

## Chapter VII

### IN THE SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS

#### PART I PRELIMINARY

##### 1. General: (See Fig 11)

Concentration of the 6th Infantry Division (less 1st RCT) in the NOVALICHES area was completed on 18 February. Provisions were made for the Division to relieve the 2d Cavalry Brigade (1st Cavalry Division), after which the 20th and 63rd Infantry Regiments would seize and outpost a line running from East of the NOVALICHES reservoir generally North along the high ground to SAN JOSE, protecting the vital MANILA water supply system from the NOVALICHES DAM to BALARA FILTERS, and destroying all enemy elements in the Division zone. Reconnaissance would be initiated to the East, preparatory to further advances on Division order. The Division was reinforced by Company "C", 85th Chemical Battalion, and by the 112th RCT (less Troop "G"), which would continue its present mission of securing the line of communications from CABANATUAN to DULO and reconnoiter in the IPO - NORZAGARY area.

##### 2. February 20-23:

Relief of elements of the 2d Cavalry Brigade was completed by noon 20 February, and while patrols combed the NOVALICHES area, preparations were completed for an advance to the East on the 24th, to develop the enemy positions in the WAWA area. The purpose of this advance was to determine where the main effort of not only the Division, but also of the Corps in this sector would be made.

The 20th Infantry was to secure the high ground East of MARIQUINA, and then attack North to seize the line MT MATABA - MT PACAWAGAN. On the 22d and 23d of February the 20th Infantry crossed the MARIQUINA RIVER in force and occupied the high ground 4000 yards to the East, consolidating positions with the 1st Battalion on the left and the 2d Battalion on the right. The 3d Battalion continued to secure BALARA FILTERS. In support of this advance, 8 P-40's bombed and strafed enemy artillery positions and motor pool areas in the hills to the East. Several Jap trucks were set on fire.

The 63rd Infantry was to secure SAN MATEO and assemble the 2d Battalion on the high ground Northwest of MONTALBAN, prior to an attack on the 24th to seize the town and the high ground to the Northeast. In carrying out these orders, the 1st Battalion, 63rd Infantry mopped up slight enemy resistance in SAN MATEO and dispatched patrols North along the MARIQUINA RIVER to SAN JOSE, and North along the highway toward MONTALBAN. The 2d and 3d Battalions both moved to assembly areas Northwest of MONTALBAN.

The 1st RCT, upon release from XI Corps and upon arrival in the NOVALICHES area, carried out its assigned missions. The 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, relieved 63d Infantry elements securing the NOVALICHES DAM and protecting the pipe line. The 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry, relieved the 2d Battalion, 20th Infantry, along the OPL North of the NOVALICHES WATERSHED. The 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, in Division Reserve, went into an assembly area on the left flank of the 63d Infantry. (See Fig 12).

### 3. Estimate of the situation, 23 February:

At this time little definite information had been gathered regards the enemy's strength and dispositions in the operational area. Guerrilla reports indicated considerable construction of defenses and movement of troops and supplies in the IPO, NORZAGARY and MONTALBAN areas, and that the enemy had prepared for a protracted defense of this line.

Small, disorganized groups of Japs, stragglers from MANILA seeking to escape to the mountains, had been encountered by our patrols in the NOVALICHES vicinity. Also encountered were large enemy raiding parties, well equipped with demolition and incendiary charges, which were dispatched from the hills with the mission of destroying vital installations along the main line of communications to MANILA.

Large caliber naval guns and long range artillery capable of interdicting roads and destroying installations well in our rear had already been employed by the enemy in this area. It was apparent that the Jap intended to defend the IPO-NORZAGARY-MONTALBAN line from positions made as impregnable as possible to air and artillery bombardment, and that he would probably attempt extensive harassing and demolitions raids on CP's, supply dumps, artillery positions and lines of communication, particularly along the main North-South route to MANILA. In the light of our greatly extended front, a substantial counter attack was a continuing possible threat.

### 4. The Terrain:

To the Northeast, on the Division's left front and overlooking the PURAY RIVER valley and foothills to the South and West was MT ORO. Some 1000 feet in altitude, this heavily wooded hill mass afforded excellent observation and concealment for artillery and heavy mortars. Moving South across the heavily wooded PURAY RIVER two prominent North-South ridges rise 500 to 800 feet above the MONTALBAN-MARIQUINA RIVER valley and afford a natural defense line commanding the rice fields and foot hills to the West. South of the MARIQUINA RIVER and East of MONTALBAN, MT PACAWAGAN rises 1500 feet

above the valley floor and offers unlimited observation of the whole NOVALICHES WATERSHED and MANILA area. Its West approaches are very precipitous and inaccessible to vehicles. Portions of the mountain are thickly wooded, supplying the best of cover for gun positions, OP's and ground defenses. Both the forward and reverse slopes of the mountain are cut with deep, wooded ravines furnishing ideal sites for heavy mortars.

MT PACAWAGAN and the 1400 foot MT MATABA to its South are divided by a deep gorge made by the MANGO RIVER, which flows out of the mountains Southeast of MONTALBAN. MT MATABA, the same kind of steep, heavily vegetated mountain as MT PACAWAGAN, command the MARIQUINA VALLEY and MANILA area. (See Fig 12, Panoramic Sketch).

Further South on the Division's right flank, the hills vary from 500 to 1000 feet in height. Two lesser gorges are made by the AMPID RIVER and an unnamed creek. Southeast of MT MATABA the terrain consists of steep hills, narrow valleys and ridges, with several small plateaus. To the East is MT BAYTANGAN, overlooking the deep, wooded BOSO BOSO RIVER Valley. Some of these hills are covered only with dry grasses, while others are blanketed with heavy scrub growth and small trees. Most of the ravines are wooded. Similar terrain extends North to the MARIQUINA RIVER, East of MT MATABA and MT PACAWAGAN.

A second row of mountains averaging 1500 feet in elevation extends North and East from MT PACAWAGAN. North and West of MT ORO, the area outposted and patrolled by 112th RCT varies from rolling hills and open valleys to 2000 foot mountains.

Roads were non-existent and trails were poor in the Division zone of operations, with the exception of an all-weather road which leads from MONTALBAN to WAWA through a deep winding gorge.

#### 5. Nature of the Enemy's Defenses:

For months prior to our attack the enemy had been preparing his defenses in this area. The SHIMBU Line, with outposts along the MARIQUINA RIVER, involved an elaborate system of mutually supporting strong points in caves and pillboxes on commanding ground, from which the enemy could deliver accurate and intense fire of all weapons against routes of approach from the West. The right (North) flank of the SHIMBU Line was established in the MT ORO area. The left (South) flank terminated at ANTIPOLLO.

The enemy's MLR in the Division zone, as determined from captured maps, extended from MT MALAGIA, South to include MT ORO, MT PACAWAGAN and MT MATABA, with a secondary line of defenses some 3000-4000 yards to the East.

Captured documents specifically outlined enemy plans for a long range, all out defense of this line. Units were ordered to mass a six months supply of food and sufficient ammunition for "one engagement". Defense was to be a suicidal holding of each cave and dug out, accompanied by local night infiltrations and raids with the object of inflicting maximum casualties on our forces.

Long-range patrols by the 6th Reconnaissance Troop revealed the fact there were no organized positions between the SHIMBU Line and the enemy positions in the IPO area, but that the two areas were connected by well-used trails.

#### 6. The Enemy:

The first complete estimate of enemy forces opposing the 6th Division was compiled on 27 February. Units defending the SHIMBU Line, along the Division front, were identified as the SHIMBU Group, commanded by Lieutenant General YOKOYAMA Shizuo, former Commanding General of the 8th Division, whose headquarters was reported by a PW to be in the mountains South of the WAWA DAM, on 4 February. The SHIMBU Group was reported to be composed of the following forces:

a. Elements of the 105th Division: Total strength 3700, including five (5) battalions.

b. Elements of the 8th Division: Total strength 5400, including the 31st Infantry Regiment (less 1 Battalion) a MG Battalion, and an AT Battalion (locations uncertain). Also two battalions of the 8th Field Artillery Regiment, last reported in the IPO area.

c. The KOBAYASHI Group, on our immediate front, 4675 troops, including:

- (1) The Right Sector Unit: Total strength 2060, including Infantry, MG, Artillery and Medium Mortar units, plus a few service troops, in the MT ORO area.
- (2) The Central Sector Unit: Total strength 1050, composed of the 10th Provisional Infantry Battalion and 4th Medium Mortar Battalion, originally assembled West of SAN MATEO.
- (3) MARIQUINA Advanced Force: Total strength 385, Infantry and AW units, including light AA, originally assigned the mission of repelling Allied airborne raiding forces.
- (4) Left Sector Unit: Totaling 1180 Infantry, Artillery, AT and MG units, a Rocket Gun Battalion, and part of the 11th Air Sector Unit, located East of MARIQUINA.

