

I Corps in the Liberation of Luzon: Lessons in Multi-Domain Operations within Littoral Environments

A Monograph

by

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Abstract

I Corps in the Liberation of Luzon: Lessons in Multi-Domain Operations within Littoral Environments, by MAJ William J. Larsen, 73 pages.

The prevailing notion that the Marine Corps will be able to handle the amphibious assault requirements and then transition Army forces into the theater to assume ground operations may not be possible in future wars. If required to move troops into an anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) environment, the luxury of ports of debarkation secured by forward presence forces may also not be readily available. The Marines could rapidly become fully committed, requiring Army support. These potential conditions require that the Army to rebuild amphibious assault capabilities to meet the challenges of multi-domain operations (MDO) in the Pacific littorals as a member of the joint force. Tension currently exists within Army doctrine of the perceived role of Army forces about its responsibilities within Joint Forcible Entry Operations (JFEO). Army doctrine focuses on airborne and air assault operations, while joint doctrine specifically identifies the Army and the Marines responsible for serving as landing forces within amphibious assaults. As demonstrated in the Mike I operation during the World War II liberation of Luzon, fighting an enemy in well-prepared island positions requires a well-trained force capable of integrating multi-domain capabilities to overcome adversary strengths. The I Corps utilized the MDO tenets of calibrated force posture and convergence, enabled through multi-domain command and control to defeat the Japanese throughout the Luzon campaign. Time may not be available to train and develop an amphibious assault capable MDO force in the future, necessitating the need to reestablish the capacity for amphibious assaults within the Army now.

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Abbreviations

A2/AD	Anti-Access and Area Denial
ADP	Army Doctrine Publication
FM	Field Manual
ID	Infantry Division
IGHQ	Japanese Imperial General Headquarters
INDOPACOM	United States Indo-Pacific Command
JFEO	Joint Forcible Entry Operations
JP	Joint Publication
LST	Landing Ship, Tank
LVT	Landing Vehicle, Tank
MDO	Multi-Domain Operations
RCT	Regimental Combat Team
SWPA	South-West Pacific Area
TF	Task Force

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Introduction

The US Army Multi-Domain Operations (MDO) concept serves as the future framework for modernizing the Army as part of a joint force to counter emerging threats.¹ China and Russia are both named as specific emerging threats within the 2018 National Defense Strategy (NDS).² Both states are post-industrial economies that developed and integrated technologies to operate within the information domain, requiring changes to the United States' operating paradigm.³

The NDS names China as one of the primary potential adversaries threatening stability within the Indo-Pacific Command (INDOPACOM).⁴ China is named specifically for developing anti-access and area denial (A2/AD) systems and strategies to counter American military strength while expanding within the competition space below the threshold of war beyond the Pacific. China seeks to establish an in-depth defensive system of long-range weapons combined with ground, naval, and air forces to expand its control and influence within the region. The system creates complex problem sets for the United States, regional partners, and allies in the Pacific not encountered since World War II.

During World War II, Japan sought to expand its empire and establish dominance in the Pacific region. They seized terrain through the Solomon Islands before victories at the battles of Midway and Guadalcanal shifted the initiative in favor of the Allies. The Japanese found themselves fighting in depth across the Pacific to maintain their eastern buffer and the operational

¹ US Department of the Army, Training and Doctrine Command (TRADOC) Pamphlet 525-3-1, *The US Army in Multi-Domain Operations in 2028* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2018).

² James Mattis, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2018), accessed 24 August 2020, <https://dod.defense.gov/Portals/1/Documents/pubs/2018-National-Defense-Strategy-Summary.pdf>

³ US Army, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1.

⁴ Mattis, *Summary of the 2018 National Defense Strategy*.

and strategic supply lines from the East Indies and South East Asia to mainland Japan.⁵ General Douglas MacArthur, the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA) Commander, wanted to keep his promise to return to the Philippines and believed it to be a better staging point for the future ground invasion of the Japanese mainland. He did not agree with the strategic approach across the Central Pacific favored by Admiral Chester Nimitz, the Pacific Ocean Area Commander, and Admiral Ernest King, the Chief of Naval Operations, who favored a northern approach through the Mariana Islands to the Chinese island of Formosa.⁶ MacArthur won the debate, and in September 1944, the Joint Chiefs of Staff cleared him to proceed with an invasion of the Philippine Islands.

Future operations within the INDOPACOM theater faced challenges with access and sustainment of joint forces to attack and disintegrate systems in depth across the theater. While current operations include advanced technology and weaponry, the US fought the Pacific campaigns in World War II over the same terrain with similar objectives. Army forces conducted large-scale combat operations (LSCO) at the operational level as part of a joint force in a similar way to how the US projects LSCO in the future.

This study examines I Corps planning and operations in the Luzon Campaign through the context of MDO as defined by TRADOC Pamphlet 525-2-1: *The US Army in Multi-Domain Operations in 2028*. The study first outlines the doctrine and literature associated with MDO, amphibious operations, and the Luzon Campaign. It then addresses strategic context and the Japanese perspective by outlining the general situation before the amphibious assault, leadership, doctrine, and strategy for their defense. Next, the study views the American perspective through the context of the general situation, leadership, and the Sixth Army strategy. After framing the situation, the study examines I Corps' planning and execution of the amphibious landing in

⁵ Dale Andrade, *The Campaigns of World War II: A World War II Commemorative Series, Luzon* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, 1994), 3–4, accessed 23 August 2020, https://history.army.mil/html/books/072/72-28/CMH_Pub_72-28.pdf.

⁶ Andrade, *Luzon*, 3-4.

Lingayen Gulf and its role in joint operations throughout the Luzon Campaign. Finally, the operation will be compared the corps' roles within the MDO tenets of calibrated force posture and convergence and with multi-domain command and control to inform future MDO operations within littoral environments. Ultimately, the Army must rebuild its amphibious assault capabilities to meet the challenges of MDO in the Pacific littorals to operate successfully within range of threat A2/AD systems as a member of the joint force.

Doctrine and Literature

TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1: *The US Army in Multi-Domain Operations in 2028* serves as the current capstone document for the Army MDO concept, whose central idea is how "Army forces, as an element of the joint Force, conduct Multi-Domain Operations to prevail in competition. When necessary, Army forces penetrate and dis-integrate enemy anti-access and area denial systems and exploit the resultant freedom of maneuver to achieve strategic objectives (win) and force a return to competition on favorable terms."⁷ The tenets of calibrated force posture, multi-domain formations, and convergence provide the desired direction to accomplish MDO.

Calibrated force posture looks at the ability and capacity to conduct maneuver across the required distances and fulfill all requirements as part of the joint force.⁸ To complete these requirements, the Army must utilize forward presence forces for competition and rapid reaction to escalation. The force must possess expeditionary capability through joint forcible entry capacity if there is not a forward presence established. Army forces must integrate national capabilities with operations to maximize the effects of scarce resources. Finally, the Army must possess the required authorities to operate across all domains, including the electromagnetic spectrum (EMS)

⁷ US Army, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, 17.

⁸ Ibid., 19.

and information space. To realize these capacities, the force must also meet the requirements to operate as a multi-domain formation.

Multi-domain formations require the capabilities and capacity to conduct operations within the complex operating environment. These formations must be capable and proficient in independent maneuver across the battlespace with access to capabilities across all domains. This includes the ability to incorporate cross-domain fires to enable maneuver within an A2/AD environment. Lastly, warfare is a human endeavor and requires a well trained, manned, and equipped force capable of fighting and winning in a complex environment.⁹

The final tenet of MDO is convergence. Convergence is "the rapid and continuous integration of capabilities in all domains, the [electromagnetic spectrum], and the information environment that optimizes effects to overmatch the enemy through cross-domain synergy and multiple forms of attack all enabled by mission command and disciplined initiative."¹⁰

Convergence allows Army forces, enabled by the mission command approach, to mass effects of multi-domain capabilities to create synergistic effects on the enemy while also providing options to commanders to achieve the desired effects on the enemy.

TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1 specifies the requirements that a corps must meet in support of convergence. A corps is responsible for command and control of all assigned multi-domain elements as a joint force. As an expeditionary force, a corps shapes multiple enemy combined arms armies through its assigned and supporting assets. It does this by integrating assigned and available multi-domain assets against long-range and mid-range A2/AD systems within its designated area of operations and is also responsible for converging assets in support of division and brigade maneuver. Corps set the conditions for convergence at lower echelons by ensuring adequate resourcing, sequencing, and arranging operations while incorporating deception.¹¹

⁹ US Army, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, 19–20.

¹⁰ Ibid., 20.

¹¹ Ibid., 22.

The US Marine Corps, the lead service for amphibious operations, decided in 2019 to move in a different strategic direction. General David H. Berger, Commandant of the Marine Corps, in his 2020 document *Force Design 2030*, outlined his vision in response to the 2018 NDS. He stated that the Marine Corps' design still resembles that of the 1950s, with minor updates for new weapons and refined tactics. However, after focusing on the ground fighting in Afghanistan and Iraq, he assessed that the current design did not support littoral operations within modern LSCO.¹² Potential adversaries have developed long-range precision weapons and other techniques that render the previous approach obsolete. He no longer believes that the amphibious operations with two Marine Expeditionary Brigades (MEB) are suitable for Joint Forced Entry Operations (JFEO) due to the threat presented by A2/AD anti-ship systems.¹³

Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 1, *The Army*, a capstone document for Army doctrine shows similar tension with its role in amphibious operations when it states, “The Army today is a force that is prepared to defend the Nation and protect our national interests through prompt and sustained land combat. This includes forcible entry from the land, sea, or air...”¹⁴ Later in ADP 1, under the Army’s core competency of Combined Arms Maneuver, only Air Assault and Airborne operations are listed as contributions to the joint force for JFEO.¹⁵ Furthermore, the manual depicts three different images of D-Day landings, while only two pictures are present of airborne forces parachuting, and there are none showing air assault operations. ADP 3-0, *Operations*, is the second capstone document for Army doctrine and only mentions of JFEO once. The entry is listed under creating multiple dilemmas for the enemy stating that JFEO, “...can

¹² David H. Berger, *Force Design 2030* (Washington, DC: Headquarters US Marine Corps, 2030), 2, <https://www.hqmc.marines.mil/Portals/142/Docs/CMC38%20Force%20Design%202030%20Report%20Phase%20I%20and%20II.pdf?ver=2020-03-26-121328-460>.

¹³ Ibid., 6.

¹⁴ US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 1, *The Army* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2019), v.

¹⁵ Ibid., 2–7, 2–8.

create multiple dilemmas by creating threats that exceed an enemy force's capability to respond.”¹⁶ It continues, “Employing mutually supporting forces along different axes to strike from unexpected directions creates dilemmas, particularly when Army and joint capabilities converge effects against enemy forces in multiple domains simultaneously.”¹⁷ Through these statements *ADP 3-0* acknowledges the Army's role in and the necessity for JFEO.

Joint Publication (JP) 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations*, does not assign service specific roles for JFEO, but does acknowledge service-specific capabilities and procedures for specific means of conducting JFEO while emphasizing the joint nature.¹⁸ It then defines amphibious force as an amphibious task force and a landing force with emphasis on the ability for the amphibious force to continue operations from the initial lodgment.¹⁹ JP 3-02, *Amphibious Operations*, finally names the landing force as a Marine Corps or Army unit, task organized to conduct amphibious operations.²⁰ Therefore, the Army is responsible for maintaining a capability for conducting amphibious assaults per the joint and Army doctrine. However, the Army allocated time and resources to higher priorities, driven by the focus for modernization and training for MDO.

Amphibious operations have a history of not being a priority for the US military. After World War I, the War Department was unsure of the need for amphibious doctrine and capabilities. The failures of amphibious assaults in World War I, such as at Gallipoli, against

¹⁶ US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 3-0, *Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2019), 3–11.

¹⁷ US Army, ADP 3-0, 3–12.

¹⁸ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff Joint Publication (JP) 3-18, *Joint Forcible Entry Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2018), I–1, accessed 23 August 2020, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_18ch1_pa.pdf?ver=2018-07-03-125841-997.

¹⁹ Ibid., I–9.

²⁰ US Department of Defense, Joint Staff, Joint Publication (JP) 3-02, *Amphibious Operations* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2019), I–1, accessed 23 September 2020, https://www.jcs.mil/Portals/36/Documents/Doctrine/pubs/jp3_02.pdf.

modern weapons reinforced the opposition to incorporate the capability in the future. When the Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor in 1941, the US military did not have any of the landing craft now associated with World War II amphibious operations in the inventory. Few ships existed that could offload tanks and heavy equipment directly onto beaches, requiring the retention or seizure of port facilities.²¹ Until that point, the doctrine focused primarily on the Navy and the Marine Corps, and generally so on the Pacific Ocean as the theater of employment.

Pre-war American planners at the War Department hoped that large scale amphibious operations were not going to be required in the European theater.²² The preeminent assumption held by the military leadership was that existing port facilities would remain under Allied control on the continent and in Africa, similar to World War I. They were confident in the French military's capability to withstand a German attack long enough to move shipping into the existing ports.²³ The assumption proved false with France's rapid fall to the German Blitz in 1940. Subsequently, at Dakar in North Africa, an Allied force failed to negotiate a surrender of the Vichy French forces. Unable to secure the port at Dakar, a short battle ensued. Lacking the capabilities to land equipment and personnel elsewhere, the force returned to England defeated.²⁴ In response, initial Army amphibious training began in 1940. The War Department directed both 1st and 3rd IDs to undergo amphibious training and serve as the primary units of action for amphibious assaults.²⁵ The initial configuration created a joint corps of an Army division

²¹ Daniel E. Barbey, *MacArthur's Amphibious Navy* (Annapolis, MD: United States Naval Institute, 1969), 11.

²² John T. Greenwood, "The US Army and Amphibious Warfare During World War II," *Army History* Summer 1993, no. 27 (1993): 2–3, accessed 17 January 2021, <https://www.jstor.org/stable/26304100>.

²³ Barbey, *MacArthur's Amphibious Navy*, 12.

²⁴ Ibid.

²⁵ Greenwood, *Army History*, 2–3.

combined with a Marine division on each coast of the United States.²⁶ Their training adopted Marine Corps methods for conducting amphibious assaults.

Planners viewed the Pacific theater as primarily a theater of naval action. War Plan Orange created the need for a limited capacity to project combat power into the Pacific should Japan invade the Philippines or the mandates.²⁷ The Navy would then defeat the Japanese fleet while the Marines conducted limited assaults to recapture islands from Japanese forces following War Plan Orange.²⁸ However, the Marine Corps was not manned and equipped, at the time, to assume the mission set.

Major Earl H. Ellis, USMC, submitted a report and plans in July 1921, which set the Marine Corps' course as the leading proponent for amphibious operations with Imperial Japan's rise in mind.²⁹ The Department of the Navy previously developed doctrine for landing forces in 1920 to serve as a general guide for training the Marine forces.³⁰ The *Landing-Force Manual* oriented its instruction primarily on Marines' conduct once on the shore and general packing lists for a company and below, leaving many details still unanswered. The Joint Board attempted to refine the practical concepts in January 1933 with the publication of The Joint Board of the Army and Navy *Joint Overseas Expeditions Manual*. The manual highlighted many practical planning considerations without including details on how to accomplish the landings.³¹

²⁶ Marshall O. Becker, *The Amphibious Training Center: Study Number 22* (Washington, DC: Historical Section Army Ground Forces, 1946), 1–3, accessed 17 January 2021, <https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll8/id/4444/rec/1>.

