

General Subjects Section  
ACADEMIC DEPARTMENT  
THE INFANTRY SCHOOL  
Fort Benning, Georgia

ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS COURSE  
1947 - 1948

THE OPERATIONS OF A PROVISIONAL BATTALION, 41st DIVISION,  
(PA), AT ABUCAY HACIENDA (BATAAN), 15-25 JANUARY 1942  
(THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PHILIPPINES)  
(Personal Experience of a Battalion Commander)

Type of operation described: BATTALION IN A HOLDING,  
COUNTER ATTACK AND WITHDRAWAL ACTION

Major William R. Nealson, Infantry  
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO II

TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Table of contents.....	1
Bibliography.....	2
Troop List.....	3
Introduction.....	4
The General Situation.....	6
The Local Situation.....	8
The Provisional Battalion Situation.....	9
The Action of the Provisional Battalion.....	10
Analysis and Criticism.....	20
Lessons.....	23
Map No 1 - Luzon, P. I., General Orientation	
Map No 2 - General Situation Map, 15 January 1942	
Map No 3 - Special Situation Map, 15-17 January 1942	
Map No 4 - Special Situation Map, 18-26 January 1942	

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

- A-1 MacArthur and the War Against Japan  
By Frazier Hunt  
(1944) (TIS Library)  
(Good for the general picture. Numerous discrepancies.)
- A-2 War With Japan--Part I  
Department of Military Art and Engineering  
US Military Academy, West Point, N. Y., 1945 (TIS Library)
- A-3 Report of Operations of South Luzon Force, Bataan Defense Force, and II Philippine Corps in Defense of South Luzon and Bataan from 8 December 1941 to 9 April 1942.  
(Compiled by former G-2, II Philippine Corps, from accounts presented by various Unit Commanders after their repatriation in 1945. Accounts were based on sketchy diaries of the Commanders and their personal memories. Details are inaccurate in many instances.)  
(Copy in possession of former G-2, II Philippine Corps, Lt. Col. Dennis M. Moore.)
- A-4 General Wainwright's Story  
By Robert Considine  
(1946) (TIS Library)  
(A broad, general picture is presented in a slightly colored account of the Defense of the Philippines.)

(Other accounts consulted add only to the general picture. Therefore, they were not referred to in this monograph. Total lack of material on small unit actions necessitated reliance of the author on personal knowledge and memory.)

TROOP LIST

41st Division, Philippine Army

43rd Infantry (PA)

Provisional Battalion (PA) (41st Engineer Battalion (PA))

31st Infantry Regiment (US)

2nd Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS)

THE OPERATIONS OF A PROVISIONAL BATTALION, (41st DIV., PA)  
AT ABUCAY HACIENDA (BATAAN), 15-25 JANUARY 1942  
(THE STRUGGLE FOR THE PHILIPPINES)  
(Personal experience of a Battalion Commander)

INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of a Provisional Battalion of the 41st Division (PA) at the Abucay Hacienda, Abucay, Bataan, 15-25 January 1942, during the ten day struggle to maintain the first battle position on Bataan, Luzon, following the rout of the 51st Division (PA).

In order to orient the reader on conditions existing in the Philippines at the outbreak of hostilities, it is necessary that he be made acquainted with the conditions which existed and placed our Pacific outpost in a position both precarious and untenable.

The advent of the Japanese attacks on our Far Eastern bases found the Philippine Department poorly prepared. This fact was recognized by military leaders years before a defense of the Islands became an actuality. (1)

The Philippine Division (US), our only trained combat division, was far under strength. Our air forces were inadequate and, after the first week of the War, to all intents and purposes, inoperative. (2)

The ten divisions of the Philippine Army were newly mobilized, untrained and lacked sufficient and proper equipment to enter combat. Each division numbered approximately 8,200 officers and men. (3) In most cases, mobilization of the component units of each division had been accomplished at separate cadre training centers, and the divisions were assembled for the first time when they took up their

(1) A-1, p. 52. (2) A-1, p. 34. (3) A-3, p. 4.

