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US ARMY DOCTRINAL EFFECTIVENESS ON BATAAN, 1942:  
THE FIRST BATTLE

A thesis presented to the faculty of the U.S. Army  
Command and General Staff College in partial  
fulfillment of the requirements for the  
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

by

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B.A., San Jose State College, 1968

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## ABSTRACT

US ARMY DOCTRINAL EFFECTIVENESS ON BATAAN, 1942: THE FIRST BATTLE, by Major John W. Whitman, USA, 134 pages.

This study examines the first battle of World War II: the defense of the Philippines on the Bataan Peninsula. Only those units properly equipped, adequately trained, and led by officers who were knowledgeable on the current doctrine are examined. A detailed narrative explains what happened.

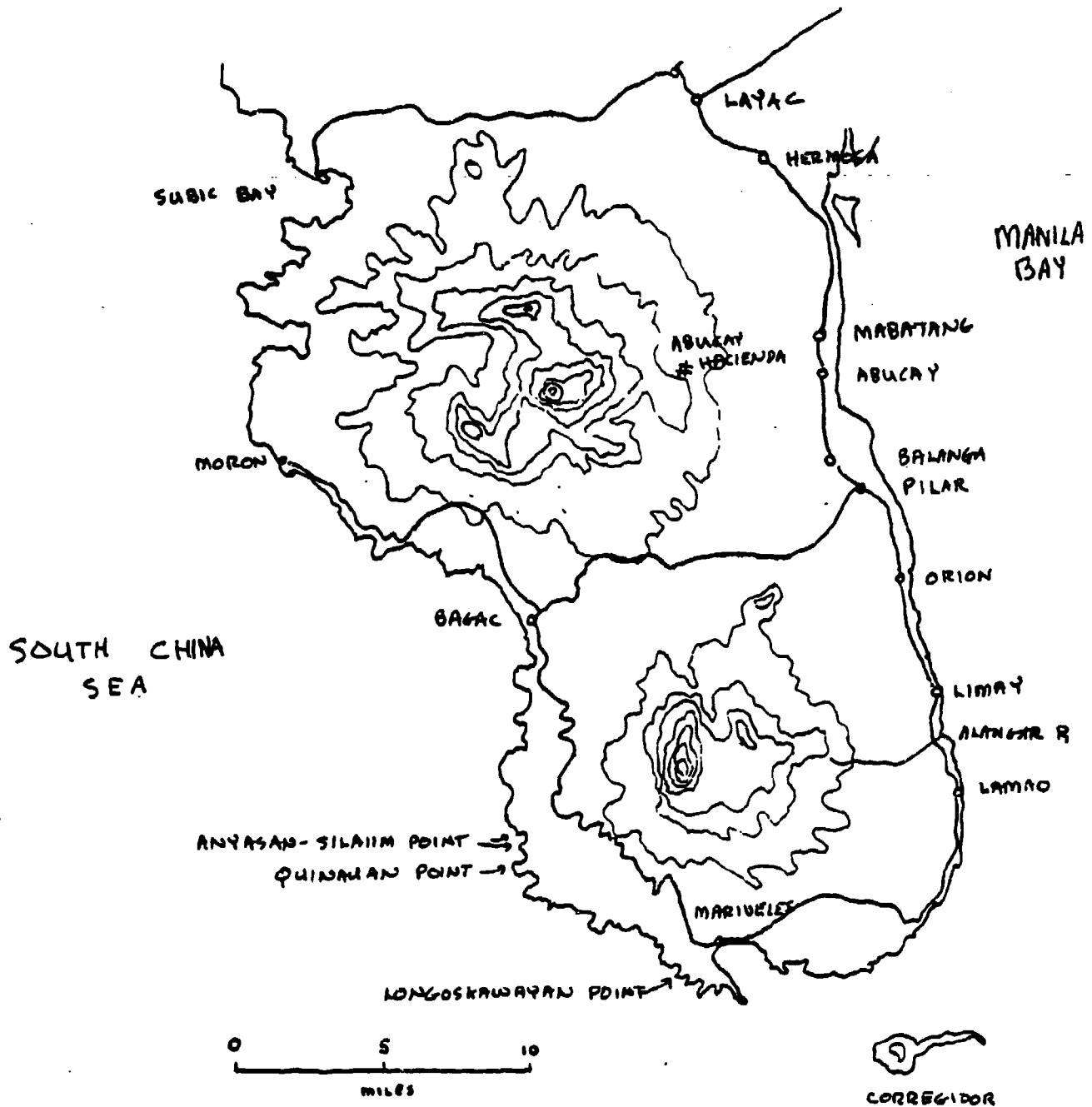
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# BATAAN 1942



## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

Doctrine provides leaders with a standard, sometimes battle-proven process to follow when solving tactical problems. Doctrine states how an army expects to fight. Critics of the military charge that the military always plans to fight the last war rather than preparing for future conditions. Is this true? Our current doctrine professes to prepare the Army for the first battle of the next war. But how effective is doctrine when it meets the test of combat? One way to shed light on this issue is to examine past doctrine and determine how it fared when the US Army went to war. If past doctrine always failed, or if it always succeeded, or if any pattern emerges, some conclusions about today's doctrine might be drawn.

The purpose of this thesis is to see if pre-World War II doctrine met the test of combat in World War II's first battle for the United States, that of the Philippines in 1941-42. The method of research to be used in this thesis will be historical. War Department field manuals will be used to determine what military units should have done in accordance with doctrine. Then a determination will be made as to whether or not units on Bataan actually followed the principles set forth in the field manuals. Additionally, it will be determined if local conditions were key to whether or not units followed doctrine. After taking into consideration constraints of materiel, personnel, and training, did General Douglas MacArthur's forces follow doctrine? Was



pre-World War II doctrine effective on Bataan? Offense, defense, and retrograde doctrine will be examined. This research will focus on the tactics of infantry, armor, and artillery from corps to battalion.

General MacArthur's Filamerican army began its defense of the Bataan peninsula on 6 January 1942. The United States defended the Philippines using War Plan Orange 3 (WPO-3). Ever since the United States conquered the islands, Joint Army-Navy Boards had developed and updated plans to defend the Philippines against potential enemies. The planner had completed the most recent revision, one covering war between the United States and Japan, only eight months before World War II began. Because no other enemies or allies were assumed, events proved the simple, two-sided war envisioned by WPO-3 to be obsolete. But tactically, the plan was sound and adaptable to any number of contingencies. Two major assumptions were that war would come with too little warning to reinforce the garrison on the islands, and that the attack would occur during the dry season, sometime in December or January. In retrospect, both assumptions held true.<sup>1</sup>

Under WPO-3, no attempt would be made to defend all the islands. Instead, planners directed all efforts toward holding central Luzon. If the worst were to happen, the Army would hold Bataan at all costs. The key to the plan was to deny Manila Bay to the enemy by holding Bataan and Corregidor. Philippine Army forces were expected to hold for six months. By then, the US Navy would have fought its way across the Pacific, destroyed the Japanese fleet, and landed on Bataan with massive reinforcements. The strengthened Bataan garrison would sally forth and drive the now-isolated enemy into the sea. The planners almost realized the first half of their plan, that of holding Manila Bay for six months. Corregidor fell one day shy of five months, and armed resistance in the southern islands did not end until as late as 9 June, six

months and two days after the war started. The second half of the plan, relief from the United States, failed.<sup>2</sup>

Defense of the Philippines rested with MacArthur's Philippine Army controlled by headquarters, United States Army Forces Far East (USAFFE). To man his army, MacArthur trained two contingents of Filipinos each year, each period consisting of five and a half months of individual training emphasizing scouting and patrolling. Annual training of as few as 5,000 men proved to be a great drain on the Commonwealth's treasury, and more training was fiscally unpopular. Lacking cadre and equipment, MacArthur could do little in the area of field and weapons training. Unit training was first attempted in 1941, before the big call up of reserves, and even then it was restricted to small units (companies) for a period of two weeks.<sup>3</sup>

The Philippine Army which fought on Bataan had been organized just a few short months before the war began. By late 1941, the international situation was becoming bleaker. Although Philippine Army mobilization cantonments were not complete and could not accommodate full divisions, the most recent five and a half month training period had just ended thereby freeing existing camps. MacArthur decided to mobilize increments of each reserve division in these camps. So in August of 1941, he issued orders calling into service by 1 September ten infantry regiments, one regiment for each of the ten reserve divisions. Upon mobilization, units and personnel were inducted into the armed forces of the United States. Cadres of the other divisional elements were also called to the colors. Reservists were called up, and able-bodied men ages twenty to thirty were accepted as volunteers. The Philippine Army would total 120,000 men, but only 76,750 were on Luzon, the island fated to serve as the decisive area of combat.<sup>4</sup>

In bits and pieces, the first regiment mobilized, and as soon as

cantonment space became available, other regiments assembled and started training. The shortest time required to raise and train a division in the United States in 1941 was about one year, and this assumed the necessary equipment, training areas, and instructors were available. In the Philippines, divisions were mobilized in haste, fielded in confusion, and sent into battle in less than four months. At best, the lucky soldiers had three months of training before they fought. The unlucky men were trained on Bataan during the fighting. There was a shortage of every type of equipment, from antitank guns to artillery, as well as engineers, medics, support, and signal troops. Three divisions had to convert their artillery regiments to infantry after they failed to receive cannon. Filipino lieutenants with little experience--even brand-new 3rd lieutenants--commanded battalions. Staff officers were new to their jobs, with most never before having held a staff position. Headquarters units, staffed by men expected to organize, equip, and train the new formations, were in no better shape than their subordinate units.<sup>5</sup>

The Philippine Army divisions were by necessity light divisions, never receiving the materiel and support standard to American divisions. As equipment became available from the United States, it was shipped to the islands. In this fashion, the old equipment held by the Filipinos would be replaced with more modern items. But time did not allow completion of this modernization, and never would a Philippine Army division reach half the strength of an American division. Corps, Army, and Communication Zone troops never mobilized; they were to have been formed in 1942.<sup>6</sup>

One small bright spot in the military situation was the elite, high-spirited 10,400-man Philippine Division. It was a regular division stationed in the Philippines and carried on the rolls of the United States Army. It had three infantry regiments, all well-equipped and well-trained, supported by

engineer, signal, medical, and light artillery troops. The 31st Infantry (US) was composed exclusively of American officers and enlisted men and was the only American infantry regiment in the Philippines (exclusive of the 4th Marines on Corregidor). The 45th and 57th Infantry (PS) were led by American officers and manned by Philippine Scout enlisted men. The Scouts were equipped with the same individual gear standard to American infantry and were well-known throughout the Army for their superb marksmanship and their love of soldiering. Filipinos considered selection to the Scouts a great honor, and entry standards were strict.<sup>7</sup>

Although the Philippine Army was led by Americans, the handicaps under which it operated were so great that it is impossible to draw conclusions about doctrine from its actions. Because only American and Scouts units were sufficiently trained and led by men who were familiar with doctrine, only those units will be analyzed in this thesis. Even then, caution must be exercised because of difficulties in equipment, supplies, and leadership. All action on Bataan was influenced by pre-World War II doctrine. Because this was the first battle for the Americans in the war, the leaders could not draw on previous lessons learned. Instead, they had to follow the lessons and guidance they had received during peace-time training. In short, they had to follow doctrine.

The Bataan campaign started on 6 January 1942 and concluded a disorderly delaying action during which time MacArthur's army beat a hurried retreat from all corners of Luzon. General Masaharu Homma's 14th Army had landed in both north and south Luzon and had easily routed the Philippine Army beach defenses. Unable to contest these landings, the Philippine Army retreated toward Bataan. Filipino forces defended eight different delay lines just long enough to force the Japanese to maneuver out of march formation for an attack. Then the Filipinos withdrew, scattered, or deserted. Those collected by

their officers repeated the process on the next line. The steady influence of American light tanks, self-propelled artillery, and Philippine Scouts of the 26th Cavalry were barely sufficient to dignify the maneuver as a withdrawal rather than a rout. In desperate circumstances and under constant enemy pressure, the untried Philippine Army, spread across north and south Luzon, withdrew in a dangerous double retrograde, joined, and retired into Bataan. Here the Filamerican army would fight for three months, from 6 January until 9 April 1942. At first, the defenders severely mauled the Japanese, but they finally succumbed to starvation and a rejuvenated Japanese army.

## Endnotes, Chapter I

1. Louis Morton, United States Army in World War II The War in the Pacific The Fall of the Philippines (Washington, D.C.: Office of the Chief of Military History, United States Army, US Government Printing Office, 1953), pp. 61-64.

2. Ibid.

3. James V. Collier, "Notebooks," 1:13; and Jonathan M. Wainwright, General Wainwright's Story: The Account of Four Years of Humiliating Defeat, Surrender, and Captivity (New York: Modern Literary Editions Publishing Company, 1945), pp. 12-13.

4. Morton, Fall, p. 26.

5. Wainwright, Wainwright's Story, p. 16; Morton, Fall, pp. 26-27; Jonathan M. Wainwright, "Report of Operations of USAFFE and USFIP in the Philippine Islands, 1941-1942," p. 22; and Wainwright, "Report of Operations of USAFFE and USFIP," Annex V, "Report of Operations of South Luzon Force, Bataan Defense Force and II Philippine Corps in the Defense of South Luzon and Bataan from 8 December 1941-9 April 1942," p. 2.

6. Morton, Fall, pp. 34-37.

7. Ernest L. Brown, "The Operations of the 3rd Battalion 45th Infantry (Philippine Scouts) at the Hacienda at Mount Natib, Luzon, 15-25 January 1942 (The Bataan Campaign)(Personal Experience of a Battalion Executive Officer)," p. 3; and Wainwright, "Report of Operations of USAFFE and USFIP," p. 16.

## CHAPTER II

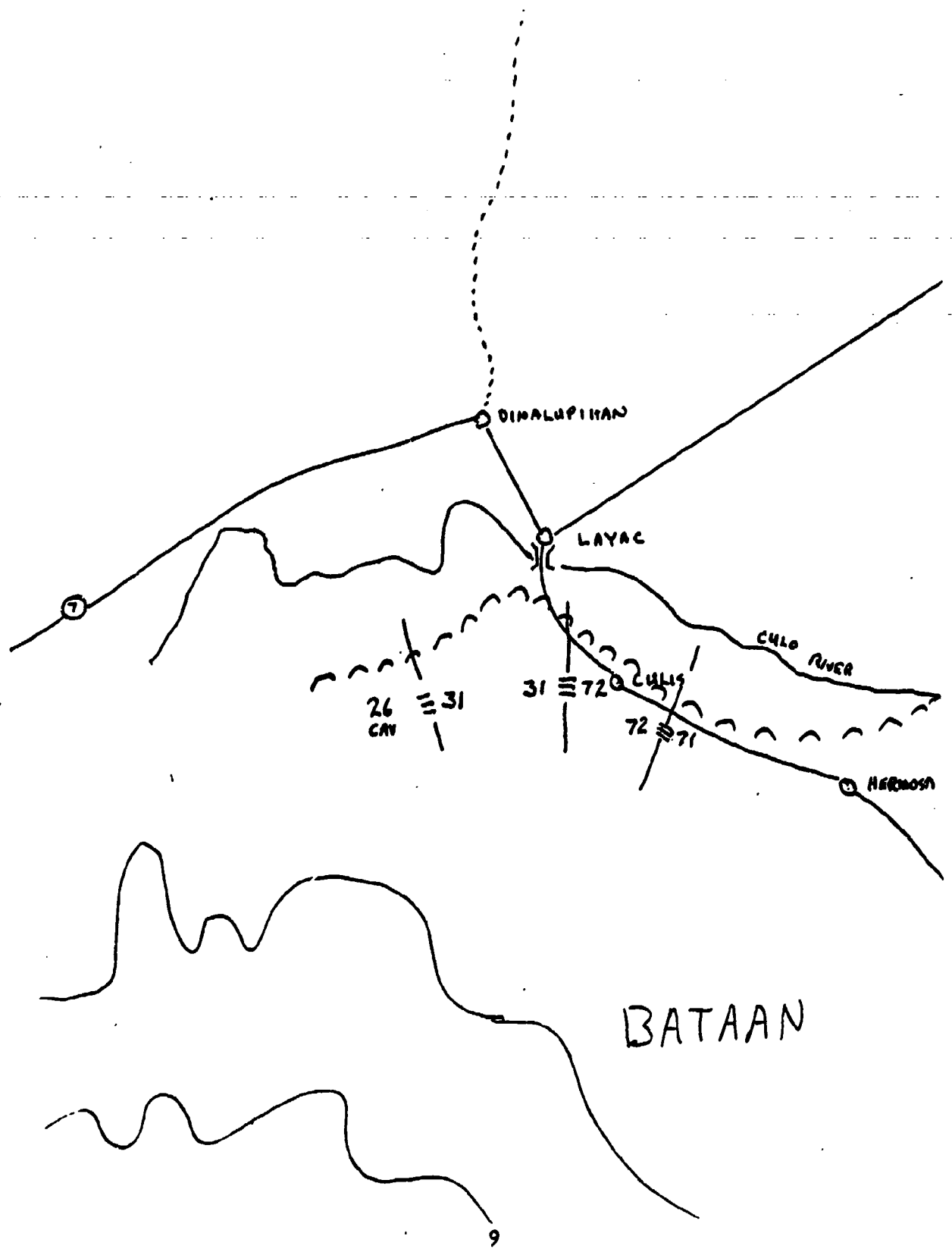
### DISCUSSION

#### Divisional Covering Force at Layac, 6 January 1942

On 6 January 1942, after the withdrawals from north and south Luzon were completed and the Philippine Army had retired to Bataan, one last position remained between the Japanese and the main American line at Abucay. American positions on Bataan were divided into two corps sectors, a physical necessity posed by Mount Natib which divided the peninsula into west and east coastal plains. Major General Jonathan M. Wainwright's I Philippine Corps defended the western approaches, while Major General George M. Parker's II Philippine Corps defended the Manila Bay side.

The origins of the Layac covering force position lay in War Plan Orange 3, so there was little surprise when orders came to occupy the position. MacArthur ordered Wainwright to organize the line before turning it over to the commanding general, Bataan Defense Force. In turn, Major General Parker was told that Layac would be given to him and held until a coordinated attack forced a withdrawal. Brigadier General Clyde A. Selleck, commanding the 71st Division, received actual responsibility for establishing the Layac line. Wainwright alerted Selleck on 2 January and instructed him to hold the position for several days. He would thereby cover the withdrawal of the 11th and 21st Divisions and gain time to prepare the Abucay line.<sup>1</sup>

Selleck placed his 71st Infantry on the right of the line. The 71st





Infantry's right was partially protected by marshy tidal streams and water-covered ground, while the remainder of the ground was monotonously flat. To the left of the 71st Infantry stood the 72nd Infantry, and to the left of the 72nd Infantry was Colonel Charles L. Steel's 1,600-man American 31st Infantry. Although this regiment was unique in not having seen any action up to that point, its strength was low, for many of the most experienced men had been pulled from their units and sent to instruct or command the new Filipino outfits. On the far left of the covering force line, the reduced 26th Cavalry Regiment with 657 men reached Selleck the night of 5 January and extended his line west to the foothills of the Zambales Mountains. The cavalry began reconnaissances the morning of the 6th, but even then the 2nd Squadron on the extreme left did not get into position until 1400 hours, well after the fight started. The cavalry regiment established a standing screen of patrols from the mountains on the left to the American regiment on the right; the bulk of the regiment massed so as to be ready to react to enemy penetrations.<sup>2</sup>

Selleck's 71st Division Artillery consisted of two two-gun 75mm batteries and one four-gun 2.95-inch pack howitzer battery, a total of eight guns in his 71st Artillery. In general support of Selleck's line were two batteries of the 23rd Artillery and two batteries from the 1st Battalion, 88th Artillery. Both were corps artillery units, both were armed with 75mm guns, and both were well-trained Scout units. For some reason, maybe because of an oversight, no one gave Selleck any long-range 155mm support. The cannon could have been positioned either close to or well behind the line in order to cope with either enemy artillery or enemy infantry. The absence of the big guns would prove a major error. A USAFFE organization, the Provisional Tank Group, was also in support with eighty light tanks, forty-two half-tracks, and fifteen Bren gun carriers. Two battalions of USAFFE self-propelled 75mm artillery

covered tank approaches; in a pinch, they could act as anti-tank artillery as well as normal field artillery.<sup>3</sup>

Occupation of the line had begun on 3 January, but without engineer support--Selleck's battalion of divisional engineers was working for North Luzon Force--progress was slow. The construction effort at Layac was the first time the 71st Division had ever tried to string barbed wire or build obstacles, and with few exceptions, the tired and dispirited Filipinos made very little progress organizing the ground and entrenching. A visiting American engineer found little desire on the part of the 71st Division to hold their positions for even a short time. The American 31st Infantry entrenched reasonably well, but even here, an all-out effort was missing.<sup>4</sup>

Across the entire front, the Layac position was weak. The right of the line faced east and could be enfiladed from the west, while the center of the line faced north and could be enfiladed from the east. The low, rolling hills were hardly more than bumps in the uniformly flat ground. The tiny Culis River itself did not provide an obstacle, and even the larger Culo River was fordable by dismounted troops. The Culo's steep, almost vertical banks made vehicular traffic difficult, but an engineer effort could cut approaches for a crossing. The best Selleck could organize was a series of mutually supporting strong points entrenched and wired as much as time and materiel would permit.<sup>5</sup>

At 1030 hours on 6 January, Selleck's artillery stopped the Japanese advance by driving the lead infantry and artillery off the road. The Japanese began to deploy about two-and-a-third miles north of Filamerican lines. A half hour later, Japanese artillery replied. Japanese 75mm and 150mm shells, directed and corrected by aerial spotters, who dropped as low as 2,000 feet in their search for targets, began to fall near the defending artillery. Little escaped the air observers' attention, and Japanese artillery grew more accurate.