Several hundred "Fishing Unit" personnel, used as Infantry, plus Signal and Engineer detachments and Air Corps Troops gave the enemy over 14000 combat troops in the SHIMBU Group, with numerous other service and labor troops known to be in the IPO and WAWA areas.

The enemy encountered in this sector was well equipped, as he had been elsewhere on LUZON. Equipment captured or destroyed by our troops in this operation included every common type of artillery piece possessed by the Jap. 150mm Mortars and 8" Rockets were used for the first time, against this Division. Small arms, automatic weapons and light and medium mortars were present in large numbers. The enemy's supply of ammunition was adequate.

## PART II THE ATTACK ON MT MATABA AND MT PACAWAGAN

### 1. February 24: (See Fig.13)

From their positions in the hills 4000 yards North and East of BAYANBAYAMAN the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 20th Infantry attacked Eastward at 0930L and gained approximately 1000 yards against little resistance. The 63d Infantry also launched an attack at 0930L. The 1st Battalion advanced on MONTALBAN astride the SAN MATEO-MONTALBAN Highway, and entered the town with only scattered opposition. The 2d Battalion seized SAN ISIDRO, unopposed, and dispatched patrols to the high ground 800 yards to the East. The 3d Battalion, from an assembly area just West of SAN JOSE, attacked to the East under cover of darkness, on the night of 23-24 February. The Battalion objective was the high ground some 1200 yards Northeast of ZARAGOSA known as HILL 400. Strong enemy outposts, supported by 47mm and 70mm fire, were encountered on the objective hill, but by 1630L, 24 February, HILL 400 had been secured.

The 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, relieved 63d Infantry troops at the NOVALICHES DAM and BALARA FILTERS, while the 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry, expanded its positions along the Division OPL.

On this date, the regimental boundaries were changed, giving the 1st Infantry a limited objective area to mop up in the SAN MATEO vicinity. MT PACAWAGAN was included in the zone of the 63d Infantry instead of the 20th Infantry.

### 2. February 25:

Operations on the 25th were characterized by increased enemy aggressiveness to our immediate front. All sectors received heavy artillery and rocket fire. The 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, left one company to protect the NOVALICHES DAM and pipeline and moved the balance of the battalion to the vicinity of SAN MATEO. The 3d Battalion dispatched Company "L" to gain and maintain contact with the 20th Infantry and mop up between the two attacking regiments.

The 20th Infantry continued its advance Northeastward into the mountains, meeting stiff organized resistance in the 1st Battalion zone, along the UNNAMED RIVER, approximately 2500 yards Southeast of SAN MATEO and at the AMPID RIVER, near TILAGAAN. The 2d Battalion advanced several hundred yards Eastward, screened by patrols to the front and flanks. Only scattered resistance was encountered and several artillery and rocket launcher positions were overrun.

The 63d Infantry mopped up and consolidated positions in MONTALBAN and the high ground to the Northeast. 1st Battalion combat patrols attempting to scale MT PACAWAGAN encountered well entrenched enemy positions on the West slopes of the mountain, and, after destroying several positions, were forced to withdraw to the vicinity of MONTALBAN. The 2d Battalion patrolled to the high ground Northeast of their position at SAN ISIDRO, while Company "G", reinforced, advanced to positions approximately 2000 yards Northeast of town, preparatory to attacking the high ground overlooking the PURAY RIVER.

The Division Artillery fired effective counter battery against enemy artillery and destroyed definitely located rocket positions. Seventy-three Marine dive bombers and Army B-47's bombed and strafed gun positions, troop concentrations, dumps and vehicles in the 20th Infantry sector and WAWA area. Forty-five B-24's hit troop concentrations in the IPO-METROPOLITAN ROAD area and many large fires were started.

This date additional changes in the regimental boundaries were made, giving the 1st Infantry (less 2d Battalion) a 2000 yard front between the 20th and 63d Infantry, with the WAWA area as the regimental objective.

### 3. February 26-27: (See Fig.13.)

This two day period saw some gains made in all three regimental sectors, the 20th Infantry making the best progress, on the Division right flank. After receiving considerable artillery and rocket fire throughout the night, the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, attacked to the Northeast, moving with 3 companies abreast, and advanced 1700 yards up the Southernmost slopes of MT MATABA, against scattered resistance. The 2d Battalion attacked to the East, through rugged mountain terrain, and advanced to positions 6000 yards East of BAYANBAYANAN. Continuous artillery and rocket fires were received during the advance.

Both the above battalions drew harassing artillery and rocket fires throughout the night of February 26-27, and several rocket launching positions were located and neutralized by our artillery. The 1st Battalion continued the attack on the 27th, making slow gains against well organized positions. Leaving "E" Company in position to protect the Division right flank, the 2d Battalion

attacked Eastward on the same day and progressed several hundred yards against considerable resistance from well fortified positions.

The 3d Battalion, 20th, at BALARA FILTERS, on 27 February displaced "I" and "L" Companies to positions in the hills 5000 yards East of BAYANBAYANAN.

In the 1st Infantry sector, the 1st Battalion launched an attack to the Northeast from SAN MATEO, Company "C" moving to positions 2000 yards East of the highway and North of the MANGO RIVER gorge. This attack, toward WAWA, was renewed next morning, but little progress was made against strong enemy positions commanding the steep mountain slopes.

On the Regimental right flank, the 3d Battalion advanced 2500 yards Northeast from SAN MATEO, to a position on the West slope of MT MATABA, South of the MANGO RIVER gorge. Late in the afternoon this drive was brought to an abrupt halt, by enemy artillery, mortar and automatic weapons fires, and our troops sustained heavy casualties. Intense mortar and artillery fires continued throughout the night and made positions of "I" and "L" Companies untenable. At 1030 next morning both companies withdrew to SAN MATEO vicinity, covered by a smoke screen laid down by the 1st Field Artillery Battalion.

In the MT PACAWAGAN area, the fires of five artillery battalions were massed against enemy positions on the West slopes of the mountain, preparatory to an early afternoon attack by the 1st Battalion, 63d Infantry. Two different thrusts were made. One, by Company "B", succeeded in reaching the objective on the Northwest slope of the mountain, near the summit, and positions were held despite heavy enemy mortar fire.

Elsewhere in the 63d sector, approximately 50 Japs were killed when an estimated enemy company tried to break through our positions, Northeast of SAN ISIDRO. Companies "K" and "L", Northeast of MONTALBAN, repulsed an attack by an estimated 150 Japs.

#### 4. February 28:

The night of 27-28 February saw increasing aggressiveness on the part of the enemy, two small counter attacks being launched on the 20th and 63d Infantry fronts. Both attacks were repulsed with heavy losses to the enemy. Artillery, rocket, and heavy mortar fires fell intermittently throughout the night and continued during the following day. Under cover of darkness, Company "C", 1st Infantry, withdrew from their position at the base of the hills North of the MANGO RIVER to the vicinity of SAN MATEO. Similarly, 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry elements, less a small group left to evacuate casualties, completed withdrawals from the high ground Northwest of MT MATABA.

In the 20th Infantry sector, the 1st Battalion tried unsuccessfully to advance against strong enemy resistance.

The 63d Infantry expanded their positions on MT PACAWAGAN. Sporadic enemy artillery fire was received in this area. Patrols of the 2d Battalion, operating Northeast toward MT ORO, made long range observations of several groups of enemy, with nil contact. 3d Battalion patrols to the North and Northeast contacted small groups of enemy. Patrols of the 112th RCT continued to probe enemy defenses North of the METROPOLITAN ROAD.