²⁷ Ronald H. Spector, *Eagle Against the Sun* (New York, NY: Free Press, 1985), 54–9. War Plan Orange was the color plan for war with Japan, originally created in 1903 then later updated in 1924. The color plans were developed by the Joint Board to prepare for future conflicts.

²⁸ Barbey, *MacArthur's Amphibious Navy*, 13.

²⁹ Jeter A. Isely and Philip A. Crowl, *The US Marines and Amphibious War* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1951), 24–7.

³⁰ United States Navy, *Landing-Force Manual* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, 1921), accessed 12 December 2020, <https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll9/id/880/rec/3>.

³¹ Isely, *The US Marines and Amphibious War*, 35.

Based on the immediate need to fill in the details omitted from the *Joint Overseas Expeditions* manual, the Commandant of the Marine Corps approved a recommendation to halt training of Marine Corps Schools at Quantico and develop doctrine for the conduct of amphibious landing operations. The result was a bottom-up, refined Tentative Landing Manual, published in 1934, that went into detail about the responsibilities and detailed the roles of the landing forces and the Navy in an amphibious assault.³² The Navy adopted the manual after undergoing revisions in the 1938 publication of Fleet Training Publication 167. This document became the foundation for the Army publication Field Manual (FM) 31-5, *Landing Operations on Hostile Shores*, first published in 1941, then updated each subsequent year through 1944.³³

The Army possesses two official histories of the Luzon Campaign. Dale Andrade's pamphlet *Luzon* from the US Army Campaigns of World War II Series serves as a concise summary of the campaign.³⁴ He includes the significant portions of the I Corps movement and the action of its units throughout the campaign. However, the details of the planning and execution of the campaign below the SWPA level for the landings are not addressed. Robert Ross Smith's *Triumph in the Philippines* from the Center for Military History is the foundational work covering the planning for the landings on Luzon through securing the remainder of the Philippine islands. Smith draws much of his information from primary source documentation, allowing him to describe the events covered in detail. However, he acknowledges gaps in the information available to him. I Corps notably did a poor job transferring G3 planning records to the archives.³⁵ Thus, he does not get into very much detail at the corps level. Sixth Army and SWPA

³² Isely, *The US Marines and Amphibious War*, 34–6.

³³ Ibid., 36.

³⁴ Headquarters, 43rd Infantry Division, “Luzon Campaign: Forty Third Infantry Division,” September 25, 1945, accessed 4 November 2020, <https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll8/id/4452>.

³⁵ Robert Ross Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, US Army, 1993), 697, accessed 23 August 2020, https://history.army.mil/html/books/005/5-10-1/CMH_Pub_5-10-1.pdf.

documents' availability led to focusing primarily at SWPA, Sixth Army, and division levels. This work was also published when some records remained classified and not available for review and publication at the time.

Samuel Elliot Morrison's *The Liberation of the Philippines* details the Navy's role in Luzon and the Visayas operations.³⁶ He details the obstacles, risk, and opposition Task Force 7 experienced as it approached Lingayen Gulf from Japanese naval and air forces. He emphasizes the Navy's continuous struggle countering the Kamikaze threat as the convoy moved to Lingayen Gulf and the cost in terms of sailors and ships to bring the landing forces to the fight. Morrison also describes the staging of the landing forces and execution of the amphibious assault, then describes the support provided as they moved inland to secure the lodgment.

The most recent publication covering Luzon is Christopher M. Rein's *Multi-Domain Battle in the Southwest Pacific Theater of World War II*.³⁷ The book shows the progression in the complexity of operation throughout the war in the Pacific. Rein starts with the 31st Infantry Regiment in the Philippines in 1941-1942, progresses through the war's significant campaigns, and ends with the SWPA focus on Luzon's liberation. Chapter three is meant to focus on I Corps in the Papua-New Guinea campaign, but instead focuses on the division and regimental levels. Rein emphasizes new information from MacArthur's signals intelligence and code-breaking program that was not brought out in the other volumes. This work also serves as the first Army official history to apply MDO concepts to the Pacific theater in World War II. The conclusions focus on the combined use of all domains as the key to success in future combat. It was published prior to and thus references neither TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1 nor the prior version *Multi-*

³⁶ Samuel E. Morison, *The Liberation of the Philippines: Luzon, Mindanao, the Visayas 1944-1945*, History of United States Naval Operations in World War II (Boston, MA: Little, Brown, and Company, 1959).

³⁷ Christopher M. Rein, *Multi-Domain Battle in the Southwest Pacific Theater of World War II* (Fort Leavenworth, KS: Army University Press, 2017).

Domain Battle: Evolution of Combined Arms for the 21st Century in the text.³⁸ This campaign has not yet been assessed utilizing MDO principles as outlined by TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, creating the opportunity to view the events through a new perspective.

Japanese Situation

To understand the Japanese situation on Luzon in 1945, one must first look before the assault on Leyte. The Japanese Imperial General Headquarters (IGHQ) canceled plans to expand the outer perimeter of the empire to Samoa, Fiji Islands, and New Caledonia after the Japanese Navy lost over 400 aircraft in the battles of Coral Sea and Midway.³⁹ They instead began the “SN” Operation to reinforce the outer perimeter defenses by building strategic airfields throughout Papua, New Guinea and in the Solomon Islands.⁴⁰ After US and Australian forces identified the construction efforts on Guadalcanal and sensed a threat to the lines of communication between Hawaii, the US mainland, and Australia, the US decided to intervene and stop the Japanese advance.⁴¹ After bitter fighting, US and Australian forces pushed the Japanese out of Guadalcanal and halted their advance in Papua, leading to a turning point in the war.⁴² Japan thus lost the ability for strategic offense and was instead forced into fighting a strategic defense.

³⁸ David G. Perkins, *Multi-Domain Battle: Evolution of Combined Arms for the 21st Century 2025-2040* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2017), accessed 17 July 2020, <https://hq.tradoc.army.mil/sites/G14/tradoclibrary/blog/TRADOC%20HQ%20Library%20Repository/Multi-Domain%20Battle%20Evolution%20of%20Combined%20Arms%20for%20the%2021st%20Century%202025-2040.pdf>.

³⁹ Richard B. Frank, *Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle* (New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1992), 43.

⁴⁰ *Ibid.*, 31.

⁴¹ John Miller, *Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, US Army, 1959), 1–3, accessed 23 August 2020, https://history.army.mil/html/books/005/5-5/CMH_Pub_5-5.pdf.

⁴² Frank, *Guadalcanal: The Definitive Account of the Landmark Battle*, 612–5.

The US next began a systematic approach to destroy the Japanese base at Rabaul in eastern New Britain. The Japanese had captured Rabaul in January 1942 and established a large base with both port facilities and an airfield, which served as the gateway to New Guinea and the Solomon Islands.⁴³ Rabaul was thus a vital hub in the region, making it the next strategic objective. Planning began in late 1942 for the approach to Rabaul but was not finalized until an operations order issued 26 April 1943, code named Operation Cartwheel.⁴⁴

In early 1943 MacArthur expected the Japanese to move forces from Rabaul across to reinforce Lae and the surrounding areas in New Guinea based on signal intercepts and increased enemy activity in the area.⁴⁵ He placed his air forces on alert and detected a large convoy on 28 February. The resulting Battle of the Bismarck Sea lasted through 4 March, with land-based aircraft sinking all eight transport ships and four of eight destroyer escorts. The battle resulted in the loss of over 3,500 Japanese soldiers from the 51st Division and enough food for 20,000 meals, aircraft fuel, and other supplies needed in New Guinea. The Japanese adjusted their resupply techniques from that point on utilizing highspeed transports only for movements within allied bomber range and utilizing small boats to ferry supplies up the coasts. The loss of air superiority hampered their operations.⁴⁶

Admiral Isoroku Yamamoto, Commander-in-chief of the Combined Fleet, developed the I Operation to reestablish Japanese air superiority in the region. The I operation called for airstrikes against US shipping and air power to create an opportunity for a counteroffensive in the southwest Pacific since US joint forces halted Japanese ground and naval advances.⁴⁷ From 7-14

⁴³ Miller, *Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul*, 2.

⁴⁴ *Ibid.*, 25–6.

⁴⁵ Douglas MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. II, part 1 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1967), 110–11.

⁴⁶ *Ibid.*, II:110–13.

⁴⁷ Miller, *Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul*, 42–3.

April, Japanese aircraft attacked ships and aircraft at Guadalcanal and ports around Papua New Guinea. The Japanese believed that they caused extensive damage to the US fleet after inaccurate reporting from the pilots.⁴⁸ After the attack on Milne Bay, Admiral Yamamoto, accompanied by his Chief of Staff, decided to leave Rabaul to visit troops on Bougainville Island on 18 April. US intelligence intercepted his destination and arrival time, to which MacArthur and Halsey planned to ambush him while in flight. When Yamamoto's aircraft was near its destination, sixteen P-38's attacked and shot down both transports, killing Yamamoto and injuring his Chief of Staff.⁴⁹ Yamamoto's death hampered the Japanese war effort, but the loss of trained pilots hindered Japanese air operations. The aircraft needed to conduct the I Operation pulled from the Imperial Navy aircraft carrier airwings, both ship and shore-based, with additional Army bombers and fighters in support.⁵⁰ The Japanese used over 190 total aircraft for Operation I, and approximately 42 were shot down.⁵¹ A subsequent operation in June 1944 lost approximately ninety-eight aircraft in the same areas.⁵² While the Japanese production rate of aircraft remained high, they could not provide enough trained pilots quickly enough to meet the demand for replacements, especially those capable of operations from aircraft carriers.⁵³ Japan's loss of air superiority and inability to reconstitute effective airpower allowed the allies to move unchecked through the region.

Operation Cartwheel began 21 June 1943 with attacks against New Georgia, followed on 30 June with attacks against Woodlark Island and Kiriwina in Papua New Guinea and along the

⁴⁸ Douglas MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. II, part 2 (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1967), 206–8.

⁴⁹ Vern Haughland, *The AAF Against Japan* (New York: Harper and Brothers Publishers, 1948), 139–42.

⁵⁰ Isely, *The US Marines and Amphibious War*, 171.

⁵¹ Miller, *Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul*, 42–4.

⁵² *Ibid.*, 45.

⁵³ Isely, *The US Marines and Amphibious War*, 171.

northern New Guinea coast. SWPA rapidly constructed airfields on both Woodlark and Kiriwina Islands to support Cartwheel.⁵⁴ Airfields within fighter aircraft range of amphibious landings and subsequent combat operations were crucial to enable the advance as aircraft carriers were not available and would be put in disadvantageous positions near the Japanese fortifications and airfields. Fighting on New Georgia continued through the end of August, with multiple Japanese positions bypassed and cut off from support. On 5 September, US and Australian forces began a combined airborne and amphibious landing against the airstrip at Lae. The Allies captured Lae on 16 September and immediately prepared it to receive aircraft.⁵⁵ On 22 September, the Australian 20th ID landed at Finschhafen and attacked northwest along the New Guinea coast, setting conditions to attack New Britain.⁵⁶

After the Quebec conference in August 1943, Roosevelt and Churchill decided to neutralize and bypass Rabaul instead of a direct assault based on the recommendation by the Joint Chiefs. Capturing Rabaul would require significant manpower and resources if directly attacked, but isolating it instead freed the resources for use elsewhere with greater effects. The Chiefs directed MacArthur to continue clearing northern New Guinea to Wewak and secure the naval bases at Manus in the Admiralty Islands and Kavieng in northern New Ireland, then clear through the Vogelkop Peninsula in New Guinea in preparation for a return to the Philippines.⁵⁷

While the fighting in New Guinea continued, starting 1 November, the 3rd Marine Division conducted an amphibious assault on Bougainville Island under I Marine Amphibious Corps' command. The Japanese previously established positions with airfields on the northeast and southwest corners of the island, leaving the middle section lightly defended. The plan

⁵⁴ Miller, *Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul*, 381.

⁵⁵ Douglas MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. I (Washington, DC: US Government Printing Office, 1966), 122–4.

⁵⁶ Miller, *Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul*, 58.

⁵⁷ *Ibid.*, 225.

centered around the Marines establishing a beachhead and airstrip to be replaced by Army units who would defend against Japanese counterattacks. The dense jungle terrain slowed the Japanese movement of personnel and equipment to the area, which gave the defenders enough time to prepare the defense.⁵⁸ The conduct of the operation generally went as planned. The landing met little resistance but highlighted problems in air-ground coordination with aircraft and the gunnery skills from supporting ships.⁵⁹ Neither air strikes nor naval fires hit the few identified Japanese positions resulting in avoidable losses at the beach. The Japanese conducted an amphibious counter landing on 7 November, successfully landing around 475 soldiers on the western portion of the lodgment. The Marines defeated the force by the end of 8 November when a morning artillery preparation killed most of the Japanese, and ground forces subsequently cleared out those that remained.⁶⁰

The 37th ID landed on Bougainville between 13 and 19 November with other Marine Corps units to expand the beachhead. The 3rd Marine Division and 37th ID secured the final defensive line by 15 December with over 44,000 personnel present and then worked to improve their positions.⁶¹ The same day brought about a significant change to the force on Bougainville. Admiral William F. Halsey, the commander of the 3rd Fleet, wanted the I Marine Amphibious Corps to lead the attack on Kaevenig. Thus, Halsey directed that the XIV Corps replace them; XIV Corps assumed command by the end of December, with units from the 23rd ID arriving to replace the 3rd Marine Division and support elements arriving through the end of February 1944.⁶²

⁵⁸ Isely, *The US Marines and Amphibious War*, 175–8.

⁵⁹ Ibid., 180–1.

⁶⁰ Miller, *Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul*, 260.

⁶¹ Ibid., 265.

⁶² Ibid., 266–7.

The island hopping Cartwheel next targeted the Admiralty Islands. 1st Cavalry Division (CD) landed on 29 February 1944, surprising the Japanese defenders near Momote Airfield. The intense fighting continued until 25 April, when 1CD captured the final island in the chain.⁶³ By March 1944, the Japanese Eighth Area Army, headquartered in Rabaul, could no longer command and control its units in New Guinea. IGHQ decided on 14 March to move the Eighteenth Army and Fourth Air Army under the Second Area Army's command.⁶⁴ Rabaul and over 100,000 Japanese soldiers remaining in the Solomons, Bismarks, and New Britain were isolated and unable to escape or be rescued.

MacArthur next focused on defeating the remaining Japanese in New Guinea. The approach continued the trend of bypassing strong Japanese positions through subsequent amphibious assaults up the coast. MacArthur bypassed the Japanese 51st division at Wewak, instead directing landings at Hollandia and Aitape. Hollandia was the primary logistics base for New Guinea due to protected anchorage and was the center for Japanese aircraft in the region. The fighting at Hollandia lasted from 22 April to 6 June, with the bulk of the fighting completed by 26 April. The landings completely surprised the Japanese, who put up limited resistance.⁶⁵ The Aitape landings took place at the same time as Hollandia and experienced similar results. Surprised defenders quickly abandoned their positions, bringing the fighting rapidly to an end. Aitape afforded the US another airstrip and served as a defensive position to fight the 20,000 isolated Japanese as they moved west.⁶⁶

⁶³ MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. I, 136–42.

⁶⁴ Saburo Hayashi and Alvin D. Coox, *Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War* (Quantico, VA: Marine Corps Association, 1959), 102–4.

⁶⁵ MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. I, 145.

⁶⁶ Perkins, *Multi-Domain Battle: Evolution of Combined Arms for the 21st Century 2025-2040*, 90–1.