Because the big Model-4 150mm howitzers firing 10,000 yards outranged the smaller Filipino 75mm's, the Japanese were untouched by counterbattery fire. Filipino artillery was severely shelled and took several direct hits. By mid-afternoon, every gun in the 71st Artillery had been hit at least once, and four were damaged beyond repair. Changes in gun position made little difference because of Japanese aerial observation, for no sooner were the guns in a new location than they were once again under fire. Concealment was scarce, cover was nonexistent, and the old artillery maxim "a battery seen is a battery lost" held true.<sup>6</sup>

Under galling fire, the Filipinos from the 1st Battalion, 71st Artillery abandoned their guns, carrying away the firing pins and keys to the prime movers. Bamboo thickets surrounding the eight cannon of the 23rd Artillery caught fire and threatened the guns more than did the enemy shelling. The evening before, B Battery's prime movers were collected at battalion headquarters, where they would be safe. Now, as the bamboo fire approached the immobile guns, there was no way to move the pieces out of danger. Because telephone lines were cut, B Battery could not tell battalion headquarters to send the vehicles forward. When the fire reached the pits occupied by the gunners, the men jumped out, and the guns were lost.<sup>7</sup>

Enemy artillery also hit the American infantry manning the main line of resistance. At 1400 hours, the Japanese succeeded in putting several infantry battalions across the small river, and patrols probed the junction between the 31st Infantry and 72nd Infantry. The Japanese brought small arms fire against the American B Company, and the entire company panicked and broke. The adjacent C Company held, but the battalion reserve could not regain the line. Colonel Steel called on his reserve battalion, and two companies counterattacked. One of the companies broke under enemy artillery, but the

second advanced successfully and re-established the main line.<sup>8</sup>

Although the 31st Infantry had now restored its line, the situation still looked bad. Most of Selleck's artillery was out of action, enemy planes left him without concealment, and all his infantry reserves were committed. If the Japanese broke through the 71st Division on the right of the line, they would cut the only road leading south and trap the entire covering force. Light firing was continuing along the American regiment's front into the early evening, still more Japanese were arriving at Layac, and Japanese movements forward of the 72nd Infantry were increasing. Selleck was forced to assume the bulk of General Homma's 14th Army faced him. Selleck's mission was to delay the enemy, not to fight a pitched battle. He had already lost the two-battery 23rd Artillery and the 1st Battalion, 71st Artillery. Two American rifle companies had run and were out of the fight, the reserve battalion was committed, and the Filipinos along the 71st Division's front--even though they had not been seriously pressured--were shaky and ready to bolt.<sup>9</sup>

At 2000 hours, Colonel Steel explained the 31st Infantry's situation to Selleck, but Selleck refused permission to withdraw. A second report to Selleck stressed the possibility of a disastrous daylight withdrawal the next day if the men did not get out that night. This time Selleck agreed and asked II Corps for permission to withdraw. When General Parker received Selleck's request, he initially considered reinforcing Selleck and counterattacking at dawn, but he dropped the idea after his artillery staff told him it was impossible to position cannon at night and shoot at dawn without a daylight reconnaissance. So at 2200 hours, II Corps ordered Selleck to conduct a night withdrawal.<sup>10</sup>

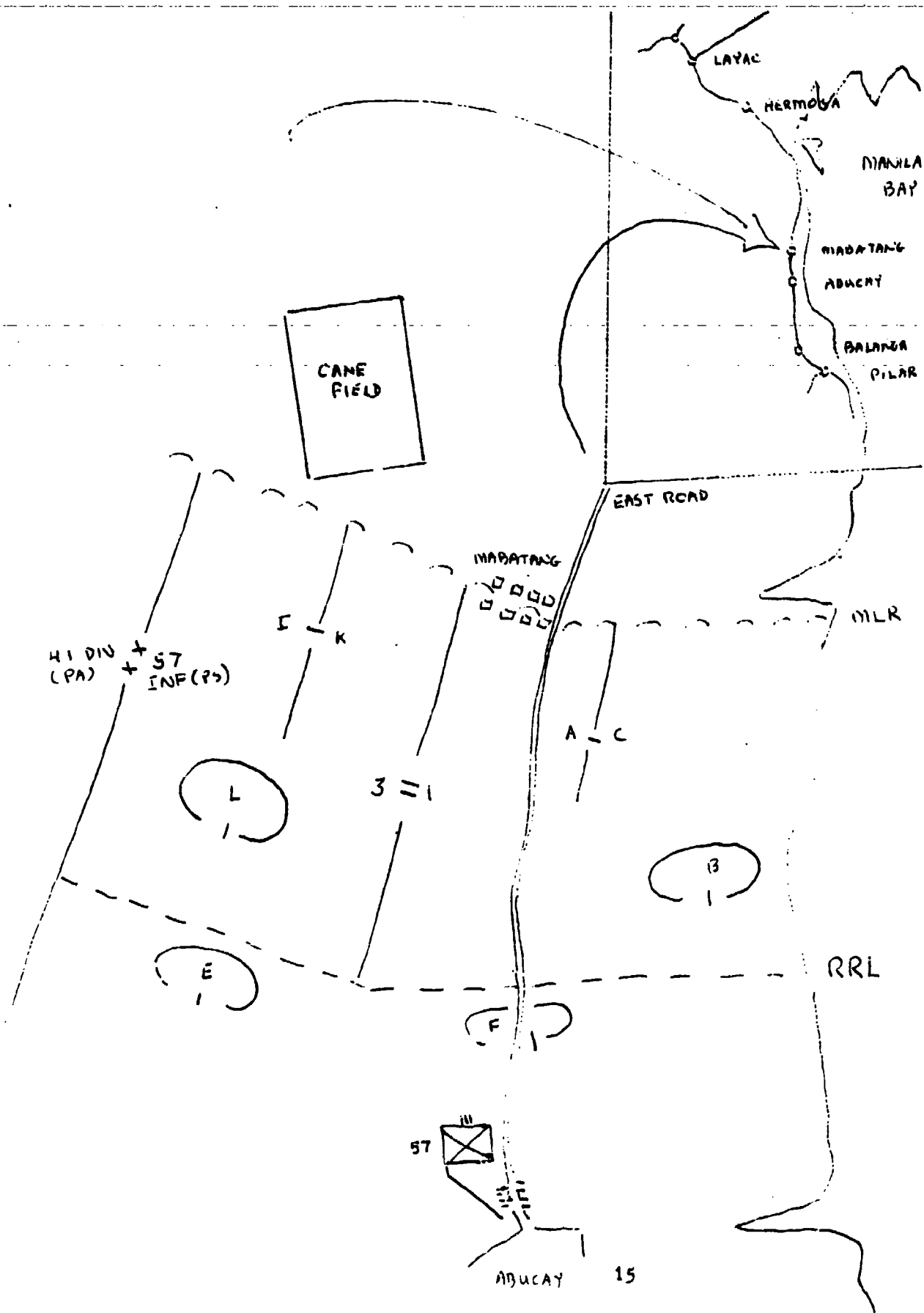
Despite local confusion, the withdrawal succeeded, and Selleck's force broke contact with the Japanese who, now unopposed, occupied Hermosa in the dark. All things considered, the delay force was lucky--the Japanese failed to

pursue and the defenders once again traded space for time. But this one-day delay proved costly, especially since USAFFE had expected more than a single day's delay out of Selleck's men.<sup>11</sup>

The Japanese made an unenthusiastic pursuit of Selleck's force but failed to catch it. From 7 until 10 January, the Japanese marched south toward the main line of resistance, moved supplies forward, and repaired roads and bridges. The main Japanese force now on Bataan was the 65th Brigade, a three-regiment (seven-battalion) outfit reinforced to about 12,000 men by engineers, artillery, tanks, and various service support units. The 65th Brigade divided its left flank regiment into two single battalion columns, one moving into the foothills to the west while the second battalion marched straight down the East Road toward the Philippine Scouts of the 57th Infantry. The eastern most battalion would open the next phase of the Bataan campaign.

#### Regimental and Battalion Defense at Mabatang, 11-12 January

II Corps defended the right half of Bataan with two Philippine Army divisions and a Philippine Scout regiment on the main line of resistance, the Abucay line. The left of the corps line was anchored on Mount Natib's precipitous slopes. The right of the line was considered so critical that it was manned by a regiment of the Philippine Division, the only regular division in the islands. The Japanese also considered the right of the line the most promising target, and they launched their first serious assaults here the night of 11-12 January. The elite 57th Infantry (Philippine Scouts)--1,914 Filipino enlisted men commanded by American officers--blocked the most likely enemy avenue of



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approach into II Corps just north of Mabatang barrio. The staunch Scouts were the best infantry in the Philippines, better than the Americans, the Philippine Army, and the Japanese. The regiment deployed with its 3rd Battalion on the left, the 1st Battalion on the right, and the 2nd Battalion in reserve.<sup>12</sup>

Overall, the line was strong, but trouble would come from a sugar cane field lying across the front of the 3rd Battalion. The field ran from as far out as 400 yards to as close as 150 yards from the main line. Japanese could enter the northern edge of the cane field via a dry stream bed and move south to the Scout main line. Ignorance did not leave the cane intact; there were too many professional soldiers present simply to forget to cut it. The battalion commander, his company commanders, and the regimental operations officer all agreed the cane should be cleared. Fields of fire were much too short, and the enemy could dash into the Scouts, completely avoiding long-range rifle and machine guns fires. There was ample time to clear it, and numerous reconnaissances convinced them the field was a serious threat. But the regimental commander forbade any cutting, believing that newly cut cane would show on aerial photos and indicate the presence of major defensive positions. Even after the 3rd Battalion commander asked that the "no cut" order be reconsidered, the regimental commander refused, believing Scout artillery could deny use of the cane field as an assembly area.<sup>13</sup>

When night fell on 11 January, the Japanese advanced and massed in the uncut cane field a scant 150 yards from the 3rd Battalion. After driving in the Scout outposts, a Japanese infantry battalion assembled here and worked its way close to the Scouts. Despite the concealed routes, the Japanese failed to move in completely undetected. Scout listening posts heard noises and sounds of significant movement, but they could not see anything because the moon had not yet risen. Their reports were relayed through company CPs to artillery FDCs,

and a call for fire went to the guns of the Scout 1st Battalion, 24th Artillery.<sup>14</sup>

At this very moment, when the 75mm cannon were being laid, the Japanese were creeping to the south edge of the cane. They first fired small arms and some light mortars at the Scouts, then they increased the tempo of their machine gun fire. Scout requests for artillery fire on the cane field reached the gunners an hour before midnight, and Scout artillerymen began their well-drilled routine. Just as the first 75mm projectiles exploded in the tall stalks of sugar, "the cane field seemed to vomit Japanese in great numbers screaming, howling, yelling 'Banzai' as they charged," recalled a company commander.<sup>15</sup> Quickly, C Battery, 24th Artillery, which was dug in on the main line and silent until now, leveled its four 75mm guns at the inviting target and fired point blank over open sights into the mass of charging Japanese. The battery commander hastily organized his artillerymen for defense against infantry, yet kept men on the guns to maintain a hot fire. Joining the fires of C Battery were the other two batteries of the battalion.

Despite the appalling effects of massed artillery and small arms fire, the Japanese continued across the short stretch of open field. Departing the cane field, they ran downhill, crossed a small creek, then pushed uphill across moderately vegetated ground, through dry rice paddies, and into Scout barbed wire. In contrast to the 1st Battalion on the right, the 3rd Battalion was firing tracers mixed with ball ammunition, and the fiery bullets gave the Japanese a good idea of the battalion's line, especially the location of machine guns and automatic rifles. The Japanese threw themselves on the double-apron barbed wire, and succeeding squads climbed over the bodies pinned to the wire. Once over the wire, the Japanese charge pushed into the Scout foxhole line of I Company. Despite incredible confusion and the close proximity of the Japanese,



the Scouts calmly held their ground, and the Japanese lost their cohesion. But the Japanese were as determined as the Scouts, and they worked their way from foxhole to foxhole. Some Scouts were physically manhandled out of position with the men on both flanks suffering the most. I Company's commander asked for help, and the reserve company commander pleaded to be allowed to counterattack. But the battalion commander said no--he was unwilling to commit his reserve this early.<sup>16</sup>

To the right of I Company was K Company, and the Japanese attack lapped into K Company's left flank. At 0130 hours, the Japanese formed a casualty bridge over the barbed wire and swamped I Company immediately adjacent to K Company. Realizing he would lose his entire left flank if it remained in place, the K Company commander moved a section of machine guns behind his left flank and began a careful withdrawal of the left flank platoon and the two reserve squads. Luckily, previous construction left ready-made works into which the Scouts safely settled. The move was beautifully executed.<sup>17</sup>

Sometime after 0200 hours, the I Company commander started an inspection of his lines accompanied by his first sergeant and two riflemen. At 0315 hours, his party came upon Japanese occupying three foxholes in the center of the line, and a quick fire fight ensued. Five Japanese died, but rifle fire also shattered the company commander's hip. He could not walk, so his soldiers dragged him back to his CP while confused fighting raged across the dark battlefield. Just before dawn, the acting I Company commander set out to tour his platoons. The company's right and left flanks were destroyed or dispersed, but the center and the CP still remained, both now well forward of Japanese on either flank. The Scouts, seriously short of rifle ammunition, crawled from foxhole to foxhole collecting rounds from the dead and wounded.

Returning to the CP, the acting company commander reached the parapet of I Company's dugout when Japanese machine gun fire from the cane field killed him.<sup>18</sup>

It had been obvious for some time that the 3rd Battalion's line was badly disorganized and that I and K companies needed help. The 3rd Battalion commander alerted his battalion reserve, L Company, for a counterattack. L Company's Scouts assembled at 0400 hours and advanced to stop the Japanese. The minute they appeared, the entire area burst into machine gun fire which hit several of the Scouts. In the dark, L Company mixed with K Company and foundered. Despite happy shouts of greeting from K Company, it was nearly impossible to tell friend from foe and extremely dangerous to approach any foxhole, so L Company's arrival created "a perfect havoc of confusion."<sup>19</sup> K Company had taken considerable mortar and rifle fire during the Japanese attack and then had received machine gun fire as I Company was penetrated. K Company was not prepared to have a friendly company climb up its back. The counterattack only contained the Japanese and did little more than extend K Company's flank southwest to the battalion reserve line. A big hole still existed.

With the failure of the 3rd Battalion's counterattack, only the regimental reserve remained to stop the Japanese. At 0430 hours, the regimental operations officer ordered the reserve battalion's E Company into action. When preparing their defenses in early January, the 2nd Battalion officers had conducted terrain walks over areas across which they might logically counterattack. Then they held several night exercises to familiarize key leaders with the terrain. The battalion commander was aware of the 3rd Battalion's difficulties, and shortly after 0300 hours had alerted E Company for possible commitment to the left flank of the battered I Company. Regiment's

subsequent orders, therefore, came as no surprise--the 2nd Battalion was ready. E Company followed recognizable terrain features along the regiment's left boundary and attacked without error into I Company's sector. The company advanced with two platoons forward, right platoon echeloned to the right rear in anticipation of meeting the left of L Company, and filled the gap remaining to the left of L Company. The advance overran and killed five small teams of Japanese, but E Company stopped when it became apparent there was still vigorous M-1 rifle fire coming from I Company's area. Certain they would kill more I Company Scouts than Japanese if they continued in the dark, E Company went to ground and dug in. E Company's effort, although not reaching the main line of resistance, stalled the Japanese and contained the penetration.<sup>20</sup>

The fighting at Mabatang continued for several more days, and the Scouts ultimately prevailed. Concurrent with the attacks against the Scouts, six battalions of Japanese infantry were deeply involved in attacks against Filipino units off to the west. The Philippine Army's 41st and 51st Divisions extended II Corps' line west from the Scout 57th Infantry. From 11 to 16 January, the Japanese repeatedly assaulted the 41st Division, drove several Filipino battalions off the main line back to the regimental reserve lines, and inflicted heavy casualties on the poorly trained defenders. In response, II Corps heavily reinforced the 41st Division using elements from the 21st and 31st Divisions. The Japanese finally stopped their attacks and moved their efforts farther west against the 51st Division. Here, at the Abucay Hacienda, they had more success. On 16 January, they routed the 51st Infantry and drove the 53rd Infantry from the field. Fortunately for II Corps, the Japanese did not immediately realize the extent of their success, and the 65th Brigade failed to push into the abandoned 51st Division line for more than a full day. This respite allowed commitment of the Philippine Division in a corps counterattack role.

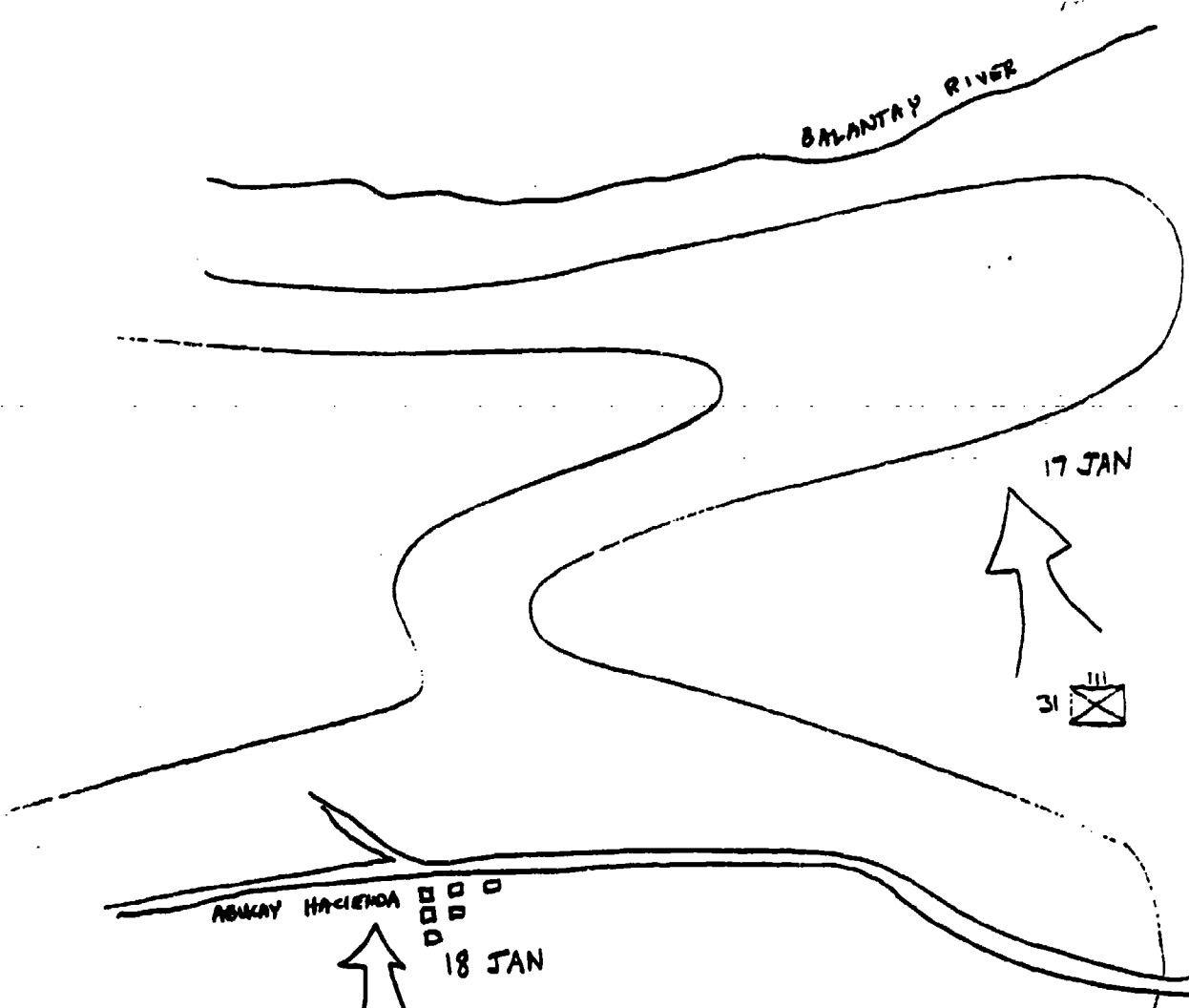
### Division/Regimental Offense at the Abucay Hacienda, 17-22 January

The morning of 17 January dawned as another in which the fortunes of war could swing dramatically in favor of the Japanese. If the Japanese could complete the turning II Corps' left flank--a likely prospect following the destruction of the 51st Division--the Abucay Line would become untenable, and II Corps would be forced to retreat. American hopes now depended on the performance of the 31st Infantry.

On 16 January, two regiments of the elite Philippine Division moved out of reserve toward the Abucay Hacienda. Although the American 31st Infantry made the march without difficulty, the Scout 45th Infantry attempted a night march cross country, only to get lost in a maze of trails. So only the 31st Infantry arrived on time. The 31st Infantry approached the Abucay line with the 2nd, 1st, and 3rd battalions in line of march. The antitank company, engineers, and the self-propelled artillery followed the 3rd Battalion. Information reached the troops in fragments with promises of more to come later, and leaders urged everyone to hurry. Japanese planes were active and dove occasionally at the column, but because the Americans dispersed well, little damage was done.<sup>21</sup>

The regiment marched for two solid hours before the first halt. It was a hot, hard, tiring uphill march of thirteen miles. Some men sickened in the brutal, dusty heat and fell out of the line of march. The regiment reached the left of the 43rd Infantry at 1900 hours, well after sunset but with a little light in the sky. During the last hours of daylight, Japanese observation planes watched the regiment, but they refrained from launching any attacks. The Americans thankfully bivouaced about 2,000 yards east of the Abucay Hacienda, and leaders rushed to get in a quick reconnaissance. The regiment established local security, soldiers paired off, and everyone tried to make themselves

BALANTAY RIVER



17 JAN



ABUKAY HACIENDA



18 JAN



3 45

comfortable. The Americans had outmarched their support, and they went to sleep hungry.<sup>22</sup>

Night had long since fallen when the battalion commanders of the 31st Infantry met with Colonel Steel at his regimental command post. Steel had little information about enemy strengths or locations, but he passed on what he had. His briefing was followed by orders for the next day's attack. Sunrise was at 0724 hours, and the attack would start at 0800 hours with the 1st Battalion on the left, west, and the 2nd Battalion straddling Trail 12 on the right, east. The 3rd Battalion was in reserve. Direction of attack was north. The officers returned to their battalions an hour after midnight.<sup>23</sup>

Everything now depended on the American 31st Infantry. If their attack succeeded, II Corps' line could hold for some time to come. The Japanese did not have unlimited power, and if stopped here, they would need to reorganize before mounting another effort. But if the Americans failed, and especially if they were routed, the entire Filamerican line would have to retreat, probably under heavy Japanese pressure. And if the Americans broke, as B and I Companies did at Layac, little hope could be placed in the less well trained Filipinos.

The 31st Infantry attacked at 0815 hours with two battalions abreast. Jumping off from their line of departure, the men initially encountered few enemy. On the left, following trails in the thick jungle, the 1st Battalion drove ahead even after encountering substantial resistance, some of which dissolved into hand-to-hand fighting. The Americans met more resistance at a sugar cane field full of Japanese where close combat was the rule because of the thick vegetation and broken ground.<sup>24</sup>

The 2nd Battalion was on the right of the regiment's attack. As the men walked 800 yards up the Hacienda Road early on 17 January, they passed

through a mango grove containing some wounded Filipinos, filled canteens from a water pipe near the Hacienda, and when dawn broke, made a 90-degree right turn up to their line of departure. The 2nd Battalion attacked with G and E companies abreast and a machine gun platoon attached to each. After crossing the line of departure, the Americans received mortar and small arms fire interspersed with a terrific cracking and banging of Japanese firecrackers. In G Company, the left flank platoon pushed forward 400 yards until stopped by automatic weapons firing down lanes cut in a sugar cane field. The cane field was badly tangled with strong vines which the Americans had to hack clear before they could advance. Then, G Company's right flank platoon stumbled into an unexpected seventy-five foot deep ravine.<sup>25</sup>

In an unusual and baffling move, the 2nd Battalion commander withdrew his left flank company and switched it to the battalion's right. He then pushed F Company, the battalion's reserve, into the hole left by G Company's departure. Unhappily, F Company was hardly more successful than G. Enemy machine gun fire was so intense here that it cut swaths of cane and stacked it on the ground as if ready for harvesting. A few men from F Company, bellies hugging the ground, crept forward and used hand grenades to reduce the closer gun positions. The 2nd Battalion called a halt for mortars to work over the Japanese. After the mortars stopped, it was the infantry's turn again. As the 2nd Battalion's three companies worked their way across the deep ravine, they ran into even heavier fire. The rifle company commanders voted, two to one, to make a concerted effort. As soon as heavy machine guns could be carried into position, each company would attack. But before the attack was launched, a runner from battalion arrived and ordered the three companies back to the south side of the ravine. The rifle companies, exhausted by the day's fighting, made their way across the big ravine. The three companies then set up for the

night.<sup>26</sup>

When the 2nd Battalion hit resistance, and when the 1st Battalion shied to the left, a gap developed between the two battalions, so regiment tapped the reserve battalion for one company to fill the hole. K Company moved into position between B and G companies. The terrain over which K Company moved was wooded and broken, and it had difficulty establishing contact with B and G companies and had even more difficulty maintaining contact. Men disappeared into gullies or vanished behind thick vegetation. All things considered, the day's progress would have been much more agreeable had the Scout regiment been there to help. Only on the left, in the 1st Battalion, did the Americans reach their objective, the Balantay River.<sup>27</sup>

With the coming of enough light to lead them out of the trail maze, the 45th Infantry spent 17 January trying to get into position. The regiment marched most of the day through tall cogon grass across rugged ground where every ridge line seemed to run perpendicular to the line of march. Two hours after midnight, guides met and escorted 45th Infantry officers to the command post of the 41st Division. There they hashed out plans for the next day, the 18th. The pre-dawn conference resulted in agreement to continue the attack. The 45th Infantry would attack any Japanese found between the American right and the left of the Philippine Army 41st Division. The Scouts would provide the main effort with battalions echeloned to the right. The American regiment would launch a holding attack. Unfortunately, the plan miscarried almost immediately. The Scout 3rd Battalion missed the 45th Infantry's assembly area, continued marching to the west, and finally stopped next to the left flank of the 31st Infantry facing the Hacienda. Making a virtue of necessity, the 3rd Battalion was allowed to attack from its present location. It would relieve some of the pressure building to the left of the American 31st Infantry.<sup>28</sup>



At 1200 hours, as the 3rd Battalion's point squad approached the sugar plantation, a shot rang out and the lead Scout fell dead, shot between the eyes. The other Scouts quickly fanned out and advanced through the area without meeting resistance. The Scouts reformed just south of the seven one-story buildings. The battalion commander made a risky decision and placed all three companies on line, leaving none in reserve. Time was short, too short to allow for a reconnaissance. With platoons in column, companies on line, L, I, and K from left to right, the 3rd Battalion crossed the Hacienda at 1300 hours and pushed north. The machine gun platoons, with four .30-caliber water-cooled guns each, were attached one platoon to each company. The battalion's single .50-caliber and lone 81mm mortar were set on the line of departure in support of the battalion. The left flank company advanced in squad column, three platoons on line with scouts forward. Pushing their way through sugar cane with visibility limited to a few feet, the men hiked forward for 250 yards before coming out of the uncut cane into a burned area. Here, Japanese automatic weapons cut accurately through L Company. As the Scouts threw themselves to the ground, the attached machine gunners trotted into action and returned a hot fire. The remainder of L Company deployed on the skirmish line formed by the foremost men. An officer went to the rear to request mortar fire, but when he tried to locate the enemy on a map, the map was so different from the actual terrain that he could not pinpoint the spot. The mortar fired some rounds in the general direction, but none came close.<sup>29</sup>

As L Company continued forward, Japanese fire increased, all of it coming from the left flank. A large draw, covered by enemy fire, delayed the Scouts, but the Scouts crossed the obstacle without too much trouble. North of the ravine, enemy fire became very heavy. The Scouts returned the fire and subdued the enemy's initial enthusiasm, but not before L Company and attached

machine gunners suffered thirty casualties. The direction of attack was running the men laterally across the front of the Japanese machine guns. The Japanese, not unnaturally, lost little time in taking advantage of the targets. Helping them in their firing was an east-west trail that provided an excellent field of fire. When the Scouts were within 100 yards of their objective--the abandoned foxholes of the 51st Division--the companies received an order from battalion headquarters to return to the line of departure. This they accomplished but not before L Company suffered more men killed and wounded as they again passed in front of the Japanese.<sup>30</sup>

When II Corps heard of the halt, they countermanded the order and told the badly used battalion to advance again. Once more, the men rose from the protection of the ground and walked forward. Once again, the Japanese cut up the left flank company. But this time, by a quick rush across some open ground, the 3rd Battalion reached its objective. The soldiers closed on the scrub-lined ravine overlooking the Balantay River and contacted the American 31st Infantry to their right. The time was 1630 hours, three and a half hours after the attack started. The battalion's front was 1,400 yards wide with a completely exposed left flank.<sup>31</sup>

The Americans attempted a coordinated attack the next day, 19 January. The 3rd Battalion was to attack east against the right flank of the enemy, the 2nd Battalion would push north along Trail 12, and the two 45th Infantry battalions were to attack the Japanese left. The 41st Artillery provided some artillery fire in support of the effort, but artillery support was limited. It was difficult to get cannon far enough west into the rough terrain where they could shoot effectively. Those guns in range could do little because of dense forests, bad maps, and inadequate communications.<sup>32</sup>

The 2nd Battalion deployed, F, G, and E companies from left to right.

