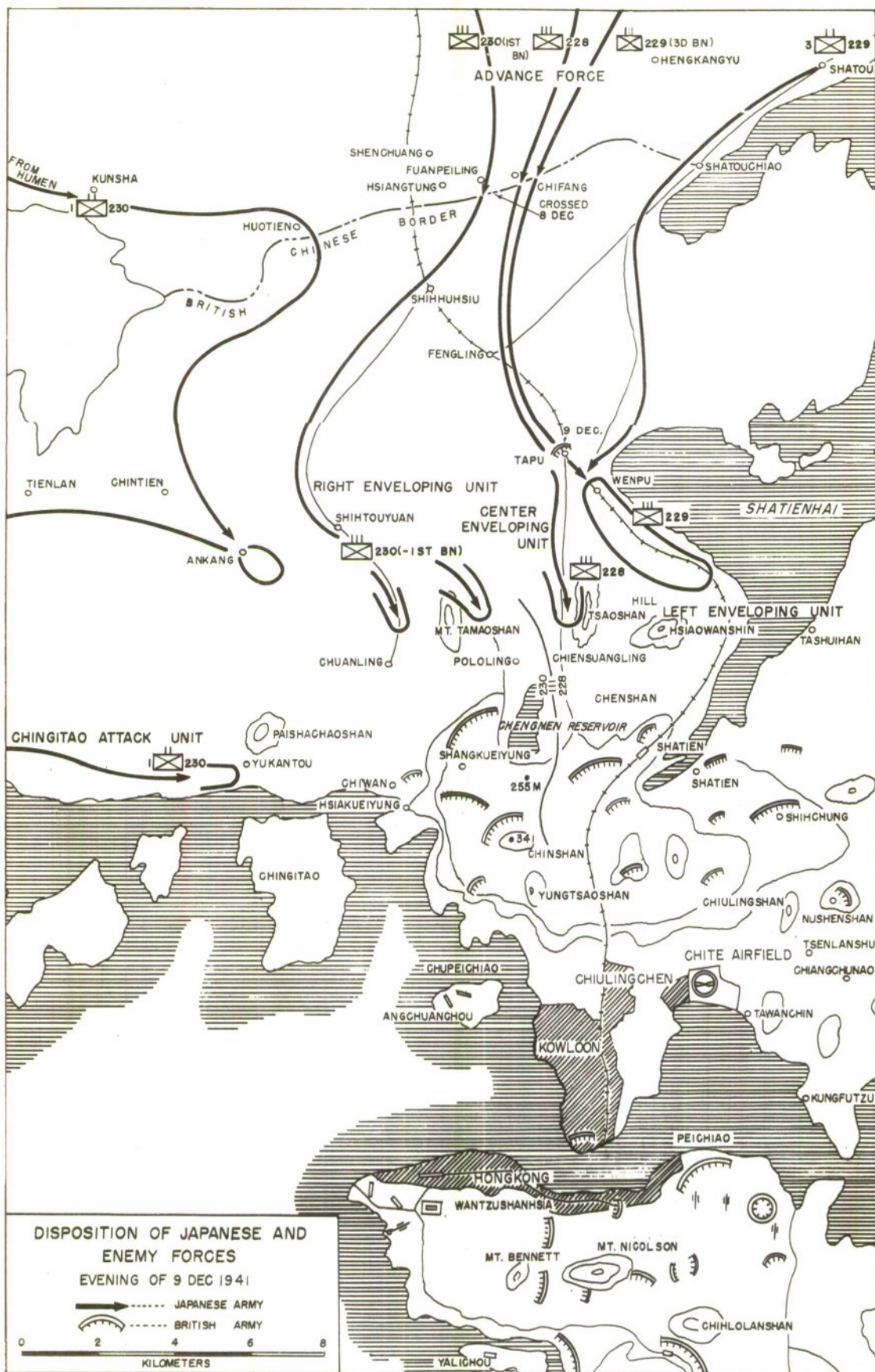
In accordance with the Army order, the 38th Division designated the 230th Infantry Regiment as the Right Enveloping Unit, the 228th Infantry Regiment as the Center Enveloping Unit, and the 229th Infantry Regiment as the Left Enveloping Unit. On the afternoon of the

9th, the division commenced attack preparations with a disposition as shown in Map No. 1. In order to support the attack of the 38th Division, the main body of the Army artillery and an element commenced deployment to capture the position in the vicinity of Tapu and Chintien, respectively.

At that time the first British defense line in the Kowloon peninsula consisted of permanent positions with concrete pillboxes constructed in several echelons along a line linking Hsiakueiyung, Hill 255 (south of Chengmen Reservoir), Shinchung and Nushenshan. Although the number of the defenders of that line was not known, the total British-Indian defense strength in Hong Kong and Kowloon was estimated at approximately 10,000 men.

At the time of the border crossing on 8 December, the 228th Infantry Regiment commenced its advance as the second line regiment of the division. On 9 December it was ordered to advance to the first line as the Center Enveloping Unit. It leapfrogged the 229th Regiment at Tapu and advanced toward Chiensuangling (Lead Mine Pass).

On the afternoon of the same day, the 3d Battalion was assigned as the advance unit of the regiment. At 1700 hours on the 9th, the battalion arrived at a sunken place four kilometers south of Tsaoshan Hill and the battalion commander dispatched the 10th Company to the hill east of the Chengmen Reservoir to reconnoiter the enemy situation and terrain south of the reservoir. From Tsaoshan Hill Colonel Doi, commander of the 228th Infantry Regiment also reconnoitered the enemy



situation and terrain and found the terrain and the enemy position to be the same as shown on the maps the regiment had been using for the past two months. However, no enemy troops could be sighted in the position and it was assumed that they had either withdrawn or were not expecting an attack. The regimental commander therefore planned to effect a night attack on the hill south of the Chengmen Reservoir. Although the sector south of the reservoir was in the patrol area of the Right Enveloping Unit (230th Infantry Regiment) and was outside the zone assigned to the 228th, he considered that if the attack was successful, the division would approve his action. He was, of course, well aware of the orthodox attack plan of the army and the division, but harbored a desire to capture the enemy position by a surprise attack if there was a possibility of taking the enemy unaware.

The 3d Battalion commander, Major Nishiyama, and the 10th Company commander, 1st Lt Wakabayashi, were also planning to effect a surprise attack upon the Kowloon position at an opportune moment.

The regimental commander called all battalion and infantry gun unit commanders together, reported the results of his reconnaissance and asked the opinion of each battalion commander. All recommended a night attack. The 3d Battalion commander was particularly strong in his recommendation, giving as his reason that his reconnaissance, conducted from the saddle west of Tsaoshan Hill, indicated that the enemy disposed in the sector south of the Chengmen Reservoir was not

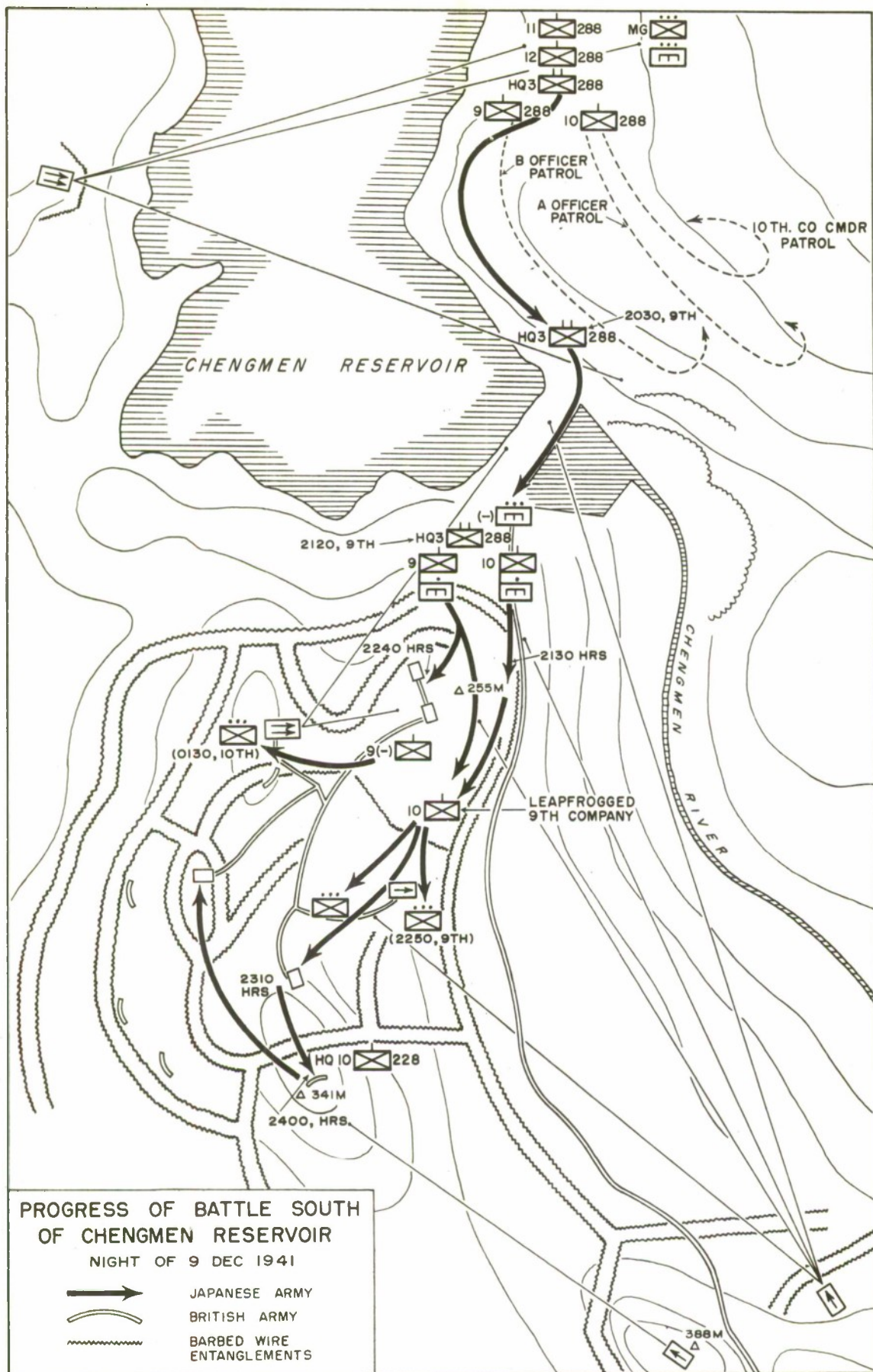
very strong. Because of the complete agreement of the various commanders, a night attack was decided upon.

The regimental commander immediately ordered the 3d Battalion to effect a night attack on Hill 255 and directed the main body of the regiment to advance to the sector east of the reservoir to support the battalion in the attack. (See Map No. 2)

At 2030 hours, the 3d Battalion advanced to the area north of the embankment at the southeastern end of the Chengmen Reservoir and conducted preparations for an attack. The night was dark and there was a light rain.

The 9th Company, assigned to capture Hill 255, crossed the embankment at 2100 hours and advanced. Although the company was fired on from both sides and the front, there was no enemy disposed on the embankment and the company successfully effected the breakthrough. The battalion commander ordered the attached engineer platoon to secure the embankment and assembled the main body of the battalion to the north of the embankment to await further developments in the 9th Company attack.

Since the battle situation was unknown. At 2130 hours, the 10th Company advanced across the embankment and arrived at the foot of Hill 255. At this time the enemy began directing heavy fire against the embankment and it appeared impossible for the other units of the battalion (the 11th and 12th Companies) to cross. The battalion commander, having determined to take personal charge of the



attack, halted the two rear companies and, accompanied by his adjutant, advanced to the foot of Hill 255. He sent one engineer squad each to the 9th and 10th Companies.

In the meantime, taking advantage of the incomplete disposition of the enemy, the 9th Company had effected its attack on the firing position located on Hill 255 and at 2240 hours captured the hill.

The battalion commander immediately ordered the 10th Company to execute a leapfrog movement and attack the summit of Hill 341 and directed the 9th Company to attack the northwest corner of the enemy position southwest of Hill 255. By 2400 hours the 10th Company had succeeded in capturing Hill 341 and by 0130 hours on the 10th the 9th Company captured the northwest corner of the enemy position.

Note: According to prisoner interrogations conducted after the operation, the enemy disposed in the positions captured by the battalion was approximately one company in strength.

As soon as Hill 255 was captured, enemy artillery began concentrating fire upon the 3d Battalion. The battalion commander ordered an element of the 10th Company to secure the highest point of the hill as a strong point for launching a future attack and ordered the 9th and 10th Companies to secure all captured positions, avoiding losses from enemy fire by utilizing occupied enemy positions. The 11th and 12th Companies were assembled at the northern foot of Hill 255 and made attack preparations.

Note: On the night of the 9th, the 38th Division Headquarters received the report of the decision to make a surprise night attack by the 228th Infantry Regiment. Division

headquarters considered that the attack force would be annihilated and the division commander ordered the regimental commander to withdraw his force. However, the regimental commander did not comply with this order. On the morning of the 10th, the division chief-of-staff came to the east side of the Chengmen Reservoir and after inspecting the situation of the enemy positions already captured and secured, the withdrawal order was cancelled. The main body of the 38th Division commenced its attack on the evening of the 11th, with the approval of the Twenty-third Army, and successfully broke through the enemy's main defense line on the 12th. The night attack of the 228th Infantry Regiment was the factor that expedited the occupation of the enemy's main Kowloon defense line earlier than had been expected.

Author's Observations

This is an example of a successful night attack against a strong enemy position effected by a force which had advanced in front of the enemy position in the evening and with little time to prepare for the attack, effected a two kilometer break-through. Several factors contributed to the success of this attack:

1. The first line commander was able to observe all movements of the enemy and to detect all weaknesses in the enemy position. Since the enemy was confused by the surprise move, their troop disposition was not complete and it was the opportune moment to effect a night attack.

2. A thorough study of the enemy position had been made prior to the attack. Although the actual preparatory time for the attack was limited, for two months the 38th Division had conducted study of the terrain and the enemy positions utilizing three dimensional maps.

3. The thorough military training given the troops, their high morale and the excellent abilities of the officers were also important contributing factors to the success of the operation.

Example No. 6a

Attack on Position on the South Side of Hill 255 by the
10th Company of the 3d Battalion of the 228th Infantry
Regiment at Kowloon in December 1944

(Based on the collection of examples of small-scale
operations published by the Inspectorate General of
Military Training in August 1943.)

Immediately after the capture of Hill 255 by the 9th Company (See Map No. 1), the 10th Company joined the fighting. Reaching the vicinity of Point B, after crossing the hill at 2240 hours on 9 December, it received fire from an enemy position of the right. The company's advance was halted and temporarily thrown into confusion. Accompanied by the leader of the 1st Platoon, the company commander advanced to Point B and ordered the demolishing of the wire entanglements. He instructed the 1st Platoon to capture Hill C, sent a small detachment to capture Fire Position E, ordered the 2d Platoon to take Fire Position D, and led the remainder of the company to Point F.

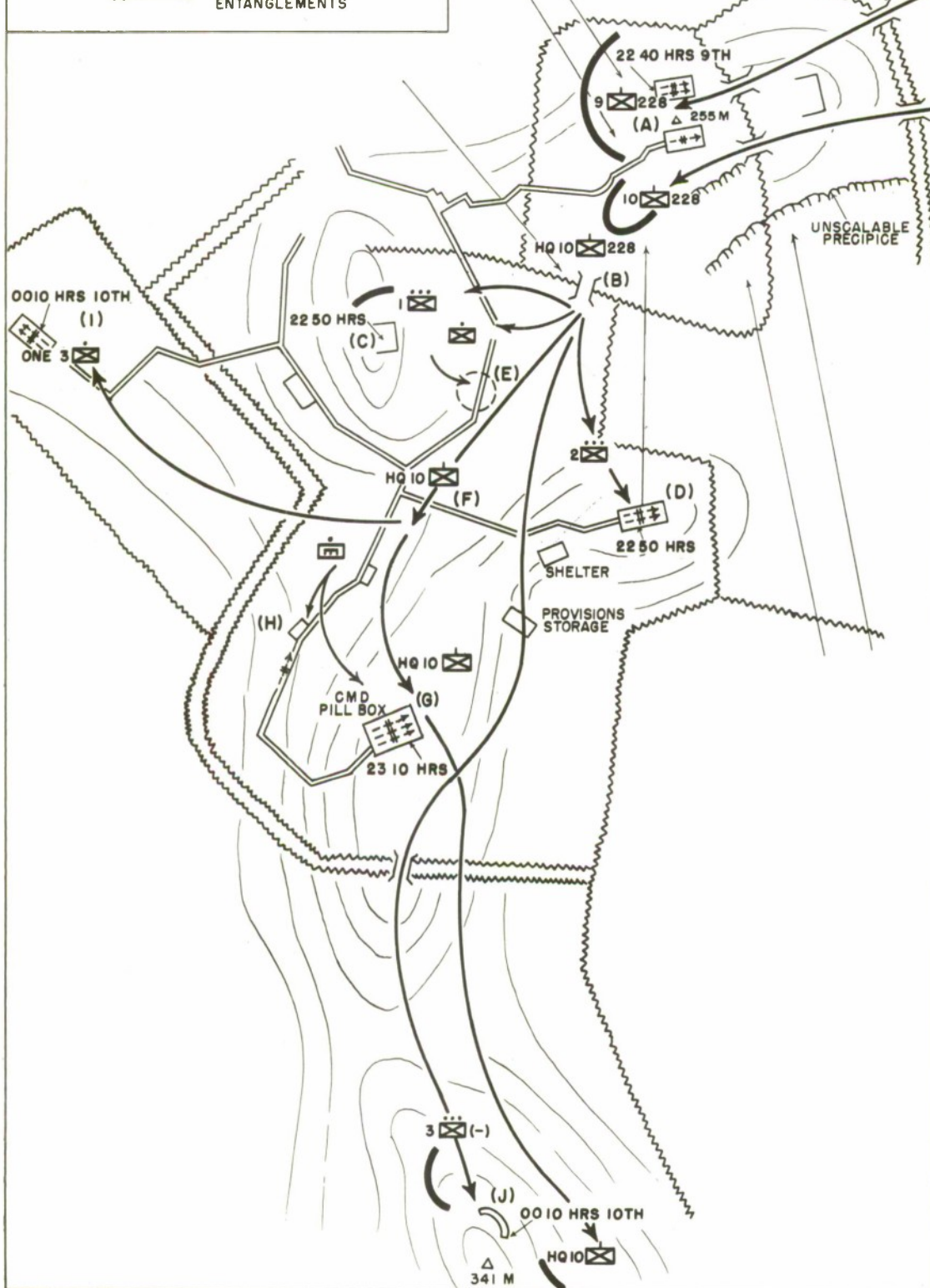
The 1st Platoon captured Hill C, meeting little opposition. The sergeant who had been ordered to capture Fire Position E, approached with two men and attacked with hand grenades. The position proved, however, to be a concrete air vent rather than a firing position.