first beach defense positions on 8 December 1941. (4)

Supplies, ever a critical item, became even more scarce within the first week of the War. After a chaotic period of requisitioning, confiscation and outright taking of supply items, the available supplies were dangerously depleted. To increase difficulties, bombing of the Army Port Area, on Manila Bay, destroyed a great deal of the Philippine Department Quartermaster supplies. Troops were put on half rations shortly after the start of the War. Further cuts were made at later dates. (5)

Ordnance was in no better status than Supply. The Philippine Division (US) was armed with the M1 rifle and the 81 mm mortar and the 60 mm mortar in addition to the BAR, the heavy machine gun and the light machine gun. However, there was no supply of ammunition for the 81 mm or 60 mm mortars. A limited supply of Stokes 3 inch mortar ammunition was available, but it proved to be about seventy per cent (70%) defective. (6)

The Philippine Army, armed with obsolete, and completely unsatisfactory, Enfield, M1917, rifles and British 75 mm artillery pieces, <sup>WAS</sup> were even more poorly armed. Automatic weapons were issued to each unit. Some of the artillery units were equipped with the 2.95 pack howitzers, for which a limited ammunition supply was available. (7)

Very few of the Philippine Army personnel had actually fired their weapons prior to combat firing against an all too realistic enemy.

Our "heavy artillery", 155 mm guns, <sup>WAS</sup> were of obsolete design and proved to be outranged by the Japanese artillery.

(4) A-3, p. 3. (5) Personal knowledge. (6) A-3, p. 6.

(7) A-4, p. 15.

Again, limited supplies of ammunition bogged down these fine weapons, the bulwark of the defense, even though enemy air forces failed to silence them after continuous effort.

Transportation, necessary to the movement of the troops into the Bataan Peninsula, was outmoded and consisted of every available civilian motor vehicle, private and commercial, to supplement the too few military vehicles. Some units had more transportation than they needed and others had little or none at all.

These were the conditions which existed when the Japanese invasion forces struck at <sup>the</sup> Lingayen Gulf Area.

#### THE GENERAL SITUATION

The failure of the beach defenses was soon apparent. In face of the superior Japanese forces, the USAFFE (United States Armed Forces in the Far East) troops were forced to withdraw into a consolidated position to avoid being separated and destroyed in detail. Further defense of North, Central and South Luzon became impractical and impossible.

Therefore, General MacArthur ordered War Plan Orange #3 to be put into effect on 24 December 1941. (8) This called for evacuation of North, South and Central Luzon and the organization of pre-planned battle positions on the forward slope of the high ground formed by the range of Mt. Mariveles, Mt. Samat and Mt. Natib. War Plan Orange #3 was designed to deny an enemy the Bataan Peninsula and to protect the fortified islands in the mouth of Manila Bay. These islands would be untenable with enemy positions on the high ground of Bataan.

The movement into Bataan was affected and completed by (8) A-3, p. 16.

the main body of troops by the night of 5-6 January 1942. The covering forces withdrew on the night of 6-7 January 1942. The main contact with the Japanese was lost. (9)

The main battle position of the II Corps, USAFFE, (Eastern Bataan), was occupied from ~~left to right~~ <sup>right to left</sup> by the 57th Combat Team (PS), 41st Division (PA) and the 51st Division (PA) (less the 52nd Infantry). The MLR extended from Manila Bay, on the East, along the high ground North of the Balantay River to a point approximately 5000 yards West of the Abucay Hacienda on Mt. Natib. Contact with the I Corps was maintained by patrols over the rugged, jungle-grown terrain of Mt. Natib. Contact was never satisfactorily established. (10)

Defense in depth existed only in an unoccupied and poorly prepared RRL. The extended division frontages and acute shortage of troops and weapons precluded the possibilities of a reserve regiment. Break-throughs and counter-attacks were to be dealt with by whatever troops were available in the Division or Corps areas.

(The general situation and boundaries between major units are shown on Map #2.)

