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COLONEL
BRUCE PALMER JR.

6TH INFANTRY
DIVISION

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AFTER ACTION REPORT

FINAL PHASE OF LUZON CAMPAIGN

1 JULY TO 21 AUGUST 1945

HEADQUARTERS 6TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO 6

22 August 1945

The following after-action report covers the operations of the 6th Infantry Division in the CAGAYAN VALLEY of LUZON from 1 July to 21 August 1945 during which period the Division was part of the XIV Corps operating under Eighth Army. This report is a continuation of a previously submitted report covering the action of the Division prior to 1 July 1945 when Sixth Army directed the operations on LUZON.

At the time of the cessation of hostilities with Japan on 15 August 1945, this Division was probably the most heavily engaged Division in the U. S. Army. All three Infantry Regiments were committed. When hostilities ended, the 1st Infantry advancing east from BANAUE had made junction with Filipino forces near MAYOYAO and were mopping-up a hard-won ridge over-looking HAPAO on the northern approach to HUNGDUAN. The 20th Infantry had turned the western anchor of the formidable Jap position on MT PULOY (4,500 ft. elevation) which had withstood attack from its frontal approaches and were within sight of the Jap communication center of KIANGKIANG to the south of HUNGDUAN. The 63d Infantry pushing south from KIANGAN had captured ANTIPOLLO, a large food area, which was sorely needed by the beleaguered Japs. The Division Artillery had an unusually large number of remunerative targets upon which to bring their gun-power to bear. The Division Engineers had accomplished a major engineering feat in opening New Highway 4 clear to BANAUE. The 6th Medical Battalion and all divisional service units had performed magnificently to overcome the problems of the most difficult supply and evacuation difficulties the Division had ever faced. Certainly on 15 August 1945 the situation of General Yamashita, Supreme Commander in the PHILIPPINES, completely cut-off in the rugged mountains of the IFUGAO PROVINCE, could be considered hopeless.

The final chapter of the long and savagely fought campaign of LUZON has been written. Since 9 January 1945 when the assault landing was made in LINGAYEN GULF, elements of the Division have been actively committed in combat. It is believed that this record of 219 days continuous action is unsurpassed in the Pacific War. The action has been bloody and our losses severe. It is to our immortal dead, rather than to us the living, that we owe our success in arms.

C. E. Hurd

C. E. HURDIS
Major General, U. S. Army
Commanding

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INTRODUCTION

At 0001, 1 July 1945, the XIV Corps took over operations in NORTHERN LUZON from the I Corps and at the same time, tactical responsibility for LUZON passed from Sixth Army to Eighth Army. This date found the leading elements of the 63d Infantry attacking northwest along Old and New Highways 4, in the vicinity of HUCAB, after an advance from the LAMUT RIVER which had begun on 13 June. The 1st Infantry was in the process of moving to the area north of the LAMUT RIVER, as elements of the Regiment were relieved in the SALINAS-PINGKIAN-KAYAPA area by elements of the 32d Infantry Division. At the same time the 20th Infantry had begun its movement east from BAGABAG to relieve elements of the 37th Infantry Division along Highway 5 between the MAGAT RIVER crossing and ILAGAN. (See Fig. 1).

The primary mission assigned the Division by XIV Corps was to continue the attack to the northwest to seize KIANGAN, and to prepare for further advance on Corps order to seize HUNGDUAN and BANAUE. Other missions were to secure the CAGAYAN VALLEY and the uninterrupted use of Highway 5 in the Division zone, to seize JONES and to reconnoiter the DIBULUAN and DABUBU RIVER VALLEYS, and to reconnoiter east from ILAGAN towards PALANAN BAY, destroying any enemy encountered.

Combat units attached to the Division at this time included:

BUENA VISTA Regiment (PA)
2d Provisional Battalion, 3d PANGASINAN Regiment (G)
2d Provisional Battalion, 2d PANGASINAN Regiment (G)

Battery "B", 465th Field Artillery Battalion (8" How)
Battery "A", 161st AAA Battalion (90mm)
2d Platoon, Battery "B", 209th AAA (AW) Battalion
(M-51's on Half-Tracks)
Provisional Platoon, Battery "A", 209th AAA (AW)
Battalion (M-51's on Half-Tracks)
Company "B", 85th Chemical Mortar Battalion
Company "D", 754th Tank Battalion
26th Infantry Scout Dog Platoon

Chapter I

THE CAPTURE OF KIANGAN

1. Estimate of the Situation, 1 July:

The total strength of enemy troops concentrated in the BOKOD - KIANGAN - BONTOC area was estimated at 12,000 to 15,000, including 2,000 naval personnel, and 2,000 civilians and laborers. Approximately 2,500 were believed to be army combat troops, and the rest miscellaneous army line of communication units.

In the advance from PAYAWAN to HUCAB, the 63d Infantry had been in contact with three provisional infantry battalions, had overrun their main positions, and reduced the units to remnant status. Noticeably absent up to that time was contact with 105th Division Combat units, believed to be in the vicinity of KIANGAN. This suggested that these troops were still in reserve, possibly to man a defense line reported by air observers to be about 2,000 yards north of KIANGAN.

