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THE OPERATIONS OF COMPANY "G" 187TH GLIDER INFANTRY
REGIMENT (11TH AIRBORNE DIVISION) IN THE BREAKTHROUGH
TO THE ORMOC CORRIDOR, 22-23 DECEMBER 1944
(THE LEYTE CAMPAIGN)
(PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF A PLATOON LEADER)

TYPE OF OPERATION DESCRIBED:
COMPANY IN BREAKTHROUGH ATTACK

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INTRODUCTION

In this monograph the writer will relate briefly the actions of the 11th Airborne Division during the Leyte Campaign, and will cover in more detail the operation of Company G 187th Glider Infantry near the close of the campaign when the all important junction was made with the 7th Infantry Division in the Ormoc Corridor. While it was the 511th Parachute Infantry that spearheaded the entire move across the mountains and made the junction possible, it was the 2nd Battalion, 187th Glider Infantry, lead by Company G, that actually made physical contact. Major General Joseph M. Swing, Commanding General of the 11th Airborne Division, was present at the time this contact was made, and was the first man to walk into the lines held by the 7th Division. (1)

The Allied offensive in the Pacific, once launched, kept increasing in tempo, and by September, 1944, successive hops, skips, and jumps had brought General MacArthur's forces to Morotai, northernmost of the Halmahera Islands, 2,000 miles and 25 months from Milne Bay, New Guinea. The Philippines would be our next target. (2)

Planning for the invasion of the Philippines started in July 1944. By early October of the same year, the stage was set; the first decisive blow was to be directed at strategically located Leyte, eighth largest of the Philippine Islands. Its seizure would serve to split Japanese forces on the entire archipelago. The Japanese expected our blow to be directed at Mindanao where they had concentrated most of their defenses. With this fact in mind it was believed that if we could launch this operation, the element of surprise could be employed to work as our ally. (3)

(1) Personal knowledge; (2,3) A-6, p. 4.

Leyte is approximately 107 miles long. Its width varies from 42 miles in the north at the widest point to approximately $15\frac{1}{2}$ miles in the center at the narrowest sector. The greater part of the island is mountainous and covered by close knit jungle foliage, presenting a definite obstacle for the movement of troops to the east or west. Three valleys are found along the coastline, the Ormoc Valley along the northwest, the Tacloban Valley along the northeast, and Leyte Valley along the east and north. (4) (See map A)

The 14th Army Group under Count Terauchi constituted the major Japanese forces on Leyte. In that Group was the 16th Japanese Division, the torturers of Bataan, soon to be met by a vengeance force that included a handful of veterans of Corregidor. (5)

THE GENERAL SITUATION

On the morning 20 October 1944, the Sixth Army consisting of X Corps and XXIV Corps, hit the east coast of Leyte on four beaches; two between San Ricardo and Dulag; and two others on Pancan Island at Leyte's southern tip. (6) (Map A)

The landings were preceded by beach reconnaissance, under water demolition teams, air-strikes, and naval gunfire. Among approximately 100 warships supporting the landings were the battleships California and Pennsylvania, both supposedly "destroyed" at Pearl Harbor. (7)

The X Corps on the right (north) landed on beaches between Palo and San Jose, just south of Tacloban, where initial enemy resistance from extensive field fortifications along all landing beaches was relatively light. In this sector many of the Japanese had withdrawn from their beach positions to the mountain foothills to avoid the fire from American Naval vessels stationed in Leyte Gulf. Taking full advantage of this withdrawal, the 1st Cavalry and 24th Infantry Divisions were quick to exploit their initial successes in their zones of action; on A plus 1, Tacloban was in the hands of the 1st Cavalry Division and Palo was taken by the 24th Infantry Division. Extremely stubborn resistance was soon encountered; but our troops had gathered momentum and, by 2 November 1944, the two divisions in a co-ordinated attack had captured Carigara to the north. (8)

(4) A-1, p. 5; (5) A-6, p. 4; (6) A-1, p. 32; (7) A-6, p. 5; (8) A-1, P. 32

The XXIV Corps on the left (south) landed in the vicinity of Dulag. In that zone of action early stubborn enemy resistance made the progress a bit slower; however, aggressive action on the part of our troops pushed back the enemy and by A plus 5 the three enemy air fields in the Bureauen area had fallen to our 7th Infantry Division. The 96th Infantry Division had to initially bypass the enemy stronghold on Catmon Hill but seized the southern portion of Leyte Valley in their zone of action, and on 28 October attacked Catmon Hill. By 31 October 1944, all hostile resistance on Catmon Hill was eliminated. (9)

