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THE OPERATIONS OF THE II PHILIPPINE CORPS
ON BATAAN, 10 JANUARY -8 APRIL 1942
(PHILIPPINE ISLANDS CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Staff Officer)

Type of operation described: CORPS IN DEFENSE

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THE OPERATIONS OF THE II PHILIPPINE CORPS ON BATAAN,
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ORIENTATION

INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of the II Philippine Corps in the battle of BATAAN, 10 January -9 April 1942.

In order to orient the reader, it will be necessary to discuss briefly some of the major political and military events which preceded this action.

After completion of his tour as Chief-of-Staff of the United States Army, General Douglas MacArthur was sent to the PHILIPPINES to serve as Military Advisor for the new Philippine Commonwealth. Later after his retirement from the United States Army, he was retained by the infant government in this capacity and given the rank of "Field Marshal". His plans for the development of the Philippine Military Establishment called for a regular Philippine Army of about 930 officers and 10,000 enlisted men; however, due to insufficient funds this goal was never reached, and by 1941, its strength was probably less than 40 per cent of this. It was also planned that at the end of ten years of independence, that reserve components would boost the total strength to 250,000. (1) In 1941, most of the effective strength of the regular Philippine Army was included in the Philippine Constabulary, which was engaged in police duty.

In addition to the forces provided by the Philippine Government, the United States maintained the Philippine Division composed of : 45th Infantry Regiment (PS), 57th Infantry
(1) A-1, p. 47

Regiment (PS), 31st Infantry Regiment (US), 24th Field Artillery Regiment (PS) (two battalions of truck drawn 75mm guns), 88th Field Artillery Battalion (PS) (truck drawn 75mm guns), 86th Field Artillery Regiment (PS) (two battalions of 155 GPF guns) and the 14th Engineer Regiment (PS); located at FORT MCKINLEY, MANILA, and FORT STOTSENBURG. Also stationed at FORT STOTSENBURG was the 26th Cavalry Regiment (PS) and the 23rd Field Artillery Regiment (PS) (two battalions of pack 2.95 inch howitzers). The 59th, 60th and 92nd Coast Artillery Regiments were maintained on the various islands for the defense of MANILA and SUBIC BAYS. To save space, service troops and separate companies are not listed. The Air Force will be discussed later. (2)

During the spring and summer of 1941, the political situation in the FAR EAST became progressively worse. On 26 July 1941, the United States, alarmed by Japan's threatening attitude, ordered the embryonic Philippine Army into the service of the Army of the United States as legally provided for by the Independence Act of 1934. (3) At the same time, General MacArthur was recalled to active duty and placed in command of the United States Forces in the Far East.

American officers and non-commissioned officers, both American and Philippine Scout, were selected to train the Philippine Army, and by 1 September 1941 the mobilization was begun. The 31st Division (PA) was probably a typical division, and will be used to illustrate the status of these divisions at the outbreak of war. One infantry regiment (31st) was

(2) A-17

(3) A-1, p. 48

activated on 1 September, a second (32nd) on 1 November, and the third (33rd) about 25 November. Some divisions were unable to activate their third infantry regiment before the war started. The rifle companies were equipped with four heavy machine guns, two heavy water-cooled AA .50 caliber machine guns, and two Stokes Mortars. All regiments were without anti-tank organizations. Each company was equipped with one civilian-type 1½ ton truck. Usually there were only four telephones per regiment. There was no engineer equipment for the engineer battalion. Very few regiments of artillery were mobilized entirely; those that were mobilized were equipped with either 75mm guns or 2.95 inch howitzers. Very few organizations were able to fire practice rounds before the war started. (4)

During September and October, National Guard Units, the 200th Coast Artillery Antiaircraft Regiment, the 192nd and 194th Tank Battalions were sent to the PHILIPPINES by the War Department. In November, the 4th Marine Regiment was transferred from SHANGHAI, CHINA to CORREGIDOR. About fifty self-propelled 75mm howitzers arrived in November, which were used to equip a Provisional Self-propelled Artillery Group. (5)

SITUATION AT THE OUTBREAK OF WAR

By 8 December 1941, the Army Ground Forces in the PHILIPPINES under General MacArthur had been grouped into five major commands. (See Map A)

The NORTH LUZON FORCE under the command of Major General Jonathan Wainwright, with headquarters at FORT STOTSENBURG,

- (4) A-14
- (5) A-17

was composed of the following combat units: 11th Division (PA) then training in the LINGAYEN GULF area, 21st Division (PA) then training just north of TARLAC, 71st Division (PA) then training at CAMP O'DONNELL, and the 31st Division (PA) training at SAN MARCELINO near SUBIC BAY. (6)