The follow-on landings on Wakde Island and the Sarimi Region on 17 May were conducted rapidly after Hollandia. Macarthur wanted to return to the Philippines by December and increased the pace of operations. The Japanese 223rd and 224th Infantry Regiments made a determined stand at the battle of Lone Tree Hill in Wakde. By the end of the battle, one RCT and two different infantry divisions rotated through to clear the fortified positions and killed over 10,000 Japanese.⁶⁷

The final objective on New Guinea was the Volgekop Peninsula. On 30 July, the 6th ID conducted an unopposed amphibious assault on Sansapor. The position isolated two separate garrisons from the Japanese 35th Division, trapping 27,000 Japanese troops on the peninsula. The operation for Sansapor generated additional airfields for projecting airpower and served as a staging location for follow on operations towards the Philippines.⁶⁸

IGHQ published their "Plan for the Conduct of Future Operations" on 24 July 1944, which redefined their strategy based on the current situation. The plan outlined four primary points for future operations. First, IGHQ directed commanders to improve the defenses of potential US landing sites within the Philippines, Formosa, the Nansei Islands (the small southern islands of Japan including Okinawa), the Japanese home islands, and Kurile Islands (the small island chain north of Japan). Second, IGHQ specified that the combined Japanese military would converge forces for a decisive battle and identified the four most likely locations.⁶⁹ The four courses of action were collectively named the Sho-Go Operations. Sho-1 focused on the defense of the Philippines with a projected target date of the end of August. Sho-2 focused on the defense of Formosa and the Ryukyu Islands with the same projected date. Sho-3 focused on the defense

⁶⁷ Edward J. Drea, *New Guinea: 24 January 1943- 31 December 1944* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, US Army, 2019), 28–30, accessed 17 July 2020, <https://hq.tradoc.army.mil/sites/G14/tradoclibrary/blog/TRADOC%20HQ%20Library%20Repository/Multi-Domain%20Battle%20Evolution%20of%20Combined%20Arms%20for%20the%2021st%20Century%202025-2040.pdf>.

⁶⁸ Drea, *New Guinea: 24 January 1943- 31 December 1944*, 37.

⁶⁹ Hayashi, *Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War*, 114.

of the main Japanese islands, excluding Hokkaido, with a projected date of the end of October. Sho-4 focused on the defense of Hokkaido, also with an end of October projected date. Third, the Fifth Area Army in mainland China continued the Siang-Kwei Operation to destroy US airbases used to intercept Japanese shipping and disrupt production. Finally, maritime traffic were to use shipping lanes closer to shore to mitigate American aircraft and submarine interdiction risk.⁷⁰ The IGHQ accurately understood their situation and the options available to the American forces: while possessing an abundance of fighting spirit, they lacked the necessary material to support the war effort. America's comparative lack of material forced IGHQ into a position where they had to mass the majority of their combat power in a decisive battle to turn the war's momentum or risk being defeated in detail.

Japanese Leadership

The Philippines were part of the Japanese Southern Army under the command of Field Marshall Count Hisaichi Terauchi. IGHQ saw the Philippines as a rear administrative area until the end of 1943 when the probability of fighting within the Philippines increased after losses in New Guinea. In August 1944, IGHQ promoted the Japanese Fourteenth Army to an Area Army under the command of Lieutenant General Shigenori Kuroda.⁷¹ The Fourteenth Area Army assumed responsibility for the Thirty-Fifth Army, under the command of Lieutenant General Sosaku Suzuki, while maintaining the elements of the Fourteenth Army. The Fourth Air Army under the command of Lieutenant General Kyoji Tominaga provided air support for the Fourteenth Area Army, but remained under the command of the Southern Army.⁷²

⁷⁰ Hayashi, *Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War*, 114–5.

⁷¹ An Area Army is generally equivalent to a US Field Army while a Japanese numbered Army is generally equivalent to a US Corps.

⁷² Hayashi, *Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War*, 121–126.

On 29 September, at the direction of IGHQ, General Yamashita replaced Lieutenant General Kuroda as the Fourteenth Area Army commander.⁷³ Before his reassignment, Yamashita served as the First Area Army Commander in Manchuria and was known for his campaign as the Twenty-fifth Army commander, which captured Malaya and Singapore. He did not arrive at the HQ in Manila until 6 October due to a stopover in Tokyo to meet with the Army High Command. He did not get a chance to understand fully the Fourteenth Area Army's current conditions when the US combined attack in Leyte commenced.

The confirmed American amphibious landings in Leyte's vicinity on 19 October set the Sho-1 decisive battle plan into action with X-Day as 25 October. Initially, the Army planned to fight on Luzon. During the meeting with the Army High Command in Tokyo, IGHQ specifically told Yamashita that Luzon was the location for the decisive ground battle and directed to prepare for it.⁷⁴ However, based on overestimated projections of American carrier aircraft destroyed in the vicinity of Formosa from 13-14 October, the IGHQ decided to make Leyte the location of the Army's decisive battle in conjunction with the air and naval forces. Terauchi, therefore, ordered Yamashita on 22 October to destroy the American forces on Leyte.⁷⁵

The Thirty-Fifth Army received all available supplies and combat units from Luzon while cross-leveling what they could internally from Mindanao. The resistance on Leyte was stiff but following the loss of naval support and significant air support, the US combined force isolated the Thirty-fifth Army and captured its supply hub at Ormoc. On 22 December, Yamashita ordered Suzuki to conduct "self-sufficient combat" within the Thirty-fifth Army's area of operations in preparation for a counterattack later.⁷⁶

⁷³ MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. II, part 1, 357.

⁷⁴ MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. II, part 1, 357.

⁷⁵ Hayashi, *Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War*, 122–4.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 125–6.

Japanese adapted strategy for the defense of Allied landings

The initial Japanese mindset for island defenses in 1942 was that islands were like aircraft carriers that could not be sunk and served well as prepared defensive positions.⁷⁷ By 1944, the idea changed to reflect the crucial role of air and naval forces in island defense. Otherwise, attackers could easily bypass the isolated Japanese troops, as demonstrated at Rabaul and other points along northern New Guinea.⁷⁸

The method for defending islands was updated based on the Japanese forces' experience up to that point. IGHQ issued an updated version of their defensive doctrine entitled "Essentials of Island Defense," which took US bombardment capabilities into account before landing forces arrived. The doctrine previously stated that the defending force engage the landing forces on the beaches in a forward defense. However, the casualty rate to the defenders from the pre-landing bombardment was too great. IGHQ changed the guidance to build positions set back from the areas expected to receive the pre-landing bombardment, build primary positions that can withstand bombardment, and be survivable enough to delay for an extended time.⁷⁹ Dispersed machine gun positions should be placed to affect the landing troops and delay the landing force from establishing a beachhead. When appropriate, the defending forces should conduct a decisive counterattack to destroy the landing forces.⁸⁰ One portion that remained unchanged was joint firepower targeting troop transports before getting a chance to unload. As conventional capabilities waned, the weapons to do this were through suicide tactics and air interdiction.⁸¹

⁷⁷ Ibid., 42.

⁷⁸ Hayashi, *Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War*, 102.

⁷⁹ Commandant Translation Section, *Information Pertaining to Island Warfare Against the United States* (Fort Snelling, MN: Military Intelligence Service Language School, 1945), 4–5, accessed 11 December 2020, <https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll8/id/4263/rec/1>.

⁸⁰ Hayashi, *Kogun: The Japanese Army in the Pacific War*, 115–6.

⁸¹ Ibid., 116–117.

Luzon Defensive Plan

Preparations for the defense of Luzon began in 1944 for the decisive battle. The multiple islands and expected utilization of air and naval assets within their specified roles tied up transportation assets and prevented rapid relocation of ground units.⁸² Regardless of the point of initial entry to the Philippines, the preponderance of forces would remain on Luzon. To accomplish the defense, Yamashita devised a plan dividing responsibility for Luzon across three separate groups, each responsible for a designated geographic area and potential landing sites. These were the Shimbu Group, the Kembu Group, and the Shobu Group. See Figure 1. These three groups would conduct the ground fight. Meanwhile, the Fourth Air Army's remnants fell under the Fourteenth Area Army 1 January 1945, which would destroy landing forces, shipping, American aircraft, and provide early warnings for attacks.⁸³

The Shimbu Group, under the command of LTG Shizuo Yokoyama, was responsible for defending the Southern portion of Luzon from the Bicol peninsula through Laguna de Bay.⁸⁴ Yokoyama was also the commander of the 8th Division at the time. The original plans directed a delaying action while units displaced north and consolidated in the mountains east of Manila. However, they were ordered to concentrate in the north on 27 December 1944 due to the lack of transportation assets and increased guerilla activity around Manila. From there, the Shimbu Group could control Manila's water supply from the reservoirs around the mountain positions.⁸⁵ Yamashita decided not to utilize his forces to defend Manila.⁸⁶ Manila did not provide tactical significance to the island's defense. It instead provided a soft target and was growing increasingly

⁸² MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. II, part 1, 326.

⁸³ MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. II, part 1, 460.

⁸⁴ *Ibid.*, 458–9.

⁸⁵ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 97.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*, 240–2.

dangerous due to civilian instability and increased guerilla presence. However, ADM Iwabuchi, the 31st Naval Special Base Force commander and not under Yamashita's command, refused to leave Manila undefended. Iwabuchi ordered his 16,000 strong Manila Naval Defense Force to defend the city and port.⁸⁷ The Shimbu Group was assigned approximately 80,000 soldiers total strength comprised of the 8th Division, 105th Division, Manila Naval Defense Force, and other naval and Fourth Air Army ground elements.⁸⁸ See Figure 1 for troop dispositions.

⁸⁷ Ibid., 241–44.

⁸⁸ Ibid., 96–7.

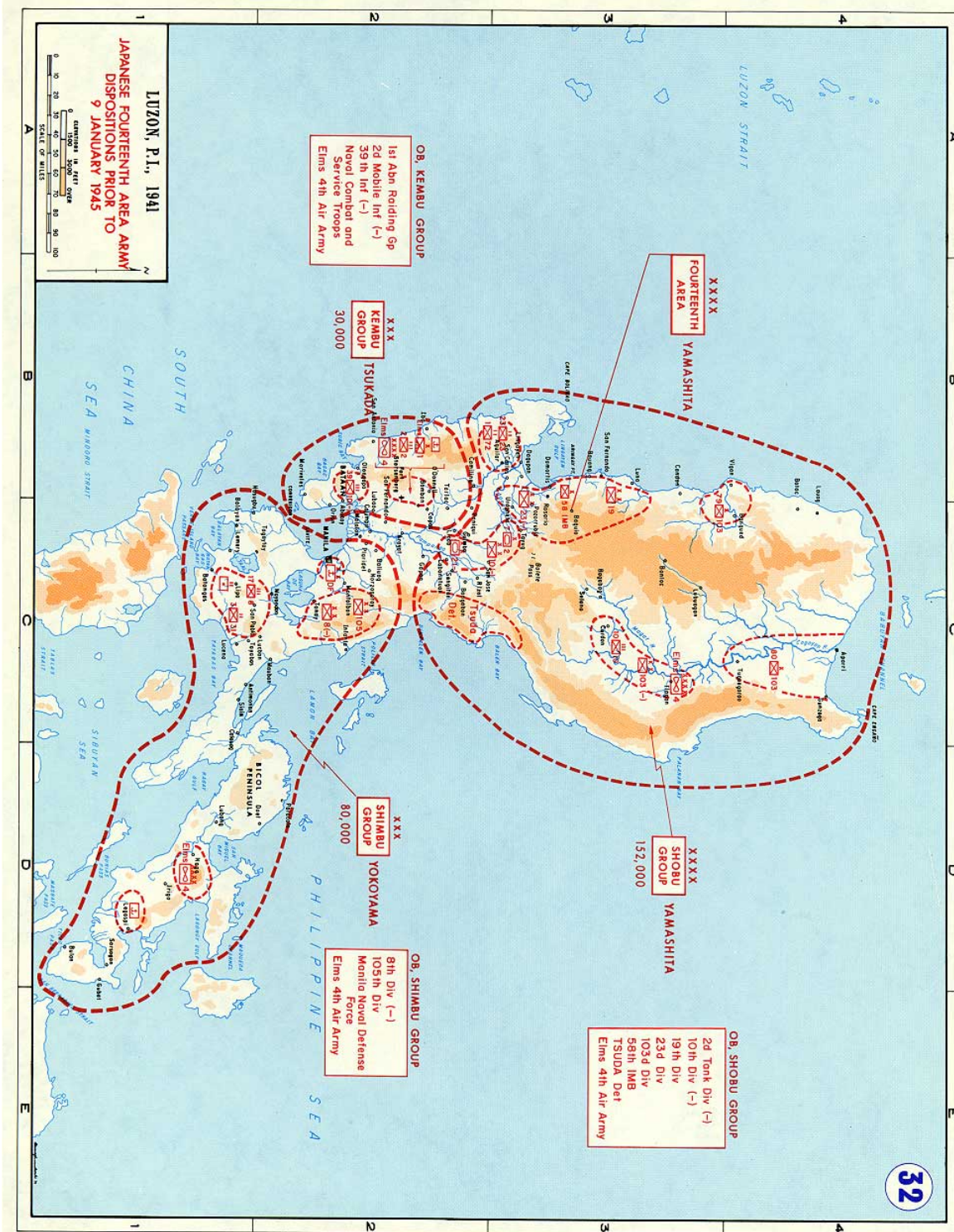


Figure 1. Japanese Fourteenth Area Army Disposition Prior to 9 January 1945. Thomas E. Griess, *West Point Atlas for The Second World War: Asia and The Pacific* (Garden City Park, NY: Square One Publishers, 2002), 32. Accessed 20 August 2020, https://www.westpoint.edu/sites/default/files/inline-images/academics/academic_departments/history/WWII%20Asia/ww2%2520asia%2520map%252032.jpg.

The Kembu Group was under the command of LTG Rikichi Tsukada, formerly the First Raiding Group Commander, at the time of the landings in Lingayen Gulf.⁸⁹ Until December 1944, LTG Yoshiharu Iwanaka, the 2nd Tank Division commander, commanded the group and oversaw the fortifications' construction. He was placed there with the original expectation that the entire 2nd Tank Division would move to the Clark Field area but was not in position for the landings.⁹⁰ Yamashita tasked the Kembu group to protect the Clark Field and Fort Stotsenburg area and disrupt an advancing landing force towards Manila with heavy fortifications in the Zambales Mountains. Those positions provided excellent overwatch of Luzon's Central Plains and could affect Clark Field with fires. The Kembu Group had approximately 30,000 troops assigned, the combat troops were primarily from the First Raiding Group, 2nd Mobile Infantry Regiment, Thirty-ninth Infantry Regiment.⁹¹ Naval and Fourth Air Army ground elements, fighting as infantry, comprised nearly half of the group's strength.

Under Yamashita's command, the Shobu group was the largest force, stretching from the Central Plains to the island's northern end.⁹² Yamashita expected US forces to land in Lingayen Gulf in similar locations to where the Japanese forces landed in 1943. To account for these positions, he aligned the Nineteenth and Twenty-third Divisions along those points. The 10th Division and the 2nd Tank Division were aligned in a central position along the Cabaraun Hills as second echelon forces. This disposition also allowed armor to react to a US airborne operation while controlling movement into the Cagayan Valley along Highway 5 and counterattack the landing beaches. The 103rd Division was positioned primarily in the Cagayan Valley. The scheme of maneuver was to contest the landings in Lingayen Gulf and fight a defense in depth. If

⁸⁹ Headquarters, Sixth Army, "Enemy on Luzon: An Intelligence Summary," 1945, 178, accessed 24 August 2020, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll8/id/3187>.