Before long it became evident that the enemy intended to hold Leyte at all cost. Apparently, the Japanese High Command had decided that the struggle for the Philippines would be won or lost on Leyte rather than on Luzon, and poured troops and supplies into Leyte in spite of terrific losses incurred enroute. (10)

In accordance with intelligence reports the initial number of enemy estimated to be in Leyte were 26,800 men. (11) Before the battle for Leyte was over, hurried reinforcements from Mindanao, Cebu and other islands raised enemy strength to approximately 150,000 men. (12)

While the enemy continued to reinforce their Leyte forces, our Sixth Army was also being reinforced. The 32nd Infantry Division and 112th Cavalry RCT arrived on 14 November 1944, followed by the 11th Airborne Division on the 18th, and the 77th Infantry Division on the 23rd of the same month. (13)

THE DIVISION SITUATION (MOP 13)

The 11th Airborne Division departed Oro Bay, New Guinea, on 11 November 1944, in convoy of nine ships bound for Leyte; and on 18 November 1944, the Division landed on a 6,000 yard front between Abuyog and Terragona on the east coast without opposition. At this time the Japanese troops were being pressed into the Ormoc Corridor from three directions: in the North on a wide front below Carigara Bay,

(9) A-1, p. 39; (10) A-1, p. 84; (11) A-8, p. 1; (12) A-6, p. 4; (13) A-1, P. 62;

the 24th Infantry Division and 1st Cavalry Division were pushing south; to the east in the central sector, the 96th Division was attempting to move west across the mountains from Dagami; and in the south at Baybay, the 7th Infantry Division was advancing north up the west coast highway. The following quotation from Time Magazine dated 20 November 1944, sums up the military situation. "The U.S. drive on land slowed down to a walk after it had over-run about 50% of the northern half of Leyte, ORMOC, the key western port where the Japanese landed and deployed in a ten mile semi-circle, could be approached only from the north or south unless the U.S. troops attempted to come over the mountains between DAGAMI and JARO, a long difficult pass." It was through this long difficult pass that the 11th Airborne Division did attack. (14)

The first mission given the 11th Airborne Division by the XXIV Corps (Field Order number 28, dated 22 November 1944) was to relieve the 7th Infantry Division along the line Burauen-Lapaz-Bugho, and to destroy all enemy in that sector. By the 28th of November the last elements of the 7th Division had been relieved and the 11th Airborne Division had started its drive to gain control of the trails and passes that led to the west coast through the central mountain range, preparatory to pushing through the mountains to hit the Japanese Ormoc defenses on the east flank. (15)

The first elements of the 11th Airborne Division pushed into the mountains on 23 November 1944. The initial drive was spearheaded by the 1st Battalion, 511th Parachute Infantry, who moved out immediately to the west along what we called the north trail. The 3rd Battalion, 511th Parachute Infantry moved out shortly thereafter along the southern trail, followed by the 2nd Battalion, 511th Parachute Infantry and later by the 2nd Battalion, 187th Glider Infantry. The difficulty of the march was intensified by jungle foliage which covered the entire area. The trails were treacherous and knee deep in sucking mud; the monsoon season was at its height; the mountains and trails were unmapped or falsely mapped; towns located in northern Leyte on the map turned out to be in southern Leyte on the ground.

(14) A-3, p. 1; (15) A-3, p. 2.