It was anticipated that the advance toward KIANGAN would be extremely difficult. To secure the road necessitated the crossing and traversing of deep rocky gorges, and scaling precipitous mountain heights by troops who could be supplied only by hand carry. All along the road, the enemy had destroyed bridges, carried out other demolitions, planted mines and dug tank traps. In addition were obstacles caused by landslides and by friendly air attacks. The maximum effort of the 6th Engineer Combat Battalion would be needed to open the road. Additional Corps engineers were urgently needed to support the advance as it went higher into the mountains.

The enemy was in a position to defend from successive ridges along Highway 4, and well situated to counter our thrusts at his strongpoints. Flank attacks on the supply route were probable, as were suicidal infiltrations to harass supply lines and areas farther to the rear along Highway 4.

2. The Battle for LANE'S RIDGE, 1 to 8 July: (See Fig. 2 and sketch)

Operations along Highway 4 on 1 July were limited by landslides and heavy rains to reconnaissance and security patrols, forward and to the flanks of leading elements of the 63d Infantry. A few enemy stragglers were encountered. A landslide on New Highway 4, 500 yards north of BOLOG, it was estimated by the Engineers, would take three days to clear. A temporary dry weather by-pass around this for 1/4 ton trucks and tractors was made impassable by the end of the day by heavy rains.

The following day a reconnaissance in force by a reinforced platoon of the 1st Battalion, 63d Infantry, encountered an estimated 50 riflemen and 4 MG's about 900 yards northeast of HUCAB on New Highway 4. At the same time the 2d Battalion, 63d Infantry, advanced 700 yards along Old Highway 4, overrunning a small delaying position, but later being held up by an unknown number of Japs with automatic weapons, defending from a ridge astride the highway. The finding of 29 dead Japs during the day testified to the effectiveness of our artillery and air strikes, while 20 rounds of enemy 47mm or 75mm which landed in the 63d zone caused no damage.

On 3 July, elements of Company "G", 63d Infantry, pushed up Old Highway 4, killing 16 enemy and capturing a LMG, to a point 2,500 yards northwest of HUCAB, where stiff resistance developed along high ground later named "LANE'S RIDGE". A defensive position including 5 caves was cleaned out, at a cost to the enemy of 45 lives. MG fire from adjacent enemy positions forced the leading platoon to withdraw for the night.

Company "G" continued the attack next morning, following an air strike, and set the stage for the four day battle of LANE'S RIDGE, which later proved to be the Jap's final position guarding the approaches to KIANGAN. Company "G" secured a position 400 yards south of the ridge, preparatory to an attack on 5 July. This attack was launched at 0800, following an air bombardment and artillery and mortar preparations. Company "F", in the assault, advanced only 200 yards, meeting determined resistance from rifles and an estimated 5 MG's. The Company held the ground gained while enemy positions were pounded by artillery fire, and other elements of the battalion hacked their way through heavy bamboo thickets and underbrush, seeking flanking routes of approach. Tanks could not be brought forward to support the attack, because of a large bomb crater blocking the road at the junction of the Jap cut-off and Old Highway 4.

On 6 July, a reinforced platoon of Company "G" sought to envelop the enemy's west flank, cutting their way through dense bamboo and up precipitous ridges only to be stopped by 6 MG's and numerous riflemen covering the western approaches to the Jap strongpoint. The platoon pulled back while artillery concentrations were laid on the enemy emplacements. An attempt by Company "F" to make a flanking approach to the east was blocked by deep gorges.

In an all-out effort on 7 July, following napalm and demolition bomb air strikes and preparations by all available supporting weapons, the 2d Battalion, 63d Infantry, assaulted and took the forward slope of LANE'S RIDGE. Continuing northwest toward KIANGAN,



North slope of hill A

LANE RIDGE
Viewed from the South

leading elements uncovered another strong defensive position on the reverse slope of the ridge. This position was later found to consist of 55 mutually supporting emplacements, including 13 pillboxes and 22 caves, with enemy riflemen and machine gunners well dug in. The position selected could only be assaulted frontally, as the flanks were protected by almost impenetrable undergrowth and deep ravines.

These emplacements were overrun late on the afternoon of 8 July, in a determined attack following a heavy artillery and mortar preparation, and under cover of a smoke screen and strafing fires of Quad 50's. A total of 51 dead Japs were counted, and 12 additional Nips were killed when an unknown number of them made an unsuccessful counterattack about 2230, raising the total Japs destroyed in the LANE'S RIDGE fight to over 150.

From the overall excellence of this defensive position, the enemy's good physical condition, and his aggressiveness, it was believed that, as had been anticipated, the 63d had met trained troops of the 105th Division.

In the meantime, the 3d Battalion, 63d Infantry, had pushed "K" Company forward on 5 July to secure the rear of the 2d Battalion along Old Highway 4. In conjunction with the 2d Battalion's 7 July attack, a reinforced platoon from Company "L" advanced along New Highway 4 to a point 2,300 yards north of HUCAB, and then moved west in a wide envelopment of LANE'S RIDGE. High ground about midway between the two highways was secured with nil opposition. At 0800 on 8 July, the 3d Battalion attacked northwest along the high ground west of New Highway 4, with their object the commanding ground 3,000 yards north of HUCAB.

