

8. The Attack is Renewed Once More: (See Fig. 18.)

On 2 April, both the 1st and 20th resumed their attacks. The 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, reinforced by 2 platoons of Company "B", 82d Chemical Battalion, jumped off to the Northwest at 0640I, following an artillery preparation. Companies "B" and "C" in the assault advanced 800 yards under continuous small arms and MG and intermittent 150mm mortar fires. Company "A" moved up between the two assault companies and mopped up bypassed resistance. The 3d Battalion also attacked at 0645I, Company "I" advancing 600 yards against MG fire to secure their objective, only to be driven back by intense and accurate 150mm mortar fire which inflicted heavy casualties on our troops.

Little success was achieved in the 1st Infantry zone. The 2d Battalion, reinforced by 1 platoon each of chemical mortars, tanks and Cannon Company SPM's, attacked at 0810I, but the attack bogged down in the face of intense MG and mortar fire.

In the 63d sector, Company "G" positions West of MT ORO repulsed a night attack by an unknown number of Japs using knee mortars, MG and small arms fire. Five Japs were killed and one PW was captured.

On 2 April, orders were issued which involved the mutual relief of the 1st Infantry and 63d Infantry, the latter taking over the MT MATABA area. By Corps order, the 112th RCT was relieved from Division control, and, together with the 159th Infantry, were to form the Baldy Task Force, which would assume responsibility for the zone from HOT CORNER North to the IPO area. This reduced somewhat the front which the Division had to cover.

The principal activity on this date took place in the zone of the 63d Infantry. Company "A" patrols reconnoitering for approaches to MT MATABA from the West moved 200 yards up the Northwest slopes, South of the MANGO RIVER, and drew direct 75mm and 150mm mortar fires believed to have originated in the MANGO RIVER gorge. Other 1st Battalion patrols worked several hundred yards to the East, up the UNNAMED RIVER, with nil enemy contacts.

From positions formerly occupied by the 20th Infantry, the 63d Infantry, reinforced by 1 Platoon, Company "C", 754th Tank Battalion and Company "B", 82d Chemical Battalion was ordered to attack North on 6 April to seize MT MATABA and destroy all enemy elements therein. The 1st Infantry, reinforced by Company "C", 82d Chemical Battalion, and 1 Platoon, Company "C", 754th Tank Battalion (less the 3d Battalion in Division Reserve) was directed to continue to secure the high ground commanding the BOSO BOSO RIVER, while continuing development of the enemy positions to the North, in preparation for further attacks on Division order.

9. April 4-5:

This two day period was devoted to completing the regrouping of forces and in preparing for the April 6th attack. The 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, maintained security patrols in the area South of MT MATABA until relieved by 2d Battalion, 63d Infantry, who immediately initiated reconnaissance of their objective area. This relief was completed under the cover of darkness.

In carrying out their assigned missions, the 1st Infantry dispatched I&R Platoon and other patrols to the North and East, making contacts with isolated groups of Japs. In expanding their positions, the 2d Battalion employed direct fire from tanks and SPM's against caves and pillboxes. Considerable supplies and equipment were destroyed by 1st Battalion and I&R Platoon patrols East of MT BAYTANGAN. Numerous well built huts, wrecked trucks and approximately 100 unoccupied caves, some of the latter being large enough to accommodate 15 men, were found.

On the extreme left flank of the Division, a 6th Ranger patrol operated several thousand yards to the Northeast, to a point 2000 yards North of MT ORO. Enroute the patrol encountered a strong enemy combat patrol, 11 of which were killed by the Rangers using hand grenades. These Japs wore head camouflage and carried fixed bayonets. Their mess kits held cooked rice. They were in top physical condition, husky and well fed. No noteworthy enemy contacts were made in the MT ORO area.

A PW taken by the 112th RCT stated that about a month previously the KOBAYASHI Force had moved South from IPO. This force of some 2700 troops comprised the bulk of the 31st Infantry Regiment, 8th Division, the 13th MG Battalion, elements of the 23d Independent AT Battalion, and a HIRASHI unit. It was believed that the enemy was probably holding this force in reserve somewhere in the WAWA area.