⁹⁰ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 96.

⁹¹ Ibid.

⁹² Rein, *Multi-Domain Battle in the Southwest Pacific Theater of World War II*, 135.

necessary, the forces would converge into prepared positions in the mountains between Baguia, Bonto, and Bambang to draw out the fight as long as possible and inflict as many American casualties they could to create additional time for the home islands to prepare defenses.⁹³ Yamashita had approximately 152,000 soldiers to conduct his defense. The total force available to the Fourteenth Area Army on Luzon was approximately 275,000 men.⁹⁴

American Situation

Following the successful operations at Leyte and Mindoro, General Douglas MacArthur targeted Luzon to complete the liberation of the Philippines and assigned the Sixth Army to the task. He sought to destroy or isolate the Japanese forces, liberate Manila, and prepare for follow-on operations, using the largest amphibious operation to date in the Pacific.

Leadership

The US I Corps first entered the Pacific theater in July 1942, activated under the command of then MG Robert L. Eichelberger. At the time, the SWPA assigned I Corps the 32nd and 41st Infantry Divisions, which were already in Australia.⁹⁵ Seven months later, in February 1943, LTG Walter Krueger stood up the Sixth Army as a subordinate command to administer the Army land forces in preparation for Operation Cartwheel.⁹⁶ The initial units assigned to the Sixth Army were I Corps, the 2nd Engineer Special Brigade, and the 503rd Parachute Infantry Regiment.⁹⁷ On 7 September 1944, MacArthur stood up the Eighth Army under Eichelberger's command to assume responsibilities for securing rear areas and allowing the Sixth Army to focus

⁹³ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 97.

⁹⁴ Ibid., 94.

⁹⁵ Samuel E. Milner, *Victory in Papua* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, Government Printing Office, 1989), 49–50, accessed 23 August 2020, https://history.army.mil/html/books/005/5-4/CMH_Pub_5-4.pdf.

⁹⁶ Miller, *Cartwheel: The Reduction of Rabaul*, 20–2.

⁹⁷ Ibid.

on front-line combat operations.⁹⁸ He was succeeded in I Corps by LTG Innis P. Swift, who previously commanded the 1st Cavalry Division through Operation Cartwheel.⁹⁹ These leaders maintained their positions through the start of the operation. The campaigns across New Guinea, Morotai, and Leyte provided the necessary experience for the formations in amphibious operations and planning together as a joint force.

Sixth Army Campaign Plan

The Sixth Army received SWPA Operating Instructions 73 on 12 October 1944, directing the Luzon operation, named Mike I.¹⁰⁰ The order arrived right before the Sixth Army began the Leyte operation, which required concurrent future planning while in the fight. SWPA tasked Krueger to coordinate the planning for sea, air, and ground forces for Luzon.¹⁰¹ Sixth Army received I Corps and XIV Corps for their subordinate headquarters with the 6th and 43rd Infantry Divisions assigned to I Corps and the 37th and 40th Infantry Divisions to XIV Corps.¹⁰² Sixth Army maintained control of the 158th Infantry Regimental Combat Team (RCT) and the 13th Armored Group as the Sixth Army reserve was to go ashore on S+2, two days after the initial landings. Sixth Army maintained a separate reserve element afloat comprised of the 25th Infantry Division and the 6th Ranger Battalion. Both units were prepared to land where needed after the situation developed from the assault landings.¹⁰³ The planned operation consisted of three

⁹⁸ MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. I, 149.

⁹⁹ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945, 1946*, 2, accessed 23 August 2020, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll8/id/3367>.

¹⁰⁰ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, vol. 1 (1945): 5, accessed 23 August 2020, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll8/id/2307>.

¹⁰¹ Ibid.

¹⁰² Ibid., 6-7.

¹⁰³ Ibid.

phases.¹⁰⁴ The first phase was the amphibious assault to seize a beachhead in Lingayen and Damortis in the Lingayen Gulf. During this phase, both I Corps and XIV Corps were to establish the initial logistics and basing facilities and establish airfields to support the operation. Phase two consisted of destroying enemy forces north of the Agno River and securing crossing sites over the river. Phase three called for the destruction of enemy forces in the Central Plains and an attack to capture the Philippines capital, Manila. MacArthur expected to liberate Manila within four to six weeks of the landing.¹⁰⁵

The initial target date for the operation, S-Day, was 20 December 1944. MacArthur later adjusted S-Day to 9 January 1945. The change of date was in response to a shortage of shipping and troop transport ships due to the proximity of the Mindoro operation and the delayed establishment of airbases on Leyte.¹⁰⁶ The delay, however, provided needed time to complete the preparations for the operation, such as developing a better intelligence picture of the Japanese forces on Luzon, emphasizing their strength was higher than initially projected. In response, MacArthur made 1st Cavalry and the 32nd, 33rd, and 41st Infantry Divisions available to the Sixth Army starting on S+18.¹⁰⁷

Sixth Army utilized a similar concept from the Leyte Operation for the Lingayen Gulf landings. The I Corps and XIV Corps would land next to each other at designated beaches with two divisions abreast. A naval task force was assigned to support each corps. Task Force 78, the San Fabian Task Force, commanded by Vice Admiral Adam E. Barbey, was assigned to transport I Corps. Task Force 79, the Lingayen Task Force, commanded by Vice Admiral Theodore Wilkinson was assigned to XIV Corps. Vice-Admiral Thomas Kinkaid supported the overall

¹⁰⁴ Headquarters, Sixth Army, "Field Order 34," November 20, 1944, 3, accessed 23 November 2020, <https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll8/id/4691/rec/6>.

¹⁰⁵ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 29.

¹⁰⁶ *Ibid.*, 22–23.

¹⁰⁷ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:10.

operation, commanding Task Force 77..¹⁰⁸

Luzon Campaign

Sixth Army notified I Corps on 4 October about the Luzon operation while stationed in New Guinea. For the previous three months, I Corps prepared for an assault on the island of Mindanao on the southern end of the Philippine islands that was then canceled for the Mike I operation. Under Mike I, I Corps was assigned the 6th and 42nd Infantry Divisions, and then constituted a reserve of the 63rd RCT from the 6th Infantry Division. Both divisions previously received training and gained combat experience in amphibious landings through the New Guinea campaign. In total, I Corps was responsible for over 50,000 troops at the start of the operation..¹⁰⁹

I Corp's initial tasks only supported the Sixth Army's first phase of operations and were responsible for landing at the Blue and White beaches in the vicinity of San Fabian and Damortis and securing the bridge at Dagupan. See Figure 2. On order, I Corps would seize crossing sites over the Agno River within the I Corps boundaries. Throughout the operation, they were responsible for protecting the left (east) flank of the Sixth Army and maintaining contact with adjacent units..¹¹⁰ The I Corps published Field Order 1 on 25 November 1944 outlining the plan for the operation.

The order did not establish set phasing for the operation, only highlighting the Sixth Army's three phases. However, as the history of the Luzon Campaign was compiled, the operation was organized into four phases. Phase one was establishing the initial beachhead, began on S-day and ended on 14 January. Phase two, extending the beachhead, began on 15 January and continued through 19 January. Phase three, cutting Luzon in half, began on 20 January with the

¹⁰⁸ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 32–33.

¹⁰⁹ Headquarters, I Corps, "Field Order No. I," November 25, 1944, 60, accessed 23 August 2020, <https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll8/id/4625/rec/13>.

¹¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 3.

publishing of Sixth Army Field Order 44 with I Corps in position to secure the left flank for XIV Corps to attack south to secure Clark Field and ended 12 February when elements of 6ID reached

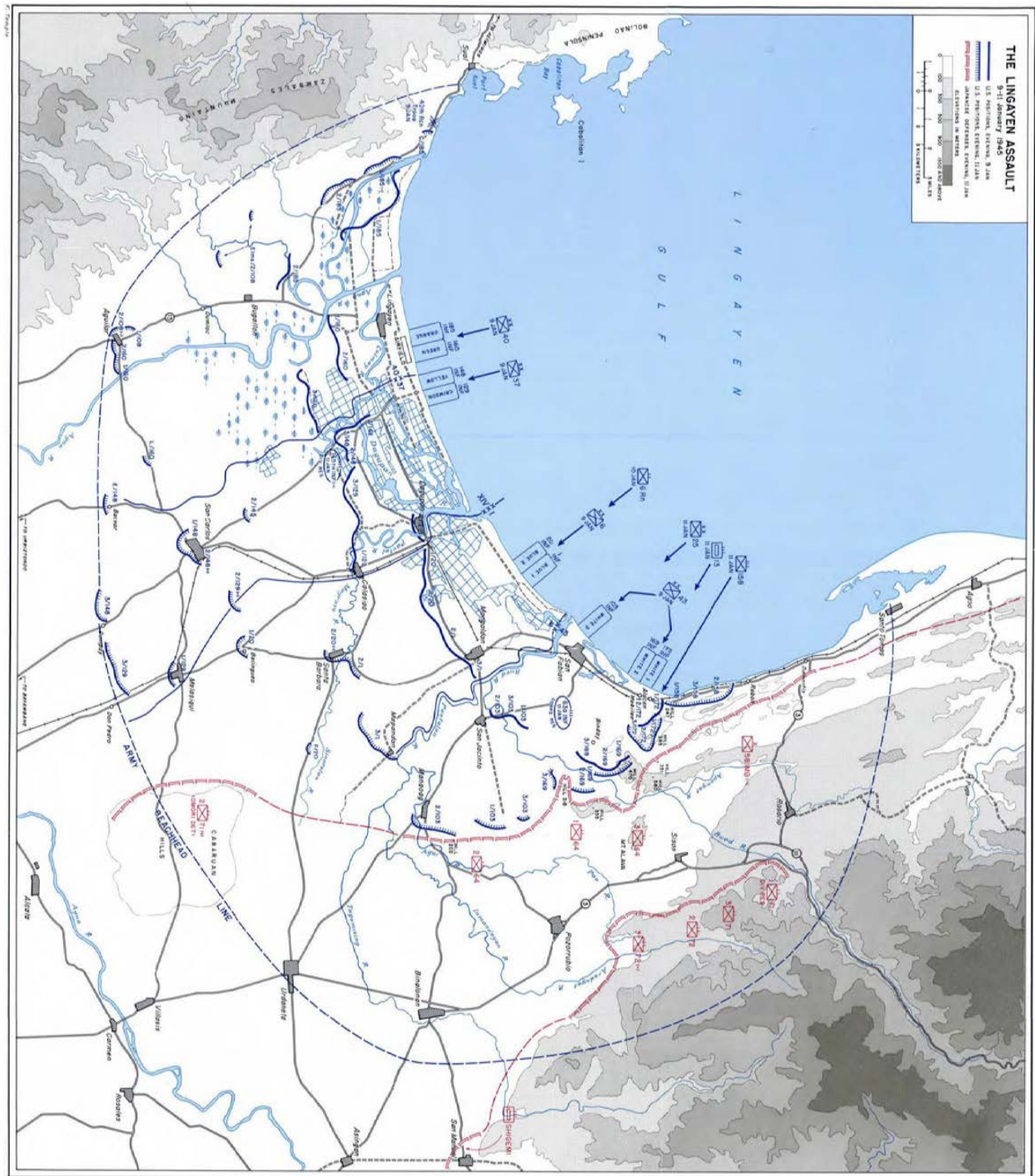


Figure 2. The Lingayen Assault. Robert Ross Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, US Government Printing Office, 1993), 757.

Baler Bay on the east coast of Luzon. Phase four, the drive to the north, began on 13 February after seizing the Central Plains. This phase continued through 30 June when MacArthur announced the end of the Luzon Campaign. The Sixth Army relieved I Corps of responsibility for Northern Luzon to begin planning and preparing for the invasion of Japan.¹¹¹

Field Order 1 tasked the 6th Infantry Division with landing on Blue Beaches One and Two with one RCT at each. Their organic 63rd RCT was detached to serve as the Corps reserve for the operation. From there, 6th ID was to secure the Dagupan bridge on the western side, within the XIV Corps boundary, until they could assume responsibility. Then throughout the operation, they were to maintain contact with their adjacent units and aggressively attack south to the designated beachhead line.¹¹²

I Corps tasked the 43rd Infantry Division with landing on White Beaches One, Two, and Three with one RCT at each beach.¹¹³ The three White beaches were spread out nearly twice as far as the Blue Beaches due to the terrain. To mitigate the risk of being stranded on the isthmus surrounded by fish hatcheries and the Bued River, the I Corps augmented the 43rd with the 533rd Boat and Shore Regiment to establish a ferry service over the Bued River at San Fabian.¹¹⁴ The operations order tasked the 43rd to seize the high ground to the north-east to deny the Japanese forces' observation of the landing beaches. Lastly, they were to attack with a minimal force towards Rabon and pass the 158th RCT when they arrived on S+2.¹¹⁵

The delayed start date created time for the divisions to conduct additional training and rehearsals in their separate locations. The 6th Infantry Division prepared from Sansapor, New Guinea, utilizing the time to conduct familiarization training with the Philippines and organizing

¹¹¹ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 123.

¹¹² Headquarters, I Corps, "Field Order No. I," 4–5.

¹¹³ *Ibid.*, 5.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

the supplies and equipment for movement. Finally, the 6th Infantry Division conducted their rehearsal on Christmas 1944 without unloading the ships' supplies. The rehearsal focused on loading and moving the Landing Vehicle, Tanks (LVTs), which served as the primary landing vehicle for the first three waves. They loaded up in the following days and left Sansapor on 29 December.¹¹⁶ The 43rd Infantry Division conducted their preparation in Aitape, New Guinea. Upon notification of the Mike I operation, the 43rd Infantry Division required fielding and training with the LVTs. Once completed, they finished their loading activities on 25 December, facilitating landing rehearsals on 27 December. The 43rd departed on the evening of 28 December.¹¹⁷

Assault at Lingayen Gulf

The ships from Task Group 77.2, the bombardment and fire support group, under the command of Vice Admiral Jesse B. Oldendorf, arrived on 6 January 1945, began the bombardment of Japanese coastal defenses and airfields, and prepared Lingayen Gulf for the arrival of the attack forces.¹¹⁸ Minesweeper ships cleared lanes and staging areas, finding fewer than expected mines. However, they encountered heavy kamikaze aircraft attacks throughout the day, and incurred heavy casualties. By the end of 6 January, one ship in TG77.2 was sunk, with 16 of the 164 ships damaged and over 200 sailors killed.¹¹⁹ As a result, the significant damage done by kamikaze aircraft prompted Oldendorf to request additional fighter support over the Luzon airfields for the next day. His request was supported by Third Fleet, which required them

¹¹⁶ Division Public Relations Section, *The 6th Infantry Division in World War II: 1939-1945* (Nashville, TN: The Battery Press, n.d.), 59. LVTs, also known as Amphibious Tractors, were an amphibious tracked vehicle with armor protection that could traverse from ship to shore with personnel and cargo. Their tracks allowed them to traverse quickly over coral reefs and continue movement to beaches. They also provided limited light armor support to ground forces once ashore.

¹¹⁷ Headquarters, 43rd Infantry Division, "Luzon Campaign: Forty Third Infantry Division," 11.

¹¹⁸ Morison, *The Liberation of the Philippines: Luzon, Mindanao, the Visayas 1944-1945*, 98–115.