The SOUTH LUZON FORCE under the command of Brigadier General George M. Parker, Jr., consisted of the 41st and 51st Divisions (PA). The 41st Division (PA) was training in the vicinity of TAGAYTAY; while the 51st Division (PA) was scattered among the towns of BANAYBANAY, SANTO TOMAS and ROSARIO. (7)

The UNITED STATES ARMED FORCES IN THE FAR EAST RESERVE was retained under the control of General MacArthur. It included the 91st Division (PA) (less one regiment) at CABANATUAN, the Provisional Tank Group located at FORT STOTSENBURG, the 200th C.A.AAA Regiment stationed near CLARK FIELD, and the Philippine Division with units at FORT MCKINLEY, MANILA AND FORT STOTSENBURG. (8)

THE HARBOR DEFENSE COMMAND, under the command of Brigadier General George Moore, was charged with the defense of MANILA and SUBIC BAYS. (9)

The VISAYAN-MINDANAO FORCE under the command of Brigadier General William F. Sharp was charged with the defense of the SOUTHERN PHILIPPINE ISLANDS. (10)

The FAR EAST AIR FORCE under the command of Major General Lewis H. Brereton, comprised about 300 aircraft and

- (6) A-3, p.14
- (7) A-5, p.3
- (8) A-17
- (9) A-17
- (10) A-17

8,000 aviation personnel. But only 125 of the planes were suitable for combat. This nucleus of first-line aircraft consisted of thirty-five flying fortresses and ninety P-35's and P-40's. Pilots and crews were all well-trained and lacked only actual combat experience. (11)

Our naval strength consisted of the small ASIATIC FLEET and a few small boats of the Philippine Offshore Patrol, under command of Admiral Thomas C. Hart. (12)

The original plan of defense for the PHILIPPINES was the WAR PLAN ORANGE No.3 (WPO-3). It was a revision of a plan which provided that in the event of a successful Japanese landing on LUZON, the Philippine Division and the Philippine Army would hold LUZON as long as possible. If their positions were to become endangered, all units were to withdraw into BATAAN for a prolonged defense. BATAAN and the island forts of MANILA BAY would thereby provide a beachhead for reinforcements which could be transported to the PHILIPPINES from the UNITED STATES by the Navy. However, because of the defensive nature of the plan, it was set aside by General MacArthur. This act resulted in much confusion in the opening phases of the war. (13)

Late developments in air power had not caused any change in the plans except that additional air fields were to be constructed on LUZON and MINDANAO. Two on LUZON, IBA and DEL CARMEN were completed by the outbreak of war. The main fighter base was to be NICHOLS FIELD, and the heavy bombers were to be based at CLARK FIELD. (14)

THE JAPANESE ISOLATION OF THE PHILIPPINES

By 0700 hours on 8 December 1941 most unit commanders, by

- (11) A-2, p.48
- (12) A-17
- (13) A-17
- (14) A-1, p.52

various means, were aware of the fact that a state of war existed.

By 0800 hours most of the available airplanes were searching the seas around LUZON, or furnishing fighter cover over CLARK and NICHOLS FIELDS. However, the Japanese bombers attacked TUGUEGARAO, TARLAC, and BAGUIO in NORTHERN LUZON between 0900 and 1000 hours. At approximately 1020 hours, a force of enemy aircraft was reported as headed for CLARK FIELD and MANILA. The fighter defense, without fighting, diverted them from their original targets, for they attacked VIGAN and LA UNION near the LINGAYEN GULF. At about 1100 hours it was decided that the bombers could undertake offensive action against FORMOSA. The planes were ordered back to CLARK FIELD for refueling, bomb loading and crew briefing. Somehow, without warning, between 1213 and 1247 hours, Japanese bombers flying in two waves, attacked CLARK FIELD from high altitudes. All during the CLARK FIELD attack, there were thirty-six P-40's and eighteen P-35's airborne in the MANILA area; but since all communications were destroyed in the initial wave these planes could not be directed into the fight, so the enemy was unopposed. The bombing was very accurate, and our Air Force was left with approximately seventeen B-17's, fifteen P-35's and fifty-five P-40's. (15)

The first landings on LUZON took place in the north on 10 December at APARRI, where a Japanese unit quickly brushed aside the one infantry platoon on beach defense, and at VIGAN where another Japanese unit landed unopposed. (See Map A)

The units pushed inland, apparently with the mission of securing or constructing suitable air fields that would permit the

transfer of Army aircraft to the PHILIPPINES. Japanese Army planes based in FORMOSA were unable to bomb the main installations on LUZON; therefore in order to support a large landing operation at LINGAYEN GULF, it was very important that these fields be secured. The Naval aircraft had been very effective, but apparently they were needed to support other invasions to the south. Due to poor communications, but especially because of poor roads in the mountainous regions north of BAGUIO, little was done to dislodge the Japanese. (16)