On the night of 10-11 January 1942, the Japanese attacked the right flank of the MLR after driving the outposts in. The first attack in strength was made on the right flank of the II Corps line, in the area of the 57th Infantry (PS) near the town of Abucay. The attack was vigorous and gained a partial break-through, but a successful counter-attack re-established the MLR. (11)

Thereafter, the Japanese attacked piece-meal along the

(9) A-3, p. 27. (10) A-3, p. 20. (11) A-3, p. 29



line. Thrusts at the 41st Division (PA) and the 51st Division (PA) positions were repelled. These first attacks were made on the gently sloping ground used for rice fields by the Filipinos.

The line in the II Corps sector held intact until the rout of the 51st Division (PA) on the night of 15 January 1942.

#### LOCAL SITUATION

The 51st Division (PA), with its left flank floating on the side of Mt. Natib, was engaged several times by small forces of the Japanese, but had suffered very little loss in the encounters. This division disintegrated and was routed by a small Japanese force on the night of 15 January 1942.

The rout of the 51st Division (PA) exposed the left flank of the 41st Division (PA), held by the 43rd Infantry (PA). The 43rd Infantry (PA) had been mobilized on 24 November 1941, and had received no training and very little of its equipment prior to being engaged in combat. However, though it had been engaged several times, the unit held its positions. This was largely due to the efforts and example of Lt. Col. Eugene T. Lewis and his staff of American officers and non-commissioned officers. These officers, as with other officers of the 41st Division (PA), were advisors only and had no command authority. However, in combat, they exercised command in the absence of competent and experienced Filipino officers.

Plans were made to protect the exposed flank and counter the anticipated attack by the Japanese.

## THE PROVISIONAL BATTALION SITUATION

The Provisional Battalion, 41st Division (PA), consisted of the 41st Engineer Battalion (PA) and filler personnel from the Division Signal Company, the Division Quartermaster Detachment, and stragglers pressed into the makeshift Battalion. (12) With the exception of Company "A", 41st Engineer Bn. (PA), these troops had no experience as combat troops. The Provisional Battalion was a hastily formed Division reserve.

The Engineer Battalion was commanded by a Captain of the Philippine Army, who was also the Division Engineer. He remained at the Division CP. The American advisors to the Division Engineer were temporarily put in command of the Companies of the Battalion. These officers were: 1st Lt. Henry Harriss, 14th Engineer Bn. (PS) and 2nd Lt. Myrl E. Schrock, a civilian mining engineer, familiar with the topography of the Philippines after many years of mining experience in the islands.

The three letter companies of the 41st Engineer Bn. (PA), when supplemented by the miscellaneous filler personnel, numbered about one hundred fifty (150) men per company, with an aggregate of about four hundred fifty (450) men in the Provisional Battalion. (13)

The Battalion was armed with the Enfield, M1917, calibre .30 rifle. There were no automatic weapons or mortars for the Battalion. Artillery support was available from the 41st Field Artillery Battalion (PA), in direct support of the Division and occupying positions in the rear of the Division. (See Map #2) However, the poorly trained Filipino (12) Personal knowledge. (13) Personal knowledge.

artillery men made close-in fire dangerous to friendly troops as well as to the enemy.

#### THE ACTION OF THE PROVISIONAL BATTALION

At 0630, 16 January 1942, Colonel Malcolm V. Fortier, the Senior Advisor to the Division Commander, ordered Lt. Harriss to move the Battalion to a position on the left flank of the 43rd Infantry (PA) and maintain contact with the 43rd Infantry, awaiting the arrival of the Philippine Division (31st Infantry (US) and the 45th Infantry (PS)). (See Map #3) Lt. Harriss was to report to the Provisional Battalion Commander at the 43rd Infantry CP. The Battalion Commander was, at that time, on a reconnaissance of the 51st Division (PA) area to try to locate and contact any elements of that Division which may have held their position.

