

THE ANNIHILATION OF THE SIXTH JAPANESE TANK REGIMENT

1. General: (See Fig. 7, Orientation Map.)

Nightfall of 29 January found all elements of the 6th Division (less the 63d RCT) South of the AGNO RIVER. Intermediate objectives in our advance towards TALAVERA, LICAG, and MUNOZ had been secured with virtually no enemy resistance. Plans for 30 January, involved a reconnaissance in force of TALAVERA with not to exceed one rifle company of the 1st Infantry. The 20th Infantry, in their sector, would make a similar reconnaissance of BALOC and MUNOZ, and if not opposed by superior forces, seize and occupy these towns.

The 1st Infantry accomplished its mission by noon the next day, when Company "I" reinforced occupied TALAVERA and SAN PASCUAL. Company "B", 20th Infantry reinforced encountered a small force of entrenched enemy at BALOC. Company "K", 20th Infantry, with MG and mortar attachments, encountered no enemy while enroute to MUNOZ, but patrols attempting to enter the town from the West, were stopped by heavy sniper fire. A line of pillboxes and other emplacements could be observed paralleling the road at the West edge of the town, but no enemy activity could be seen from the ground. The town was reported destroyed by our air strikes, with the many bomb-shattered buildings affording excellent cover for snipers and ideal camouflage for tanks and pillboxes. A 51st Field Artillery Battalion air observer spotted tank tracks and enemy activity in the North section of town. Harassing fires were placed on MUNOZ during the night.

2. Estimates of the Enemy Situation, 30 January:

Activities to the South indicated that the enemy was still attempting a major displacement Northward to the CAGAYAN VALLEY. It was believed that he would react vigorously against any threat to his principal avenue of withdrawal to Northern LUZON, via CABANATUAN - BONGABON - SAN JOSE, probably employing main elements of the 2d Armored Division. It seemed logical that he would leave a strong delaying force at MUNOZ, with his main defense at SAN JOSE, gateway to the CAGAYAN VALLEY.

When I Corps made its plans to attack to the South and East on 1 February and the 6th Division was given the mission of seizing SAN JOSE, it was anticipated that tanks would be an integral part of whatever defense the enemy might offer. No definite information was available regarding the enemy strength at MUNOZ and SAN JOSE. Both towns were known to have been levelled by air strikes, but past experience had demonstrated the enemy's ability to withstand our air blows.

In the fight which developed at MUNOZ, the 20th Infantry reinforced dug out and destroyed the largest concentration of enemy armor encountered in any one place on LUZON.

3. Nature of the Terrain and Enemy Defenses:

MUNOZ was formerly a typical small Filipino barrio, with Nipa huts, a few larger frame dwellings, a large rice mill, the usual market square, and a church and school buildings. Contrary to its location as shown on tactical maps, MUNOZ is situated right on Highway 5, with the highway and railroad track skirting the South edge of town and intersecting each other as shown on the accompanying sketches. The town covers an area some 1200 yards in length and 500 yards in width, at its widest point. The terrain is perfectly flat, except for shallow drainage ditches lining the streets, and a fan shaped ravine, or draw branching out to the West beyond the school and market place. This draw is lined with scrubby undergrowth in spots, with patches on swampy cogon grass. (See Fig. 15, Sketch of MUNOZ).

On all sides the approaches to the town are open, offering excellent observation to a defending force, but affording no cover or concealment for attacking troops. There are numerous small trees of considerable tactical value to an enemy as skilled in camouflage as the Jap.

The enemy had transferred this sleepy little barrio into a veritable fortress, bristling with automatic weapons, and organized in depth. The backbone of his defenses were medium tanks, and armed with 47mm guns and LMG's. These tanks were deeply dug in, so that only the turrets were exposed, and were excellently camouflaged against air and ground observation.

Tanks were so placed as to be mutually supporting, both with 47mm and MG fire. Numerous 47mm anti-tank guns and 105mm howitzers were similarly emplaced, protected by 2 or 3 thicknesses of sand bags or hemmed in by walls of dirt several feet thick. In one instance, a 105mm gun was camouflaged by a heap of tin and debris carefully placed to resemble a destroyed hut. When our troops approached within 75 yards of this position, the sheets of tin were thrown back like a cellar door and the enemy fired point blank at our personnel.

Both tanks and field pieces were so well emplaced that only a direct hit from artillery, heavy mortars, or infantry anti-tank weapons could neutralize them. Smaller pillboxes covered the heavier weapons with automatic fire, while riflemen sniped from pit type foxholes.

4. The Enemy:

The enemy garrison at MUNOZ was eventually identified as the 6th Tank Regiment, less one company, strongly reinforced, under the command of Colonel KIMPEI IDA. This force of approximately 1900 enemy was very well equipped. Tanks, tank guns and artillery were of the latest design and in excellent condition. Ammunition and ordnance supplies were plentiful. The enemy's food and water supply was adequate and he had ample medical supplies.

Ordered by their commander to resist "to the last man", the enemy forces displayed the same stubborn defense as was encountered in the CABARUAN HILLS, withdrawing only after 2/3 of the garrison, including Colonel IDA, had been annihilated, and a further stand meant the certain destruction of valuable equipment.