The leader of the 2d Platoon, with a non-commissioned officer and four men, approached Fire Position D and threw hand grenades but the attack was not effective as the enemy had closed the steel casement of the gun port. The detachment then rushed the position through

ATTACK OF THE 10TH COMPANY AGAINST ENEMY FIRE POSITIONS

NIGHT OF 9 DEC 41

→ JAPANESE ARMY
 () BRITISH ARMY
 ~~~~ BARBED WIRE  
 ENTANGLEMENTS



the entrance and effected its capture after a brief hand-to-hand struggle.

All three attacks were executed promptly and action was completed within ten minutes. The company commander had, in the meantime, advanced to Point F and with one orderly had captured three men who had been firing from an underground position at that point. He then sent the 3d Platoon to capture Hill 341, which was the highest point in the vicinity, and ordered a few men to cut some 20 telephone wires which were laid along the underground passage. One squad from the 3d Platoon was sent to capture Fire Position I.

With one squad under his direct command, the company commander moved to capture Fire Position G. Several hand grenades were hurled but since the enemy had closed the firing ports, no results were achieved. The occupants of the position threw hand grenades and fired pistols through the upper ventilation ports. Efforts were made to force an entrance through the firing aperture but because of effective machine gun fire, being received from a neighboring enemy position, the attempt had to be abandoned. The company's engineer squad was ordered to demolish the steel casement with a five kilogram explosive charge and two Bangalore torpedoes were thrown through the hole made by the demolition charge. Six of the occupants were killed and one officer and 20 men came out of the position waving a white handkerchief in token of surrender. The occupation of the position was completed at 2310 hours.

The capture of Fire Positions I and J was accomplished by 0010 hours on the 10th. Investigation conducted after the conclusion of the attack disclosed that the fire positions were built of concrete 1.5 to 2.0 meters thick and were connected by underground passages. Fire positions, however, had no individual obstacles and although there were field positions linked with the fire positions, fields of fire were not effectively established. At the time of the attack there were no guards or patrols posted and the enemy field positions were not manned.

Author's Observations:

Primary reasons for the success of this operation were the same as those advanced for the success of the 3d Battalion and the 9th Company.



Example No. 6b

A Night Attack by the Goto Platoon of the  
6th Company of the 228th Infantry Regiment  
During the Occupation of Hong Kong

(Based on the collection of examples of attacks on fire positions published by the Inspectorate General of Military Training in August 1943.)

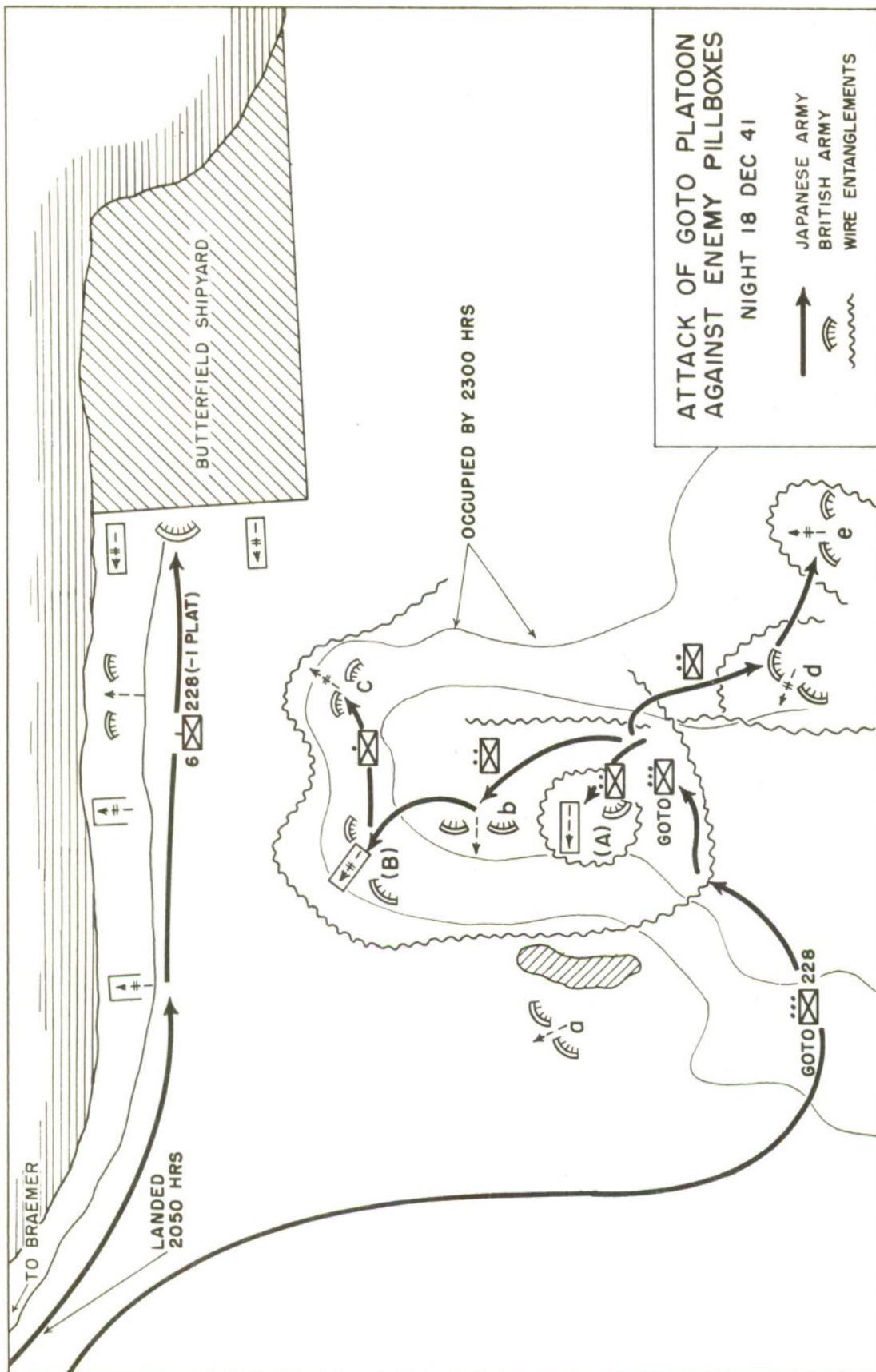
On the night of 18 December 1941, the 38th Division carried out the Hong Kong landing operation. The Goto Platoon of the 6th Company of the 228th Infantry Regiment was deployed on the extreme left flank of the regiment and at 2050 hours it landed on the western coast near the Butterfield Shipyard.

The missions of the 6th Company were the capture of the shipyard and the enemy positions on the hill to the south as well as covering the left flank of the regiment. It was planned to capture the shipyard with the main body of the company, assigning the strongly fortified hill positions to the Goto Platoon. (See Map No. 1)

To accomplish its mission, the Goto Platoon organized the following units prior to the commencement of the landing operations:

|                            |                  |                                   |
|----------------------------|------------------|-----------------------------------|
| Clearing Squad .....       | Leader and 7 men |                                   |
| First Assault Squad .....  | Leader and 5 men | (2 or 3 hand grenades per man and |
| Second Assault Squad ..... | Leader and 5 men | (2 armor piercing                 |
|                            |                  | (mines per squad.                 |
| Grenade Discharger Squad . | Leader and 5 men |                                   |

Upon completing the landing, the Goto Platoon advanced to the extreme left flank, concealing its move to the best of its ability.



It encountered two double-apron wire entanglements near the southwestern corner of the enemy position and successfully breached the obstacle within 30 minutes, without being detected. Under cover of darkness, the platoon passed through the break, approached Fire Position A and conducted reconnaissance.

Although it was a moonless night, the Goto Platoon easily found Fire Position A because, not yet aware of the platoon's approach, Fire Positions A and B as well as Field Positions a and b were continuing to fire toward the coastal area.

Fire Position A was surrounded by low wire entanglements. The platoon leader, with one assault squad, promptly demolished the entanglements, rushed into the position, through the entrance in the rear, annihilated the enemy and occupied the position. At this time the platoon began receiving machine gun fire and Field Position d and e were discovered further to the south. The platoon leader ordered one assault squad to capture Field Positions b and c and Fire Position B. At the same time he took personal command of the other assault squads and moved to capture Field Positions d and e.

Taking advantage of the confusion of the enemy, the assault squads attacked and soon captured Positions B, b and c. Platoon Leader Goto ordered the grenade squad to neutralize Positions d and e and then rushed into the positions and occupied them. By 2300 hours on the 18th, the Goto Platoon had successfully occupied all enemy positions on the hill.



Investigation conducted after the conclusion of the attack showed that the concrete of Fire Positions A and B was 50 to 80 centimeters in thickness and that gun ports were copper plate approximately 20 millimeters thick. The principal weapon at each fire position was the water-cooled machine gun.

Author's Observations:

The effective attack carried out by the Goto Platoon was primarily successful due to the factor of initial surprise. Although the platoon had, of course, conducted map and long range study of the terrain before the fighting started, it had had no opportunity for close observation. The locating of the positions was materially assisted by the firing at the coastal area by the defenders of the position.

Example No. 7

Night Attack by the 215th Infantry Regiment  
in the Vicinity of Kuzeik in South Burma

(Based on operations records compiled by the 1st  
Demobilization Bureau and the statements of  
Colonel Harada, commander of the 215th Infantry  
Regiment.)

On the morning of 20 January 1942 the Fifteenth Army crossed the Thailand-Burma border and invaded Burma and advanced to the right bank of the Salween River.

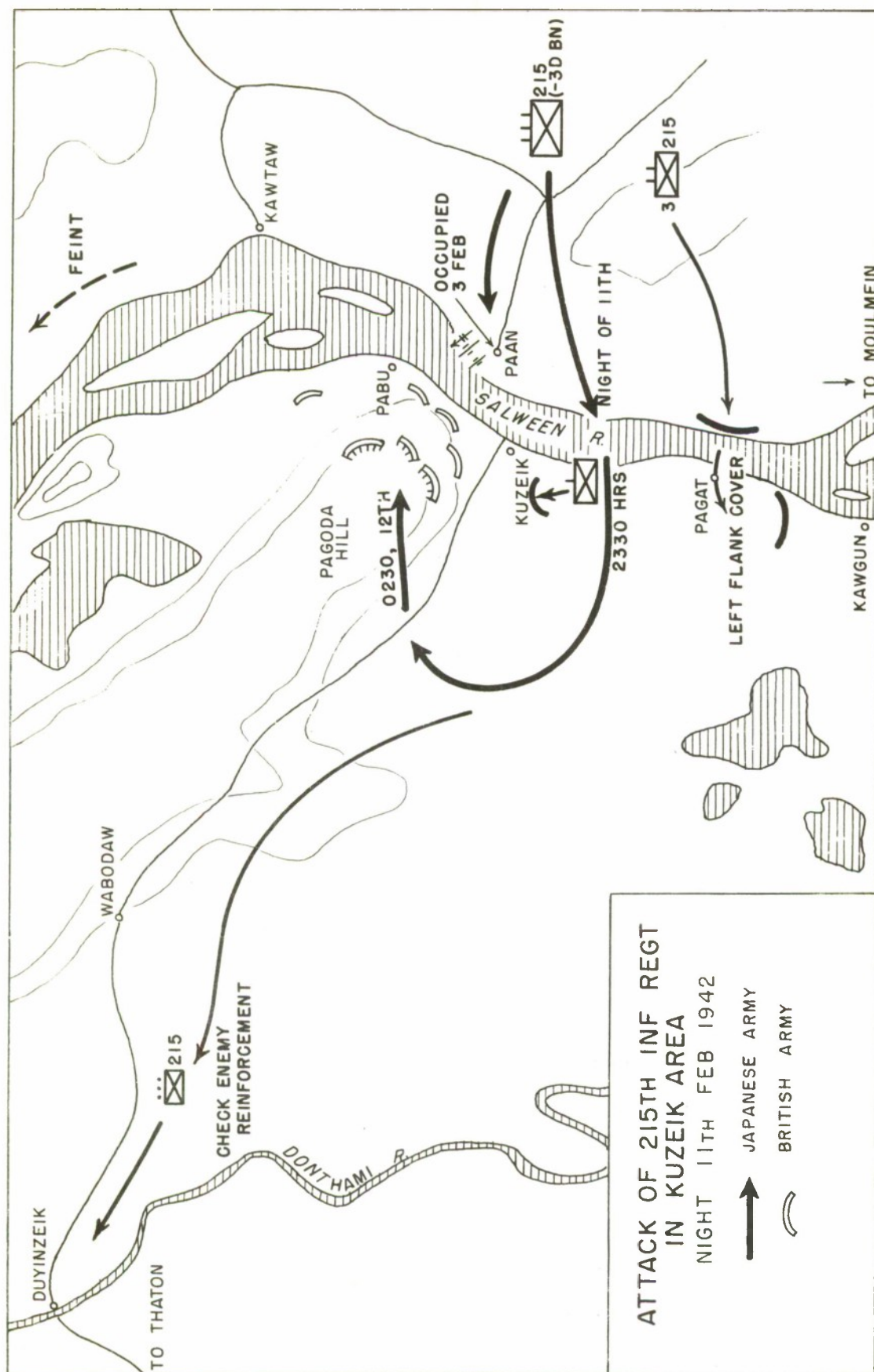
On the night of 3 February, the 215th Infantry Regiment, leading unit of the 33d Division, the front line division of the Fifteenth Army, occupied Paan on the right bank of the Salween and engaged in preparations for an attack on the comparatively weak British garrison in the Kuzeik area. (See Map No. 1)

The most difficult problem confronting the regiment was the crossing of the Salween River. As the regiment had no river-crossing equipment, local canoes were collected.

The regimental commander disposed the regiment in a wooded area east and southeast of Paan and issued orders for a river crossing operation:

1. On the night of the 10th, one infantry company will secretly cross the Salween River, occupy the area south of Kuzeik and act to cover the river crossing operation of the main body of the regiment.

2. On the night of the 11th, the main body of the regiment will cross the Salween River at a point south of Kuzeik, advance to the rear of the enemy positions in the vicinity of Pagoda Hill, and make a night attack upon the enemy. Capture of the positions will be completed by the morning of the 12th.





3. Simultaneously with the crossing of the main body of the regiment, the 3d Battalion will cross the river at a point near Pagat to cover the left flank of the regiment.

4. One platoon will be dispatched from the main body of the regiment to the vicinity of Duyinzeik to check enemy reinforcements.

5. Before the commencement of the river crossing operation, a feint will be made to deceive the enemy into thinking that the crossing will be made at a point between Paan and Pagat.

6. All machine guns and infantry guns will be disposed on the river bank northwest of Paan. If necessary, they will support the attack of the main body of the regiment.

The point south of Kuzeik was chosen for the crossing of the company on the night of the 10th because local inhabitants had been observed swimming there and it was believed that this indicated that there were no British troops in the area. This assumption proved to be correct and the company, operating according to plans, obtained the initial success by capturing Kuzeik.

At sunset of the 11th, the main body of the regiment began the crossing of the Salween and although the movement was slow due to the necessity of employing native canoes, there was no enemy interference. In general, the crossing made smooth progress and was completed by 2330 hours.

Upon completing the crossing, the regiment (less the 3d Battalion) advanced westward, swung northeast and attacked the enemy positions from the rear. It was a dark, moonless night and the enemy was taken completely by surprise. The 1st and 2d Battalions were deployed in a line and at 0230 hours of the 12th, made an assault.

After offering only light resistance the enemy withdrew in confusion.

Interrogation of 150 prisoners captured in the attack revealed that the area was defended by the Baruchi Battalion of the Indian 17th Division.

Author's Observations:

Under normal conditions this attack would have been made after dawn of the day following the river crossing but because it was impossible to transport the heavy machine guns and infantry guns by canoe, the regimental commander determined that, without the support of the heavy weapons, a night attack would be more favorable.

It must be noted that the British forces were not effective and failed to make careful reconnaissance or preparation.

Example No. 8

The Establishment of Raiding-infiltration Tactics  
by the Eighteenth Army in New Guinea and the  
Formation of the Takasago Volunteer Unit

(Based on statements of Lt Col Tanaka, former staff  
officer of the Eighteenth Army.)

In December 1942 the 41st Infantry Regiment and the 15th Independent Engineer Regiment were preparing for a final stand in the Buna and Giruwa sectors. Both units had lost virtually all of their artillery and supplies of all kinds were short. Allied armament was so superior that whenever the Japanese opened fire their guns were destroyed immediately after by heavy enemy counterbattery fire. It became obvious that some measures must be taken to destroy enemy artillery and supply depots without the use of the few artillery pieces remaining and without suffering disastrous retaliatory artillery bombardment.

The employment of raiding-infiltration tactics appeared to be the only solution. This was, coincidentally, the same solution which the Seventeenth Army arrived at in meeting a similar problem on Guadalcanal at about the same time.

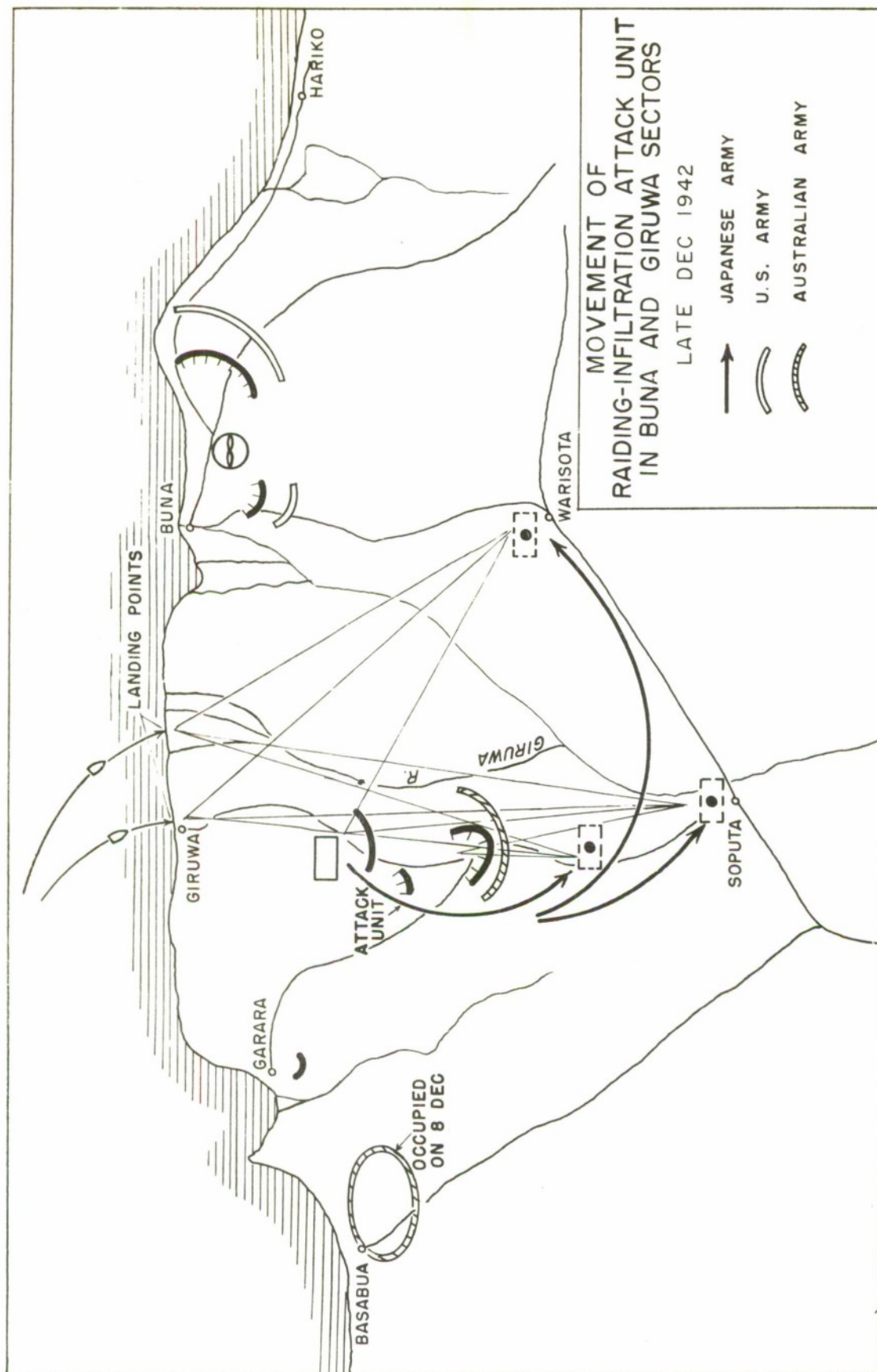