Air and artillery concentrations were placed on enemy gun positions, personnel and supply areas. Several mortar, MG and artillery positions were known to have been silenced by artillery counter battery fires. Ninety SBD's bombed and strafed enemy installations in support of 1st and 20th Infantry operations, starting large fires in an enemy troop concentration area in the MANGO RIVER gorge. B-24's bombed enemy installations in the METROPOLITAN ROAD - IPO DAM area with reported "great success".

The 6th Engineer Combat Battalion made good progress on regimental supply roads, particularly in the 20th Infantry sector.

A regrouping of forces was ordered on the 28th. The 1st Infantry (less 1 Battalion), was to relieve the 63d Infantry elements on MT PACAWAGAN, prior to 1800, 2 March, destroy enemy forces thereon, and be prepared to push to the WAWA area on Division order. The 20th Infantry was to extend the outpost line to include MT MATABA, while holding and consolidating present positions and protecting the Division's right flank. The 63d Infantry would make preparations to attack to the East on 3 March, their ultimate objective a North - South line from MT ORO to MT HAPONANG BANOY. The 112th RCT would continue present missions, with Particular emphasis on reconnaissance to the IPO area and North of the METROPOLITAN ROAD.

#### 5. The Period March 1-3: (See Fig.14.)

Under cover of darkness during the night of March 1-2, Company "G", 1st Infantry, moved to an assembly area East of MONTALBAN, and at daylight advanced to relieve 63d Infantry troops on MT PACAWAGAN. The balance of the 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, moved to an assembly area near MONTALBAN. The following day was spent in consolidating positions atop the mountain, and in the improvement of supply trails to support further operations South along the MT PACAWAGAN ridge.

The 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry (less Company "G" reinforced, securing the NOVALICHES DAM), concentrated in the SAN MATEO area.



Throughout the period March 1-3, the 20th Infantry consolidated their positions in the hills East of BAYANRUYANAN and carried on extensive patrol activities. A determined enemy counter attack launched against the Company "I" position, on the regimental right flank at 0300 on the morning of March 2, resulted in 68 dead Japs, while our troops suffered 2 WIA. 1st Battalion patrols probing for enemy defenses on the Southwest slopes of MT MATABA drew heavy MG, mortar and rifle fires.

A patrol of the 63d Infantry to the limestone ridge North of MT PACAWAGAN found an elaborate enemy defense system, of company strength, with natural caves, man made tunnels, well built pill boxes and individual foxholes. Enemy 150mm mortar fire forced the patrol to withdraw from the area. 2d Battalion, 63d Infantry, patrols searched for routes of approach and possible supply roads in the MT ORO area. A midnight attack was made by an estimated company of Japs against positions occupied by Company "F", 63d Infantry, on the TANOY RIVER, some 1500 yards West of MT ORO. After a 3 hour fight, Company "F" withdrew for lack of ammunition, returning next morning to retake the ground and count 29 dead Japs. Leaving Company "I" to outpost the high ground Northeast of MONTALBAN, the 3d Battalion, 63d Infantry, moved to new positions North of SAN ISIDRO, in preparation for a reconnaissance in force to the MT ORO area on 4 March.

This period saw a slackening of enemy artillery and rocket fire throughout the Division zone, although some 100 rounds of Jap artillery were concentrated on front lines, OP's and supply lines of the 63d Infantry.

#### 6. March 4-5:

Operations on the 4th of March found the 1st Infantry continuing its present missions and directing heavy artillery and air bombardment on enemy mortar and artillery positions on the Southeast slopes of MT PACAWAGAN. In a night movement, Company "E" relieved Company "G" on top of the mountain, despite continuous mortar and artillery fire falling on the supply trail up the mountain side.

20th Infantry patrols to the East and Northeast, searching for more advantageous approaches to the strongly defended MT MATABA, received heavy machine gun, mortar and small arms fire from well prepared pillboxes and entrenchments. On the Regimental left flank, Company "A" advanced some 300 yards.

The 63d Infantry continued to probe for enemy defenses and routes of approach to the MT ORO area. Several bombing and strafing missions, one employing NAPALM, were directed against observed installations on the Southwest slopes of the mountain.

Ground operations on 5 March were limited to consolidation of present lines and a continuation of patrol activity. Enemy activities were confined to minor infiltration forays and one small counter attack in the 20th Infantry sector. Some 180 rounds of enemy artillery fell in the Division zone throughout the night. The Division Artillery harassed enemy positions and fired some twenty missions against enemy heavy mortar positions. Artillery WP was used to mark targets for air strikes, the bulk of which were concentrated on known enemy positions in the MT MATABA area.

#### 7. The Division Changes Its Main Effort:

Thus far our efforts to penetrate the Central Sector of the enemy's lines had met stubborn resistance, and the greatest success had been achieved in his Left Sector in the zone of the 20th Infantry. The most favorable terrain for an attack was in the 20th Infantry sector. A drive East in this sector to the BOSO BOSO RIVER would isolate the WAWA area from the ANTIPOLO area and would allow an envelopment of the enemy strong points on MT MATABA and MT PACAWAGAN from the South.

Orders received from XIV Corps, on 5 March, directed that such an Eastward drive be made, in coordination with elements of the 1st Cavalry Division on our right flank.

#### 8. Summary:

Although our attempted penetration of the enemy's defenses in the Central Sector was not carried to completion, much valuable information was gained regarding his strength, dispositions, and the nature of his defenses. In terms of enemy destroyed and equipment captured or destroyed, our accomplishments were considerable. His casualties for the period 18 February to 5 March were 1,105 KIA and 13 PW's, in comparison with our figures totalling 91 KIA, 320 WIA, 83 IIA and 4 MIA. The additional enemy killed or wounded by our constant artillery and air bombardments could only be conjectured.

Equipment and supplies known to have been destroyed or captured included:

<u>Captured</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>
70-Assorted trucks and sedans	75-Assorted trucks and sedans
2-Armored personnel carriers	6-Gas and ammo dumps
1-Tankette	1-Half track
1-Half track	1-105mm gun
2-Tracked prime movers	1-75mm gun
1-90mm mortar	2-70mm guns
1-70mm gun	1-40mm AA gun
8-HMG	2-20mm AA guns
6-LMG	1-Mountain gun
70-Rifles	8-HMG
1-47mm AT gun	2-Rocket launchers
2-Flame throwers	3-u/i field pieces
2-Dumps, aerial bombs	
1-Food warehouse, with rice and hardtack	

Additional equipment destroyed by artillery fires and air strikes could not be determined at this time. During the period, approximately 650 bombing and strafing sorties were flown in the MT MATABA - MT ORO area, and approximately 330 tons of bombs were employed against enemy gun positions, bivouacs and dump areas.

## PART II EAST TO THE BOSO BOSO RIVER

### 1. Brief Estimate of the Situation:

The original estimate of troops in the enemy's Left Sector, East of MARIQUINA, included the 8th Provisional Infantry Battalion, 7th Provisional Machine Gun Company, 5th Provisional Anti-Tank Company, 6th and 8th Provisional Artillery Batteries, 3d Rocket Gun Battalion, and elements of the 11th Air Sector Unit, making a total of 1180 troops. Later reports revised this figure upward to 2850, of which some 329 had been reported killed as of 3 March. (See Order of Battle Summary, 3 March.). Additions to original units of the Left Sector included the 4th Medium Mortar Battalion (previously carried as a Central Sector Unit), the 149th Airfield Battalion, 134th Airfield Battalion, and the 37th Airfield Company. To date in operations in this area the 20th Infantry had counted a known 507 enemy dead.

Although by no means as formidable as the towering MT MATABA and MT PACAWAGAN, terrain obstructing our projected Eastward thrust was ideally suited to a hill by hill, ridge by ridge defense by a determined enemy. Due to supply difficulties, our advances must be canalized along existing East-West trails, which the enemy could easily cover with automatic fires from heavily fortified commanding ground and interdict with artillery and mortar fires. His well established OP's precluded any secrecy of movement on our part, excepting the possibility of night attacks.