The Japanese were active and fought delaying actions, set ambushes and attacked our perimeters nightly. As the situation developed it became apparent that the Japanese would attempt to hold in depth along a line Patog, Ananong, west through Lubi and Mahonag to the head waters of the Talisayan River. (16)

On 6 December 1944, at approximately 1830, enemy aircraft carrying incendiary and high explosive bombs raided the San Pablo airstrips setting a gas dump on fire. Our AA batteries engaged the hostile aircraft vigorously but the only significant result obtained was the expenditure of all immediately available AA ammunition. At 1840, when two flights of C-47 type aircraft in V of V's flew over the strip at about 700 feet and dropped between 250-300 Nip parachutists, the AA units could only sit and watch. Surprise was complete and very little opposition met the Japs as they landed but they were confused and many were killed before they could take up firing positions. Many were found to be drunk and some had descended without parachutes (unless they used a new invisible non-opening type, not known to the Americans at this time). Their objectives appeared to be the 11th Airborne Division liaison planes and supply dumps, and the Air Corps installations and the Sixth Army Service installations. Needless to say an exciting night was spent by all. (17)

The next day, 7 December 1944, remnants of two Japanese forces totaling about 450 men descended from the mountains and attacked Bureau from the northwest and southwest. These two forces might have been much larger and better organized were it not for the fact our forces in the mountains had dispersed the enemy concentrations, killing many hundreds, and on this very night were containing a large force undoubtedly earmarked for the co-ordinated air, sea and ground counterattack on our rear echelon. Thanks to the U. S. Navy and Air Corps the sea elements never arrived. (18)

Early the next morning, available elements of the 11th Airborne Division, consisting largely of artillerymen and headquarters and service

(16) A-3, p. 2; (17,18) A-5, p. 4,5.

troops, attacked the Japanese Airborne troops at San Pablo, but were stopped before reaching the strip. The attack was later resumed with elements of the 149th Infantry, 38th Infantry Division, attached to the 11th Airborne Division, and by 10 December, succeeded in clearing the entire area of enemy. (19)

Perhaps this Japanese Airborne operation was in celebration of the Pearl Harbor anniversary. If so, we too had something to celebrate, for in the early morning of 7 December 1944, the 77th Infantry Division made a surprise landing at Deposito, three miles south of Ormoc on the west coast of Leyte, and on the 10th had moved into Ormoc after three days of bitter fighting. It was at this time that Major General A. D. Bruce, Commanding General of the 77th Infantry Division, sent the following message to the 11th Airborne Division and the 7th Infantry Division. "Have rolled two sevens in Ormoc, come seven, come eleven". Bruce. (20)

Back in the mountains units of the 11th Airborne Division were "coming" although progress was rather slow due to the large number of strong enemy positions we had encountered. The enemy infested jungle covered mountains were not conducive to both speed and efficiency. Furthermore, fighting was only one problem; the question of supply and evacuation had reared its ugly head and became problem number one.

We were compelled to discontinue using yards or miles as a barometer for distance, and were now using hours or days to measure or designate the distance from one point to another. Hand carry was almost impossible and definitely not feasible. Carabao, the Philippine beast of burden, had been used with great success out of the mountains, and into the foothills but had to be abandoned at a point midway between Burauen and Mahonag. They could not climb the vertical inclines, were too fat to squeeze through narrow cuts, and were too slow and noisy in the jungles. Vehicles were, of course, entirely out of the question, and the only answer was air. (21)

Neither the weather nor the small drop zones permitted daily resupply by air. A supply point to build a stock pile was as necessary as

(19) A-2, p. 14; (20) A-9, p. 17; (21) Personal knowledge.

an air-strip was for the evacuation of troops, and we needed both immediately.

Battery A, of the 457th Field Artillery Battalion, was located at Manarawat, where it had parachuted in a drop zone measuring 500 feet long by 150 feet wide, surrounded completely by a 150 foot deep gorge. Manarawat was one of the few semi-cleared areas in our entire zone of action, and while it was not well suited for an airstrip, it was well located, and a shade better than nothing. It was decided to build a liaison strip at Manarawat, where there would be established a forward Division Command Post, supply point, and hospital.

On approximately 1 December 1944, elements of the Division Staff, one platoon of the 127th Engineers, and one platoon of Company G, 187th Glider Infantry, parachuted into Manarawat from liaison planes and work was started on the airstrip. On 5 December the first plane landed, and the first wounded man was evacuated by liaison plane. Personnel from a Portable Surgical Hospital, parachuted into Manarawat, had set up a complete hospital capable of caring for the wounded until they could be evacuated. (22)

All the liaison planes of the division, plus five borrowed from the New Guinea Short Lines, ^{and L-5 squadron} began the shuttle run which supplied the division. The pilots flew as much as twelve hours a day to find some small drop zone, drop their supplies and return for reloading. There were days when the thick gray fog closed into the ground and the pilot had to circle, looking for a break in the clouds to dive into; often the break would close in after he had passed, and a nightmarish climb to the sun resulted. (23)

These planes were often fired upon by the Japanese. As a consequence, each pilot carried tommy guns, fragmentation grenades, and White Phosphorus grenades. With this heavy armament they carried out many a bombing mission against the Jap positions. Whether they ever killed a Jap no one knows, but the "biscuit pilots" say the Nips ran for cover every time a fragmentation grenade was tossed their way.