Upon return from the reconnaissance, the Provisional Battalion Commander reported to Colonel Fortier, confirming the report of the complete rout of the 51st Division (PA) and the absence of a Japanese force in the area. He then was ordered to return to the 43rd Infantry (PA) CP, coordinate his movements with Lt. Col. E. T. Lewis, place his Battalion in position on the left flank of the 43rd Infantry (PA) and refuse the Division's flank to the South and West. (See Map #3) As soon as the Battalion was disposed across the flank, he was to patrol, in force, toward the Abucay Hacienda and beyond to Mt. Natib. He was ordered to hold, at all cost, the refused flank and deny the enemy access to the Division's rear.

Upon his arrival at the CP of the 43rd Infantry (PA), the Battalion Commander found that Lt. Harriss and Lt. Schrock had already begun the organization of the refusal of the left

flank. They had tied in with the left unit of the 43rd Infantry (PA), spanned a ridge and deep draw, skirted an uncut cane field and straddled the Abucay Hacienda Road. Frontage was cut considerably by Lt. Col. Lewis' decision, earlier, to begin the flank refusal. He had swung his left unit around to the West and South and contact was actually made with the Provisional Battalion on the Regimental Reserve Line. (See Map #3) Lt. Col. Lewis had begun his pivoting action when it became apparent that contact with the 51st Division (PA) was no longer possible with patrols. The Battalion was deployed with Company "A", less one platoon, on the right, and contacting the 43rd Infantry; Company "C" in the center and Company "B" on the left.

2nd 15th  
43rd

The Provisional Battalion put out a covering force for the Battalion work parties. The organization of the line was completed by 2000, 16 January 1942.

A patrol of approximately one platoon of Company "A", 41st Engineer Battalion, was sent out under Lt. Schrock. The patrol was ordered to proceed through the Abucay Hacienda to Mt. Natib and return along the general line of the former MLR of the 51st Division (PA). The patrol had proceeded about 1500 yards when they were taken under fire on their flank by automatic weapons located in the uncut cane field. Efforts to dislodge these Japanese installations were repulsed. The patrol attempted to proceed by using a draw to the South of the Abucay Hacienda. They encountered heavy resistance and were forced to return to the Battalion position. They suffered a few casualties, but the few were costly in view of the loss of additional men from the total strength.

Refer to  
page 10

At 1900, 16 January, the Battalion was informed that elements of the 31st Infantry (US) would make an attack at daylight, 17 January, moving through the Battalion to re-establish the MLR. The Battalion was ordered to hold in its position until further orders.

During the night, prior to 2400, 16 January, a gap was temporarily opened between the Provisional Battalion and the 43rd Infantry (PA). The Japanese succeeded in passing a small unit, about one platoon, through the opening before it was closed. This group followed a heavily wooded draw and reached a position about 200 yards from the 43rd Infantry CP. Lt. Col. Lewis requested aid to destroy this force since he had no CP defense. The platoon of Company "A", which had been used for patrol, was sent to help destroy the Japanese unit. At about 0230, 17 January, the platoon reported back after having destroyed the Japanese infiltrating unit.

At 0500, 17 January, the Battalion was ordered to pull back about 500 yards to allow the 31st Infantry (US) to use their mortars and supporting artillery on the cane field, to the front, and the deep draw on the Battalion's right front.

After a preparatory artillery barrage and <sup>an</sup> ineffective mortar barrage, the 2nd Battalion, 31st Infantry (US), passed through the Battalion's position and advanced to and slightly beyond the position the Provisional Battalion had just vacated. (See Map #3) They were stopped by small arms and automatic weapons fire from the cane field and the crests of the ravine. Sporadic enemy mortar fire was ineffective.

The left flank unit of the 43rd Infantry (PA), (2nd Bn.), failed to make any progress in their movement toward the MLR.

Lt. Col. Lewis requested aid from the Provisional Battalion to give weight to his forward movement. Company "B" of the Battalion was sent to the 2nd Battalion, 43rd Infantry (PA). This unit was placed in the line and took part in the effort to regain the MLR.