Although Japanese soldiers were well trained in normal patrolling and infiltrating methods, the tactic of penetrating deep behind enemy lines and the employment of demolitions in the destruction of enemy weapons and depots was a departure from accepted practice and it was generally believed that those who participated in such missions had little chance of returning.



In early December 1942 Colonel Yokoyama, Giruwa Sector Commander, called for volunteers for artillery destroying raids and was successful in obtaining approximately 100 men, ranging from young men in fine physical condition to those suffering from wounds and illnesses who volunteered in order to have the opportunity of dying an honorable death. Volunteers were divided into groups of varying sizes and given training in demolition work and infiltrating tactics. Upon completion of training, missions were assigned to groups and the implementation of raiding-infiltration tactics began.

Note: Raiding-infiltration groups were composed of 5 to 20 men each and light machine gun and rifle squads were often sent to support or protect the demolition groups. Subsequent experience indicated that a group of more than 10 men was seldom successful because it was too easily detected.

The first raids were launched in the latter part of December 1942 and January 1943 with the mission of destroying artillery emplacements in the Soputa and Warisota areas, behind the enemy lines. Of the first six raids, two were successful, two were partially successful and two failed and the groups failed to return. Units which attempted to attack by force, using firepower in an attempt to neutralize installations before attacking were not successful while those which awaited an opportune moment and, approaching by stealth, conducted a surprise raid had a better chance for success. Contrary to expectations, losses were comparatively light and most units returned intact. (See attached Sketch)



Considering the lessons learned and the amount of success achieved in the early raids, it was determined to train special units to accomplish raiding missions rather than depend on hit or miss volunteer methods. Foremost among the special units were 200 young men from the Takasago Tribes of Formosa, commanded by highly trained officers and non-commissioned officers who were graduates of the Counter Intelligence School, chosen to form the Takasago Volunteer Unit in June 1943. Intensive training was conducted and that, combined with their natural aptitudes, physical ability, adaptability to the tropical climate, patience, marksmanship and bravery made them an ideal and highly valued raiding force. Due to the skill which they eventually developed in their special hit and run tactics, as well as their ability to conceal their movements, the raiding-infiltration attack was not considered by them to be a suicide mission and their losses were comparatively light throughout the numerous campaigns in which they were engaged.

The Takasago Volunteer Unit was assigned to the Nakai Detachment in the Ramu Valley where they spearheaded an attack in the Kesewa area and were successful in attacking and destroying an enemy billeting area. (See Example No. 11) Later, during the withdrawal of the Nakai Detachment from the Kaiapit sector, the unit was designated as a rear guard and by their continued harassing activities facilitated the withdrawal of the main body of the detachment.

Following the attack by the Eighteenth Army along the Drinumor



River in July 1944, the counterattacks of the heavily reinforced enemy forced the army to wage a wholly defensive battle because the men did not have the physical strength to launch an attack. Owing to a series of attacks, against which no counterattacks could be launched, one position after another had to be vacated and it was at this time that the Takasago Unit proved its real worth. They conducted many raiding attacks and expanded their operational methods to include a general mop-up of raided areas after each attack.

In the spring of 1945 it was realized that the Eighteenth Army was not capable of mounting a general offensive and it was determined to employ raiding tactics on a large scale. While the loss of the Takasago Volunteer Unit as a fighting force would be serious, it was felt that its personnel might better serve as instructors in order that the army, as a whole, might be taught the techniques of raiding. Officers and non-commissioned officers of the Takasago Unit were dispersed to all units of the Eighteenth Army area to act as instructors in raiding-infiltration tactics.

By June 1945 training had progressed to such a point that all Eighteenth Army units had raiding groups in constant use. Each unit defended its position during the day and employed raiding tactics at night. These harassing attacks enjoyed some measure of success in that the enemy was required to maintain strong defenses at night which had the effect of slowing down their drive and strength the following day.

Author's Observations:

One weakness of raiding-infiltration tactics is the fact that higher headquarters cannot invariably confirm the results achieved by raiding parties. It was found that many reports tended to be over-optimistic and although the raiding tactics employed against the Australians in eastern New Guinea were most effective, they were not as completely successful as was reported on several occasions. It is believed that in future employment some method must be devised to give the higher echelons of command sufficient accurate information to form a true and impartial picture of actual results.

Example No. 9

Night Attack by the Kawaguchi Detachment  
on Guadalcanal

(Based on operations records compiled by the Demobilization Bureau, "Examples of Small-scale Actions" compiled by the Inspectorate General of Military Training in October 1943, and statements of veteran officers.)

After an attack by the Ichiki Detachment had ended in failure on 21 August, the commander of the Seventeenth Army dispatched the Kawaguchi Detachment to Guadalcanal with orders to capture the island from the United States forces which had landed on 7 August 1942.

The main body of the Kawaguchi Detachment, which was sent to Guadalcanal aboard Navy destroyers, debarked under cover of darkness in the vicinity of Taivu Point between the nights of 29 August and 4 September. The total strength which Detachment Commander Kawaguchi had in the Taivu Point vicinity was the 35th Infantry Brigade Headquarters, the 1st and 3d Battalions of the 124th Infantry Regiment, the 2d Battalion of the 4th Infantry Regiment, the remnants of the Ichiki Detachment (about one infantry battalion) and one field artillery battery.

Note: The 2d Battalion of the 124th Infantry Regiment embarked on small craft and landed on the morning of 5 September at Maravoro on the northwest tip of the island. This unit assumed the offensive from the west in cooperation with the offensive from the east by the Kawaguchi Detachment.

Apparently the United States forces had detected the debarkation of the Kawaguchi Detachment as beginning in the early morning of 1



September they mounted air strafing and bombing attacks.

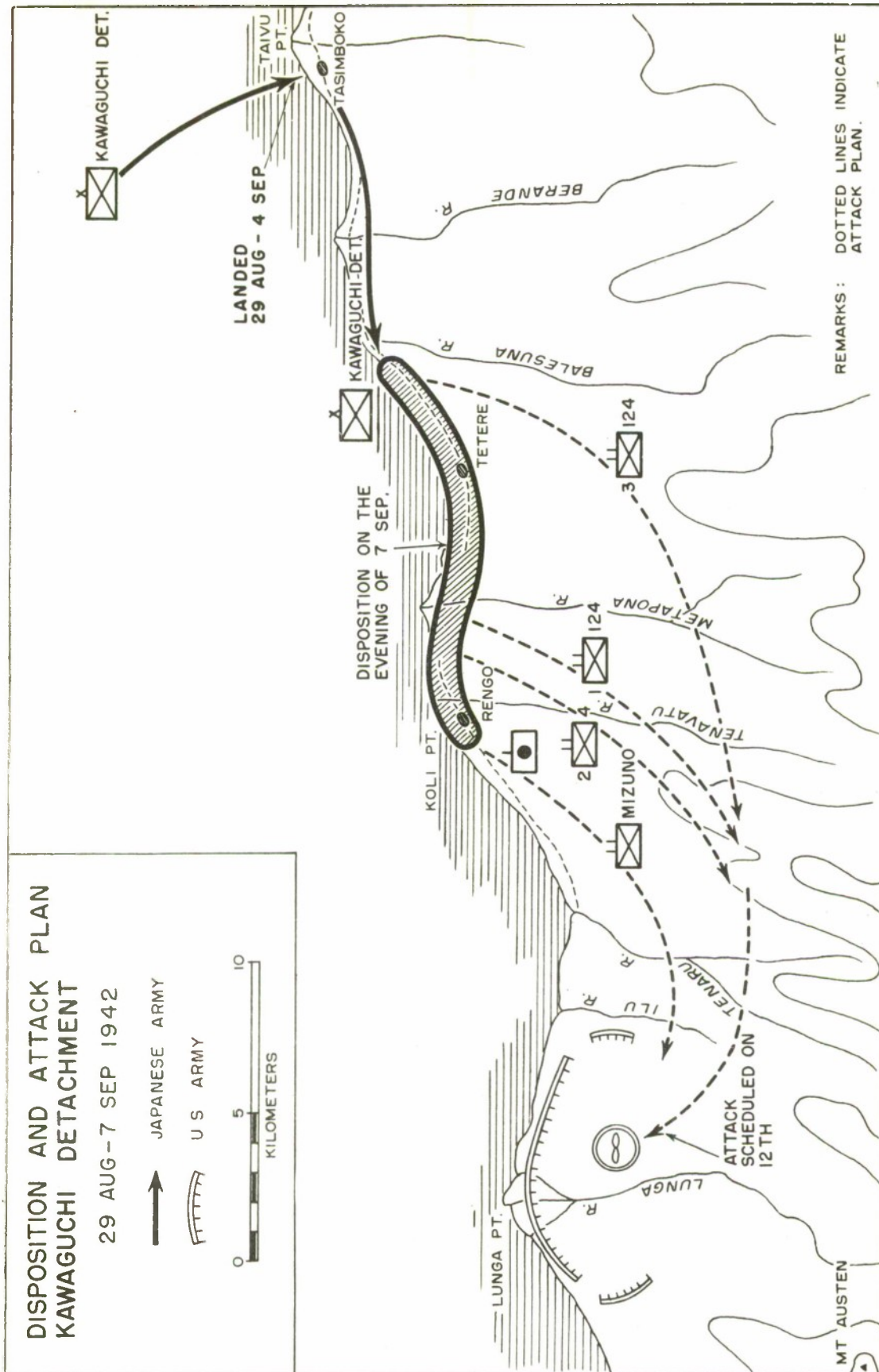
To make attack preparations by securing a position to the west, the detachment advanced, on the night of the 2d, to the sector between Koli Point and the Balesuma River and made a reconnaissance of the enemy situation and terrain. (See Map No. 1)

Although the original plan as outlined by Seventeenth Army had called for an attack on the 11th, some doubt was expressed in army headquarters as to the capabilities of the Kawaguchi Detachment. The detachment commander was queried on the 5th as to the advisability of delaying the attack. Detachment Commander Kawaguchi replied on the following day:

"It would not be advisable to postpone the day of attack in order to wait for reinforcements. There will be no moon on the 12th and conditions will be suitable for a surprise attack. I plan to launch the attack on or about the 12th and am confident of accomplishing the mission with our present strength."

In spite of the fact that the attack scheduled for the 11th had been coordinated with the navy, which was to attack the Lunga Airfield simultaneously with the attack by the Kawaguchi Detachment, army headquarters agreed to change the attack to the 12th.

In the meantime, reconnaissance had indicated that progress through the jungle would be exceedingly difficult due to the fact that many of the rivers had flooded as a result of the continuous rains. The transport of ammunition and provisions would be particularly difficult. On the 7th of September the commander considered postponing the attack until the 13th and radioed a request to army



headquarters. On the same day, however, the Seventeenth Army had received the following message from Imperial General Headquarters:

"A large enemy convoy with marines aboard, arrived at the Fiji Islands on the 5th."

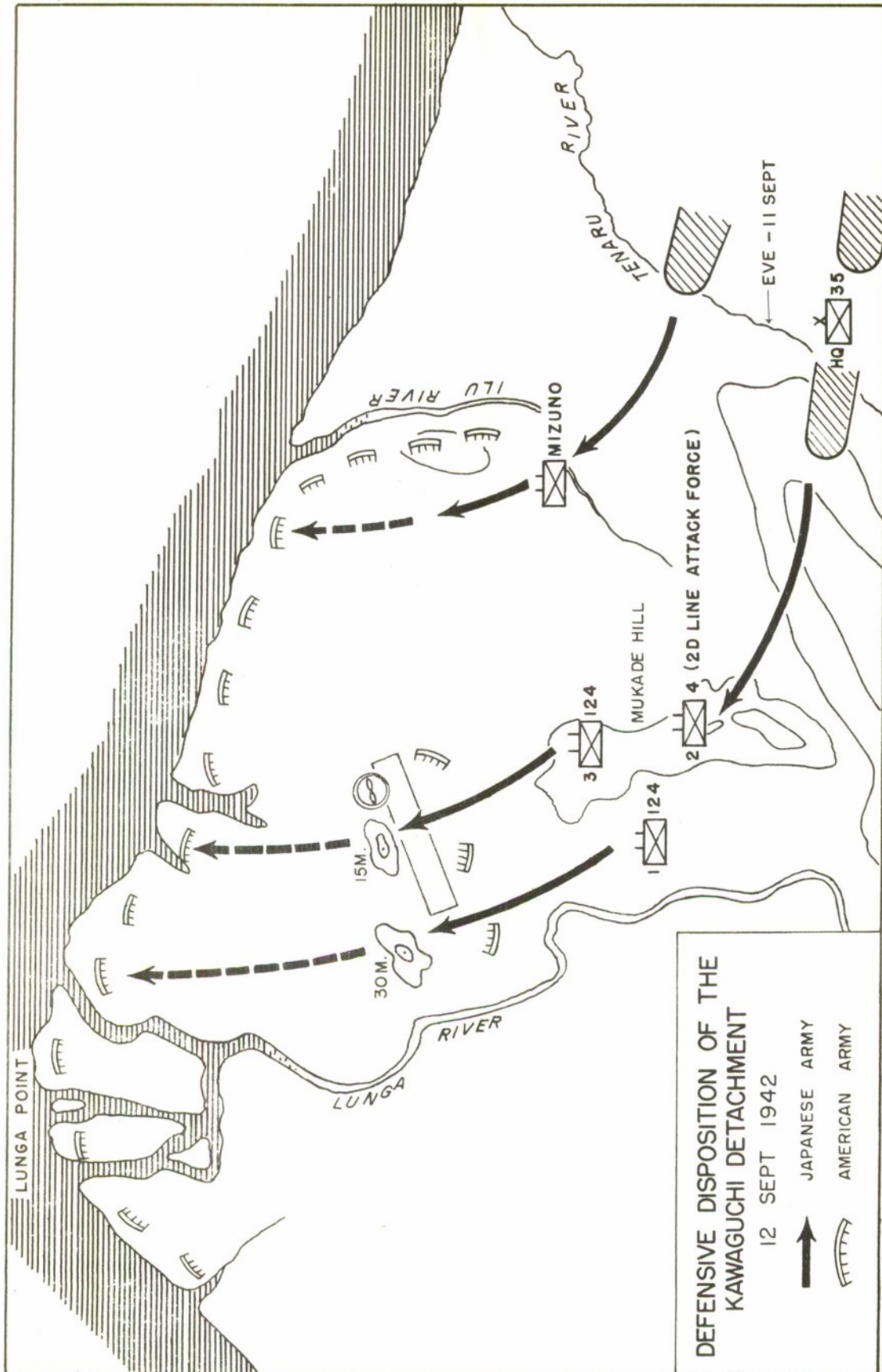
Due to the imminence of immediate reinforcement for the United States forces on Guadalcanal, the army ordered the Kawaguchi Detachment to retain the attack date of the 12th.

At dusk on the 8th the detachment departed Koli Point and commenced a flanking movement through the jungle. Prior to departing from army headquarters at Rabaul a night attack had been determined as being the only possible tactic which might be effective against the United States forces. However, influenced by the failure of the frontal attack made by the Ichiki Detachment, the decision to make a flanking movement through the jungle to the south was decided on by Detachment Commander Kawaguchi after landing on Guadalcanal Island.

The movement through the jungle was conducted with the infantry battalions in four columns. Although considerably delayed due to unexpected difficulties all columns were able to arrive at the Tenaru River by the evening of the 11th. Three of the battalions merged into one column (the Mizuno Battalion, a mixed organization formed from the personnel of the Ichiki Detachment, remained on the extreme right flank), enabling the detachment commander to exercise direct control of the main body. (See Map No. 1A)

Note: One reason given for the difficulty of the movement was that bearings were often lost because of the magnetic





variation of the compasses. Such difficulties might have been due to lack of training in the use of compasses in jungle movement.

The enemy was still unaware of the approach of the detachment and success seemed assured. It was believed that enemy positions were established only on the sea front and on the east and west land fronts and that there were practically no enemy positions in the south. As a consequence of this belief, strong enemy resistance was not expected in the south nor at the Lunga Airfield which was to be attacked simultaneous with the main enemy positions.

Note: The detachment was confident that its movement had not been detected by the United States forces because an American flyer, captured when his plane crashed on the route of advance, informed them that the United States forces were not aware of the movement.

The detachment commander resolved to launch the attack at 2200 hours on the 12th, capture the airfield by the morning of the 13th, and advance to the shore line. Rations carried when departing from Taiwu Point were sufficient for only about 13 days and little supply was expected after that time. Therefore, it was apparent that provisions would be exhausted about the 14th. It had been planned to depend on rations captured from the United States forces after that.