3. KIANGAN Falls: (See Fig. 2)

The 1st and 3d Battalions, 63d Infantry continued the drive on KIANGAN on 10 July. From LANE'S RIDGE, Old Highway 4 turns west, while New Highway 4 runs north to the IBULAO RIVER. The 1st Battalion, passing through Company "F", by the end of the day had advanced 2,000 yards to a point about 4,300 yards short of KIANGAN. Scattered enemy fire, tank traps, landmines and numerous landslides delayed the advance. Another 2,000 yards was gained next day by Company "B", supported by four tanks and a Quad 50. 12 July saw the capture of KIANGAN. Company "C" moved through Company "B" and effected a junction with elements of Company "K", advancing from the IBULAO RIVER. Together the two companies took what was left of the town.

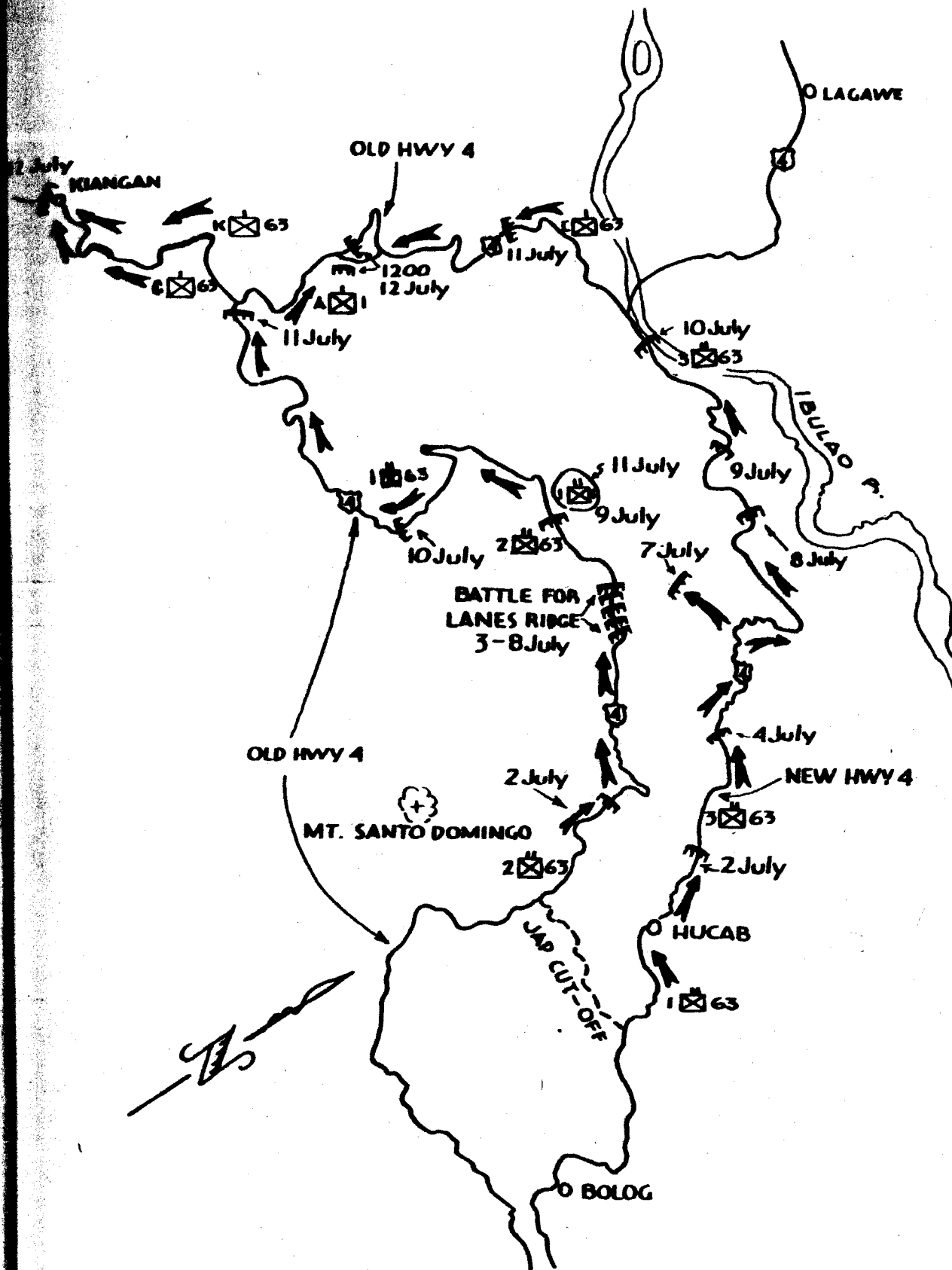


Fig. 2
 63rd INFANTRY OPERATIONS
 1-12 JULY

1000 500 0 1000 2000 YDS.
 SCALE: 1:32,500

The 3d Battalion's part in the seizure of KIANGAN involved four days of active fighting along the New Highway. By 9 July elements were over-looking the IBULAO RIVER, 1,000 yards south of the old bridge site, after breaking through a series of enemy delaying positions and road blocks, flanked by steep slopes and bamboo-choked ravines. On 10 July, two companies engaged in an afternoon firefight with an unknown number of Japs about 200 yards from the river crossing. Company "L", continuing the advance on 12 July, reached the IBULAO RIVER crossing and then leaving New Highway 4, pushed north and west along the road to KIANGAN. At 1200, at a point along the road about 2,500 yards from the river, Company "L", 63d Infantry, made junction with Company "A", leading company of the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, which had assembled near LANE'S RIDGE the day before, and then had moved out again along Old Highway 4 on 12 July. On the same day, Company "K", 63d Infantry, striking out across country from the IBULAO RIVER reached KIANGAN against slight opposition and secured the town jointly with Company "C", 63d Infantry. (See Fig. 2)