(22) A-5, p. 3.
(23)

The pleasure and satisfaction of watching the Nips run to cover and ~~the~~ resultant safety from this type of strafing partly repaid the pilots for the splendid, fatiguing, and hazardous work they did.

The period 11th to 20th of December 1944 was characterized by continued destruction of enemy pockets of resistance in the Anas, Mahonag, Lubi, and Anonang areas. By this time it was established that the enemy's main line of defense was now on the ridges east of the Talisayan River, and on the high ground in vicinity of Mahonag. We were not too far from the 7th Division in the Ormoc Corridor in yards or miles; but the enemy's strongholds lay between us, and promised to make a strong bid to keep us from gaining contact.

On the Ormoc side of the mountains the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Infantry, 7th Infantry Division crossed north of the Talisayan River on 14 December 1944, ~~then~~ pushed east to contact the 511th Parachute Infantry, but were stopped at the foothills by hostile forces that occupied the commanding positions in the area. A number of attacks were made on these Jap positions but the attacks were hindered by the extremely rugged terrain which gave the defenders every advantage.

(24)

By 20 December 1944, units of the 11th Airborne Division were disposed as follows: The 511th Parachute Infantry, who had run into the main Japanese supply trail, was concentrated on Rock Hill in contact with a large group of Japanese in well prepared positions along Hacksaw Ridge which blocked off their advance to the sea. Rock Hill had been taken on the 18th when the 511th Infantry followed an artillery concentration by Battery A 457 F. A. Battalion, and moved up the slopes to assault the enemy with flame throwers and bayonets as their principal weapons. The area was mopped up on the 19th, and on the 20th the 511th was ready to launch its attack to the west from the newly established C.P. on Rock Hill. (25)

(24) A-4, p. 19, 20; (25) A-5, P. 5

The Japanese supply trail closely paralleled the Division route of advance, and was closest at Mahonag; it was a wooden corduroy road wide enough for a jeep, but in extremely poor condition due to the tropical rains. In many spots the road itself was two feet below the surface of the mud. Aerial reconnaissance and captured maps indicated that the trail entered the mountains at a point south of Ormoc near Anas, and it was decided to cut this trail, thereby cutting off any supply to Japanese positions in the mountains. (26)

The 2nd Battalion, 187th Glider Infantry was in what we called the Mahonag DZ with the mission of securing the drop zone and its installations which included a supply dump and the second hospital built in the mountains. This mission was best accomplished by vigorous patrolling and setting of ambushes. Ambushing along the main Jap supply route was a lucrative business; dividends ran as high as 80 of the enemy killed in a single action using one understrength rifle platoon plus a section of HMG's to man the ambush; parachutes that hung in trees made excellent bait to attract the hungry Japs. The DZ itself was a semi-cleared space approximately 200 yards wide and 400 yards in length, studded with 6 foot stumps on the steep side of one of the hills that made up the Mahonag mass. It was a difficult place to hit for aerial supply but a good place to defend, as the Japanese learned after many costly ^{and} unsuccessful assaults to drive us out of the position. (27)

Battery A of the 457th Field Artillery was at the Manarawat Airstrip, together with one platoon Company C, 187th Glider Infantry, and a platoon of the 127th Airborne Engineers. Their mission was providing close and continuous artillery support to assault troops, guarding and maintaining the airstrip, and aiding in the evacuation of the wounded. (28)

The 1st Battalion, 187th Glider Infantry, together with elements of the 188th Glider Infantry, was at Ananong preparing to attack a strong enemy position previously bypassed by the 511th Parachute Infantry and the 2nd Battalion, 187th Glider Infantry. (29)

(26-27) Personal knowledge; (28-29) A-5, p. 6.