To effect an attack on the night of the 12th it would be advisable to place each unit in position for attack preparations at about 1400 hours and to reconnoiter the enemy situation and terrain until about sunset (1900 hours). The detachment commander realized that since the unit was well behind schedule it might be extremely difficult to effect an attack on the night of the 12th. However, since

coordinated plans called for the bombarding of the airfield by the navy on the night of the 12th, the attack could not be postponed at that late date.

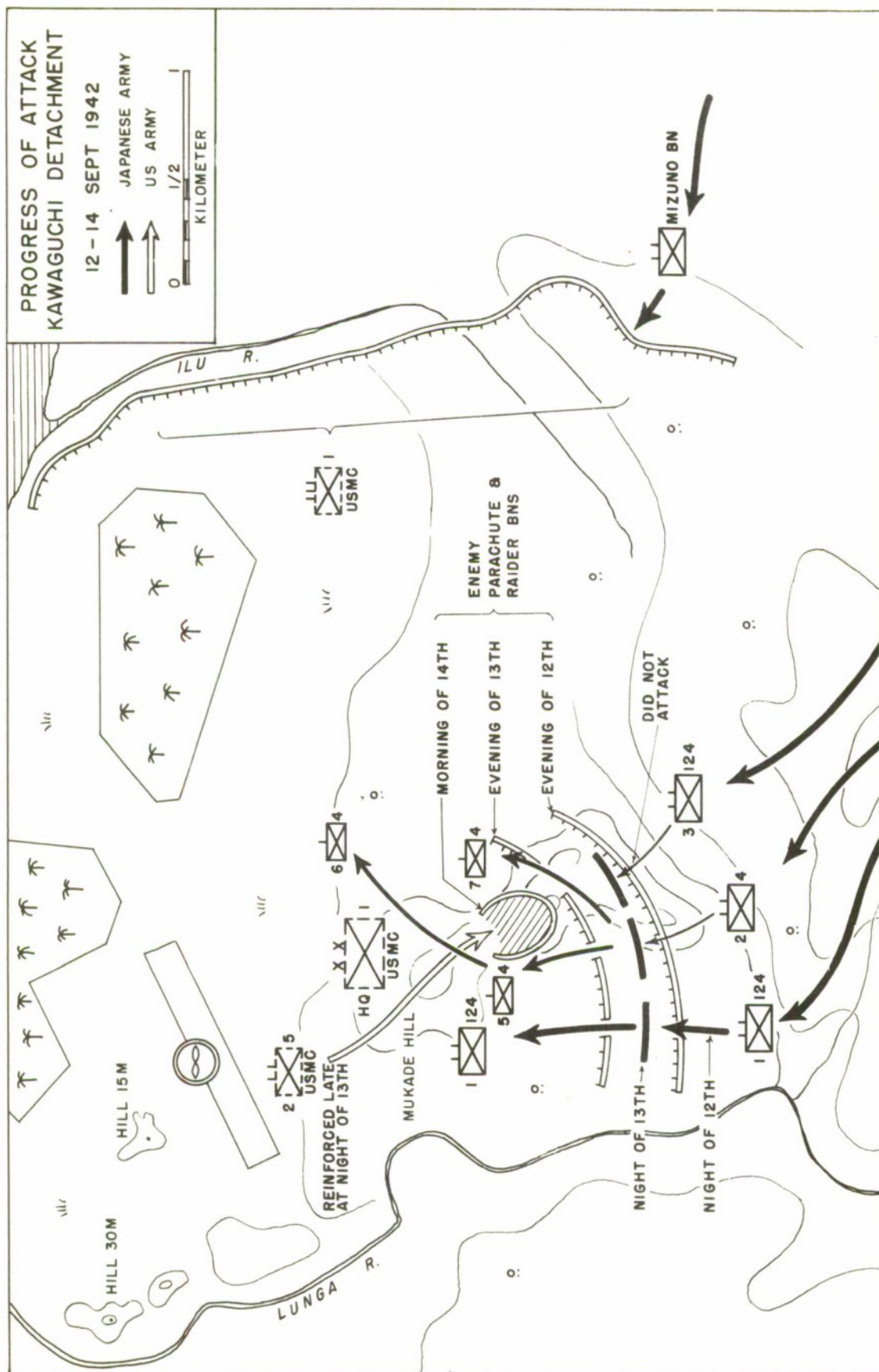
The advance of the detachment was delayed even longer than had been anticipated and it was not only unable to take up positions for attack preparations by 1400 hours, but was unable to reach the preparatory positions by sunset.

Shortly after sunset contact between the detachment headquarters and all battalions was lost and until the morning of the 13th each battalion operated independently. The 3d Battalion, on the extreme right flank, discontinued advance and all action at sunset because of a leg injury received by the battalion commander. The 2d Battalion, assigned as the first line attack unit, continued its advance through the jungle and arrived at the vicinity for attack preparations. However, the battalion could not estimate the enemy situation or terrain and dawn of the 13th came before reconnaissance could be completed.

The 1st Battalion, on the extreme left flank, launched an attack against an enemy position at about 2200 hours and captured it but enemy artillery bombardment compelled the battalion to abandon the position the following morning. (See Map No. 2)

Note: It was believed on this night that the 1st Battalion had assaulted Hill 30 (northwest of the airfield). However, it was later determined that the battalion had been attacking one company of a U.S. raider battalion south of the airfield.





The Mizuno Battalion which had proceeded toward the Ilu River failed to carry out an assault due to obstacles in front of the enemy positions.

On the morning of the 13th, the enemy situation and details of the terrain still remained unknown; even the location of the detachment could not be pinpointed. However, out of necessity, the detachment commander ordered each battalion to resume the attack at 2200 hours on the 13th.

Earlier than the expected time, the 1st Battalion, on the extreme left flank commenced attacking about sunset and succeeded in occupying the enemy position to its front. Harassed by an enemy bombardment which was intensified at that time, the advance became difficult and was stalemated about 2200 hours. As on the previous night, the 3d Battalion did not attack.

Note: The attack of the 1st Battalion forced two companies of a raider battalion to withdraw from their position.

The 2d Battalion located roughly in the rear center, commenced an assault with considerable success after 2200 hours, in spite of a fierce bombardment which reached its height at that time. Some companies broke through the enemy position on Mukade Hill to advance to the sector southeast of the airfield. However, the success attained by the attacking companies could not be maintained nor exploited; in the darkness and the jungle the men and units were badly scattered and it became virtually impossible for the battalion commander to direct the action. (See Example No. 9a)

At dawn on the 14th, the enemy bombardment and air bombings were again intensified and an element of the enemy counterattacked. Continuous losses were sustained and it became impossible for General Kawaguchi to exercise any measure of control over the detachment. In view of this situation and the fact that the food supply had been exhausted, he decided to disengage temporarily and regroup his strength on the left bank of the Lunga River. The detachment commenced the disengaging action on the 14th and reached the left bank of the river on the 15th.

Because of the interruption of communication the Seventeenth Army was not informed of the failure of the attack until the 15th. Upon receipt of the news, the detachment was ordered to withdraw to the area west of the Matanikau River.

Losses sustained by Kawaguchi Detachment from the time of the landing on Guadalcanal until 2 October are as shown in the following chart.



| Unit                                                                                                                                                                                                             | Total Strength<br>Involved in<br>Fighting | Number<br>Killed in<br>Action | Number<br>Wounded<br>in Action | Ratio of<br>Losses<br>(%) |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Detachment Hq                                                                                                                                                                                                    | 164                                       | 3                             | 4                              | 4%                        |
| 1st Bn, 124th Inf Regt                                                                                                                                                                                           | 1,034                                     | 208                           | 185                            | 38%                       |
| 3d Bn, 124th Inf Regt                                                                                                                                                                                            | 814                                       | 66                            | 62                             | 16%                       |
| 2d Bn, 4th Inf Regt                                                                                                                                                                                              | 658                                       | 107                           | 79                             | 28%                       |
| Mizuno Battalion                                                                                                                                                                                                 | 658                                       | 58                            | 36                             | 14%                       |
| Total:                                                                                                                                                                                                           | 3,328                                     | 442                           | 366                            | 24%                       |
| Remarks:<br>1. Escort platoon of 41 men are included with Detachment Headquarters.<br>2. Deaths from wounds in action, sickness contracted at the front and missing are included in the number killed in action. |                                           |                               |                                |                           |

Note: Losses sustained amounted to close to one-fourth of the entire strength of the detachment. Although it cannot be denied that these were heavy losses, they had not reached the point which would justify the abandonment of the attack.

Author's Observations:

In the preparation of this record, the author interviewed Maj Gen Kawaguchi on 8 December 1953. In response to a query as to the reason for the failure of the attack, General Kawaguchi stated that the failure to postpone the attack until the 13th was the principal direct cause. His opinion was that if his radio message of 7 September recommending the postponement of the attack had been approved by

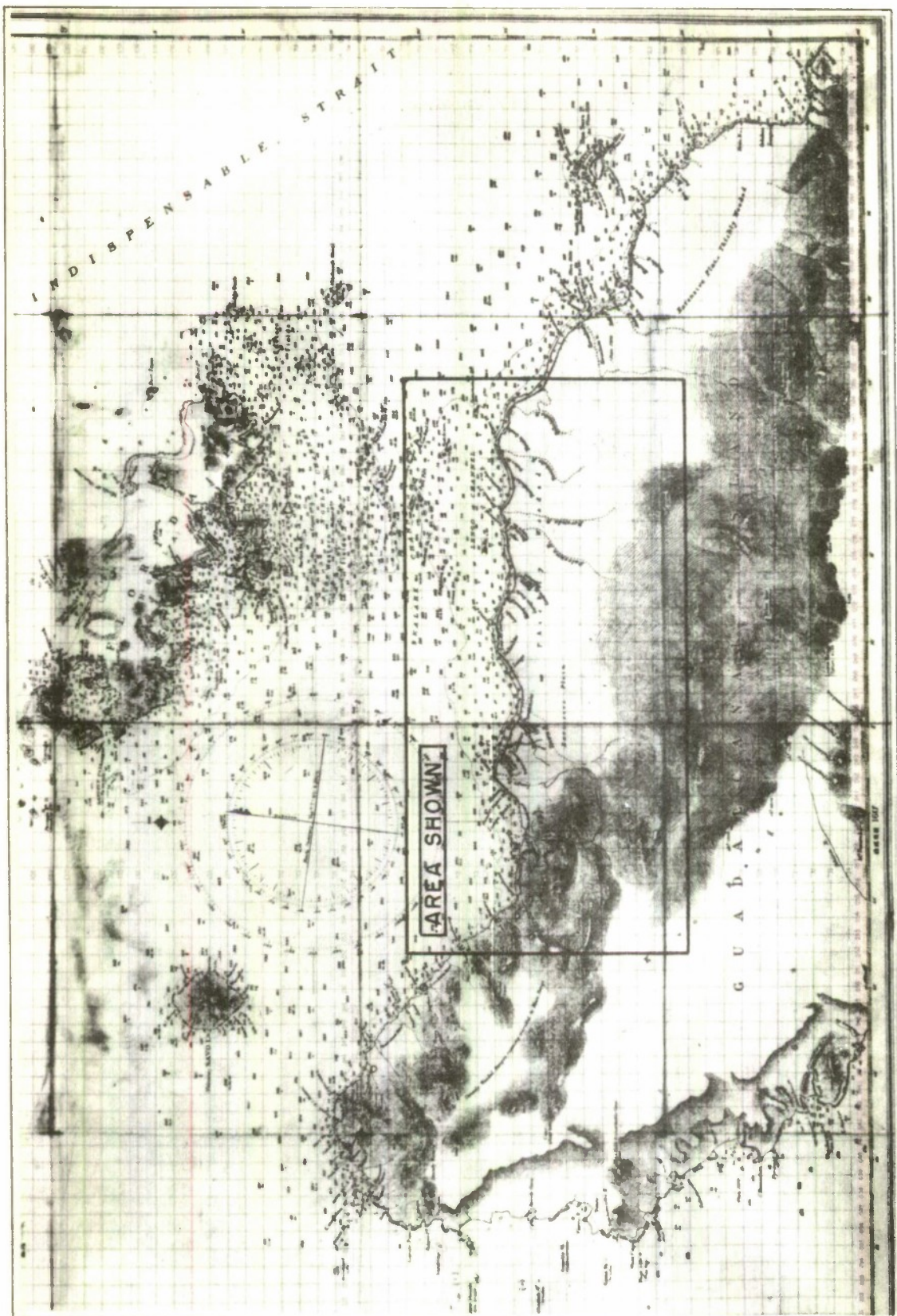
the Seventeenth Army or if he had used his own discretion, the attack of the Kawaguchi Detachment would definitely have succeeded and the subsequent situation on Guadalcanal might have changed greatly.

Other reasons advanced were; the lack of time to conduct attack preparations, the lack of accurate maps and the failure of the 3d Battalion to show proper fighting spirit.

The lack of adequate maps must have been an important factor in the failure of the attack. The mistake of thinking that the 1st Battalion, on the extreme left, had attacked Hill 30 would not have been made if accurate maps had been available and if time had permitted the making of proper reconnaissance. For a general map, the Kawaguchi Detachment had only a hydrographical chart of Guadalcanal and for the Lunga area, it had an aerial photo of the coastal sector north of Mukade Hill. Aerial photos were reproduced as simple maps but the aerial photos themselves were supplied only to detachment headquarters. (Copies of the hydrographic chart and aerial photograph are attached as Maps 3A and 3B.)

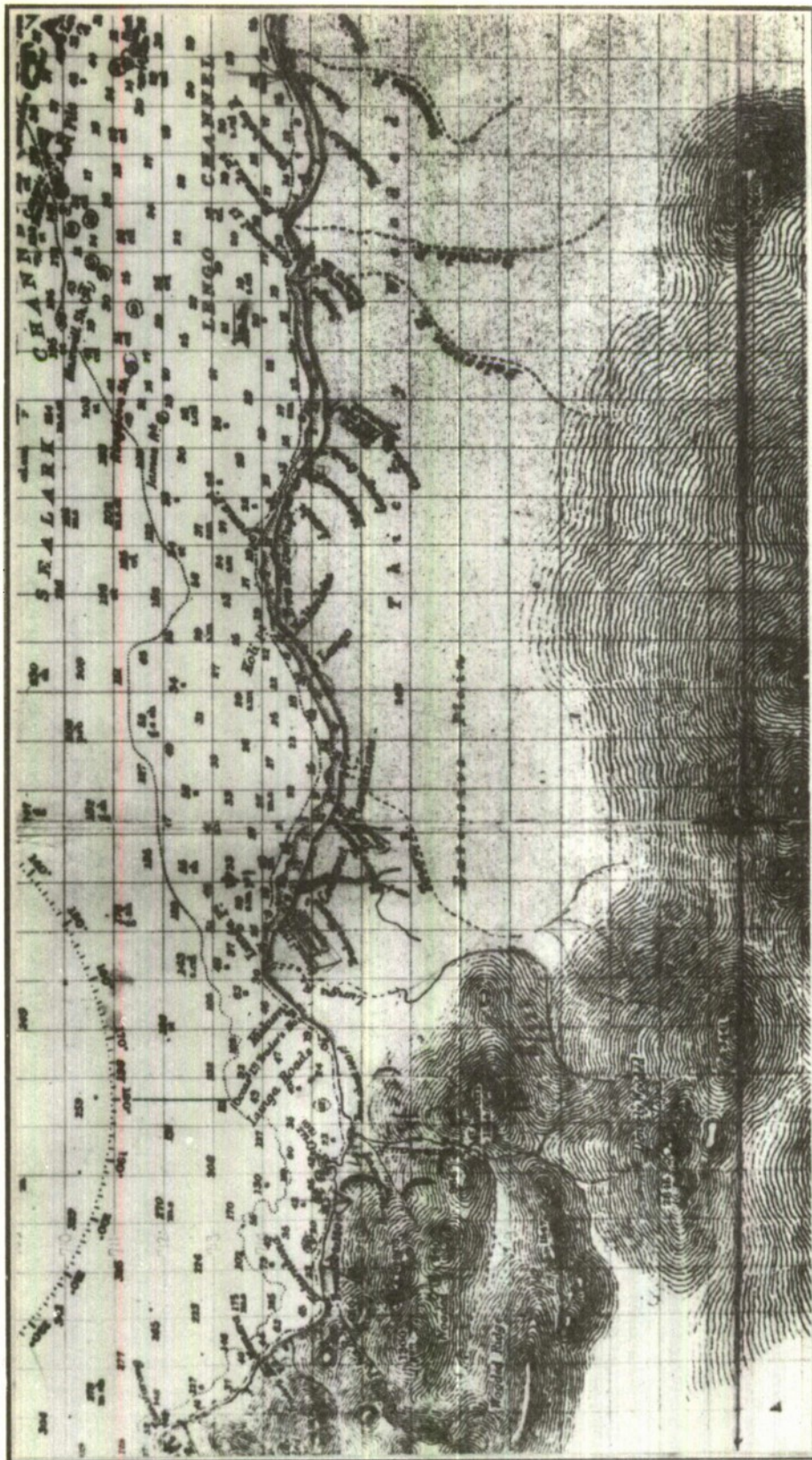
The Kawaguchi Detachment was under the impression that its flanking movement to Mukade Hill was well concealed from the American forces. However, it is now evident that the United States forces knew of the movement well in advance, although they were not aware of the exact time and place until the attack was begun. The detachment had lost its objective of strategic surprise and had little chance for anything other than a tactical raid. A full scale attack





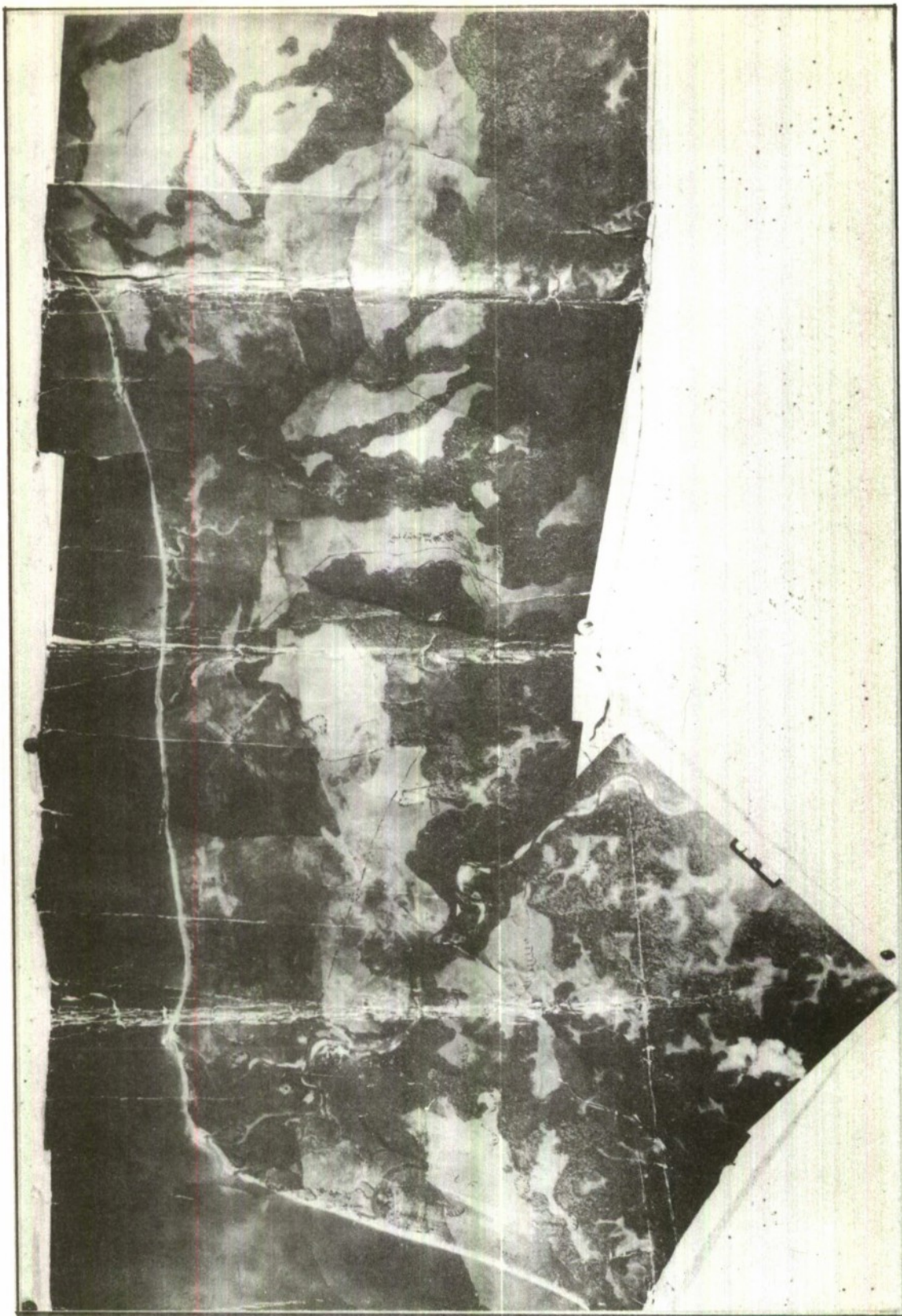
HYDROGRAPHICAL CHART OF GUADALCANAL





HYDROGRAPHICAL CHART OF GUADALCANAL





AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF LUNGA AREA

following thorough preparation might have met with some measure of success.

If the detachment had succeeded in occupying the air strip, the entire defensive of the United States forces would have been adversely affected and might have crumbled. It was, from the Japanese point of view, a most regrettable failure.



Example No. 9a

Summary of the 2d Battalion Attack on the  
Night of 13 September 1942. (See Map No. 2)

The 2d Battalion completed its attack preparations about 1900 hours on the 13th and at 2200 hours the enemy intensified its artillery fire, bombarding the positions of the 1st and 3d Battalions. Without waiting for orders, Major Tamura, commander of the 2d Battalion, ordered an attack on Mukade Hill.

The 5th Company, on the left flank, broke through and captured points in the first line of the enemy and approached the secondary positions. At this time, enemy rifle and artillery fire was concentrated on the company but the company commander massed his remaining men, including the reserve platoon, and in spite of the heavy fire and the severe losses which it inflicted, by taking advantage of the terrain and advancing by crawling, the two assault platoons succeeded in occupying the secondary positions. During this assault the company commander was killed and the assault slowed down.

The 7th Company, on the right flank, broke through almost simultaneously with the 5th Company and occupied enemy first line positions. Later the company broke through several weak points in the secondary positions, crossed the crest line and advanced to the sector on the northeast side of the hill.

The battalion commander was aware of the fierce resistance of the enemy and the heavy casualties being sustained but, determined to

press the attack with the object of advancing to the shore line by dawn of the 14th, ordered the reserve company to advance. The 6th Company crossed the line of the 5th Company and approached the enemy position for a flanking attack. Although the company commander was wounded and over half the company were casualties, the remaining 50 or 60 men broke through the enemy line, crossed the crest of the hill and advanced to the sector southeast of the airfield about dawn of the 14th. The company halted in this area to regroup and make preparations for the next attack.