A landing was made at LEGASPI on 12 December. Our Air Force launched attacks on the landing and the air fields at APARRI and VIGAN; but due to the continued air attacks by the Japanese on CLARK FIELD and NICHOLS FIELD, our Air Force was reduced to fourteen effective B-17's. So between 17 and 20 December, the remaining B-17's were ordered to DEL MONTE, MINDANAO and later to AUSTRALIA, with plans to support the troops in LUZON from there. This would be slow, but not impossible so long as facilities were available at the DEL MONTE AIR FIELD on MINDANAO. (17) However, such support never materialized.

With our Air Force out of the way, and the Navy reduced at PEARL HARBOUR, the isolation of the PHILIPPINES as a battlefield was complete; thereby permitting the Japanese free access to any part of the shore that they desired.

THE MOVEMENT INTO BATAAN

Before dawn on 22 December, landings were made on three beaches between BAUANG and AGOO. Our forces had expected the landings to be made farther south near LINGAYEN, hence the

(16) A-1, p. 54-56
(17) A-2, p. 44-62

landings were almost unopposed.

General Wainwright ordered the 26th Cavalry (PS) to stop the south-bound spearhead and at the same time to contain another group of Japanese landing at DAMORTIS. Due to unopposed enemy air power and insufficient coordination with the attached tank units, the 26th Cavalry was forced to withdraw. The east flank was exposed, thereby forcing a withdrawal of all units to a line known as D1. (See Map B) The pressure continued and by the next day, the units were deployed generally on the D2 line on the banks of the AGNO RIVER. These phase lines and others to the rear had been selected by General Wainwright as the positions to occupy while fighting a delaying action. At this time, it was believed by the North Luzon Force that a counterattack could be launched, and plans were being made to do so. However, General MacArthur notified all headquarters that War Plan Orange No. 3 was to go into effect immediately. This meant that all units would engage in delaying actions until they reached BATAAN. (18)

The flanking movements of the Japanese continued on the east flank, so that the next day, all units were forced to deploy along the D3 phase line. By 28 December, the forces were on the D4 phase line which extended generally from TARLAC to CABANATUAN, when the Japanese hit the 91st Division (PA) with a very heavy night attack. Survivors of this division told the author (in prison) that the division moved out shortly after dark with the mission of stopping a Japanese regiment reported to be headed in their direction. About mid-night, the division met what appeared to be a reinforced Japanese Division. In the resulting night action, the 91st Division (PA)

was routed; in fact, about half of its personnel were lost in the action. This was the first action for the 91st Division (PA) and in the confusion of darkness whole battalions were lost and never regained. With the right flank so endangered by the rout of the 91st Division (PA), a general withdrawal to Phase Line D5 or Bambang River Line was ordered on the night of 30-31 December. (19)

The South Luzon Force, withdrawing northward toward SAN FERNANDO to reach the only road leading into BATAAN, had to cross the PAMPANGA RIVER at the Calumpit bridge. This bridge was a serious bottleneck, but the North Luzon Force was able to protect the area and the bridge through the night of 31 December -1 January, thereby permitting the South Luzon Force to move into BATAAN. (20)

Other delaying actions, minor in scope, continued until the morning of 6 January 1942, when the last units of both forces reached BATAAN.

On 24 December, General Parker was ordered to move the 41st Division (PA) at once to BATAAN and to turn over command of the South Luzon Force to Brigadier General Albert M. Jones. General Parker's new command was to be the BATAAN DEFENSE FORCE, with a mission of organizing the peninsula for defense. (21) Besides the 41st Division (PA), the Philippine Division (less 57th Infantry) which had been in BATAAN since 11 December, and the 31st Division (PA) which had been moved from SAN MARCELINO were added to his command.

Upon crossing the PAMPANGA RIVER, the South Luzon Force had ceased to exist as such, and its units became part of the

- (19) A-3, p. 42
- (20) A-6, chapter 13
- (21) A-13, A-14, and A-17

Bataan Defense Force. The Bataan Defense Force then deployed along the east coastal plains, began organization of the peninsula for defense; and at the same time, covered the withdrawal of the North Luzon Force into its sector on the west coast of BATAAN. General Wainwright's North Luzon Force was then renamed the I PHILIPPINE CORPS and General Parker's Bataan Defense Force was renamed the II PHILIPPINE CORPS. The main line of resistance extended from MORON to ABUCAY, with a north-south line through MOUNT NATIB as the boundary between the two corps. (22)