10. The Period April 6-9:

Operations during this four day period were centered around 3 co-ordinated attacks which the 63d Infantry launched against the MT MATABA strong point, all of which were stubbornly resisted by automatic weapons fires from mutually supporting strong points, supported by accurate and intense artillery and 150mm mortar fires.

The first of these attacks was launched at 0630I, April 6th. From their positions Southeast of the mountain, the 2d Battalion pushed off behind a 15 minute artillery preparation and advanced Northward against only small arms fire until some 200 yards short of their objective, Hills "A" and "X", approximately 1000 yards Southeast of the summit of MT MATABA (see Fig. 20.) Here the enemy, from caves and pillboxes, placed automatic weapons, knee mortar and 150mm mortar

fires on our advancing troops. Direct fires from SPM's, tanks and 4.2 mortar fire were used in an effort to neutralize these positions. Under the covering fires of the 3d Battalion, on their left, Companies "E" and "C" secured portions of their initial objectives, and reported finding 100 dead Japs, killed by artillery fire.

On the West flank, 1st Battalion, 63d Infantry, patrols operating in the AMPID and UNNAMED RIVER gorges, advanced approximately 200 yards into the gorges with no enemy contacts. The battalion continued reconnaissance of MT MATABA in preparation for future commitment in this area.

During the night, Company "E" positions on the South slope of their objective hill received several small counter attacks by Japs attempting to retake the hill. These were repulsed and 48 enemy were killed. The 2d Battalion renewed their attack at 0630I, Companies "E" and "G" maneuvering against both flanks of the objective area, hills "A" and "X", and drawing heavy MG fire from emplacements on the reverse slopes of both hills. Company "F" was committed on the right flank of Company "E", and moved around the East flank of Objective "A". The battalion knocked out a total of 5 machine guns and dugouts.

The 3d Battalion, from their positions to the left rear of the 2d Battalion, launched an attack at 0630I, across the saddle connecting the two objective hills and they too were stopped by heavy MG fires.

At 2030I, following a medium mortar concentration, the Japs launched a well organized counter attack against Company "G", 63d Infantry, which was forced to shift to a position on the East slopes of Objective "A", out of the mortar impact area. Enemy harassing attacks, mortar and artillery fires continued throughout the night. The 3d Battalion attacked at the same time, maneuvering around the West slope of Objective "A", toward the saddle between the two hills. Company "K", in the assault, drove in the Jap outposts and reached the main Jap positions, where enemy MG and mortar fire reached such intensity that the company was forced to abandon ground gained.

No large scale advances were undertaken on 8 and 9 April. Positions were consolidated and the two battalions regrouped for another major effort on the 10th. On the morning of 9 April a "K" Company patrol reoccupied the South slopes of Objective "A", followed later by the balance of the company.

The 1st Battalion, 63d Infantry, assembled in the SAN MATEO area, completed preparations for an attack on MT MATABA from the West. In the 1st Infantry sector, plans were completed for future attacks on the high ground South of the MARIQUINA RIVER. Scattered contacts with small groups of enemy were made.

The 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop operated armored car patrols along the pipeline road from BALARA FILTERS to a point 3000 yards West of the NOVALICHES WATERSHED, and along the Division MSR and SAN MATEO - MONTALBAN Road.

The 6th Engineer (Combat) Battalion furnished demolition parties to support the 63d Infantry in destroying caves and pillboxes in their objective areas, and completed surfacing the Division MSR.

Company "C", 754th Tank Battalion (less 1 Platoon supporting the 1st Infantry) continued to reconnoiter the MT MATABA area for terrain suitable for tank attacks.

Company "B", 82d Chemical Battalion delivered 4.2 mortar fires in preparation for and in support of the 63d Infantry attacks, while Company "C" delivered harassing fires for the 1st Infantry.

During this four day period, Division Artillery, reinforced by Corps artillery units, saturated the MT MATABA objective areas. Air strikes were used to hammer enemy positions on both MT MATABA and MT PACAWAGAN.