Example No. 10

Night Attack of the 2d Division on Guadalcanal

(Based on operations records compiled by the Demobilization Bureau, statements of surviving officers and the book, "Guadalcanal" by Masanobu Tsuji.)

After the United States forces landed on Guadalcanal on 7 August 1942, the Seventeenth Army failed in two attempts to recapture the island by attacks of the Ichiki and Kawaguchi Detachments. Starting in the middle of September the army moved the 2d Division from Rabaul to Guadalcanal on destroyers and on the night of 9 October, Lt Gen Hyakutake, commander of the Seventeenth Army, arrived at Tassafaronga to personally direct the operation. Plans formulated at Rabaul had taken into consideration the failure of the attempted surprise attacks of the Ichiki and Kawaguchi Detachments and this third offensive was designed to overwhelm the enemy with power, making full use of superior artillery and fire power. At Tassafaronga, however, the army commander discovered that the actual strength of the 2d Division consisted of only five infantry battalions (excluding those attached to the Ichiki and Kawaguchi Detachments), two field guns, two mountain guns and four 15 cm howitzers, with only a small amount of ammunition.

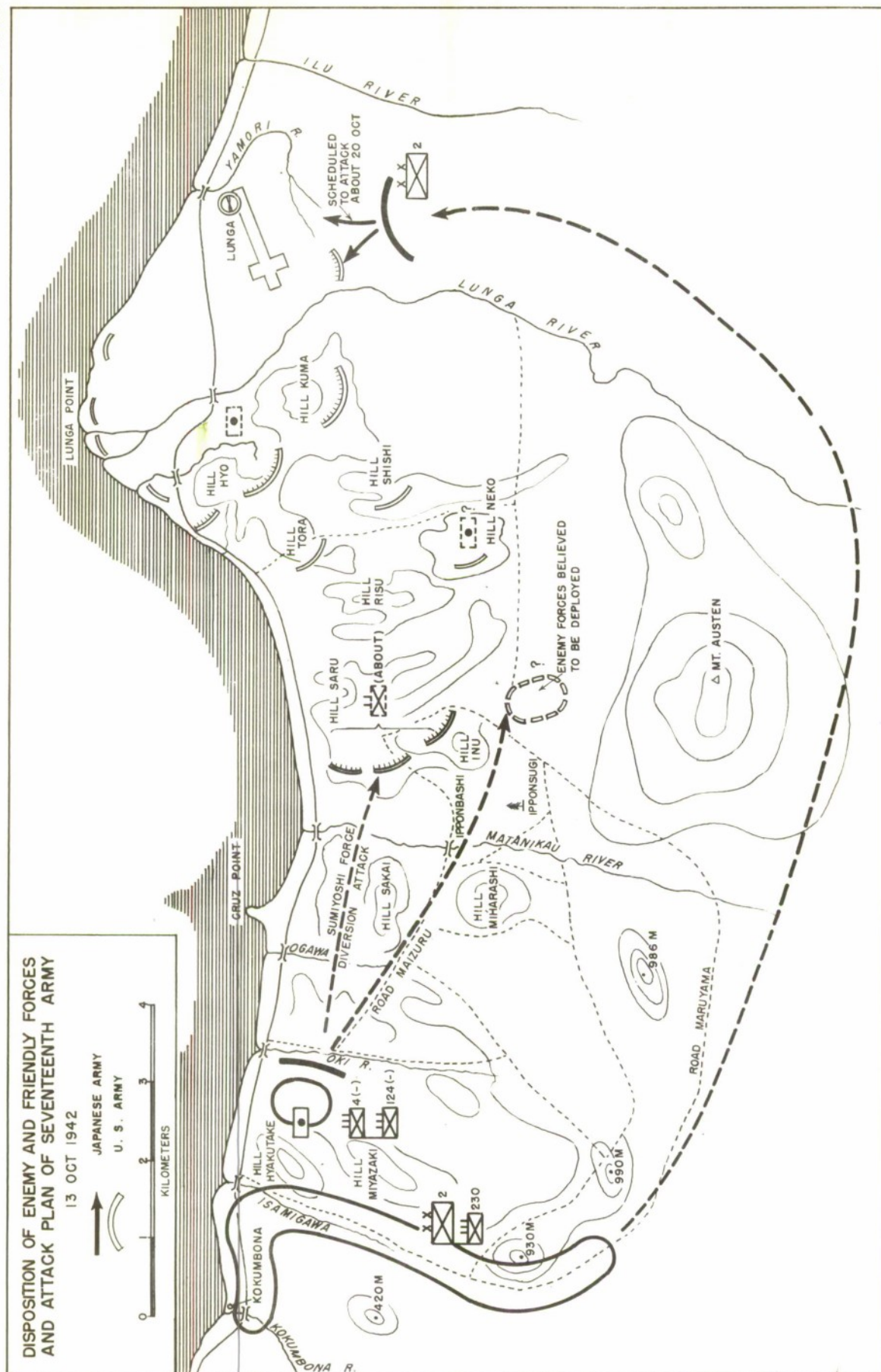
Ship transportation capacity was only half of that scheduled and the number of men who debarked was between one-third and one-half of full division strength. The amount of munitions transported was also extremely small.



Imperial General Headquarters was strongly demanding the recapture of the Guadalcanal airfields by 20 October and in view of the reduced strength of the 2d Division, the army commander realized the necessity of revising the attack plan. On the morning of the 11th, the 2d Division reported that the mountainous area south of the enemy positions was not wooded and recommended the adoption of a flanking attack. The army commander decided that a flanking attack would be more advisable than the frontal attack originally contemplated and on the 12th he informally directed the 2d Division to employ an element to divert the enemy to the coastal area and conduct a flanking movement with the main body from the southern foot of Mt Austen to the right bank of the Lunga River and to occupy the airfield with a surprise attack. The 2d Division reported that it would be able to make an attack on or about 20 October and on the same day ordered the 2d Engineer Regiment to commence construction of the division route of march. (See Map No. 1)

On 13 October the Seventeenth Army issued an order to the 2d Division to commence preparations. The Kawaguchi Detachment Headquarters and one comparatively strong battalion were transferred to the division and the remaining detachment strength was placed under direct army command. In accordance with the army order, on the 14th at 0800 hours, the 2d Division issued an order to prepare for action:

"The 4th Infantry Regiment and the bulk of artillery strength on Guadalcanal will be organized into the Sumiyoshi Force to contain the enemy in the coastal area. The remaining combat strength will prepare for a flanking attack. Units will carry 12 days provisions and as much ammunition as possible."



Preparations proceeded well; by 14 October the 2d Engineer Regiment had constructed half of the route, by the morning of the 15th, reinforcements (the 16th and the 230th Infantry Regiments) had landed at Kokumbona and the massing of the attack force was completed. A bombardment conducted by the Sumiyoshi force and naval forces against the Lunga Airfield from the 13th to the night of the 14th covered the transportation and unloading operation. It was believed at first that this bombardment had been highly effective, however, as a result of enemy bombing which began at dawn on the 15th, three transports out of six were destroyed and only one-tenth of the ammunition and one-half of the provisions were unloaded.

On 15 October the Seventeenth Army issued orders to the 2d Division:

"After sunset of X Day the 2d Division will make a surprise attack on the enemy flank from the southern side of the Lunga Airfield and destroy the enemy on Guadalcanal."

Although tentatively scheduled for the 20th, the exact date of X Day was to be decided on in accordance with the situation of the division.

The 2d Division, at 1000 hours 15 October, ordered the commencement of movement to the upper Lunga River. At 1400 hours on the 16th, all units commenced movement from the left bank of the Oki River with the 29th Infantry Regiment as the leading element. With the start of the movement, the army commander placed the Sumiyoshi force under his direct command with the intention of using that force to expedite



the attack of the division by permitting it to concentrate on the airfield. The units of the former Kawaguchi Detachment were placed under the Sumiyoshi force, which was ordered to advance to the left bank of the Matanikau River to attack Mt Austen and the enemy positions on the right bank of the Matanikau River.

The movement of the 2d Division was extremely difficult and slow because of poor roads and rugged terrain. The lack of horses and other transportation facilities made the movement of heavy weapons impossible and artillery pieces were abandoned along the route of march. Eventually, the leading unit reached a point six kilometers northeast of the Lunga River crossing point about sunset of the 19th. A concentration of troops, in that vicinity, was effected on the 20th.

Note: The 2d Division had estimated that the point was two kilometers behind the scheduled line of deployment. However, it was later discovered that the division was actually located about a day's march to the rear of the scheduled line.

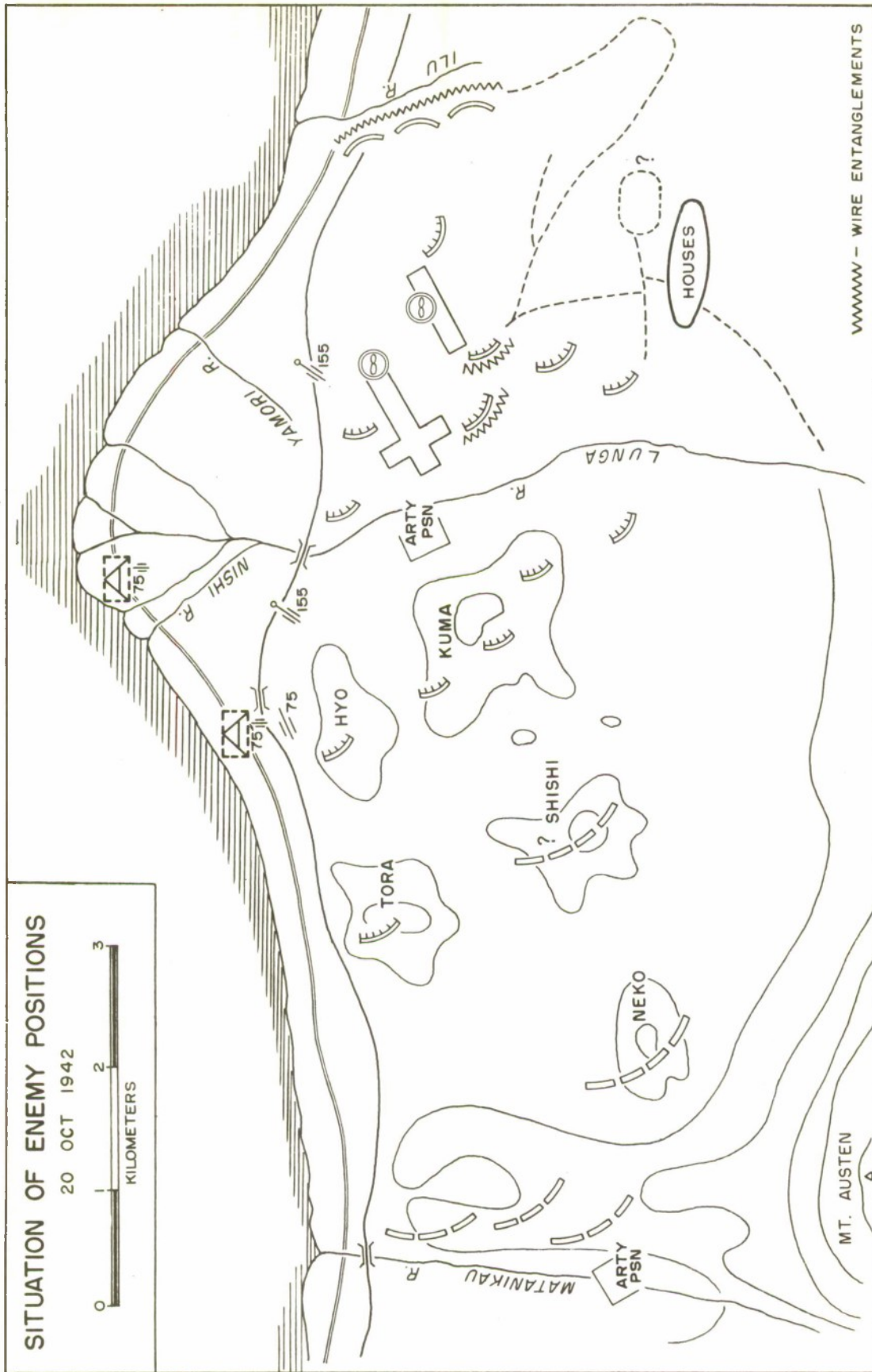
The army commander on being informed that the 2d Division was arriving at the scheduled point on the 19th, issued the following order:

1. The time has come for the decisive battle between the United States and the Japanese forces.
2. X Day will be the 22d.
3. Officers and men of each unit will exert the utmost efforts to accomplish their mission.

In accordance with the army order the 2d Division issued the following order at 1200 hours on the 20th:

1. The known enemy positions are shown on the appended map.
2. The division will deploy on the line of its present location, effect a surprise night attack, capture the enemy airfield and destroy the enemy on the left bank of the Lunga River. The direction of the main effort of attack will be along the right bank of the Lunga River to the northwest sector of the airfield. The time of assault is tentatively scheduled for 1800 hours on the 22d, but time will be confirmed in a separate order.
3. The Right Flank Force (3d Battalion of the 124th Infantry Regiment, the 230th Infantry Regiment, less one battalion, and one engineer company under the command of Major General Kawaguchi) will prepare for attack at the present line, direct the main effort of attack on the left, conduct a surprise break-through of the enemy positions on the southern edge of the airfield, capture the enemy positions along the edge of the jungle on the north side of the airfield and advance to the coast line. After advancing to the coast line, the main body will concentrate in the vicinity of the south side of the Yamori River and will annihilate the remaining enemy west of the Ilu River.
4. The Left Flank Force (29th Infantry Regiment and one engineer company under the command of Maj Gen Nasu) will prepare for an attack at the present line and effect a surprise attack against the enemy positions near the southern edge of the airfield. Immediately after advancing to the motor road north of the airfield, it will cross the Lunga River, capture the Kuma position from the rear and complete the mop-up of the enemy on the left bank sector by dawn.
5. The boundary between the Right and Left Flank Forces will be the line connecting the open grassy area east of the Lunga River, the radio receiving station north of the airfield and the eastern mouth of the Lunga River.
6. The reserve force (16th Infantry Regiment) will follow the rear of the Right Flank Force. It will be prepared to cross the Lunga River and make preparation to attack the Kuma position from the flank.
7. The engineer unit will assist the Left Flank Force and the reserve force in crossing the Lunga River.

The strength of the 2d Division was, at that time, nine infantry battalions (about 5,600 men). The mortar, antitank, and mountain gun



# SITUATION OF ENEMY POSITIONS

20 OCT 1942



MT. AUSTEN

WIRE ENTANGLEMENTS



units were assigned to both the Left and Right Flank Forces but had practically no guns and only four mountain guns with 50 rounds of ammunition per gun were actually used in the attack.

All units of the 2d Division departed from the assembly point in the morning of the 21st and advanced toward the line of deployment.

The division chief of staff had been with the engineer unit which was engaged in route construction, determining and designating the division's line of march. The construction work of the engineer unit made slow progress and because of a misjudgement in plotting they could not, even on the 21st, estimate precisely when they would reach the line of deployment. Because of this situation, the division commander was requested to postpone the attack one day. The division commander having received the approval of the army commander, issued an order to postpone the time and date of the attack from 1800 hours on the 22d to 1900 hours on the 23d.

On the morning of the 22d, the engineer unit advanced to the prearranged line of deployment and marked attack positions for the Left and Right Flank Forces. Although both forces exerted utmost efforts, the advance was slow and it was apparent on the evening of the 22d that even if the first line units of the forces should arrive in front of the enemy position by the evening of the 23d, the arrival of reserve units would be delayed and it would be impossible to make complete preparations for a night attack. In spite of this

situation, taking into consideration the coordination of the operation with the Combined Fleet, the division commander refused further postponement of the attack.

At 1600 hours on the 22d the division received the following report from Maj Gen Kawaguchi, commander of the Right Flank Force:

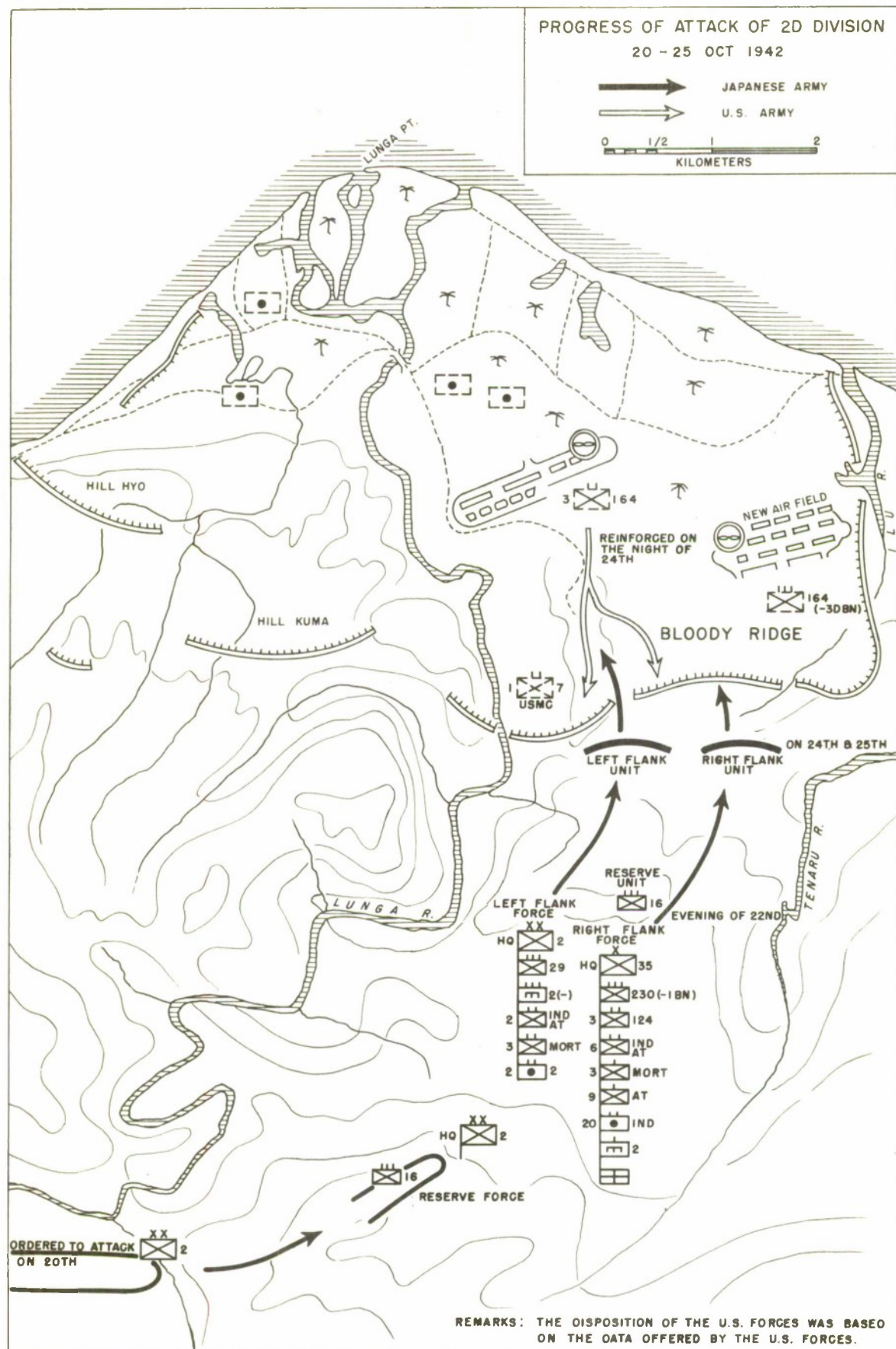
"If the attack is effected as scheduled (on the 23d) only the 3d Battalion of the 124th Infantry Regiment will be committable. The main body of the 230th Infantry Regiment will not be available because of its slow progress. A postponement of one day is requested."

At that time, the Left Flank Force reported that it would be possible to attack after sunset of the 23d. The division commander accepted the recommendation of the Right Flank Force, postponed the date of attack to 1900 hours on the 24th but on the evening of the 23d he relieved Major General Kawaguchi from command and assigned Colonel Shoji, commander of the 230th Infantry Regiment, to the command of the Right Flank Force. (See Map No. 2)

Note: According to Major General Kawaguchi, there was another reason for his removal as commander of the Right Flank Force. After a study of the aerial photograph delivered during the advance, General Kawaguchi came to the conclusion that there were strong enemy positions in the attack front of the Right Flank Force and was most insistent in recommending a flanking attack from the right bank sector of the Ilu River. The recommendation was not approved by the division commander and hard feelings developed. As a matter of fact, General Kawaguchi's estimate of the situation was not altogether correct as it was later discovered that the right bank of the Ilu River was also strongly defended by the American 164th Infantry Regiment.