After a few rounds of artillery, the men entered the big ravine, but fragmented in the thick underbrush. Men became lost, leaders disappeared when they went scouting, and confusion prevailed. Crawling up a dry waterfall and using rifles to hoist and pull each other up, one rifle and one weapons platoon worked their way out of the ravine. But it was dark when they reached the top. Behind them, another platoon reached the top and engaged a group of Japanese. In the dark, no one could tell what was happening, and a coordinated effort was impossible. Both platoons received orders to return to their start point. Similar troubles were experienced by all units. A full battalion effort might see one or two platoons actually fighting while the remainder stumbled about looking for the enemy.<sup>33</sup>

In a frustrating stalemate, the Americans and Scouts launched attack after attack on 20 and 21 January, while their higher headquarters watched the Japanese increase their pressure on the far left battalions. Although Japanese attacks were steadily weakening American and Scout units, losses were also mounting in Japanese units. By the close of 22 January, the 65th Brigade recorded losses of 342 men killed and 777 wounded, losses completely unacceptable if a quick result could not be obtained. Despite all they could do to force the issue, the Japanese admitted that "the enemy, showing no signs of retreating, was resisting with increased tenacity."<sup>34</sup>

Gloom was equally thick in Filamerican units. Ominous reports were reaching II Corps headquarters of Japanese moving south along the eastern slopes of Mount Natib. On 19 January, a three-man Scout patrol hiding on Mount Natib watched the Japanese 9th Infantry walk by, just yards from their position. The 9th Infantry's march through the jungle, clinging to the side of Mount Natib, was horrible. Countless ravines and valleys, cut by heavy water flows, ran across its line of march and slowed the column to a crawl. Some

gullies were absolutely impossible to climb and utterly defeated the tired infantrymen until they strung climbing ropes or cut zig-zag trails by hand. Trails along the mountain wandered aimlessly or came to abrupt halts. Even pack horses could not keep up with the men, and the animals had to be hauled up and down cliffs with ropes. The effort expended in moving the regiment's heavy weapons was enormous. When elements broke contact, they found it virtually impossible to find one another again. When the Japanese ran out of food on 23 January, they found and killed a few carabao, dug and ate grass roots, and resorted to every field expedient possible to gather food. Resupply from their own lines as far south as they were was impossible, and air drops were unreliable. The 9th Infantry needed to link with other Japanese units, and the only way to do that was to drive out the defenders.<sup>35</sup>

During 20 and 21 January, the Japanese facing II Corps completed preparations for what they hoped would be the final attack of the Abucay fight. Colonel Takeo Imai was gradually shifting the bulk of his 141st Infantry westward, around the open left flank of the Scout 3rd Battalion. Despite extensive use of Scout mortars to break up enemy movements, the high proportion of duds in the 3-inch rounds rendered the mortars relatively impotent. At noon on 22 January, the Japanese launched another effort. They massed large air and artillery forces, and the bombardment fell most heavily on the American 1st Battalion. All available Japanese bombers and fighters swept in to help their infantry. Japanese pilots amused themselves by diving low across the battlefield, grinning and waving at the frustrated Americans. Knee mortars added to the pounding. So many rounds impacted that dust and smoke hid the advancing Japanese. Brush fires burst out in dry cane fields and raised curtains of smoke. With visibility disappearing, the Americans became disorganized. On the heels of the Japanese air and artillery came the infantry.

Grudgingly, out of touch with friends on both flanks, the 31st Infantry recoiled.<sup>36</sup>

Seeing this movement, the Scout battalion on the far left spent a nervous hour before it received orders to withdraw south of the Hacienda to act as a reserve for the Americans. Under orders, the Scouts broke contact. Beginning at 1400 hours, the 3rd Battalion withdrew under the cover of four machine guns, a squad of riflemen, and the battalion executive officer. The 3rd Battalion, 31st Infantry, now exposed on both flanks, also withdrew. Despite forcing the Americans backwards, the Japanese did not feel they were making any progress. Their slight advances were accomplished only after extreme efforts against a cohesive defense. By late afternoon of 22 January, the Philippine Division was back to its 19 January positions after losing heavily in men and equipment. Some companies had lost sixty percent of their strength.<sup>37</sup>

Conflicting conclusions were drawn by General Parker at II Corps and General Nara at the 65th Brigade at the close of 22 January. General Parker surveyed his corps and realized, "It was now evident that the MLR in the 51st Division sector could not be restored by the Philippine Division."<sup>38</sup> The counterattack that might have saved the Abucay line had failed. The situation was now so bad the Japanese might drive all of II Corps against Manila Bay and end the Bataan defense. The biggest threat was the emergence of the Japanese 9th Infantry after its trek along the "impenetrable" slopes of Mount Natib. Only its continuing difficulty with the terrain kept it from sweeping through II Corps' rear.

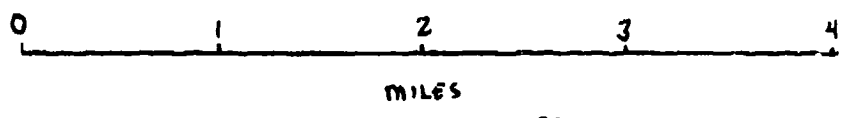
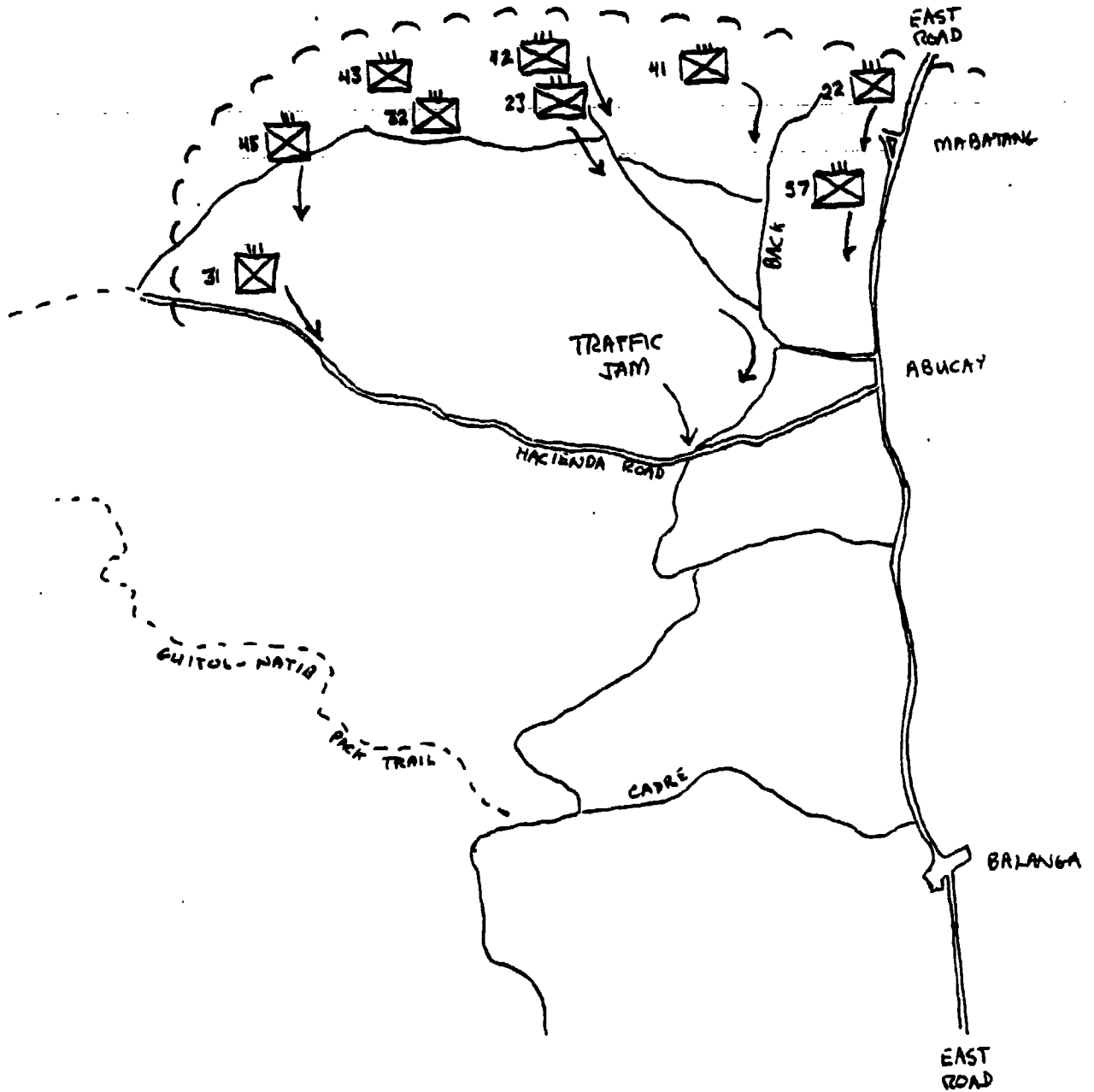
Despite their relatively advantageous position, the Japanese were still displeased with the progress of the 65th Brigade. Indications were that all their efforts had been in vain, and they saw no end to the punishing fighting.

The volume of Filipino artillery fire was increasing again, the Japanese worried about another counterattack, and restrictions placed on Japanese artillery prevented them from doing all they could. Numerous targets were sighted, but orders forbade the Japanese from engaging them so as to save ammunition. If this bloody fighting continued, the Japanese felt sure they would run out of soldiers. Every time it seemed they might break through, they were hit by a vicious counterattack. As serious as the loss of personnel was the decline in spirit. Both sides were ready to quit.<sup>39</sup>

Because the Japanese were continuing their regimental-sized turning movement around II Corps' left flank, and because I Corps off to the west had been driven from the main line of resistance, further action at the 51st Division's original line was fast losing relevance. Even if the line could be restored, the Japanese were about to flank it from the west. MacArthur's Chief of Staff came to Bataan on 22 January to see if a general withdrawal to the reserve battle position was necessary.

#### Corps Withdrawal, 23-26 January

MacArthur's Chief of Staff did not have to look very long to come to a decision. The Japanese had overrun the left of II Corps, and counterattacks had failed to restore the line. So a decision to withdraw was "timely and necessary if more than regrettable."<sup>40</sup> Retreating to the reserve battle position along the Pilar-Bagac Road was not an admission of defeat. The defense of Bataan had always been envisioned as a defense in depth with both a main and reserve battle position. The northern Abucay line had never meant to be the location of a last-ditch stand. The line was to be held as long as possible for two reasons: to keep the Pilar-Bagac Road, valuable for its lateral communications, in



friendly hands, and to enable the reserve battle position to be prepared.<sup>41</sup>

Detailed withdrawal orders already existed in draft, so finalizing them took only a matter of hours. MacArthur's headquarters issued Field Order Number 9 the night of 22 January to both corps headquarters. II Corps held a meeting the morning of 23 January to alert commanders to the upcoming move. General Parker's staff published II Corps Field Order Number 2 and distributed it the next day to confirm instructions issued on the 23rd. Initial withdrawal of some artillery and support troops the night of 23 January proceeded without alerting the Japanese, a real surprise considering Japanese command of the air. But the Japanese were not flying at night, and their artillery practically never fired at night, so the blacked-out convoys rolled south unmolested.<sup>42</sup>

Pre-war plans had already selected a reserve battle position, but no construction effort had gone into the line before the war. And during the fighting along the Abucay line, almost nothing had been done to prepare the new line for occupation. At the beginning of January, the reserve battle position was scarcely more than a line sketched on a map. By 22 January, when MacArthur decided to occupy it, it was not much better, even though two companies from the 301st Engineer Combat Regiment (PA) and 600 other soldiers rushed to work on the line. The 14th Engineer Battalion had been the only unit working full time on emplacements since late December.<sup>43</sup>

The Japanese had turned the left of II Corps' line in the area defended by the American 31st Infantry and the Scout 45th Infantry. Movement of II Corps' elements here would begin at 1900 hours; order of withdrawal was from right to left, 41st, 42nd, and 43rd Infantry followed by the 22nd, 45th, and the American 31st. Reconnaissance parties were dispatched, and heavy baggage, ammunition, and rations were collected at dumps for movement by truck. Each



unit was tasked to provide its own covering shell, normally a third of the infantry bolstered by machine guns. Some light artillery pieces would stay in place until the last moment, and they would withdraw just ahead of the infantry of the covering shell. Each division's artillery regiment would leave one 75mm battery for each infantry regiment of the covering shell. Additionally, both battalions of light tanks supported by self-propelled 75mm artillery scattered themselves all across II Corps' line as a backstop to the withdrawing troops. Because of their mobility, they could remain longer and withdraw quicker than could the infantry.<sup>44</sup>

The covering shell's mission was to screen the vulnerable main body as it marched south. The shell would hold until 0300 hours on 25 January and then pull south. Some regiments left a battalion as their screening force, while other regiments used a company to screen each battalion. Japanese artillery hit the main line at 1800 hours, and infantry launched probes a half hour later. On the left of the 31st Infantry were the troops of the 1st Battalion's covering shell. A and B companies marched away just before dark; just after dark, D Company gathered its men and heavy weapons and followed the route taken by the two rifle companies. C Company positioned itself as the battalion's screen. C Company repulsed a Japanese attack and then withdrew through another battalion's screening force. This screen, in turn, withdrew under pressure through a line of five light tanks. The five tanks shot up the Japanese and then withdrew.<sup>45</sup>

Across the entire II Corps front, the night began badly and degenerated to chaotic. Planning for the withdrawal had been incomplete, and execution of the planning which had been accomplished was poor. Road nets, in particular, made the withdrawal difficult. As early as 1600 hours, the main north-south road was jammed with buses going south or trying to turn around. But the

greatest confusion developed along the left and center of the corps' line. As the front line infantry--except for the small covering shell--withdrew, they jammed onto the one road leading to safety, and at the intersection of the Back Road and the Abucay Hacienda Road was "the worst traffic jam imaginable."<sup>46</sup> The mass of six regiments of infantry concentrated here, and military police were not present to control traffic. Units did not come out intact. They came out as hordes of men with their commanders and instructors trying to organize them for further movement south. The soldiers were badly packed on roads and trails, and if the Japanese had fired artillery seriously that night, the withdrawal would have turned to rout.<sup>47</sup>

When the 41st Infantry--five battalions strong at the moment--marched up to the junction of the Back Road and the Hacienda Road, they found it jammed even though they should have been the first unit to arrive there. As the senior instructor recalled, "<We><sup>\*</sup> couldn't find anyone to give us orders so we moved the 41st Inf<antry> column right through the stalled columns and thereby started some of the others."<sup>48</sup> The 22nd Infantry joined the mess at 2200 hours--a full hour ahead of schedule--and blocked motor movement to the east. Next, the American 31st Infantry arrived earlier than planned while trying to reach the East Road and ran into the 22nd Infantry. Both regiments claimed the single road. Then the 45th Infantry arrived and demanded priority on the Back Road because they had the longest distance to travel. Without anyone to regulate the traffic, soldiers poured uncontrollably into the intersection, but few departed despite the pressure added by each new unit.<sup>49</sup>

As the situation became increasingly difficult, more and more commanders left their units and waded into the press to direct traffic. Colonel

\* < > are used in place of brackets.

Thomas W. Doyle of the 45th Infantry found vehicles bumper to bumper and "not a wheel turning," so he tried to send them east along the Hacienda Road while directing foot traffic south along the Back Road.<sup>50</sup> Colonel Malcolm V. Fortier of the 41st Division stepped into the crossroads to take charge and sent two officers down the Back Road. These two men found the cause of the blockage; at a stream just a half mile south, Filipinos were trying to keep their feet dry by walking on rocks. The water was only ankle deep, yet because of an absence of supervision here, disaster threatened. The two officers ran the men across the stream at a double time, and the jammed column sluggishly started moving.<sup>51</sup>

Earlier that evening, at 1900 hours, the corps covering force extricated itself from the main line, marched south, and established a line from Balanga west to Guitol through which both II Corps' main body and its covering shell would withdraw. The covering force consisted of the remnants of the routed 51st Division, one-third of the American 31st Infantry, a third of the Scout 57th Infantry, all the 33rd Infantry, and a battalion of the Philippine Army 31st Infantry. Tanks and self-propelled 75mm's would support the covering force. The tracked vehicles left their reserve positions during daylight on the 24th and occupied their covering force positions. The covering force, supported by four 155mm guns, would stay in position through 25 January. After the main body and the covering shell passed through, the covering force would withdraw the night of 25 January.<sup>52</sup>

The covering force took up its positions and held the line all day on the 25th. The Japanese, however, were so slow to pursue that the only action seen by the covering force concerned artillery. Observers from Major Joseph Ganahl's self-propelled artillery spotted the Japanese coming down the East Road. Ganahl's 75mm cannon were backed under nipa shacks with an observation

post in a church tower. The first salvo struck in the middle of the Japanese, and the 75mm guns continued firing until the Japanese had completely dispersed. The Japanese failed to reach the covering force which withdrew without trouble that night. As a rear guard, the covering force left the 194th Tank Battalion to delay the next day's pursuit.<sup>53</sup>

It was well past daylight on 26 January when the tankers, delayed from withdrawing until the last Filipinos and Scouts cleared the road, left their delay positions. After a short drive, the M-3 tanks settled into temporary positions, now only a kilometer north of the new main line. Supporting the light tanks were four self-propelled 75mm's. The tankers had orders to delay the Japanese, so when the Japanese stepped into sight, the tanks took them under fire. The self-propelled guns were in excellent positions, and they fired everywhere the Japanese jumped for cover. The battalion's half-tracks were interspersed among the tanks, and their .30-caliber and .50-caliber machine guns added to the carnage. The fight started at 1030 hours, but it was not until noon that the Japanese finally unlimbered some artillery and fired at the tanks. Once the fire became dangerous, the tankers broke contact and retired into the new main line.<sup>54</sup>

From the new Orion-Bagac line, the Filamerican army successfully repulsed strong Japanese attacks in late January and early February. Noteworthy was the fact that three Japanese regiments attacked fewer Filipinos and were bloodily repulsed. No American or Scout units took part in the fight, partly because most of the Scout battalions had been drawn off to repulse Japanese amphibious landings along the west coast. The landings began on 23 January, but Japanese planning for the effort had started even earlier.

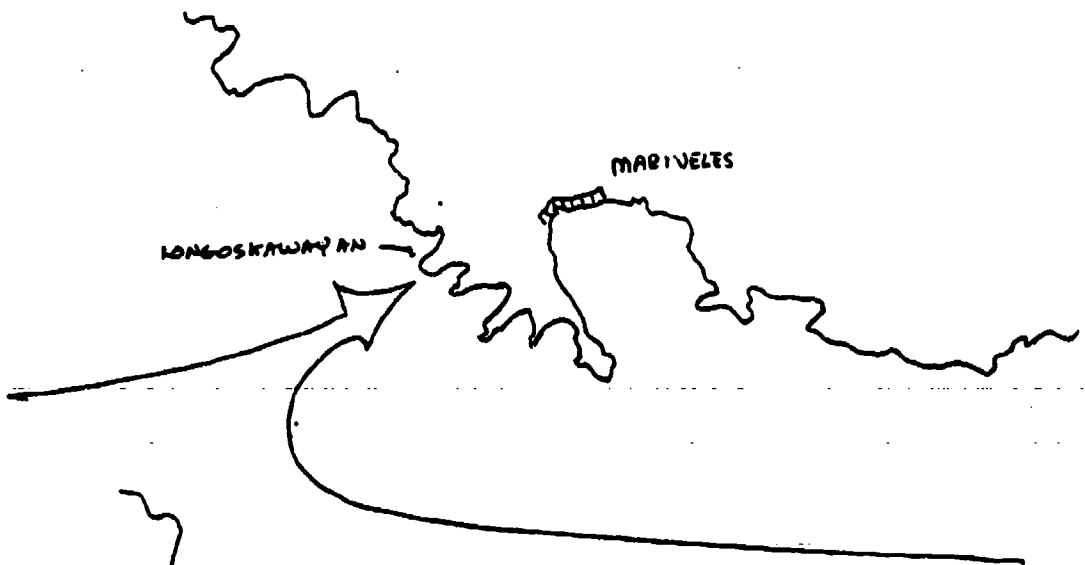
Regimental and Battalion Offense,  
Longoskawayan, Quinauan, and Anyasan-Silajim Points,  
23 January to 13 February

Longoskawayan Point, 27-31 January

As the fighting continued along the Abucay line through mid-January, the Japanese decided to make an amphibious landing along the left flank of the Filamerican lines, along Bataan's west coast. General Homma pointed out that similar amphibious operations had succeeded against the British in Malaya, where General Tomoyuki Yamashita had continually cut behind defending lines, forcing them to withdraw, thereby avoiding costly frontal attacks. Homma went so far as to order landing craft moved from Lingayen Gulf to Olongapo, and planners set Caibobo Point on Bataan's west coast as the operation's beachhead and the West Road as the objective.<sup>55</sup>

General Mitsuo Kimura, commander of the 16th Division, selected Lieutenant Colonel Nariyoshi Tsunehiro's 2nd Battalion, 20th Infantry, to make the amphibious end run. Tsunehiro's amphibious operation was not to be an independent affair. At the time Homma made his decision to flank I Corps by sea, Japanese infantry had penetrated Wainwright's main line, so the amphibious operation would support Kimura's overland thrust after he defeated I Corps and turned against II Corps. If the Japanese succeeded, and if they could reinforce their landing, they could destroy all of Wainwright's I Corps by cutting off its line of retreat.