The 674th and 675th Airborne Field Artillery Battalions, were ordered to exchange their artillery mission for one of Infantry and were now at Catabagan with the mission of mopping up enemy stragglers in that area. (30)

The 152nd Airborne AAAT Battalion was operating a relay net of 609's to provide the Division with the necessary communications to accomplish its mission. This relay net was necessary since it was impossible to carry heavy long range radios along the mountain trails by man carry after the Carabao became useless. (31)

The 127th Engineers had devoted most of their time to making roads and bridges that would support the Division traffic. Now with the breakthrough to the coast imminent, they proceeded to the west coast, via the Dulag-Bay Bay road, located the entrance of the Jap Supply Trail, and using this trail commenced construction of an ambulance trail up the mountains. The Quartermaster Company began to build up a dump on the west coast from which supplies could be drawn when the troops descended from the mountains. Everything was now in readiness for the final breakthrough attack. (32)

THE BREAKTHROUGH ATTACK

On the night of 22 December 1944, at approximately 1800, the 2nd Battalion, 187th Glider Infantry, was relieved by elements of the 188th Glider Infantry and ordered to push out of the DZ at 0400 23 December to make contact with the 511th Parachute Infantry at Rock Hill, and to be prepared to aid in the breakthrough attack to the coast. (33)

The 11th Airborne Division Commander had established his C/P on Rock Hill to personally direct the battle of Hacksaw Ridge and effect the breakthrough. (34)

Upon receipt of the order, the 2nd Battalion 187th Glider Infantry alerted the troops and prepared for the move. At 0400, 23 December, the Battalion pushed out of the perimeter with Company G leading. The trails were treacherous, muddy and slippery, however, the battalion made its way along the long difficult route without incident and at approximately 0600 the approaches along the slopes of Rock Hill, were reached. At the same time the 511th Parachute Infantry launched its attack on Hacksaw (30-31-32) A-5, p. 6; (33) Personal knowledge; (34) A-3, p. 3.

Ridge, the last known major Japanese position blocking the advance. (35)

The attack proceeded in column of battalions and cracked the enemy defenses on Hacksaw Ridge. The troops used demolitions, flame throwers, bazookas and grenades in the final assault, to annihilate the deeply entrenched enemy.

At approximately 0830, the ridge, lined with enemy dead, was firmly in our possession. We were still a long distance from contact with the 7th Division, and the enemy was still determined to keep us from accomplishing this mission. Word came back for the 2nd Battalion, 187th Glider Infantry to pass the 511th Parachute Infantry and take up the lead. The Battalion went forward to overtake the lead elements of the 511th who were pushing forward at breakneck speed along the Japanese Supply Trail, which ran along the razor back ridge in the direction of Ormoc. It was difficult to understand how a unit engaged in bitter fighting could keep up the terrific rate of march forward. The trails everywhere were littered with enemy dead, as were the slopes of the ridge. (36)

The 2nd Battalion 187th Glider Infantry caught up with the lead elements at approximately 1000, only to find that the 511th Parachute Infantry was too busy to be relieved[?] ^{why} at this time, and it wasn't until approximately 1200 that Company G, 187th Glider Infantry actually took the lead in column of platoons, 2nd Platoon forward. (37)

Colonel Haugen, Commander of the 511th Parachute Infantry, had stopped the lead platoon leader Company G, long enough to give him the following order. "You must keep going as fast as possible, run if you have to, but don't give the Nips a chance to set up their weapons; we've got them with their pants down, you can't even stop to kill them all, just push through, we are behind you and will take care of them as we come to them. Just keep going, fast, any questions?" (38)

Running if possible was what Company G endeavored to do; but had (35-36-37-38) Personal knowledge.

proceeded less than 100 yards when they were fired upon by a Japanese machine gun from a point approximately 20 yards to the front where the trail turned abruptly to the left. Immediately a BAR man opened fire in the direction of the machine gun, at the same time a member of the lead squad tossed a WP grenade at the same point. The platoon leader had the lead squad cut left into the jungle while he sent four men to assault the machine gun position from the right. The lead elements were back on the trail and pushing forward in a matter of minutes, and the four men who had assaulted the MG position returned and reported "the machine gun and three men manning it are out of action". The platoon leader now saw the value of pushing. (39)

After proceeding another 150 yards, the trail disappeared into a deep gorge. When our troops reached the lip of the gorge, the scouts opened fire on a number of Japs seen on the trail. Our fire was returned from unseen positions but seemed to be very inaccurate. At this time the platoon leader saw two Japs kneeling on the banks of a small stream on the right side of the bottom of the gorge just as they committed suicide by holding hand grenades to their heads.