5. Development of the Enemy Defenses on 31 January:

At 0730, following a brief artillery preparation, Company "K", 20th Infantry, attacked to the Northeast from a position astride the railroad, and moved forward about 200 yards to the rice mill and railroad crossing without opposition. No enemy installations had yet been spotted when, without warning, the assault platoons were pinned down by automatic weapons fire from a series of emplacements hidden under tin and other debris. Lacking sufficient cover for the employment of supporting weapons or flanking patrols, our troops could only dig in to hold ground gained, establishing a line in the Rice Mill area. The balance of the battalion (less Company "L") with a platoon of 4.2 mortars attached, arrived at 1630L.

The Commanding Officer, 20th Infantry, was directed that same day to assemble immediately his entire force in an advanced assembly area West of MUNOZ, and beginning at 0800L, 1 February, attack to clear enemy forces from the MUNOZ area in preparation for a coordinated attack on Division order against SAN JOSE. This order provided that the bulk of the 1st Infantry move to the vicinity of BUNOL and reconnoiter routes of advance with the view of seizing, on Division order, an assembly area along the RIZAL - SAN JOSE road in the vicinity of the TALAVERA RIVER crossing. In anticipation of coming operations, 10 P-51's bombed and strafed BONGABON, and 38 SBD's and 4 P-51's hit SAN JOSE.

6. The Annihilation of the 6th Tank Regiment Begins:

On 1 February, the 3d Battalion, 20th Infantry, attacked MUNOZ from the Southeast, following a 15 minute preparation by the 51st Field Artillery Battalion and two 4.2 mortar platoons of Company "A", 98th Chemical Battalion. The North-South road along the west edge of town was the first objective.

The attack was stopped by much heavier fires than those received the previous day; the enemy was now employing artillery fire and 47mm fire from dug-in tanks. Our artillery and mortar fires were adjusted on these positions as soon as they could be spotted, and 2 tanks and 1 field piece were knocked out. Heavy interlocking lanes of fire from enemy automatic weapons effectively protected his tank and gun positions from our infantry attacks.

The 1st Battalion, advancing on the 3d Battalion's right flank, also met heavy resistance. Beginning at 1100L, Company "B" swung wide to the right, to attack through the cemetery on the East flank, while Company "A" moved through the open field alongside the road. The battalion progressed to a line abreast of the 3d Battalion's right flank, using the skimpy cover afforded by small dikes and irrigation ditches of the rice paddies. Here, too, our troops were halted by machine gun and 47mm fire. Company "A" disposed of two dug-in medium tanks with rockets and anti-tank grenades. Patrols dispatched toward the town drew devastating fires from several enemy positions covering the entire battalion front, and further advance was impossible.

Thus the stage was set for the six day siege of MUNOZ. The 2d Battalion, 20th Infantry (-), remained in regimental reserve near BUENAVISTA, while Companies "E" and "F" patrolled in force to protect the left flank of the Division.

On 1 February, the 53d Field Artillery Battalion reverted to Division control and went into position near BUNOL. Corps Artillery, the 191st Field Artillery Group, composed of the 251st and 472d Field Artillery Battalions (105 How) and the 760th Field Artillery Battalion (155 How) arrived in the Division area and prepared to reinforce the Division Artillery from positions in the vicinity of BUENAVISTA.

7. 2-3 February:

A coordinated attack on MUNOZ at day break on the 2d was stopped all along the front, our troops again being pinned down by heavy cross fires from automatic weapons, artillery, and tank guns. Three Jap tanks which foolishly moved out of their covered positions were disposed of by bazookamen and rifle grenadiers, while attempting to charge the 3d Battalion. Mortars and artillery cooperated in stopping this attack and accounted for 2 - 47mm guns.

Although little ground was gained, valuable information was gleaned regarding the enemy's defenses and dispositions. This knowledge was put to good use by night tank stalking parties who destroyed several automatic weapons positions and 1 tank.

Next morning a heavy artillery and 4.2 mortar concentration directed at known enemy positions was followed by a coordinated

attack all along the front. Supported by the direct fires of tanks and Cannon Company SPW's, the 3d Battalion made costly gains and moved through the enemy's first line of defenses. Enemy equipment accounted for included 1 - 105mm howitzer, 4 armored cars, 2 sedans and 3 trucks. All enemy emplacements encountered were badly burned.

The 2d Battalion (less Company "G" in Division Reserve) moved around the 3d Battalion's left rear and attacked MUNOZ from a Line of Departure 1200 yards West of the schoolhouse. By 1730I, they were some 100 yards from the West edge of town, and were receiving fire from numerous enemy pillboxes. Visual contact was established with the 3d Battalion.

In the meantime, under cover of darkness on the night of 2-3 February, the 1st Infantry, less 1 Battalion, moved to the vicinity of the TALAVERA RIVER crossing Southeast of SAN JOSE, and reconnoitered toward SAN JOSE. The 2d Battalion established a strong position astride the PINAGPANAN - RIZAL highway near BICOS, secured this vital route, and protected the right flank of the Division. The 1st Battalion moved to TUMANA, preparing for the coming attack on SAN JOSE. In capturing the TALAVERA RIVER bridge, elements of the 3d Battalion engaged in a short but decisive battle with enemy forces, killing 57 Japs, and destroying 2 medium tanks, 1 light tank, 1 loaded cargo truck, 1 personnel carrier, a small arms ammunition dump and a fuel dump. During the morning of 3 February, the 3d Battalion moved North to the river crossing Northeast of TULAT. The 2d Battalion moved to the vicinity of OLONGOLONG and relieved 3d Battalion elements at the TALAVERA bridge. (See Fig. 8.)