Embarking from Mayagao Point near Moron the night of 22 January, the 900-man 2nd Battalion, 20th Infantry (reinforced), immediately sailed into



trouble. Encountering strong tides, pitch-black skies, and rough seas, the soldiers jammed aboard the landing craft were further plagued by a PT boat. Because of the tide, heavy seas, and disrupting influence of the PT boat, the Japanese, relying on inadequate maps and now badly separated from one another, came ashore at two different points, neither of which had been designated in the plan. Disorganized and lost, the only advantage the Japanese held was that of complete surprise. One group of 300 men landed at Longoskawayan Point, ten miles south of the intended landing point, on a ridge running off the hill mass of Mariveles Mountain.<sup>56</sup>

Local defense forces composed of a grounded Air Corps pursuit squadron and a naval battalion contained the Japanese, but they could not evict the invaders. After four days, Philippine Scouts were alerted. The Navy and Air Corps had done their job; they had held the enemy when there were no regulars available, and now the veterans of Mabatang were at hand. At dusk on 27 January, 475 Scouts from the 2nd Battalion, 57th Infantry arrived at Longoskawayan. Colonel Hal C. Granberry spent the afternoon reconnoitering the enemy's most advanced positions and picked a big gap in the Naval Battalion's line to be the Scout line of departure. Granberry planned to attack southeast, parallel to the Pucot River to clean out the most easterly Japanese, then swing 90 degrees to his right and seize the high ground fronting Longoskawayan Point.<sup>57</sup>

Colonel Granberry put his two most experienced company commanders on line, E Company on the left and F Company on the right. Working in the dark, the company commanders each deployed a single platoon on line with the remaining platoons following closely behind the deployed formations. Fighting was serious, but the disciplined Scouts drove the Japanese through tangled second growth and the more open virgin jungle, made their 90-degree right turn,

and took the high ground which overlooked Longoskawayan. Here, G Company relieved F, leaving G and E in place. Both companies then put a second platoon on line, giving the battalion a four-platoon front. Then the men settled down to wait for daylight.<sup>58</sup>

Preparation for the upcoming day's work was thorough. Scout mortars registered, and machine guns dug in to cover the advance. Covered by small arms fire and artillery support, the Scouts attacked at 0600 hours on 28 January and made steady progress until their supporting weapons were masked by a small hill. After a platoon of machine guns shifted to cover the immediate area and a platoon of D Battery, 88th Artillery moved until it could once again cover the advance, the Scout infantrymen resumed their attack and forced the Japanese to the lower third of the small peninsula. In hopes of keeping friendly losses to a minimum--the Scouts were literally irreplaceable--the battalion planned extensive artillery fires for the next day's attack.<sup>59</sup>

The morning of 29 January, the Scouts pulled out of the way of the scheduled artillery preparation. Despite the 12-inch shells from Corregidor falling on the top of Longoskawayan, not all the Japanese were impressed by the shelling. Some followed the morning withdrawal of the Scouts and reoccupied the positions lost the day before. After stopping the Japanese, the Scouts spent four hours evicting them from the same ground won the day before. When Colonel Granberry committed his reserve F Company, it took only three more hours to finish the job. By 1900 hours, the Scouts stood triumphant on Longoskawayan.<sup>60</sup>

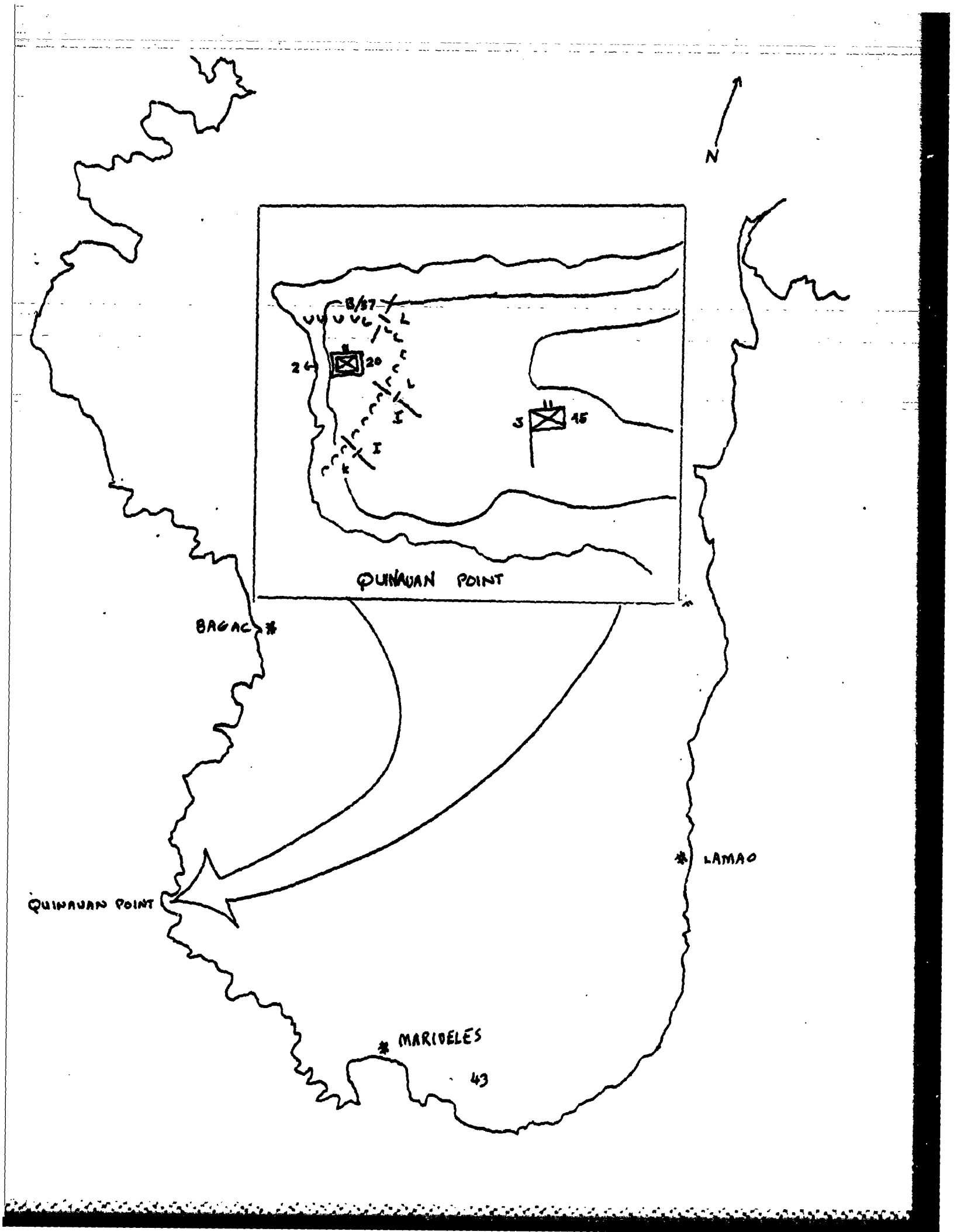


### Quinauan Point, 27 January to 8 February

The second and larger part of Lieutenant Colonel Tsunehiro's battalion came ashore at Quinauan Point. Barges carrying a portion of Tsunehiro's invasion force tried to land at the proper location, Caibobo Point, but several craft which stood in close to the shore sailed into Air Corps .50-caliber machine guns. Abandoning a few sinking craft, survivors swam to barges standing farther off shore. After rescuing the bedraggled swimmers, the little Japanese flotilla sailed south. By now, the navigators were badly confused and the boats scattered. Edging east, they found another piece of terrain more hospitable than Caibobo. Still having no idea where they were, the Japanese--big, well-equipped men--splashed over the rocky, ankle-turning beach without opposition.<sup>61</sup>

Reports from different American Air Corps listening posts soon indicated the Japanese were landing, but the posts could not determine specific landing sites or enemy strengths. The beach defenders reported the enemy's general location to General Selleck at 0230 hours on 23 January, six hours sooner than he learned about the Japanese who landed further south at Longoskawayan. General Selleck knew the 34th Pursuit was not strong enough to stop them, so he alerted his reserve. But until his Constabulary battalion arrived, the 34th Pursuit had to fight alone.<sup>62</sup>

When the grounded 34th Pursuit advanced to meet the enemy, heavy Japanese fire stopped the airmen cold, and the Americans discontinued active efforts to dislodge the Japanese. Although further offensive movement was impossible, the 34th Pursuit's fumbling efforts were enough. The Japanese, concerned over the noisy reaction to their landing and missing a full third of their force--lost somewhere at sea that confusing night--looked for a place to



dig in. Without his missing 300 men, now fighting at Longoskawayan, Colonel Tsunehiro felt too weak to press on toward the West Road. Unfortunately the Japanese, Tsunehiro's decision was a serious mistake. The 600 infantrymen then ashore could have scattered the airmen by simply advancing. By hesitating, the Japanese lost their best chance to cut the road.<sup>63</sup>

As was the case at Longoskawayan, efforts to destroy the Japanese with Air Corps and Constabulary failed. Once again, the call went out for regular infantry. When the first reports of the Japanese landing reached the 3rd Battalion, 45th Infantry, they were told only twenty-five to fifty Japanese needed to be evicted. At Quinauan Point, a Scout representative met with the units facing the Japanese and received a briefing as to terrain, enemy positions, and Filipino deployments. The Scouts decided to begin the relief, Scouts replacing Constabulary, at 2000 hours. The Scouts arrived and began the involved process of moving into positions held by another unit. The relief took four hours and concluded at midnight. All three Scout rifle companies went on line, K, I, and L from left to right, covering a front of 900 yards with a machine gun platoon attached to each company placed where resistance was expected to be the strongest. The gunners were tasked to shoot apart trees which might contain Japanese--a mission of no little difficulty--for the area was heavily forested with trees climbing sixty to eighty feet high.<sup>64</sup>

Beginning at 0830 hours on 28 January, the Scouts attacked through the thick jungle, but were held to surprisingly small gains. The bamboo was so thick that even heavy .30-caliber rounds glanced off the tough wood. The most effective weapons would have been 60mm and 81mm mortars, but no 60mm ammunition existed in the Philippines, and a severe shortage of 81mm ammunition reduced the effectiveness of that weapon. In place of the 81mm round, mortarmen used inaccurate 3-inch (75mm) projectiles. Despite the

expertise the Scouts held in infantry fighting, the day's progress was less than 100 yards, while at some points they gained only ten. That evening, B Company, 57th Infantry was attached to the 3rd Battalion, 45th Infantry. Even with the extra rifleman and the arrival of D Battery, 88th Artillery, the attack the next day failed to make any progress, for the Japanese fought furiously, especially in the center.<sup>65</sup>

On 30 January, the Scouts fired an hour-long mortar barrage in hopes of softening the Japanese. The vegetation was too dense to observe the fall of the shells, so men on the front lines listened to the bursts and fed information to mortar crews over telephone lines. When the mortars stopped firing, the Scout riflemen built up a tremendous volume of fire with M-1 rifles, machine guns, and even pistols. Scout infantry pressed themselves as close to the protecting ground as possible as they inched forward. At the rate of one round a minute, friendly howitzer shells thumped into the Japanese. After an effort lasting forty-five minutes--fighting in tight jungle and a deafening world of noise--L Company Scouts gained only twenty yards at the cost of eleven men killed and wounded. The Japanese were well entrenched, and even the most sharp-eyed Scouts could not spot their positions until they were within a few feet of them. The Scouts gained so little ground that the battalion ordered everyone to return to the foxholes dug the previous day; it was easier for the men to spend the night there than expend the energy in building a new line.<sup>66</sup>

The next day, 31 January, events paralleled those of the previous day--terrific firing, an attempt to advance, and fourteen Scouts from L Company carried to the rear. At the close of the effort, the frustrated Scouts reoccupied their old foxhole line. Even the addition of the 192nd Tank Battalion to the Scout attack had little impact on the enemy's powers of resistance. Fallen trees impeded the tanks, and thick vegetation reduced their

fields of fire. Besides that, the tanks operated hesitantly. Of the twenty-three tanks in I Corps, only three were committed, and they spent most of their first day making short rushes into the tangled jungle to clear paths for the infantry. The same three M-3 tanks were used continuously, and the tankers neared exhaustion in their oven-like vehicles. Even when the tank platoon in contact was given the normal five tanks, use of tanks in such small numbers proved futile.<sup>67</sup>

In the center of the line, the net result of L Company's attack, just one of four rifle companies taking part in the 2 February effort, was seventeen killed and wounded, leaving but two officers and twenty-seven men alive. The next day, two more Scouts died and two disappeared somewhere along the front line. Then on 4 February, five more men were lost. Losses in the rifle companies continued to rise with some, like L Company, suffering horrendous casualties until everyone was worn down both physically and mentally.<sup>68</sup>

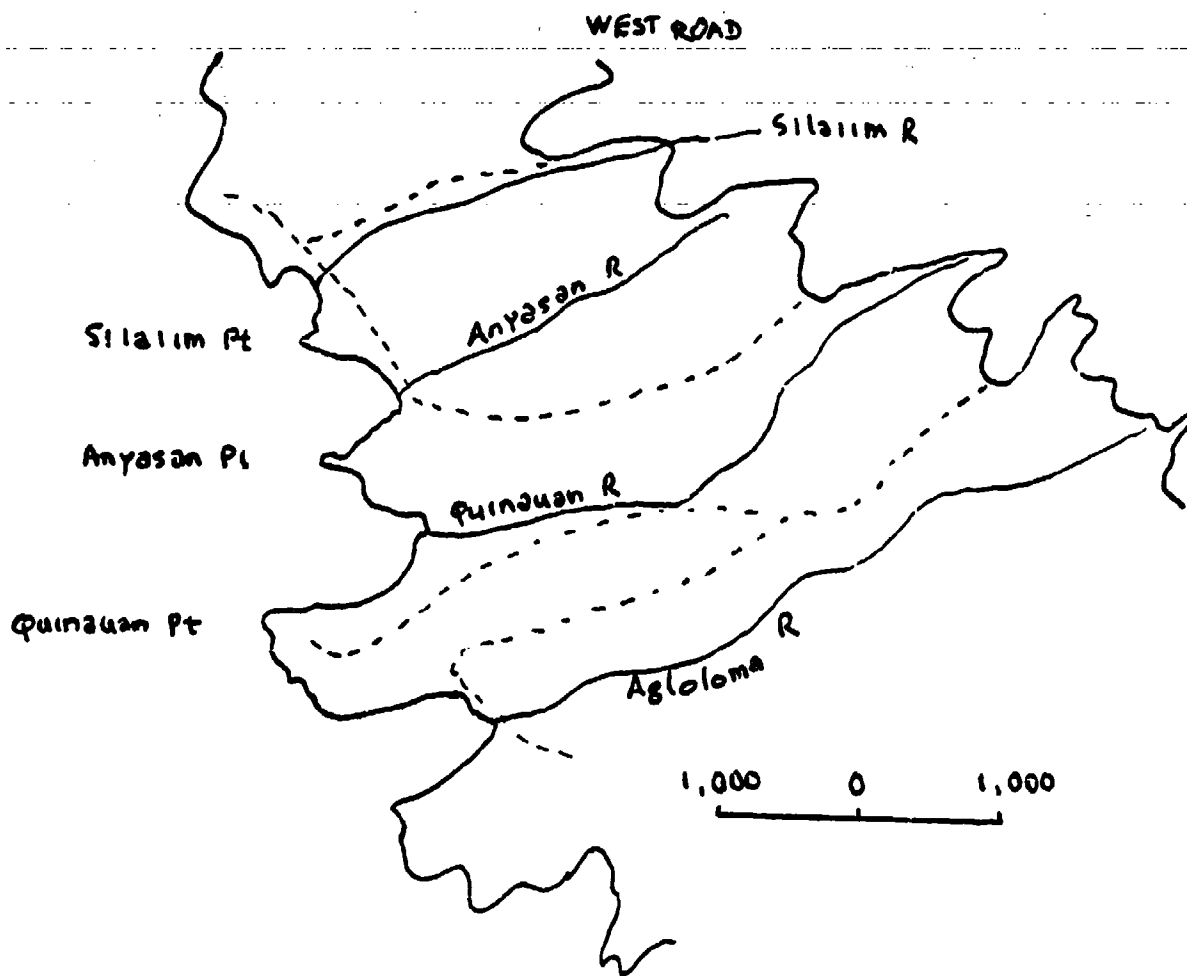
Finally, on 4 February, a coordinated attack using tanks and close radio control forced the faltering Japanese into a shrinking perimeter only fifty yards from the cliffs at the very edge of Quinauan Point. The tanks were the deciding factor now. The once thick, concealing vegetation had been shot away, allowing the tanks to see and maneuver. Guided by radio, they moved forward, firing at targets spotted by nearby infantrymen. They shot apart Japanese positions or crushed them with their 13-ton weight. Surviving Japanese retreated until they occupied a perimeter slightly larger than a football field. Then the remaining Japanese jumped up, ripped off their uniforms, leapt off the cliff, and scrambled down the crumbling ledges. Exultant Scouts and Americans fired machine guns and rifles into the enemy killing scores of them.<sup>69</sup>

The battle for Quinauan was over. The Japanese 2nd Battalion, 20th Infantry, was totally destroyed, its 900 men dead. To General Homma, the battalion had been lost "without a trace."<sup>70</sup> Every depression and foxhole was filled with Japanese dead, and pictures of wives and children fluttered over the bodies. Friendly losses at Quinauan were five times those suffered at Longoskawayan, nearly 500 Filipinos and Americans killed and wounded. More than fifty Filipinos from the 1st Constabulary were lost, and of four American instructors assigned, one was killed and two wounded. Scouts of the 3rd Battalion, 45th Infantry, had carried the brunt of the battle. They entered the fight on 27 January with 500 officers and men. Just twelve days later, only 212 men remained. Most impressive was the fact that every man in the battalion was accounted for as either present for duty, buried, or evacuated as wounded; there were no stragglers or deserters.<sup>71</sup>

But before the Americans could consider the west coast secure, the results of two more landings had to be countered. In another effort to outflank I Corps from the sea, one company of Japanese from the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry landed on 27 January, and the remainder of the battalion came ashore the first night of February.

#### Anyasan - Silaiim, 31 January to 13 February

On 25 January General Homma ordered the 16th Division commander, Lieutenant General Susumu Morioka, to leave Manila with two of his infantry battalions and the 21st Independent Engineer Regiment headquarters and to assume command of the operations against Wainwright's corps. Morioka decided to reinforce the Quinauan landings with one company from his 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry. But once again, poor seamanship, a dark night, and difficulty in



spotting landmarks along Bataan's coast brought the Japanese 2,000 yards short of their objective. Although the spot at which the Japanese came ashore looked much like Quinauan Point, the 200 Japanese actually landed between the Anyasan and Silaiim Rivers, just north of Quinauan Point.<sup>72</sup>

There were men along the coast who might have made a fight of it, but ~~elements of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Constabulary, fled.~~ When this news reached Brigadier General Clinton A. Pierce, the Sector commander, Pierce ordered the 17th Pursuit Squadron--one of his reserves--to advance to the beach. With their point element out, the airmen entered the abandoned headquarters of the panicked Constabulary battalion. With the airmen just 300 yards past the Constabulary bivouac and only 400 yards west of the vital West Road, three Japanese stepped into view and opened fire with automatic weapons. The airmen tried to deploy out of column into a skirmish line, but the jungle was so dense that this maneuver proved impossible. This was the first time many of the Americans had ever fired their rifles, and because they could not see anything, their firing was high. Probably feeling they had too few men, and already a mile inland, the Japanese outposts fell back toward the beach, and the firing died. American airmen had once again bought time for reinforcements to assemble. Earlier that day, the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Constabulary, received orders to join the fight. The battalion moved from its reserve location and joined the 17th Pursuit that night.<sup>73</sup>

At I Corps, Wainwright became more and more concerned over the safety of his corps as one Japanese landing after another splashed ashore behind his main line. On the afternoon of 27 January, he sent a memorandum to MacArthur recommending consideration, and consideration only, of moving both corps further south to shorten the flanks.

My coastal flank is very lightly held, so lightly that the Japs appear to infiltrate through it at night at points selected by them. If I take troops off



my front to thicken the Coast Defense, they will certainly crash through the front. They already attacked there today with infantry and artillery and have tanks in position.<sup>74</sup>

Wainwright was also concerned over his inland right flank units, his 11th Division and 2nd Philippine Constabulary. Without roads upon which to move--only narrow foot trails--they stood in serious danger of being cut off if the Japanese broke through to the West Road. When Wainwright wrote his memorandum, he was faced with a penetration of his main line of resistance and the beginning of a pocket similar to the one which forced him from his original position. And when he looked seaward, all he could see were Japanese coming ashore and threatening his lines of communications. Even his retreat could be threatened, so he had reason to be concerned. But MacArthur refused to order further withdrawals, and rightly so. There was too little space remaining on Bataan, and a last-ditch stand had to be made somewhere. Here was as good a place as anywhere.<sup>75</sup>

The day after the landing, the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Constabulary, and the 17th Pursuit launched another but it was only after a battalion of Scouts from the 45th Infantry arrived the next day that any progress was made and the situation considered under control. The 2nd Battalion, 45th Infantry arrived on 29 January just in time to prevent a Japanese sortie from succeeding.