NARRATION

THE ABUCAY-MOUNT NATIB LINE

Because of the limited road net from central LUZON to BATAAN, it was very evident that the main Japanese effort would probably be on the MANILA BAY side of the peninsula thereby engaging the II Philippine Corps first. The terrain varied from a flat coastal plain on the east (right) flank to a very rough mountainous region around MOUNT NATIB on the extreme left flank. In fact, the western part of the line was so rough that it was believed that enemy operations in that region would be impossible, except for limited patrolling. Therefore, the left portion of the line was lightly defended, and owing to the rough terrain little contact was maintained with the east flank of the I Philippine Corps. Units of the II Philippine Corps began organizing positions along the MLR as shown on map "C". Due to a shortage of barbed wire, only certain parts of the front were wired in. Some improvised mines were laid; however, most of the effort was expended in digging positions. (23)

(22) A-13, A-14, and A-17

(23) A-12, A-13, A-14, A-16, and A-17

The Japanese, on 9 January 1942, made their first contact with the II Philippine Corps on the 57th Infantry (PS) OPLR near CALAGUIMAN. This outpost was too far in front of the MLR and it was decided that if the force was to be saved, it should be withdrawn to the MLR. On the night of 11-12 January, the enemy struck the main line of resistance of the 57th Infantry (PS). The attack started during daylight hours by an attempt to cross through a fish pond area on the right flank. Due to accurate artillery defensive fire, the attack was dispersed before it came within rifle range. The attacking force slid to the west and struck during the early morning hours of the next day. A field of cane had been left standing just in front of the 3rd Battalion; and it soon became apparent that the field would become an assembly area from which the attacks would be launched. Attempts to burn the field by white phosphorus shells and gasoline were without effect, so the Japanese massed sufficient forces to launch an attack from this area. Due to an error in communications, proper supporting artillery fire was delayed, and the 3rd Battalion was forced to withdraw during the night. A counterattack was organized, with Company "E", the reserve company of the 2nd Battalion, 57th Infantry (PS), supported by 1st Battalion of the 24th Field Artillery Regiment (PS) in direct support, a two-battery battalion reinforcing the fires of the direct support battalion. This force was within two hundred yards of restoring the MLR when its advance was pinned to the ground by enemy fire.) (24)

The nose of the salient was blocked, and the flanks on either side of the opening were not turned; fortunately, the enemy did not take advantage of this situation. During the

late afternoon of 13 January, the 1st and 2nd Battalions of the 21st Infantry Regiment (PA) were attached to the 57th Infantry Regiment (PS), for the purpose of restoring their 3rd Battalion's portion of the main line which was completely open due to the confusion which had resulted from the fighting of the previous night. (25)

A frontal attack against the nose of the salient was launched by the two battalions. One battalion was successful, while the other one met with limited success; leaving about four hundred yards of the front still open. The 22nd Infantry Regiment (PA) was released to the 57th Infantry Regiment (PS) for employment in an attack against the nose of this salient. Progress was slow, but by 19 January, the line was completely restored. (26)

The enemy continued his sliding tactics, while engaged in fighting the 57th Infantry Regiment (PS), by launching piecemeal attacks that successively progressed to the west. This was done apparently with the hope of finding a lightly defended sector, or in the hope of locating and enveloping the left flank.

Enemy pressure against the 41st Infantry Regiment (PA) was very strong, and after numerous attacks and counterattacks, the regiment was forced to reserve positions. However with the aid of the 3rd Battalion of the 32nd Infantry Regiment (PA) and the 2nd Battalion of the 43rd Infantry Regiment (PA) a counterattack was launched. This counterattack was supported by fire from the 42nd Infantry Regiment (PA), and with excellent artillery fire. The counterattack was successful, and by 18 January, the MLR was restored. The 43rd Infantry

(25) A-13
(26) A-11, p. 18

Regiment (PA) received very strong attacks also, but with the aid of the 23rd Infantry Regiment (PA) they were able to hold their sector of the MLR. The fighting had been so severe that the 41st Infantry Regiment (PA) suffered 696 casualties in the engagement. (27)

The 51st Division (PA) was employed on the left flank of the II Philippine Corps in very rough terrain, which prevented the establishment of contact with the I Philippine Corps on the west side of MOUNT NATIB. Thus it might be said that the 51st Division (PA) had the hardest sector to defend and that their left flank was exposed.