8. The Siege of MUNOZ, 4-6 February: (See Fig. 9.)

The 20th Infantry's advances on 2-3 February left no doubt as to the strength of the enemy's defenses. The first main defense line, running East and West across the South end of town, consisted of 6 medium tanks, spaced 40 to 80 yards apart, dug-in with only their turrets exposed, and with interlocking fields of fire. In the same line were 2 - 105mm howitzers and 2 - 47mm anti-tank guns. Both tanks and field pieces were covered by an estimated dozen LMG nests and numerous riflemen.

The 63d Infantry (less 1st Battalion in I Corps Reserve), which had reverted to Division control on 1 February, in the vicinity of GUIMBA, moved on 2-3 February to bypass MUNOZ in the South and take up positions near the AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL. Leaving Company "L" reinforced to mop up the AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL area, the 63d Infantry (-) was ordered to attack to the North on 4 February, astride the MUNOZ - SAN JOSE Highway, and, together with the 1st Infantry, seize SAN JOSE.

All three battalions of the 20th Infantry resumed their attack on the 4th. By now five artillery battalions, the 51st, 80th, and three battalions of the 191st Field Artillery Group, were supporting

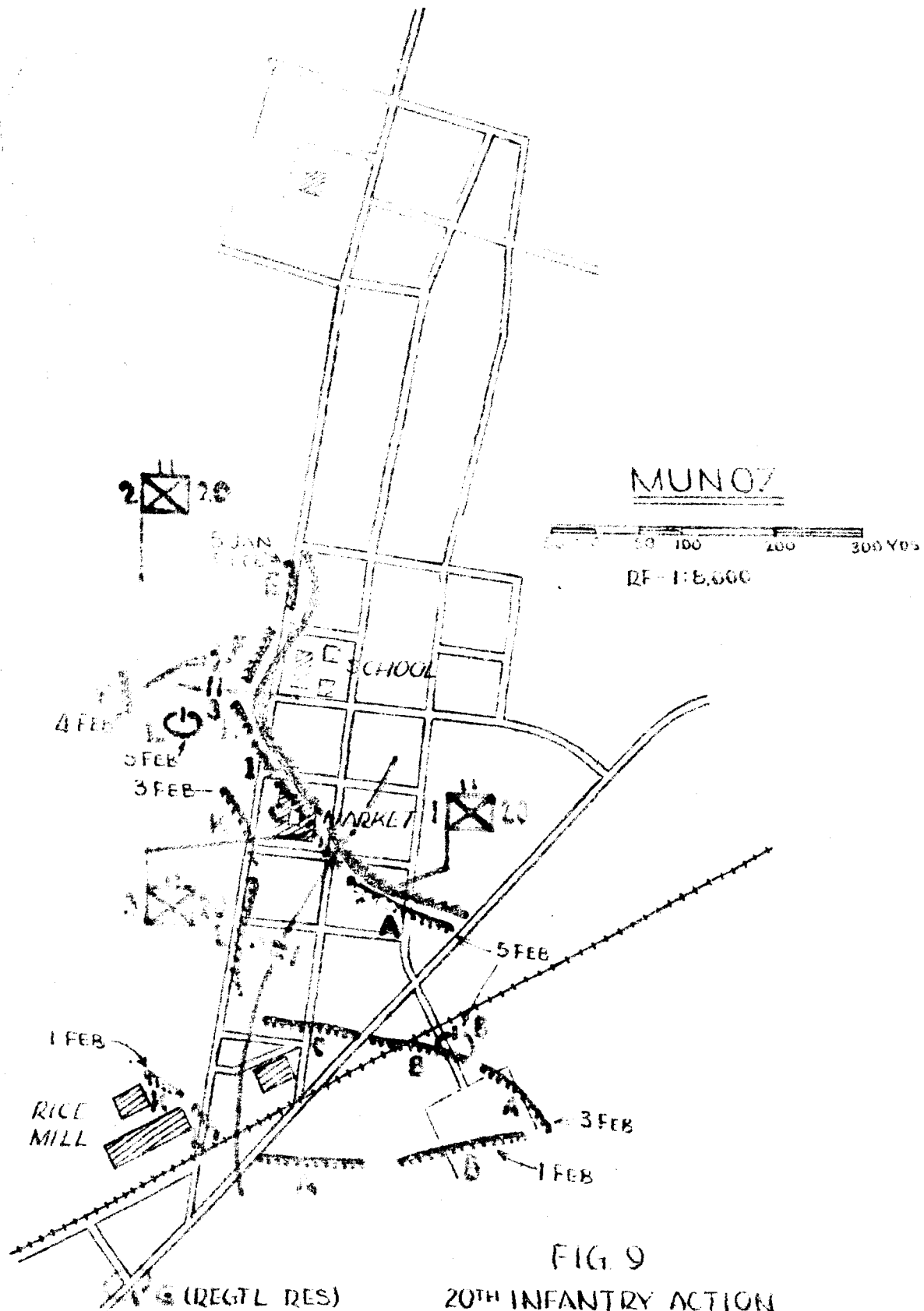


FIG 9
20TH INFANTRY ACTION
MUNOZ, 1-5 FEB

the attack. Combined infantry-artillery-mortar operations in the 1st Battalion sector yielded 4 more medium tanks, and an additional 100 enemy dead were counted. The 2d Battalion attempted to breach the enemy line along the West edge of town, employing flame throwers and demolitions, but had little success. During the night, Company "F" killed 15 Japs trying to infiltrate into their positions.