11. Estimate of the Situation April 9:

While the enemy had undoubtedly suffered heavy attrition from our combined ground, air, and artillery blows, he had successfully defended his MT MATABA strongpoint. Devastating artillery and heavy mortar fire plus constant air bombardment had been unable to dislodge him, where heretofore he had withdrawn under lesser poundings. This stubborn resistance, coupled with the move South from IPO of the KOBAYASHI Force seemed convincing proof that the WAWA stronghold remained of utmost importance to the enemy.

In preventing our seizure of MT MATABA, the enemy had thus far placed an unprecedented reliance on his artillery and heavy mortars. Some 700 rounds of 75mm, 105mm, and other calibers were received by our units during the period April 6-9, while the 150mm mortars, though used more sparingly, inflicted heavy casualties on the attacking troops of the 63d Infantry.

To date we had destroyed in the Right, Central and Left Sectors a large proportion of the enemy's artillery pieces, but over half still remained.

	<u>47mm</u> <u>Gun</u>	<u>70mm</u> <u>How</u>	<u>75mm</u> <u>Gun</u>	<u>105mm</u> <u>How</u>	<u>150mm</u> <u>Mortar</u>	<u>Rocket</u> <u>Gun</u>
Destroyed to date	15	4	10	7	3	18
Still Operative	10	6	20	7	14	24

The enemy's supply of ammunition could be considered ample, safely stored underground.

12. MT MATABA Falls: (See Fig. 19.)

At 0400I, 10 April, the 63d Infantry launched a coordinated attack on MT MATABA, with the 1st Battalion attacking from the West and Southwest up the steep slopes facing the MARIQUINA VALLEY and with the 3d Battalion attacking to secure the remainder of the ridge line East and Southeast of MT MATABA (Objectives "A", "B", and "X"). This attack was preceded by a heavy artillery preparation fired by 2 light and 2 medium artillery battalions, and a battery each of 8" howitzers and 155mm guns.

The attack was successful, resulting in the seizure of all of the MT MATABA hill mass except the Northernmost tip of the mountain. The effectiveness of our artillery support was evidenced when the infantry killed 35 stupefied Japs and counted an additional 100 killed by artillery fire.

Both battalions consolidated their positions on 11-13 April, mopping up by-passed enemy positions and repulsing light counter-attacks. On 14 April, an attack to seize the Northernmost tip of MT MATABA was stopped by determined resistance from mutually supporting emplacements, the approaches to which were canalized along "hog-backs". The attack was continued on 15 April and gains of some 400 yards were made against fortified caves and emplacements. An additional 150 yards was gained on 16 April, and on the 17th the remainder of MT MATABA was seized by direct assault.

In the final phases of the MT MATABA attack, SPM's and tanks rendered excellent direct support. The Herculean efforts of the 6th Engineers in pushing supply roads up to the very summit of MT MATABA made this close support possible. Effective smoke screens laid down by artillery, chemical mortars and by B-25's blinded enemy observation in the area and allowed engineer construction, troop movements and supply and evacuation to continue with minimum interference from enemy artillery and mortar fire.

13. Other Operations, 10-18 April:

While the 63d Infantry was attacking MT MATABA, the 20th Infantry continued to secure the NOVALICHES WATERSHED area and the high ground West and Northwest of MONTALBAN, and probed enemy positions in the MT PACAWAGAN area. On 16-17 April, the 20th Infantry effected a mutual relief with the 145th Infantry (37th Division), which had been garrisoning MANILA. On the 18th, the 20th Infantry passed to the control of the Provost Marshal General USAFFE in MANILA and the 145th Infantry passed to the control of the 6th Division.

The 1st Infantry maintained positions South, North, and Northwest of MT BAYTANGAN until 16 April, searching for enemy dispositions to the North and regrouping for further attacks on the

regimental objective, the high ground South of the MARIQUINA RIVER and 4000 yards South of MT BINICAYAN. On 17-18 April, the 3d Battalion attacked Northward along "WOODPECKER RIDGE" and gained 600 yards in spite of severe 90mm and 150mm mortar fire. The intensity of the fighting is evidenced by the fact that the 3d Battalion suffered over 100 battle casualties during these two days.