The bottom of the gorge was approximately one hundred feet below the position we now occupied and was clear of underbrush. The banks to the right and left were approximately fifty feet higher than our position. It was evident that the Japanese in the gorge would have security placed at these two vantage points.

The platoon leader now ordered the first squad to establish a base of fire, squad number two and squad number three were sent to the right and left bank respectively, to secure these positions overlooking the gorge and to assist the assault by fire if possible. When all were in position the first squad plus elements of the first platoon which followed the second and lead platoon, assaulted the gorge and eliminated the enemy. These Japanese appeared to have put up only feeble resistance. At this

(39) Personal knowledge

point the Battalion Commander had come forward to ask, "what is holding up the parade? " He was satisfied only after somebody had counted thirteen enemy dead. Two of the enemy dead constituted part of the Nip security element on the right bank who had jumped off the 150 foot wall of the gorge when the second squad assaulted that position. (40)

The climb on the far side of the gorge was a steep and hazardous one, but fortunately was made without enemy action, thanks to the third squad which had gone up the left bank and eliminated two snipers who would otherwise have been looking down our throats. All squads had now rejoined the platoon, and soon we found ourselves high on the western slopes of a steep mountain, from which point the west coast could be seen plainly. Here the Platoon leader temporarily stopped the column while he fired a violet smoke grenade which was the signal for friendly forces intended to attract elements of the 7th Infantry Division that might be in the vicinity. A similar signal was fired by the 7th Infantry Division from a ridge that appeared to be four or five hundred yards to the west, and thus visual contact had at long last been made. The appearance of the rugged terrain between the two forces promised that more fighting would take place before physical contact could be made. (41)

The column pushed on, down the winding trail until it reached the draw at the bottom of this same mountain. At this point the Company ran into another group of Japanese, who put up only feeble resistance, and were easily eliminated by grenade and BAR fire. Continuing to follow the Japanese supply trail, the column soon reached the approaches of an extremely dangerous looking position to the front, Here the Platoon leader stopped the column, put our security, and dispatched a patrol to reconnoiter the position. With the closing of the column, again the Battalion, (40-41) Personal knowledge.

Regimental, and other Commanders came forward to learn of the slowup. These Commanders were interested in speed and every moment lost was investigated. The Commanding General, who had been just behind the lead elements throughout the attack, also came forward at this time. (42)

A rifle shot rang out from a point very close to the head of the column on the right; the security elements had spotted a Jap sniper in a tree who apparently had the column under observation but had not fired on it. The single shot did away with this threat. The reconnaissance patrol soon returned with the following report: The position is honey-combed with caves and well dug positions; it appears to have been heavily shelled; it has been recently abandoned judging by the condition of some of the camouflage, and a number of enemy dead are on the position. (43)

The column moved forward up the steep incline to the top of the peak. The positions on this peak, like most of the Jap deliberate defensive positions, were well laid out, camouflaged and dug in almost solid rock. The battered trees and number of enemy dead found on the top of this position, which was long and narrow in shape, served as mute evidence of heavy gunfire. Among the dead were two American soldiers that appeared to have been dead less than twenty-four hours.

When the column reached the west end of the hilltop, which formed a razor back ridge, we could see Ormoc and the sea coast. To our front, approximately 200 yards away, along the ridge that ran from this hilltop toward the coast, were dug in emplacements that were soon alive with members of the 2nd Battalion, 32nd Infantry. They were amazed to see fellow American soldiers on the same strong enemy position that had given them so much trouble. "oh yes", said one of the members of the 32nd, "we expected you, saw the violet smoke; but we didn't think you were coming over that hill, why only last night it was solid with Nips, we lost two of our boys on it". (44)

Thus physical contact was made with the Ormoc Corridor, and the trail between this point and Rock Hill was covered with approximately

(42-43-44) Personal knowledge.