Companies "A" and "C" were ordered into Division reserve, with instructions to stay in the <sup>fixed battle</sup> position held at the time the 2nd Battalion, 31st Infantry (US), launched their attack, approximately 400 yards East of Trail #12. (See Map #3)

At 1100, 17 January 1942, the <sup>2nd Battalion, 31st Infantry</sup> 2nd Battalion, 31st Infantry (US), had stopped with the two assault companies abreast of the cane field on the East and through the ravine on the North and East. The ravine made contact and direction difficult. Contact between the 31st Infantry (US) and the 43rd Infantry (PA) was lost. Further movement opened the gap approximately 1000 yards. (14) The ravine afforded an excellent avenue of approach into the position. Therefore, the closing of the corridor became a first priority.

The Provisional Battalion, less Company "B", was ordered to move astride the gap, with the mission of preventing enemy infiltration, and re-establishing contact with the 43rd Infantry (PA) and the flank of the 31st Infantry (US). (See Map #3) The Battalion moved into position astride the gap, encountering very little resistance in the forward movement. For the first time since being put into the line, the Battalion was subjected to the harassing fire of snipers, knee-mortars, the deceit of "fire-crackers", and position-revealing tracers and rockets. Another experience new to the Battalion was the eerie musical pipes, somewhat similar to a

(14) A-3, p. 32

high pitched ocarina, which the Japanese apparently used for signal purposes. The reaction to these annoyances was highly commendable.

At 2000, 17 January, at the position indicated by the Division Commander, the Battalion took up position and put out all-around security. With the untrained, untried troops, it was felt that night movement or engagement would not be made unless further circumstances favored such movement or engagement.

During the night of 17-18 January 1942, Lt. Col. Lewis notified the Division Commander that certain units of his Regiment were beginning to weaken under repeated local attacks. He had suffered several casualties among his American officers and non-commissioned officers. He was informed (15): that units of the 45th Infantry (PS) would attack on his left to close the gap; that upon the launching of the attack by the 2nd Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS), the Provisional Battalion would be relieved from Division reserve and attached to his Regiment; that a Battalion of the 21st Infantry, 21st Division (PA), would replace the Provisional Battalion as Division reserve.

The Provisional Battalion Commander was also informed of the change and ordered to move his Battalion to whatever position Lt. Col. Lewis should order it, movement to be completed before 0800, 18 January 1942.

Lt. Harriss and Lt. Schrock were informed of the change and instructed to get the Battalion ready to move.

Upon reporting to Lt. Col. Lewis, the Provisional Battalion Commander was ordered to move his Battalion to the  
(15) Personal knowledge

left flank of the 2nd Battalion, 43rd Infantry and tie in with the 2nd Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS). (See Map ~~\*)~~ #4? Company "B", 41st Engineer Battalion (PA), was to be returned to the control of the Provisional Battalion.

The Battalion was ready to move at 0600, 18 January. Lt. Harriss and Lt. Schrock were briefed on the move and received the orders of the Battalion Commander. The Battalion was to tie in solidly with the 2nd Battalion, 43rd Infantry (PA), and extend approximately 1000 yards to the left rear (South-West), in the order: Company "B" on the right, Company "C" (less one platoon) in the center and Company "A" on the left. Contact was to be made with the 2nd Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS). One platoon, Company "C" was held in Battalion reserve. This platoon, though an ineffective, hopeful gesture, was to be the Battalion counter-attack group. Actually, it was never used as such. Instead, it was used for contact patrols on the flank.

The attack by the 2nd Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS), was delayed and did not get off until 1600, 18 January. During the day other units of the 31st Infantry (US) and the 45th Infantry (PS) had varying degrees of success and reversal. With the uncut cane field as a key objective, still in the hands of the Japanese, the 31st Infantry (US) had a difficult and obstinate enemy to dislodge. Theirs was the most difficult mission. For, the Japanese reenforced their installations in the cane field, almost at will, using the concealment of the ravines and the cane field itself. Artillery and mortar fire failed to dislodge them.

Despite the delay of the 2nd Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS), the Provisional Battalion was ordered to move as soon



as the 45th Infantry (PS) took their position slightly to the Battalion's rear. The 2nd Battalion, 43rd Infantry (PA) was beginning to give ground. Therefore, the Battalion moved and was in position by 1400, 18 January. (See Map #4) The role of the Provisional Battalion was narrowed to that of holding its position against Japanese attacks, maintaining flank contact and movement forward coordinated with, and in the wake of, attacks by the Philippine Division.