On 12 January, the enemy attacked the 51st Infantry (PA) regimental sector. During the artillery preparation which preceded the attack, the Regimental Commander (Lt. Col. Loren P. Stewart), the Battalion Commander of the 3rd Battalion which was in reserve (Capt. Wilbur A. Kruse), and the Battalion Commander of the 1st Battalion, a battalion occupying a section of the MLR (Capt. William R. Osborn) were in conference when the group was brought under artillery fire. This resulted in the regimental commander and the battalion commander of the Reserve Battalion being killed. The Battalion Commander of the 1st Battalion, which was occupying a position on the MLR, had to move forward through the Japanese lines in order to avoid being killed. This created confusion among the units who had lost their commanders. This may not seem unusual; but the reader must be reminded that the American officers were distributed one to each battalion and two to regimental headquarters, so that the loss of any of the five was a serious matter. Lt. Villaneuva, the second-in-command of the 1st

Battalion, for some unknown reason, ordered that battalion to withdraw.) The Regimental Headquarters, and the adjacent units were not notified of this action; which resulted in a deep penetration by the enemy. By 15 January, all of the 51st Division (PA) reserves had been committed and the division was still losing ground. All elements of the division that could be found were reorganized and a counterattack was launched on 16 January. This counterattack failed, and by mid-afternoon, the 51st Infantry Regiment (PS) was doubly enveloped; with the rout of these troops, their front began to disintegrate. The 53rd Infantry Regiment (PA) fell back a short distance, but was left in position to protect the right of the I Philippine Corps. (28)

The Philippine Division (less 57th Combat Team) was released to the Commanding General of the II Philippine Corps for use in a counter-attack to restore the main battle position formerly occupied by the 51st Infantry Regiment (PA). The 31st Infantry Regiment (US) attacked on 17 January with the 1st Battalion on the left, the 2nd Battalion on the right, and with the 3rd Battalion in reserve. This first attack was able to regain only a small portion of the ground which had been lost, so the 45th Infantry Regiment (PS) entered the attack with their 1st and 2nd Battalions on the right flank of the 31st Infantry Regiment (US) and the 3rd Battalion on the left flank of the 31st Infantry. Attacks were repeated until 20 January, which resulted in the right portion of the MLR being reached. The left flank was still flapping in the breeze. Due to the enemy air superiority, it was impossible for friendly artillery to fire in the daytime, so the enemy attacks became more

difficult to repulse; and by 24 January, they were able to out-flank the 3rd Battalion of the 45th Infantry (PS), thus endangering the left flank of the II Philippine Corps. (29)

WITHDRAWAL TO RESERVE POSITIONS

"On 22 January, Major General Sutherland, Chief of Staff, USAFFE, visited the II Philippine Corps Headquarters. After a discussion of the situation, it was decided that a withdrawal from the ABUCAY-MOUNT NATIB position was essential. The reasons for the withdrawal at this time were:

(1) Disintegration of the 51st Division (PA), which had left a gap in the Main Battle Position for six days.

(2) Failure of the counterattack by the Philippine Division to reestablish the MLR.

(3) Unknown strength of the enemy that had penetrated into the ABO-ABO RIVER corridor through this gap.

(4) Loss of contact between I and II Corps.

(5) All reserves of I and II Corps had been committed except elements of the 31st Division (PA)

(6) Possible envelopment of ABUCAY-MOUNT NATIB position thus making a withdrawal impossible.

(7) The enemy was in the rear of the Main Battle Position in the I Corps Sector." (30)

Plans to withdraw to the reserve positions were made, with the movement to begin on 1900 hours of the night 24-25 January. The covering force was to withdraw on the following morning. The covering force consisted of one rifle company and one platoon of machine guns from each front line battalion, and one battery of 75 mm howitzers for each front-line regiment. Just

(29) A-15

(30) A-5, p. 37

as the Philippine Division (less 57th Combat Team) was preparing to withdraw, the Japanese launched a terrific night attack. After this attack was repulsed, the withdrawal continued as ordered. (31)

In prison, the author talked with many small-unit commanders who participated in this withdrawal, and without exception they stated that: coordination was poor, that all roads were clogged with troops and vehicles, and that had the Japanese artillery fired on the roads, particularly in the town of BALANGA, our losses would have been very severe -- in fact, mass slaughter.

The 194th Tank Battalion and SPM's were employed along Cadre Road in front of what was to be the new outpost line to aid the covering shell in their withdrawal, and to give the units as much time as possible in preparing the new defensive positions. By the morning of 26 January, all units were behind the main line of resistance -- ORION to MOUNT SAMAT. (32)

THE ORION-MOUNT SAMAT LINE

The new defense line extending from ORION to MOUNT SAMAT was much shorter than the ABUCAY-MOUNT NATIB line. This was very necessary, because all units had lost heavily. Probably the greatest losses were in the 51st Division (PA). It was reorganized into a) combat team, with each regiment having only enough men left to reorganize into a battalion. (33)

The Philippine Division was placed in USAFFE reserve.