### 2. The Operations Plan: (See Fig. 15.)

The XIV Corps scheme of operations envisioned a push Eastward to the BOSO BOSO RIVER, to sever the enemy's North-South line of communications and cut him off from what was believed to be a key supply center at NEW BOSOBOSO. With this accomplished, units on our right could mop up enemy remnants in the ANTIPOLLO sector, while our efforts were then concentrated to the North. The Division plan involved a concentration of the 1st Infantry, reinforced, in the area East of BAYANBAYANAN, from where they would attack to the East in the 20th Infantry Sector. The Regiment would secure both flanks of their line of communications as the attack progressed, and maintain contact with the 1st Cavalry Division on their right.

The 63d Infantry, reinforced, would relieve the 1st Infantry

elements in the SAN MATEO - NOVALICHES DAM area, and the MONTALBAN - MT PACAWAGAN area, securing the high ground along the general line SAN MATEO - SAN JOSE - HOT CORNER, and would counter any offensive threat or infiltration from the Northeast or East.

No change was made in the missions of the 112th RCT.

The shifting of troops was to be conducted with a maximum of secrecy. The Division Artillery would continue normal fire missions in front of the 63d to deceive the enemy as to our intentions. For planning purposes, D-Day was set as 8 March, with H-Hour tentatively scheduled for 0830.

### 3. The Period March 6-11:

Throughout the 6, 7 March, Division operations were concerned primarily with the regrouping of forces in preparation for the coming attack, while front line units in contact continued to exert pressure all along the front. An attack by some 50 Japs, supported by knee mortars, against Company "I", 20th Infantry positions, was repulsed with 21 Japs KIA.

To soften enemy defenses in the objective area, all possible air and artillery concentrations were placed on mortar and artillery positions, troop concentration areas and known enemy strongpoints. Division Artillery marked targets for air strikes, using WP, and Marine dive bombers blasted heavy mortars in deep ravines inaccessible to artillery fires. The 1st and 80th Field Artillery Battalions moved to new positions East of MARIQUINA, to better support the attack.

The 1st Infantry attacked to the East as scheduled, at 080830I, preceded by a half hour of intense artillery and 4.2 mortar preparation, and supported by close air bombardment and strafing. The attack progressed against unexpectedly light resistance and by 1500I, the 1st Battalion was consolidating positions on their initial objective, the commanding ground 1500 yards East of the Line of Departure. On the Regimental right flank, Company "K", reinforced, moved Southeast and East to secure positions to the right and rear of the 1st Battalion. Numerous caves and pillboxes showing signs of recent occupation were discovered in this area. Visual contact was established with 1st Cavalry elements. Company "K" reached their objective unopposed and consolidated their positions against anticipated enemy night counter attacks.

The 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, closed in to an assembly area 2000 yards East of the MARIQUINA AIRSTRIP, in Regimental Reserve, and initiated further movement to positions near the 1st Battalion's LD.

On the 9th, 1st Infantry elements made further penetrations into the enemy's defenses with only moderate resistance until late in

the afternoon. During the morning, Company "G" was moved into the front line, closing a gap between "A" and "B" Companies. Supported by the direct fires of SPM's and AT guns, the 1st Battalion reinforced continued to comb and mop up the surrounding draws, killing 59 Japs. Passing through extensive dug-in and well fortified positions recently vacated by the enemy, Company "C" moved some 600 yards to the East against only token resistance, killing 25 Japs. Late in the afternoon the company was brought under heavy 150mm mortar and artillery fire from enemy positions just to the West of the Division objective, and were forced to withdraw to more tenable ground.

On the right flank, the 3d Battalion maintained its positions on the high ground and patrolled to the East. Patrol contact was established with 1st Cavalry elements.

Determined enemy resistance from well organized positions was encountered on 10 March. The 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, with Company "F" attached, resumed their attack Eastward at 1000I, and secured a key ridge 300 yards to the front. Numerous caves and dug-outs supported by mortars and automatic weapons were overrun, and a total of 185 dead Japs were counted. Numerous weapons and equipment were captured or destroyed.

On the Division right flank, Company "K", 1st Infantry, repulsed an early morning counter attack, then advanced 300 yards to the East, where they engaged in a fire fight with a strong pocket of Japs.

The 20th Infantry moved Company "K" to the North, to a position 1000 yards East of TILAGAAN, to cut off a possible Jap route of withdrawal in that direction.

On 11th March, the Division exploited the gains of the previous two days, destroying considerable enemy supplies and material. The 1st Infantry continued the attack to the East at 0930. Supported by artillery and 4.2 mortar fire, and following an air strike, the 2d Battalion pushed through the 1st Battalion and gained some 1200 yards to the East, sealing and destroying many enemy caves and extensive fortifications in draws and ravines along the axis of advance. Demolitions teams thoroughly covered each successive ridge. The 1st Battalion secured the Regimental supply road and mopped up in the hills and draws surrounding their positions. A total of 60 Japs were killed in one large cave in the 1st Battalion area.

On the Regimental right flank, Company "L" moved from a rear assembly area at 0730I to attack to the Southeast and seize BM 8, the most commanding ground on the Division's right flank, affording excellent observation toward the objective area.

The 20th Infantry moved the 1st Battalion to a forward assembly area just to the rear of the 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry lines. The 3d Battalion, 20th Infantry, advanced Company "K" 1000 yards SSE of MT MATABA. Considerable enemy material was destroyed during the advance and a total of 40 Japs were killed.

In the 63d Infantry Sector, Company "I" executed a reconnaissance in force up the PURAY RIVER to LIMESTONE HILL, 2500 yards North of MT PACAWAGAN. Patrols reported that the enemy had abandoned excellent positions as a result of thorough artillery and air bombardment of this area.

Eighty-five dive bombers bombed and strafed in close support of 1st and 20th Infantry operations and continued to hit enemy caves and gun positions in the MT HAPONANG BANOY, MT PACAWAGAN area.

Enemy identifications made during the period verified the presence of the 148th, 134th and 149th Airfield Battalions and the 47th Airfield Company in the 1st Infantry Sector, receiving the brunt of the present Division attack.

#### 4. The Period March 12-14: (See Fig. 15.)

The enemy attempted to take the offensive during the night of 11-12 March, launching 3 different counter attacks which were repulsed with disastrous results. The largest attack was made against Company "K", 20th Infantry, between 2300I and 2330I. The Company's lines of communication were cut and the attack started by what seemed a pre-arranged signal of lights. The Japs attacked in small infiltration groups and were stopped by combined mortar, artillery and small arms fire, with 49 Japs KIA.

In a new attack to the Northeast, beginning at 0900I, on the 12th, the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, advanced 2000 yards, against varying resistance, and seized the Corps objective in their zone. Numerous Jap-occupied caves were encountered. Each succeeding ridge and the intervening ravines were thoroughly mopped up.

In the 1st Infantry Sector, the 1st and 2d Battalions consolidated their present positions and continued to destroy enemy remnants and by-passed fortifications in adjacent area. The 3d Battalion moved Company "E" to positions adjoining Company "L", on BM 8, and advanced 1 platoon to cut the ANTIPOLO trail 1000 yards to the East.

Thus far in the Division right sector, a total of 153 caves, tunnels, and dug-in fortifications had been overrun and destroyed by combined air, artillery and ground attacks. 6th Engineer Battalion crews destroyed several mine fields consisting chiefly of mortar shells and bombs, and rendered valuable assistance in sealing enemy

caves. Enemy equipment reported captured or destroyed during the period included numerous small arms, two light AA guns, and 3 ammunition dumps. A captured sketch map, actually an engineer work progress chart, showed 133 tunnels varying in size from 15 to 150 feet and a number of field gun emplacements in the area which our troops were now mopping up.

On 13 March, the 1st Infantry advanced their lines 500 yards to the East. The 3d Battalion maintained strong positions on the right flank, combing ravines and destroying abandoned Jap caves in the Battalion zone. Two Jap attacks on the "I" Company roadblock East of BM 8 resulted in 21 enemy dead.

The 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, reorganized and mopped up their newly gained positions, and counted an additional 113 Japs as a result of the previous day's advance. In the 3d Battalion Sector, Company "I" displaced to new positions to the North. An additional 44 Japs were counted as a result of the Jap attack on Company "K" positions the night of 11-12 March.

