

Staff Department  
THE INFANTRY SCHOOL  
Fort Benning, Georgia

ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE  
1949-1950

THE OPERATIONS OF THE 96TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
IN THE AMPHIBIOUS LANDING AND INITIAL ACTION  
ON LEYTE, 20 OCTOBER - 30 OCTOBER 1944  
(LEYTE CAMPAIGN)

Type of operation described: AN INFANTRY DIVISION IN AN  
ASSAULT LANDING AND OPERATIONS TO SECURE A PORTION  
OF A CORPS BEACHHEAD AREA IN A TROPICAL AREA

Major Claudius M. Easley, Jr  
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO I



## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A-1 The Deadeyes, The Story of the 96th Infantry Division  
By Orlando R. Davidson, J. Carl Willems, Joseph A. Kahl  
February 1947. (Personal possession of author)
- A-2 Action Against the Enemy Report, King II (Leyte) Operation  
20 October 1944 - 25 December 1944  
96th Infantry Division (TIS Library)
- A-3 Biennial Report of the Chief of Staff of the United States  
Army July 1, 1943 to June 30, 1945, to the Secretary of War  
US Army (TIS Library)
- A-4 Supplement to the Biennial Report of the Chief of Staff  
of the United States Army July 1, 1943 to June 30, 1945,  
to the Secretary of War. US Army (TIS Library)
- A-5 Operation Report, Leyte, 20 October 1944 - 25 December 1944  
XXIV Corps (TIS Library)
- A-6 Report of the Leyte Operation, 20 October 1944 - 25 Decem-  
ber 1944 Sixth Army (TIS Library)
- A-7 Operation "King II", The Invasion of Leyte by United  
States Troops, The Ground General School, Fort Riley,  
Kansas.  
August 1947 (TIS Library)
- A-8 Field Order No. 2, 96th Infantry Division  
10 October 1944 (TIS Library)
- A-9 The War with Japan, Part II (August 1942 to December 1944)  
Department of Military Art and Engineering  
US Military Academy, West Point, N.Y. 1947 (TIS Library)
- A-10 Tactical Lessons, K-II Operation  
383d Infantry, 1945 (TIS Library)
- A-11 Intelligence Bulletin No. 6  
G-2, USAFPOA, 17 December 1944 (TIS Library)
- A-12 G-2 Periodic Reports, 20 October through 30 October 1944  
96th Infantry Division (TIS Library)
- A-13 G-3 Periodic Reports, 20 October through 30 October 1944  
96th Infantry Division (TIS Library)
- A-14 G-4 Periodic Reports, 20 October through 30 October 1944  
96th Infantry Division (TIS Library)

THE OPERATIONS OF THE 96TH INFANTRY DIVISION  
IN THE AMPHIBIOUS LANDING AND INITIAL ACTION  
ON LEYTE, 20 OCTOBER - 30 OCTOBER 1944  
(LEYTE CAMPAIGN)

ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of the 96th Infantry Division in the amphibious landing and initial action on LEYTE, PHILIPPINE ISLANDS, 20 October - 30 October 1944.

In order to orient the reader, it will be necessary to discuss briefly the major events leading up to the invasion of the PHILIPPINES.

During the summer months of 1944 a series of amphibious operations were successfully executed in the Southwest Pacific Area against BIAK ISLAND, NOEMFOOR ISLAND, SANSAPOR, NEW GUINEA, and, finally, MOROTAI ISLAND in the NETHERLANDS EAST INDIES. At the same time, Central Pacific Forces successively assaulted and captured the islands of SAIPAN, GUAM, and TINIAN in the MARIANAS, and ULITHI, PELELIU and ANGAUR in the western CAROLINES. (See Map A)

As a result of these leapfrog operations, Allied forces, by the end of September 1944, had gained strategic domination over the NEW GUINEA area and had pushed to within 600 miles of the PHILIPPINES, themselves. (1)

During the end of August and the beginning of September 1944 the carrier-based planes of the Third Fleet made a number of probing air strikes in the western CAROLINES and the PHILIPPINES. The highly successful results of these strikes caused a revision of overall plans and projected operations against YAP, MINDANAO, and TALAUD and SANGIHE ISLANDS were cancelled in order that LEYTE in the central PHILIPPINES could be attacked as soon as possible. The XXIV Army Corps, which was

---

(1) A-4, pp. 48-64

already loaded aboard ships for the YAP operation, was lent by Central Pacific Commander, Admiral Nimitz, to General MacArthur for the operation. It was decided that the landing in LEYTE could be effected on 20 October 1944 and that date was set as A-Day. (2)

#### THE GENERAL SITUATION

The island of LEYTE, located in the center of the PHILIPPINE ARCHIPELAGO, was the key to the liberation of all the PHILIPPINES. Its seizure would give us airbases from which to support operations throughout the rest of the islands and to sever the Japanese supply lines between JAPAN and the rich, conquered territories to the south. The United States Sixth Army was given direction of the assault on LEYTE. It planned to strike simultaneously in the TACLOBAN and DULAG areas on the east coast and occupy the straits at the northern and southern ends of the island, then to complete the conquest of LEYTE and the thinly held island of SAMAR to the northeast. (See Map B) It was planned that on A-3 the 6th Ranger Battalion would land on the islands of DINAGAT, HOMONHON and SULUAN to protect the entrance to LEYTE GULF. Two major beachheads, separated by about ten miles, were planned on the main island. The X Corps, composed of the 1st Cavalry Division and the 24th Infantry Division, was to land on A-Day in the northern beachhead area between TACLOBAN and PALO while the XXIV Corps, composed of the 7th and 96th Infantry Divisions landed in the southern beachhead in the DULAG area. The 21st Infantry Regiment was to land on A-Day in the vicinity of PANAON STRAIT at the southern end of LEYTE to secure control of that entrance to SOGOD BAY. (3)

---

(2) A-3, p. 71

(3) A-6, pp. 19-23

A belt of rugged mountains, ranging up to almost 4500 feet in elevation, extends the full length of LEYTE from north to south. Some smaller hills run from TACLOBAN northwest to the coast. Between these ranges lies the broad LEYTE VALLEY running from CARIGARA BAY in the north to the coast between TACLOBAN and ABUYOG. There are 35 miles of excellent sand beaches along this coast which provide relatively few problems for an amphibious assault. This stretch is actually the only part of the coast of LEYTE suitable for military operations except for a smaller area on ORMOC BAY on the west coast. The best roads of the island lie in the LEYTE VALLEY but only a small part of these were surfaced and passable in wet weather. (4)

East of the central mountain range there is no dry season but the maximum rainfall is in the period from November to March. From October to January, rainy days in this area normally exceed 20 per month. The average daily temperature during this period is 79 to 80 degrees with a maximum temperature of about 85 degrees. (5)