4. Activities of Other Units, 1 to 12 July:

During the first few days of July, the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, and later the 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry had been disposed along Highway 4 to the rear of the 63d Infantry, guarding lines of communications with the aid of Filipino guerrilla units. On 3 July a 1st Infantry patrol discovered a strong though small Jap position some 3,500 yards southwest of PAYAWAN. This took Company "F", 1st Infantry, several days to overcome with the aid of artillery and air support. About 60 Japs were killed or found dead. While mopping up was taking place in this locality, patrols were being sent to the north and west along the LAMUT RIVER to protect the left (west) flank of the Division.

The 14th Infantry Regiment (PA) (-two Battalions) operated in the DUIT-HALIAP area, south of KIANGAN and west of BOLOG, where they reported the movements and dispositions of Jap remnants living off the land in this area. This regiment was attached to the 63d Infantry on 11 July.

On 10 July, the 1st Infantry was given the mission of passing through the 63d Infantry to seize and secure a bridgehead north of the IBULAO RIVER. By 12 July, leading elements of the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, had moved to the old crossing of the IBULAO RIVER on Highway 4 and had relieved elements of the 63d Infantry in that vicinity.

The Division artillery and attached Corps artillery furnished excellent support to assaulting units despite poor roads,

difficult weather conditions and inadequate position areas. The fires of the 8" howitzers were particularly effective in closing cave positions on IANE'S RIDGE. The 90mm AAA Battery proved valuable in placing harassing fires on KIANGAN and interdicting roads in that area.

More than 450 sorties were flown during the 12 day period. In addition to tons of HE, 100,000 gallons of Napalm were dropped. For four days of the period, bad weather prevented all air activity including the use of the L-5 controller plane. Principal close support targets were IANE'S RIDGE, KIANGAN, and the enemy position 3,500 yards southwest of PAYAWAN. Targets north of the IBULAO RIVER were also hit.

Tanks and Quad 50's mounted on half-tracks were of great assistance in the reduction of the IANE'S RIDGE position. A short distance beyond this point, however, they passed out of the picture, as all efforts to get these vehicles forward resulted only in getting them hopelessly bogged down.

5. The 63d Infantry Mops up Around KIANGAN: (See Fig. 3)

During the period 12 to 24 July, operations of the 63d Infantry were limited to local actions to search out and destroy enemy remnants in the KIANGAN area, as determined enemy groups continued to resist to the west and south of the town. The problem of supply and evacuation for troops in the forward areas became increasingly serious as continuing heavy rains and high winds hampered engineer operations to open supply roads.

On 14 July, supply vehicles moving on Old Highway 4 could get within 4,000 yards of KIANGAN and could reach the IBULAO RIVER. By 16 July, however, bad weather made Old Highway 4 impassable, and for the next five days, over 100 vehicles including a tank platoon and a Quad 50 platoon, were marooned between the Jap cut-off and the junction of Old Highway 4 with the KIANGAN-IBULAO RIVER road. Adverse weather also prevented supply by air. New Highway 4 was blocked in four places by large rock slides and demolitions between the Jap cut-off and the IBULAO RIVER. Evacuation and supply was accomplished by combined vehicle haul and hand carry. The 6th Engineer Battalion worked 24 hours a day to clear Old Highway 4 which could be used to supply both KIANGAN and IBULAO RIVER troops. By 20 July, Old Highway 4 was open again to light traffic under dry weather conditions only, and all marooned vehicles had been extricated. Clearing this road involved the removal of mines, filling tank traps, clearing landslides, installing culverts, and corduroying rice paddy mud holes. The 6th Engineers were also busy

on New Highway 4 from the IBULAO RIVER north. By 16 July a foot bridge had been completed over the river, and on 18 July, an improvised jeep bridge was open to traffic. This bridge, later reinforced to take 1 $\frac{1}{2}$ -ton trucks, was built on top of captured Jap trucks anchored in the swift, boulder-strewn mountain river. New Highway 4 north of the river was opened to GUROG on 25 July. In the meantime, Corps Engineers had taken over responsibility for New Highway 4 as far as the river on 16 July, and on 18 July had begun work on the first large slide north of the Jap cut-off.