Due to the lack of adequate roads and a shortage of communication equipment and personnel; the ORION-MOUNT SAMAT Line was divided into sub-sectors with a commander for each. | X

(31) A-9, p. 21

(32) A-6, p. 156-160

(33) A-10, p. 6

Disposition of units in these sub-sectors is shown on map D. Sub-sector "B" was occupied by a Provisional Air Corps Regiment. This regiment was formed from the various squadrons, which were now without planes. It had an approximate strength of 1400. During January, the unit was equipped and trained to a limited degree. Fortunately, some of the Air Force officers and non-commissioned officers had formerly served in the Infantry. (34)

Probably due to the very heavy casualties that they had suffered in the actions along the MOUNT NATIB-ABUCAY line, the Japanese were slow to follow up the advantage gained by the Corps withdrawal. There were cautious probes at the line, and in some sectors, contact was lost for two or three days.

On the night of 26-27 January, the enemy attacked in sub-sector "C". Brisk fighting at close quarters resulted in the Japanese establishing a pocket about seventy-five yards immediately in front of the MLR. The attack was continued the next night, but without success. The 41st Infantry Regiment (PA) (less one battalion) was then thrown into the MLR relieving the pressure on the 2nd Battalion of the 32nd Infantry (PA). On the night of 28-29 January, the enemy launched a very strong attack following an artillery preparation of about one hour. Major (then Captain) Clinton Kuntz, a member of the 41st Infantry Regiment (PA), later told the author that the enemy attacked in such numbers that the dead were stacked along the final protective lines of the machine guns, and that some of the enemy were able to dig in within six feet of the MLR. The attack was finally repulsed without a penetration of the MLR.

Captured documents indicated that three Japanese Regiments had been used in the attacks on this sector. (35)

The success of our forces in this and other actions was aided by the outstanding performance of the artillery units.

After the action mentioned above, the enemy withdrew to a position between the OPLR and the MLR along the TALISAY RIVER, which was out of our artillery range. After additional artillery was moved forward, several counterattacks were launched with the enemy being forced to withdraw north of the OPLR on the night of 22-23 February. Elsewhere on the II Corps front, during the month of February, there was only patrol action. The enemy during this period, was concentrating his actions on the I Corps. (36)

During early March, the enemy continued to limit his actions in the II Corps to harassing artillery fire and patrolling. This permitted units on the MLR to reorganize and strengthen their position.

About the middle of March, enemy activity started increasing. Patrolling and aerial activities were intensified by the enemy to the extent that our patrols were unable to penetrate a screen that they had established. However, large numbers of troops, artillery and tanks were observed moving west of ABUCAY and massing in front of sub-sector "D". The 21st Infantry Regiment (PA) ambushed a Japanese patrol of about 12 men led by a Master Sergeant, and from it secured a very valuable document. The document indicated that the patrol was to examine the ABO-ABO RIVER and obtain the following information: (a) possible tank approaches to our MLR;

(35) A-5, p. 43

(36) A-14

(b) possible fords along the river; (c) depth of the water in the river; (d) slope of the banks on both sides of the river; and (e) whether the defending forces intended to use gas against the Japanese. (37) This document also indicated that an attack was being planned for sometime after 26 March, in the MOUNT SAMAT region. This document was sent through channels to Corps Headquarters and so far as the author can determine, no effort was made to strengthen the defenses in that area. At the time, it was common knowledge that our tank officers considered the terrain too rugged to permit an armored attack in that region.

Due to the poor showing that the Japanese Army was making, additional ^{TOP} units were dispatched to the PHILIPPINES. One source lists these reinforcements as: one division from CHINA, a reinforced regiment from INDO-CHINA, several artillery battalions from HONG KONG and JAPAN, and a group of forty medium bombers from BURMA. (38)

Later in prison, the author was able to obtain information, from Japanese guards, that these reinforcements had been sent as listed above; and also that additional units were sent from the MALAYAN PENINSULA.

At this point, time must be taken to review the physical and mental condition of the personnel in the II Philippine Corps.

Due to inadequate staff planning, very little food was taken into BATAAN, so that on 6 January all troops were placed on $\frac{1}{2}$ rations. The ration continued to be cut so that by the middle of March, all troops were lucky if they

(37) A-16
(38) A-1, p.74

received $\frac{1}{4}$ rations. Heavy fighting on $\frac{1}{2}$ or $\frac{1}{4}$ rations resulted in a very definite and alarming decrease in combat efficiency. The ration at this time consisted of 4 ounces of rice and 1.6 ounces of salmon, which becomes very nauseating as a steady diet and is definitely not enough to sustain life.

Prophylactic quinine was no longer available after 1 February. Since BATAAN is a malarial infested region, this resulted in about 500 men being hospitalized daily for malaria. By the end of March, this rate was almost 1000 per day.