It was estimated that the enemy garrison of the LEYTE - SAMAR area consisted of the 16th Division and elements of the 102d Division together with base defense and service troops, making a total of about 25,000. (See Map C) Of these, it was considered that about 7300 were in the TACLOBAN area, 5500 in the DULAG area, and 5100 in the ORMOC area. (6) To the one prewar airstrip at TACLOBAN the Japanese had added during the occupation an airfield at DULAG, three in the BURAUEN area at BURI, BAYUG and SAN PABLO, and one on the west coast north of ORMOC. Enemy air strength in the VISAYAS was estimated to be 175 fighters and 32 bombers. (7)

---

(4) A-6, pp. 5-6  
(5) A-6, p. 6  
(6) A-2, p. 21  
(7) A-6, p. 6

The Japanese 16th Division, the major enemy unit in LEYTE, was made up of well seasoned troops with much combat experience in several campaigns in CHINA and in the attack on the PHILIPPINES in 1941-42. It had, however, remained in the PHILIPPINES throughout the war and had a long period of inactivity. Nevertheless, it still had the fanatical Japanese will to resist encountered everywhere in the Pacific war. On the American side, three of the assault divisions had already had considerable combat experience, but the fourth, the 96th and subject of this monograph, was entering on its first combat and was as yet unproven in battle. The American forces were generally up to T/O strength and morale was good. Although the Sixth Army had an initial superiority in strength the enemy had the advantages of familiarity with the terrain and prepared positions. In general, it is estimated that the combat effectiveness of the opposing forces was equal. (8)

The Sixth Army supply plan prescribed that units arriving prior to A / 10 would carry in with them ten days of supply of Class I, II, III, and IV supplies and two units of fire. By A / 10, sufficient additional supplies were to be laid down in the objective area to bring the total to 30 days of supply of Class I, II, and IV; 15 days of motor transport fuel; and 30 days of other Class III supplies, and five units of fire. (9)

Since the XXIV Corps was already loaded out of HAWAII for the capture of YAP, it was not deemed feasible by Sixth Army to prescribe or alter the supply plan already put into effect. Actually, XXIV Corps was put ashore with 5 units of fire and 30 days of supply of all other classes of supply. (10) Certain changes in equipment had been made by XXIV Corps in anticipation

---

(8) A-7, p.11  
(9) A-6, p.24  
(10) A-6, p.214

of landing in YAP over a fringing reef. The substitution of amphibious vehicles for wheeled reduced the number of all purpose vehicles accompanying the units to less than 50% of T/E allowance, which subsequently caused a serious shortage of transportation. Extra heavy engineering equipment took the place of about 50% of T/E dump trucks, the lack of which hindered seriously necessary road construction. (11) Sixth Army had responsibility for resupply operations. (12)

#### DISPOSITIONS AND PLANS OF XXIV CORPS

By the middle of September, 1944, XXIV Corps had completed planning for the YAP operation, conducted a rehearsal at MAUI, T. H., and loaded into the assigned shipping. The slowest elements of the convoy sailed from PEARL HARBOR on 11 September and the sailing of the transport groups on 15 September coincided with the change of the Corps' objective to LEYTE, P.I. There was a reassembly of the Corps at ENIWETOK on 25 September where a preliminary order for the assault was issued, and a second reassembly at MANUS ISLAND, in the ADMIRALTIES, on 3 October 1944 where all plans were completed and final orders issued. (13)

The XXIV Corps was given the initial missions by Sixth Army of landing on A-Day at H-Hour in the DULAG - LABIRANAN area with the 7th and 96th Divisions abreast, seizing the DULAG - BURAUEN - DAGAMI - TANAUAN area, and destroying hostile forces therein; of establishing and maintaining contact with the X Corps along the BINAHAAN River; and of protecting the left (south) flank of Sixth Army. (14)

The Corps plan was to land the 96th Division on the right (north) and the 7th Division on the left (south) in the Corps zone. (See Map D, Overlay 1) The 96th Infantry Division was

- 
- (11) A-5, p. 35  
(12) A-6, p. 214  
(13) A-5, p. 4  
(14) A-6, p. 94

instructed to continue after landing the neutralization, carried out during the preparation by air and naval gunfire support, of CATMON HILL by all means available, but initially to bypass on both sides this dominating terrain feature and attack north and northwest to make junction with the X Corps. The 96th Division was also instructed to secure the northern boundary of the Corps Beachhead and seize the TANAUAN - DAGAMI highway. The 7th Division was given the mission of attacking west toward BURAUEN, of seizing the airfields in that area, and then turning north to capture DAGAMI. The 7th Division was to protect the south flank of the Corps. (15)

#### SITUATION OF THE 96TH INFANTRY DIVISION

The 96th Division was entering on its first combat operation. It had gone through extensive and thorough training in amphibious operations, had made careful and complete plans for the seizure of YAP ISLAND, and had engaged in a full scale dress rehearsal in HAWAII with other elements of XXIV Corps. Then, as the last transports were sailing on 15 September 1944 from HAWAII for the staging area at ENIWETOK, the mission of the division was changed to participate in the invasion of the PHILIPPINES at LEYTE ISLAND. Planning was carried on as best possible with the scant information available and under the distinct disadvantage of being at sea. The Division Field Order was finally issued at MANUS ISLAND, the new staging area, shortly before the convoys set sail for LEYTE.

In the course of the long voyage the troops were briefed as well as the limited information available permitted. Daily calisthenics and weapons inspections were carried out. By the time the division arrived in LEYTE on 20 October, the troops

had been in cramped quarters on shipboard, with the exception of some trips to the beach in MANUS, for 35 days. In spite of the depressing effect of all these difficulties, morale remained high in anticipation of the coming campaign. (16)

The division was generally up to full strength and, with the exception of having substituted amphibious vehicles for about 50% of their wheeled vehicles in anticipation of landing in YAP, had the complete allowance of equipment. No provision had been made for a pool of replacements to be available in the objective area so no replacements were received until about half way through the LEYTE campaign. On the whole, it can be said that the combat effectiveness of the division, though still untested in battle, was excellent.

It was estimated that the terrain in division zone was primarily flat except for the hill mass of CATMON HILL, rising up to 1400 feet, two small peaks about 300 feet high south of TANAUAN, and a hill about 120 feet high located about 500 yards north of the CALBASAG River and 500 yards inland from the coast. (See Map D) Maps indicated that most of this flat area was planted in abaca (hemp) and showed some limited swamp areas.

In spite of over 40 years of occupation of LEYTE by the United States, the maps proved to be highly inaccurate as to distances, directions and condition of terrain. This situation seriously affected operations when, in the course of the advance, it was found that a deep swamp extended through the division zone from within 300 yards of the shore almost to the GUINARONA River, omitting only the hills and the town locations. Although a liaison party from the division had accompanied two Naval Underwater Demolition Teams into the beach area on A - 2, they were not able to rejoin the division until after the

landing craft had left the line of departure. So their information was of a little value. (17)

The coastal road between DULAG and TANAUAN and the road running inland from TANAUAN to DAGAMI and BURAUEN and back to the coast at DULAG were considered to be all-weather roads. Other than these roads there were only footpaths and carabao trails within the Corps Beachhead Line.