14. The Capture of MT PACAWAGAN: (See Fig. 20.)

With the fall of the MT MATABA stronghold, MT PACAWAGAN remained as the last position from which the enemy could observe the MARIQUINA RIVER VALLEY. This sprawling hill mass was also the last enemy strongpoint on the MLR of the SHIMBU LINE.

There are no easy approaches to the summit of MT PACAWAGAN; its slopes are precipitous all around. It is separated from MT MATABA by the MANGO RIVER gorge, deep, rocky and narrow, with steep slopes and heavily covered with dense bamboo thickets. The highest part of MT PACAWAGAN is the Northern end; here the ground rises to three separate knobs which form a triangle. The ground on top slopes to the South and runs into two parallel spurs separated by a deep and densely wooded ravine. Parts of the mountain are heavily wooded; other parts are comparatively open.

Patrol reports and captured documents disclosed that the strongest part of the enemy positions was located on the North end. Here the Jap had built a complex system of pillboxes, trenches, tunnels and caves on the triangle formed by the three mutually supporting knobs. It was believed that the Southern half of the mountain was relatively lightly held.

On 18 April, the 145th Infantry was ordered to attack MT PACAWAGAN. The attack was launched at 0400I, 21 April with the 3d Battalion making the main effort against the Southwest slopes of the mountain. The 1st Battalion attacked the Western slopes in two places about in the center of the hill mass. By the end of the day, the 3d Battalion was securely dug in on the Southern end of MT PACAWAGAN, having stormed the summit against only light resistance. Both columns of the 1st Battalion advanced almost to the top of the ridge before being pinned down by Jap small arms fire from commanding ground above. The attack was resumed on the 22d with the 3d Battalion moving North along the Western spur to make contact with the right (Southern) column of the 1st Battalion and cleaning out enemy cave positions in between. The left (North) column of the 1st Battalion was unable to advance because of intense automatic weapon and mortar fire from enemy positions which could not be flanked. This column was withdrawn, therefore, under cover of darkness on 22-23 April, as it was interfering with our artillery fire placed on the main enemy positions to the North.

The initial assaults against MT PACAWAGAN were supported by the 63d Infantry which had emplaced all available cannon and AT guns and the heavy weapons of two infantry battalions on the Northernmost slopes of MT MATABA. From these positions, very effective fires could be massed against MT PACAWAGAN since MT MATABA afforded excellent observation of the Jap positions on top of the hill mass. This ideal base of fire was perhaps the key to the entire MT PACAWAGAN area, since our heavy and accurate fires kept the Jap in his caves and tunnels and enabled the 145th Infantry to gain a foothold on top. The 63d Infantry also launched an attack on the morning of the 21st with a company reinforced with tanks driving 3000 yards up into the MANGO RIVER gorge. This attack effectively blocked one of the best reinforcing routes available to the enemy. Our troops captured two of the deadly enemy 150mm mortars and 300 100-lb sacks of rice, a heavy loss to the enemy.

The massed fires of three light and two medium field artillery battalions, and a battery each of Long Toms, 240mm howitzers and 8" howitzers supported the attack. Precision fires of the heavy artillery were very effective in closing caves and tunnels and were instrumental in the final reduction of the main enemy strongpoints at the northern end of the mountain. Again smoke laid down by chemical mortars and B-25's materially reduced enemy artillery and mortar fire by effectively screening his OP's.

One of the most outstanding features of the attack was the supply road built under fire by the 6th Engineer Battalion up the Southwest slopes of MT PACAWAGAN. Until this road was completed to the top, supply and evacuation had to be accomplished by a laborious and difficult hand-carry. The slope is so steep that wheeled vehicles could only negotiate the first third of the ascent. The rest of the road could only be negotiated by tractors and bulldozers which were used to haul supplies in trailers. The upper part of the road had to be cut through solid rock, which necessitated considerable demolition. Bulldozers working on this end of the road were secured by cable from above to keep them from toppling over on the steep grade. Infantry cannon were towed by triple-gang tractors to the summit where they were invaluable in making direct assaults on caves and pillboxes.