The 3d Battalion's (20th Infantry) early morning attack was stopped by heavy machine gun, tank, and artillery fire from the front and right flank. The battalion was confronted by a slight rise in the ground which descended abruptly into a sizeable draw, covered by the ever-present machine guns and dug-in tanks. Several enemy positions were located and our front lines were pulled back while a heavy artillery and 4.2 mortar concentration was laid on the draw.

Despite the great volume of 105mm and 155mm shells poured into this enemy strongpoint, a second attack at 1500 was stopped in the same place. Artillerymen were later cheered by the news that artillery action on 4 February had killed Colonel IDA.

Tank stalking and mine laying parties were employed during the night, and approximately 30 infiltrating Japs were killed by the 3d Battalion.

Company "L", 63d Infantry, reduced several pillboxes in the AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL area and ferreted out enemy snipers. Elements of the 2d and 3d Battalions, attacking toward SAN JOSE astride Highway 5, met heavy opposition from enemy field pieces and advanced only to ABAR #2.

The 1st Infantry, with 1 Platoon, Company "A", 98th Chemical Mortar Bn, and Company "A", 6th Engineer Bn, attacked toward SAN JOSE at 0900 with 1st and 3d Battalions abreast. Several casualties were suffered due to enemy shelling from the hill mass East of SAN JOSE. An air strike requested for 0900 was delivered on SAN JOSE at 1020I. Bombs were dropped on the target, but subsequent strafing which had not been requested, held up the advance of our troops. By 1200I, SAN JOSE was ours, with all principle routes of entry securely blocked, and the gateway to the CAGAYAN VALLEY was closed.

On 5 February, the 20th Infantry initiated another coordinated attack on MUNOZ at 0800I, the 1st and 3d Battalions pushing Northeast, while the 2d Battalion attacked East. The latter battalion achieved the major success of the day. Employing flame throwers and demolitions against the row of enemy positions to their front, several penetrations were made and 12 pillboxes were reduced. Late in the afternoon, "F" Company moved around to the right flank in an effort to close the gap between Battalions.

The 1st Battalion, made slow progress, but pushed its left

flank forward to the market place, alongside Company "I". At 1445I, the enemy launched a counterattack, using 4 tanks supported by numerous riflemen and covered by automatic weapons fire. The attack was repulsed and 3 tanks were destroyed. Enemy dead counted during the day totaled 61.

The 3d Battalion could not advance, but supported the attacks of the other two battalions by fires along their fronts. One of the 4 tanks which attacked the 1st Battalion ran over 3 anti-tank mines in the 3d Battalion sector. The tracks were blown off, but the vehicle continued forward on its bogie wheels until finally stopped by a 37mm gun at a 10 yard range. A total of 10 additional medium tanks were reported destroyed.

During the night, the 3d Battalion lines were withdrawn 150 yards and the 2d Battalion moved to the North, so that a heavy artillery concentration could be placed on the draw next morning.

Company "L", 63d Infantry, continuing its cleanup of the AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL area, supported by Cannon Company SPM's, accounted for 6 additional pillboxes and 1 medium tank. Stubborn resistance along Highway 5, in the vicinity of ABAR #2, continued to hold up the advance of other 63d Infantry elements. Plans were formulated for the movement of the 1st Battalion, 63d Infantry, in Corps Reserve, from POZORRUBIO to BICOS, where it would revert to Division Control on 6 February.

The 1st Infantry consolidated its positions in the SAN JOSE area, patrolling to the North and Northwest, and blocking all routes of entry into the town. A truck load of some 15 wounded Japs retreating North from ABAR #2 struck a 1st Battalion mine field on Highway 5 and all enemy were killed.

Air strikes were delivered on RIZAL, in preparation for further advances to the East on Corps order, 3 B-25's dropping 500 lb bombs at 1030I and 12 P-40's covering the area at 1155I.

On 6 February, despite the heaviest artillery preparation to date, the 20th Infantry failed to make any gains in MUNOZ. Activities to the North, however, set the stage for an all out Division effort planned for the next day. Moving with the utmost secrecy on the night of 5-6 February to an assembly area South of SAN JOSE, the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry (less Company "A"), launched a surprise day-break attack on the rear of enemy elements opposing the Northward advance of the 63d Infantry. Many automatic weapons and several field pieces were captured or destroyed, and an estimated 150 enemy were killed. Several supply dumps were burned and the highway from SAN JOSE to the AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL was cleared of Japs.