CATMON HILL was obviously the most critical terrain in the division zone of action. It dominated the landing beaches and provided excellent observation in the beachhead area. Furthermore, it would provide holding forces an excellent strongpoint.

The enemy force in the DULAG area was estimated to number about 5500, including most of the 9th Infantry Regiment of the 16th Division, and base defense and service troops. Extensive field fortifications were prepared along the landing beaches and there were numerous emplacements and pillboxes on CATMON HILL. The information on the enemy was about a month old on A-Day and precise information of enemy dispositions was lacking but the general estimate proved to be quite accurate.

As the division convoy entered LEYTE GULF in the early morning of 20 October the day dawned clear and calm. However, it was known that the season of the greatest rainfall was due in this area and also that the possibility of typhoons striking the area was strong.

#### PLAN OF THE 96TH INFANTRY DIVISION

A-Day had been set for 20 October 1944; J-Hour was 1000.

The 96th Division had been assigned a beachline about 2600 yards long extending from the CALBASAG River on the south to the village of SAN JOSE on the north. (See Map D, Overlay 1)

(17) A-2, p. 29

In accordance with the Corps order it was planned to put two Regimental Combat Teams ashore abreast. The 382d RCT was to land on BLUE BEACH, the southern half of the division beachline, and the 383d RCT was to land on ORANGE BEACH, the northern half of the division beaches. The 381st Infantry, reinforced, had been designated as Sixth Army Floating Reserve.

The two assault RCTs were ordered to land on A-Day at J-Hour with two battalions abreast and to defeat and destroy the enemy forces in their zones of action.

The 382d RCT was given the additional mission of protecting the left flank of the division. (18)

The 383d RCT was further ordered to seize LIBERANAN HEAD, to neutralize promptly and, as rapidly as the situation permitted, to capture CATMON HILL and adjacent high ground, to secure the coastal road between the CALBASAG and BINAHAAN River, to prepare for further advance to the north and west, and to establish contact with X Corps as soon as possible, all the while protecting the right flank of the division. (19)

The 381st Infantry, reinforced, was ordered by Sixth Army to be prepared to reinforce elements of the Sixth Army in any objective area. The 96th Division gave the 381st Infantry, if released to Division control, the mission of being prepared to land on ORANGE BEACH to seize CATMON HILL from the southeast, or to pass around the northwest end of CATMON HILL, attack northeast and establish contact with the 24th Infantry Division (X Corps). (20)

The actual landing formation was largely dictated by the manner in which units had been loaded for the YAP operation. For loading essential assault elements, each assault Regimental

---

(18) A-8, p. 4  
(19) A-8, p. 5  
(20) A-8, p. 5

Combat Team was assigned 10 LSTs. In general, the Battalion Landing Teams were loaded on 4 LSTs each, regimental troops and shore party supporting troops on 1 LST, and the supporting artillery battalion on 1 LST.

Since the YAP operation involved crossing a fringing reef, it had been planned to put the first wave ashore in LVTs and have subsequent waves transfer from LCVPs to LVTs to cross the reef. Although this transfer was not necessary in LEYTE, the plan to land the first wave in LVTs was maintained. One company of the 780th Amphibious Tank Battalion attached to the division was attached down to each Battalion Landing Team and of these one platoon of five LVTs was loaded on each LST assigned to embark that Battalion Landing Team. There were amphibious tanks, amphibious tractors and DUKWs loaded on each LST. (21)

It was planned that each of the three organic battalions of light artillery would be attached to its normal Combat Team Infantry Regiment so long as that regiment remained in contact with the enemy. The Combat Team artillery of the reserve regiment would be placed in general support of the division and given a reinforcing mission. The organic battalion of medium artillery and the attached battalion of medium artillery (198th FA Bn) from Corps Artillery would be in general support of the division with reinforcing missions, and would, when in positions near each other, be formed into an artillery group.

The naval gunfire preparation began at dawn on 20 October with an intensive two-hour bombardment of the selected landing beaches by Allied battleships. (22) From J -45 minutes until J -6 minutes the cruisers and destroyers delivered heavy fire on the beaches. During this 39 minute period, 180 rounds

---

(21) A-5, p. 4; A-2, pp. 8-9  
(22) A-6, p. 32

of 14", 180 rounds of 8", 800 rounds of 6" and 1560 rounds of 5" shells were placed directly on BLUE and ORANGE BEACHES.

The landing forces received close-up last minute naval gunfire support by LCI mortar and gunboat units which accompanied the leading wave of amphibious tanks to the beach. The LCI gunboat unit fired 20-mm and 40-mm shells continuously and rocket barrages from J -8 minutes of J -5 minutes. A total of 5,568 4.5" rockets were fired on the division beaches just prior to the landing.

The LCI mortar unit bombarded first the immediate beach area and later the reverse slopes of CATMON HILL and LIBERANAN HEAD with 4.2" mortars.

After J-Hour, five fire support ships were immediately available as direct support ships to the assault Battalion Landing Teams until naval gunfire support was discontinued 25 October.

Naval air support was available from shortly after J-Hour through air liaison parties with each Battalion Landing Team.

(23)

#### NARRATION

A-DAY, 20 OCTOBER 1944  
(See Map D, Overlay 2)

The order to send the landing force ashore was given at 0842. The previously prepared plans were put into operation and the movement began as scheduled. With the wave of amphibious tanks in the lead, the first wave of troops in LVTs crossed the Line of Departure at 0930 and subsequent waves moved out on schedule.

As the first wave approached the beach it became apparent that something had gone wrong with the naval plane that was supposed to drop white flares to indicate that assault troops

---

(23) A-2, pp. 30-31

were within 800 yards of the beach and naval gunfire support should be lifted. The plane had actually had difficulty in taking off from its carrier and was not present at the time. A hasty radio message got the fire lifted and no harm was done to the waves of troops coming up to the shore. (24) The amphibious tank wave of the 383d Infantry landed on ORANGE BEACH at 0956 and that of the 382d Infantry landed on BLUE BEACH at 0959. (25)

Although there were extensive field fortifications along the landing beaches they were unoccupied. Apparently the tremendous naval bombardment had disrupted any plans the enemy might have had to defend at the beach. The only resistance met was enemy artillery and mortar fire which fell on BLUE BEACH during the landing. The amphibious tank waves and the closely following wave of assault troops in LVTs advanced inland about 300 yards before any small arms fire was received. .