During the period, the 63d Infantry and attached guerrilla troops patrolled extensively in all directions from KIANGAN, with profitable results. On 13 July, 69 Japs were killed, and 131 found dead in the area. By 15 July, Company "K" had seized LONSA to the west of KIANGAN against light opposition. Strong enemy opposition, however, was met by Company "C", attacking cave positions on the high ground 500 yards to the southwest of KIANGAN, which were reduced on 15 July. The same day, a patrol from Company "A", advancing to the south on PALAO, ran into two machine guns and an estimated squad of riflemen 3500 yards south of KIANGAN. Mopping-up in the KIANGAN-LONSA area on 16 July netted 37 Japs killed and 85 found dead from recent artillery and mortar fire. Fifteen of the Japs were killed by Ifugao scouts. 63d Infantry patrols made contact the same day with elements of the 14th Infantry (PA) in the vicinity of PALAO. This Filipino unit, disposed in the PALAO-DUIT-HALIAP area, had suffered numerous casualties in scattered contacts throughout the area, and badly needed supplies of all kinds. Operations in this sector were very difficult, as the only connecting trail from KIANGAN went up over a high mountain and crossed four wide streams which were impassable after rains. Active patrolling by the 63d Infantry continued in the KIANGAN sector until 21 July, when the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, relieved 63d Infantry elements in the area. This 20th Infantry Battalion, however, remained under the control of the 63d Infantry until the 20th Infantry assumed responsibility for the zone on 24 July.

In the advance on and seizure of KIANGAN, the 63d Infantry, during the period 13 June to 21 July, killed, or found dead, 2,383 Japs and took 119 PW's. The Regiment, during the same period, lost 48 dead and 195 wounded and injured.

Chapter II

OPERATIONS ALONG HIGHWAY 5 IN THE CAGAYAN VALLEY

1. The 20th Infantry is Committed in The Cagayan Valley (See Fig. 1)

On 1 July 1945, the 20th Infantry initiated relief of elements of the 37th Infantry Division disposed along Highway 5 between the MAGAT RIVER and IIAGAN (See Fig. 1). By 5 July, the Regiment with the 3d Platoon, 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop attached, had completed the relief. The 3d Battalion covered the northern part of the zone in the IIAGAN area, the 2d Battalion was disposed in the CABATUAN-CAUAYAN area, and the 1st Battalion, with the 2d Battalion, 2d PANGASINAN Regiment (G) attached, was responsible for the ORIOUNG PASS-SANTIAGO-JONES sector.

In the 20th Infantry zone, there were two areas to which the enemy was known to have withdrawn with some organized forces. One of these was along the trail running east from NAGUILIAN towards PALANAN BAY. Guerrillas reported that small groups of Japs were living in barrios located along this trail. About 800 were reported in the PALANAN BAY area. The second area was to the south of JONES, where it was estimated that approximately 1000 Japs, poorly equipped and in poor health, were trying to live off the land. In the upper CAGAYAN VALLEY, enemy small-scale harassing attacks on Highway 5 from SANTIAGO to IIAGAN, and contacts with isolated Jap groups attempting to rejoin their main forces in either the CARABALLO or SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS, could be expected.

2. Operations of 20th Infantry, 1 to 24 July:

The 20th Infantry remained in this zone until 23 July. During this period, the 1st Battalion (and later the 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop) secured JONES, reconnoitred to the south up the DIBULUAN and DABUBU RIVER, and patrolled extensively in their sector, but only scattered contacts were made and no organized resistance was encountered.

The 2d Battalion also made scattered contacts during the period, the majority of which were groups of Japs, who had escaped from the CAGAYAN VALLEY and were attempting to withdraw along the trail west of SANTA CRUZ to join other Jap forces in MAYOYAO and BANAUE.

The heaviest action during the period occurred in that

part of the 3d Battalion sector east of NAGUILLAN. From NAGUILLAN to the east runs the only trail traversing the SIERRA MADRE MOUNTAINS to the east coast of LUZON. This trail is passable to weasels and SPM's only as far as SAN MARIANO, and then only in dry weather. From SAN MARIANO, the trail crosses the PINACUAN DE ILAGAN RIVER which is impassable for vehicles and too swift for weasels. Beyond the river, the trail is very poor and passable only to foot troops. The country is heavily wooded and hilly as far as AMBUBU, about half way between SAN MARIANO and PALANAN BAY. From AMBUBU, the trail runs through the deepest jungles of LUZON and crosses mountains up to 4,000 feet elevation. Near the coast, the trail descends to PALANAN TOWN about 8,000 yards up the PALANAN RIVER from PALANAN BAY.

Company "I", 3d Battalion, 20th Infantry secured SAN MARIANO on 5 July, and then crossing the PINACUAN DE ILAGAN RIVER on 6 July, pushed on for 2,200 yards where enemy rifle fire was received. Company "K" secured the trail between NAGUILLAN and SAN MARIANO. By 14 July, Company "L" had joined Company "I" which had pushed 5,000 yards east of SAN MARIANO and was in contact with an estimated 100 Japs, dug in and supported by mortars and heavy machine guns. On 15 July, Company "L" and two Platoons, Company "I", overran this position and secured DIBULUAN, killing 12 Japs enroute. SPM fire from positions in SAN MARIANO was very effective in supporting the attack. Abandoned Jap pill-boxes were found in the area and considerable Jap food supplies and ammunition were destroyed. The next day, another Jap strong-point was met about 200 yards east of DIBULUAN. Heavy weather brought operations to a practical standstill for the next five days. However, elements of the 3d Battalion did succeed in reaching AMBUBU, about 10,000 yards west of DIBULUAN, on 18 July. The trail from SAN MARIANO to DIBULUAN was now so slippery that even lightly-loaded carriers took two days for the trip. From DIBULUAN to AMBUBU was another three days march which only foot troops without packs could negotiate.