Prior to this, elements of the 63d Infantry withdrew under

cover of darkness from ABAR #2 to SANTO TOMAS. In two days' stiff fighting they had destroyed 1 tank, 12 - 47mm guns, 16 MG's and 1 Jap radio, and accounted for 72 Japanese. By nightfall on the 6th. "L" and "K" Companies of the 63d Infantry completed mopping up at the AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL.

By this time, some 36 light and medium tanks had been knocked out in MUNOZ, and as yet only 1/3 of the town was in the hands of our forces. An estimated 20 tanks still remained. However, the enemy's escape route to the North was now completely severed.

Plans for the 7th called for the Commanding Officer, 20th Infantry, to withdraw the bulk of his forces to an assembly area South of the railway before daylight, leaving a covering force in contact with the enemy until about 1000I. A heavy Napalm air strike was scheduled to take place at 1100I. The 63d Infantry (-) was to move on the morning of the 7th, via covered routes, to the South of MUNOZ. At the completion of the air strike, 20th Infantry on the left, 63d Infantry on the right would attack to the North, following a rolling barrage from the massed guns of 3 artillery battalions. An abortive Japanese attempt to escape during the night of 6-7 February made this attack unnecessary.

9. 7 February Brings a "Hollywood" Finish to the Battle of MUNOZ:

Between midnight and dawn, the remaining Jap garrison, having lost their commanding officer and suffered terrific casualties from constant artillery bombardment and infantry assaults, decided to make their break for freedom. Their plan, as pieced together from interrogations of Prisoners of War captured later, was to evacuate the remaining tanks, vehicles, and troops down the main highway to SAN JOSE under cover of darkness. The retreat was to be screened by a diversionary attack, spearheaded by four tanks, against the 20th Infantry's front lines.

This attack was carried out at approximately 0330I, accompanied by a great deal of noise all along the front. Previously registered fires of all available supporting weapons were immediately employed by the 20th Infantry. Daylight revealed that this fire destroyed 3 tanks and a 105mm howitzer towed by a M-3 half track within a radius of 75 yards of the draw fronting the 3d Battalion. A tank-infantry battle broke out in the 1st Battalion sector, where all of the 4 attacking tanks were destroyed.

None of the vehicles which reached the highway succeeded in running the gauntlet to SAN JOSE. As they neared the first 63d Infantry road block at the AGRICULTURAL SCHOOL, a hail of 37mm and cal .50 MG fire was loosed. Every available weapon up and down the highway joined in the assault. Two field artillery battalions, the

53d and 80th, fired point blank against the advancing column in the first such attack they had ever engaged in.

Tanks and trucks hit by the first roadblock guns, but not yet out of action, continued down the highway, and Company "G", 44th Tank Battalion, in an assembly area by the roadside hurled 75mm shells into the oncoming enemy procession.

Daylight found the highway from MUNOZ to SANTO TOMAS littered with smoking Jap tanks, trucks and enemy dead. The entire column had been destroyed, including 10 medium tanks, 1 light tank, 10 $2\frac{1}{2}$ -ton personnel carriers, 2 prime movers (tractors) and 2 105-mm guns. A total of 247 dead Japs were counted, and the number of additional enemy blown to bits could only be conjectured.

The 20th Infantry attacked North at 0700I, and walked through the town, eliminating several snipers and destroying 1 tank. An additional 109 enemy dead were counted, and the town was secured by 1100I. Infantrymen patrolled up and down the adjoining rice fields, cleaning up few Japs who had managed to escape.

The total list of destroyed vehicles, weapons and tanks in the seven day MUNOZ battle reads like the Table of Equipment of the 6th Tank Regiment and its attachments:

- 48 Medium Tanks (with 47mm and 37mm guns)
- 4 Light Tanks
- 4 Armored Cars
- 2 Tracked Prime Movers
- 41 Trucks
 - 1 American Half Track
- 15 Sedans
 - 1 Station Wagon
- 4 105mm Howitzers
- 16 47mm AT Guns

From documents and Prisoners of War, it was definitely established that the following units were destroyed or rendered ineffective in the SAN JOSE - MUNOZ areas:

356th II Bn, 103d Div	850 (2 PW's)
8th Btry, 2d Mobile Arty	100 (1 PW)
AT Bn, 2d Armored Div	300
6th Tank Regt (-2d Co)	600
Pi, 3d Coy, 2d Armd Engr	35
3d Tank Brig Hq ?	<u>50</u>
Total	1935

TOTAL ENEMY KILLED (actual count) 1527

Our casualties for the MUNOZ - SAN JOSE action were as follows:

	<u>KIA</u>	<u>WIA</u>	<u>IIA</u>	<u>DOW</u>
1st Infantry	7	55	7	2
20th Infantry	45	152	35	9
63d Infantry	21	63	0	3
Division Artillery	6	14	0	0
Co "C", 14th Tank Bn	1	12	1	0
Co "A", 98th Cml Mtrtr Bn	1	0	0	0
Co "B", 6th Engr Bn	2	7	0	0
TOTAL CASUALTIES	83	303	43	14

12. Summary of Lessons Learned:

Artillery offers little solution to the problem of disposing of dug-in tanks and field pieces, except by time-consuming precision fires. 4.2 chemical mortars employing WP shells can be used more advantageously for this purpose because of the greater accuracy of this weapon. Artillery employed on such positions very effectively fixes the enemy. Given a chance to register on the Japs' thin skinned tanks that are exposed, our artillery makes short work of destroying them. Dive-bombers would have been the best solution for dug-in tanks, but such close support was not available to the Division at this time.