The 383d Infantry, under command of Colonel Edwin T. May, landed with the 1st Battalion on the right and the 2d Battalion on the left. All assault troops were ashore by 1020 and the leading wave had progressed 500 yards inland without meeting resistance. The reserve battalion, the 3d, was ashore by 1110. At 1230 one platoon of Company I moved into the town of SAN JOSE to secure the division right flank. The 3d Battalion moved into the line in the center between the 1st and 2d Battalions and both, the 2d and 3d Battalions had advanced inland about 3000 yards by 1630 when, in accordance with previously issued orders they went into a perimeter defense for the night. The 1st Battalion, on the right flank, advanced about 2000 yards inland, swung north and crossed the LIBERANAN River on a bridge

---

(24) A-2, pp. 78-79

(25) A-2, p. 33

of amphibious tractors that got mired in the stream. They moved to positions at the foot of CATMON HILL from which they could attack LIBERANAN HEAD from the west the following day. The only resistance encountered by the regiment the first day was not from the enemy but from the hipdeep swamp encountered about 300 yards in from the beach. All vehicles got mired including the amphibious tanks, amphibious tractors and Sherman tanks. The men had to plough through on foot carrying all their equipment. (26)

The 382d Infantry, commanded by Colonel Macy L. Dill, landed with its 2d Battalion on the right and the 3d Battalion on the left. Enemy resistance was first encountered when the 3d Battalion reached the foot of HILL 120 at 1025. An assault was organized and a preparation of all available naval gunfire and mortar support was brought down on the hill. By 1040, the 3d Battalion had reached the summit of the hill with no further resistance. (27) The 2d Battalion encountered only scattered enemy and continued its advance inland. The 1st Battalion, in regimental reserve, began landing at 1100 and moved into an assembly position just East of HILL 120.

As the 3d Battalion continued its advance about 200 yards west of HILL 120 it received a small enemy counterattack preceded by mortar fire against its right flank. Two companies of the 1st Battalion were committed against this counterattack but the enemy withdrew before any action developed. (28) During the day the 2d Battalion advanced unopposed about 3000 yards while the 3d Battalion, due to the resistance it had encountered and its efforts to maintain contact with adjacent elements of the 7th Division, advanced only 1100 yards. This Regiment, too,

---

(26) A-1, p. 21  
(27) A-2, p. 34  
(28) A-2, p. 34

had encountered the deep swamp just inland from the beaches and had been greatly slowed up by it.

Two Tank Companies of the 763d Tank Battalion had been attached to each of the assault Regimental Combat Teams. They landed just after the reserve battalion of each RCT but could not reach the assault troops to give them any support because of the swamp already mentioned. There were no roads leading inland in the division zone and it was not until 24 October that the tanks could be got up to give close support to the infantry. (29)

The three battalions of light artillery in Division Artillery were all landed on A-Day and were firing prior to 1800. The first mission was fired by the 921st FA Battalion, attached to the 383d Infantry, at 1530. The attached battalion of medium artillery from Corps Artillery, the 198th FA Battalion, came ashore on A / 1. Again due to the obstructing swamp, the artillery could not move in from the beaches and all these battalions were set up in an area 1500 yards wide by 400 yards deep. (30)

The division CP moved ashore in echelons and by 1800 the entire division CP had closed in and was operating from a shore location. (31)

During the night 20-21 October the combat troops were engaged in no activity but the unloading of the shipping was continuing at the greatest rate possible. Anti-aircraft searchlights were used, as well as other means, for illumination.

A / 1, 21 OCTOBER 1944

At 0800 the morning of the 21st, the 1st Battalion, 383d Infantry, continued its attack up the west nose of LIBERANAN HEAD but increasingly strong enemy resistance was encountered

---

(29) A-2, p. 35  
(30) A-2, p. 36  
(31) A-2, p. 34

and the attack was stopped after very little advance. The battalion commander decided to by-pass the initial enemy position with a composite company consisting of a platoon from each rifle company. This force was able to work its way through the tangled underbrush to the north and up a covered draw to a small hill in the rear of this enemy position. The composite company had secured this high ground by 1600 but was then ordered to return to the battalion area to make way for an air and naval gunfire strike on the whole area. No further advances were attempted by the 1st Battalion that day, but artillery fire was placed on all the enemy positions which had been encountered during the day's engagement. (32)

The other two battalions of the 383d Infantry continued their advance inland through the seemingly endless swampy ground. Only a few enemy were encountered and no serious resistance except for enemy mortar and artillery fire from CATMON HILL which caused a number of casualties.

In the southern sector, the 382d Infantry, advancing with three battalions abreast, was also fighting the swamp rather than the Japanese. During the day it was able to push forward only about 2000 yards.

The division CP was shelled in the afternoon by enemy 75-mm artillery from CATMON HILL. Three enlisted men were killed and nine officers and enlisted men were wounded, including the Division G-4, Lt Col Roberts H. Billingsley, who had to be evacuated from the island. By the following morning the 361st FA Battalion reported the complete destruction of these enemy artillery positions. (33)

By late afternoon of the 21st, two batteries of the 504th AAA (90-mm Gun) Battalion were ashore and one was in firing position.

---

(32) A-1, p. 31; A-2, p. 37

(33) A-2, p. 38; A-1, p. 21)

A / 2, 22 OCTOBER 1944

The battalion commander of the 1st Battalion, 383d Infantry, sent another reinforced company to capture LIBERANAN HEAD. Making full use of the covered routes available and with the aid of effective artillery support the company had reached the top by about 1630. The rest of the battalion moved up and was in defensive positions before dark. (34) A sharp counterattack was immediately received but was driven back by a heavy barrage of artillery by the combined fires of the 921st, 362d, and 361st FA Battalions which had registered on the area. (35) The 1st Battalion remained in these positions on LIBERANAN HEAD, continually improving them, through 26 October in order to protect the right flank of the division while the other battalions of the 383d Infantry were circling to the north end of CATMON HILL in accordance with the operational plan.

The 2d and 3d Battalions of the 383d Infantry continued their difficult advance through the jungle swamp against light enemy resistance. The 3d Battalion advanced through ANIBANG and by evening was bivouacked on the outskirts of the town. The 2d Battalion advanced about a mile.

The 382d Infantry also continued forward against light enemy resistance but still struggling through the swamp. The leading elements of the division reached Phase Line O-1, the first day's objective, on the 22d of October. (36)

As the foot troops advanced the problems of supply became rapidly more and more difficult because of the morass of swamp through which they were going. No roads going inland existed in the division zone of action. Although the Engineer

---

(34) A-2, p. 38  
(35) A-1, p. 32  
(36) A-2, p. 38

Combat Battalion had been working on the construction of roads since A-Day it was impossible to get them through to the advancing troops. Practically all the heavy weapons, ammunition and supplies were being hand-carried forward, as much use being made as possible of native carriers and carabao. Some supplies and equipment were got forward in some areas on the M29Cs (Weasels). It was still impossible for supporting weapons such as tanks, infantry cannon, and 4.2" mortars to join the frontline troops. (37)

The 381st Infantry, still in Sixth Army reserve, started landing on BLUE BEACH at daylight on 22 October on order of XXIV Corps and by evening it was in bivouac about 600 yards inland.