By the 29th, all of the Northern, Western and Southwestern slopes and most of the Southeastern slopes of MT PACAWAGAN were in our hands. The fighting was heavy; strongpoints were overrun only by direct assault with the Japs dying to the last man. Over 500 Japs were killed during the attack.

MT PACAWAGAN dominates the MARIQUINA RIVER gorge, the WAWA RIVER VALLEY, MT BINACAYAN, MT ORO and MT HAPONANG BANOY. Its capture exposed the entire WAWA area, long the heart of the SHIMBU LINE, to direct assault. Its fall sealed the fate of the remaining

Jap positions West of the MARIQUINA RIVER.

15. Mutual Relief of the 6th and 38th Infantry Divisions:

In the meantime, XI Corps had directed on 20 April that a mutual relief between the 6th Infantry Division and the 38th Infantry Division be effected, the bulk of the regrouping to be accomplished by 4 May. The 38th Infantry Division sector included BATAAN, CORREGIDOR ISLAND, CABALLO ISLAND, EL FRAILE ISLAND, ZAMBALES PROVINCE and part of the TARIAC and PAMPANGA PROVINCES.

The relief was initiated on 22 April with the reserve battalion, 1st Infantry moving to the BOTOLAN area and relieving the 153d Infantry (-1 Bn). By the 26th, the 152d Infantry had relieved the entire 1st Infantry in the MT BAYTANGAS sector. Mutual relief of the 63d Infantry and the 151st Infantry was initiated on the 27th of April. At 1800I on the 30th, command of the two Division zones was mutually passed between the Division Commanders. By the 4th of May, the last of the 6th Infantry Division troops had closed into the new zone.

16. Summary:

During the final phase of the Division's operations against the SHIMBU LINE, from 25 March to 30 April, an additional 2,394 Japs were killed, raising to over 6,500 the number of enemy destroyed in this area, and swelling the accumulative total of Japs killed on LUZON to over 11,000. Our casualties for the period were KIA 107, WIA 351, and IIA 254.

Enemy equipment and supplies captured or destroyed included:

<u>Equipment</u>	<u>Supplies</u>
95 Rifles	11 Small arms ammo dumps
6 Knee mortars	200 Rounds 81mm Mortar ammo
5 Cal. .50 aircraft MG's	1000 Hand grenades
17 JMG's	1 90mm mortar ammo dump
18 HMG's	675 Rounds 105mm ammo
1 37mm gun	12 Cases TNT
3 75mm guns	25 Cases 20mm ammo
7 105mm guns	300 Bags rice
1 150mm mortar	4 Knee mortar ammo dumps
5 20mm AA guns	
1 Mountain gun	
7 Trucks	

17. Summary of Lessons Learned:

a. In eliminating enemy resistance in large caves such as were frequently encountered in the SHIMBU LINE, flame throwers were

found to be less effective than white phosphorous grenades. Operations against caves must be covered by the fires of supporting weapons even to the point where mortar fragments may land among the assaulting troops.

b. In developing an enemy position, leaders must be quick to secure ground that patrols find clear of the enemy. If such action is delayed, the Jap upon detecting our patrol movements will often move in rapidly and take the ground which we might otherwise have occupied without a fight.

c. Units attacking successive objectives day after day must vary the hour of attack. Occasional night attacks were very successful following three or four successive daylight attacks.

d. In an area where mutually supporting caves and pill-boxes are encountered, specially trained battalion assault teams must be organized into ~~two~~ or three separate squads, of sufficient strength and armament to act as separate units, so that two or more installations can be engaged simultaneously.

e. An 81mm mortar observer should accompany combat patrols operating within range of this weapon.

f. Information regarding new enemy weapons encountered (e.g. Japanese rockets) should be disseminated to all troops as soon as possible.

g. Patrols in mountainous terrain found the SCR 300 radio much too bulky. As a rule only the SCR 536 was carried, while at the battalion CP an SCR 284 often worked the 536 channel, making possible a greater range than is normal.

h. The 1/4 ton truck and trailer proved to be the best means of supplying front line companies. Even when trails permitted the larger trucks to reach forward positions, their presence usually invited enemy artillery and mortar fire.