750 enemy dead. The road was finally opened between Burauen and Anas, and the area west of Mahonag was cleared. Extensive aggressive patrolling throughout the newly won area prevented any portion of it from falling into Jap hands. Several bypassed enemy pockets remained in the central mountains that would have to be wiped out before the 11th Airborne could write finis to the ^{point of the} Leyte Campaign. This mission was assigned to and successfully carried out by the 188th Glider Infantry, and 1st Battalion 187th Glider Infantry. (45)

In the Leyte Campaign General MacArthur had this report to make. "Total Jap casualties for the vain ten week stand were 113,221. Mopping up operations raised the total to 134,995. U.S. losses were 2623 killed. Forty three Japanese for every American. General MacArthur announced that the American casualty rate was so low as to be unsurpassed in the history of war". (46)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In analyzing and criticizing this operation, it is my opinion that the Japanese lost the battle of the Philippines on Leyte ~~where~~ ^{when} they very wrecklessly threw in reinforcements at a tremendous cost to them in lives lost enroute. These reinforcements were brought in even though it was known that they could not properly be supplied or equipped. Their hunger alone accounted for a large number of casualties. Starvation took its toll; a large number were killed when they attempted to steal our loaded supply parachutes that landed out of our perimeters. (These chutes were used as "bait" for many of our ambushes) ^fforaging for food took much of their time and many of their positions were given away by foraging parties.

Japanese acts of suicide in lieu of possible capture or surrender worked to their disadvantage in many cases. A number of "suicides" may have been the very ones to delay our advance were they to have fought. If they had permitted themselves to be taken prisoners, they could have added to our guard and supply problems. However, at least six committed

(45) A-3, p. 3; (46) A-6, p. 5.

suicide in a matter of a few minutes in the small battle of the gorge where two men committed suicide by hand grenade; and two jumped off a 150 foot cliff; two others jumped out of the jungle into the trail screaming and running with their backs toward us, we had no alternative but to shoot them.

We can criticize our own prior planning for lack of good maps of the central part of Leyte. The Jap maps of the central areas were far superior to ours in spite of the fact the Philippines were in our possession for almost 50 years; also, lack of engineer equipment so necessary to keeping roads open, was evidence that the monsoon season could not have been taken into consideration during the planning phase.

Contact with the enemy was not maintained by the 32nd Infantry unit. Even though they had two of their men lying dead on a hilltop 200 yards to their front, they did not know that the Japanese had withdrawn from the position almost twenty four hours before they saw members of the 11th Airborne come over the position.

LESSONS

1. The proper use of weapons can and will save time, effort and lives. One WP grenade did the work of a whole squad in blinding a Jap MG position so that it could easily be assaulted.

2. Physical hardening of personnel is essential, especially when employed in mountainous terrain. Had it not been for the excellent condition of our troops, we would not have had the stamina to maintain the fast pace necessary to success on the breakthrough attack. This attack came after one month of jungle fighting, short rations, very little sleep, long patrols, and rain filled foxholes.

3. Contact with enemy once established, should not be broken. The 32nd lost contact with a position to their direct front that may have greatly added to the success of the final push.

4. Aggressive action pays big dividends as evidenced by our attack of Hacksaw Ridge, and the push to the coast. The Japanese were pushed at such a rapid pace they lacked the time to properly set up

their weapons to delay our advance materially.

5. Artillery attacks may not kill, but they will so effect the personnel that they will become ineffective.

6. Good maps are essential to any operation.

7. Terrain that appears to be your enemy, can be made to be your friend if used correctly.

8. Terrain does not present insurmountable obstacles if troops are properly equipped, clothed, supplied and trained.

9. The small type L-4-5 planes can be used to fly missions that the larger planes cannot accomplish.

10. The L-4-5 planes can be used for aerial re-supply, for dropping paratroops, and evacuation, with huge success.

11. In operations where trails are steep, narrow and slippery, even pack animals cannot be used to carry supplies. Man can still carry his own, but not in quantity, and air re-supply is the most effective means of re-supply.

12. You cannot take part in an operation over jungle covered mountains and take your organic transportation or any heavy equipment with you. Ask the troops to carry only the bare essentials, and you will not waste valuable supplies and equipment. Soldiers will throw all but the most essential away in time.

13. Naval gunfire is effective even against strong beach defenses. The X Corps initial successes can be attributed to the Naval gunfire support that caused the Japs to leave their beach defenses and seek shelter in the mountains.

not pertinent