On 27 January, General Homma ordered General Morioka to reinforce Quinauan Point and seize Mariveles Mountain. Assigned this huge task was the rest of the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry. Like its lead company, the 1st Battalion moved to the coastal town of Olongapo and embarked for the trip to Quinauan to reinforce the stranded 2nd Battalion. There was little time to plan and rehearse, for Major Kimura received his orders on 31 January and had to sail the next evening. The 500-man battalion was in trouble even before it left

friendly shores the first night of February. A captured Japanese order revealed Japanese intentions of reinforcing the western landings and driving to Mariveles Mountain. The Americans took immediate action to counter the expected landings. Staff officers alerted observers along the west coast and dispatched one of the two American tank battalions to the threatened area. Just after dark, P-40 fighter aircraft went on strip alert.<sup>76</sup>

With his plan already compromised, Major Kimura encountered a second serious problem soon after his boats sailed. Three Navy signalmen perched atop a tree spotted his flotilla in the light of a full moon. The signalmen sounded the alarm, and the carefully laid defense plan--the first coordinated air-sea-land action of the campaign--slipped into gear. Navy PT boats sped into the area, and the 26th Cavalry left I Corps' reserve for Caibobo Point riding Bren-gun carriers and buses. Four P-40's roared from their dirt strips, climbed over Mariveles Mountain, and dropped toward the sea to attack the twelve or more enemy barges. On each pass, the low-flying pilots subjected the barges to murderous fire from six wing-mounted .50-caliber machine guns. Five barges sank, carrying the equipment and ammunition-encumbered Japanese with them. The P-40 blitz was a shock for the Japanese, until then confident in their undisputed aerial superiority. The American planes returned to base, made a night landing without loss, and quickly rearmed for another strike. After eight sorties--flown individually as soon as a plane was rearmed--four fresh pilots replaced the original fliers and took off for yet another strike.<sup>77</sup>

The slaughter continued. After heavy 155mm guns of E Battery, 301st Artillery, and then light 75mm cannons of D Battery, 88th Artillery, found the range, they were joined by the unmistakable rapid booming of heavy .50-caliber ground-mounted machine guns from Scout and Air Corps units. As the Japanese drew closer to land, Scout infantry fired their shorter range weapons; their

light machine guns and rifle fire chopped into the water. Finally, PT 32 dashed about firing machine guns and two torpedoes at the Japanese minelayer Yaeyama which was supporting the attack. After losing half their force before even touching shore, the thoroughly battered Japanese turned about and limped north. But either because of his tenacity or because his damaged boats could not make the return trip to Moron--the closest safe harbor--Major Kimura beached the survivors of his battalion at Silaiim Point and joined his one company already there.<sup>78</sup>

The Japanese who landed with their equipment at Silaiim were full of fight. Some supplies were lost, some men were dead, and some equipment was missing, but fighting spirit remained. To keep the Japanese off balance, two batteries of Filipino and Scout artillery poured a thousand rounds of 75mm and 155mm high explosive into the beachhead in the first twenty-four hours after the landing. At least this time there did not have to be haphazard improvisation, no juggling of Constabulary, Air Corps, Philippine Army, and Scouts. Sufficient forces were on hand. Two battalions of the 57th Infantry, the 1st and 3rd, had arrived.<sup>79</sup>

The 57th Infantry brought friendly forces to three battalions of Scouts, a battalion from both the Constabulary and Philippine Army, and a pursuit squadron. The Scouts would be the main maneuver force while the airmen, Constabulary, and Philippine Army would protect the flanks and patrol rear areas. Fighting along Bataan's west coast had sucked up five of the six Scout infantry battalions on Bataan, and it was imperative that the job be finished quickly so as to return these elite troopers to reserve. The staff finalized preparations for the next day. Because it knew the enemy's general trace, it could assign specific objectives for each battalion. The 1st Battalion received the mission of taking the southern-most objective, Anyasan Point, while the 3rd

Battalion, north of the 1st, was assigned Silaiim Point and the mouth of the Anyasan River. The 2nd Battalion, 45th Infantry, was to take the mouth of the Silaiim River and the north side of the point. Philippine Army, Constabulary, and Air Corps units were kept in reserve against a sudden Japanese breakthrough toward the West Road.<sup>80</sup>

In the predawn darkness of 2 February, the two 57th Infantry battalions departed their West Road assembly areas, 1st Battalion on the left and 3rd Battalion on the right. It was still dark on the jungle floor at 0600 hours, but rather than providing surprise and concealment for the Scouts, the darkness only hampered the attack. Not needing light, the Japanese simply fired their pre-arranged fires and forced the Scouts off the trails into the jungle. Formations mixed, and leaders fought a losing battle to find and control their men. It quickly became apparent nothing could be done until the sun rose, so the Scouts went to ground and waited for daylight.<sup>81</sup>

When it was light enough to start again, progress was slow and fighting at close quarters. The Japanese were dug into a series of well-organized self-contained strong points, each prepared for all around defense, connected by communication trenches and possessing good fields of fire. The advance was slow and cautious. Line of sight was five to ten yards, and runners were hindered by an absence of lateral trails. By the end of the first day, Scout gains were negligible. The 1st Battalion spent the day pushing its way through amazingly thick vegetation along the only two trails in the area.<sup>82</sup>

On 3 February, the infantry received some support from nine light tanks from C Company, 194th Tank Battalion. The west coast was bad for armor everywhere and completely impossible in the 1st Battalion's area. The only place the 1st Battalion could operate was opposite Silaiim Point, and even here it was restricted to a single narrow trail walled in by trees. Scout infantry

guided the tanks forward, and the tankers found the close support most welcome. Very few Scout and tank bullets found a mark, but the huge volume of fire prevented the Japanese from shooting back, and Scout infantry could crawl forward with minimal losses. Despite the tanks, it was still an infantryman's battle, and the foot soldiers relied on rifles, bayonets, and untrustworthy hand grenades. Because of thick vegetation and small fields of fire, the Scouts attached their heavy machine gun platoons to the rifle companies. But as the 3rd Battalion advanced away from the West Road, and as fields of fire and visibility both declined, the effectiveness of machine guns diminished. More important, the problems of bringing adequate ammunition over the rough terrain resulted in machine gunners being used as ammunition bearers for the riflemen.<sup>83</sup>

The Scouts finally shoved the Japanese onto Silaiim Point itself, and both sides could see the end approaching. Tanks from A Company, 192nd Tank Battalion, often stood hull to hull with less than ten feet between vehicles as they flayed the Japanese. The Japanese in Major Kimura's 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, were now in desperate straits. Unless help arrived, he was doomed. Kimura messaged General Morioka of his plight. "I am unable to make contact with the Tsunehiro Battalion <2nd Battalion, 20th Infantry>. The battalion is being attacked by superior enemy tanks and artillery, and we are fighting a bitter battle. The battalion is about to die gloriously."<sup>84</sup> But rather than let Major Kimura's battalion die, gloriously or otherwise, Morioka ordered the 21st Independent Engineer Regiment to rescue the trapped men. The engineers departed Olongapo and sailed down the west coast the night of 7 February, but failed to locate any of their troops. When they approached the shore for a better look, they ran into two Bataan-based P-40's, artillery, and numerous machine guns.<sup>85</sup>

With this seaborne rescue attempt thwarted, General Morioka relieved Major Kimura from his original mission of linking with the Quinauan force and ordered him to evacuate his men using whatever materials were available. On 10 February, the Japanese continued to retreat before the Scouts and Constabulary. The Scouts pushed steadily through minor opposition and neared the coast by late morning. At noon, they ran into the final enemy positions and engaged in some close combat before standing triumphant on Anyasan Point.<sup>86</sup>

In a final effort to escape the tightening ring of Scouts, 200 Japanese launched a desperation drive out of Silaiim Point the morning of 12 February. The assault drove through the junction between E and F companies, 45th Infantry, and plowed over two Scout machine guns killing one of the crews. The second crew fired until out of ammunition and then escaped. Losing about thirty men, the Japanese broke free, turned north, and ran into the command posts of the 17th Pursuit and F Company, 45th Infantry. Just as the Japanese hit the command post's security, and just as they started firing into the Scouts with machine guns, the 3rd Battalion, 57th Infantry, arrived. Hardly had K and L companies gone on line than twenty-five Japanese overran an L Company machine gun, losing twenty of their own men in the process. Although the Japanese fought hard and skillfully, they were not in prepared positions. Their attack was broken, momentum was lost, and when the 3rd Battalion hit them, the survivors scattered. By 1500 hours the next day, the Scouts reached the beach.<sup>87</sup>

At Longoskawayan and Quinauan, Wainwright's men wiped an infantry battalion from the Japanese order of battle. At Silaiim and Anyasan, they destroyed a second battalion, half of it at sea. Now only a single battalion remained to the ill-starred 20th Japanese Infantry, and it would soon be destroyed in a battle against Filipino troops. General Morioka's attempt to flank

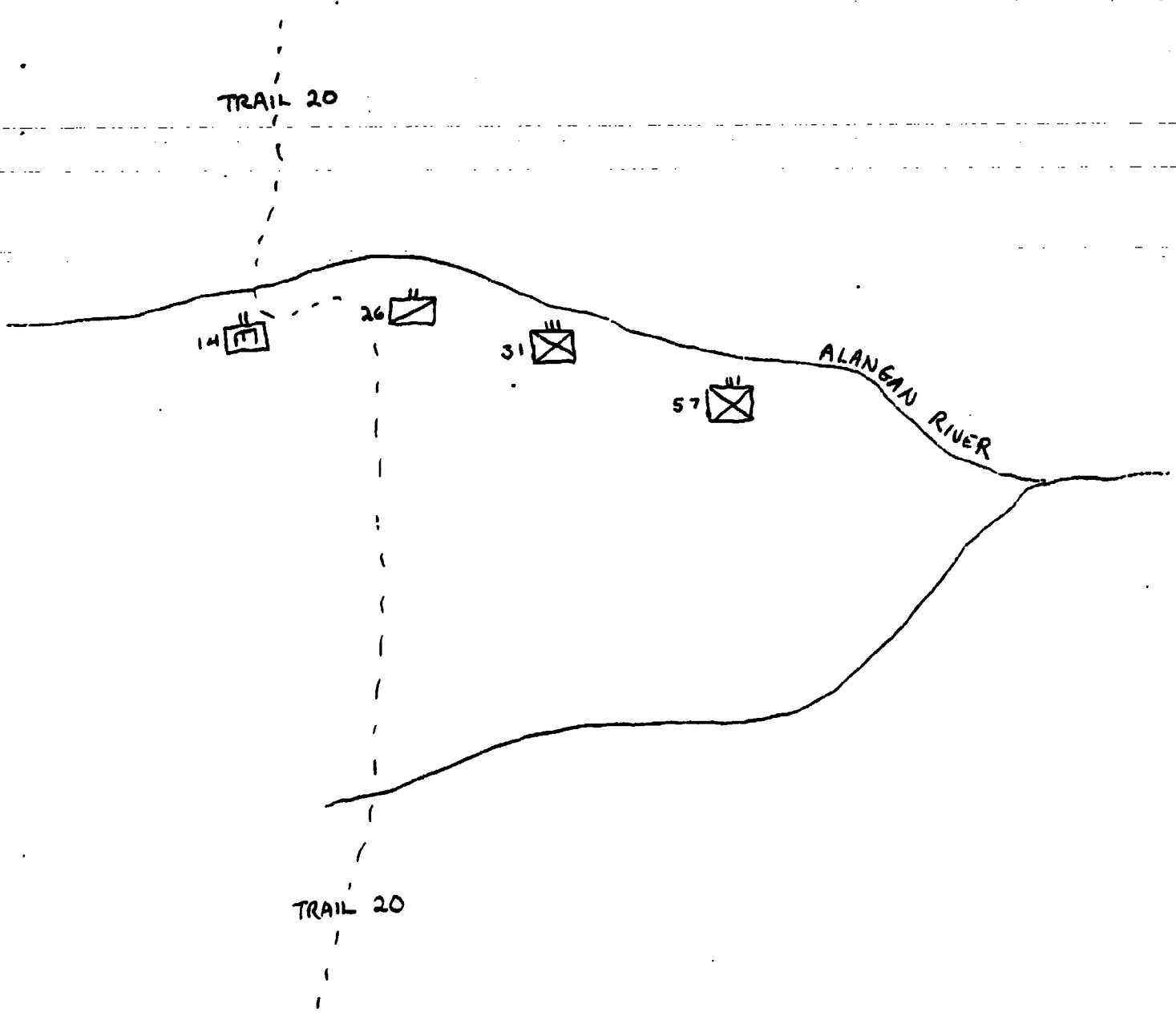
I Corps and force a speedy end to the campaign had ended in unmitigated disaster. The concept was good, and if things had gone well, the landings would have posed a real threat to MacArthur's army. But the Japanese landed without adequate reconnaissance, and were committed piecemeal in different locations on different days. Even as poorly as the maneuver was executed, the landings caused considerable concern. They forced the commitment of five Scout infantry battalions, but the net accomplishment of three weeks of bitter fighting was the complete destruction of the 1st and 2nd battalions, 20th Infantry.

The fighting along the west coast of Bataan ended active operations for nearly seven weeks. The Japanese withdrew to reorganize, receive replacements, and acclimate new units. The Filamerican army tried to do the same, but the decreasing stocks of food led to an enormous drop in the stamina of the soldiers. By the time the Japanese launched their next attacks, the defenders were on one-quarter rations and actually starving to death. The Japanese smashed II Corps' main line of resistance on 3 April, penetrated it on 4 and 5 April, pushed the defenders to another line on 6 April, and attacked that line on 7 April.

#### Task Force Delay, San Vicente to the Alangan, 7-8 April

The Japanese rupture of the San Vicente line the afternoon of 7 April was the start of two days of delaying actions that culminated in the surrender of the Bataan army. The motorized Scout 26th Cavalry was the first organized force to arrive and block the pursuing Japanese. The cavalry came under the command of Brigadier General Clifford Bluemel, commander of the destroyed 31st Division, who would fight the delay for the

# ALANGAN RIVER 8 APRIL





next two days. The cavalry regiment's 2nd Squadron deployed across Trail 2 and prepared to execute another delaying action, a maneuver with which they were quite familiar. The 1st Squadron moved into position to protect the 2nd Squadron's route of withdrawal. The Japanese 8th Infantry hit the 2nd Squadron, and a short but lively battle developed. When the Japanese paused for breath, they were astonished to find the Scouts still in place. But rather than take unnecessary casualties, the Japanese started a flanking movement. The 2nd Squadron was forced to withdraw, and they turned the battle over to the 1st Squadron.<sup>88</sup>

The 1st Squadron now faced the Japanese from hasty entrenchments just north of Trail Junction 2 and 10. The ground here was open, rolling, and sparsely vegetated, not the sort of terrain to offer much concealment. When the Japanese ran into the Scouts, they once again sent flanking parties around both sides of the defenders. At the same time, Japanese dive bombers fell on the cavalrymen at the trail junction, practically wiping out the 2nd Squadron's two-squad rear guard. Under the threat of encirclement, the 1st Squadron withdrew through the most severe bombing and shelling the regiment had ever experienced. The men had to cross the danger area by short rushes in small groups, and casualties were heavy. General Bluemel had foreseen the impossibility of stopping the Japanese here and had issued orders to reassemble at the Mamala River.<sup>89</sup>

The 26th Cavalry, 31st Infantry, and trucks from the 14th Engineers all jammed the road as it dropped toward the Mamala River, and the narrow, steep-sided, one-way Trail 12 overflowed with traffic. Demoralized Filipinos, flushed by the Japanese, further choked the route. Circling overhead, Japanese airmen could hardly miss seeing the target. Pilots from the 16th Air Regiment delivered the most awe-inspiring bombing the soldiers had ever seen. One bomb

hit a cavalry ammunition truck in the narrowest part of the trail. The truck caught fire and set nearby trees ablaze, blocked the trail, and peppered men and vehicles with fragments. The air attack smashed communications trucks, ambulances, and every sort of rolling conveyance. Three scout cars had to be destroyed after the trail proved impassable. Although his men reformed on the south bank of the Mamala, Bluemel was now without transportation. Realizing he could not stop the Japanese here, he ordered an evening withdrawal to the Alangan River.<sup>90</sup>

During the early morning hours of 8 April, fragments of II Corps occupied the Alangan River line. Straddling Trail 20 on the left of the line were 450 Scouts of the 14th Engineers. They covered a road block and refused the left of Bluemel's line. These engineers were the freshest and least disorganized of the soldiers along the Alangan River, and they tied in with the 26th Cavalry to their right. The cavalry put both squadrons on line covering 350 yards of the river. In contrast to the relatively fresh engineers, the cavalrymen had snatched but one hour's sleep in fifty-four hours and had consumed but a single canteen of water in thirty hours. Between the cavalry and the American 31st Infantry to the right was 600 yards of unoccupied, open ridge. Then the 200 Americans remaining from the 31st Infantry occupied a narrow piece of ground with no contact on either flank. Off to the right of the Americans 400 yards away, stood two reduced battalions of the Scout 57th Infantry guarding a front of 500 yards. Because of the inadequate communications situation, Bluemel controlled just the 14th Engineers and the 26th Cavalry; the 31st and 57th Infantry off to the right were on their own.<sup>91</sup>

During the morning, Japanese aircraft spotted Bluemel's men organizing their positions, and at 1100 hours, the Japanese 16th Air Regiment found both the 57th and 31st Infantry. Utterly unopposed by anti-aircraft fire, the light

bombers accurately dropped incendiaries, and fierce grass fires drove some of the men out of position. They took refuge in some woods just south of their line, waited until the fires were out, and then reoccupied their burned foxholes. At 1400 hours, advance elements of the Japanese 8th Infantry appeared before the 57th Infantry. The Japanese found both flanks open but failed to penetrate the Scouts. To the right of the Scouts, a small fragment of the American 31st Infantry fought off Japanese attacks, but with hardly four clips of rifle ammunition per man, prolonged resistance was impossible. At 1630 hours, after slowing the Japanese for ninety minutes, the Americans withdrew to a small river just south of the Alangan.<sup>92</sup>

Then the center of the Alangan line buckled. Japanese artillery shelled out a platoon from the 31st Infantry's A Company, and pressure increased on the 200 Americans. As the right of Bluemel's line was withdrawing, as his center was being pressured, and as the 57th Infantry was repulsing probes from all sides, his far left entered the fight. Three companies of the 14th Engineers covered Trail 20 where the trail ran through Bluemel's lines. At 1400 hours, sporadic firing broke out in front of the engineers. An hour later, one of the companies was heavily engaged, but the engineers held. A little after 1600 hours, six tanks from the Japanese 7th Tank Regiment rolled into sight on the north edge of the river and blindly fired cannon and machine guns at the south bank. After softening up Scout resistance, the six tanks churned through the rocky river bed, climbed the narrow trail south of the Alangan, and ran into a rock-and-truck roadblock established earlier that day by the engineers. The narrow trail, steep slopes, and virgin jungle flanking the obstacle prevented the Japanese from turning around, so they sat there firing machine guns and 47mm tank cannons. The tanks had no infantry immediately available, but the engineers were without anti-tank guns and could not hurt the tanks. For a time

it was a standoff. Then the Japanese 8th Infantry, following the tanks in trucks, and already pressuring the 31st and 57th Infantry, dismounted, deployed, and hit the 26th Cavalry.<sup>93</sup>

Despite tank rounds bursting in the bamboo and small arms fire cutting along the line, the Scouts held their ridge and refused to budge. But their tenacity was costly, for only an hour after the fight started, nine of the veteran cavalymen were dead and seventeen wounded. A battery of American self-propelled guns, that when placed there earlier in the day gave the Scouts hope they could stop the enemy, received orders to hurry to the East Road to intercept a column of Japanese tanks, tanks which turned out to be American.<sup>94</sup>

By 1630 hours, Bluemel's line was crumbling everywhere. Because he had contact with only the engineers and cavalry holding Trail 20, he did not know the status of the 31st or 57th Infantry. He knew they were east of him, but he did not know how they were faring. Luckily, both regiments coordinated with one another and withdrew when the pressure became too severe. The center 31st Infantry sent a message to Bluemel telling him this and asking that Trail 20 be held until they reached it.<sup>95</sup>

With the 31st and 57th Infantry withdrawing, there was nothing left for Bluemel to do but order the engineers and cavalry to follow. To delay pursuit, the cavalymen placed a broken bus and a car across the trail and pulled out from right to left. All of Bluemel's forces successfully broke contact and retreated to the Lamao River, but the night march to the Lamao broke up some of the surviving units. The soldiers were exhausted and mentally drained by the time they reached the river, and hardly 250 men remained under control. Bluemel's action on the Alangan marked the last organized resistance offered by the Americans on the Bataan peninsula. The next morning, 9 April, the Luzon Force surrendered, and the battle for Bataan was over.

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## CHAPTER III

### ANALYSIS

#### Divisional Covering Force at Layac, 6 January 1942

##### Analysis

The one-day fight at Layac on 6 January was one of two true covering force actions seen during the Bataan campaign. The second was during II Corps' withdrawal later in the campaign. However, because this was the first time a covering force was used, and because Layac was a "pure" covering force action, an analysis will concentrate on Layac. There were other fights that might be called covering force actions, but they were usually nothing more than simple delays. Additionally, Layac was the first action of the war that had, as its major combat units, Americans and Scouts as well as Philippine Army. It can therefore be determined if doctrine was used and whether or not it was effective.

Doctrine, in FM 100-5, Operations, stated that, whenever possible, an advanced covering force is employed. The covering force had four major missions: "to inflict the maximum delay on the enemy, to permit the defender to utilize advanced artillery observation, to permit the laying of mines, demolitions, and obstacles in front of the outposts and the battle position, and to deceive the enemy as to the actual location of the battle position."<sup>1</sup> Because a covering force in the defense implies a friendly defensive attitude, doctrine concerning delays also applies. As in the case with MacArthur's army, recourse to delaying actions implied a lack of readiness for battle and a hostile

superiority of force. "<The delay's> purpose is to gain time while avoiding decisive action...It finds especial application in the operations of covering force..."<sup>2</sup> Delaying actions may be used in the opening phases of battle to gain time for the unified employment of the entire command.

The occupation of the covering force position at Layac met all the criteria and reasons set forth by FM 100-5. The Americans wanted to hold this delay position, just south of Layac and the small Culo River, long enough to stop the forward elements of the Japanese 14th Army. By fighting here, MacArthur would deny the Japanese Route 110 leading south into the Bataan peninsula, give the Filamerican forces more time to entrench along the main line of resistance further south, and deceive the enemy as to the location of the main line. After the Japanese deployed for a full-dress attack, the covering force would withdraw, without serious casualties, it was hoped. South of the Layac covering force, the I and II Philippine corps were working along the main line trying to settle units into place and prepare for the Japanese. If the Japanese were able to closely pursue the main body of the two corps, it would be impossible to organize the line, and Bataan would fall.

"The advanced covering force should be mobile. The use of cavalry, mechanized and motorized troops and engineers is indicated. It should have strong artillery and anti-tank support."<sup>3</sup> General Selleck's infantry regiments were foot-mobile with the exception of the American 31st Infantry, organic and commandeered transportation could move most of this regiment. The two 71st Division regiments were totally foot mobile. Only the Philippine Division--of which the 31st Infantry was a part--could be classified as motorized, and that division was too valuable to risk in its entirety as a covering force. Use of a semi-static covering force may have violated doctrine, but the extremely light Philippine Army divisions were actually quite mobile. They had so little

equipment that they could march at a moment's notice. Additionally, the Japanese were also foot-mobile, so little danger existed that the pursuing Japanese would overrun the fleet-footed Filipinos. The only cavalry regiment in the entire army was given to Selleck, but it arrived the day of the battle and contributed little. Large horse cavalry units should rarely be required to defend a position, but they can delay. Positioning the 26th Cavalry on the covering force's left flank proved the best, most prudent use that could have been made of the cavalry--with one exception. They could have been used as an outpost line of resistance for the covering force had they arrived earlier and had anyone thought of it.<sup>4</sup>

The remaining motorized troops of MacArthur's army--tanks and self-propelled artillery--were present at Layac. The two battalions of M-3 light tanks were present, but in a serious staff failure, no arrangements were ever made allowing Selleck to give the tankers orders. The tanks were there, but they were responsible solely to their own commanders. **"Tanks are essentially offensive weapons. They are held in reserve in a covered position out of effective artillery range until the situation is favorable for their employment."**<sup>5</sup> Although the tanks were properly in reserve and in a covered position, the orders given the tankers effectively removed them from the battle--unless the tank commanders decided to fight. Unity of command did not exist at Layac, for the tankers responded to their own leaders, not to Selleck. As it turned out, they decided not to fight. The self-propelled artillery was also present, but their usefulness to Selleck, like the tanks, was limited by their instructions. They were ordered not to go into action unless enemy tanks came down the road. Despite doctrine which stated, **"Whenever practicable, most effective <artillery> support is provided by holding the artillery under centralized control, which permits the massing of its fire at critical points,"** Selleck's headquarters

could not give the self-propelled mounts orders.<sup>6</sup> So they too sat out the battle and never entered the artillery duel which so pounded Selleck's towed artillery.

To support a covering force, "Organic artillery may be reinforced by artillery from the main force, temporarily emplaced in advance of the battle position."<sup>7</sup> In delaying actions in successive positions, corps artillery normally supports the main delaying positions. Delaying the enemy by long-range fires from forward positions is stressed in FM 6-20, Field Artillery Field Manual Tactics and Technique. FM 6-20 stated that "Just prior to disengagement, counterbattery becomes especially important."<sup>8</sup> But despite clear guidance in the Army's field manuals, neither II Corps nor USAFFE gave Selleck any long-range 155mm support, the only gun capable of firing deep enough to shoot counterbattery. The failure to attach 155mm's could hardly have been Selleck's fault, for he was an artilleryman and a graduate of the Field Artillery School Advanced Course and knew how to employ cannon. A major concern about emplacing the 155mm's with Selleck had to be the severe mobility restrictions facing the towed pieces. Each gun was hauled by a big prime mover, 10-ton caterpillar tractors that had been in service since World War I and that were now in poor mechanical shape. These wooden-wheeled, slow-speed cannon could not be towed faster than five miles an hour, and even then they had to stop hourly to grease and cool the wheel bearings. Regardless of such problems, the absence of the big guns was a major error. Whether the lack of 155mm's was due to a failure to understand doctrine or due to a conscious decision to violate doctrine because of mobility problems, the absence of these guns from Selleck's covering force was the most significant single failure of American field artillery during the entire Bataan campaign.<sup>9</sup>

"Defense of the position is begun by the artillery in general support which lays down interdiction fires on the routes of hostile approach. . ."<sup>10</sup>

Selleck's two small general support Scout artillery battalions initiated the action by driving the Japanese off the road leading into the covering force position. "Ordinarily, close support of the delaying position need not be provided for."<sup>11</sup> Here is a failure in doctrine. The Japanese deployed out of column and probed the infantry line, but there is no record that any friendly artillery was fired in close support of the line. It seems that the artillery commanders followed doctrine, doctrine which left the main line unsupported with priority of fires to deeper targets. It is true that a covering force should not accept decisive combat, but it might have to fight just to force the enemy to deploy. Close artillery support of the infantry line seems appropriate.