Company "I", 63d Infantry positions Northeast of MONTALBAN again received night counterattacks, at 0355I and 0410I, by an estimated 60 troops. Trip flares and anti-personnel mines slowed up the attacks, which were further disorganized by our machine guns, mortars and grenades. Eleven dead Japs were found within our positions, with other known dead yet to be counted. Company "C", 44th Tank Battalion (-) reinforced the fires of the 53d Field Artillery Battalion with 1 platoon continuing in direct support of the 20th Infantry. The 6th Engineer Battalion began gravelling the Division MSR East of the MARIQUINA RIVER, and started a new supply road to the 63d Infantry CP, to replace one abandoned temporarily because of increased artillery fires along the route.

The night of 13-14 March and the following day saw an increase of enemy artillery fire, a total of 172 rounds falling in the Division zone, most of it in the Southern Sector.

The 1st Infantry resumed the attack to the East on the 14th, with the 1st Battalion gaining some 300 yards before being stopped by well organized enemy positions supported by MG and mortar fire. The 2d Battalion dispatched patrols to the South to contact the 3d Battalion and combed draws and ravines in the battalion zone. Two small enemy infiltration attempts were thwarted by the Battalion. The 3d Battalion protected the Regimental right flank and maintained contact with the 43d Division, the latter having relieved the 1st Cavalry Division.

The 20th Infantry continued to protect the Division MSR and searched for enemy remnants throughout the Regimental zone. 1st

Battalion reconnaissance patrols operated 1800-3000 yards North and Northeast without enemy contact. The 3d Battalion drew sporadic mortar and artillery fire from the MT MATABA area. Company "I" attacked North through Company "K" and advanced approximately 600 yards to the North against light small arms fire to secure their objective ridge on the Southeast slopes of MT MATABA.

A 63d Infantry patrol operating from SAN ISIDRO North along the PURAY RIVER returned and reported no enemy contact or signs of recent enemy movements.

On the 15th, the 1st and 51st Field Artillery Battalions displaced to new positions. Company "C", 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion (less 1 platoon) continued in support of the 1st Infantry. One Platoon was relieved from attachment to 1st Infantry and was attached to the 20th. Company "D", 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion, passed to control of Commanding General, 43d Infantry Division, while Company "C", 85th Chemical Mortar Battalion, passed to control of Commanding General, XIV Corps.

Some 300 rounds of enemy artillery, 75mm and 105mm, fell within the Division area, with 3d Battalion, 20th Infantry, drawing considerable and accurate 150mm mortar fire.

5. The Eastward Drive is Continued Under XI Corps:

At 0001H, 15 March, the 6th Infantry Division, reinforced, went under the control of XI Corps. Our mission as ordered by that Headquarters was to continue the attack on 17 March, making the main effort on the right (South) flank, in conjunction with the attack of the 43d Division. The 1st Infantry, reinforced, was ordered to secure successive objectives "A" and "B" (see Fig. 16.) The 20th Infantry were ordered to continue their attack to the East to secure successive objectives, and to protect the Division North flank.

The 16th of March brought a heavy outbreak of enemy artillery throughout the Division zone. Some 360 rounds fell, varying from 47mm to 155mm howitzer, causing little material damage, but inflicting several casualties.

Our ground operations were confined to continued preparations for the attack on the 17th. A patrol from Company "I", 1st Infantry, investigating a ravine which had been brought under heavy artillery fire by the battalion, found 175 dead Japs, in an apparent assembly area. Air strikes and artillery bombardments were concentrated on the Division objective and on heavy mortar positions in the MT MATABA area.

The large increase of enemy artillery in the previous few days, together with identifications made of the 26th Ind. Mixed



Regiment, tended to confirm the G-2 estimate that the enemy was moving troops from the ANTIPOLO Sector to the North, which was threatened with complete isolation by our drive. A captured operational order showed the enemy to be highly concerned over his precarious position brought about by our deep penetration of his Left Sector.

In a pre-dawn attack on 17 March, 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry pushed off to the East at 0500I, following a heavy artillery and mortar preparation, and advanced in a column of companies to secure the 20th Infantry portion of objective "A" at 0700I. Ravines were combed throughout the Battalion zone. Many caves were demolished and 124 Japs were killed.

In the 1st Infantry Sector, the 3d Battalion advanced to the East beginning at 0900I, after artillery and mortar preparation, and gained 1000 yards against light resistance. Positions were consolidated on high ground overlooking the Southern portion of Objective "A". On the Regimental left flank, the 1st Battalion resumed its Eastward push at 0930I, and made gains of several hundred yards. About 1800I, some 60 rounds of 150mm mortar, followed by knee mortar fell on Companies "A" and "B" positions, causing heavy casualties and making positions untenable. The Companies withdrew part way to reorganize.

An investigation of the draw fronting the Company "L", 63d Infantry outpost Northeast of MONTALBAN disclosed 72 Japs killed by mortar and artillery fire the past few days. Company "L" drew intermittent mortar fire throughout the night, and repulsed an enemy infiltration attempt.

Three Battalions of Division Artillery (the 51st, 53d, and 80th Field Artillery Battalions) supported by the 517th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm gun) and Battery "C", 465th Field Artillery Battalion (8" how) massed their fires in preparation for the 20th Infantry's night attack. The 1st and 80th Field Artillery Battalions, reinforced by the 517th Field Artillery Battalion, 757th Field Artillery Battalion (155 how), 1 Battery, 544th Field Artillery Battalion (240mm how) and Battery "C", 465th Field Artillery Battalion, fired a preparation for the 0900I attack of the 1st Infantry.

Identifications made in the 20th Infantry zone of the 31st Infantry Regiment which was believed to be in the IPO area, indicated the possibility that the enemy was reinforcing his crumbling Left Sector with elements of that regiment.

#### 6. A Revised Estimate of the Situation, 17 March:

The Division Order of Battle Section summary for the period 10 March to 17 March placed the remaining strength of the Left Sector Force at 2119. The organization of the Left Sector for defense

appears to have been as follows: The Sector was outposted by the MARIQUINA ADVANCED FORCE. The main line of resistance was held by the 3th Provisional Infantry Battalion, the 3d Rocket Gun Battalion, and the 7th Provisional MG Company. Part of the 11th Air Sector (134th, 148th, 149th and 1 Company of the 180th Airfield Battalion) was organized as a second line of resistance. The 5th Provisional AT Company, the 6th and 8th Provisional Artillery Batteries were in support. To date, the Eastward advance of the 1st and 20th Infantry had penetrated both lines and was approaching what was believed to be the 3d line of defense. This line, according to a captured map, consisted of the 22d, 136th, and 137th Field Searchlight Companies, and the 77th Field AA Battalion.

Based on the stubborn resistance already met in the Left Sector, it was suggested that the enemy had placed a high priority on this zone of defense, and that we might expect to meet reinforcements brought in from other Sectors of the SHIMBU Line.

7. The Period March 18-20: (See Fig. 16.)

On the 18th of March, our ground operations were concerned primarily with consolidating and expanding present positions to the North of Objective "A", mopping up bypassed draws and ravines. Battalions assembled near Lines of Departure for attacks on the 19th, and the necessary preliminary reconnaissance was accomplished. In the 1st Infantry zone, Company "C" regained positions relinquished by "A" and "B" Companies during the previous night's heavy mortar attack. The 2d Battalion moved Eastward to positions from which to launch a new attack. During the night, the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry was counter attacked all along the battalion front at 0100I. An estimated company of Japs were repulsed, and at daylight 153 enemy KIA were counted. In a further mop up of the battalion area, several large caves and supply dumps were destroyed. The 2d Battalion, 20th, moved forward to a new Line of Departure. The 3d Battalion patrolled to the North and Northwest. Enemy KIA counted for the day totalled 374.

Substantial gains were made all along the Eastern front on 19th March. In another pre-dawn attack, 2d Battalion, 20th Infantry, advanced about 700 yards Eastward to commanding ground overlooking objective "B" in their sector, some 1200 yards West of MT BAYTANGAN, by 0600I. "E" and "F" Companies sighted a large number of Japs to their right front, apparently preparing for an attack. Artillery and mortar fires were placed on this area. Investigation later showed a total of 96 dead Japs. During the night, a trip flare was set off in the 1st Battalion area, exposing approximately 20 infiltrating Japs, 8 of whom were killed by MG fire. All Battalions continued extensive patrolling and mopping up operations, destroying many caves and considerable equipment. A total of 231 dead Japs were counted in the 20th Sector.