¹¹⁹ *Ibid.*, 110–11.

to cancel planned strikes on Formosa to fulfill the request..¹²⁰

The conditions improved over 7-8 January. Fewer kamikaze attacks permitted the landing of underwater demolition teams on the assault beaches..¹²¹ The teams encountered minor resistance and completed surveys of the beaches, revealing no obstacles against expectations and favorable beach conditions..¹²²

Unexpectedly on the morning of 8 January, as the bombardment began for the day, a group of nearly 100 civilians waving American and Philippine flags gathered in the town of Lingayen in the XIV Corps' area..¹²³ The firing ceased long enough to drop fliers telling them to disperse and seek cover..¹²⁴ Firing resumed after giving them enough time to disperse. Oldendorf was uneasy after completing the bombardment mission. The Japanese tactic of pulling back to fortified positions was known at this point, and the civilian presence suggested that the beaches were clear and there was not a forward defense as expected..¹²⁵ The result was significant losses of life and damage to ships that may have been unnecessary. However, the potential damage Kamikaze aircraft could have inflicted on the landing forces would have been substantial had the bombardment group not been present. The conditions were thus set for the landings.

On the morning of 9 January 1945, S-Day, Task Group 78 entered Lingayen Gulf and prepared for the assault on the White and Blue beaches. The command of the San Fabian bombardment group transitioned over to Barbey as they approached their anchorages..¹²⁶ The pre-landing bombardment commenced at 0700 on S-day as planned, and the landing force began

¹²⁰ MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. I, 258.

¹²¹ Morison, *The Liberation of the Philippines*, 112.

¹²² Ibid.

¹²³ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 68.

¹²⁴ Ibid., 68-9.

¹²⁵ Ibid.

¹²⁶ Ibid., 69.

loading their landing craft. At 0900, the landing craft were cleared to cross the line of departure approximately 4000 yards from the beaches. The leading waves comprised of LVTs with Landing Craft, Infantry (LCIs), rigged with rockets in front of them for additional fire support. The bombardment group shifted fires to deep and flank targets as the LCIs reached the trigger to fire their rockets at 2,700 yards from the beach to prevent projected reinforcements from reaching the landing beach.¹²⁷ The first wave of troops from the 43rd ID landed at exactly 0930, H-hour, on White beaches. The 6th ID landed on both Blue beaches at 0939.¹²⁸

The 43rd ID on the White beaches encountered most of the Japanese resistance to the landings on S-day. They received indirect artillery fire and direct fire from a 75-mm gun position from the hills to the northeast. The 75-mm gun position damaged multiple LSTs and the destroyer USS Jenkins but did not stop landing and offloading at the beaches.¹²⁹ The division rapidly secured its initial objectives with the Alcan railroad crossing and the town of San Fabian, both secured by 1030. MG Leonard F. Wing moved ashore and assumed command of the division at 1430.¹³⁰

From there, I Corps tasked the division to reach the first dominant terrain features to the north and east to dislodge the Japanese defenders firing on the beaches. By the end of the day, the 43rd ID found itself spread out with the 103rd RCT oriented south near San Jacinto, the 169th RCT in the hills north of Binday oriented east, and the 172nd RCT vicinity the roadblocks and eastern hills at Mabilao, north of the landing beaches.¹³¹

¹²⁷ Morison, *The Liberation of the Philippines*, 127; Barbey, *MacArthur's Amphibious Navy*, 112–119. Some LCIs were retrofitted with twelve rocket launchers, each holding twelve 4.5in rockets, that were used to bombard the landing beaches ahead of the first assault wave.

¹²⁸ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 25.

¹²⁹ Morison, *The Liberation of the Philippines*, 132.

¹³⁰ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 25; Headquarters, Sixth Army, “Field Order 34,” 6.

¹³¹ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 81.

The 6th ID experienced no resistance on the Blue Beaches and immediately moved cross the Binloc river and through the fish hatcheries and rice paddies.¹³² MG Edwin D. Patrick assumed command of the division at 1445 as the division secured its initial objectives.¹³³ By nightfall, the 6th ID secured the bridge at Dagupan, linked up with the XIV Corps, and established defenses along the highway between Dagupan and Mangaldan.¹³⁴ The division had a difficult time moving supplies inland over the Bued River and required Bailey bridges to be brought ashore ahead of schedule. The assault waves crossed in their LVTs, but the sustainment assets relied on trucks to move supplies inland. On S+1, Bailey bridge materials were brought ashore for engineers to bridge the Binloc River, which was operational on the afternoon of S+3.¹³⁵

The 158th RCT, under the command of BG Hanford MacNider, landed 10 January on landing beach White 1.¹³⁶ Sixth Army retained control and sent the 158th north to assist the 43rd by securing Rabon and Damortis. After securing the towns, the 158th attacked to secure the hills to the east. They were met with stiff resistance and indirect fire, forcing a withdrawal.¹³⁷

Swift moved ashore and assumed command of I Corps on 11 January. At this point, the situation revealed that the preponderance of the Japanese defense was to the north instead of in the Central Plains and that he would not be able to advance as quickly as intended. The XIV Corps had already reached the beachhead line and was prepared to continue their advance. 6th ID

¹³² Sixth Infantry Division, *Sixth Infantry Division: Report of the Luzon Campaign*, 1945, 5, accessed 16 September 2020, <https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll8/id/5188/rec/7>.

¹³³ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 25.

¹³⁴ *Ibid.*, 27.

¹³⁵ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 202. Bailey Bridges use prefabricated bridge segments to bridge different-size gaps and could be configured to withstand different weight limits.

¹³⁶ Headquarters, 43rd Infantry Division, "Luzon Campaign: Forty Third Infantry Division," 8.

¹³⁷ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*.

made good progress in the center, but the 43rd needed to secure the heights to the north to protect the beaches and prevent a counterattack from the north and protect the Sixth Army's left flank. I Corps rapidly reached the point where it could not continue to secure the Agno River and address the threats to the north while maintaining a continuous front. Swift committed the Corps' reserve, the 63rd RCT, to the 43rd on 12 January to fill a growing gap between the 158th RCT and 172nd RCT. Krueger attached the 158th RCT to I Corps and subsequently to the 43rd ID on the same day.¹³⁸ The 43rd ID now controlled five RCTs.

Engineers and approximately 400 Filipino laborers completed repairs on the Lingayen airstrip on 15 January. The 308th Bombardment Wing (Heavy) flew to the completed airstrip and assumed responsibilities for air support from the aircraft carriers that supported the landings. Engineers built a second airstrip in dried-up rice paddies at Mangaldan, which was completed and put into service on 22 January. Fifth Air Force elements and Marine Air Groups 24 and 32 occupied the fields and provided support from there until Clark Field was seized and any necessary repairs completed.¹³⁹

Extending the Beachhead

Krueger understood the implications of the fighting in the north and committed the 25th ID to I Corps on 16 January. The 25th ID under MG Charles L. Mullens' command moved into a sector between Urdaneta and Pozorrubio.¹⁴⁰ The 25th ID created space for the 6th ID to continue its maneuver to the southeast to secure the beachhead line, Route 3, and reach the Agno River.¹⁴¹ See Figure 3. The 1st RCT secured the town of Urdaneta on the evening of 17 January after a determined Japanese defense supported by artillery and 47mm anti-tank guns.¹⁴² Meanwhile, the

¹³⁸ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 105.

¹³⁹ Ibid., 132–3.

¹⁴⁰ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 32.

¹⁴¹ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 140.

¹⁴² Sixth Infantry Division, *Sixth Infantry Division: Report of the Luzon Campaign*, 10.

20th RCT began the fight for the Cabaruan Hills.

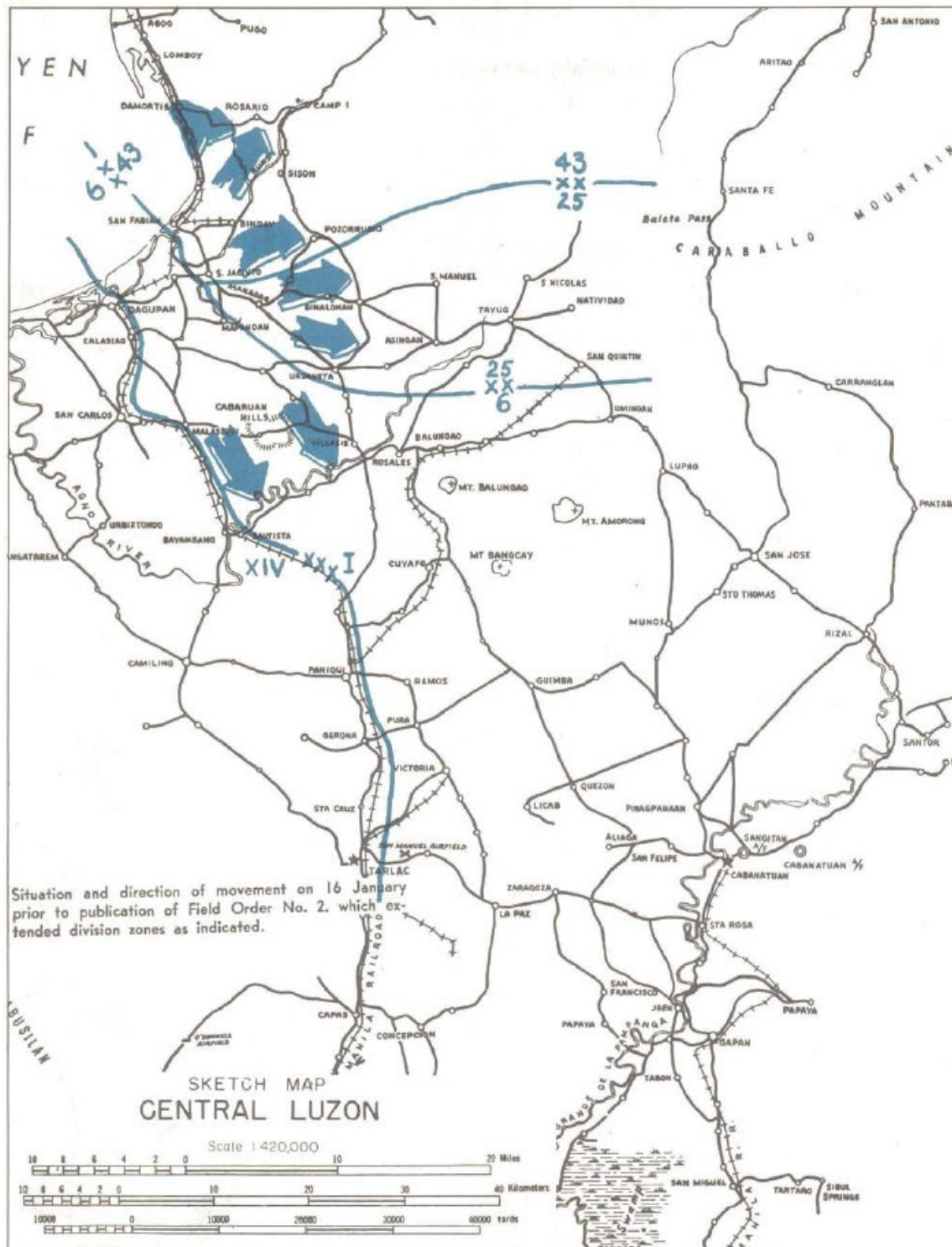


Figure 3. Extending the Beachhead. Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 1946, 31, accessed 23 August 2020, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll8/id/3367>

The 20th RCT conducted reconnaissance and started the movement to the Cabaruan Hills

on 16 January as the 25th ID moved into position. Once the 35th was in place, the 20th RCT continued their attack. Over the next three days, the 20th RCT attacked the hills' western and southern portions with little resistance. 20th RCT believed the battle to be nearly over and planned to attack the final eastern part of the hills on 22 January after a full day of artillery and air preparation of the objective on 21 January.¹⁴³

MacArthur, though, was unhappy with the pace of operations up to this point. He had promised the Joint Chiefs of Staff that he could secure the Central Plains and Manila within four to six weeks after the landing.¹⁴⁴ The strong Japanese positions to the north, close to the logistics base, possessed the capacity to counterattack with significant strength, causing Krueger to concentrate on destroying the northern forces before committing to an attack south. Differences in the projected Japanese strength on Luzon influenced the pace, and the risk that Krueger was prepared to accept. The Sixth Army intelligence estimated 234,500 Japanese on Luzon, while SWPA analysts estimated only 152,500 Japanese. The actual number of Japanese forces on Luzon was approximately 250,000.¹⁴⁵ The total US forces on the ground were 175,000, with only 110,000 of those combat troops.¹⁴⁶ In addition to his promise, MacArthur required the use of Luzon for heavy bombers to support operations in Iwo Jima and Okinawa.¹⁴⁷ The two commanders agreed on echeloning I Corps to the south to cover the advance of XIV Corps. Krueger cautiously increased the pace allowing for the attack south to Clark Field before he preferred. The feared massive counterattack never materialized by a matter of chance.

The Fifth Air Force bombed rail and road bridges until 19 January when Sixth Army

¹⁴³ Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Sixth Army, "Battle for the Cabaruan Hills," *Sixth Army Combat Notes*, July 1945, 2–6, accessed 12 February 2021, <https://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/p4013coll8/id/4512/rec/6>.

¹⁴⁴ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 140–1.

¹⁴⁵ *Ibid.*, 141.

¹⁴⁶ *Ibid.*

¹⁴⁷ *Ibid.*

requested to focus on bombing moving vehicles and trains.¹⁴⁸ Combined with guerilla sabotage and Japanese destruction of bridges behind their movement, the Japanese 2nd Tank Division's routes were blocked, forcing them to fight generally in position.¹⁴⁹ Denied the armored counterattack in the Central Plains, the Japanese 58th IMB and 23rd ID conducted counterattacks along the north flank of I Corps, attempting to recapture lost positions and affect the US support area.

To the north, the 25th ID secured Binalonan and cut off Route 3, the north-south road used by the Japanese to move supplies into the mountains.¹⁵⁰ On 18 January, I Corps changed the southern 25th ID boundary to include Urdaneta, freeing the 6th ID to continue advancing towards the Agno River. The next day 1st BN 1st RCT seized the town of Villasis and crossed the Agno River. They found that the Japanese or Army air forces destroyed the Paridel bridge south of Villasis, so vehicles and equipment were moved across the river using LVTs.¹⁵¹

With conditions set, the 43rd ID secured Pozorubio and prepared to defend against a Japanese counterattack from the mountains, allowing the 172nd RCT to attack the hills overlooking Rosario and the valley. The fighting in the hills was fierce. The dug-in Japanese positions proved resistant to the constant naval gunfire, bombing, and artillery, which forced them to reduce each position individually.¹⁵² Soldiers resorted to using flame throwers, bazookas, and white phosphorus grenades to clear the defenders out of the caves and tunnels. The 43rd ID received multiple counterattacks throughout the nights of 16-17 January, all of which were repulsed, inflicting over fifty casualties and destroying eleven tanks.¹⁵³ The 169th RCT received

¹⁴⁸ Haughland, *The AAF Against Japan*, 249.

¹⁴⁹ MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. II, part 1, 469,477.

¹⁵⁰ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 32.

¹⁵¹ *Ibid.*, 34.

¹⁵² Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:23.

¹⁵³ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 112–4.

a massive counterattack on the morning of 19 January near Sison. The 169th RCT eventually repulsed the Japanese battalion, killing over 950 Japanese, but sustained over 400 casualties before they were forced to withdraw south under heavy artillery support.¹⁵⁴ While not at the assigned corps' limit of advance, the 43rd and its attachments successfully protected the Sixth Army's northern flank.

Cutting Luzon in Half

I Corps Field Order 3, published 19 January, initiated 25th ID's attack east to clear the remaining Japanese positions west and secure crossing sites along the Agno River.¹⁵⁵ See Figure 4. The primary Japanese force remaining was the Shigemi Detachment at San Manuel, whose total strength was around 1,000 soldiers supported by 15 anti-tank guns and 45 tanks.¹⁵⁶ Unbeknownst to Mullins, the Shigemi Detachment planned to fight to the death in place due to the lack of suitable roads and river crossing sites to retrograde the tanks and rolling stock.