3. The 20th Infantry is Relieved:

In the meantime, the 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop had relieved the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, in its zone on 16 July. The 1st Battalion moved to BAGABAG in Division Reserve on 17 July, and on 21 July passed to the control of the 63d Infantry, and relieved the 1st Battalion of that regiment in the KIANGAN area.

On 22 July, pursuant to XIV Corps orders, the Division zone was changed to exclude the sector then held by the 20th Infantry and 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop, the MAGAT RIVER becoming the east boundary of the Division. Relief of 6th Infantry

Division elements in this sector by elements of the 32d and 37th Infantry Divisions was initiated on 22 July, and was completed on 24 July. The remainder of the 20th Infantry and the 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop moved to assembly areas north of the LAMUT RIVER, where the 20th Infantry made preparations to relieve the 63d Infantry in the KLANGAN area. The 2d Battalion, 2d PANGASINAN Regiment (G) remained attached to the 20th Infantry and moved to the BOLOG-KLANGAN area on 26 July where it helped to secure lines of communication.

During the period, 1 July to 23 July, the 20th Infantry killed 382 Japs and took 207 PW's while their own losses were two dead and 15 wounded.

Chapter III

OBJECTIVE BANAUE

1. Estimate of the Situation, 12 July:

It had been anticipated that KIANGAN itself would be taken easily, since it had been estimated as early as 1 July, that at least a partial withdrawal from the KIANGAN area was taking place. PW and civilian reports indicated further that the enemy was not withdrawing to the north along Highway 4 towards BANAUE, but was retreating to the northwest towards the rice terraced mountains around HUNGDUAN. At this time, it was believed that the 14th Area Army headquarters of General YAMASHITA, Supreme Commander of the Philippines, was in the vicinity of HUNGDUAN, and that remnants of the 105th Japanese Division would be used to block the southern approaches to this position. From 3,000 to 4,000 troops were thought to be disposed between PACDAN and HUNGDUAN.

To the south of KIANGAN, it was estimated that there might be as many as 1,000 Japs in the ANTIPOLLO-AMDUNTOG area, consisting primarily of remnants of the Geki Force (2d Armored Division). These troops were thought to be scattered throughout the area in small groups where they could forage off the land. Little trouble in eliminating these pockets was expected.

In the BANAUE area, it was estimated that elements of the 103d Japanese Division, about 2,000 strong, moving south from BONTOC, might either defend BANAUE or withdraw further to the south and west in the direction of HAPAO to protect the northern approaches to HUNGDUAN.

Jap troops in the MAYOYAO-BUNHIAN-NATONIN area, estimated at between 1,000 and 2,000 in number, were believed to be remnants of service, air and naval units, organized into provisional infantry units, which had escaped from the LOWER CAGAYAN VALLEY.

2. The 1st Infantry Captures BANAUE: (See Fig. 3)

On the afternoon of 12 July, Company "A" of the 1st Infantry relieved elements of the 63d Infantry near the destroyed IBULAO RIVER bridge. Crossing the river despite high and dangerously swift water, the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, by 15 July had secured a bridgehead on the far side against only scattered resistance. (See Fig. 3). Troops were supplied initially by hand-carry across a foot bridge completed on 16 July. At this