The withdrawal into BATAAN had been so swift that approximately 20,000 civilians were trapped behind our lines. These were, of course, of little value to us; and yet they had to be taken care of. This resulted in further depletion of our food and medical supplies.

The total absence of friendly air craft and incessant bombings by the enemy together with poor physical health resulted in nervous fatigue for all troops. This lowered the combat efficiency even further.

Due to a lack of parts, maintenance of the ordnance and transportation equipment was extremely difficult. Worn out trucks and busses together with a gasoline shortage meant that movement of any unit by motor transport would probably be impossible. Most battalions were equipped with only one $1\frac{1}{2}$ ton civilian truck, and had an allowance of three gallons of gasoline per week. (39)

THE JAPANESE BREAKTHROUGH

On the nights of 21-22 March, 27-28 March, and 30-31 March, three enemy raids were staged against our lines in

sub-sector "C". The first two raids were repulsed at the OPLR with heavy casualties. The OPLR broke under the force of the third, and a gap was created which extended into the MLR. Fortunately, the enemy did move through this gap and exploit his success. (40)

In sub-sector "D" on 28 March about a regiment of Japanese broke through the OPLR of the 42nd Infantry Regiment (PA). With some difficulty, the position was restored; but with the aid of fresh troops, reinforcing artillery, tanks and air support, the Japanese launched another attack which was successful in forcing the regiment back to their MLR. Fierce fighting continued, resulting in great losses on both sides, but by 2 April, the OPLR was restored. (41)

On 3 April, there was a concentrated artillery shelling and aerial bombardment of the 41st Division (PA) area. Japanese dive-bombers neutralized all supporting artillery of the 41st Division (PA). About 1500 hours, a heavy coordinated attack supported by tanks was launched against the division. The main effort was made against the west flank of the 42nd Infantry Regiment (PA). This heavy attack launched behind a smoke screen was successful and the 42nd and 43rd Infantry Regiments (PA) gave away in complete rout. The 41st Infantry Regiment (PA) (less one battalion), the division reserve, had been committed in sub-sector "C"; hence when the rout occurred, the division had no reserves that could be employed. (42)

The 33rd Infantry Regiment (PA) was ordered from Corps

- (40) A-5, p.48
- (41) A-13
- (42) A-13

reserve to help stop the attack; they were deployed along the CATMON RIVER. (43)

The 45th, 31st and 57th Combat Teams and the Tank Group were released on 4 April to the II Corps Commander for use. (44)

On 5 April, before these reserve units could be employed, a strong tank-infantry attack was launched against sub-sector "C". This attack came from the rear of the 41st Division (PA) area, off the forward slope of MOUNT SAMAT. The 21st Division (PA) was enveloped in a night attack, and the unit completely disintegrated. The enemy had effectively broken through our MLR. (45)

THE DISINTEGRATION

By the afternoon of 6 April, all available reserves on the peninsula had been rushed to the II Corps in an attempt to stop the Japanese force which had broken through in the MOUNT SAMAT area.

Due to communication and transportation difficulties, all units were employed piecemeal and with little coordination; which resulted in all units being cut to pieces after being enveloped. Attempts were made to withdraw and hold lines to the rear, but each attempt met with the same results. The Japanese breakthrough and the II Philippine Corps disintegration can best be visualized by examining map E. (46)

By midnight 8-9 April, the enemy had open passage to the south, so the Commanding General of the Bataan Forces surrendered to the Japanese.

- (43) A-5, p.53-54
- (44) A-15
- (45) A-16
- (46) A-5

It is interesting to note that at the time of the surrender, there was between three and five days rations remaining for the troops on BATAAN. So regardless of the breakthrough, the II Corps would have been unable to have fought much longer than it did. (47) X ↑

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In studying the action of the II Philippine Corps, much can now be said in criticism. Many of these criticisms of necessity, encompass higher headquarters as well, and must be included to complete the picture.

1. SUPPLY

Initially, the War Plan (WPO-3) was not in effect, and later when it was placed into effect, there was insufficient time to transport adequate supplies to BATAAN. This can be attributed only to poor staff planning and lack of foresight by certain individuals. The lack of adequate supplies, of all types, probably contributed more to the defeat of the II Philippine Corps than any other single factor. The Japanese Forces could have obtained victory, without offensive action on Bataan, by keeping the forces contained until their food supplies were depleted. No defending force can be effective without sufficient food stores. The tactics and operations of units was limited because of a shortage of transportation facilities.