Beginning at 1100 the division CP moved 1000 yards farther inland.

A / 3. 23 OCTOBER 1944

The 1st Battalion, 383d Infantry, mopped up what little enemy resistance as remained in the area of the positions which they had secured on LIBERANAN HEAD on 22 October. A platoon of this battalion with two platoons of the 763d Tank Battalion and parts of the regimental Cannon and Anti-Tank Companies moved north along the coastal road and by 1420 had secured the town of SAN ROQUE. Light tanks continued to advance and by 1600 were 1/2 mile north of TELEGRAFO. A defensive position was promptly set up in this area. (38)

The 2d and 3d Battalions, 383d Infantry, continued their advance north of ANIBANG. As the 2d Battalion approached the GUINARONA River in the vicinity of PIKAS light enemy forces were taken by surprise while bathing in the river and fled

---

(37) A-2, p. 39

(38) A-2, pp. 39-40

without occupying their previously prepared positions. The 2d Battalion pushed its advance across the river and set up a perimeter defensive position at 1810 on the high ground on the north bank of the river. The 3d Battalion closed into this position by 1900. (39) Shortly after dark the enemy launched a small "banzai" attack, consisting of an estimated 100 troops, against the perimeter. The defending weapons were already in position and the attacking Japanese were cut down before being able to do much damage. (40) The day's activities had given these two battalions their first encounter with organized resistance. It was still impossible for regimental vehicles to get across the swampy terrain to these positions. (41)

In the south the 382d Infantry, with three battalions abreast, continued its slow advance inland through the swamps, meeting no enemy opposition.

A / 4, 24 OCTOBER 1944  
~~CONFIDENTIAL~~

On the morning of the 24th, the Regimental Commander, 383d Infantry, was ordered to hold his present positions in the vicinity of PIKAS until a supply route could be opened, and to execute vigorous patrolling. (42) Roads and trails were still non-existent; water and rations were dropped by Navy planes and a trickle of supplies was brought up by "Weasel," carabao train, and Filipino carrying parties. Communication was also becoming a serious problem ~~problem~~ for this regiment since only hand-carried sets of short range could be taken along. (43)

In the sector of the 382d Infantry, the 1st Battalion reached the JULITA - HINDANG Road about 1400 yards south of

- 
- (39) A-2, p. 40  
(40) A-1, p. 25  
(41) A-2, p. 40  
(42) A-2, p. 41  
(43) A-2, p. 41

HINDANG and there found Company B, 763d Tank Battalion caught in heavy enemy fire from a fortified area. (44) These tanks had previously been ordered to advance through the zone of the 7th Division along the DULAG - BURAUEN Road to JULITA and then to turn north toward HINDANG. The two forces joined up, quickly overcame the enemy resistance, and moved on a few hundred yards up the road toward ASLOM. The 3d Battalion advanced through HINDANG, where they found an unmanned strongpoint consisting of 36 pillboxes, and continued on to positions near the 1st Battalion. (45) The 2d Battalion moved into ANIBANG, previously passed through by the 3d Battalion, 383d Infantry, and secured that town.

A 45, 25 OCTOBER 1944

The 383d Infantry had, on the 24th, sent a patrol to investigate guerrilla reports of enemy troop concentrations in the town of TABONTABON to the left flank of the regimental perimeter. They found extensive but unoccupied emplacements there and received reports from the natives that 5 Japs had passed through the town on the previous night. The I and R Platoon had, on the same day, located enemy in the vicinity of SAN VICTOR. Company K was ordered to occupy TABONTABON on the morning of 25 October and to proceed from there to capture SAN VICTOR. As the leading squads entered the town at 0730 they were pinned down by extremely heavy machine-gun and rifle fire. The Japanese had reoccupied the town during the night with an estimated 200 troops and occupied positions dug under the houses. A stiff firefight developed immediately but no headway could be made against the stubborn resistance. The company was ordered to withdraw at 0845 because a counterattack

---

(44) A-1, p. 35  
(45) A-2, p. 40

was expected from the east but the company could not get out due to the continued heavy enemy fire. A platoon from I Company was sent to reinforce K Company and with this assistance the withdrawal was completed by 1130. Company K had suffered 7 killed and 2 wounded in the action and it was estimated that 25 Japanese had been killed. (46) That afternoon, about 1600, an enemy reinforced platoon launched a counterattack against the regimental defensive perimeter from the northwest slope of CATMON HILL, east of SANVICENTE. The attack was quickly repulsed, an estimated 25 enemy were killed and the rest of the force withdrew. (47)

The 1st Battalion, meanwhile, was still in its defensive position on LIBERANAN HEAD protecting the division right flank. In the early morning of the 25th a reinforced platoon with light tanks and an engineer platoon equipped for bridge repairs started out from SAN JOSE with the mission of reconnoitering the coastal highway as far north as the BINAHAAN River and of making contact with the X Corps. The patrol reached the TANAUAN River about 1300 and discovered the bridge damaged. The engineers went to work and had the bridge repaired by 1600. A patrol then advanced through the town of TANAUAN, killing 7 Japanese on the way, and effected the first lateral contact between the X and XXIV Corps at the BINAHAAN River bridge. (48)

The 1st and 3d Battalions of the 382d Infantry continued their attack to the north abreast astride the road to ASLOM. The two battalions quickly reduced an enemy defensive position found at ASLOM. At this point the two battalions split, the 1st turning west astride the road from ASLOM to TABUGNON while the 3d continued its advance to the north astride the ASLOM - TABONTABON Road against small delaying patrols. The 2d Battalion

---

(46) A-2, p. 42; A-1, pp. 25-28

(47) A-2, p. 42

(48) A-2, p. 4

had been led astray by faulty maps in its advance from ANIBANG and continued almost to the GUINARONA River about half way between PIKAS and TABONTABON. (49)

Sixth Army released the 3d Battalion, reinforced, of the 381st Infantry to control of the 96th Division as of 1930. The remainder of the regiment remained in Sixth Army reserve.