M-4 tanks and SPM's can operate against dug-in enemy tanks only when suitable cover is available. Both were more than a match for isolated enemy tanks or field pieces.

Bazookas will effectively dispose of Japanese medium tanks. Jap tanks, guns, and artillery considered bazooka men profitable targets, firing on them in preference to machine gunners and riflemen.

Our 37mm guns will knock out enemy medium tanks unless the shell strikes the turret at a glancing angle. These guns must be employed in pairs. Heavy machine guns are of little value against Japanese tanks.

81mm mortars firing WP were known to have accounted for at least one enemy tank. HE was fired only as a harassing agent and to prevent enemy movement.

Numerous small patrols must be employed constantly by day and by night, to locate tanks or pillboxes before supporting tanks, SPM's or artillery are committed. Small patrols will accomplish this with fewer casualties than would be suffered by a large scale attack.

In the MUNOZ battle, guerrillas were used as litter bearers with great success.

Chapter V

THE 6TH DIVISION SPLITS JAPS FORCES ON LUZON

1. General: (See Fig. 7.)

Field Order 9, Headquarters I Corps received on 6 February, ordered the 6th Division to advance to the East to capture RIZAL and BONGABON, and secure the line RIZAL - BONGABON - CABANATUAN (exclusive). The first steps in this new advance were accomplished on 7 February. The 1st Battalion, 63d Infantry (less Company "B" protecting the I Corps CP) moved to an assembly area in the vicinity of MABINA, while the 1st Infantry (less 1 Battalion at SAN JOSE) displaced East of the TALAVERA RIVER, to an assembly area in the vicinity of CAPISUAN, Northwest of RIZAL.

Movements on 8 February saw the following accomplished: The 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, was relieved at SAN JOSE by elements of the 25th Division and moved to BICOS to become Division Reserve. The 2d and 3d Battalions dispatched a strong patrol to block the road North of RIZAL.

The 63d Infantry (-) moved North from PINAGPANAAN and occupied RIZAL, capturing or destroying large quantities of enemy equipment East of the RIZAL bridge, and securing the high ground North and East of the town.

The 2d Battalion, 20th Infantry (less Company "G" left to secure MUNOZ and Highway 5) moved into Division Reserve in PINAGPANAAN, with a mission of securing the Division Main Supply Road. The balance of the 20th Infantry moved by truck to BONGABON, their advance screened by elements of the 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, and occupied the town at 1300L, without opposition. An OP was established at SANTOR and the CABU bridge was secured.

All units continued their present missions on 9 February, with extensive patrolling being conducted throughout the Division sector. Contact was maintained with the 25th Division on our left and the 1st Cavalry Division on our right flank. The 775th Tank Battalion was attached to the Division on this date, while elements of the 716th Tank Battalion reverted to I Corps control.

2. East to the Philippine Sea:

No noteworthy enemy contacts were made during the period 10-12 February. Our activities were concerned chiefly with pushing strong reconnaissance patrols to DINGALAN and BALER BAYS, and in preparing for movements to the South. On 10 February, Company "L", 20th Infantry, reinforced by one Platoon of the 6th Reconnaissance Troop

and a detachment of the 6th Engineer Battalion, and the Reconnaissance Platoon of the 775th Tank Battalion departed to outpost and reconnoiter the BALER BAY area.

DINGALAN BAY was reached on 12 February, with nil enemy contact. Our troops had thus split enemy forces on the island of LUZON in two. A strong foot patrol from Company "E", 63d Infantry reached their objective at BALER BAY on 13 February. No enemy were encountered. The Jap constructed airstrip at BALER was reported to be in good condition.

3. The 1st Infantry is Placed Under Sixth Army Control:

On 10 February warning was received that one regiment of the 6th Division might soon be placed in Army Reserve, and the 1st Infantry RCT was ordered to make preparations for this assignment. 1st Infantry's OP's and patrol activities were taken over by the 63d Infantry, and the 1st Battalion, in Division Reserve at BICOS, was released to Regimental control.

On 11 February, the 1st Infantry was alerted for movement to DINALUPIHAN, on the BATAAN PENINSULA. Advance reconnaissance and route marking parties were dispatched to the objective area.

The 1st Infantry, with 1st Field Artillery Battalion, Company "A", 6th Engineer Battalion, and Company "A", 6th Medical Battalion attached, was ordered to concentrate in the DINALUPIHAN - ORANI area beginning at 0700I, 12 February and closing prior to 1800I, 14 February. The long motor march was completed on schedule, and the 1st RCT went under the control of XI Corps.

4. The Division is Given a New Assignment:

Field Order 12, I Corps, dated 12 February provided that the 6th Infantry Division reinforced, less one RCT, be concentrated in the BONGABON - PINAGPANAAN - MAYAPYAP area for movement to the vicinity of SAN MIGUEL on 15 February. Plans were made to accomplish this as soon as 25th Division elements relieved the 63d and 20th Infantry.