Another problem concerned antiaircraft artillery. Doctrine stated that during delaying actions, "The antiaircraft artillery is employed primarily to protect the artillery, reserves, and critical defiles in rear from hostile attack."<sup>12</sup> Guns had been near Layac earlier to protect the bridge during the withdrawals, but they had all moved south the night of 3 January. There were but two antiaircraft regiments on Bataan, and they were placed around what higher headquarters considered priority targets: airfields and supply installations near the southern tip of Bataan. But leaving the covering force completely unprotected was a mistake and a violation of doctrine. As mentioned earlier, Japanese air had complete control over the battlefield and brought indirect artillery fire down about the ears of the Scout and Filipino artillerymen. The absence of air defense assets, combined with the absence of long-range 155mm's, were the principal reasons the Layac covering force subsequently withdrew.<sup>13</sup>

Doctrine stressed the skillful use of terrain and the employment of engineers to construct barriers to strengthen the obstacle value of terrain. Selection of Layac as the covering force position was made because of the Culo

River that crossed the enemy's line of advance. Additionally, the right flank was denied by swamps and Manila Bay, while mountains covered the left flank. But Selleck did not receive engineer support. His infantry tried to dig in, but without qualified engineer officers to tell the untrained infantry how to entrench, their efforts were unguided. Even his divisional engineers were taken from him. Higher engineer priorities drew the few Army level assets deeper into Bataan, leaving Selleck with nothing. Although Philippine Army mobilization plans called for three combat engineer regiments and six separate battalions--in addition to divisional engineers--none were ever mobilized. USAFFE could not spare a single engineer unit for Selleck. Regardless of higher priorities existing further south, failure to give Selleck an engineer battalion was a major error.<sup>14</sup>

Because one of the purposes of a covering force is to deceive the enemy as to the true location of the main line, there is great importance in keeping the enemy in doubt as long as possible as to the location of the delay positions--in this case, the location of the covering force line. "As in the defense of any position, an outpost, strong in automatic weapons, is deployed well in front of the delaying position to harass and delay the enemy's advance and to keep him in doubt as to its location."<sup>15</sup> This guidance is very clear and should have been second nature to the Americans at Layac, but Selleck's covering force failed to make any attempt to gain contact with the approaching Japanese. The last of MacArthur's retreating army had passed through the covering force early the morning of 6 January, and contact with the Japanese had been lost. Selleck did not have any authority over the tanks sitting behind him, the one bridge to his front had been blown, nor would the tankers have been keen on the idea of going forward without mobile infantry to support them. For some reason, Selleck did not push forward his own outposts. His two Philippine Army regiments were not well enough trained to hazard men forward



of the main line, but the Americans of the 31st Infantry were properly trained and owned sufficient vehicles to deploy outposts well forward. Surprisingly, they failed to do so, maybe because this was their first action and they were hesitant to risk the men. So when the Japanese arrived, their strength was unattrited and under complete control.

"The advanced covering force fights delaying action in its withdrawal."<sup>16</sup> Although a covering force should avoid serious engagements with the enemy, it should dispute their advance and make it as difficult as possible. But once Selleck retreated and was clear of his covering force positions along the Culo River, he headed directly south for friendly lines. He did not make any effort to maintain contact with the Japanese. Whether or not he had a formal subsequent delay mission from II Corps or USAFFE is unknown. Regardless, MacArthur's headquarters or II Corps should have made arrangements to maintain contact with the enemy and to fight short, sharp actions as the Japanese approached the main line of resistance at the main battle position. Doctrine was quite clear that an advanced covering force "is" employed in front of the main line's outposts whenever practicable.<sup>17</sup> It was certainly practicable here, but only MacArthur had sufficient mobile assets to fight a delay yet maintain freedom of movement. So the failure to maintain the covering force must rest with his headquarters unless Selleck had that mission and simply abandoned it. From the evening of 6 January until moderate contact was regained at the outpost line of resistance on 10 January--at Japanese initiative--the Japanese were unopposed by anything other than artillery. It was not until 10 January that serious assaults were made against the main line. By failing to follow doctrine, MacArthur's army lost several days of grace by not continuing the delay from Layac down to the main line. The two American tank battalions, supported by self-propelled 75mm artillery, had fought similar delays

for a week before entering Bataan and could have fought such delays for a day or more once on Bataan. Considering that every day the main line received to prepare itself for the enemy was precious, MacArthur's failure here is significant.

In summary, the covering force action at Layac was handled poorly. Artillery, antiaircraft artillery, tanks, and engineers were misused--or more accurately, not used. Command relations with tanks and self-propelled artillery were unworkable. Although Selleck's guns did land the first blows, his artillery battalions lost eleven of twenty-four guns. There was a lack of determination in several 31st Infantry units, and two company commanders were relieved of command. Selleck's failure to outpost his own lines is difficult to understand. Most damning, however, is the fact that the covering force broke contact and allowed the enemy uncontested approach to the main line. The American command was admittedly in a defensive and almost defeatist mood by then, and its possible no one thought to continue the delay. If so, it is a poor reflection on the commanders.

For some reason, II Corps left Selleck's force out on a limb. The corps could have provided a modest number of engineers, antiaircraft guns, and 155mm's. Admittedly, II Corps had just set up shop, having expanded from its division-sized South Luzon Force configuration to a four-division corps, and its priority was to build a main line of resistance, not bother with a division-level delay. The physical assets existed, command channels to order these assets to Selleck existed, and time to get them there existed. All things considered, the kudos must go to the Japanese. The battle was a nice example of a numerically inferior, better trained Japanese force professionally evicting a larger, less well-trained force from a moderately strong position.<sup>18</sup>

## Regimental and Battalion Defense

at Mabatang, 11-12 January

### Analysis

"The mission of the Infantry in sustained defense is, with the support of the other arms, to stop the enemy by fire in front of the battle position, to repel his assault by close combat if he reaches it, and to eject him by counterattack in case he enters it."<sup>19</sup> The 57th Infantry's defense of the Mabatang position was the most classic and doctrinally sound of all defenses on Bataan. The regiment had time to establish the position, and its flanks were secure; the right stopped at Manila Bay while the left linked with the 41st Division. As a result, it could operate a classical defense when the Japanese struck.

This was the only battle on Bataan where American troops (albeit Scouts) with American officers fought such a defensive set-piece battle. The Scouts had standard American weapons with the exception of 60mm mortar ammunition; the mortars were available, but not a single round of ammunition was available anywhere in the Philippines. The 81mm mortars had to fire 75mm Stokes mortar rounds because of a severe shortage of 81mm ammunition. Other battles were fought with Philippine Army soldiers who were insufficiently trained to properly use doctrine. Subsequent April defensive actions fought by the 57th Infantry were undertaken during the collapse of the Bataan army when starvation and sickness had so lowered efficiency that few conclusions about defensive doctrine can be drawn.

Finally, resource material is particularly rich at Mabatang, so the battle can be closely analyzed. Field Manual 7-5, Infantry Field Manual Organization and Tactics of Infantry, The Rifle Battalion, 1940, provided

guidance for the battalion level while FM 100-5, Operations, 1941, covered regiment and division. Doctrine in these two manuals will be the standard for examining the activities at Mabatang. The two manuals were clear and concise. FM 100-5 was, by necessity, more general than FM 7-5, but it still gave comprehensive guidance.

**"The defense is built around a series of tactical localities, the retention of which will insure the integrity of the position."**<sup>20</sup> **"Infantry units in the battle position are generally employed in two echelons: a holding garrison designed for the immediate defense of a position; and a reserve. The entire strength of smaller units <companies and platoons> may be devoted to holding missions."**<sup>21</sup> The term "holding mission" is one of the few remaining in 1941 which carries obvious World War I connotations. **"A substantial portion of the larger infantry units <battalion and regiment> is usually held in mobile reserve."**<sup>22</sup> The 57th Infantry followed this guidance to the letter by employing two battalions forward and one in reserve. The 1st Battalion on the right had two companies up and one in reserve, as did the 3rd Battalion on the left. As the battle developed, the forward companies fought holding actions per doctrine. The reserve 2nd Battalion manned the outpost line of resistance and occupied the regimental reserve line. The reserve companies in each battalion occupied the battalion reserve line. Once the outpost line of resistance was driven in, the entire 2nd Battalion would be available as a foot-mobile reserve.

Each of the main line of resistance companies deployed two platoons up and one in reserve, with the exception of the regiment's right flank company that had all three platoons on line. This company had the widest company front in the regiment, but it was also behind large fish ponds with water so deep and mud so thick that an enemy attack would be very difficult. Therefore, it was in accordance with FM 7-5 which states that, **"Wide frontages are permissible**

where the hostile approach is exposed to observation and fire over a long distance. Obstacles along the front of the main line of resistance permit increase of frontage."<sup>23</sup> Every other company retained a reserve, and as events developed, it proved the proper deployment. Frontages averaged, by doctrine, 200-400 yards for a platoon, 400-600 for a company, 800-1,500 for a battalion, and 2,000-3,000 for a regiment. At Mabatang, the 57th Infantry was within each of the averages with each level of command.<sup>24</sup>

"Boundaries in the defense usually fall between critical localities so as not to divide responsibility for their defense or that of the principal avenues of approach."<sup>25</sup> The 1st Battalion had full responsibility for the East Road, and the 3rd Battalion blocked the infantry avenue of approach west of the road. When the Japanese attacked, their main effort was against I Company. There was no difficulty between battalion boundaries.

Although the defense seeks to act by surprise, and although every effort is made to keep the enemy in doubt as to the location of the main line, the 57th Infantry followed this principle to a fault.<sup>26</sup> In order to keep aerial photos from pinpointing his line, the regimental commander forbade any cutting of the large sugar cane field to the front of the 3rd Battalion. FM 7-5 was, to be sure, very specific, for it stated, "Protection must not be sought at the expense of disclosing dispositions. Unmasked defensive dispositions will be promptly neutralized, if not destroyed, by superior hostile means of action."<sup>27</sup> But failure to cut the cane was a failure of the regimental commander, not of doctrine. The cane could have been cut without disclosing specific foxholes, lines, and positions, although it might have disclosed the general trace of the main line along this one small section. The other officers of the regiment knew what needed to be done, but they could not convince their commander. The existence of the concealing cane so close to the main line was the principal

reason for the enemy's success in storming I Company.

Anti-tank doctrine was relatively new to the Army, but even so, the manuals were reasonably concise and helpful on the matter. "Full advantage must be taken of natural obstacles which give protection against tanks."<sup>28</sup> The fish ponds in front of the 1st Battalion blocked tanks access there, but the center and left of the regiment were vulnerable. Engineers blew bridges over the streams running in front of the main line, and they placed a small number of anti-tank mines--actually cases of TNT--across the most likely tank approaches. There were insufficient engineer assets to build anti-tank ditches and obstacles. "Battalion antitank weapons are usually emplaced in firing positions in close proximity to the main line of resistance. Regimental weapons are preferably emplaced near a mask in the rear of the main line of resistance. . ." <sup>29</sup> Although doctrine refers to "battalion antitank weapons" and "battalion antitank platoons," a reorganization had occurred in the Philippines that had concentrated all the 37mm guns into a regimental Anti-tank Company. Even though doctrine had been somewhat outdated by events, it was still applicable. Guns of the regiment's Anti-tank Company were employed in depth; one platoon sat behind a destroyed bridge near the main line and covered fields of fire as flat as a pool table, and a second platoon set up deep in the regimental sector to defend against any sudden breakthroughs. The Scouts were very sensitive to the tank threat and took most every step possible to counter it. With the exception of a single armored car that the Scouts destroyed, no armor threat materialized, so the anti-tank defenses were not tested.<sup>30</sup>

"The battle position is protected by outposts whose mission is to provide time for the main force to prepare itself for combat, to deceive the enemy as to the location of the battle position, to force early deployment by the enemy, and to provide a deeper view within the terrain over which the

attacker will advance."<sup>31</sup> "Unless otherwise directed by higher commanders, outposts hold their position. The combat action of an outpost is subject to the general procedures governing the action of a defensive force deployed on a wide front."<sup>32</sup> "Fully organized outposts are established by regiments and larger units and are ordinarily located beyond the range of infantry weapons...combat outposts as a rule comprise one or more platoons usually selected from the battalion reserve, under a commander designated by the battalion commander."<sup>33</sup> The 57th Infantry established an outpost line of resistance with two platoons from G Company, part of the reserve 2nd Battalion. FM 100-5 does not give guidance as to the strength of a regiment's outpost line of resistance. The regiment's outpost line was more than 2,000 yards north of the main line--beyond the range of infantry weapons--one platoon on each side of the main north-south road leading into the regiment's line. Battalions did not have combat outposts forward of the main line of resistance. On the afternoon of 10 January, the Japanese probed the line, inflicted twenty casualties on the Scouts, and convinced the outpost commander to withdraw, without receiving permission from regimental headquarters which was controlling the outpost line.<sup>34</sup>

The regiment realized it would lose observation and early warning if the outpost line was not replaced. After first light on 11 January, a platoon of fresh Scouts supported by a platoon of machine guns moved through the main line and spread out behind a small river about 1,700 yards north of the main line. But the Japanese pushed again, and the outpost line received permission to reenter friendly lines. Although doctrine was sound, and although it was specific (with the exception as to the outpost line's size) the actions of the outpost commander--a lieutenant--negated whatever value the line might have had. It did not force the enemy to deploy, and it did not deceive the enemy as to the

location of the main line. No doubt the reason is that the line was too weak, just two platoons on 10 January and just one platoon the next day.<sup>35</sup>

Once the regimental outpost line of resistance was driven in, the security mission fell to combat outposts sent out by the companies on the main line. Little more than listening posts, these detachments, of a size unknown, remained forward of the main line until dark when heavy Japanese movement forced them into the main line. These listening posts succeeded in pinpointing Japanese assembly areas and in calling for artillery.<sup>36</sup>

The ultimate success of the 57th Infantry at Mabatang was due, in large part, to the artillery support it received, both divisional and corps. "The corps artillery has for its principal mission the neutralization or destruction of hostile artillery. It will also be used for interdiction, counterpreparation, and fire in front of the outpost position to reinforce the artillery of the divisions."<sup>37</sup> "The artillery plan of fire is based primarily upon the execution of a counterpreparation to break up or cripple the hostile attack before it can be launched. Fire is not opened by the mass of the artillery until targets of significant importance are disclosed. It is important to take hostile artillery under fire at an early moment, to interdict hostile routes of approach, and to dislocate the hostile system of command and fire control."<sup>38</sup> Supporting the right of II Corps' line, and in particular the 57th Infantry, was the 1st Battalion, 24th Artillery (four 2.95-inch and eight 75mm guns) in DS, reinforced by the 2nd Battalion, 88th Artillery (eight 75mm guns). The 86th Artillery (a single battalion of 155mm guns) and the 301st Artillery (155mm guns) were in general support of II Corps' line. The artillery did an outstanding job of digging in and camouflaging. Despite extensive Japanese efforts to locate and shell defending guns, the Japanese failed miserably to suppress the Scout and Filipino gunners.<sup>39</sup>



"Long-range destruction and interdiction fire is directed especially on sensitive points in the enemy's rear areas and on his lines of communications. .<sup>40</sup> On 9 January, the fires of the 155mm's were especially effective in interrupting what the Japanese had planned as their first attack. The Japanese did not know the location of Scout lines, and they stumbled about under devastating 155mm fire trying to find their enemy. Defending artillery also blocked supply organizations trying to move south to support the attack. On 10 January, defending fire drove the Japanese off the East Road and shot them out of every house they occupied. It took the Japanese two days before they found the Scout main line of resistance, a delay due in most part to the artillery fire which so badly disrupted their southward movement.<sup>41</sup>

Doctrine suggested that some artillery be placed well forward, generally just in the rear of the regimental reserve line.<sup>42</sup> But in an unorthodox move, the 57th Infantry emplaced a battery of 75mm's on the main line with the riflemen of the 3rd Battalion. C Battery, 24th Artillery, burrowed its four 75mm cannon into dugout emplacements and prepared to fire against both infantry and tanks. Nowhere in FM 6-20, Field Artillery Field Manual Tactics and Technique, did doctrine call for guns to be set on the front line. But in this case, fear of tanks, and a shortage of anti-tank guns, overruled doctrine. These 75mms had as their primary mission defense against tanks, but they were equally well-positioned to hit enemy infantry. The remainder of the regiment's direct support artillery was set slightly behind the regiment's reserve line, and it rendered excellent support from there. Antiaircraft artillery should have been deployed initially to protect the preparation of the main battle position and then massed near the threatened parts of the main line. As with General Selleck's covering force at Layac, the 57th Infantry's area was barren of antiaircraft assets; all the guns were further south. But unlike Selleck's

covering force, absence of antiaircraft guns at Mabatang did not prove significant.<sup>43</sup>

"If the assembly area for attack of the hostile Infantry is discovered, the fire of the mass of the artillery and attacks by combat aviation are directed on the known or suspected assembly areas."<sup>44</sup> "If the enemy succeeds in launching his attack in spite of the counterpreparation, the artillery seeks to keep him under fire in considerable depth by placing defensive concentrations on his advancing attack echelons and on his reserves, and by continuing counterbattery fire. These fires are delivered on the request of supported unit commanders, or of observers following the progress of the attack. . ."<sup>45</sup> C Battery, dug in on the main line, fired point blank over open sights at Japanese leaving the cane field. A and B batteries hit the sugar cane field from which the Japanese were attacking. As the battle progressed, II Corps brought more and more of its general support artillery to the aid of the 57th Infantry. The 1st Battalion, 24th Artillery (reinforced by the 2nd of the 88th) was already in action as was a battery of self-propelled 75mm mounts and a battery of 155mm's. II Corps gave the 57th Infantry another battery of self-propelled mounts, two more batteries of 155mm's, and another battery of 75mm towed. This massing of fires in front of a single infantry battalion was critical to the success of the defense. The Japanese that entered Scout lines were cut off from their support, and reinforcements were unable to push their way through the very heavy fires falling between the cane field and the main line of resistance. Happily for the 57th Infantry, there were no competing demands for artillery from other infantry units, so II Corps could afford to mass what totalled eleven batteries of artillery in support of a single infantry battalion.<sup>46</sup>

"If the enemy succeeds in effecting a close approach to the main line of resistance, all close-in prearranged fires are released...If the enemy assaults,

he is met with rifle fire, grenades, and counterassault."<sup>47</sup> "A unit entrusted with the defense of a tactical locality under no circumstances abandons it unless authorized to do by higher authority."<sup>48</sup> The main thrust of the Japanese assault centered on the 3rd Battalion's I Company. The Japanese swamped the defensive wire and pushed into the Scout foxhole line, wounded the company commander, overran both flanks, and made a small penetration in the center. As the night progressed, forty-percent of the line was lost, the acting company commander was killed, and a third of the Scouts were wounded or killed. The reserve platoon advanced to help the company form a perimeter defense. But at no time did company leadership request permission to withdraw, nor did battalion or regimental headquarters consider a withdrawal. It never seemed to enter anyone's mind to consider a withdrawal. As half of the 3rd Battalion's holding garrison, the company did its job of holding. And because they held, the Japanese failed. A more flexible doctrine that allowed withdrawals on company initiative might have collapsed the entire line.<sup>49</sup>

"Such local counterattacks must be launched during the period of temporary confusion and disorganization which occurs when the attacking troops have entered the position and have not had time to reorganize and establish themselves. This period is relatively short. Consequently, the counterattack must be delivered without delay, on the initiative of the local commander."<sup>50</sup> "If the enemy succeeds in entering the position, the defender seeks to strengthen and hold the flanks of the gap and counterattack the penetrating elements from the flank rather than attempt to close the gap by throwing troops across the head of the salient."<sup>51</sup> In the 57th Infantry's case, this doctrine proved sound, but considering the confusion existing on the battlefield and the relatively small enemy penetration, it was impossible to counterattack a flank. All the battalion reserve (L Company) could do was advance until it made

contact, then fight whatever portion of the enemy they found.

"Regimental reserves are primarily intended for counterattack of penetrating elements and flank defense of the regimental sector...Approaches to prospective departure positions and flank lines of resistance are reconnoitered as well as the terrain between departure positions and the combat echelon."<sup>52</sup>

"Counterattack plans are arranged to meet various situations. Details are usually prepared by the reserve commander."<sup>53</sup> At 0300 hours on 12 January, the regimental operations officer alerted the reserve 2nd Battalion to prepare E Company for possible commitment to the 3rd Battalion's area. The situation was still unclear, and there was not enough room for an entire battalion to counterattack, so regiment decided to send one company. As described earlier, plans had already been prepared and reconnaissances made, so commitment of part of the regimental reserve was smooth.

"General reserves may be called upon to relieve units on the battle position, participate in a major counterattack or counteroffensive, extend the flanks of the battle position, or occupy a rear position."<sup>54</sup> II Corps headquarters was concerned about the fighting in front of the 57th Infantry. If the Japanese broke through the East Road defenses, the entire II Corps center and left, consisting of two divisions, would be bypassed and trapped in the mountains. So II Corps had good reason to reinforce the 57th Infantry. II Corps released from its reserve the two-battalion 21st Infantry (less regimental headquarters) and attached it to the 57th Infantry. The Filipinos arrived late on 12 January, met with guides, and marched up to their line of departure. Their job was to evict the Japanese from the penetration they still held in I Company's area. More realistically, they could replace the Scout battalions on the main line and free them to maneuver against subsequent Japanese attacks.

At 0600 hours on 13 January, the 2nd Battalion, 21st Infantry attacked

behind an artillery preparation. Then the 3rd Battalion, 21st Infantry came up to help. The fighting was not fierce, as the Filipinos were not well enough trained to know how to fight. Once the two Philippine Army battalions stalled, the 2nd Battalion, 57th Infantry, advanced through the Filipinos and closed to within 150 yards of the original main line. That night, another II Corps reserve, the 22nd Infantry, joined the 57th Infantry. Over the next few days, the 22nd Infantry relieved the 57th Infantry from the main line.<sup>55</sup>

II Corps' use of reserves was effective. II Corps had correctly positioned one of its best regiments--the 57th Infantry--on the most critical piece of terrain along II Corps' line. After the Scouts absorbed the shock of the Japanese assault, II Corps nailed down the victory by adding five battalions of Philippine Army infantry to the fight. II Corps' only error was in not withdrawing the 57th Infantry from the line soon enough to use it in a more decisive action than developing along the corps left flank.