2. TRAINING

Considering the lack of training in almost all of the Philippine Army units, their combat efficiency was much higher than expected. The presence of American officers and

non-commissioned officers in these units contributed much to their success in battle. Part of the ineffectiveness of the Philippine Army units must be attributed to the lack of equipment; particularly signal, ordnance, and transportation. The performance of the staffs of almost all units indicated insufficient training. This was undoubtedly due to the short period of mobilization and training prior to war.

3. CONDUCT OF THE DEFENSE

When the Japanese engaged the 57th Infantry Regiment (PS) at ABUCAY, they were finally repulsed and forced to withdraw. They had been stopped for the first time in the war. Even after shifting their attacks to the west flank of the Corps, against an untrained Philippine Army division, they were still unsuccessful in breaking through our front. The Japanese were not prepared to exploit either of the two small penetrations which existed for a short time. This allowed the defenders sufficient time to reorganize counterattacks with reserve units.

In both actions, battalion commanders failed to properly supervise preparation of fields of fire and the organization of their positions; for example, standing cane-fields were left in front of the positions which were later used by the Japanese to conceal troop concentrations. Part of this deficiency could be attributed to a lack of time and proper equipment.

On the ABUCAY-MOUNT NATIB and the ORION-MOUNT SAMAT Lines, there was too much dependence placed on the impenetrability of the terrain. On the ABUCAY-MOUNT NATIB Line, the weakest division of the Corps was employed on the west

flank with undoubtedly the worst terrain to defend.

Even though the Japanese forced the Corps to withdraw from the above mentioned line, they felt that they were not successful. This was evidenced by the fact that reinforcements, particularly artillery, were needed before another attack was launched.

The captured Japanese document supported by observed movements of additional troops, particularly artillery and tanks into an area opposite sub-sector "D" should have been sufficient warning of the enemy's intent. For some reason, however, apparently very little credence was placed in this intelligence information. There was insufficient strength to organize the battle positions in depth as advocated by present doctrine; but, the reserves were not moved in to meet this threat until after the thin MLR had been routed.

With fresh troops and preponderance of artillery and air power, the Japanese were finally successful in breaking the inadequate defenses of a disease-ridden, poorly-equipped, untrained, starved force.

4. OBJECTIVE

Even though the forces on BATAAN suffered defeat, their actions must definitely be termed successful when considering the entire Allied war effort. The Japanese Army had expected to capture the PHILIPPINES within one month after their initial landings. The American and Filipino forces on BATAAN fought for four months and the forces on CORREGIDOR for an additional month. Additional Japanese troops, diverted from other operations, were required to reduce the

defenses, all of which resulted in a time-consuming operation when both time and troops were needed by the Japanese for their planned advance to the south.

It has been argued by some that such a delay could have been obtained more effectively by the employment of the various units in the PHILIPPINES as guerrilla forces other than in the more orthodox defense. However, it must be remembered that the decision for the forces to defend BATAAN was made by higher headquarters, hence is beyond the scope of this paper.

5. AIR SUPPORT

The causes for the loss of our Air Force in the early days of the war is still under debate, but the absence of an American Air Force definitely influenced the action of both forces. The Japanese Army did not attempt any major operations until they had air superiority. Throughout the campaign their air power was a potent weapon. The lack of a friendly Air Force had the effect of restricting distant reconnaissance as well as limiting daytime movement of our forces.

LESSONS

1. Under threat of invasion, time becomes the most critical factor in training.
2. When faced with an invasion, tactical planning should not be dependent upon outside help.
3. Any outpost, such as the PHILIPPINES, must be reinforced and resupplied in time of war; or the outpost may be lost.
4. Indecision by a higher commander impairs success.
5. Properly trained staffs are essential.

6. Air power is important for either retrograde or defensive operations.
7. Inadequate road-nets hamper resupply and movements.
8. Adequate communications are indispensable.
9. Missions should be assigned to units commensurate with their strength and capabilities if possible.
10. Terrain alone will not defend a position. Troops must occupy the terrain to increase its effectiveness.
11. Reserves should be committed before the situation becomes hopeless.
12. Be prepared to exploit every success.
13. Combat efficiency is reduced after prolonged periods of inadequate food supply.
14. Combat intelligence is of utmost importance and its value must be recognized by commanders.

SPECIAL COMMENT

The operations described in this monograph will be accepted by many as just unfortunate incidents. However, detailed study of the entire campaign should be made to determine and record for future use, the reactions of commanders and units when faced with an invasion by superior forces during the period of mobilization. This study should also deal with the effect of the following factors on the fighting efficiency of our units: starvation, inadequate training, inadequate weapons, lack of Air and Naval support, disease, and isolation from reinforcement. The campaign is unique in that we have no similar actions in the annals of modern U.S. Warfare. It is the opinion of the author, that in a democratic country, the opening phases of future wars could very easily follow the same pattern.