Early in the morning of the 24th, the commander of the 2d Division advanced with the reserve unit to the rear of the Right Flank







Force and at 1400 hours issued the following order:

1. Through divine aid and desperate effort by the officers and men, the division has been able to advance to the enemy's flank without being detected.

2. With divine protection, the division commander will effect the attack in accordance with the established plan and defeat the enemy in the vicinity of the airfield.

3. The two Flank Forces will effect an assault at 1900 hours and penetrate deep into the enemy line.

4. The division commander will remain at his present location until 1600 hours and will then advance toward the airfield behind the Left Flank Force.

Infantrymen and engineers of the two division forces exerted their utmost efforts to construct the route of approach. However, the advance was still extremely difficult because of the rugged terrain and, as the jungle became more and more dense, it became difficult to plot points and take bearings. At about 1700 hours it began to rain heavily and at sunset it was virtually impossible to advance. The rain stopped about 2400 hours, the moon came out and while it was then possible to take action, the time scheduled for attack had long since passed.

The Right Flank Force was unable to make an assault because of insufficient attack preparations.

On the Left Flank, the right front battalion lost its bearings and was unable to attack. Infantrymen and engineers of the left front battalion demolished wire entanglements and assaulted the enemy position about 0030 hours. As a result of heavy enemy fire from

automatic weapons and mortars, the assault was checked just short of the enemy positions.

Colonel Komiya, commander of the 29th Infantry Regiment, took command of the left flank reserves (2d Battalion, 29th Infantry Regiment) and, utilizing all available fire power of heavy weapons, assaulted the enemy position. After forcing a breach in the enemy's first line, the battalion penetrated deep into the enemy positions. However, before they could secure the breach the enemy closed it.

At dawn of the 25th it became apparent that the night attack had ended in failure along the entire line. The division commander again made preparations to capture the airfield and support the 2d Battalion of the 29th Infantry Regiment which had penetrated the enemy positions. He determined to effect an assault with the entire division strength on the night of the 25th. At 1200 hours he issued the following order:

1. The Left Flank Force will support the 2d Battalion of the 29th Infantry Regiment which has breached the enemy lines, penetrated deep into enemy territory and captured the airfield.
2. The 16th Infantry Regiment and the 2d Engineer Regiment (less two companies) will be added to the command of the Left Flank Force.
3. To night the Right Flank Force will attack, capture the airfield and accomplish other assigned missions.

After learning of the failure of the night attack on the 24th, the Seventeenth Army also issued an order to resume the attack on the night of the 25th. Throughout the entire day of the 25th the

enemy bombarded the front and rear sectors of the Left Flank Force and at noon enemy fighter planes strafed troops in the front line.

The Right Flank Force regrouped and prepared for attack. However, during the afternoon it shifted to the defense because of a report (later found to be erroneous) that an element of the enemy was approaching the right flank in an enveloping move. The dispatch of this information to division headquarters was delayed until that night and no further instructions were received by the Right Flank Force. As a consequence the Right Flank Force suspended all attack preparations and did not participate in the attack on the night of the 25th.

The Left Flank Force deployed the newly added 16th Infantry and the 2d Engineer Regiments on its right flank. With the approach of night Maj Gen Nasu, commander of the Left Flank Force personally led the force in a desperate attack. An element of the 16th Infantry succeeded in demolishing the enemy's wire entanglements and rushed into the enemy positions but were thrown back. The main body of the force also exerted all-out efforts to assault the enemy position but failed to accomplish a break-through. With daybreak the enemy fire with automatic weapons and mortars became extremely heavy and casualties increased.

In the attack General Nasu and the commander of the 16th Infantry Regiment, Colonel Hiroyasu, were killed. Virtually every key officer in the attacking force was seriously wounded or killed. No



contact could be made with the 2d Battalion of the 29th Infantry and the breach effected by that unit had been firmly closed.

The second night attack of the 2d Division ended in complete failure, the division had no reserves remaining, all provisions were expended and there was no supply transportation. On the 26th, the Seventeenth Army ordered the 2d Division to suspend the attack.

#### Author's Observations:

This attack failed of success because of the lack of two elements essential for a flanking surprise attack operation.

One was the lack of knowledge of the terrain and the climate of Guadalcanal. There were no accurate maps and the available aerial photographs were incomplete. The erroneous report of the 2d Division that the mountains were not densely wooded was undoubtedly a big factor in the adoption of this plan of operations. However the conditions in the jungle, the terrain and the rainfall proved contrary to all information, causing serious delays and the several changes in the date of attack. Furthermore, as a result of the long and difficult movement, the 2d Division lost the bulk of its artillery, heavy weapons and field rations, and the physical condition of the officers and men declined, causing a great decrease in fighting power. Map No. 3 is one of the aerial photo maps used by the 2d Division. It should be noted that this photograph shows mainly the Lunga Sector and does not include the areas along the route of advance. The fact that this photograph was delivered after the commencement of the



AERIAL PHOTOGRAPH OF LUNGA SECTOR



advance may also have had some bearing on the situation.

Secondly, the Seventeenth Army and the 2d Division made a serious error in their estimation of the enemy situation. The strength of the United States forces was estimated at about 10,000 men with declining morale. It later developed that American strength on Guadalcanal approximated 23,000 men and that neither their morale nor training was in any way inferior. This underestimate been largely responsible for the failure of the attack by the Kawaguchi Detachment but the Seventeenth Army and the 2d Division did not abandon its original estimates of enemy strength. The attack order of the 2d Division makes it clear that it was believed that the division could destroy the United States forces at one blow.

It was later discovered that on 23 October, just prior to the attack by the Japanese 2d Division, the United States 1st Marine Division had disposed two battalions of the 7th Marine Regiment on a 2,560 meters front along Bloody Ridge (south of the airfield). However, as a result of the diversion by the Sumiyoshi force on the 23rd, the 7th Marine headquarters and one battalion were transferred to the coastal area on the 24th. As a consequence of this move, when the 2d Division attacked, only the 1st Battalion of the 7th Marines was defending a front of 2,560 meters. The artillery disposition had also been changed in accordance with a reconnaissance report that Japanese forces had been sighted south of the airfield. It was only in the late afternoon of the 24th that the 1st Marine Battalion



became aware of the approach of the Japanese forces and it was then too late to change dispositions.

The diversion created by the Sumiyoshi force obtained the expected results and the 2d Division succeeded in completely concealing its plan of attack until just before it was launched. Considering these circumstances, and despite various unfavorable conditions, the 2d Division had a possibility of success in the night attack. However, they failed to achieve success against a single marine battalion because the shortage of provisions, the strain of a long and arduous march through dense jungle terrain under difficult climatic conditions had had a most adverse affect upon the physical condition of the officers and men. The tendency to consistently underestimate the strength and fighting power of the United States forces and the restriction of movement as a result of the loss of air supremacy were also factors which materially contributed to the failure to achieve any measure of success.

Some degree of success might have been achieved had the attack been limited to a strategic surprise attack. It is apparent that the attack disposition of the division was not satisfactory and the order issued by the 2d Division was incomplete in that it did not designate whether both Flank Forces would conduct surprise attacks simultaneously or whether they would employ firepower at the same time. According to the order, "they would occupy the airfield and annihilate the main body of the United States forces by dawn of the

25th." Even without encountering resistance it would have been impossible to accomplish that mission in consideration of the past slow rate of jungle movement.

On two successive nights the Japanese forces repeated an attack against the same section of enemy positions and in the same manner, not attempting to break through weak points.

An important factor affecting the outcome was the American use of resourceful measures in their defensive operations. They inflicted huge losses on the attacking units and destroyed them by prompt dispatch of reserve units to the battle area. Their employment of artillery fire, intensive use of infantry fire power and fire control by means of detecting devices was particularly effective.

Example No. 11

Night Attack by the Nakai Detachment in the  
Vicinity of Kesewa, New Guinea

(Based on operations records compiled by the First  
Demobilization Bureau and statement of Major Kawahigashi,  
commander of the 1st Battalion, 78th Infantry Regiment.)

In early December 1943, the main body of the Eighteenth Army was involved in the Finschhafen Operation in New Guinea. The Nakai Detachment, attached to the Eighteenth Army, was deployed on the Finisterre Mountain line south of Madang where it was engaging the Australian 7th Division which had advanced along the Markham and Ramu Rivers from Lae. The mission of the Nakai Detachment was to check the advance of the 7th Division at the mountains and to cover Madang, the advance operations base for the Eighteenth Army.

The Nakai Detachment had as its nucleus the 78th Infantry Regiment (less one company) and included the 5th Company of the 80th Infantry Regiment, the Saito Volunteer Unit (a raiding-infiltration unit of about 150 men from the Takasago tribe of Formosa), one field gun battalion, and one independent engineer regiment. The 239th Infantry Regiment was subsequently assigned by the Eighteenth Army.

During the first part of October the Australian 7th Division had made a strong attack in the vicinity of Mt Kankirei but had been repulsed. It was believed, however, that the enemy might plan to move an element west of the Kesewa area<sup>1</sup> and advance to Madang by breaking