Division/Regimental Offense  
at the Abucay Hacienda, 17-22 January

Analysis

The next major fight concerned the counterattack launched by the Philippine Division to restore II Corps' left flank. "The conduct of the defense must be aggressive. It must be prepared to take advantage of errors or failures on the part of the enemy. The counterattack is the decisive element of defensive action. It is seldom feasible to hold a defensive position by passive resistance only."<sup>56</sup> "If the enemy has attained such success that local commanders are unable to eject him, the higher commander must decide whether to counterattack with reserves at his disposal to restore the battle position, to

continue battle on the battle position and prevent further enemy advance, or to withdraw to a prepared position in rear."<sup>57</sup> With his left flank gone, but with the center of his II Corps line temporarily stabilized by the hard-fighting 41st Division, General Parker decided to counterattack with the newly arrived Philippine Division. The Philippine Division had been kept in USAFFE reserve (minus the 57th Infantry at Mabatang) because it was the only division in the army able to maneuver offensively. General Parker hoped to restore the original 51st Division line the morning of 17 January. Receiving the counterattack orders sometime after noon on the 16th, Brigadier General Maxon S. Lough, the Philippine Division commander, led two of his three regiments toward the battle. Lough planned for his two-regiment attack to start the morning of the 17th.<sup>58</sup>

"The purpose of offensive action is the destruction of the hostile armed forces. To facilitate the accomplishment of this purpose the commander selects a physical objective such as a body of troops, dominating terrain, a center of lines of communication, or other vital area in the hostile rear for his attack."<sup>59</sup> General Parker established a physical objective, the abandoned main line of resistance of the 51st Division. Once the main line was restored, a Philippine Army division would relieve the Americans and Scouts. Unfortunately for the troops about to attack, intelligence about the enemy was nearly nil, and the 31st Infantry went into action completely unaware of enemy dispositions. Nor did they know much more about the terrain. Their crude maps were almost worthless.<sup>60</sup>

"Sound tactical maneuver in the offense is characterized by a concentration of effort in a direction where success will insure the attainment of the objective. On the remainder of the front are used only the minimum means necessary to deceive the enemy and to hinder his maneuver to oppose the main attack."<sup>61</sup> Here the American command committed one of its most serious

mistakes of the entire campaign. USAFFE and II Corps failed to mass sufficient power to accomplish their aim--that of restoring the left flank of II Corps' main line. Combat power was available, but no one massed it where the Japanese were making their main effort. Three major errors were committed.

First, and perhaps most important, both the 31st and 45th Infantry were to have attacked, but the 45th Infantry, coming out of a reserve position in I Corps, lost its way during the night approach march and was not in position when morning dawned. The thick vegetation and broken terrain, which until now had so frustrated the Japanese, had turned with a vengeance upon the defenders. Sufficient time had existed for the 45th Infantry to rendezvous with the 31st Infantry had the Scout regiment marched during the day, but it tried to move only at night so as to avoid enemy air attacks and aerial reconnaissance. As a result, instead of two regiments abreast, only one would be in position to attack. There was not time now to wait for the 45th Infantry, and a cardinal error was about to be committed. The counterattack became a piecemeal commitment of the best troops on Bataan.<sup>62</sup>

Second, the Philippine Division's third infantry regiment, the 57th Infantry, could have joined the counterattack, but it remained on the now-quiet Mabatang front. Starting on 13 January, the 57th Infantry began withdrawing from the main line of resistance once Philippine Army battalions arrived as reinforcements. Therefore, the regiment was reasonably available. Admittedly, the Japanese at Mabatang continued to pressure the Philippine Army battalions now holding the main line, but this activity ceased after 16 January. From 16 January until the withdrawal of II Corps to the reserve battle position on 24 January, this regiment was unemployed. Had II Corps been more risk-oriented or had followed doctrine by adding the 57th Infantry to the 31st and 45th at the Abucay Hacienda, these three regiments might have stopped the Japanese. Never

during the entire Philippine campaign did the Philippine Division operate as an entity. It was always parcelled out by individual regiment and thereby lost its synergistic possibilities.

Third, II Corps failed to properly redefine the counterattack's objective once the original plan went awry. When the 45th Infantry arrived and attacked on 18 January, two battalions reached their objective against extremely light opposition. The two battalions, on the right of the heavily-engaged 31st Infantry, then sat and did nothing for six days until II Corps withdrew. Here again is a failure of either the Philippine Division staff or of II Corps. Once it became apparent the objective was secured and enemy resistance nearly non-existent, two courses of action were available: one, continuing the attack beyond the main line, or two, replacing these two elite Scout battalions with Philippine Army units in an economy of force role. Attacking beyond the main line with only two battalions was far too aggressive to even be considered by the Americans. But shifting the two battalions west was well within the realm of possibility. Sufficient Philippine Army battalions existed to replace the 45th Infantry, for II Corps was using two entire Philippine Army divisions--the 21st and 31st--as "fire brigades" behind the 41st Division. The switching of these Philippine Army battalions from place to place was incredibly confusing, but with their help, the 41st Division did hold. A regiment or more of these units could easily have replaced the two 45th Infantry battalions and reoccupied the main line positions here. Then the two Scout battalions could have joined the single battalion of the regiment on the corps' extreme left flank where intense fighting was in progress.

Doctrine existed in FM 100-5 to alert commanders to such a possibility. "In offensive combat, a relief may be necessary to continue the momentum of the attack with fresh or more experienced troops; to change the direction of



the attack, or to extend an envelopment; or to initiate a strong offensive on a front where stabilization has existed."<sup>63</sup> But no one took action, and the 1st and 2nd battalions, 45th Infantry--one third of the forces committed to the counterattack--played no further part in the week-long fight. Nor were any Philippine Army troops moved to the corps left flank to support the Philippine Division. Corps records are extremely sparse, and Philippine Division records concern unit movements, not decisions. So no reason can be offered for this striking failure to mass. It is quite possible no one recognized the opportunity. American commanders--especially at II Corps--were "CP bound" and hardly ever went forward to see the battle. Although no reason can be offered for the failure to mass, the results of this failure are easily identified. Doctrine stated that open flanks are highly vulnerable and that the best security is to keep the enemy so heavily involved that he had no time or means available to endanger the success of the attack. Because the enemy was not pressed enough by the 31st Infantry, the Japanese succeeded in turning the corps' left flank with an entire regiment. If the American counterattack had been more powerful, it might have pinned this regiment and prevented the encircling movement.<sup>64</sup>

Despite all these problems, the American 31st Infantry was ready to attack the morning of 17 January. Because the Americans moved into an area on which enemy dispositions were unknown, the regimental commander did not specify a main attack. "When it is impracticable to determine initially when or where the main attack is to be made, the commander retains his freedom to act by disposing his forces in great depth, by holding out strong reserves, and by maintaining close control of his supporting weapons."<sup>65</sup> Because Colonel Steel knew so little of the enemy facing his 31st Infantry, he chose to attack with two battalions up and one in reserve. So unclear was the enemy's dispositions that the initial advance was more a movement to contact than an attack. No

artillery preparation was fired either because the artillery supporting the regiment had not arrived or because targets could not be located.

"The initial strength and location of the reserve will vary with its contemplated missions, the type of maneuver, possible hostile reaction, and clarity of the situation. After the attack is launched, the reserve and the fires of supporting arms are the principal means available to the commander for shaping the course of action and for enforcing favorable decision. The primary mission of the reserve is to enter the action offensively at the proper place and moment to clinch the victory."<sup>66</sup> "As far as practicable the reserve is sent in by complete units. Reinforcement by driblets is avoided."<sup>67</sup> Although Colonel Steel retained a sizeable reserve--a full battalion--he surrendered this advantage at the end of the first day by using one rifle company to tie the left and right battalions back together again after they diverged during the day's attack. The remainder of the battalion was committed the next day in the center for the same reason. He reinforced failure, he reinforced his line by driblets, and he refused to swing right or left with his reserve battalion. Colonel Steel thereby violated almost every tenet of reserve doctrine.

"The best guarantee for success in the attack is effective cooperation between the troops in the attack echelon, the supporting artillery, and any supporting combat aviation."<sup>68</sup> With the addition of the 45th Infantry to the attack on 18 January, II Corps had committed all it would commit to the counterattack. And despite singular successes by the sole 45th Infantry battalion to hit the enemy's main strength, the II Corps' counterattack can be considered a failure as of 18 January. Only with hindsight can this judgment be made. At the time, no one knew what was happening or what would happen. So for four more days, II Corps and the Philippine Division tried to destroy the Japanese, but each offensive effort was bungled by the Americans or shot apart

by the Japanese. On 22 January, the Japanese regained the initiative, and the Philippine Division assumed a defensive stance. The failure to fight well had more to do with American leadership than with anything else. In the three months before the war, the experienced squad leaders, platoon leaders, and company commanders had been pulled out of their units to cadre the Philippine Army, and the 31st Infantry never recovered from this raid on its leaders.

**"Coordination is assured by command and staff visits to subordinates to see that orders are understood and are being carried out."**<sup>69</sup> Throughout the entire battle, and the Bataan campaign for that matter, the American commanders and their staffs at regiment, division, corps seem to have universally violated this precept. I have not found a single document which even suggests that anyone from Corps or USAFFE went forward to see the battle at the Abucay Hacienda. All meetings and orders were at regiment and division CPs. Recollections of the front line company commanders fail to recall a single instance of regiment or division commanders or staffs coming forward to visit them. At least one company commander complained that even the battalion commander failed to come forward. Three company commanders actually voted on whether or not to attack. In I Corps, General Wainwright was already famous for touring the foxholes under enemy fire, but similar activity did not exist in II Corps. And the failure to respond to opportunities can be blamed on the absence of decision makers from the action.<sup>70</sup>

**"In offensive operations, the mass of available means for defense against air . . . attack is disposed to favor the main attack."**<sup>71</sup> Although antiaircraft doctrine was reasonably sophisticated in 1941, it was hardly ever followed on Bataan. Not one antiaircraft gun supported the Philippine Division's counterattack, nor, as best as can be determined, were any antiaircraft units anywhere near the main line of resistance. They were all in the army's service

command protecting airfields, command posts, and supplies. Enemy air became very active once the Japanese realized they were under attack, but the Americans had only small arms to defend themselves. The Japanese attack of 22 January made extensive use of aircraft, and they were totally unopposed by any American anti-aircraft guns. Scout and Filipino artillery were finding it increasingly difficult to fire without being smothered by Japanese counter-battery directed by aerial spotters.

### Corps Withdrawal, 23-26 January

#### Analysis

The result of all the difficulties experienced at the Abucay Hacienda was a stalemate along II Corps' left flank. General Sutherland visited Bataan and recommended to MacArthur that an immediate withdrawal to the Reserve Battle Position be undertaken. "A withdrawal from action is the operation of breaking off combat with a hostile force. The general purpose of the operation is to regain or preserve freedom of action."<sup>72</sup> After expending the 31st and 45th Infantry in an unsuccessful counterattack, II Corps did not have sufficiently trained or mobile forces with which to fight a mobile defense along its left flank. Nor could the vast majority of its forces fight a successful offensive action to evict the Japanese wherever they might be found. When the 31st and 45th Infantry proved unable to restore II Corps' left flank, the Japanese gained entrance to the corps rear. Unable to maneuver offensively, the corps had to regain its freedom of action by moving to a new position and assuming the defense once again.

"A daylight withdrawal usually involves such heavy losses and so great a degree of disorganization that it is preferable for large units to hold out at

all costs until nightfall and effect the withdrawal under the cover of darkness."<sup>73</sup> Because of Japanese control of the air, there never was any consideration given to a daylight withdrawal. However, some of the movement had to extend into the daylight hours simply because of the distances to be covered and the necessity for foot movement. On the first full day of the withdrawal, daylight of 25 January, Japanese aircraft inflicted significant wounds on the retreating army and delayed its march south. But by then, it was too late for the Japanese to stop the withdrawal.

"As a rule, only rearward echelons can be withdrawn successfully by day."<sup>74</sup> "Prompt starting of trains to the new areas, evacuation of the wounded, removal or destruction of supplies, energetic measures for the maintenance of traffic control, construction of necessary bridges, and preparations for the execution of demolitions on the routes of withdrawal are of importance."<sup>75</sup> In order to preserve security, no violent destruction of immobile supplies took place near II Corps' main line. Sugar was poured into gas tanks of the vehicles which could not be moved, some equipment was disassembled and buried, and even more was abandoned. Additionally, the Filamerican forces were so lightly equipped that there was little that needed to be moved. The Americans were successful in concealing the withdrawal. Pre-withdrawal traffic was light enough that the Japanese did not realize a withdrawal was about to start.

Traffic control during the night withdrawal, however, was to prove impossible. The entire Bataan Army had but one company of military police. The US Army's experience with corps level withdrawals ended in 1865, and none had occurred since then (with the possible exception of the Louisiana Maneuvers of 1941). Considering the inability to practice corps withdrawals, the vague guidance in FM 100-5 and the 1942 FM 100-15, Larger Units, is not surprising. Partly as a result of vague doctrine concerning control measures during a

withdrawal, II Corps experienced major confusion during the march.

"Successful counterattacks often create conditions most favorable to the withdrawal. Because of their mobility and fire power, combat aviation and mechanized units are especially suited to support counterattacks."<sup>76</sup> II Corps did not have forces suitable for such a counterattack. Although elements of the two tanks battalions could have operated against the enemy near the East Road, they would have had to operate without infantry support. Any limited counterattack at this time would not have impressed the Japanese, and the Japanese might have identified the counterattack as an attack to cover a withdrawal.

"The commander who orders a withdrawal designates a rearward position on which the troops will prepare for a renewal of resistance. . .The rearward position is selected at such distance that the enemy will be compelled to regroup his forces, displace his artillery, and renew his preparations for attack."<sup>77</sup> The new line was about nine miles south of the main battle position. The Japanese would have to uproot every logistical and combat support activity they had in order to resume their assaults. An entirely new battle would begin. The Japanese experienced great difficulties displacing their artillery and support forces south after II Corps withdrew. The major north-south road was a wreck, and defending 155mm guns kept the road under heavy fire.

"The bulk of the artillery normally is withdrawn shortly after dark, moving, as the situation dictates, to assembly points where march columns are to be formed or to the support of a new position. . .It habitually precedes the Infantry of the main body..."<sup>78</sup> The first units which moved out of the main battle position were the 155mm corps artillery units. They needed as much time as possible to move. It could take up to twelve hours to move a single 155mm gun, and in the 301st Artillery, there were only eight tractors available to pull

sixteen guns. The guns of corps artillery received priority on the roads and began their movement south the night of 23 January. They were repositioned by the morning of the 25th ready to support the withdrawing infantry. Movement of II Corps Artillery a day before the infantry withdrew seems to have violated doctrine, but it can be justified by the transportation problem, the poor road net, and by the rugged terrain over which the guns had to move.<sup>79</sup>

"In retrograde movements, the principal mission of the artillery is to delay the enemy advance and to assist the Infantry in disengaging from action. Just prior to disengagement, counterbattery becomes especially important."<sup>80</sup> The Americans scored a coup in the early evening. Covering force 155mm's shelled the Japanese artillery headquarters and greatly damaged the enemy's ability to command its artillery. The Japanese recorded that "the command became chaotic."<sup>81</sup> This one artillery action went a long way toward insuring the success of the withdrawal.

Doctrine considered truck-drawn light and medium artillery as best suited to support retrograde movements because it combined the required fire-power with high mobility. With the advent of self-propelled mounts, the Bataan artillery met and exceeded the best-case parameters set by doctrine. And because the self-propelled mounts were more mobile than the infantry they supported, they did not have to precede the infantry in the withdrawal as suggested in artillery doctrine. These self-propelled guns were often the last units to leave a position and sometimes acted as a rear guard for the infantry. In this case, technology had made doctrine obsolete.<sup>82</sup>

"It is best usually to withdraw the least heavily engaged units first. When the terrain is favorable and the security of the command permits it, all subordinate units may be withdrawn simultaneously. However, it usually is necessary to move certain units ahead of others in order to avoid congestion

and to insure a smooth execution of the movement."<sup>83</sup> In II Corps' case, the least heavily engaged units were withdrawn first--per doctrine--covered by the most heavily engaged units. Although doctrine called for small elements to move to designated platoon assembly areas, platoons to company areas, and companies to battalion assembly areas, II Corps' forces did not do this. Instead, most organizations moved to the nearest trail and headed south. The main bodies of most Scout and American units remained relatively intact, but the Philippine Army units nearly disintegrated. Doctrine was effective, but leaders in most units were not capable of executing the doctrine.<sup>84</sup>

"At night the withdrawal of the greater part of the forces engaged commences shortly after nightfall."<sup>85</sup> "Administrative and supply elements and reserves usually withdraw soon after dark."<sup>86</sup> "Small detachments are left in immediate contact with the enemy. These detachments, formed from troops nearest the enemy, should be well-supplied with automatic weapons, ammunition, and pyrotechniques."<sup>87</sup> "The detachments left in contact with the enemy at night, screen the withdrawal by simulating normal activity."<sup>88</sup> "A part of the artillery remains in position to support the elements still in contact."<sup>89</sup> II Corps followed these guidelines to the letter. And considering that more than half the line was composed of Philippine Army forces rather than doctrinally-aware US and Scouts, the movement went well, at least at the main line of resistance.

"The movement is screened by small groups left in immediate contact with the enemy, supported by slightly larger groups. The screening force on the front of a battalion does not exceed the equivalent of a rifle company, reinforced by machine guns, mortars, and antitank weapons. . . . A commander for the screening elements in each battalion sector is usually designated by name and provided with personnel and equipment for command, communication, and control. . . . The screening force remains in position until a designated hour."<sup>90</sup> In



every case for which records exist, both the Philippine Army and American troops faithfully followed doctrine, and when tested by Japanese attacks that night, the doctrine proved sound. Enough force remained in place to defeat several enemy night attacks and keep the enemy off the main body.

"Tanks are useful in daylight withdrawals, particularly in counterattacks, to assist other ground units in breaking contact with the enemy...They are not ordinarily used in night withdrawals."<sup>91</sup> Here the Americans overruled doctrine and used tanks actively during the night withdrawal. It seems obvious that tank doctrine--as well as anti-tank doctrine--was too new and untested to even consider all the possible uses of tanks. American tanks fought in numerous night delays and withdrawals throughout the Philippine campaign in which they proved quite successful. During the II Corps withdrawal, American tanks were used with both the covering force and with the covering shell along the front lines. A column of pursuing Japanese infantry marched down the Hacienda Road into the guns of five light tanks. It was very dark, and the tankers and self-propelled artillery simply guessed at the range, added a small safety factor, and fired. The Japanese scattered. Not expecting tanks, confused, and thinking they had surprised an artillery position, the Japanese organized for an attack. But then, disorganized groups of Filipinos and American stragglers, still withdrawing from the front, bumped into the Japanese rear and flanks. Confusion prevailed, and the Japanese went to ground. They were sufficiently disturbed that the remainder of the withdrawal went unpursued. The Japanese did not move again until daylight.<sup>92</sup>

"Whether the rearward position is organized for defense or is the area in which the command will be assembled for further retrograde movement, the commander makes provision for a covering force in front of this position. The

mission of this covering force is to cover the withdrawal of the detachments left in close contact with the enemy and of the artillery supporting these detachments."<sup>93</sup> "Artillery <in a covering force> is particularly valuable owing to the long-range delay provided by its weapons."<sup>94</sup> Brigadier General Lough's covering force was not attacked, so it is impossible to assess its combat capabilities. However, the subsequent delay executed by the tanks of the covering force was everything and more that could be expected of such an action. Although never seriously pressed, the covering force which covered II Corps' withdrawal was much better organized and commanded than General Selleck's force at Layac. This time, the tanks were commanded by the covering force commander, the self-propelled artillery was able to fire, and 155mm cannon supported the force. Once again, however, the force was without antiaircraft gun support.

This time, like the Layac action, the withdrawing force again lost contact with the pursuing Japanese. "Close touch with pursuing forces is maintained by aggressive patrolling."<sup>95</sup> The tanks and half-tracks had the mobility to do this, but they departed their covering force positions late on 25 January and positioned themselves as a rear guard the morning of the 26th. No one tried to delay the Japanese or observe their advance. Only when the Japanese walked into the tanker's rear guard positions did the Americans engage their enemies.

Regimental and Battalion Offense,  
Longoskawayan, Quinauan, and Anyasan-Silaiim Points

Analysis

The infantry operations along Bataan's west coast are interesting in that they were fought almost exclusively in heavily jungled terrain, and operations here can best be described as battalion and regimental attacks in jungle terrain. Yet infantry battalion doctrine in FM 7-5 contains not a single word on jungle operations. There is guidance covering combat in woods, but even then, the guidance is obviously oriented to European woods. "The attack of a woods comprises the advance over open ground to the edge of the woods, the advance through the woods, and the egress therefrom."<sup>96</sup> There is no guidance concerning woods so large that an advance over open ground to the woods and egress from the woods does not exist. Despite the US Army's experience with jungle operations in the Philippines and Central America from 1900 to 1941, none of the lessons are included in FM 7-5. Nor is a "jungle" field manual carried in Appendix III, list of references.

The 57th Infantry received orders to move to the west coast on 30 January, and it headed for an assembly area close to Anyasan-Silaiim Points. "The location of assembly positions is dependent on several factors. Darkness, cover from observed hostile artillery fire, a thorough knowledge of the situation, and a plan of attack already decided, favor advanced positions located in conformity with the plan of maneuver. Conditions the reverse of these indicate the selection of assembly positions well back."<sup>97</sup> The regiment moved next to the Points the night of 31 January, and because there was no enemy artillery fire, because it was dark, and because of the concealment offered by the jungle, the Scouts occupied an assembly position well forward.

The Japanese were being held in check by the Air Corps ground troops, the Constabulary, and one battalion of 45th Infantry Scouts, so the 57th Infantry did not have to concern itself with any of the conditions laid down by doctrine.

**"Reconnaissance is initiated by all commanders prior to arrival in their final assembly positions."**<sup>98</sup> The officers of the first Scout battalion to arrive at Silaiim planned an attack for 30 January, but their effort proved premature. Planning was quick, and not everyone knew where everyone else was positioned. When the Scout infantry attacked, their effort was shot apart by tree bursts from friendly artillery which killed or wounded twenty Scouts. Because of the almost complete absence of firm information upon which to base a plan, the regiment spent 1 February making a very thorough reconnaissance. The day's reconnaissance revealed the Japanese were establishing a perimeter from Silaiim River to Quinauan River. This was a large front for the small Japanese force there--less than 450 men--but the line indicated the enemy's outer shell only, not where they would stand and fight. Scout patrols proved largely unsuccessful in locating the enemy and determining his strength, but they did reduce by seventy-five percent the area thought to be occupied by the enemy.<sup>99</sup>

Colonel Lilly decided to open his operations with a night attack despite FM 7-5's guidance that read, **"Open terrain favors control and movement and should be selected for the <night> attack. Woods or badly cut-up ground render difficult the maintenance of direction, control, and contact. A well-defined line of departure near the objective and directly opposite it is desirable. The objective should be recognizable in the dark."**<sup>100</sup> The 2nd Battalion, 57th Infantry's evening attack at Longoskawayan Point to seize the high ground overlooking the southern-most Japanese landing was amazingly successful. Using minimum forces forward--a two-platoon front for an entire battalion--the battalion retained maximum flexibility and encountered minimum control

problems. Three factors were critical to the battalion's success: the terrain was somewhat open, the Japanese were small in number and not dug in, and the objective was recognizable in the dark. "<Night attacks> against an inferior or a demoralized enemy. . .are particularly effective."<sup>101</sup> In this case, the Japanese were inferior in strength, and the night attack proved "particularly effective."

At Anyasan-Silaim Points however, none of the conditions which led to success at Longoskawayan were present for Colonel Lilly's night attack. Considering the very clear guidance in FM 7-5, it is surprising to see the 57th Infantry start its effort at Anyasan-Silaim with a night attack. The vegetation, absence of trails, and poor knowledge of enemy dispositions seem to argue against a night attack. It is possible Colonel Lilly hoped to catch the Japanese unawares, and he obviously hoped to reduce his own losses by limiting the enemy's observation. Lilly did have the best-trained troops on Bataan with which to make the attempt, but that one advantage was not enough.

"Only the simplest maneuvers are likely to succeed in a night attack. Units must attack straight to the front. Detours of a few yards are permissible for individuals or small parties."<sup>102</sup> This was the first real jungle fighting seen by the 57th Infantry--the fight at Mabatang was in relatively open terrain, so maybe the leaders had not yet learned how inhibiting the jungle could be to maneuver at Anyasan-Silaim. Colonel Lilly was attacking on a three-battalion front versus the two-platoon front at Longoskawayan, thereby greatly magnifying his control problems. Whatever the reason for deciding upon a night attack, the attack failed. Doctrine proved a better guide than the commander's judgment.