A / 6, 26 OCTOBER 1944

On the morning of the 26th, the 383d Infantry sent out a reconnaissance in force against the slopes of SAN VICENTE HILL, the northern tip of the CATMON HILL mass. The force, consisting of Company E, jumped off at 0950 preceded by a ten minute artillery preparation by the 363d FA Battalion. The company got caught in an open field at the base of the hill and was brought under fire by small arms, automatic weapons, and mortars from prepared positions on the hill. Additional elements of the battalion were committed but by 1115 the attack was stopped and the forces were withdrawn under concealment of smoke. The battalion as a whole suffered 65 casualties and the Battalion Commander, Lt Col James O. McCray, was killed in the action. (50)

On the 26th the 382d Infantry was ordered to secure TABONTABON and patrol the road to the northwest. The 2d Battalion, which had gotten off its course on the 25th, backtracked and was approaching TABONTABON from the southeast in the afternoon while the 3d Battalion came up alongside of it on the road from ASLOM. The 383d Infantry which had had its K Company stopped on the east edge of town on the 25th was ordered to stay clear and to protect the left flank of the 382d during its attack. The attack jumped off at 1500 after an artillery preparation. The assault troops forded the GUINARONA River under

---

(49) A-2, p. 41; A-1, p. 35  
(50) A-1, pp. 28-31; A-2, p. 44

heavy enemy fire and were entering the town by 1600. The enemy had an excellent defensive position organized consisting of pill boxes and machine gun nests set up underneath the houses and even on the second floor of some of the larger buildings. Trenches connected the various strongpoints. The heavy cross-fire of enemy machine guns slowed the advance and at dusk the enemy launched a strong counterattack preceded by mortar and artillery fire. The two battalions were forced back to the far banks of the GUINARONA and established a perimeter defense for the night. During the night enemy mortar fire fell intermittently within the perimeter and division artillery fired harassing fire and prearranged concentrations into the town. (51)

At about 0830 on the 26th, the 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry, began its march north along the coastal highway with the mission of proceeding to TANAUAN and thence west along the TANAUAN - DAGAMI Road, securing bridges and other critical points along the route, and contacting the elements of the 96th Division fighting north on the western side of CATMON HILL. This battalion was reinforced with one platoon of the regimental Cannon Company, one platoon of Company A, 321st Engineer Combat Battalion, Company A, 763d Tank Battalion, one platoon of Company A, 321st Medical Battalion, and Battery C, 361st FA Battalion. The battalion reached TOLOSA by dark and spent the night there in bivouac. (52)

A / 7, 27 OCTOBER 1944

The 1st Battalion, 383d Infantry, at the southern end of CATMON HILL Mass, sent out a reinforced rifle company on the morning of the 27th to reconnoiter LABIR HILL in force. Initially only light sniper fire was encountered but when the

---

(51) A-2, p. 43  
(52) A-2, p. 44

company reached the foot of the hill, heavy rifle and machine gun fire opened up which resulted in the death of the commander of Company D, the Battalion S-3, and seven enlisted men and the wounding of 2 officers and 31 enlisted men, including the Battalion Commander, Lt Col Edwin O. List. At noon, the company was ordered to be withdrawn until additional support could be obtained. (53)

The 2d and 3d Battalions, 383d Infantry, remained in their previous positions on the 27th while the 382d Infantry launched a coordinating attack against TABONTABON with the 2d and 3d Battalions in the assault. With an artillery preparation at 1000 the troops again forded the GUINARONA and fought their way back into the town against heavy enemy fire. The 3d Battalion entered the town in the southwestern portion and was followed by the 1st Battalion which had now come up on the road from TABUGNON. After a brief but sharp fight they were able to work their way out of the town on the road going northwest toward DESAHONA on the TANAUAN - DAGAMI Road. The two battalions, one on each side of the road, encountered several pillboxes along the road but no organized defense line and advanced to a position about a mile northwest of TABONTABON. (54)

The 2d Battalion, which had entered the town in the south central portion, encountered the heaviest resistance. They fought their way through to the northern edge and there found every exit thoroughly covered with machine gun fire. With the advance still held up at nightfall, the battalion was pulled back and set up a perimeter in the center of the town. The Japanese counterattacked during the night but were successfully beat off. (55)

---

(53) A-2, p. 45  
(54) A-1, p. 37  
(55) A-1, p. 38

The 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry, continued its advance along the coast on the morning of the 27th and by 1000 had entered TANAUAN unopposed. Contact was made with elements of the 19th Infantry (X Corps) and the advance turned southwest down the road toward DAGAMI. At the bridge about 600 yards out of TANAUAN the advance party encountered an enemy position which they were unable to reduce before dark so the battalion dug in for the night. (56)

At 1400 on the 27th, the rest of the 381st Infantry, commanded by Colonel Michael E. Halloran, was released to the 96th Division from Sixth Army Reserve along with a directive to attack CATMON HILL as soon as possible. The 381st Infantry was ordered to attack CATMON HILL on the 28th and to relieve the 1st Battalion, 383d Infantry, in its positions on LIBERANAN HEAD. (57)

A / 8, 28 OCTOBER 1944

On the 28th of October the 383d Infantry remained in its same positions at each end of the CATMON HILL Mass.

The 1st and 3d Battalions, 382d Infantry, continued their advance toward DESAHONA in the morning and at KAPAHUAN engaged a strongly defended fortified position consisting of pillboxes made of coconut logs. The position was supported by two 70-mm howitzers and numerous 50-mm mortars, but it was quickly reduced with the assistance of artillery and the employment of flamethrowers and demolition teams. The two battalions continued to advance and reached the road junction on the TANAUAN - DAGAMI Road at DESAHONA at 1500. This road bordered the northern boundary of the XXIV Corps beachhead line. The 3d Battalion was left at the road junction to protect the division left flank and to mop up enemy in the area while the 1st Battalion turned

---

(56) A-2, p. 44  
(57) A-2, p. 45

to the east and advanced astride the road toward KILING. At 1600 an estimated company of enemy attacked the 3d Battalion but was successfully repulsed. (58)

The 2d Battalion, 382d Infantry, spent most of the day fighting its way out of TABONTABON on the road toward KILING. Just at the northern edge of the town extremely heavy enemy resistance was encountered; the road was mined and machine guns pinned down the infantry. Through the use of tanks, including one with a flame thrower, mortars, and artillery, and the execution of an envelopment by Company G, the Japanese positions were broken by late afternoon. A perimeter was set up for the night north of the town where the fighting had taken place. Approximately 350 enemy soldiers had been killed in the TABONTABON action. In the three days fighting at TABONTABON the 2d Battalion had lost 34 killed and 80 wounded. (59)

The 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry, quickly overcame in the morning the light resistance encountered southwest of TANAUAN on the afternoon of the 27th. They advanced rapidly down the road toward KILING until about 1600 when the head of the column was about 200 yards northeast of KILING where enemy resistance was encountered. An estimated company of enemy counterattacked the battalion about 1630 which caused the battalion to withdraw about 1000 yards to a defensive position for the night. (60)

The 381st Infantry (- 3d Battalion) moved during the morning from its reserve positions near BLUE Beach to assembly positions in the vicinity of SAN ROQUE in preparation for its attack against CATMON HILL at 1200.