The 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, attacked to the East at 0900I, 19 March, following an artillery and mortar preparation, and advanced 1200 yards, consolidating their lines on Objective "A", 1500 yards Southwest of MT BAYTANGAN. On the right flank, Company "K" reinforced advanced to the East 600 yards, with strong combat patrols combing the draws along the route of advance. An estimated company of Japs attacked "K" Company's position at 1245I, following a heavy knee mortar preparation. The attack was repulsed with 56 Japs KIA. The 1st Battalion completed reorganization and displaced Eastward, patrolling the intervening ground between 2d and 3d Battalions.

Enemy artillery fire continued to fall intermittently throughout the Division area. Few casualties and little damage resulted. Corps Artillery reinforced Division Artillery in firing preparatory and supporting fires for both 1st and 20th Infantry attacks. Air strikes included 20 B-24's which hit the summit and South and East slopes of MT ORO.

On the 20th of March, the 2d Battalion, 20th Infantry, advanced an additional 500-600 yards to the East, Company "F" cutting the North-South trail on Objective "B", while "G" Company denied its use to the enemy from commanding positions on the high ground immediately to the West. Seven 20mm AA guns were destroyed during the advance.

A captured Field Order dated 8 March and signed "GROUP CO KOBAYASHI Takashi", concerned the commitment of the 185th II Battalion (less 1 section) in the 20th Infantry Sector, West of MT BAYTANGAN, and the employment of the 1st and 2d Provisional Engineer Companies in the MT BAYTANGAN - MT YABANG area. With the recent identification of the 2d Battalion and Regimental Headquarters of the 26th IMR by a PW, and now of the above units which had been previously believed to be reserve units of the KOBAYASHI HEIDAN, it appeared that the enemy was employing all available reserves to prevent a break through in the Left Sector.

#### 8. The Period March 21-23:

The Division's main effort on 21 March was made in the 1st Infantry Sector. Following artillery and 4.2 mortar preparations and a close air bombardment, Company "G" advanced Southeast some 600 yards, to seize the high ground 1300 yards Northwest of MT YABANG, on a line with 20th Infantry advance elements and just short of Objective "B". Company "L", on the Regimental right flank, advanced Northeast 800 yards to secure the Southern portion of Objective "A".

Enemy activities were characterized by a renewal of artillery fires and light infiltration attacks. Throughout the night, 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry received an estimated 200 rounds of 75mm and 105mm fire from positions fronting the 172d Infantry (43d U. S. Infantry Division) on the Division's right flank. Considerable 150mm

mortar fire fell on the 1st Infantry supply road during the night. Company "E", 20th Infantry, repulsed a series of Jap infiltration attacks by approximately 40 Japs, from 0100I to 0400I, killing 14. The Division total of enemy KIA for the day was 124.

On the 22d, extensive patrol activity was carried out throughout the Division zone and preparations were completed for continuing the attack to the East on the 23d. In the 20th Infantry zone, Company "C" made a reconnaissance in force some 800 yards to the East, to Objective "B", on the Southwest slopes of MT BAYTANGAN. Their advance was slow, against enemy resisting from caves and other prepared positions. Many caves were destroyed and considerable equipment captured, and 79 Japs were killed. 2d Battalion patrols worked East to the BOSO BOSO and MARIQUINA RIVERS. The 3d Battalion received intermittent mortar fire throughout the day. Patrols combing the Battalion area destroyed several caves.

The night of 22-23 March saw a noticeable decline in enemy aggressiveness, with no counter attacks or infiltration raids attempted. Both the 1st and 20th Infantry experienced little difficulty in advancing next morning to Objective "B". The 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, supported by 1 Platoon of Company "B", 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion, attacked at 0900I, with Companies "A" and "C" in the assault, and advanced against moderate resistance to seize and consolidate positions on the wooded area just West of MT BAYTANGAN. Numerous caves, both occupied and unoccupied, were encountered. In the advance, 134 Japs were killed and a great deal of enemy material was captured or destroyed, including five 47mm guns, five knee mortars, 16 LMG's and 4 HMG's.

On the Division right flank, the 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry, attacked Eastward at 1000I, supported by Division Artillery, and Company "C", 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion, Company "I" advancing 1300 yards in two hours to secure the battalion objective, Northwest of MT YABANG, which dominates North-South trail in the Southern portion of Objective "B".

The 63d Infantry dispatched overnight patrols to the North and Northeast, to return at 1800I on the 24th. The 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop moved from its positions near HOT CORNER to an assembly area Northeast of BAYANBAYAN, in preparation for future patrols in the BOSO BOSO RIVER area.

So far, in this sector, the 1st and 20th Infantry had destroyed a total of 322 caves and tunnels.

From identifications obtained on the 23d, it had become increasingly possible that elements of the 31st Regiment, 8th Division, or possibly the whole regiment, had been injected into the Left Sector Line or had been committed to defend the Southern approach to WAWA

9. The Final Phase of the Drive to the East: (See Fig. 17.)

On the 24th the Division completed successful advances to the East as planned. The 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, launched a coordinated attack at 0835I, advanced rapidly for 800 yards against light resistance, and reached the Battalion objective at 1205I, cutting the last main N-S trail and securing the high ground South of MT BAYTANGAN, overlooking the BOSO BOSO RIVER. A total of 34 Japs were killed during the advance and mop up. The 3d Battalion consolidated their present positions, patrols mopping up remaining resistance in the "I" Company sector, and furnished protection for 6th Engineer elements improving the Regimental supply road. The 3d Battalion assault team blew up some 37 enemy caves.

In the 20th Infantry Sector, the 1st Battalion reinforced continued to drive Eastward, and secured the commanding ground on MT BAYTANGAN. Company "A" spearheaded the attack, against heavy small arms and automatic weapons fire. Some 143 dead Japs were counted during the advance and in subsequent patrol activity, most of whom had been killed by mortar and artillery fire. Patrol action in both the 1st and 2d Battalion zones accounted for considerable enemy material and equipment captured or destroyed. 2d Battalion patrols North and East to the BOSO BOSO RIVER sighted a 20-foot wide road on the East side of the stream, and observed two enemy trucks moving North.

The enemy showed considerable aggressiveness during the night of the 24th. The 2d Battalion, 20th Infantry, received some 80 rounds of mortar fire, accompanied by small infiltration attacks. Just before dark, in the 63d Infantry Sector, an OP sighted 40 Japs leaving the MANGO RIVER gorge and entering the SAN MATEO - MONTALBAN VALLEY. Artillery fire was placed on this group, which caused them to withdraw back into the gorge. At 0100I, an "I" Company, 63d Infantry listening post at SAN ISIDRO repulsed a raiding party of 25 Japs. Several fires were started in MONTALBAN at 0350I, and a patrol sent to investigate killed 7 Japs 1000 yards Southwest of the town. 1st Battalion patrols South of SAN JOSE, between 0315I and daylight killed 17 Japs armed with bangalore torpedoes, incendiary bombs and satchel charges. A "B" Company patrol to SAN MATEO at 0815I encountered an estimated 50 Japs, who scattered throughout the town, and were hunted down throughout the day. Three pro-Jap Filipinos, headed toward the mountains from MONTALBAN were captured, and were found to be carrying Japanese explosives.

The 63d Infantry dispatched two 5-man patrols up the PURAY RIVER to MT ORO and Northeast up the TANOG RIVER, to be gone 4 days.

Air strikes on the 24th were concentrated on the area of projected operations. Forty P-51's and seven P-38's bombed and strafed enemy supply dumps and troop concentration areas on MT PACAWAGAN, MT MATABA, and the WAWA VALLEY, while eighteen B-25's

bombed and strafed the MANGO RIVER gorge and started several large fires.

10. Summary:

For all practical purposes the drive to the East had been completed. All enemy defense lines in this sector had been penetrated and the units either destroyed or rendered ineffective. On the right flank, 43d Division elements had occupied MT YABANG and were fast closing in on NEW BOSO BOSO. While identifications captured by 1st Infantry showed evidence of forces from the South being forced North into the Division zone of action, there were no signs of any further organized defenses to the immediate front, except perhaps in the MT PURRO area, which our patrols were now beginning to probe.