The 20th Infantry (less 2d Battalion) was relieved by the 35th Infantry on 13 February, and was assembled near BONGABON. The 2d Battalion remained in its location at PINAGPANAAN, and reverted to Regimental control. The 63d Infantry assembled near MAYAPYAP, Company "B" returning from Headquarters I Corps, and Company "E" returning from BALER BAY. The 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop patrolled in the CABANATUAN - GAPAN - SAN MANUEL area. The 775th Tank Battalion and elements of the 98th Chemical Mortar Battalion were released from Division control.

February 15 was spent in maintenance of vehicles and preparations for the movement. The Division (-) was to concentrate in

the SAN MIGUEL area by foot and motor march, starting 0900I, 16 February, and closing 0800I, 17 February.

The Division Artillery (less Division Artillery Headquarters) displaced to an assembly area near TAMBO. Elements of the 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop moved to GAPAN and protected the battalions in their new positions.

The move to vicinity SAN MIGUEL was completed by 170715. At 0800I, the Division passed to control of XIV Corps. Plans were completed for moving the Division to the objective area in the vicinity of NOVALICHES, while the 6th Engineers began improvement of the roads leading to the NOVALICHES area.

While the rest of the Division was being concentrated for the second phase of its operations on LUZON, the 1st RCT was helping to secure the BATAAN PENINSULA.

THE FIRST INFANTRY OPERATIONS IN BATAAN

1. General: (See Fig. 10.)

Driving East across BATAAN from SUBIC BAY the XI Corps had chopped off the peninsula and established contact with the XIV Corps Northwest of MANILA. Little opposition had been encountered thus far on BATAAN, and it was believed that the enemy did not intend to attempt a strong stand here. The process of mopping up the peninsula was underway in the West and Central portions. The 1st Infantry reinforced with 1st Field Artillery Battalion; Company "A", 6th Engineer Battalion; and Company "A", 6th Medical Battalion, passing under control of XI Corps on 11 February, was given the mission of securing the area BALANGA - PILAR and the surrounding road net.

While the above units were moving South from the vicinity of RIZAL to DINALUPIHAN on 12 February, orders were received to continue the advance South to ABUCAY. By 1500I, 14 February, all units had completed their motor movements into the objective area. Company "C", 754th Tank Battalion (-) joined the Regiment. By 1700I, the 1st and 2d Battalions had occupied the BALANG - PILAR area. "E" and "G" Companies were astride the road in the vicinity of BANTAN - PEQUENO, while Company "B" had established a position astride the road 3500 yards Southwest of PILAR.

Company "A", 6th Engineer Battalion, from their bivouac near LALIWIGAN, had begun work on destroyed bridges, and were improving the by-passes along the route of advance. The 1st Field Artillery Battalion was in position 500 yards West of ABUCAY.

The only enemy contact for the day occurred at 0500I, when a boatload of Japs evacuating MANILA landed near SAMAL and started inland. This group of 11 Japs was trapped in a shack by elements of Company "C" and the I&R Platoon. Six Japanese were killed, and the rest escaped.

2. The Period 15-16 February:

On the 15th, the 1st Battalion pushed Southwest from PILAR and by 1300I, Company "B" had secured the river crossing 7000 yards Southwest of the town, with no enemy contact. Company "C" remained in BALANGA, while Company "A" occupied the road block vacated by Company "B".

The 2d Battalion pushed rapidly to the South and seized ORION before noon, going into position there, with Company "E" outposting the South side of the town. Company "F" remained at PILAR and operated

OP's at PUERTO RIVAS and BANDAY POINT.

The 3d Battalion strengthened their positions at ABUCAY and MAGANTANG and guarded the route of advance of the Regiment. Company "K" relieved Company "A" of its assignment protecting the Regiment's right flank, and pushed one platoon to ABUCAY HACIENDA with nil enemy contact. The Battalion Assault Team killed 2 of an estimated 17 Japs, evacuees from MANILA, who landed at ABUCAY at dawn, and scattered the rest with mortar fire.

At approximately 2200I, an estimated 250-300 Japs, led by 2 Filipino spies and commanded by Captain NASIMOTO, former Jap garrison commander at ORION, broke through the Company "E" outpost and attacked the 2d Battalion CP with demolition charges and incendiary grenades. In the five hours of confused fighting, the Japs killed 11 of our men and wounded 15 others. An estimated 80 Japs were killed in the fight, and 1 prisoner of war was captured next morning.

On the morning of the 16th, Company "I" was attached to the 2d Battalion. The 1st Field Artillery Battalion displaced to a new position 300 yards North of ORION.

3. The Period 17-21 February: (See Fig. 10.)

On the 17th, the 1st Battalion advanced West along the BAGAC Road, with Companies "B" and "C" in company columns. Extensive flank patrolling was carried out during the advance, which terminated near the TIAWIR RIVER crossing. The 2d Battalion, leaving 1 Company in ORION and a reinforced platoon at LIMAY, secured the ORION HILL - BELOLO RIVER area. The 3d Battalion less 1 Company at PILAR, drove West to gain and maintain contact with the left flank elements of the 1st Battalion in their push on BAGAC, and at 1500I, established a line extending 1500 yards Southeast from TIAWIR RIVER crossing.