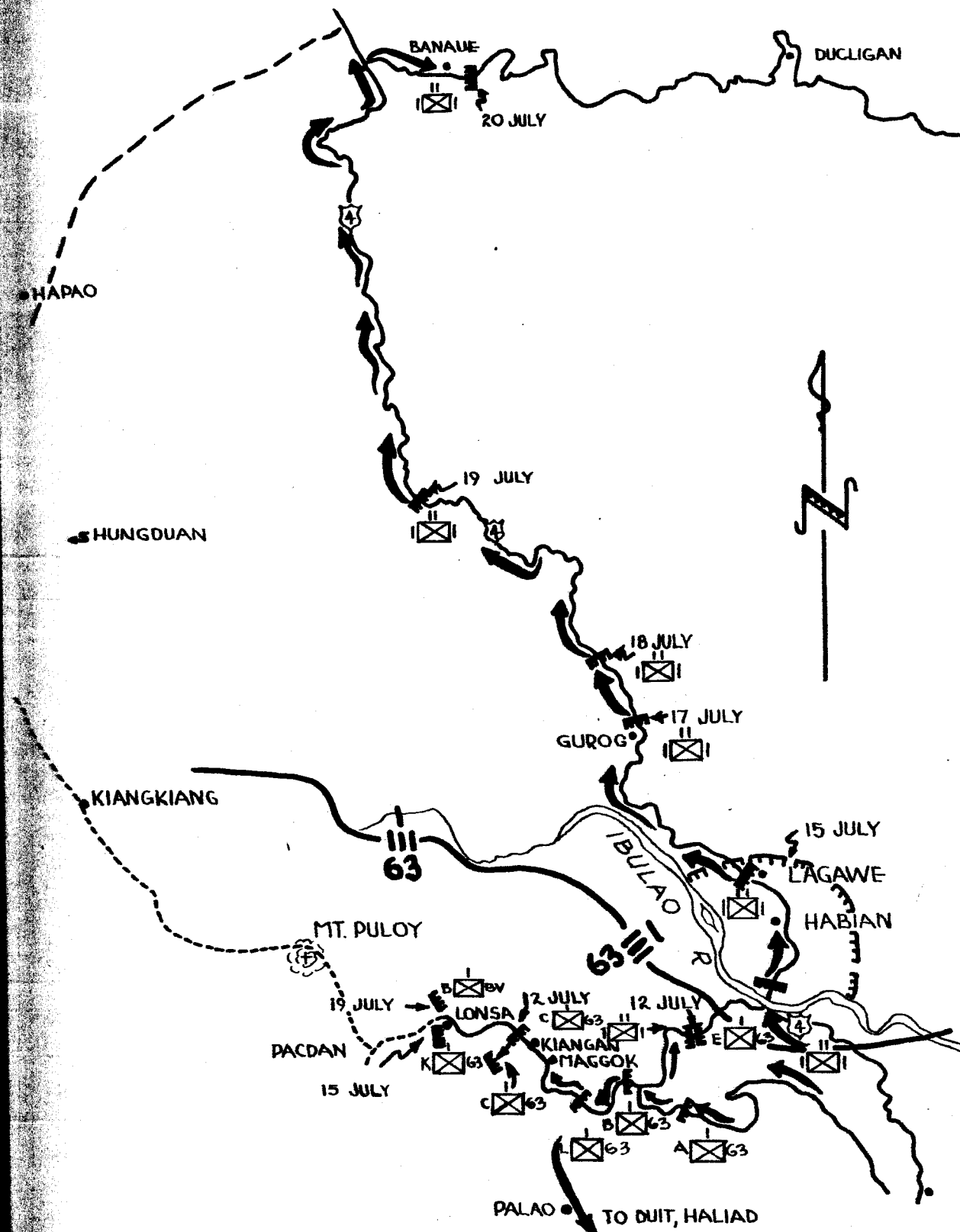


FIG. 3
OPERATIONS 12-20 JULY

1000 0 1000 2000 3000 4000 5000 YDS
SCALE 1:89,166

time, the Division received orders to seize BANAUE and destroy any enemy encountered in the BANAUE-MAYOYAO area.

Slight resistance was met 3,000 yards northwest of IAGANE on 16 July by a combat patrol consisting of a platoon of Company "A" and a platoon of Company "G" of the 14th Regiment (PA). The patrol withdrew and artillery was laid down and dispersed the group, after which the patrol proceeded and entered GUROG at noon on 17 July. Thirteen Japs were killed 500 yards south of GUROG by Company "C".

Logistically, roads and bridges were the prime considerations. It was clear that the advance to the north would depend on the ability to open a road and to keep the IBULAO RIVER bridged. Engineers had decided that it was not feasible to keep Old Highway 4 open during the rainy season and had, therefore, put the main engineer effort on New Highway 4. This road was blocked at four places between the Jap cut-off and the IBULAO RIVER, where stretches of the road bed from 100 to 287 feet in length had been completely blown away from the rocky sides of the mountain. The only practical method of supply and evacuation was by combined jeep and hand carry, with jeeps being slung on cables around these impassable points. North of the river it was found that Highway 4 was no more than a cart trail which had not been used for years, and which was blocked by landslides and overgrowth.

On 18 July against scattered small arms fire, the 1st Battalion advanced to a point 1,500 yards northwest of GUROG, killing four Japs enroute. Strong combat and reconnaissance patrols on high ground to the east and west of the Highway made no contacts. The 3d Battalion moved in behind the 1st Battalion to protect the supply road.

The next day another 4,000 yards were gained up the Highway by Company "B" of the 1st Infantry without contact. On 20 July, the Company met 30 to 50 Japs 1,800 yards west of BANAUE. The Japs lost one man before fleeing to the hills north of BANAUE. One Filipino carrier was killed and two wounded in this skirmish, which preceded the entry into BANAUE on the afternoon of 20 July. Patrols to the north on Highway 4 towards POLIS PASS and to the east of BANAUE towards DUCUGAN were immediately sent out.

3. Artillery Support.

As the advance of the Division progressed beyond KIANGAN and the IBULAO RIVER, the problem of artillery support became increasingly difficult. To haul artillery pieces, particularly 81mm How's and ammunition over mountain trails which were hardly passable for light vehicles, was no mean feat. To maintain communications with forward observers in this mountainous country, it often was necessary to establish two or three relay stations. Position areas were scarce, and those that could be occupied were entirely inadequate.