---

(58) A-2, P. 47  
(59) A-1, pp. 38-39  
(60) A-2, p. 47

CATMON HILL had been under constant artillery and naval fire since A-Day to neutralize the enemy positions located on the hill. In preparation for the attack of the 381st Infantry on the 28th, and beginning at 2100 on the 27th, the 361st FA Battalion (105-mm), 198th FA Battalion (155-mm), one battery of the 363d FA Battalion (155-mm) and the 78th Amphibious Tank Battalion (75-mm) delivered harassing fires over the entire hill mass until 1030, 28 October. Starting at this time these units fired successive concentrations advancing in bounds of 50 yards from the bottom of the hill to the top. Supporting concentrations were fired in front of the infantry as it advanced after the attack was launched at 1200. In the 2 1/2 hour period from 272100 October, 4228 rounds of 105-mm artillery, 1227 rounds of 155-mm artillery, and 200 rounds of 75-mm artillery were fired on CATMON HILL. (61)

The 2d Battalion moved up to the positions on LIBERANAN HEAD occupied by the 1st Battalion, 383d Infantry, relieved that battalion, and attacked LABIR HILL. This battalion advanced very rapidly against no resistance and by evening had established a perimeter on top of LABIR HILL. (62) The 1st Battalion was to attack LABIR HILL from the seaward side but its advance was halted very abruptly while still at the foot of the hill by heavy sniper and machine gun fire received from well prepared enemy positions. The battalion pulled back under the concealment of smoke for the night. (63)

A / 9, 29 OCTOBER 1944

The 383d Infantry remained in its positions at the northern end of CATMON HILL during the 29th of October.

---

(61) A-2, p. 45  
(62) A-2, p. 46  
(63) A-1, p. 33

The 2d Battalion, 382d Infantry, resumed its advance in the morning encountering only sniper fire in its movement to KILING. In the vicinity of SAN VICTOR approximately 150 dead Japanese were found who had apparently been killed in some previous action. The battalion reached the road junction in KILING about 1430 and made contact with the 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry, which had moved into the town from the north-east during the morning. The 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry, was relieved by the 2d Battalion, 382d Infantry, and returned by motor to SAN ROQUE where it was released to control of the 381st Infantry. The company of medium tanks which had been with this battalion was transferred to the 2d Battalion, 382d Infantry, which made preparations to advance west to GUINGAWAN to join the 1st Battalion, 382d Infantry. (64)

The 1st Battalion, 382d Infantry, continued its advance east along the road toward KILING against withdrawing enemy until GUINGAWAN was reached about 1130 where heavy automatic fire from pillboxes astride the road was encountered. An assault of the positions was stopped by the enemy fire, which now included artillery, and numerous casualties resulted. Among those killed was the Battalion Commander, Lt Col Jesse Mechem. The battalion withdrew about 1000 yards for the night. (65)

The 3d Battalion, 382d Infantry, was still in its positions at DESAHONA protecting the division left flank. At 1830 and 2000 on 29 October two enemy counterattacks were repulsed, killing 50 Japanese soldiers. (66)

On the southern portions of the CATMON HILL mass the 2d Battalion, 381st Infantry, continued its attack and by 1300 had

---

(64) A-2, p. 48

(65) A-2, p. 48

(66) A-2, p. 48

easily captured CATMON HILL itself. The 1st Battalion, whose attack had been repulsed the day before, reconnoitered for a new route of attack and jumped off at 1200. With the support of artillery and the direct fire of 45 amphibious tanks the battalion advanced through the heavily fortified area that had stopped it the day before. Junction was made with the rear elements of the 2d Battalion about 1600 and both battalions continued the advance northwest over CATMON HILL mopping up the small enemy resistance remaining. (67)

A / 10, 30 OCTOBER 1944

The 383d Infantry (- 1st Battalion) was ordered on the morning of 30 October to attack and seize SAN VICENTE HILL and the village of SANVICENTE. The attack jumped off at 1300 with two battalions abreast, the 2d on the south and the 3d on the north. The hill was taken without opposition, the enemy having withdrawn from the well prepared defensive positions which had stopped the previous limited attack on 26 October. The 3d Battalion encountered a little small arms fire north of the village of SAN VICENTE, and by nightfall both battalions were in a defensive perimeter east of the village. (68)

On the DAGAMI - TANAUAN Road the 1st Battalion, 382d Infantry, attacked the position at GUINGAWAN which had been strongly defended the day before but found little opposition. A junction of the 1st and 2d Battalions was made at 1030 thus ending organized enemy resistance along the Corps beachhead line within the 96th Division zone of action. The 3d Battalion, which had been protecting the left flank of the division from positions at DESAHONA, sent patrols down the road toward DAGAMI. Contact was established with patrols of the 17th Infantry, 7th Infantry Division, at 1445 and the Corps Beachhead line was immediately declared secure.

---

(67) A-2, p. 46  
(68) A-2, p. 47  
(69) A-2, p. 48

On CATMON HILL the 1st and 2d Battalions, 381st Infantry, continued mopping up operations. In the entire CATMON HILL area covered by the 381st Infantry, a total of 53 pillboxes, 17 caves and numerous smaller emplacements were destroyed by demolition. (70)

The results of this phase of the operations in LEYTE may be broadly summarized by saying that a sizable beachhead had been secured far into enemy held territory and the eventual liberation of all the PHILIPPINES was assured. The campaign in LEYTE was to be one of the major turning points in the war with JAPAN for it not only split the PHILIPPINES but severed the Japanese lifeline to the south. The capture of CATMON HILL had removed a serious threat to the security of the beaches over which all supplies had to come. A large area had been cleared of enemy and the Corps Beachhead Line had been secured. In the course of the action through 30 October the 96th Division had identified elements of the 9th, 20th, and 33d Infantry Regiments, the 2d Battalion of the 22d Field Artillery, the Kimura Engineer Unit and troops from a Special Naval Landing Force. During this phase 1869 enemy dead had been counted by the division and three prisoners of war had been taken. (71) Although statistics on our own casualties for the period are not available for this monograph they were, in comparison with those of the enemy, quite moderate. However, two battalion commanders had been killed and one wounded in action.

One result, important as regarded the future combat efficiency of the division, was that the troops were no longer untested but had met the enemy and defeated him. They had gained much valuable experience and confidence in their ability to succeed.