During the next twenty four hours, activity waned except for a local attack by the 2nd Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS), which succeeded in reaching the MLR, but it created another gap between that unit and the Provisional Battalion. Contact patrols were sent out, by both units, to cover the gap.

During the early morning of 20 January, the Japanese succeeded in infiltrating approximately one company through and in the rear of the 2nd Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS), lines. Elements of the 31st Infantry (US), the 45th Infantry (PS) and the Provisional Battalion reserve encircled the infiltrated company. After a brief fight, the Japanese withdrew, leaving behind a large number of dead. (16)

The pressure on the 43rd Infantry (PA) and the 2nd Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS), was relaxed on the night of 20-21 January. However, though the Japanese made no attacks, they countered vigorously several attempts of the USAFFE troops to move forward.

The reason for the relaxed pressure on the 43rd Infantry (PA)--45th Infantry (PS) area was soon apparent from the increased pressure on the left flank of the 31st Infantry (US). (17)

(16) Personal knowledge. (17) A-3, p. 34.

The Japanese were crossing the rugged crest of Mt. Natib in an attempt to turn the left flank of the 31st Infantry (US).

During the remainder of 21 January, pressure was increased against the 31st Infantry (US). That unit had to withdraw and refuse its flank. The turning movement threatened the entire II Corps. All units in the Abucay Hacienda area were ordered to withdraw to a general line extending South and West, astride the Abucay Hacienda Road and to the East of the Hacienda. (See Map #4)

On the morning of 22 January 1942, it was evident that the MLR in the 51st Division (PA) area could not be restored. USAFFE Headquarters decided that a withdrawal from the Abucay--Mt. Natib position was essential. Any unnecessary delay would endanger the entire Bataan Defense Forces. (18)

Withdrawal was to be made along the entire front to the Reserve Battle Position, a line generally along the trans-peninsular Pilar-Bagac Road. This line did away with the rugged mountain barrier separating the I and II Corps and allowed the two Corps to actually gain physical contact. Some organization of the line had been made on the right flank, but it was far from complete.

The plan for withdrawal for the II Corps was essentially as follows (19): (1) withdrawal to start after dark on the night of 23-24 January, and to be completed by daylight 26 January; (2) service installations and heavy artillery to start on night of 23-24 January, to be completed by daylight 25 January; (3) withdrawal of front line units to begin on the night of 24-25 January; (4) a covering force of designated units to start withdrawal to a designated covering line of the night of 25-26 January, to be completed by day-

(18) A-4, p. 52. (19) A-3, p. 38

light 26 January; (5) a covering shell, consisting of one rifle company and one machine gun platoon per front line rifle battalion, to start withdrawal at 0300, 26 January.

The plan of withdrawal was disseminated to all commanders and preparations for the withdrawal began.

The Provisional Battalion, with one platoon, Company "D", 43rd Infantry (PA) attached, was designated as covering shell for the 43rd Infantry (PA). Withdrawal of the Battalion was to be made in conjunction with the shell of the 45th Infantry (PS). Upon reaching the junction of the Abucay Hacienda Road and the "Back Trail", the Provisional Battalion was to be relieved from its role of covering shell, proceed to the 41st Division (PA) area on the Reserve Battle Position and await further orders.

Withdrawal began as ordered on the night of 23-24 January. However, increased pressure on the 31st Infantry (US) on the night of 22-23 January very nearly forced a complete withdrawal ahead of schedule. Meeting with heavy resistance from the units of the Philippine Division, the Japanese again tried to breach the lines in the area of the 43rd Infantry (PA). The brunt of the attack fell in the area held by the Provisional Battalion. The attack was broken up and stopped just short of the Battalion's position by heavy, if inaccurate, rifle fire. *Handwritten note: The attack was broken up and stopped just short of the Battalion's position by heavy, if inaccurate, rifle fire.*

About 0500, 23 January, the moon had set and, in the darkness prior to dawn, a second attack was made against the position. Though the attack was made by an estimated smaller force than the first attack, the center of the line was forced back slightly. The reserve platoon was brought in and strengthened the line. No attempt was made to counter attack.