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1. No town or area of "Kesewa" appears on available maps and author of this combat example is not now available for questioning. According to the editor's best information, Kesewa was an arbitrary name used by the Japanese forces to designate the general area between the southwest slope of the Finisterre mountain range and the Ramu River. Points within the area were identified further as No. 2 Kesewa, No. 3 Kesewa, etc.



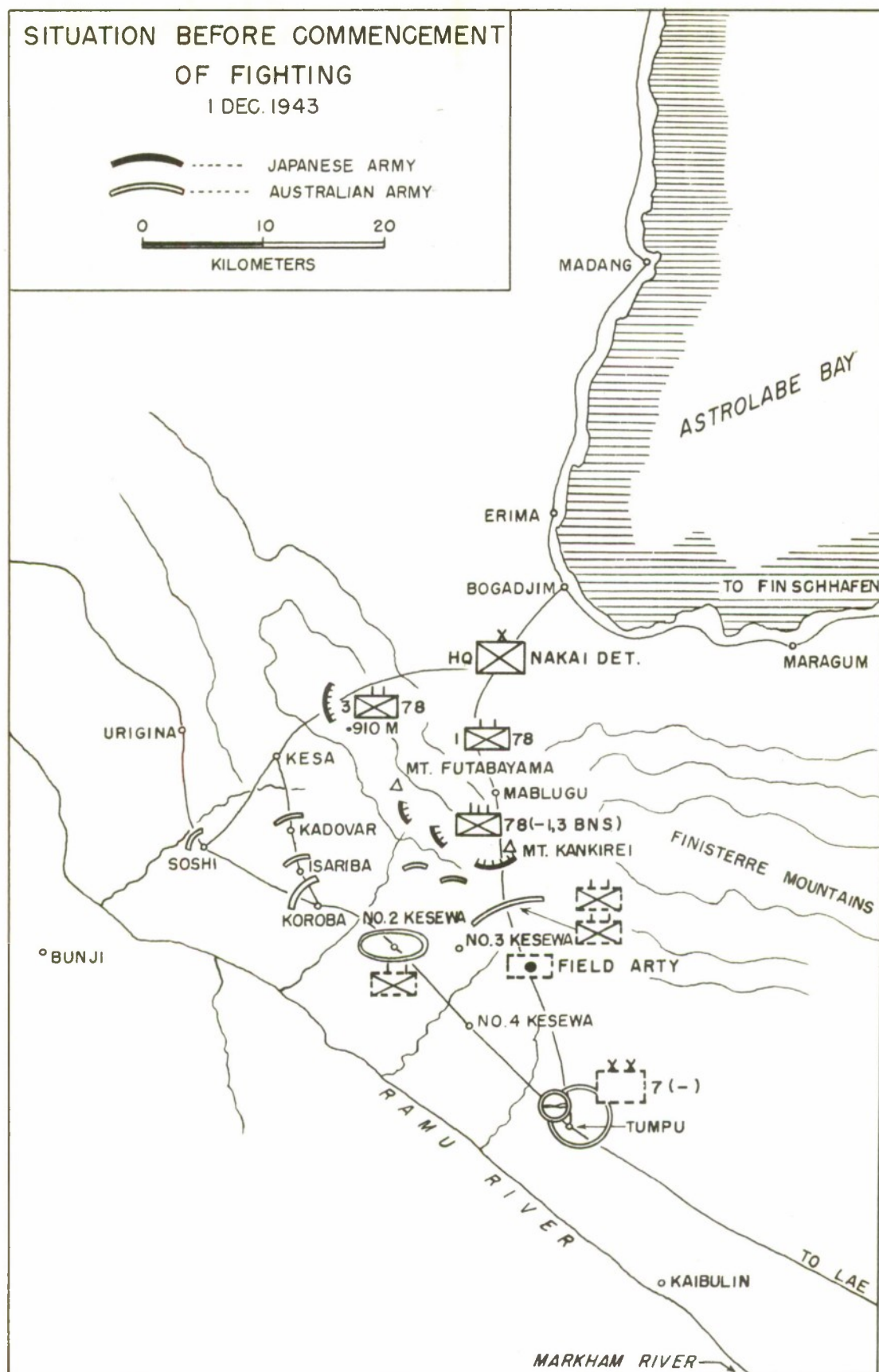
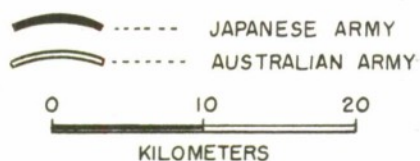
through the flank of the Eighteenth Army. An enemy battalion had advanced to No. 2 Kesewa and other elements of the 7th Division were disposed in the vicinity of Kadovar, Isariba and Soshi. The activities of Australian intelligence units in the Urigina area, west of Soshi, had been intensified. (See Map No. 1)

In consideration of this situation Detachment Commander Nakai determined to strike a blow at the enemy in the Kesewa area in order to frustrate their plan to advance northwest. On 2 December he issued the following attack plan:

1. A surprise attack will be made at 0400 hours on 8 December.
2. The 78th Infantry Regiment (less the 2d and 3d Battalions) plus the 5th Company, 80th Infantry Regiment, and the Saito Volunteer Unit will prepare for an attack in the vicinity of Mt Futabayama and attack the enemy at No. 2 Kesewa at 0400 hours on 8 December. The attack will commence with a raiding-infiltration attack by the Saito Volunteer Unit.
3. The 3d Battalion of the 78th Infantry Regiment will make a surprise attack at Soshi at 0400 hours on 8 December. Subsequently it will advance in the direction of No. 2 Kesewa.
4. The 239th Infantry Regiment (less the 1st and 3d Battalions) will attack the enemy in the vicinity of Kadovar and Isariba and later advance to Kesewa.
5. The 2d Battalion of the 78th Infantry Regiment will defend the position in the vicinity of Mt Kankirei.

In accordance with the detachment plan the assault units prepared for attack. The 78th Infantry Regiment organized the No. 2 Kesewa Surprise Attack Unit from the 1st Battalion (less the 3d Company), the 5th Company of the 80th Regiment and the Saito Volunteer Unit, under Major Kawahigashi, commander of the 1st Battalion.

SITUATION BEFORE COMMENCEMENT  
OF FIGHTING  
1 DEC. 1943



On the 5th of December the Kesewa Surprise Attack Unit obtained the following information regarding the enemy situation and terrain:

1. Enemy security at Asias was relaxed and there was no reconnaissance in the area of Hill 910.

2. There were three tent groups disposed south, east and west of No. 2 Kesewa. The number of tents in each group were estimated to be from 30 to 40, with a total of about 100 accomodating approximately 1,000 men. There was a defense position on the north side of No. 2 Kesewa but it was not manned at night.

3. The terrain from Mt Futabayama to Plantation C, via Hill 910, was heavily wooded. Further south was a grassland area with woods only along the river.

4. There was an old native trail on the crest line between Hill 910 and Plantation C.

5. The enemy did not seem to be aware of any unusual Japanese activity and reconnaissance activities had gone unobserved.

On December 5th the commander of the Kesewa Surprise Attack Unit issued the following directive:

1. The Unit will leave Junction A at 1800 hours on 7 December and make a surprise attack on the enemy in the No. 2 Kesewa area at 0400 hours on the 8th.

2. The 5th Company of the 80th Infantry Regiment will be the advance party and will move to Point D via Hill 910, Plantation C and Point D to cut off the enemy retreat in Asias and Segere.

3. The Saito Volunteer Unit will overtake the advance party at Point D and at 0400 hours on the 8th will, in a surprise attack, demolish simultaneously all tent groups in the No. 2 Kesewa area.

4. The 4th Company will accompany the Saito Volunteer Unit and will mop-up the tent areas following their demolition by the Saito Unit.

5. Remaining units will follow immediately in the rear of the 4th Company in the following order:



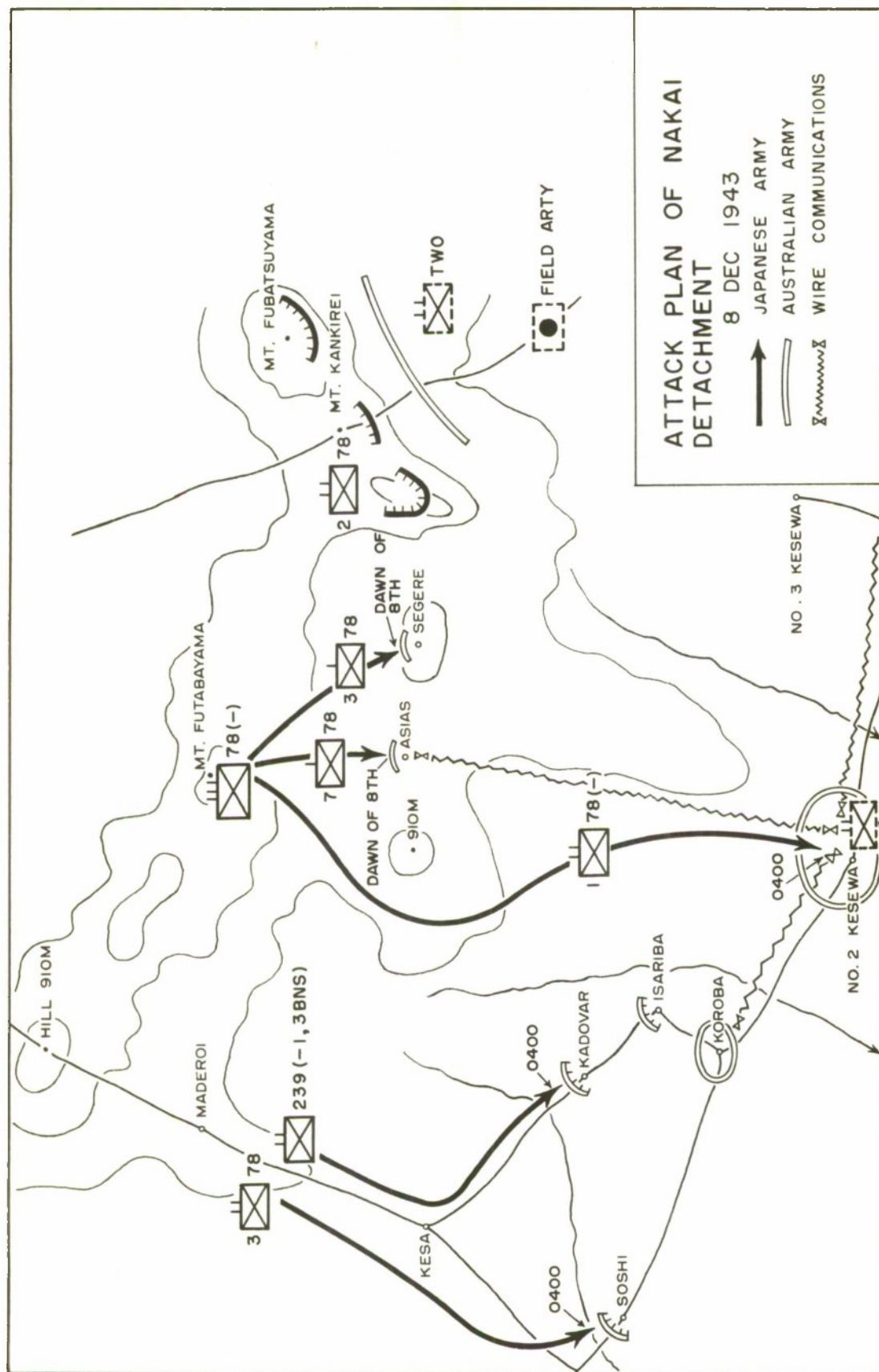
Battalion Headquarters  
1st Company  
Machine Gun Company  
Battalion Gun Platoon  
2d Company

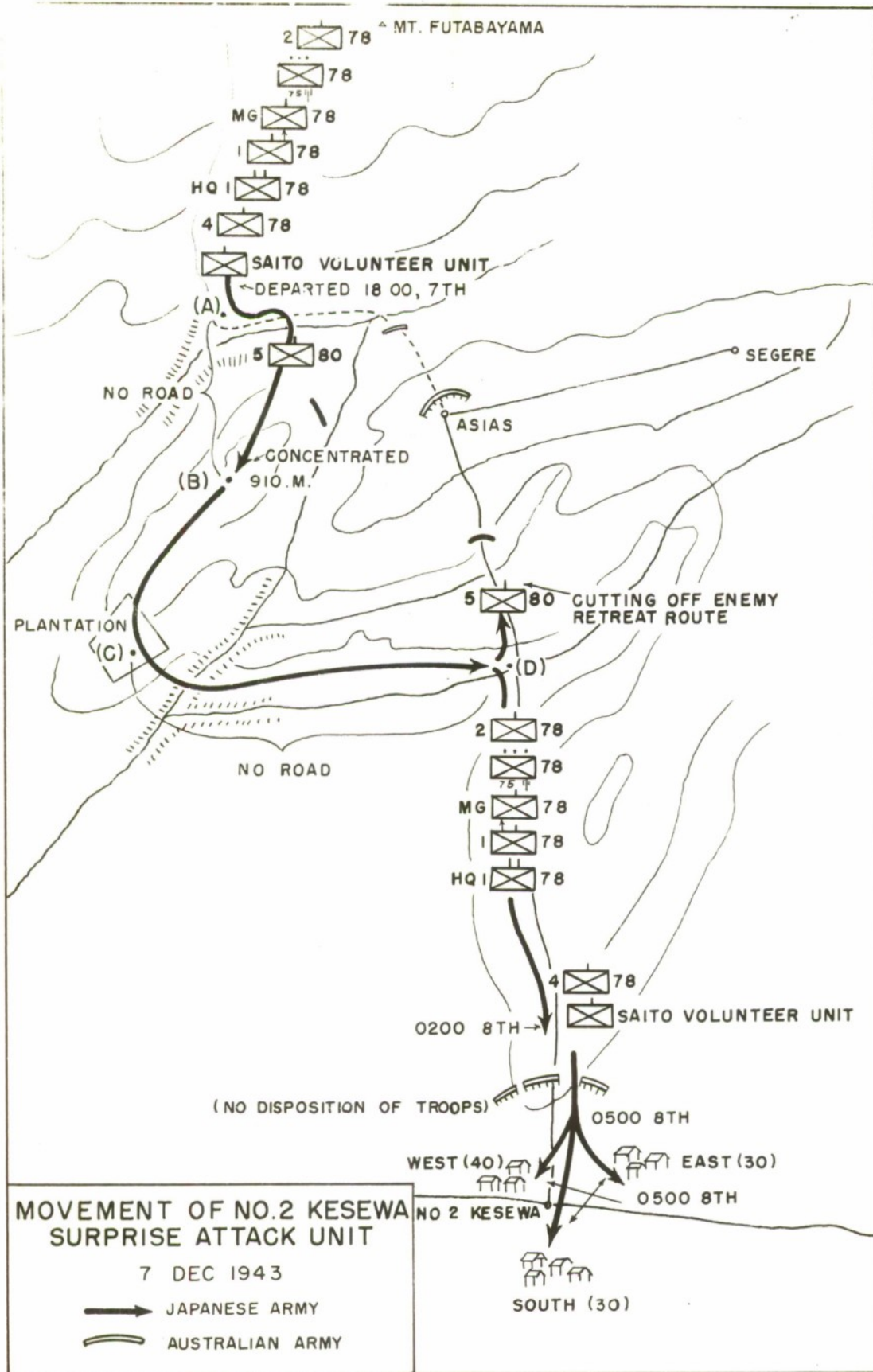
These units will be prepared to support the battle after dawn.  
(Sunrise on the 8th was at 0500 hours.)

At 1800 hours the Kesewa Surprise Attack Unit commenced advance as planned and continued the advance through the night, utilizing luminous bars fixed on knapsacks to keep men in column. At 0200 hours on the 8th the leading unit arrived at the edge of the hill north of No. 2 Kesewa. The commander ordered the commencement of infiltration, indicating targets to the Saito Volunteer Unit and the 4th Company. (See Map Nos. 2 and 3)

The Saito Volunteer Unit approached each tent group by crawling and about 0500 hours blew all groups simultaneously, using two kilogram charges of TNT. (Due to unforeseen difficulties the time of attack had been delayed one hour.) The enemy was taken by complete surprise, thrown into confusion and routed to the southeast without resistance and in disorder. The 4th Company mopped up in the tent groups and the operation at No. 2 Kesewa was completed without committing the main body of the battalion. The mop-up being completed, the battalion, together with the other elements of the Surprise Attack Unit exploited their success by moving in the direction of No. 3 and 4 Kesewa areas.

In the Segere and Asias areas, the 3d and 7th Companies of the 78th Infantry Regiment were successful in driving the enemy out of







their positions at approximately 0400 hours.

The 3d Battalion of the 78th Infantry assaulted the enemy at Soshi at dawn and occupied that area. It subsequently advanced to Koroba, left an element there to cut off enemy retreat from the direction of Isariba and then advanced to No. 2 Kesewa.

All units achieved success in accordance with the original plans, with the exception of the 239th Infantry Regiment whose advance was slowed by flooded streams along the route of advance. Delayed by difficult conditions, the regiment did not attack until about 1000 hours on the 8th. In addition, because an enemy group of about one company strength at Kadovar and Isariba offered stubborn resistance, the advance to Koroba was delayed until the 10th.

Following the mop-up of the enemy in the Kesewa area it appeared that the Australian 7th Division would not constitute a serious threat in that area for some time and the units of the Nakai Detachment returned to their original positions.

#### Author's Observations:

The success of this operation hinged on the outcome of the attack by the Kesewa Surprise Attack Unit. To ensure success two phases had been adopted in the original planning. The first phase called for the surprise attack by the Saito Volunteer Unit followed by the 4th Company. In the event that those units failed to achieve their objective, preparation had been made to destroy the enemy with

an attack in force by the main body of the 1st Battalion. In the Soshi area, where the 3d Battalion attacked, ordinary night combat tactics were employed.

The overall operational plan was a combination of ordinary night assault and raiding-infiltration tactics, which came into use about the end of 1942.

The success of this operation can be attributed to the careful planning and detailed reconnaissance conducted as well as the fact that all units, particularly the Saito Volunteer Unit, were well trained in jungle and night fighting. The success may also have been due in a large measure to the relaxed security situation of the Australian forces.

Example No. 12

Night Attack by the Eighteenth Army near  
Aitape, New Guinea in July 1944

(Based on operations records compiled by the 1st Demobilization Bureau and statements of former staff officer of the Eighteenth Army, Lt Col Tanaka; commander of the 1st Battalion of the 78th Infantry Regiment, Major Kawahigashi; commander of the Infantry Gun Unit of the 80th Infantry Regiment, Major Samejima; and commander of the 1st Battalion of the 237th Infantry Regiment, Major Yamashita.)

Allied forces landed on Aitape and Hollandia on 22 April 1944 and the Eighteenth Army Commander immediately determined to annihilate these forces in order to support the Second Area Army in western New Guinea. The 20th Division, moving west from Hansa, was ordered to advance toward Aitape and Eighteenth Army headquarters began attack preparations. In early May the 20th Division passed through Wewak and moved westward, arriving at the Drinumor River about June 10th, where it deployed along the east bank. En route it had met and defeated several enemy advance groups in the vicinity of Ulau and Yakamul.

It had been the intention of the Eighteenth Army to attack before the United States forces had an opportunity to fortify the Aitape area. However, the 41st Division, which had also been ordered to participate in the operation was required to effect a long withdrawal from Madang and Hansa and did not arrive in Wewak until the middle of June. Transportation of munitions from Wewak was also slower than had been anticipated, particularly the ammunition for the 41st Division. Since the division was short of normal



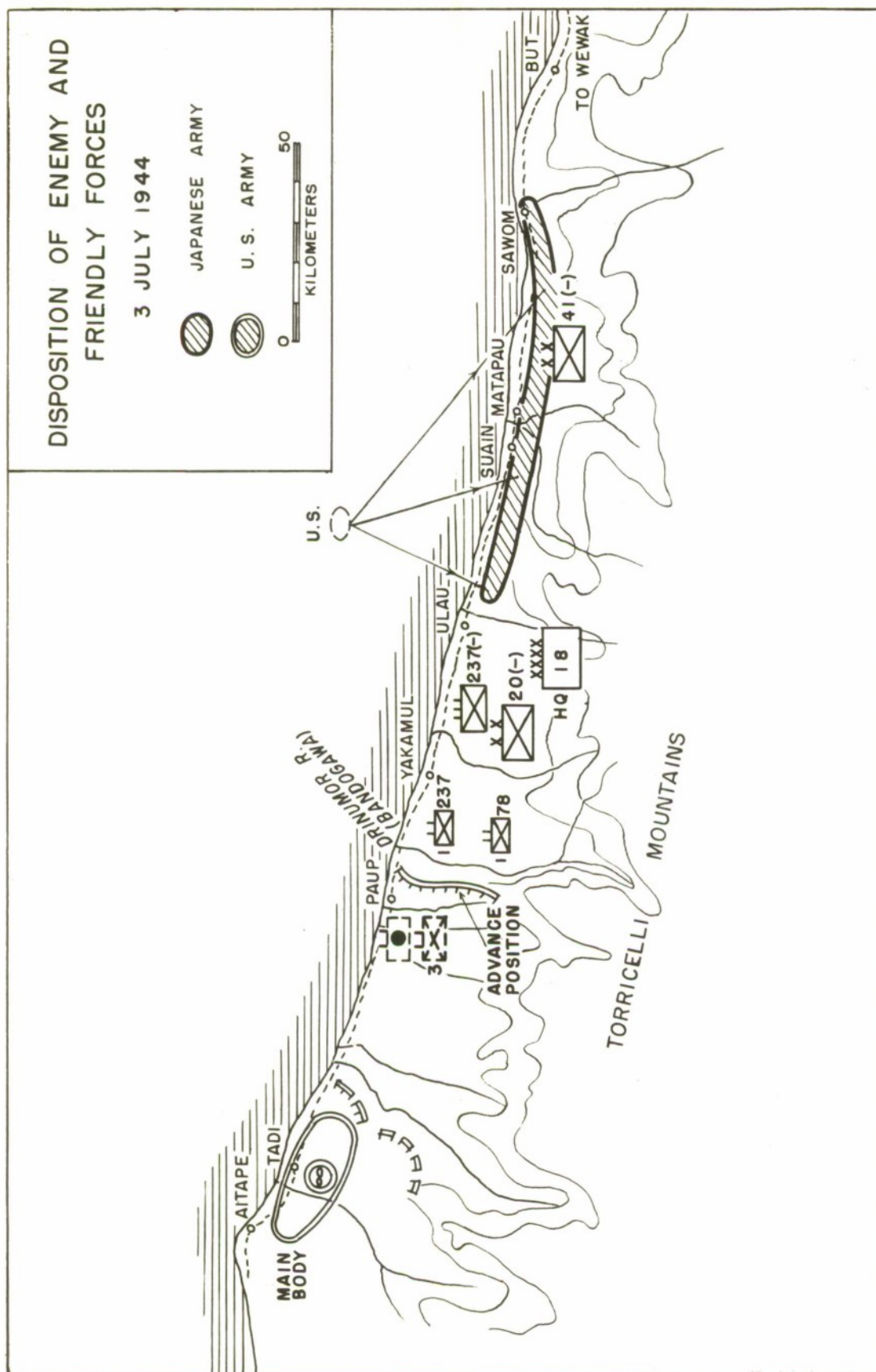
transport a large percentage of the munitions had to be carried by the men.

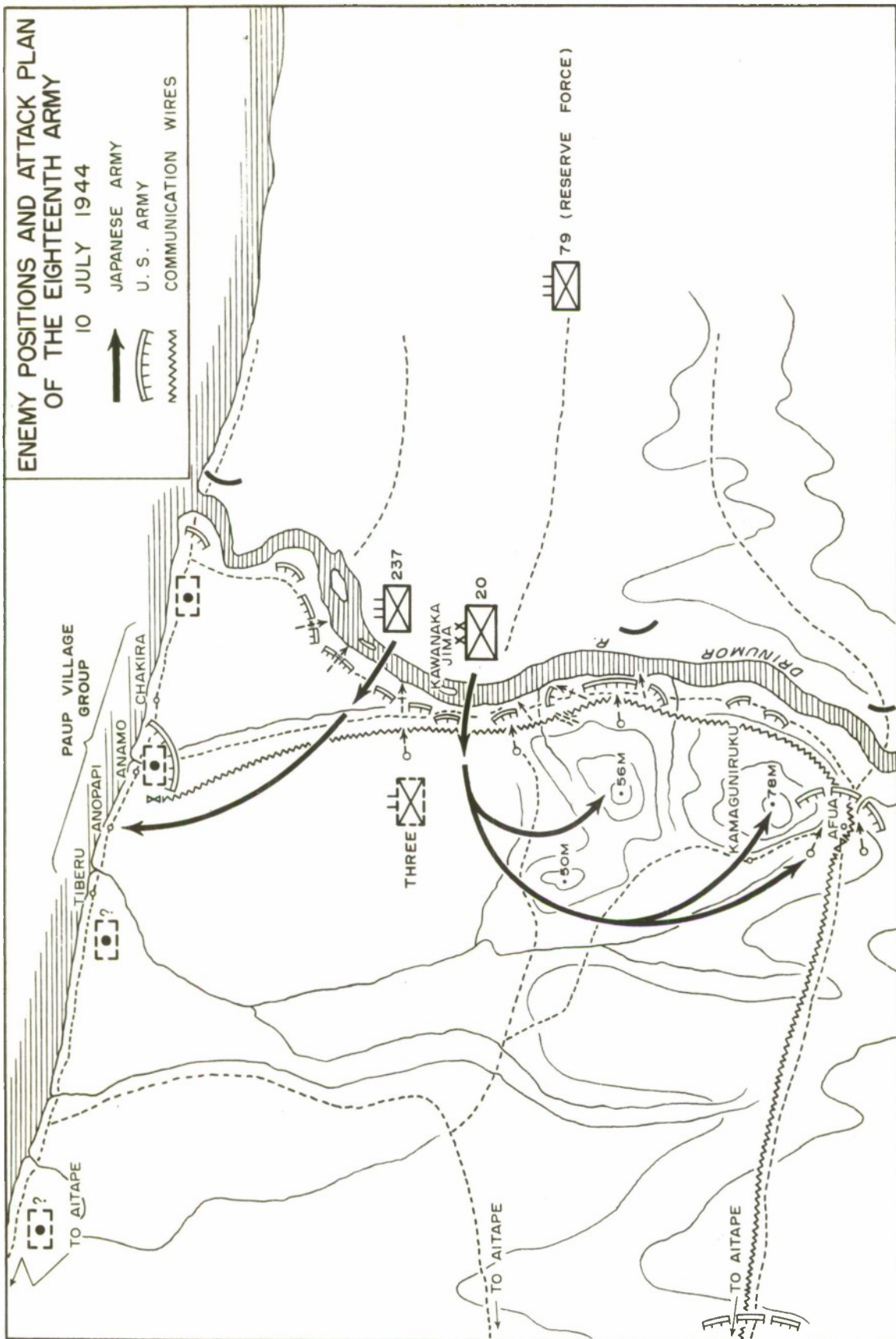
In early July, therefore, the Eighteenth Army was still making attack preparations, with its units disposed as indicated on Map No. 1.

The enemy appeared to be constructing its main position in the vicinity of Aitape and had established a force, estimated to be three infantry battalions and one artillery battalion, in an advance position on the west bank of the Drinumor River. (See Map No. 2)

The enemy positions along the Drinumor were lacking in depth, being disposed in a single line, except along the coastal area, and because the enemy strength was comparatively small for a line extending over ten kilometers, there were many gaps in the defenses. Although positions were comparatively weak, some machine gun positions were covered and simple wire entanglements had been laid at vital spots. Command of the air and sea in that vicinity was completely in the hands of the enemy. With Aitape as their base, about 50 enemy aircraft and 20 naval ships delivered day and night attacks against the entire Japanese front, denying daylight movement almost entirely.

The provisions stocked by the Eighteenth Army were approximately half of the amount required and forecasts indicated that they would be completely expended by the end of August. It was, therefore, obvious that the early commencement of an attack was imperative. The Eighteenth Army Commander determined to launch an attack with







the objective of breaking through the advance positions on the bank of the Drinumor in order to establish the army in positions from which the main enemy position in Aitape could be attacked.

Two alternatives for the attack seemed possible and the Eighteenth Army staff studied the question as to whether it would be more advisable to make a flanking movement to the Afua area, around the right flank of the enemy position, or to attempt a break-through at the center of the enemy line. The 20th Division expressed the view that because of the decline in the physical condition of the troops, it would be difficult to accomplish the long and arduous move which a flanking attack would entail and recommended an attack at the center of the enemy line. Since reconnaissance had indicated that the advance positions were weak, a center break-through seemed logical and possible and the suggestion of the 20th Division was adopted.