Since the beginning of the Eastward push on 7 March, some 3300 enemy dead had been counted in the Left Sector, while the 63d Infantry and 112th RCT areas had yielded an additional 300 enemy KIA. Our casualties for the same period numbered 112 killed, 503 wounded, and 3 missing.

Enemy equipment captured or destroyed included:

<u>CAPTURED</u>	<u>DESTROYED</u>
1 150mm Mortar	1 150mm Gun
2 37mm Guns	1 105mm Gun
16 HMG's	6 75mm Guns
24 HMG's	10 47mm Guns
1 Cal .50 MG	2 37mm AA Guns
1 Rocket Launcher	1 70mm Gun
1 81mm Mortar	1 90mm Mortar
3 Knee Mortars	21 HMG's
1 20mm AA Gun	27 LMG's
30 Rifles	2 Rocket Launchers
1 Armored Car	4 Aircraft MG's
1 Shotgun	4 Cal .50 MG's
3 Cal.50 MG's	14 Knee Mortars
1 Switchboard	9 20mm AA Guns
300 Drums Gas	65 Rifles
10 Cases MG Ammo	37 Ammo Dumps (assorted)
	3 Food Dumps
	350 (Or more) caves, tunnels

During the period, the Division continued to receive excellent air support, primarily from Marine dive bombers operating under the 308th Bomb Wing. Strikes were utilized for the most part in close support missions on objective areas of the 1st and 20th Infantry, bombing and strafing pin pointed gun positions, dumps and troop concentration areas. The almost continuous air coverage achieved

greatly restricted the enemy's movements. Several close support missions in which 500 and 1000 lb bombs were dropped on objectives only a few hundred yards from our troops were perfectly executed, to the great satisfaction of battalion and regimental commanders. Planes were talked to targets by Infantry ALP Officers, operating from advanced battalion OP's. Extensive use was made of artillery and chemical mortar WP shells to designate target. Daily missions were continued against dump areas and installations on MT ORO, MT PACAWAGAN and along the MARIQUINA and BOSO BOSO RIVER areas. Late in the period strikes were massed against enemy heavy mortar positions in deep ravines on MT MATABA, and on known strong points in the MANGO RIVER gorge, in preparation for a new drive in that sector. Although concrete results of these strikes were generally undetermined, many caves, gun positions and dump areas were known to have been destroyed. A total of approximately 1050 sorties were flown, some 200 of which were B-25's and B-24's, and over 1000 tons of bombs were dropped.

### PART III WE ATTACK TO THE NORTH

#### 1. Estimate of the Situation, 25 March:

Although the Southern part of his line had been destroyed, it was expected that the enemy would continue his stubborn defense of the MT MATABA strongpoint and that our drive Northward toward WAWA and the MARIQUINA RIVER would be opposed by well organized defenses. Sufficient time had elapsed since our first successful penetrations to the East for him to regroup his Central Sector forces, reinforced by remnants of the Left Sector and to displace his artillery and heavy mortars to meet our thrusts from the South.

Several new identifications made by the 63d and 20th Infantry during the previous few days indicated that units originally carried in the IPO area were being moved Southward to reinforce the enemy's shattered left flank, while identifications of the 5th Medium Mortar Battalion in the 20th Infantry sector suggested the shifting of elements previously carried in the MT PACAWAGAN - MT HAPONANG BANOY areas.

The Division Order of Battle Summary for the period 19-25 March listed newly identified units recently encountered in the Left Sector, which raised the original estimate to 4000. Deducting known enemy dead and an estimated number of wounded and probable dead from artillery and air bombardments, a total 3800 troops were believed to be still defending the Right, Central and Left Sectors of the MT ORO - MT MATABA portion of the SHIMBU Line. There remained the possibility of the KIBIYASHI Battalion, SUZUKI Battalion and 31st Infantry Regiment, 8th Division being in the above areas, which would raise the remaining strength to approximately 7,700 troops.

## 2. The Period 25-27 March:

This 3-day period was devoted to making plans and regrouping forces for a co-ordinated attack to the North, to seize MT MATABA and the high ground overlooking the MARIQUINA RIVER, West of the MARIQUINA - BOSO BOSO RIVER junction. The first two days saw both the 1st and 20th Infantry expanding their present positions on the high ground West of the BOSO BOSO RIVER and in the MT BAYTANGAN area. Both regiments patrolled throughout their zones, searching for bypassed enemy remnants. A combat patrol from Company "K", 1st Infantry, contacted a strong pocket of enemy in a wooded ravine, consisting of numerous caves, which were closed or demolished by the direct fires from supporting SPM's. A 20th Infantry patrol encountered an estimated 20 Japs in the process of setting up a 105mm gun. Accurately placed mortar fire dispersed the Japs, killing 6, and our troops destroyed the 105mm gun and three 75mm guns. 20th Infantry patrols in the 3d Battalion zone probed for enemy dispositions and routes of approach in the MT MATABA area.

1st Infantry and 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop patrols working East to the BOSO BOSO RIVER on 26 March moved slowly through the heavily vegetated area East of MT BAYTANGAN. A Reconnaissance Troop patrol located a bivouac of an estimated company of Japs, some 1500 yards North-Northeast of MT BAYTANGAN. In the Division zone, the BOSO BOSO RIVER was found to be a deep gorge, with steep and heavily wooded sides. Only a few crossing points were located.

Late in the afternoon of 26 March, two reinforced platoons of the 1st Battalion, 63d Infantry, advanced East toward the MANGO RIVER and AMPID RIVER gorges with a mission of drawing fire to determine enemy defenses and gun positions in the MT MATABA area.

In an effort to screen our intended thrust at MT MATABA from the South, 3 reinforced platoons of the 1st Battalion, 63d Infantry, made an afternoon diversionary attack on the night of 27-28 March toward the MANGO, AMPID and UNNAMED RIVER gorges. 81mm mortar fire and 105mm fire from SPM's were placed on the respective objective areas. Artillery fires supporting the "A" Company platoon set on fire a large ammo dump at the mouth of the MANGO RIVER. Throughout the night these groups harassed their objective areas with the fires of 60mm and 81mm mortars, MG's and 37mm AT guns. Further North, the 3d Battalion, 63d dispatched Company "K" to a position 2000 yards Southwest of MT ORO, to establish a base for reconnaissance missions in the MT ORO area.

On the extreme left flank, a strong combat patrol of the 112th RCT, operating in the hills Northeast of SAN JOSE, engaged in a stiff fire fight with a Jap outpost supported by 75mm guns, a 150mm mortar, and smaller mortars. Twenty Japs were killed.



One Company of the 6th Ranger Battalion moved to an assembly area near BALARA FILTERS and prepared plans with the Division staff for reconnaissance missions East of the BOSO BOSO RIVER, to be initiated the night of 28-29 March.

Meanwhile, on the Division's right flank, the 43d Division mopped up caves and installations in the MT YABANG - MT CAMAYUMAN areas. Elements of the 103d Infantry entered NEW BOSOBOSO in strength, securing large quantities of enemy supplies and equipment, and pushed patrols to the East and Northeast.

### 3. March 28:

Substantial gains Northward into the enemy's Central Sector were made by both attacking regiments in the initial push. The 2d Battalion, 20th Infantry, reinforced by 1 Platoon of Company "B", 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion, jumped off just before midnight and advanced 600 yards to the North under the cover of darkness, moving against light resistance but slowed by very difficult terrain. Resuming their attack at 0800I, the battalion encountered increasingly stiff resistance from automatic weapons, small arms and mortars. Companies "F" and "G", in the assault, killed 85 Japs. The 3d Battalion, also reinforced by a platoon of 4.2 mortars, remained in their assembly area until 0850I, at which time Company "I" was committed on the 2d Battalion's right flank. This force advanced approximately 800 yards, followed by the remainder of the battalion, to positions abreast of the 2d Battalion and some 1800 yards South of MT MATABA proper.

The 1st Infantry launched their attack at 0730I. The 1st Battalion, reinforced by a platoon of 4.2 mortars and a Cannon Company Platoon, pushed off behind a brief artillery preparation and advanced 800 yards to the Northwest. Enemy resistance was light, but the nature of the terrain necessitated slow progress. The 2d and 3d Battalions conducted intensive patrolling in their respective zones, East to the BOSOBOSO RIVER. Several caves were destroyed by the 2d Battalion assault team. A Company "E" patrol discovered an enemy bivouac area and observed an estimated 75 Japs, some cows and chickens, at a point 1000 yards Northeast of MT BAYTANGAN. Our artillery registered on this area.