Mullins assigned the 161st RCT to conduct the attack against San Manuel.¹⁵⁷ The attack commenced on 23 January with 2nd BN seizing the hill to the north of the town, cutting off escape routes for the Japanese. The following day, the attack resumed with poor results. The 2nd BN, with attached tanks, attacked from the south of the town and became bogged down trying to cross a drainage ditch lined by trees. Japanese counterattacks with infantry and supported by tanks halted the 2nd BN attack on the north side of San Manuel, limiting the 161st RCT to a small foothold.¹⁵⁸ Between 25 and 26 January, 2nd BN continued to fight block by block through San Manuel. In the early morning of 28 January, the Japanese conducted a large counterattack with infantry supported by tanks. After numerous attacking waves, the remaining three Japanese tanks

¹⁵⁴ Headquarters, 43rd Infantry Division, "Luzon Campaign: Forty Third Infantry Division," 13.

¹⁵⁵ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 34.

¹⁵⁶ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 158.

¹⁵⁷ Ibid.

¹⁵⁸ Ibid., 159.

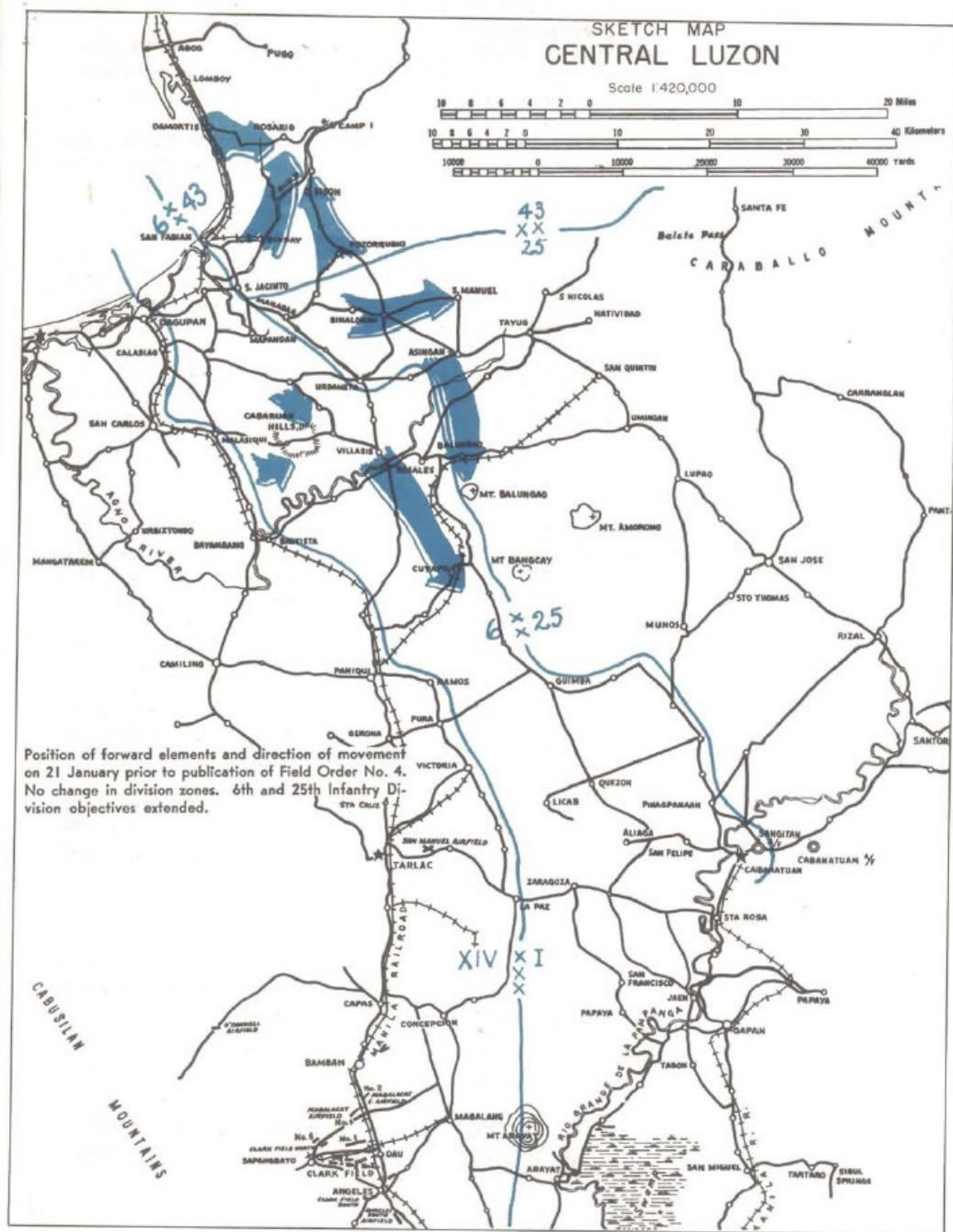


Figure 4. Cutting Luzon in Half. Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945, 1946*, 37, accessed 23 August 2020, <http://cgsc.contentdm.oclc.org/cdm/ref/collection/p4013coll8/id/3367>

and soldiers retrograded to the town's southeastern corner, and many began to flee to the east..¹⁵⁹ After air and artillery bombardment, the 161st RCT massed for a final attack..¹⁶⁰ By the end of the day, San Manuel was secured, with 750 Japanese killed and all tanks destroyed..¹⁶¹

The 6th ID continued the fight for the Cabaruan Hills while maintaining momentum in their attack. An hour-long bombardment by artillery and air support preempted the 20th RCT's 22 January attack for the final assault on the Japanese position. The attack ended abruptly after initial successes due to concentrated machine gun and field gunfire, forcing the 2nd BN, 20th RCT to fall back into defensible positions for the night. The 20th RCT received additional battalions from the 1st RCT over the next six days to encircle the position and clear it from east to west. On the final attack on 28 January, a captured Japanese soldier pointed out the remaining Japanese defenses to 1st BN, 1st RCT enabling a rapid attack, which destroyed the prepared emplacements by 1600. When they subsequently cleared the position the next morning, little remained of the reinforced Japanese battalion. In total, 1,432 Japanese were killed, and 7 Japanese captured..¹⁶²

Simultaneously, Swift, wanting to end the persistent threat to the north flank of I Corps, issued Field Order 5 on 24 January, directing the 43rd to make a coordinated attack against Rosario and the hills overwatching the town 2km north..¹⁶³ The division used the day to conduct planning and preparation for the attack the next morning. Extensive preparation from artillery and air support enabled them to advance towards their objectives rapidly. The 43rd received heavy counterattacks and artillery fire on the night of 25 January as the Japanese attempted to retake their positions..¹⁶⁴ The dominant terrain east of the road leading from Pozorrubio through Rosario

¹⁵⁹ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 159-60.

¹⁶⁰ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 27.

¹⁶¹ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 160.

¹⁶² Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Sixth Army, "Battle for the Cabaruan Hills," 10.

¹⁶³ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 39-40.

¹⁶⁴ Headquarters, 43rd Infantry Division, "Luzon Campaign: Forty Third Infantry Division," 16-7.

into the mountains and area north of the road connecting Damortis and Rosario were secured by 27 January, leaving minor mopping up operations for the 43rd on 28 January. They finally reached the designated beachhead line.¹⁶⁵

The 32nd ID arrived on Luzon on 27 January, and Sixth Army assigned them to I Corps.¹⁶⁶ Swift then assigned the 32nd to a sector between the 43rd ID and 25th ID, assuming responsibility for San Manuel from the 25th ID. The reduced frontage allowed the 25th ID to continue attacking east towards Umingan without creating a gap in the front. Krueger withheld a regiment from the 32nd ID to serve as Sixth Army's reserve and released the 35th RCT back to 25th ID for the attack.¹⁶⁷ The 32nd took control of the sector on 30 January and immediately began advancing east.¹⁶⁸ I Corps now controlled four divisions, twice what they had previously commanded to that point.

The 28th of January proved to be a notable day for I Corps. The battles for the Cabaruan Hills, San Manuel, and Rosario area all ended the same day freeing the 6th and 25th IDs to continue attacking southeast.¹⁶⁹ The remaining Japanese forces from the Central Plains and units moving north from the Manila areas consolidated in a defense of the passes leading into the Cagaulan Valley, which served as the heart of the Shobu Group and as their primary source of food. The Japanese established defenses around San Jose and the outlying towns of Muñoz, Umingan, and Lupao to maintain the last open line of communication into the Cagayan valley. Krueger was fearful that I Corps would become overextended when they continued their attack, especially given the large Japanese force at San Jose.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁵ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:27.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.

¹⁶⁷ Ibid.

¹⁶⁸ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 44-6.

¹⁶⁹ Ibid.

¹⁷⁰ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 181.

By 30 January, the 1st Cavalry Division was staged in Guimba and prepared to attack towards Manila. The fighting in the Fort Stotenseburg area, west of Clark Field, was nearing completion and created the conditions for two divisions to advance towards Manila.¹⁷¹ Krueger decided the final condition to commit the attack towards Manila was for I Corps to seize San Jose. I Corps issued Field Order 8 on 31 January, directing the attack against San Jose starting on 1 February.¹⁷² To take the objective as quickly as possible, Swift planned to seize San Jose with a double envelopment, the 6th ID attacking north through Muñoz as the main effort and the 25th ID attacking east as a supporting effort through Umingan, San Roque, and Lupa.¹⁷³ Each division received augmentation of two or three artillery battalions, a mortar company, and a tank company.¹⁷⁴

The attack started with both divisions experiencing heavier resistance than expected. The 27th RCT, 25th ID attacked Umingan on 1 February on the northern and western sides of town after the 5th Airforce dropped over eight tons of bombs, only to be stopped by heavy Japanese fire.¹⁷⁵ Mullins ordered the 35th RCT to bypass Umingan to the south, and they occupied San Roque without a fight.¹⁷⁶ The 20th RCT, 6th ID attacked Muñoz simultaneously and was stopped outside of town by heavy tank, artillery, and machine gun fire. Patrick similarly ordered the 1st RCT to move about six miles northeast to recon a crossing site over the Talavera River. He then directed the 63rd RCT to bypass Muñoz to the east and occupy positions north of town in preparation for an attack from the enemy's rear.

¹⁷¹ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:31.

¹⁷² *Ibid.*, 32.

¹⁷³ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 47.

¹⁷⁴ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 193.

¹⁷⁵ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 195; Wesley Frank Craven and James Lea Cate, *The Army Air Forces in World War II* (Washington, DC: Office of Air Force History, 1983), 429.

¹⁷⁶ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 196.

The next day, the 25th ID was surprised when most of the defenders of Umingan retrograded into the hills to the north. Only two small pockets of resistance remained. The 35th RCT then moved to attack Lupao, where the defenders stopped their advance through heavy artillery, tank, and machine gun fire like that experienced at Muñoz. Mullins ordered the 161st RCT to bypass Lupao and move south to San Isidro, isolating Lupao and occupying a position to assist 6th ID at San Jose.¹⁷⁷ 6th ID attacked San Jose with two regiments on the morning of 4 February only to find that the enemy had mostly evacuated the town.¹⁷⁸ The remaining units from the Japanese Tsuda Detachment and the 10th Division moved north along Route 5 in the direction of Yamashita. The only remaining resistance in the area was at Muñoz and Lupao, with both positions isolated.

The 6th ID's attacks against Muñoz were stopped again on 6 February by intense resistance. Patrick requested additional air and artillery assets for a massive bombardment before attacking on 7 February. The attack consisted of bombing and strafing from over fifty aircraft from the Fifth Air Force, culminating with a large napalm strike. All 6th ID and I Corp artillery would then begin firing on Muñoz as the infantry approached. However, the Japanese in Muñoz upset the plan. On the evening of 6 February, the Japanese 2nd Tank Division attempted to break out and rejoin the defenses in the north. Unfortunately, they were not aware that Muñoz was completely isolated. After a small diversionary attack south, the remainder of the unit moved north in a column along Route 5. The combined force of the small arms fire from 63rd RCT, two artillery battalions utilizing direct fire, and G CO, 44th Tank Battalion destroyed all the vehicles, stopping the breakout.¹⁷⁹ The following day, 6th ID cleared Muñoz with minimal contact. Subsequently, on 8 February, 25th ID completed seizing Lupao. The Japanese 2nd Tank Division

¹⁷⁷ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 196–7.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid., 200.

¹⁷⁹ Sixth Infantry Division, *Sixth Infantry Division: Report of the Luzon Campaign*, 30–2.

lost 52 tanks and over 1,500 men were killed in the defense and breakout of Muñoz. They also lost 166 tanks total defending Muñoz, San Isidro, and Lupao.¹⁸⁰ Due to the losses, Yamashita lost the capability to conduct an armored attack for the rest of the campaign. All subsequent engagements would be defensive and generally static.

I Corps completed bisecting Luzon across the Central Plains when 6th ID patrols completed their reconnaissance in force to Dingalan Bay and Baler Bay on 12 February without encountering any Japanese resistance.¹⁸¹ It took 34 days of hard fighting for I Corps to advance approximately 140 km across the Central Plains. On 14 February, Sixth Army directed that 1st RCT from 6th ID consolidate and prepare for movement to Dinalupihan on the Bataan Peninsula under control of the XI Corps.¹⁸² This event marked a pause in operations and facilitated a shift from seizing the Central Plains to preparing to attack north into the Shobu Group.

The Drive North

I Corps' combat divisions were spread thin across the Central Plains' northern edge, but fulfilled their mission to protect XIV Corps' Northern flank, enabling the drive for Manila. See Figure 5. Plans by both Sixth Army and I Corps to attack north were unexpectedly halted on 13 February when SWPA reduced Sixth Army's available forces for the Luzon Campaign from eleven to nine divisions.¹⁸³ SWPA redirected the 41st ID to Eighth Army for operations in the southern Philippine Islands. SWPA also tasked Sixth Army to select a division to disengage from operations on Luzon for transfer to Eighth Army.¹⁸⁴ All further operations required using the forces on hand after receiving the final reinforcing division, the 33rd ID, on 10 February.

¹⁸⁰ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 200; Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 52.

¹⁸¹ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 53–4.

¹⁸² Sixth Infantry Division, *Sixth Infantry Division: Report of the Luzon Campaign*, 34.

¹⁸³ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:45.

¹⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

Situation and direction of movement on 17 February prior to publication of Field Order No. 11, which assigned the mission of securing the Corps southwest flank to the 169th Regimental Combat Team.

**SKETCH MAP
CENTRAL LUZON**

Scale 1:420,000

10 Miles
16 Kilometers
4000 Yards

48

organization changes for I Corps given the new constraints and priorities.¹⁸⁵ The 33rd ID replaced the 43rd ID and 158th RCT in position, then the 43rd assumed the role of Sixth Army's reserve, serving as a chance to refit and recover from over a month of hard fighting. The 6th ID was detached and placed under XIV Corps' control assisting the fight against the Shimbu Group.¹⁸⁶ At that point, I Corps controlled the 25th, 32nd, and 33rd divisions, protecting the northern flank and conducting reconnaissance along the northern routes through the end of February.