The 57th Infantry was not able to position its heavy weapons to support the start of the attack, nor could the regiment use them according to doctrine. In open terrain, "The normal missions of the heavy machine guns are long-range

fire, antiaircraft fires, and protection of the flanks of attacking units against hostile counterattack. Missions close to the attacking echelon are limited to exceptionally favorable opportunities of terrain and situation."<sup>103</sup> "When the attack or defense is made on a broad front or when the terrain of the attack is heavily wooded or extremely broken, part or all of the battalion weapons may be attached to rifle companies. . ."<sup>104</sup> At both Quinauan and Anyasan-Silaim, the heavy machine guns of E, I, and M company were attached to the rifle companies. Never in the Bataan campaign could a heavy machine gun company operate as an entity. Because of thick vegetation and short fields of fire, the guns were always dispersed to support the front line companies, and along the west coast, many of the weapons company soldiers were used as ammunition bearers for the rifle companies. According to doctrine, light machine guns are "employed for frontal fires in grave emergencies only."<sup>105</sup> Yet this was the only practical use for any machine gun in the jungles of Bataan. Light machine guns and automatic rifles proved to be the most useful weapons. They could bring enemy positions under heavy fire while riflemen crawled close enough to use hand grenades. Flanking and overhead fire was impossible. No guidance was given on how to use machine guns in offensive jungle operations. The most common use of heavy machine guns became that of massed fires into trees to clear them of snipers. As a side-affect, the huge volume of fire slowly chopped the jungle to pieces, and the terrain started to clear.<sup>106</sup>

"The advance within the woods is organized to maintain cohesion between attacking units. Precautions are used to prevent loss of direction. Compass directions are always assigned. Movement is by bounds with periodic halts to restore contact and cohesion, either on predetermined lines or at prescribed periods. In dense woods the advance is in line of small columns. The advance is a series of maneuvers to gain local objectives such as trail crossings

and clearings."<sup>107</sup> After a few days of unacceptable stumbling about the jungle, the units began to coordinate their activities, not so much for combat action against the Japanese, but more to keep in touch and keep units aligned with one another. Insufficient preparation had been made to maintain contact, and it took much time and effort to correct that deficiency. An absence of trails meant the men had to cut their way toward enemy positions. Lateral communications were very difficult to maintain. Although the Japanese held slightly lower ground than did the Scouts, normally a disadvantage, this positioning seemed to have the reverse effect, because attacking Scouts were silhouetted when they advanced. The advantages of holding the high ground, those of observation and fields of fire, were negated because of the vegetation and close fighting.<sup>108</sup>

Tank doctrine had not been completely developed when the war began. Guidance on tank-infantry cooperation was not sufficiently detailed, nor did it cover the kind of fights seen most frequently on Bataan. Infantry doctrine says that infantrymen should support tanks, but no mission is given to the tanks. "The primary mission of <infantry> machine guns in support of tank attacks is the neutralization of the hostile antitank guns. They open fire on antitank weapons that disclose themselves. . . Riflemen and machine gunners give close-in protection to tanks when the latter are halted or stopped on the objective."<sup>109</sup> That last sentence is the beginning of a problem which is not solved by FM 7-5, to wit, how closely should infantrymen support tanks?

The only guidance as to where the infantry should be comes from two paragraphs. "Where the line of departure lies well within midrange of the estimated location of the hostile position, the Infantry debouches when the rear tank element has reached the position. It supports the tanks with fire of its machine guns throughout the tank advance."<sup>110</sup> ". . . the foot troops support the advance of the foremost tank echelon and closely follow the last tank elements.

The action of the foremost tank echelon is relied upon to neutralize the hostile resistance and protect the initial advance of the foot troops."<sup>111</sup> In short, the infantry was to follow the last tank element. The lead tanks were to depend on their own firepower to protect themselves. But this did not work on Bataan. There were real problems the first day tanks were employed. Scout infantry operated under what they considered to be doctrine, that of following the tanks by 150 yards. But when the lead tank lost a track to a mine, it lay isolated from friendly support and was destroyed. The next day, four infantrymen followed each tank and killed the Japanese who ducked into their foxholes as the tanks rolled past them. Unless friendly infantry were within several feet of the tanks, Japanese infantry could attack and destroy the tanks with hand grenades and mines. It would seem that in the desire to insure armor is massed and not tied to supporting infantry attacks, the writers of doctrine completely forgot about using tanks in close support of infantry.<sup>112</sup>

One sentence seems to confirm this forgetfulness. "If the situation compels unanticipated engagement of tanks against resistance which has held up the Infantry, reconnaissance will usually be necessary to locate a tank route clear of <friendly> Infantry."<sup>113</sup> And another sentence reads, "Normally one or two zones through the line of departure of an infantry battalion are reserved for tanks. When practicable, the tanks pass through the foot troops on a relatively narrow front, which they thereafter extend in accordance with the situation."<sup>114</sup> The authors of FM 7-5 failed to see any requirement for very close infantry support of tanks and, in fact, wanted to clear the infantry out of the way.

The tank had been the single-most important machine to lead to the end of trench warfare. Writers of doctrine realized this, and they advocated using these machine instead of men when men could not advance. "An overwhelming



fire or tank support is usually required to permit an attacker to advance against strong resistance. Deficient fire support cannot be compensated for by the engagement of masses of additional men."<sup>115</sup> At Longoskawayan, the battlefield was close enough to Corregidor to allow the big coastal guns to be used in a ground attack role. The big shells proved very effective, and Scout losses were light in the ensuing infantry attacks. But at Quinauan Point and then at Silaiim and Anyasan, sufficient artillery could not be massed because of the jungle. Artillery, although adequate in the number of pieces, was severely handicapped by the terrain. Despite many hours of reconnaissance, no one spot was ever found where more than two guns could be placed together. With the guns at an elevation of 800 feet, with the Japanese under trees sixty to eighty feet tall standing 100 feet above sea level only 4,000 yards from the guns, the problem of hitting the enemy without hitting friendlies was never solved. Tree tops were regularly blown off, but the rounds could not reach the ground. The 2nd Battalion, 88th Artillery, firing British 3-inch and American 75mm guns, laid over thirty-eight miles of telephone wire trying to coordinate fires, and the supported infantry gave the gunners priority use of their nets. But the guns never lived up to their capabilities despite firing 5,000 rounds. Even using mortars was difficult, for the thick vegetation seldom provided overhead clearance through which the rounds could be fired.<sup>116</sup>

Despite troubles with artillery, the Americans succeeded in massing overwhelming firepower at Quinauan by using tanks. The tanks were given a magnetic azimuth to follow, a radio-laden half track from the Tank Group helped control the tanks, and infantrymen guided the tanks with walkie-talkies. The result was complete destruction of the Japanese infantry. After the victory at Quinauan, the same tank tactics were used at Anyasan-Silaiim, although with less success because of rougher terrain.<sup>117</sup>

The fights along the west coast were linear and static in nature, but the American command was smart enough to keep a reserve in case of trouble. "Reserves are primarily maneuvering bodies whose role is the outflanking of resistance by the leading echelon, the continuance of the action of assaulting echelons when these become exhausted, and the protection of the leading echelon against counterattack."<sup>118</sup> The 57th Infantry was successful in its use of reserves. At one point, the 2nd Battalion, 57th Infantry relieved the tired 3rd Battalion and thereby invigorated the regiment's attack. And near the end of the fight, the reserve 3rd Battalion reacted against a breakout of 200 Japanese by maneuvering against them, stopping them, and destroying or driving them back to the sea.

The standard, routine, and well-known US Army infantry doctrine fit well into the fights along the west coast. The only problems came from the jungle. Otherwise, almost every piece of guidance offered by FM 7-5, The Rifle Battalion, was effective. Mobile warfare had not yet displaced standard foot infantry tactics, so those tactics worked. FM 7-5's tactics are applicable even today.

#### Delay, San Vicente to the Alangan 7-8 April

##### Analysis

"Delaying action seeks to hold off a decisive engagement, pending the development of more favorable conditions for battle, either in respect to time or to place."<sup>119</sup> The most classic of the army's delays had occurred in December and January during the double retrograde from north and south Luzon which brought MacArthur's army into Bataan. But the forces involved were overwhelmingly Philippine Army, not American or Scout, and they were so new

to military service that they had little idea of doctrine. Any study of those actions would not shed light on the effectiveness of US Army doctrine. The only other delay--as compared to covering force--occurred after the reinforced Japanese crushed the reserve battle position during 3-6 April 1942. On 7 April, the Japanese penetrated the survivors of the main line of resistance and broke the last organized line the Bataan army ever mustered. The units which then fought a two-day delay were American and Scout. Therefore, some analysis of doctrine can be made if full consideration is given to the conditions under which the delay force operated.

"Recourse to delaying action ordinarily implies either lack of readiness for battle or hostile superiority of force. Its purpose is to gain time while avoiding decisive action."<sup>120</sup> The purpose of a delay is to force the enemy to deploy at great distances and force him to prepare attacks on successive positions held by alternating echelons of the defensive force. After II Corps' last line was penetrated on 7 April and the defenders sent fleeing south, the first delay elements to contact the Japanese were two reduced squadrons of Philippine Scout cavalry, now motorized instead of horse-mobile. The 26th Cavalry had come out of army reserve with orders to report to Brigadier General Clifford Bluemel, the general officer facing the enemy's main effort. The 26th Cavalry, however, did not have sufficient men, weapons, or vehicles to force the Japanese to deploy at a great distance. The entire regiment number less than 300 men. All they could do was block the enemy's lead elements moving south along the main trail. The 2nd Squadron, 26th Cavalry, stopped the enemy's unopposed pursuit and forced the Japanese to deploy flanking parties. These flanking elements forced the 2nd Squadron to withdraw. Had more forces been available to fight during this early stage of the delaying action, the Japanese flanking parties would have been contained and compelled to deploy

for an attack. But all General Bluemel had at this moment was the 26th Cavalry.<sup>121</sup>

"Delaying positions should offer favorable observation to the front and flanks, long-range fields of fire, covered routes of withdrawal, and secure flanks. . ." <sup>122</sup> The position assumed by the cavalry regiment was on a small ridge which controlled Trail Junction 2 and 10. There was no time to run a reconnaissance, for the arrival of the cavalry was a movement to contact from reserve positions. The cavalrymen took up the best positions they could find based on General Bluemel's assessment of the situation. The front line had disintegrated earlier that day, and no one knew the exact location of the Japanese, not even Bluemel who often was the most-advanced American in the Bataan army. Most important was the fact that the 26th Cavalry was alone; their flanks were completely open.

"<Delay units> prepare two general series of fires, long-range and close-defensive fires. The former constitute the principal mission. . ." <sup>123</sup> Unfortunately, the Scouts had neither the weapons--mortars, heavy machine guns, anti-tank weapons--nor the time to establish long and close fires. Friendly artillery was either displacing south, in the process of being overrun, or without telephone lines to Bluemel's force. The doctrine makes sense, but conditions were such that the Scouts could not comply with doctrine.

"The defending forces execute successive withdrawals and seek to avoid becoming closely engaged. The dangers inherent in a daylight withdrawal, however, especially when the hostile forces include strong mechanized elements, frequently induce the delaying force to remain in position, in whole or in part, until nightfall, even accepting a close engagement." <sup>124</sup> The overwhelming Japanese advantage in numbers absolutely precluded the delaying force from remaining in position until dark. The resulting daylight withdrawal was costly.

Japanese planes hit both cavalry squadrons, the 2nd as it headed south through the 1st, and the 1st as it, in turn, pulled out and withdrew. Once again, doctrine made sense, but it did not offer any ideas on what to do in a worst-case situation.

"Withdrawals are initiated under conditions fixed by higher commanders. They may commence at a designated hour, when hostile forces reach a certain line, or when adjacent units have effected a withdrawal."<sup>125</sup> II Corps had absolutely no control over the withdrawal of its little delay force and, in all likelihood, did not know it had a delay force. General Bluemel did not have a single radio, and land lines were cut. So the cavalry withdrew on its own initiative following general guidance given it by Bluemel. The regiment succeeded in breaking contact the evening of 7 April, and the cavalrymen withdrew to the Alangan River.

"Combat ordinarily is broken off in each position before troops become closely engaged. The situation may, however, require a strong resistance on some position or even a counterattack in order to accomplish the delaying action."<sup>126</sup> On the morning of 8 April, General Bluemel had gathered three other regimental-sized units (averaging about 300 men each) to join the 26th Cavalry at the Alangan River. So he now had an opportunity to offer much stiffer resistance on the Alangan River than he could the day before. Whether or not Bluemel hoped to form a new main line of resistance here is not known, but II Corps was hoping to do so, and it sent orders to Bluemel to do that. But Bluemel's units were now so reduced in strength and so utterly exhausted that prolonged resistance was impossible. This time, the Japanese had trouble finding a flank, so they deployed and attacked straight into Bluemel's line. Bluemel's line fought hard and well, bent, then broke. By dark on 8 April, Bluemel's delay force was in retreat with little hope of slowing the Japanese the next day.

Bluemel did retain control of his forces, and the men could have offered a modicum of resistance on 9 April, but General King surrendered the Bataan army that morning.

The circumstances under which Bluemel's delay force operated were such that a truly meaningful analysis of doctrine is difficult. But had sufficient forces been available, it seems doctrine would have been effective. The most interesting result of studying this delay, and the entire Bataan battle, is the absence in Army literature of any guidance of how to control and employ routed soldiers. It seems that no one has considered writing guidance on how to employ a badly defeated force. Such guidance might exist in a pre-war field manual, but there are no hints of this in FM 100-5 or FM 7-5, the manuals most often used by battalion, regiment, and division officers. The most striking failure of command and control during April 1942 rests in the fact that general officers failed to move forward to control their broken forces when communication lines were cut. General Bluemel was the sole general officer on the front lines of an entire corps. No attempts were made to form forces around a nucleus of an experienced officers and tanks, artillery, or good terrain. The Germans were masters at this, but they had well-trained soldiers with which to work. Even so, early World War II doctrine seems to miss an important area here.

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## CHAPTER IV

### CONCLUSIONS

Pre-World War II Army doctrine set general principles by which the Army planned to fight. These principles were derived from concepts and experience. Doctrine was authoritative but required judgment in application. Without combat experience to guide them, US Army officers on Bataan followed doctrine and the lessons they had learned in pre-war schooling, schooling that was based on doctrine. Some recent lessons were available from the European war, and these lessons were incorporated into 1040-1941 field manuals. World War I experience did not seem to inhibit or restrain the Army in preparing for World War II. Pre-World War II doctrine was relatively free of trench warfare terminology and tactics. Many World War I lessons existed in pre-World War II doctrine, but the lessons were not so outdated that they were counterproductive.

In many instances on Bataan, American and Scout units did not have the equipment necessary to fully execute doctrine. Because medium artillery (105mm) did not exist, artillery units were not able to follow doctrine concerning medium artillery. The quantity of corps artillery was well below planning figures, thereby restricting commanders when they planned their battles. Radio and wire communication nets were of the most spartan nature. Tactical mobility of the 155mm's was reduced by the age of the guns and a shortage of prime movers. A dearth of qualified forward observers hampered target acquisition and engagement. Ammunition shortages further reduced the effectiveness of all weapons.

Yet despite all these difficulties, artillery officers followed current doctrine as best they could and, in doing so, put on an outstanding performance. Filipino and Scout artillery became the most effective arm on Bataan, and it was the arm most feared by the Japanese. Artillery repeatedly repulsed Japanese attacks, broke up their assembly areas, smothered their artillery, and destroyed their lines of communication. Only a few of the American artillery commanders had World War I experience, so the others had to follow what they had been taught--in short, doctrine. Artillery doctrine proved the most reliable of any on Bataan.

Infantrymen were also hampered by shortages that reduced their ability to apply doctrine. Most telling was the complete absence of 60mm mortar ammunition and a critical shortage of 81mm mortar ammunition. American and Scout units had fewer automatic weapons than similar units later in the war. But the most serious problem facing American and Scout infantry had been the mass exodus of officers and sergeants to cadre the Philippine Army. Experienced leaders were stripped from every echelon leaving new men in positions they had never before held. When these new leaders entered combat, they were not as proficient in executing doctrine as had been their predecessors. Infantry doctrine was sound, but these new leaders were not capable of fully exploiting it. The failure to outpost the Layac covering force line, and the problem of "CP bound" commanders were but two examples of the leadership failure. An important point to remember, however, is that the American and Scout infantryman either outfought, or fought to a standstill, his Japanese counterpart in most every action on Bataan. The big Japanese successes came most often against the less well-trained Philippine Army units.

On the whole, American officers on Bataan were qualified to execute doctrine. The general and field grade officers were men of long service. All but

the most junior had attended some branch schooling. The company grade officers fell into two categories: the regulars and the recently mobilized reservists. The regulars were well-schooled, but the reservists were often brand new to their jobs and in need of significant training. The reservists were poorly qualified to execute doctrine. But because most of the reservists went to the Philippine Army, they therefore had little impact on American and Scout units, the units analyzed in this thesis.

The soldiers in American and Scout units were qualified to execute the orders given them by their commanders. The Scouts were especially well-trained and highly motivated. In both American and Scout units, however, experienced sergeants had been reassigned to cadre the Philippine Army. Most damaged by this process was the American 31st Infantry. Its somewhat disappointing performance on Bataan was due, in large part, to the loss of its leaders. Additionally, over a third of its enlisted men were recruits who had just finished basic training when the war began.

Not surprisingly, the Americans were least successful in executing doctrine they had never practiced. The American Army had not practiced corps level operations in the field since actual combat in 1918. Corps maneuvers on Bataan were therefore ragged. The corps covering force action at Layac, the one-division counterattack at the Abucay Hacienda, and the corps withdrawal in late January evidenced glaring weakness in planning and execution. Additionally, tank-infantry cooperation before the war had been limited. Once on Bataan, neither tankers nor infantrymen knew how to work with one another. The American and Scout units did well those things they had practiced (offense and defense at battalion and below), but they did much less well with new tactics (tank) and with tactics not practiced (corps withdrawal).

The same comments apply to the various tactical echelons. Pre-war

training in the Philippines had concentrated on battalion and company maneuvers with only the beginnings of regimental combat teams exercises. On Bataan, success was most apparent and the most frequent at platoon, company, and battalion. Tactical troubles began at regimental level. Because the Philippine Division never operated as an entity, it is hard to say how it might have fared. But considering the difficulties the Division experienced in its two-regiment attack at the Abucay Hacienda, there can be little confidence that it would have fared well. Corps maneuvers were terribly disorganized. The Bataan army never really maneuvered as an army on Bataan.

One of the most significant tactical failures on Bataan was a seeming inability to mass. This was not a failure of doctrine, for doctrine was clear on the need to mass. But American commanders repeatedly launched attacks and counterattacks with but a fraction of the forces available. The most glaring example was the counterattack at the Abucay Hacienda. The two Philippine Division regiments failed to attack simultaneously, and the American command failed to react to opportunities. But the real failure was the refusal to mass available forces at the extreme left flank of the corps line. More units were available, but II Corps was afraid to commit them. One exception to the failure to mass was II Corps' excellent reaction to the first Japanese attacks at Mabatang on 11-13 January. II Corps immediately reinforced the threatened sector with strong infantry and artillery assets. Another successful massing occurred along the west coast in reaction to the Japanese landings there.

Part of the problem in failing to mass was a defensive mind set. American commanders knew they were besieged, knew they had limited materiel and human resources, and knew they had to hang on as long as possible. Tactical suggestions requiring boldness and offensive action were not well received by senior American commanders. As a result, most decisions were



cautious, and few risks were run. This is not to say that the commanders were completely passive. On the whole, they launched counterattacks time and time again at the correct moments. But they never took significant risks, and they never consciously ran economy of force operations so as to mass larger forces at a decisive point.

In violation of doctrine, many commanders were "CP bound." They were reluctant to leave their wire communication link and go to the front. Radios were in short supply, and the radios had to remain at the command posts. Very few commanders risked themselves to gain a first-hand idea of the situation.

Many lessons were learned on Bataan about doctrine, oftentimes when doctrine was violated. Although doctrine clearly stated that antiaircraft artillery should be used to protect the front lines, the American commanders chose to violate the guidance. With limited assets, they decided to concentrate the two regiments of antiaircraft artillery in southern Bataan to protect airfields and service support areas. This was a bad decision. The airfields and supply areas could dig in and camouflage critical items, whereas infantry front lines and defending artillery were easily pinpointed. Even token antiaircraft artillery near the front line would have relieved the infantry and, more important, the artillery from constant harassment.

Bataan units learned how to fight in the jungle against an enemy skilled at infiltration and small unit tactics. The American units had to learn how to do this from scratch, because infantry doctrine on jungle warfare did not exist. The Americans learned that it was possible to cope with infiltration, snipers, and all the problems associated with jungle warfare. Success in jungle fighting depended more than ever before on the individual soldier.

The Americans learned that tank doctrine as portrayed in FM 7-5 failed to give guidance on cooperation between tanks and infantry during close

combat. Several technical defects were found in the M-3 light tank. Infantry commanders were woefully ignorant of how to employ tanks, thinking tanks could flush snipers, patrol beaches, chase infiltrators, and more. Infantrymen learned never to employ tanks as pillboxes or to leave them forward of friendly lines without close infantry support. Tanks proved best suited (on Bataan) for employment against limited objectives always within range of infantry support. The infantry field manual failed to provide information on tank-infantry command arrangements. The tanks remained under Tank Group control, but this left the local infantry commander unable to give orders at the site of the battle.

Doctrine proved effective on Bataan. Unfortunately for the American Army at large, few of the doctrinal lessons learned on Bataan reached the outside world. Some tactical and technical data was radioed out, and a few officers escaped by submarine, but the vast majority of the lessons learned remained on Bataan. A few of the officers who were evacuated before the fall of Bataan lectured on their experiences, but they did not always draw the correct conclusions from their experiences. As a result, the American Army had to relearn most of these lessons when it next fought the Japanese in the South Pacific.

## Bibliographic Essay

The source material for the Bataan campaign is severely constrained by the loss of official records when the army surrendered and from the death of officers and men in Japanese prison camps. The standard documents from which European and post-1942 Pacific actions are analyzed do not exist for Bataan, and the researcher must look elsewhere for his data.

Paradoxically, the fact that the Americans were defeated on Bataan encouraged a larger-than-normal outpouring of personal recollections. The officers who served there wanted to justify their actions and therefore probably produced more data per person than did their more fortunate military comrades in Europe and elsewhere. And because the absence of standard research data, research into the Bataan campaign uncovers a wealth of "non-standard" source material.

Official records, orders, and reports: The number of these reports is small because of pre-surrender destruction of files and records. However, some copies were shipped out of the Philippines before the surrender, others were buried and recovered after the war, while prisoners carried a few items through three years of prison camp experiences. These records are especially valuable because they are not time-perishable; they have not changed with the passage of time as have memories. They are valuable for confirming names, dates, units etc. Post-war compilation of official reports centered around General Wainwright's "Report of Operations of USAFFE and USFIP in the Philippine Islands, 1941-1942," with eighteen annexes. This report forms the skeleton upon which Dr. Louis Morton wrote the Army's official history, The Fall of the Philippines. Wainwright's report was compiled from various major commanders,

from official notes and extracts taken from the Army's G-3 journals which were shipped out of the Philippines before the fall of Corregidor, and from notes made by officers assembled after the war with orders to write a historical report of the Philippine campaign. Before publication of The Fall of the Philippines, numerous comments about the draft were solicited and provide useful detail on the campaign.

Post-war books, magazine articles, Army service school monographs, Army branch histories, unit histories written by participants, and diaries, letters, and recollection provide very useful data. Monographs and small histories written by officer participants have been very valuable. They were written relatively soon after the war, normally before 1950. Several officers wrote large histories describing the part their units played. Post-war interrogations of Japanese officers prove less revealing than one would suspect. Only two Japanese unit histories survived the war. Several post-war books were valuable in that they pulled together official reports, messages, and orders and presented them in a convenient format. Other post-war books are often apologies or undisguised attacks on senior officers.

Data collected from Bataan veterans includes interviews, letters, and cassette tapes. These veterans provide an incredible wealth of material. Because these men were vanquished, they seem to be very interested in explaining the terrible conditions under which they waged war. Surprisingly, only a few have tried to exaggerate their own contributions to the war. The vast majority have provided sober, oftentimes personally unflattering accounts of their part in the campaign. Several oral history collections have afforded a welcome source which current research could never recreate.

Three War Department Field Manuals provide the basis from which doctrinal norms are drawn: FM 100-5, Operations, 1941; FM 7-5, Infantry Field

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TISL The Infantry School Library, Fort Benning, Georgia  
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