The line had not been breached and was steadying itself. At about 1030, 23 January, the Japanese pulled back and the Battalion resumed its former position.

Increased mortar and automatic weapons fire fell in the Battalion area throughout the rest of the day. The entire flank anticipated renewal of the heavy attacks of the previous night. However, the Japanese held themselves to small local attempts to infiltrate the lines. They were partially successful as was demonstrated by the increase in sniper fire. It was necessary to conduct sniper hunts in rear of the lines. <sup>increased</sup> Coincident with the <sup>increase in</sup> snipers was the increased number of flares and tracers fired from behind the positions.

On the afternoon of 24 January, a platoon of Company "D", 43rd Infantry (PA), was attached to the Battalion. For the first time since entering the lines, the Battalion had automatic weapons support. However, the Japanese made no further efforts in the Battalion's area.

Throughout the remainder of 24 January and during 25 January, the Japanese made no efforts in the Battalion area. As the hour of the withdrawal of the covering shell approached, contact was maintained for security reasons only. When the withdrawal started, contact was broken and never re-joined by the Battalion.

At 0300, 26 January 1942, the Provisional Battalion, covering shell for the 43rd Infantry (PA), began its withdrawal to the Reserve Battle Position. Coordination with the 45th Infantry (PS), on the left, and the 42nd Infantry (PA), on the right, was affected. However, as the 31st Infantry (US) covering shell started its withdrawal, they were vigorously attacked by the Japanese. The Provisional Bat-

talion shortened its lines and located a Company in rear of the 31st Infantry (US). The first wave of the Japanese attack was stopped short of the 31st Infantry (US) position. (20) Before subsequent waves struck, the complete covering shell detached itself and continued its withdrawal as ordered.

Small elements of the Japanese ventured down the road toward the covering shell, but contact was never made. However, mortar fire was placed irregularly along the road.

As the Provisional Battalion reached the Junction of the Abucay Hacienda Road and the "Back Trail", it boarded transportation and proceeded to the 41st Division (PA) area at Mt. Samat.

#### ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

The essential weakness of the Defense of the Philippines can be attributed to the status of poor preparation in the Philippine Department. The causes for this weakness are many and quite well recognized. There is no need to dwell on that question here.

The use of the sketchy Provisional Battalion was basically unsound from a military standpoint. The order to "hold at all cost" was more idealistic than realistic. The personnel of the Provisional Battalion had very little training in their specialized functions as Division troops and no training for front line combat duties. These troops were never truly tried in the role of infantrymen. However, it is felt that they would have conducted themselves well under even more strenuous combat conditions.

However, the Provisional Battalion's employment at a critical time and area was dictated by necessity. Japanese  
(20) Personal knowledge

failure to exploit the initial breach of the MLR may have been deterred by the appearance of the Battalion at the left flank. This assumption is problematical, however.

Communications were inadequate and, in most instances, wholly absent. This prevented any coordinated effort on the part of troops engaged in the effort to re-establish the breached MLR. Communications were maintained nearly wholly by runner. This proved hazardous and inadequate because of Japanese sniper activities.

The crux of the Abucay Hacienda engagement was the cane field left uncleared in the 51st Division (PA) area. The unit which occupied the area had intended it for their own use, without considering the possibilities of its falling into the hands of the Japanese. Had this cane field been destroyed while organization of the position was being accomplished, it is possible that the efforts of the Philippine Division may have met with success in restoring the over-run position.

The Provisional Battalion was employed throughout this action without automatic weapons or other supporting organic infantry weapons. Against a superior enemy, fire superiority could never have been gained or maintained. However, automatic weapons and mortars were not available, nor were personnel, trained to handle the weapons, available.

The very important principle of the defense, defense in depth, was characterized throughout the Defense of the Philippines by partially organized reserve lines without personnel or equipment to man them. The USAFFE lacked reserves available for counter attack.