Swift knew that the next objective was the Shobu Group to the north but did not have a specific plan of attack. With his limited number of divisions, he had to prioritize efforts to protect the northern flank. Sixth Army authorized reconnaissance to the north but did not seek decisive engagement until additional combat power was made available.¹⁸⁷ Swift believed that he needed at least four divisions, preferring five or more, to continue his attack north to Baguio and Bambang.¹⁸⁸ Both Swift and Krueger agreed that they did not want to give Yamashita time to concentrate his remaining forces in the final defensive positions known as the triangular redoubt around the towns of Baguio, Bontoc, and Bambang.¹⁸⁹

The 25th ID's reconnaissance of Route 5 resulted in meeting determined resistance from screening forces near the towns of Didig and Puncan.¹⁹⁰ The 32nd ID conducted reconnaissance from Santa Maria north along the Vella Verde Trail, a winding road that leads to the northeast

¹⁸⁵ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:46–7.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid.

¹⁸⁷ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 458.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid., 449, 463.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid., 453.

¹⁹⁰ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:46–7.

into the Caraballo Mountains towards Santa Fe.¹⁹¹ They experienced stubborn Japanese resistance along the Vella Verde Trail, and made slow but steady progress through Japanese pillboxes and cave positions with interlocking fields of fire.¹⁹² Meanwhile, the 33rd ID attacked along the southern approach to Baguio and conducted reconnaissance patrols along Route 2 and the west coast towards Bauang.

After successful progress in Manila and the surrounding areas, Krueger received MacArthur's permission to reallocate the 37th ID to I Corps to renew offensive action to the north. Krueger reassigned the 37th ID to I Corps on 7 April after they refit from operations in Manila in preparation to join the 33rd ID in attacking Baguio.¹⁹³ The attack began on 8 April and continued through 27 April.¹⁹⁴ The Japanese fought to the death through a series of subsequent positions that were well camouflaged and made the most of the terrain. The final attack on Baguio received extensive artillery and air preparation, destroying the business district.¹⁹⁵ However, the defenders retrograded out of town before the attack, leaving needed supplies behind, but surviving to continue fighting.¹⁹⁶ On 28 April, the 37th ID turned Baguio over to the 33rd ID and moved to positions north of the town and along the coast at San Jose. Then on 2 May, I Corps Field Order 16 directed the 148th RCT to be detached from the 37th ID and attached to the 25th ID.¹⁹⁷ A few days later, Field Order 17 assigned the 126th RCT from 32nd ID to 25th ID to support the advance north along the Villa Verde Trail.¹⁹⁸

¹⁹¹ Ibid., 1:47–8.

¹⁹² Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 63–4.

¹⁹³ MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. I, 284–5.

¹⁹⁴ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:85–6.

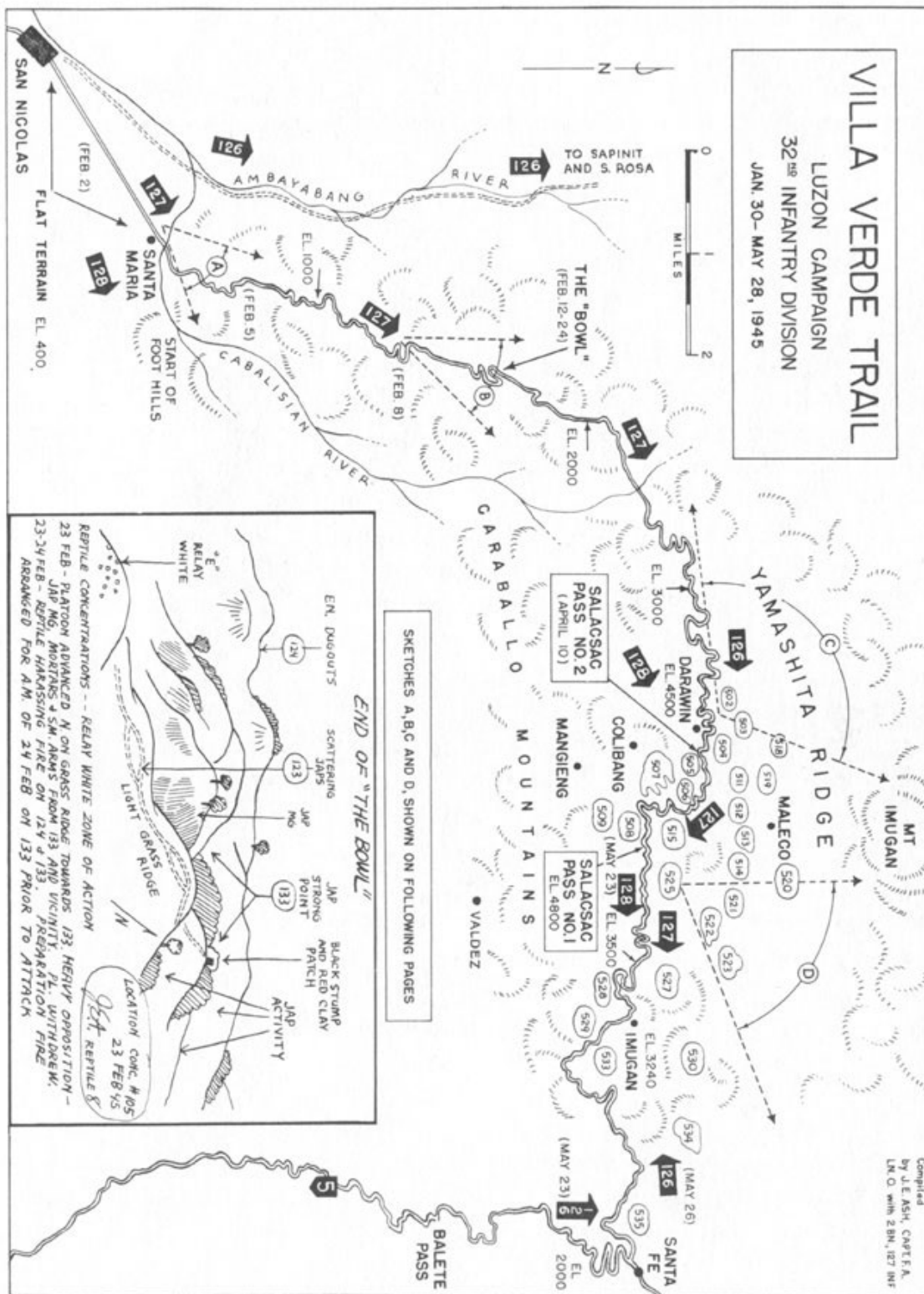
¹⁹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁹⁶ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 487–8.

¹⁹⁷ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 81–4.

¹⁹⁸ Ibid., 88–9.

The 32nd ID continued slowly advancing along the Villa Verde Trail while the 33rd ID fought for Baguio. See Figure 6. They faced the Japanese reformed 2nd Tank Division, with only



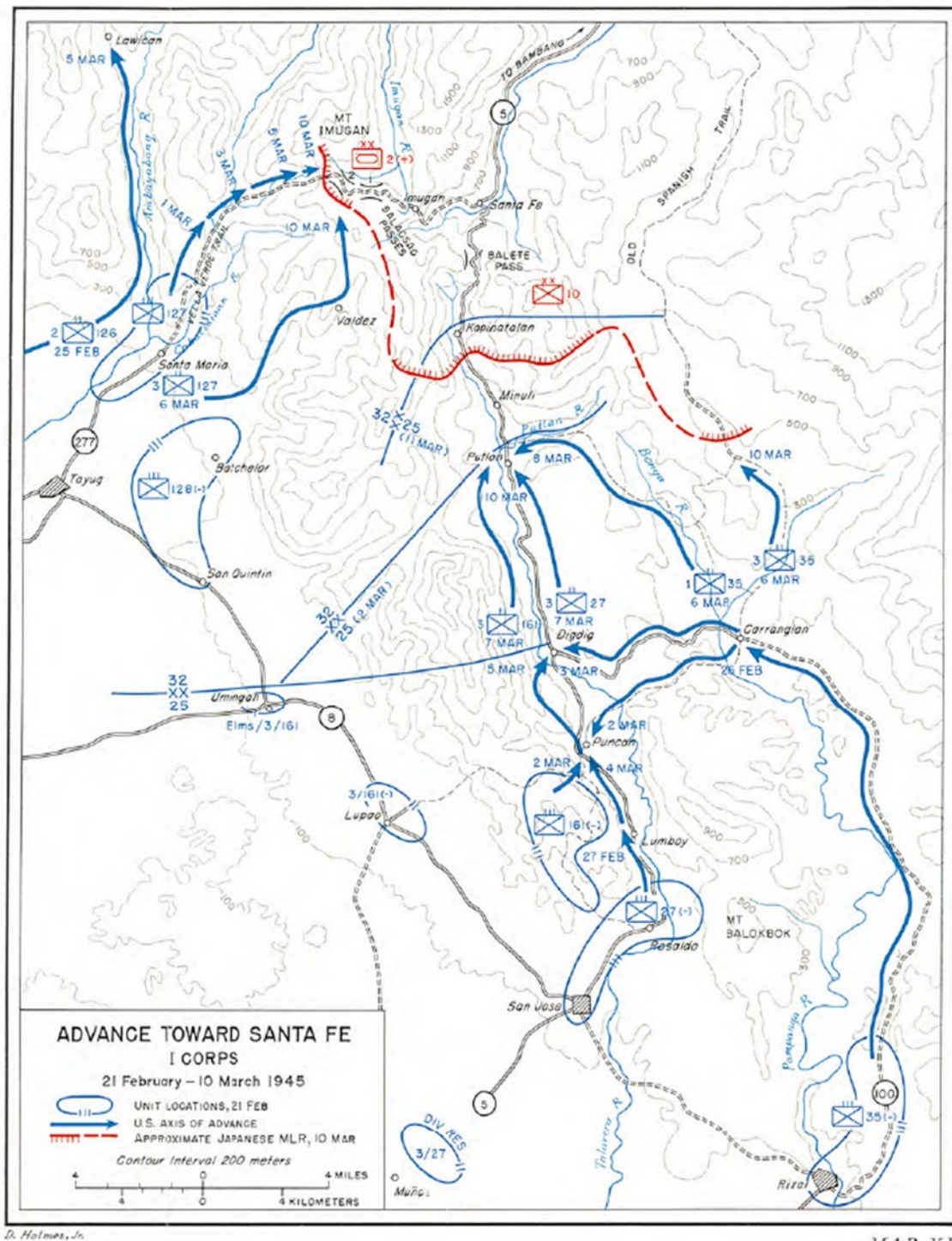


Figure 7. Advance Toward Santa Fe. Robert Ross Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines* (Washington, DC: Center of Military History, US Army, 1993), 767.

infantry due to the loss of their tanks in the Central Plains.¹⁹⁹ The 2nd Tank Division occupied positions that were prepared over the previous six months, which used the rolling terrain to their advantage.²⁰⁰ By 23 May, I Corps realized that the objective of Santa Fe on the eastern end of the Villa Verde Trail required more combat power than what the 32nd possessed. I Corps amended their limit of advance to Imugan, which was near their position at the time.²⁰¹ The 25th ID experienced more success along Route 5 and was able to capture Santa Fe quicker and assist along the Villa Verde Trail moving east towards Imugan. See Figure 7. While not capable of reaching their initial objective, the 32nd ID destroyed the 2nd Tank Division killing over 5,750 Japanese soldiers out of the 8,750 that started the defense. The cost to the 32nd ID was 825 dead and 2,160 wounded in the fighting, with an additional 6,000 casualties due to sickness.²⁰²

The focus then shifted to Route 5 and Santa Fe. The 25th ID fought their way slowly north, also facing dedicated resistance and relying on close air support armed with napalm. The two additional RCTs received from the 33rd and 37th IDs helped maintain their progress. Still, Krueger assessed that they would not have enough combat power to exploit north into the Cagayan Valley after capturing Santa Fe without another division present.²⁰³ Therefore, Krueger issued Field Order 62 on 24 May to reassign the 37th ID from the west near Baguio to the San Jose area to prepare to relieve the 25th ID, which secured Santa Fe on 27 May. They then passed the 37th ID, who continued the attack towards Arito along Route 5. The newly-arrived 6th ID, without 1st RCT, followed behind on 11 June and fixed the Japanese positions around

¹⁹⁹ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:47.

²⁰⁰ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 487–8.

²⁰¹ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 90.

²⁰² Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 509–10.

²⁰³ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:88–90.

Kiangan.²⁰⁴

Meanwhile, I Corps created Task Force (TF) Connolly around the 123rd RCT from the 33rd ID, a ranger company, a 105mm howitzer battery, and medical and engineer support augmented from Sixth Army.²⁰⁵ I Corps tasked TF Connolly to attack north along Route 3, the coastal highway, to secure Aparri on the northern tip of Luzon. Also, on 1 June, I Corps received command of the Philippine Guerilla Forces, North Luzon and was tasked with attacking the Japanese supply lines in the north and harassing the north flank of the Japanese positions.

TF Connolly reached Aparri on 21 June and linked up with guerilla forces. Sixth Army decided that additional combat power in the north would completely cut off the remaining Japanese forces and ordered 1/511 PIR to jump into Aparri to assist in clearing the Cagayan Valley.²⁰⁶ On 23 June, the battalion jumped into Camalaniugan Airfield, near Aparri, which TF Connolly secured. Krueger then assigned 1/511 PIR to TF Connolly, which attacked south.²⁰⁷ They captured Gatteran on 25 June and prepared to continue advancing south, completing the encirclement of the Kiangan Pocket.²⁰⁸

On 28 June, MacArthur declared an end to the Luzon Campaign.²⁰⁹ The Japanese still held the Kiangan Pocket in the Caraballo Mountains and the Sierra Madre Mountains along the east coast of the Cagayan Valley, but no longer possessed the capability to threaten the American forces on Luzon. Swift issued Field Order 29, which transferred command of 6th, 32nd, 37th, and the Philippine Guerilla Forces on North Luzon over to XIV Corps and Eighth Army on 30

²⁰⁴ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 569.

²⁰⁵ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 561.

²⁰⁶ Ibid., 569–71.

²⁰⁷ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:96–8

²⁰⁸ Ibid., 1:97.

²⁰⁹ MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. I, 292.

June..²¹⁰ I Corps' new mission was to prepare for an assault on the Japanese home islands under Operation Olympic. However, the follow-on mission did not materialize as Emperor Hirohito surrendered on 15 August and ended the war in the Pacific..²¹¹ That day, Yamashita abandoned the Asin Valley's final positions and surrendered over 50,000 remaining Japanese soldiers on Luzon..²¹²

Analysis

While the Pacific region's current conditions are different from those in 1945, lessons in MDO remain relevant. The analysis focuses on the MDO Tenets of calibrated force posture and convergence, as well as Multi-domain Command and Control.

Calibrated Force Posture

I Corp's Luzon campaign possessed elements of all four sub-categories of Calibrated Force Posture of forward presence forces, expeditionary forces, national-level capabilities, and authorities, contributing to their success. While MDO references forward presence forces in both competition and conflict, the assessment focuses on conflict. After receiving the mission while conducting the Leyte campaign, the I Corps forward presence enabled options for MacArthur and Krueger. While not co-located, the I Corps' forces were forward deployed and established in the SWPA. Both the 6th and 43rd IDs had recently conducted combat operations and possessed the organization, equipment, and training to execute an amphibious assault. The I Corps headquarters also possessed the fires, intel, and command and control systems and developed the procedures to plan the mission requirements for an amphibious assault.

²¹⁰ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 123.

²¹¹ Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 651.

²¹² Smith, *Triumph in the Philippines*, 579; Rein, *Multi-Domain Battle in the Southwest Pacific Theater of World War II*, 159.