The 16th found the 1st Battalion, with Anti-Tank and Cannon platoons attached, pushing on West, and by 1700I the abandoned Jap camp area 1200 yards South of MT MAIDICA was secured. The bulk of abandoned enemy equipment in the camp area consisted of medical supplies and pack saddles. The 2d Battalion remained in position 700 yards West of TIAWIR RIVER crossing, while the 3d Battalion followed the advance of the 1st Battalion, and "K" Company secured the high ground 1000 yards South of the Jap camp area.

All battalions remained in their positions on the 19th, and patrolled extensively, searching for scattered enemy remnants. Company "B" proceeded West toward BAGAC.

By 1030I, 20 February, Company "B" had advanced to a point 7000 yards East of BAGAC. A patrol from this company discovered what was believed to be CP of the BATAAN Defense Headquarters, because

of the presence of such large quantities of records, maps, food, clothing, and ammunition.

Continuing West on the 20th, the 3d Battalion pushed through 1st Battalion elements and by 1600I had reached a point 6000 yards East of BAGAC. Meanwhile, the I&R Platoon, with a section of "C" Company, 640th Tank Destroyer Battalion attached (this unit having joined the Regiment on 18 February), pushed on to BAGAC and secured the town by 1700I. Continuing on this leap frog advance, 1st Battalion passed through the 3d Battalion about 1530I and rushed rapidly to the North and South of the town.

At 1500I, 20 February, the 1st Infantry received orders that 6th Division troops in the area would revert to Division control in the SAN VICENTE vicinity commencing movement to this area on 21 February.

5. Summary:

During its operations on BATAAN, the Regiment accomplished its missions quickly. Advancing swiftly down the East coast of the peninsula, the Regiment first seized the strategically important road junction at PILAR, thereby blocking the escape route to the North to the Japanese forces withdrawing from the MARIVELES sector and denying the enemy the use of the BAGAC - PILAR road. In the second phase of the operation, the PILAR - MARIVELES Road was blocked, while the remainder of the regiment pushed aggressively West toward the final objective at BAGAC.

6. Enemy Materiel Captured or Destroyed:

Enemy equipment and supplies captured included assorted medical supplies, CWS equipment and supplies, smoke candles, several rifles, 200 land mines and 100 detonating fuses, a LMG and a knee mortar, numerous Jap documents and records, 3 U.S. field ranges and many pack saddles and harness sets.

Materiel destroyed included 77mm ammunition, Molotov cock-tails, 2 Jap motor boats, 1 barge, 12 cases of clothing and camouflage nets, 21 cases MG ammunition, and several ammunition dumps.

7. Summary of Lessons Learned:

a. Securing of towns: A unit given the mission of securing a town should not attempt to encircle the town with a perimeter. Unless the town is small and the unit large (which is usually not the case) this practice results in a paper-thin perimeter which can be easily penetrated or infiltrated through by the enemy, at almost any point he chooses. The best solution is to emplace units as road blocks astride the most likely avenues of approach, establishing

a series of strong points which can defend themselves as well as the town from enemy assault.

b. Location of Command Posts: The error of locating command posts in or near large towns was pointedly brought out in this operation. The presence of many avenues of approach to a town, coupled with the factor of limited observation due to the number of buildings, constitutes a dangerous threat to a command post or dump installation in a forward area. Though the bulk of civilians are loyal, commanders must expect that a certain number are still "pro-Japs" and would not hesitate to lead a raiding party into the CP by a route where they would least likely be observed. If a unit remains in a town overnight, the town mayor should be instructed to tell all the towns people that anyone moving out of their abode after dark will be shot.

c. Line of Communication: In the rapid advance of a unit into a forward area, such as was experienced by the 1st Infantry, an appreciable percentage of the command is dissipated in the establishment of guards over bridges and dump installations to the rear. The combat efficiency of the unit charged with this responsibility is accordingly reduced as the advance presses deeper into enemy territory, where the need for a strong reserve becomes increasingly important. If available, maximum use should be made of Guerrilla forces for these assignments.

d. Role of Combat Engineers: In the early stages of this operation, our advance was considerably retarded by the lack of combat engineers. It developed that the enemy chose to defend this sector of the BATAAN PENINSULA by passive delaying action in the form of blowing bridges and destroying portions of the road as he withdrew, rather than by the occupation of successive positions. The absence of our combat engineers necessitated the employment of the battalion A&P Platoons, civilians, and in some cases the advancing rifle companies themselves, to construct bypasses and repair roads as they advanced. Had this not been the dry season, it is doubtful whether even the foot troops could have gone past some of the obstacles encountered. Though all terrain obstacles in this case were passable by our foot troops, command vehicles, AT prime movers, and supply vehicles were often delayed for hours at a time which aggravated the problems of supply and command to a considerable extent. In an operation of this type, it is imperative that a combat engineer unit with adequate equipment and materials follow the leading assault units as closely as tactical security permits.

e. Tactics: In the movement of the Regiment over the difficult terrain in this sector where the route of advance was canalized through many defiles, "leap frogging" of the leading battalions proved very effective.