63d Infantry patrols creating the diversionary attacks in the river gorges North and West of MT MATABA withdrew at daylight, after having received only light mortar fire from the enemy.

Division Artillery, reinforced by the fires of the 757th Field Artillery Battalion, 517th Field Artillery Battalion, and one battery each of the 465th and 544th Field Artillery Battalions, supported the attacks of the 1st and 20th Infantry. Co "C", 754th Tank Battalion passed to Division control and began movement to the Division area. ✓

#### 4. March 29:

Continuing the attack on MT MATABA at 0835I next morning, the 3d Battalion, 20th Infantry, reinforced, advanced North, then Northwest across deep ravines and steep ridges and against well prepared positions, gaining 700 yards. Numerous caves and several log pillboxes were destroyed. The 2d Battalion consolidated their present positions, mopping up in the battalion zone and along the 3d Battalion supply route. A small group of Japs who attempted to infiltrate "E" and "F" Company positions during the night were repulsed and suffered 9 KIA. Sporadic enemy mortar fire fell throughout the battalion area.

In the 1st Infantry Sector, the 1st Battalion continued their push to the North, after a brief artillery preparation, and moved several hundred yards through thickly wooded terrain. Company "A", in the assault, contacted strong enemy positions just short of their day's objective. The 2d Battalion continued their patrols East to the BOSOBOSO RIVER and combed for bypassed enemy elements in the regimental zone. The Battalion Assault Team blew up 9 caves, and Company "F" destroyed a cave containing a 105mm ammo dump. In the 3d Battalion zone, a Company "L" patrol discovered four 105mm guns, two 75mm guns, and one 37mm gun, all destroyed and abandoned by the Japs.

Operations in the 63d Infantry zone saw patrols probing deep into the MT ORO area, in a search for enemy dispositions and approach routes thereto. In a pre-dawn infiltration attack against Company "K", two Japs carrying cone-shaped demolition charges were killed. Further South, a 1st Battalion ambush at MONTALBAN engaged in an early morning skirmish with 15-20 Japs supported by 1 LMG and mortars, and 5 Japs were killed.

Companies "B" and "C", 82d Chemical Mortar Battalion, continued harassing fires in support of the attacking regiments and screened the evacuation of several litter cases. Company "F", 6th Ranger Battalion, patrolling beyond the BOSOBOSO RIVER Northeast of MT BAYTANGAN, sighted small groups of Japs, but found no signs of an organized defensive line. Japs observed appeared to be transients. Terrain encountered was rugged and thickly vegetated, restricting movement to trails.

#### 5. March 30:

Little gains were made by either 1st or 20th Infantry on 30 March. Increasingly heavy resistance was met from terrain predominantly favoring the defense. Artillery and accurate 150mm mortar fire inflicted heavy casualties on our troops and necessitated some shifting of positions. On the East flank, the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, was stopped just short of the regimental objective by Jap automatic weapons and mortars. Early in the day, enemy artillery

and heavy mortar fires fell on 2d Battalion positions, causing several casualties. An "F" Company patrol working North toward the junction of the MARIQUINA - BOSOBOSO RIVERS encountered a small enemy bivouac and observed an estimated 35 Japs, including men, women and children.

The 3d Battalion, 20th Infantry, made new thrusts to the North. In a flanking movement to the right, Company "I" passed through the 2d Battalion elements to reach their intermediate objective, only to draw immediately 150mm mortar fire of such accuracy and intensity that they were forced to withdraw. The 2d Battalion consolidated their present positions and continued to police draws along the 3d Battalion supply road. Nightfall found the 20th Infantry elements on an East-West line generally 1500 yards South-Southeast of MT MATABA, with 3d Battalion on the right, 2d Battalion on the left.

In the 63d Infantry sector, enemy artillery was active, all three battalions drawing considerable 105mm fire, believed to have originated in the IPO area. In the 2d Battalion area an "F" Company bridge guard was attacked by 7 "civilians". Two were taken prisoner and were identified as pro-Jap Filipinos. A "K" Company patrol in the PURAY RIVER - TANOG RIVER area, toward MT ORO, made no enemy contacts, and reported that the construction of a supply road toward MT ORO via the PURAY RIVER would require a major Engineer effort. Enemy patrols were active in the SAN ISIDRO area, and in the area Northwest of MONTALBAN. To the North, a returning 7-man reconnaissance patrol of the 112th RCT were ambushed by 20-30 Japs supported by 3 machine guns. In the ensuing fight, 5 Japs were killed.

#### 6. March 31 - April 1:

Operations for this two day period were largely confined to the consolidating and reorganizing of 1st and 20th Infantry positions, while strong combat patrols searched for weak spots in the enemy's line and sought artillery and mortar positions denying our advances both on MT MATABA and to the high ground overlooking the MARIQUINA RIVER. Patrols from "K" and "I" Companies working across the BOSOBOSO RIVER East of MT BAYTANGAN drew considerable sniper and knee mortar fire, though no organized positions of any consequence were encountered. On the 1st of April, the 2d Battalion relieved 1st Battalion elements in their positions in the Northernmost part of the regimental zone, and the 1st Battalion reorganized and prepared to exploit the gains of the 2d Battalion, in the latter's attack next day.

The 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, moved from BARANKA under cover of darkness to a forward assembly area to the right rear of 3d Battalion elements, relieving the 2d Battalion, which reverted to Division Reserve in the vicinity of BALARA FILTERS.

In a renewal of activity on the high ground Northeast of MONTALBAN, the enemy employed artillery and knee mortars on "L" Company,

63d Infantry outpost, and inflicted several casualties. Company "C", 754th Tank Battalion, now in an assembly area near BARANKA, conducted reconnaissance in both the 1st and 20th zones, in preparation for employment on 2 April. The remaining platoon passed to 1st Infantry control.

6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop patrols East of the BOSOBOSO RIVER reported no evidences of an organized line of any kind. 6th Ranger Battalion patrols toward MT PURRO encountered thickly vegetated areas which could be traversed only by dint of considerable hacking of paths through the bamboo thickets. These patrols did not cross the stream, but gained an OP commanding the BOSOBOSO RIVER trail. Another Ranger patrol, following a trail Northeast from MT BAYTANGAN, was blocked by MG fire at a point approximately 2000 yards South of the junction of the MARIQUINA - BOSOBOSO RIVERS. Numerous foxholes were observed to the front, while whistle signals and sounds of considerable enemy activity were heard on the flanks of the trail just traversed. The patrol withdrew, and reported having heard a child crying, and sounds of chickens, just North of their furthest point of advance.

#### 7. Revised Estimate of the Situation, April 1:

Thus far in our Northward thrust, the enemy continued to refuse his exposed Southern flank in the Central portion of the SHIMBU Line, doggedly denying our forces access to the MT MATABA area. Although forced to surrender the MT BAYTANGAN hill mass and the area some 2000-2500 yards to the North thereof, he had countered Northward thrusts of the 1st Infantry with such intense mortar, artillery and MG fire that our troops had been forced to cede their slight gains. Advances of both the 1st and 20th had been met by remnants of the Left Sector Force, with the 2d Battalion, 26th Independent Mixed Regiment shouldering the bulk of the defense. Other identifications of units in contact included 11th Air Sector remnants and stragglers from the FUJITA Battalion. There was a noticeable lack of further identifications of the 31st Infantry, 8th Division. The 31st Regiment (1800) and the KIBIYASHI Battalion (750), still unidentified, comprised a total of 2550 reserves capable of intervention.

The Division Order of Battle Summary for the period March 25 - 30 presented an encouraging picture. Estimating the total strength of units identified less known dead to be 6673, as of 30 March, the total estimated enemy WIA and KIA from artillery strikes were subtracted to leave an estimated 3000 troops opposing our advances in the Right, Central, and Left Sectors of the SHIMBU Line.

Although the Left Sector remnants in contact at present were defending a line from MT MATABA generally East, there was as yet no real indication as to the extent of these organized positions.