---

(70) A-2, p. 46

(71) A-12, 30 October 1944

## ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

### 1. FLEXIBILITY OF PLAN

The division carried through to its conclusion the plan of action originally contemplated for the phase of the operation covered in this monograph in spite of the fact that a large and deep swamp was encountered just inland from the beaches which extended through most of the division zone of action and constituted a serious obstacle to movement. Because of the difficulty of moving through the swamp and because of the necessity for hand-carrying practically all weapons, equipment and supplies, it took far longer to attain the initial division objectives than the enemy resistance warranted. This delay gave the enemy the opportunity to withdraw many of his forces to prepared defensive positions in the mountains to the east. In the view of the writer, it is felt that the nature and extent of the swamp could have been determined through patrolling and the use of liaison aircraft before two regiments had been too far committed to slogging their way through an area where practically no enemy were found. If a pincers had been established around CATMON HILL by sending one regiment north along the coast route subsequently followed by the 3d Battalion, 381st Infantry, with the hill being neutralized by naval gunfire and air attack, and an assault organized from both ends of the hill mass, it is felt that more enemy would have been trapped, that the mission of securing the beachhead area would have been more quickly accomplished, and the tremendous problems of supply over the swamp would have been largely eliminated. That CATMON HILL was the most critical terrain in the division zone of action was obvious from the beginning; it should have become apparent early that the swamp was an important obstacle to the movement

not only of our own troops but to the enemy as well and that the TANAUAN - DAGAMI Road would constitute the principle avenue of withdrawal for the enemy. To make no effort to move down this road until A / 7 and to attack CATMON HILL with only one battalion in the south and a reinforced company in the north while most of five battalions were fighting terrain and supply problems rather than the enemy, would indicate a lack of appreciation of the importance of closing with the enemy and seizing critical terrain promptly. In order to be able to cope with unexpected developments in terrain or enemy dispositions it is essential to maintain a high degree of flexibility in the plans of higher units and to be prepared to alter the plan of maneuver as promptly as the situation becomes clear.

## 2. WITHDRAWING FOR THE NIGHT

There are numerous examples in the monograph of units which had been engaged during the day pulling back a few hundred yards in the evening to establish a defensive perimeter for the night. This was a widespread habit in the war with Japan, brought on largely because of the night attack and infiltration tactics of the Japanese. Deliberately to give ground already occupied, except on order of higher authority, is to invite having to fight to retake it the following day. If the enemy is seeking an opportunity to withdraw it is handed to him and then he will have to be fought later on other ground of his own choosing. Such practice of withdrawing deliberately is seldom, if ever, warranted and indicates an excessive fear or cautiousness in regard to the enemy.

## 3. MAJOR WITHDRAWALS

In two separate instances battalions moving along the TANAUAN - DAGAMI Road, one from the east and one from the west,

when fairly stiff resistance was encountered withdrew approximately 1000 yards and established defensive perimeters. A withdrawal on this scale, in the face of inferior opposition, implies an unwillingness to come to grips with the enemy on the part of the troops and a loss of control on the part of the unit commanders. Only aggressive leadership by all unit commanders can maintain the necessary control in the face of the enemy, particularly in the case of inexperienced troops.

#### 4. FAILURE TO MAINTAIN CONTACT

Over and over again contact was not maintained with the enemy. The most frequent examples of this failure are found in connection with the withdrawals to night perimeters as mentioned above. With contact lost, the enemy was free to make whatever moves he desired and often when an attack was renewed the following day it would be found that the enemy was gone. The most striking demonstration of the results of a failure to maintain contact was in the attack of the 383d Infantry against SAN VICENTE HILL on 30 October. An attack by a reinforced company had been driven off by the enemy from well-prepared positions on 26 October but contact through patrols was not maintained. On the 30th a coordinated attack with two battalions abreast was launched against the hill which proved to be unoccupied. By failing to maintain contact the enemy had been permitted to escape and certainly lived to fight another day.

#### 5. COMMITMENT OF FORCES

There appears to have been, in certain instances, a hesitancy to commit more than a bare minimum of forces to a particular attack. In the attack launched by 2d Battalion, 383d Infantry, against SAN VICENTE HILL on 26 October, one company was sent out to do the job. Its advance was stopped by heavy fire from prepared positions. Other elements of the battalion were

committed to the attack but the enemy resistance could not be overcome. On the 25th one company of the 3d Battalion, 383d Infantry, was ordered to occupy TABONTABON and seize SAN VICTOR. This company also ran into much heavier resistance than it could handle and additional forces had to be committed to permit a withdrawal. The truth of the old saying that a boy should not be sent to do a man's job is amply borne out in these examples. If an objective is worth taking sufficient forces should <sup>be</sup> committed initially to accomplish the mission, and a piecemeal commitment of additional forces will seldom achieve success.

#### 6. USE OF INTELLIGENCE

On 25 October a patrol from the 383d Infantry had been in TABONTABON and discovered extensive but unoccupied positions in the town. One company was sent out the following morning to occupy the town but ran into very heavy resistance from enemy who had reoccupied the town during the night. If intelligence is to be of any value it must be acted on promptly while it is still valid. The failure to occupy TABONTABON in force on the same day that it was found to be unoccupied gave the enemy the opportunity of moving back in and the stage was set for the bloodiest battle of this phase of the operation.

#### 7. PATROLLING

It would appear that much information on the terrain and enemy dispositions could have been available to the division units through the use of more aggressive patrolling. In the first place, deep patrolling in the division zone on A-Day could have largely determined the nature and extent of the swampland encountered and such information might have had some effect on the overall plan of maneuver. More use of aggressive

patrols could have been made to maintain contact with the enemy. This was particularly true in regard to the enemy on SAN VICENTE HILL. Adequate preliminary patrolling should have indicated the nature of the enemy positions before it was attacked on 26 October with only one company. Again, patrolling to keep track of the enemy on this hill would have made the regimental commander aware that the enemy had withdrawn before ~~and~~ a coordinated attack with two battalions abreast was launched against empty positions on 30 October.

#### 8. LIFTING OF NAVAL GUNFIRE

In the landing stage of the operation it had been planned that a Navy plane would drop white flares when the assault waves were 800 yards from the beach to indicate that the naval gunfire should be lifted. The plane to accomplish this mission had difficulty in getting off its carrier and was not present to give the signal. A hasty radio message got the fires lifted in time but any failure in communications could have had disastrous results for the landing forces. It is important that provision be made for an alternate signal for the lifting of preparatory naval gunfire in an amphibious operation.

#### LESSONS

1. Plans for operations must be flexible and subject to prompt modification when unexpected obstacles or advantages are discovered.
2. The deliberate giving of ground to the enemy, except on order of higher authority, is rarely, if ever, warranted.
3. Control of inexperienced troops in battle can be maintained only through aggressive leadership on the part of all unit commanders.

4. Failure to maintain contact with the enemy gives the enemy the benefit of freedom of movement, and the ability to withdraw if such is his intention.

5. Sufficient forces should be committed in the attack to accomplish the assigned mission.

6. Intelligence, to be of value, must be acted upon promptly.

7. Inadequate patrolling will deprive a commander of important information on the terrain and enemy dispositions often obtainable from no other source.

8. Alternate signals for the lifting of naval gunfire in an amphibious operation must be provided as a safety factor in case of failure of the primary signal.