There was not a US forward presence force on Luzon for the campaign in 1945, necessitating an amphibious assault to deliver expeditionary combat forces into the fight. The Marines, with six Army divisions, prepared for the Iwo Jima campaign after finishing operations in Palau and the Marianas in the Pacific Ocean Area, making them unable to participate in the Luzon landings.²¹³ Like today, the Marine Corps was not large enough and did not possess the capacity to conduct multiple campaigns in the Pacific simultaneously, requiring Army forces to accomplish tasks for which the Marines were the proponent service.

The landing in Lingayen Gulf required proficiency in amphibious operations and access to specialized landing craft, which I Corps learned in action and developed proficiency through training and rehearsals. Divisions received training through rotations at the amphibious warfare centers in Australia and received improvised training in New Guinea, which instilled and built on the specific requirements to execute an opposed amphibious assault. The capacity to conduct joint planning and execution at the corps level was learned through multiple joint planning conferences and by combat operations leading up to Luzon, such as at Hollandia and Sansapor in New Guinea and the unexecuted plans for the Mindanao operation in the Philippines.

The equipment required to facilitate an opposed ship-to-shore landing also required development. The Marines possessed some landing boats, but most of the craft were not capable of moving large numbers of troops, vehicles, and equipment to shore efficiently without an established port. I Corps was reliant on the Navy to provide enough landing craft and shipping to shore. The fielding of LVTs to augment the Landing Craft Vehicle, Personnel (LCVP) before the Luzon operation fulfilled much of the requirement for delivering combat troops to and beyond the shore. However, the campaign required the use of significant landing craft to bring supplies and equipment ashore to support the fight past the initial landings.

²¹³ Isely, *The US Marines and Amphibious War*, 306–9.

Beyond the ability to project forces onto a hostile shore, I Corps proved to be a proficient expeditionary force. Upon landing, they were prepared to assume combat operations and seized all initial objectives. In the subsequent days, both the 6th and 43rd ID encountered prepared Japanese positions, which were then systematically reduced. Combat operations continued past the bridgehead line with few interruptions even as I Corps integrated and detached divisions and RCTs multiple times while continuing operations. I Corps' systems, planning, and preparation enabled these successful operations while on an island in the southwest Pacific.

National-level capabilities were present for the Luzon Campaign but not integrated at the Corps level. The capabilities available were for intelligence. MacArthur's ULTRA program provided signals intelligence which informed the planning for the operation and provided updates to the enemy situation.²¹⁴ Reports from the MAGIC program, decrypted Japanese Foreign Ministry messages, contributed to the intelligence picture, especially during code changeovers and during periods of radio silence.²¹⁵ The remaining categories for kinetic, cyber-space and space-based assets do not apply to the campaign due to not possessing the capabilities at the time.

For the Mike I operation, Swift possessed some of the authorities outlined within MDO, but many remained at the Sixth Army or SWPA level. Swift possessed the authority to conduct joint planning for the operation within the limits of the authority granted to a Corps Commander.²¹⁶ Planners attended conferences where the details of the requirements were discussed and satisfied. However, Sixth Army made the major decisions and directed the general employment of divisions and independent RCTs. I Corps did receive authorization to coordinate directly with the providers of naval fires and air support. The Amphibious Task Group

²¹⁴ Edward J. Drea, *MacArthur's Ultra: Codebreaking and the War Against Japan 1942-1945* (Lawrence, KS: University of Kansas Press, 1992), 191–201.

²¹⁵ *Ibid.*, 10, 195.

²¹⁶ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:8–10; Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 13.

commander held the authority for directing air support and naval fire for the landings but coordinated with Swift and I Corps staff for targets.²¹⁷ When Fifth Airforce elements established positions on Luzon, Sixth Army delegated coordination for air support down between I Corps and Fifth Airforce.²¹⁸ This meant that I Corps could request support directly but could not change the priority and allocation of aircraft.

Convergence

Convergence is the effect achieved by integrating capabilities across multiple domains through cross-domain synergy, creating an effect greater than achieved individually, enabled by mission command. The I Corps converged its available assets across multiple domains, generating cross-domain synergy throughout the Luzon Campaign. Through cross-domain synergy, units create an over-match of forces and capabilities at desired times to defeat an enemy that may otherwise have an advantage.²¹⁹

I Corps fought the preponderance of the Shobu Group throughout the campaign, placing them at a disadvantageous force ratio. The general rule for an attack against prepared enemy positions is to have three attacking troops to every one defending enemy troop. However, I Corps faced the inverse by initially fielding approximately 50,000 US soldiers against an estimated 152,000 Japanese troops. I Corps overcame the ground overmatch through cross-domain synergy.

The Allies established air superiority over Luzon and sea control before the landings at Lingayen Gulf, allowing Swift to integrate naval fires and air support into the ground campaign with little opposition. These joint fires assisted in the destruction of the Japanese defenses enabling the ground maneuver as displayed in the battles at Rosario, the Cabaruan Hills, Umingan, Baguio, and along Route 5 to Santa Fe. The effects achieved at each position varied,

²¹⁷ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 22.

²¹⁸ Headquarters, Sixth Army, "Field Order 34," 9.

²¹⁹ US Army, TRADOC Pamphlet 525-3-1, 20–3.

demonstrating multiple corps roles within convergence. At Rosario, air and naval fires assisted ground forces in destroying the Japanese artillery that targeted ships and landing craft in the White beach sector.²²⁰ This action demonstrates I Corps' converging capabilities against anti-ship and long-range ground fires to set conditions for joint lines of effort. The remaining battles utilized air support, enabling division and independent RCT maneuver. The destruction of enemy elements from the preparatory fires and air support varied in effectiveness through the different engagements. The Japanese specifically built their defensive positions to withstand bombardment through their construction or location within cave complexes that negated the munitions used against them and necessitated the sequential clearance by ground forces.²²¹

The final portion of convergence addresses a corps' ability to enable convergence at lower echelons by allocating resources, sequencing division maneuver, incorporating deception, and conducting intelligence analysis to support tactical action. Swift provided his division commanders an objective or limit of advance to sequence operations directed by the Sixth Army. The attacks at the Cabaruan Hills and on the approach to Rosario demonstrated this, as the division commanders were in control of the fight and supported by Corps enablers. However, Swift combined efforts of multiple divisions when necessary to achieve the Corps' objectives. The 25th and 6th IDs' attacks at San Jose and the 25th and 32nd IDs' attacks towards Imugan are examples where Swift directed converging division lines of operation supporting the Corps' objectives.

The I Corps did not deliberately plan and execute deception in conjunction with the campaign. Instead, I Corps focused on using its assets to defeat the Japanese positions as the

²²⁰ Morison, *The Liberation of the Philippines*, 138; Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 28; Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:102.

²²¹ Sixth United States Army, *Sixth United States Army: Report of the Luzon Campaign 9 January 1945- 30 June 1945*, 1:103.

leading US elements encountered them, essentially conducting a movement to contact after securing initial objectives once ashore. However, SWPA executed deception operations utilizing naval, air, and guerilla forces prior to and after the landings at Lingayen Gulf to set conditions for ground operations..²²²

Lastly, the I Corps intelligence section conducted intelligence analysis through information collected from different units and echelons. The SWPA's intelligence estimate of the Japanese forces on Luzon was wrong and the I Corps G-2 Intelligence shop assisted in bringing this to light. A photo intelligence section coordinated with Air Force and Navy intelligence services to gather imagery from requested areas, which was then shared with the divisions. The language detachment received and translated captured documents and conducted interrogations of prisoners. The I Corps G-2 also utilized a team to assess the Japanese order of battle through multiple sources and produce updated maps for distribution..²²³ They then provided the results to the Sixth Army and subordinate units. The information provided to Sixth Army directly affected the operation's pace and helped to influence MacArthur to allocate additional combat forces for the campaign.

Multi-Domain Command and Control

MDO requires a command and control (C2) structure that integrates all the components of the operation to mass the capabilities and achieve multi-domain convergence. The Mike I operation provides examples of both possessing and lacking proper C2. The I Corps landed with its habitually-assigned divisions and support assets, and flexibility enabled it to receive and integrate new units into the operation quickly and efficiently. The loss of the 63rd Division to serve as the Eight Army reserve had little effect on corps operations. This was the first task organization change out of a total of fifteen that I Corps experienced of both RCT and division-

²²² MacArthur, *Reports of General MacArthur*, vol. I, 251–4; Craven, *The Army Air Forces in World War II*, 425–6.

²²³ Headquarters, I Corps, *I Corps: History of Luzon Campaign Philippine Islands 1945*, 131–7.

size elements moving in and out of the corps. Each unit transitioned with minimal impact on the tempo of the corps' operations.

The Corps' span of control varied throughout the operation as well. At the time of the landing, they controlled two of their organic divisions. They then rapidly gained two divisions and two RCTs within a week of landing. A month after landing, I Corps no longer commanded the two divisions they habitually controlled and landed with on Blue and White beaches. They integrated new units for the first time in combat. However, operations continued with relative ease. I Corps commanded a total of six different divisions and four additional RCTs throughout the campaign and remained successful.

Yamashita did not have the appropriate C2 of the forces on Luzon. The mix of Fourth Air Army support personnel and aircraft, 31st Naval Special Base Force troops, and random crew members from damaged and sunk ships, in addition to the Fourteenth Area Army forces made the command relationships complicated and cumbersome. Each group possessing different instructions and leadership. The Fourth Air Army remained under the control of the Southern Army up until 1 January 1945. By the time Yamashita gained control, there were few aircraft remaining at his disposal. Instead, he was forced to use the remaining ground crew as infantry. The 31st Special Naval Force under Iwabuchi in Manila did not want to abandon Manila as Yamashita ordered, instead they conducted a fanatical defense against XIV Corps. Lacking unity of command and coordination between the Shimbu, Kembu, and Shobu groups, each position was systematically isolated and reduced.

The success of I Corps is attributed to its flexible command structure and ability to change and integrate changes to task organization. The processes and procedures for quickly incorporating new units generated shared understanding and facilitated clear communication. The failure of the Fourteenth Area Army to establish interoperability between the different units placed them at a disadvantage and limited the options available to Yamashita to conduct a coordinated defense of Luzon.

Assessment

The role of a corps headquarters within the Luzon operation is at tension with the MDO requirements of a modern corps. The I Corps in 1945 fought under the direction of the Sixth Army and SWPA, with the primary element for coordination being at the Field Army level. Today, the expectation is different. Corps headquarters serve as a Joint Force Land Component Command (JFLCC) or joint task force (JTF) assigned under a Geographic Combatant Command (GCC) or assigned to a JTF under a Joint Force Commander (JFC). A corps would most likely not find themselves under a field army that answers to a JFC like the SWPA. A more suitable comparison to what the MDO concept expects from a corps headquarters may be that of the Sixth Army in this campaign without subordinate corps. That adjustment would place the proper MDO requirements on the corps headquarters and assign the current number of divisions to the corps.

In the present day, the Army bases its planning for amphibious assaults on the Marine Corps' availability to seize a beachhead on a hostile shore in the absence of port facilities secured by forward presence forces. The Army then follows and establishes port terminal facilities to move required equipment and forces by sea, if not transported by air, into the lodgment to open the theater.²²⁴ This plan may work on centralized landings for a theater along a limited front, but not for multiple entry points or amongst islands.

Maintaining amphibious assault capabilities within the Army is essential to successful operations within the INDOPACOM theater. Forward presence forces are currently concentrated in Korea and Japan, with joint assets located in Guam. In the event of an unexpected attack, the forces in Korea and Japan secure the only positions where follow-on forces could land through existing port facilities and airfields. Countering aggression in other locations becomes more difficult. Modern A2/AD systems deter both ships and aircraft from approaching and are being

²²⁴ US Department of the Army, Army Doctrine Publication (ADP) 4-0, *Sustainment* (Washington, DC: Government Publishing Office, 2019), 3–6; US Joint Staff, JP 3-18 (2018), IV–9.

fielded in depth. Army forces will be required to land and place fires and ground forces against the systems to enable joint partners to support the fight. The Army must be prepared to conduct amphibious assaults to provide options to the JFC or CCDR.

Fulfilling the requirement for amphibious operations requires significant training and practice for successful landings on a hostile shore. The Army should develop a training program to build the capacity before it is needed as it takes time to build proficiency. Developing initial proficiency could be accomplished without significant changes to the force structure with the pre-World War II training program serving as a guide. The 25th ID, currently assigned to I Corps, could be designated as an amphibious assault unit that would be utilized if required. They could train with the Marines and the Navy locally to gain experience with amphibious operations without travel or purchasing significant numbers of landing craft. They could also integrate amphibious assaults from ship to shore to broaden their experience under different conditions while conducting international training operations such as Pacific Pathways within INDOPACOM. Finally, they could develop and maintain the Army training program for amphibious operations and maritime cooperation like that of the 101st ID with air assault doctrine and training.

Conclusion

Both the Department of Defense and the Department of the Army are not currently convinced that the Army requires a role in amphibious operations. The prevailing notion that the Marine Corps will be able to handle any amphibious assault requirements in a campaign and then transition Army forces into the theater to assume ground operations weighs heavily given the past wars. If required to move troops into an A2/AD environment, the luxury of ports of debarkation secured by forward presence forces may not be readily available in future conflicts. The Marines could rapidly become fully committed with clearing fortified positions on islands along the nine-

dash line,²²⁵ requiring Army support to concurrent or subsequent operations. These potential conditions require that the Army rebuilds amphibious assault capabilities to meet the challenges of MDO in the Pacific littorals as a member of the joint force.

Tension currently exists within Army doctrine of the perceived role of Army forces about its responsibilities within JFEO. Army doctrine focuses on airborne and air assault operations as the means for conducting JFEO while upholding the mantra of entering by air, land, or sea. Joint doctrine specifically identifies the Army and the Marines as responsible for serving as a landing force during amphibious assaults.

As the Mike I operation demonstrated, fighting an enemy in well-prepared island positions is slow and costly. The Japanese Fourteenth Area Army developed their defensive plan to maximize their survivability against US firepower and occupy the US forces for as long as possible. The I Corps conducted the amphibious assault on Lingayen Gulf as a capstone in planning and execution. The commanders, staff, and soldiers were trained, resourced, and ready to conduct expeditionary operations and immediately engage a well-prepared enemy. They converged their available enablers to the maximum extent attriting the Shobu Group from the initial beachhead through the Central Plains and north into the Cagayan Valley by setting conditions for other joint forces and supporting ground maneuver. The resulting cross-domain synergy allowed I Corps to shape the Shobu Group to set favorable force ratios for the division and below fights. The convergence achieved would not be possible without an efficient and flexible C2 structure responsive to the significant flow of units in and out of the corps. Yamashita

²²⁵ Office of the Secretary of Defense, *Annual Report to Congress: Military and Security Developments Involving the People's Republic of China*, May 2, 2019, 9–10, accessed 24 August 2020, https://media.defense.gov/2019/May/02/2002127082/-1/-1/1/2019_CHINA_MILITARY_POWER_REPORT.pdf. The nine-dash-line refers to the islands claimed by the Peoples Republic of China amongst the Spratly and Parcel Island groups to extend their territorial waters into the South China Sea. The PRC additionally constructed islands with military facilities through land reclamation projects in the Spratly Islands through 2019.

and the Fourteenth Area Army demonstrated the dangers of poor C2 of multi-domain forces and the dangers of losing control of one or more domains.

As demonstrated in World War II operations, the Army must be prepared to conduct amphibious assaults in coordination with joint and national assets if the situation arises. Time may not be available to train and develop the capability for an amphibious assault. The Luzon campaign shows that a determined enemy with prepared defenses in a littoral environment requires effective joint action and, ultimately, soldiers on the ground to close with and destroy the enemy.

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