i. Air strikes should be controlled by the infantry regiments, unit ALP officers operating from battalion OP's whenever possible. All units within close proximity of an air strike must be notified so that patrols will be kept out of the area and so that no smoke shells will be fired which would confuse the pilot whose target is being marked with WP.

j. It was found that if our preparatory artillery fires became too stereotyped the enemy would take cover in his caves only to come out fighting when the firing ceased. Fake preparations followed by a short lull in firing to allow the enemy to re-man his positions confused the enemy as to when an actual attack would take

place and resulted in many casualties to his exposed troops.

k. The 8" and 240mm Howitzers were necessary, accurate and invaluable in destroying caves and dug-in positions.

l. When several separate batteries are attached to, or are reinforcing the fires of Division Artillery, they should be formed into a separate groupment or attached to a medium battalion for control and fire direction. It is not wise to rely on individual battery fire direction.

m. All units must constantly seek to improve methods for the accurate and early location of enemy mortars and artillery positions. An objective once taken cannot be held unless we dominate all hostile mortars and artillery capable of delivering fire on that objective.

n. Again, as in every other operation, the absolute necessity for the infantry to attack immediately after an artillery preparation was proven. Likewise, if the infantry attacks without proper previous reconnaissance, it is impossible to give adequate artillery support. Such attacks usually run into the opposition at close quarters and are too close for artillery, especially heavy artillery, to be used on the enemy positions.

o. In these operations smoke screens from aircraft, artillery and heavy mortars were used with great success to screen our engineers while they pushed supply roads right up to foremost positions. In one instance such a coverage was maintained for several hours.

OPERATIONS IN WEST CENTRAL LUZON1. Activities 1 May to 12 June: (See Fig. 21.)

The Division (less 20th Infantry, 51st Field Artillery Battalion, and Company "B", 6th Medical Battalion) spent the period seeking out and destroying enemy remnants and protecting vital installations within its zone in the West central portion of LUZON.

The 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, maintained positions in the ORANI - PILAR - BAGAC area on BATAAN PENINSULA. Strong combat patrols were dispatched daily, including over-water patrols along the West coast of BATAAN using dukws. The 2d Battalion occupied positions in the SAN ANTONIO - SAN MARCELINO area of ZAMBALES PROVINCE and secured ZIGZAG PASS. Frequent patrols were sent towards MT PINATUBA from the South and West, with few enemy contacts. Other missions were to protect the SAN MARCELINO AIRSTRIP and aviation gas pipeline which runs to CLARK FIELD from SUBIC BAY. The 3d Battalion maintained positions along the West coast of ZAMBALES PROVINCE from PCAUIG to BOTOLAN and 7000 yards East of BOTOLAN.

Equally scattered were the units of the 63d Infantry. The 1st Battalion patrolled and mopped up enemy remnants on CORREGIDOR and CABALLO ISLANDS and in the MARIVELES and CABCABEN areas, and guarded bridges along the railroad and Highway 3 from MANILA to TARLAC. The 2d Battalion took up positions near ABUCAY HACIENDA and along the PILAR BAGAC ROAD on BATAAN with the mission of destroying the remnants of the 2d and 3d Battalions, 39th Infantry (10th Jap Infantry Division) thought to be located in the MT NATIB area. During the period 1 to 10 May, strong combat patrols were sent into the MT NATIB area from all directions. Several small but sharp actions resulted as these patrols pushed through the thick underbrush and bamboo thickets and across the steep hogbacks and deep ravines found in this area. By the 10th it was clear that no organized enemy positions remained in the area, but that the enemy had disintegrated into small foraging parties, each concerned only with survival. On 16 May, the battalion moved to CAMP PATRICK (7 miles South of TARLAC), the rainy season Division Camp which the 6th Engineer Battalion was constructing. The 3d Battalion, 63d Infantry, located West of FORT STOTSENBURG, patrolled the trails West to MT PINATUBA and protected CLARK FIELD installations.

During most of the period, the 20th Infantry (reinforced) remained under the control of the Provost Marshal General in MANILA. On 21 May, the 1st Battalion reverted to Division control in the FORT STOTSENBURG area and the Division was informed that the remainder of our troops in MANILA would revert to Division control on 1 June.