Japanese control of the air was detrimental to morale

to a far greater extent than was then believed possible. Had the Japanese exploited their air supremacy in use against ground targets, the fall of Bataan would have been brought about much sooner and with less cost to the Japanese.

The untrained troops of the Provisional Battalion showed apparent willingness to carry out orders, even though the constant shifting must have caused some confusion in their minds. This is attributable in a part to the skilful handling of these troops by Lieutenant Harriss and Lieutenant Schrock and, in part, to the example set by the personnel of the 43rd Infantry (PA). The main factor in this case, however, is probably traceable to the many years of servitude under the Spanish. For the Filipino had been conditioned through many generations under Spanish domination to exact obedience to the white man. Nor had a benevolent U. S. policy greatly detracted from this obedience.

Self-propelled artillery (75 mm) was brought well forward to support the Philippine Division. Many times, troop and terrain masks forced these weapons to expose themselves to counter-battery and dive-bombing. Irreplaceable material and personnel were necessarily sacrificed for the slight gain of a few days.

The existence of the rugged, steep slopes of Mt. Natib was erroneously assumed to be a deterrent to Japanese thrusts on the flanks of both Corps. This error was not apparent until the close of the Abucay Hacienda engagement. A determined enemy can, and will, surmount such obstacles.

The use of American officers and non-commissioned officers with the Filipino troops tended to help the Filipinos hold firm, in most cases. In all Divisions of the Philippine

Army, the American personnel were in command, with the exception of the 41st Division (PA). This status in the 41st Division led to difficulties which could have caused the disintegration of the Division. However, skilfull handling and the soldierly qualities of Colonel Malcolm V. Fortier, Senior Advisor to the Division Commander, asserted complete control of these conditions and allowed Colonel Fortier to handle the Division in a highly commendable manner. He knew every foot of the Division sector and much of the area of the 51st Division (PA). Much of the credit for maintaining the first battle position must go to Colonel Fortier.

The 51st Division (PA) failed to notify the units on its flanks of its disintegration, endangering not only the units on the immediate flanks, but the entire Bataan Defense Forces. Japanese failure to exploit was the only factor that saved an earlier defeat of the USAFFE.

#### LESSONS

1. The first, and foremost, lesson to be gained from this engagement is one that reaches beyond battalions, divisions and even armies. It is a lesson in National Preparedness.
2. Coordination in every movement and every phase of an engagement must be maintained.
3. Defense without depth is futile. Reserves and reserve positions must be ready and available.
4. Counter attacks are the life of the defense. Counter attacks must be made quickly and with full coordination of all units engaged.
5. Whenever and wherever it is anticipated that native troops are to be used in a National Army, American officers,



and non-commissioned officers, if possible, should be placed in command. The status of advisor or instructor is acceptable in peace-time training, but it presents difficulties, out of proportion to its usefulness, in combat.

6. All troops, regardless of branch, should receive a minimum of infantry training.

7. Too much emphasis cannot be placed upon the value of friendly air cover, either tactically or as a morale factor

8. Artillery is the bulwark of the defense. Every consideration should be accorded the artillery as to position, observation, and protection.

9. Areas which afford cover and concealment on the defense may well serve the enemy better if it falls into his hands. Use such cover and concealment when it is available, but plan to destroy it and deny the enemy its protection should he reach it.

10. Well-trained snipers affect the morale of troops far out of proportion to the number of casualties they actually inflict.

11. When contact is made with an enemy, contact must be maintained. Otherwise, momentary advantages may be lost and result in delay in defeating an enemy.

12. Pursuit and exploitation of breaches in enemy lines must be immediate and vigorous.

13. Troops, fatigued and decimated from previous combat should not be placed in critical areas of a defensive line.

14. . Intermingling of units decentralizes control and creates confusion. Communication and coordination difficulties are increased.

15. In a retrograde movement, thorough planning and coordination are essential if time permits.

16. In a retrograde movement, equipment and material which cannot be evacuated must be systematically and totally destroyed.