On July 3d the Eighteenth Army Commander issued the following order:

1. Commencement of attack will be at about 2200 hours on 10 July.
2. The main attack will be directed at the center of the enemy position in the vicinity of Kawanakajima. After effecting the break-through, success will be exploited to the north and south and enemy forces in the Paup and Afua areas will be annihilated.
3. The attack will be a surprise night attack but preparations will be made for an attack by force should we fail to surprise the enemy and meet heavy opposition.
4. After breaking through the enemy position in the vicinity of Kawanakajima, the 20th Division will advance to the Afua area and annihilate the enemy in that vicinity.

5. The 41st Division Commander will direct the 237th Infantry Regiment to cross the Drinumor River abreast of the right flank of the 20th Division, turn north after accomplishing the break-through, and annihilate the enemy in the vicinity of Paup.

This attack procedure was based on a plan of attack which had been formulated by the 20th Division which had favored the adoption of a night attack because of the inferiority of Japanese air strength and general firepower and because it was necessary to conserve ammunition for the attack on the enemy positions at Aitape.

Although it was preferable to commence the attack as soon as possible after sunset, since the men were in such poor physical condition, it was considered imperative that they be fed prior to making an attack. Because enemy air and naval attacks made it impossible to prepare meals during daylight hours and all cooking had to be done after sunset, it was determined to launch the attack at 2200 hours before the darkness was dispelled by moonrise at about 2230 hours.

The situation of the Eighteenth Army was desperate, its rear had already been cut by the Allied forces, food shortages and the continuous fighting of the past year and a half had reduced physical and numerical strength to a low ebb, since the middle of June the 20th Division had been forced to exist on one-third rations, morale was low and most of the men were unable to move at a pace faster than a walk. There were no horses available and, since manpower was the only means of transporting heavy weapons and ammunition, the number of guns of all types as well as the amount of ammunition had to be

drastically reduced. Strength and armament of attack units was approximately as shown below:

1. 78th Infantry Regiment (20th Division)

3 battalions: With 2 or 3 machine guns and 1 battalion gun each. A total strength of about 1,200 men, including 12 companies with strengths of 60 to 70 men and about 5 light machine guns each.

Antitank and Regimental Gun Units: 1 gun each.

Total Regimental Strength: Approximately 1,300 men.

2. 80th Infantry Regiment (20th Division)

3 battalions: With 2 or 3 machine guns and 1 battalion gun each. A total strength of about 900 men, including 12 companies with strengths of 50 to 60 men and 4 to 6 light machine guns each.

Antitank and Regimental Gun Units: 1 gun each.

Total Regimental strength: Approximately 1,000 men.

3. 79th Infantry Regiment (20th Division - Reserve)

Total Regimental Strength: About 550 men.

4. Artillery Regiment (20th Division) - 10 mountain guns.

5. 237th Infantry Regiment (41st Division)

3 battalions: With 4 machine guns and 1 battalion gun each. A total strength of about 1,450 men, including 12 companies with approximately 90 men in each.

Antitank and Regimental Gun Units: 1 gun each.

Attached Mountain Gun Battery: 2 guns.

Total Regimental Strength: Approximately 1,700 men.

The total strength of all attack units (including reserves) on 10 July was approximately 7,000 men, equal to only about five infantry



and one artillery battalions. The fact that the amount of ammunition which could be carried was very small, further weakened the fighting power of the force.

Except for the hilly section near Afua, the battle area consisted of marshland and dense jungle, while in the area near the coast there were many swamps where mud and water was chest deep. The width of the Drinumor River bed varied between 70 and 120 meters, with a meandering stream 30 to 50 meters in width. Water was waist deep and the velocity of flow comparatively fast (about three meters per second). River banks were generally steep, the east bank being one or two meters in height and the west bank somewhat higher. In many parts reeds grew to the height of a man's head. The steep banks, swift current and dense jungle growth were serious obstacles to men whose strength had so greatly deteriorated.

In spite of difficulties, the attack preparations of the 20th Division progressed smoothly. Patrols were dispatched to the banks of the river to reconnoiter the enemy situation and the terrain. In preparation for the attack, machine gun and heavy weapon positions, approach routes and target areas were established.

Since the headquarters of the 41st Division was located in the vicinity of Matapau, the arrival of the division order to the 237th Infantry Regiment, which was sent through channels, was delayed and the commencement of attack preparations by that regiment were delayed. Because of the delay, the main body of the regiment reached the east

bank of the Drinumor barely in time to commence the attack. However, the 1st Battalion, which had been dispatched to the first line in June, was thoroughly familiar with the terrain and the enemy situation and was employed as the first line attack unit.

The 20th Division and the 237th Infantry Regiment were disposed as shown on Map No. 3. The attack front was shortened to add the greatest possible depth to the attack and the 20th Division directed its main attack effort at a point directly to the front of the 3d Battalion of the 78th Infantry Regiment. Originally, the Eighteenth Army had planned to have the main effort directed from the right flank of the 20th Division. However, because liaison between the division and the 237th Regiment was unsatisfactory, the plan was changed.

The change in attack points made it unnecessary for the 237th Infantry to attack abreast of the 20th Division and it was possible for it to hit a weak point in the enemy position. Heavy weapons units were ordered to establish positions on the east bank by sunset of the day of attack and prepare to deliver fire against those enemy installations which were situated to permit delivery of flanking fire. The attack unit was to leave the assembly point, about 3 kilometers east of the Drinumor River, and deploy on a line of departure along the east bank by 2100 hours on the 10th.

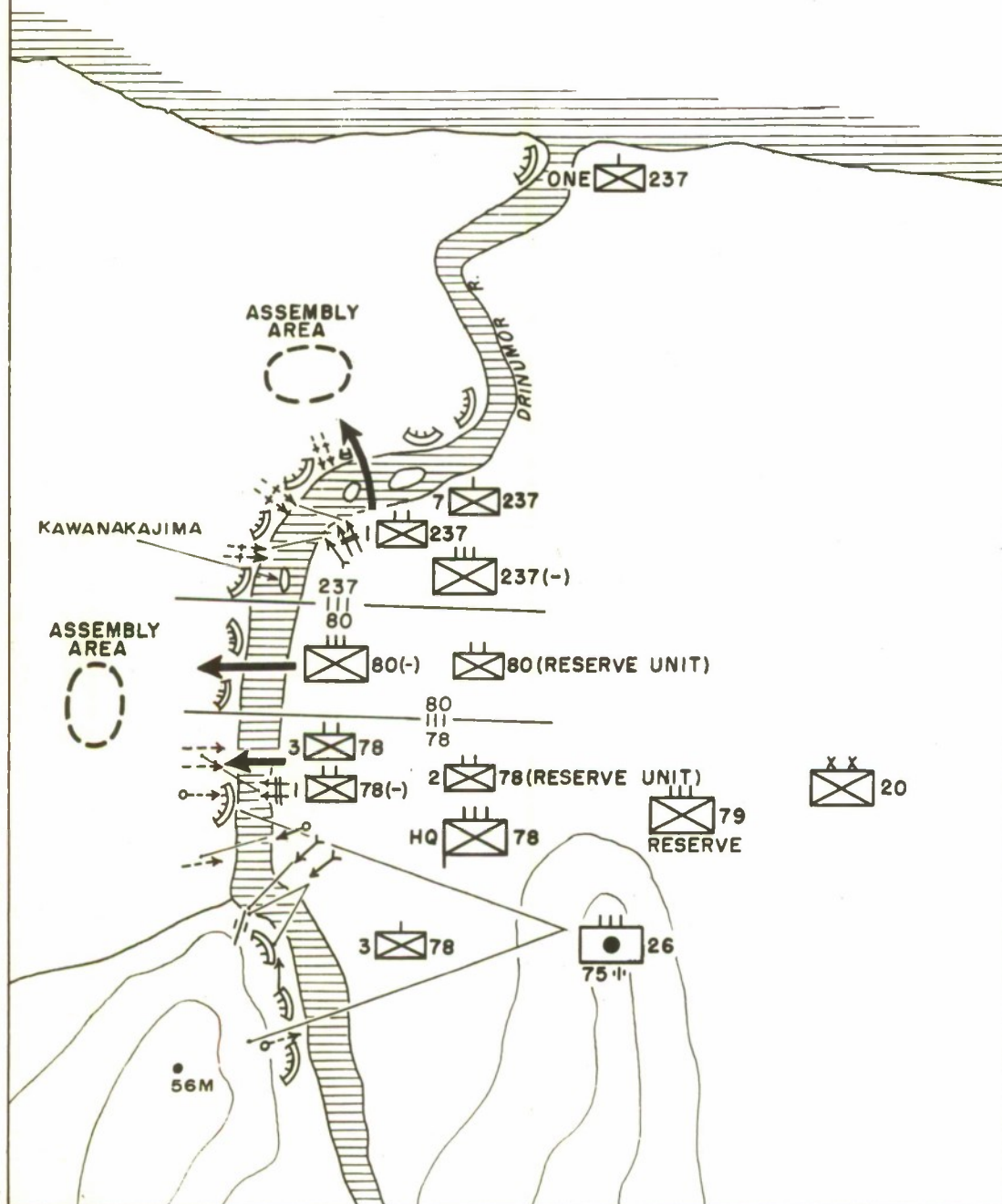
As the day of attack approached, it became evident that the physical strength of officers and men of all units had so deteriorated that it would be impossible for them to run up the slope of the

DISPOSITION OF UNITS OF  
20TH DIV AND 237TH INF REGT  
10 JULY 1944

➔ JAPANESE ARMY

▬ US ARMY

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river bank without halting for rest and most of the 20th Division first line commanders considered it expedient to effect a heavy artillery attack to destroy the enemy guns before launching the assault. The suggestion to employ preliminary fires which would eliminate the element of surprise was submitted to the Army Commander and approved. The attack plan was revised to provide for a ten minute concentration employing all firepower, except rifles and light machine guns, to begin at 2150 and continue until the time of assault at 2200 hours.

In accordance with the established plan the artillery units of the 20th Division and the 237th Infantry Regiment opened fire at 2150 hours, the first line infantry companies advanced to the river and started their movement toward the enemy positions.

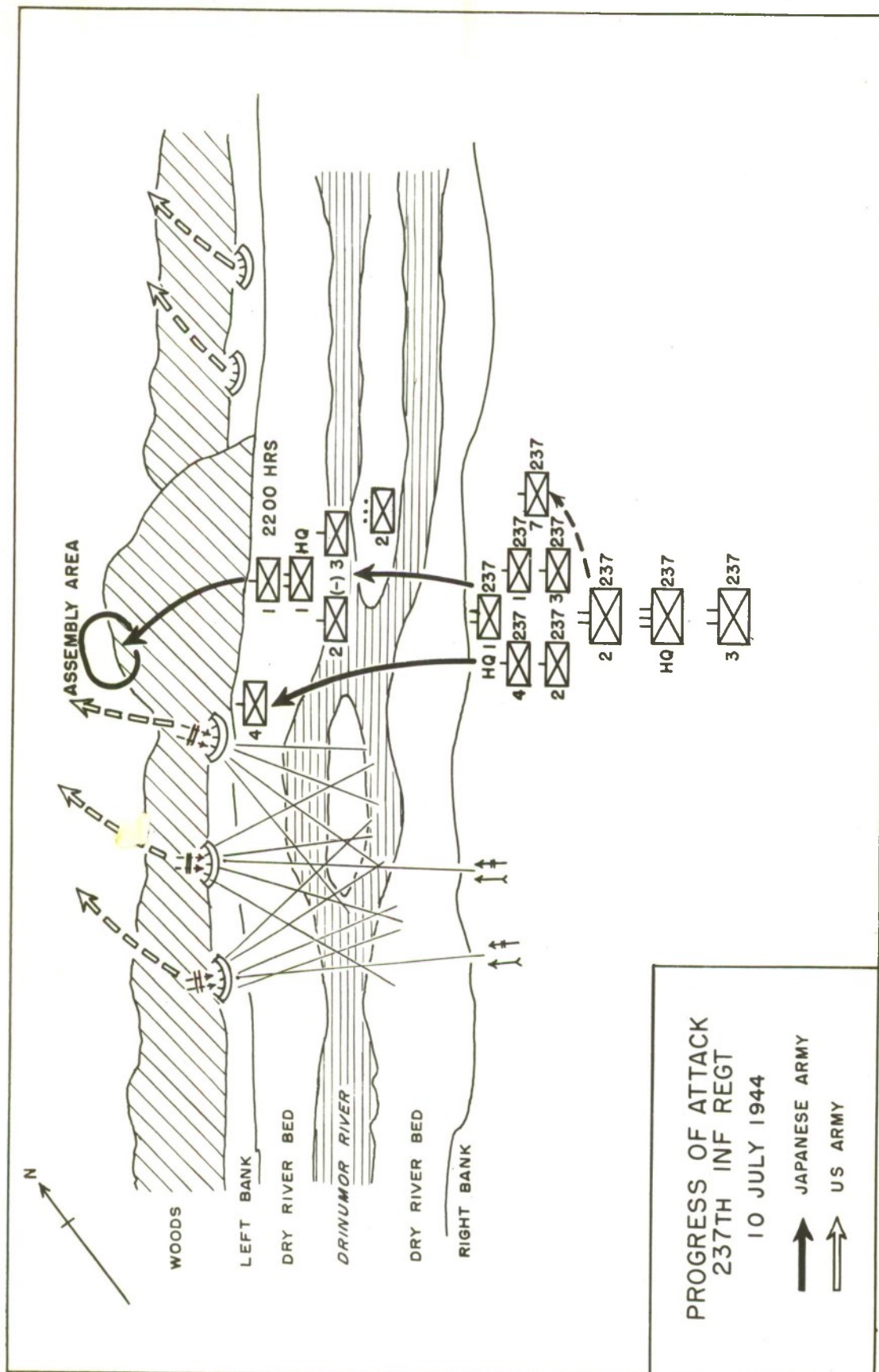
Within a minute after the commencement of the artillery concentration, the enemy opened fire with all available weapons and a few minutes later artillery units in the coastal area began firing. An accurate and heavy barrage which was laid down along the line of departure was lowered to cover the river bed as well. In addition to the artillery barrage, the east bank and the river bed were covered by cross fires. Particularly heavy fire was sustained by the 1st Battalion of the 78th Infantry Regiment, the extreme left flank unit. All units on the 20th Division front suffered heavy losses in the river bed and along the east bank, which delayed the commencement of the actual assault. However, the officers and men rallied and

crossing the river over the bodies of their fallen dead successfully penetrated the enemy position and captured it at 0130 hours on the 11th.

The 1st Battalion of the 78th Infantry Regiment suffered more heavily than other units, having 290 casualties out of a total strength of 360 and was forced to abandon the assault. About 600 men of the 78th Infantry Regiment were killed or wounded during the course of the attack and almost all heavy weapons were destroyed. Losses of the 80th Regiment were much lighter.

In the area of the 237th Infantry Regiment the enemy artillery fire was less intensive and since the regiment avoided a frontal attack, losses and casualties were comparatively light. At about 2200 hours on the 10th, the regiment secured a foothold on the west bank and conducted mop-up operation from its rear, routing the enemy to the northwest. Because of the possibility of firing into the 1st Battalion, the regiment did not conduct counter artillery fire. Progress of the attack by the 237th Infantry Regiment is shown on Map No. 4.

On the 11th, mop-up operations were conducted along the west bank and the enemy in Afua and on Hills 50 and 56 was routed. The entire enemy advance force having withdrawn to the west, the units of the 20th Division assembled in the western sector of the occupied area and prepared for a further advance westward. The 237th Infantry Regiment conducted regrouping and commenced attack preparations against Paup.





Author's Observations:

United States forces were reinforced immediately after the conclusion of the night attack and on the 12th began a series of counterattacks which continued until August 4th when the Eighteenth Army, having expended its fighting strength, was forced to break off the engagement. The original attack on the night of the 10th had been successful in that a break-through had been accomplished and the enemy forced to withdraw to the west.

Reasons offered for the success were the comparatively weak positions and shallowness of the enemy advance line. Some surviving officers of the engagement claim that the employment of fire power to neutralize the enemy position prior to the assault was responsible for victory; on the other hand Major Yamashita, commander of the 1st Battalion of the 237th Infantry Regiment, holds that the employment of fire power in this manner is a violation of the principles of night surprise attack and that its use in this case was responsible for the tremendous losses sustained by the 20th Division. However, the 1st Battalion did not have the problems which confronted the balance of the attacking units. Not having been through the entire New Guinea campaign the men of the battalion were comparatively fresh and in much better physical condition than the others, in addition the freedom given the 1st Battalion in the choice of an attack point, enabling them to drive through a weak part of the enemy line made fire support less necessary.