The 1st Field Artillery Battalion during the period was in position near HUCAB on a small spur running east from New Highway 4 just north of the Jap cut-off. The 53d Field Artillery Battalion occupied an unusual position atop a ridge just south of the Jap cut-off and between Old and New Highways 4, which was 4000 feet in elevation and could only be reached in dry weather. The 80th Field Artillery Battalion (Med) was in position near PAYAWAN FARM. On 18 July, Battery "C", 80th Field Artillery Battalion, displaced to positions near the 1st Field Artillery Battalion. On 16 July, Battery "C", 1st Field Artillery Battalion, attempting to displace forward, was marooned on Old Highway 4 and went into position along the road, until it was finally able to reach its original destination on the west side of the IBULAO RIVER crossing on 20 July. Battery "B", 465th Field Artillery Battalion (8" How), remained in position south of PAYAWAN, until 22 July when one platoon displaced forward to PAYAWAN FARM (south of BOLOG) on 22 July. Battery "A", 161st AAA Bn (90mm), displaced from positions near the 8" Howitzer Battery to the vicinity of HUCAB, near the 1st Field Artillery Battalion, on 14 July. From this position, the 90mm battery could effectively shell KIANGKIANG and HUNGDUAN.

CHAPTER IV

FINAL OPERATIONS IN NORTHERN LUZON

1. The Division Zone is Extended:

On 9 July, orders from XIV Corps changed the boundary between the Division and the force to its north, Philippine guerrilla forces, NORTHERN LUZON. The Division was now responsible for the entire MAYOYAO - BUNHLAN - SANTA CRUZ area, lying between the ALIMIT and MAGAT RIVERS. (See Fig. 1). This Corps order also directed that the 11th Infantry (1st and 2d Battalions) (PA), with the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry (PA) attached, move south from their present locations in the lower CAGAYAN VALLEY in the 37th Infantry Division zone, passing to control of the 6th Infantry Division upon entering the zone of the latter. This Filipino force on 10 July, was given the mission of seizing BUNHLAN, prepared to advance to the west and secure MAYOYAO in Division order.

Initially the CP, 11th Infantry, moved south to MARSAT GRANDE (See Fig. 1), where a 10 day supply dump was established at the river. Two battalions were then ordered to converge on and secure UBAO, the Provisional Battalion, 11th Infantry advancing west along the trail from MARSAT GRANDE, while the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, advanced from the direction of SANTA CRUZ. By 20 July, the Provisional Battalion, 11th Infantry, had secured UBAO and pushing on to the northwest, ran into resistance about 4,000 yards southeast of BUNHLAN. On 25 July, the Provisional Battalion secured BUNHLAN against slight opposition, and the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, reached UBAO, killing over 100 Japs enroute. On 26 July, the CP, 11th Infantry, opened at BUNHLAN. Troops at BUNHLAN had to be supplied by hand-carry from MARSAT GRANDE, about 25 miles away. This supply line was protected by elements of the 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry, disposed along the trail.

In the meantime, the 3d Battalion, 11th Infantry, after a long march to the south over rugged and slippery mountain trails and across swollen, swift running rivers, secured MATONIN on 24 July, making only scattered contacts on the way. By 26 July, leading elements of the 3d Battalion had joined the Provisional Battalion, 11th Infantry, near BUNHLAN.

On 20 July, the 11th Infantry was given the mission of seizing MAYOYAO. The advance from BUNHLAN was begun on 26 July

by the Provisional Battalion, 11th Infantry, which by 28 July, was heavily engaged with a strong Jap force holding the high ground north and east of MAYOYAO.

2. 1st Infantry Operations in the BANAUE sector, 20 July to 15 August: (See Fig. 4).

On 20 July, the 1st Infantry was ordered to advance to the east from BANAUE, secure DUCUGAN, and make junction with the 11th Infantry which was ordered to secure MAYOYAO and push on to the west towards DUCUGAN. This same day, the 1st Infantry was also ordered to make junction with PGF troops at POLIS PASS to the north of BANAUE along Highway 4. Patrols from the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, made contact with elements of the 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry (Filipino) at POLIS PASS on 22 July, and on 23 July, Company "C" of the latter Battalion joined the 1st Infantry at BANAUE. In the meantime, the 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry, with the 3d Battalion, 1st Pangasinan Regiment (Filipino), attached, moved forward to the BANAUE area, and relieved the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, which returned to an assembly area north of the LAMUT RIVER on 23 July.

By Corps order on 24 July, the 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry, passed to the control of the Division. This battalion (less Company "C") was ordered to advance south from POLIS PASS along the SAPAO RIVER and make junction with elements of the 1st Infantry pushing west from Highway 4. On the same day, the 1st Infantry was given the mission of seizing and securing HAPAO. Company "K", 1st Infantry, with Company "C", 11th Infantry attached, departed BANAUE on 25 July and on 27 July met the remainder of the 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry, in the vicinity of GOHANG. 22 Japs were killed during the advance of the two columns. At this point, Company "C" reverted to battalion control and the 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry, was attached to the 1st Infantry. During this period, the 2d Battalion, 3d Pangasinan Regiment was brought forward to BANAUE. This unit was later to prove valuable in furnishing carrying parties to troops fighting west of Highway 4, as civilian carriers were scarce.

Supply difficulties continued throughout the Division zone and air drops became the chief method of supply in the BANAUE and MAYOYAO sectors. Engineers continued their battle against time to clear and maintain the roads leading to all fronts. General weather conditions grew worse and landslides increased. With the roads reported clear, convoys heading for the front with much needed medical supplies, ammunition and rations would suddenly find themselves cut off by new slides.

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O 25 July
BUNHIAN

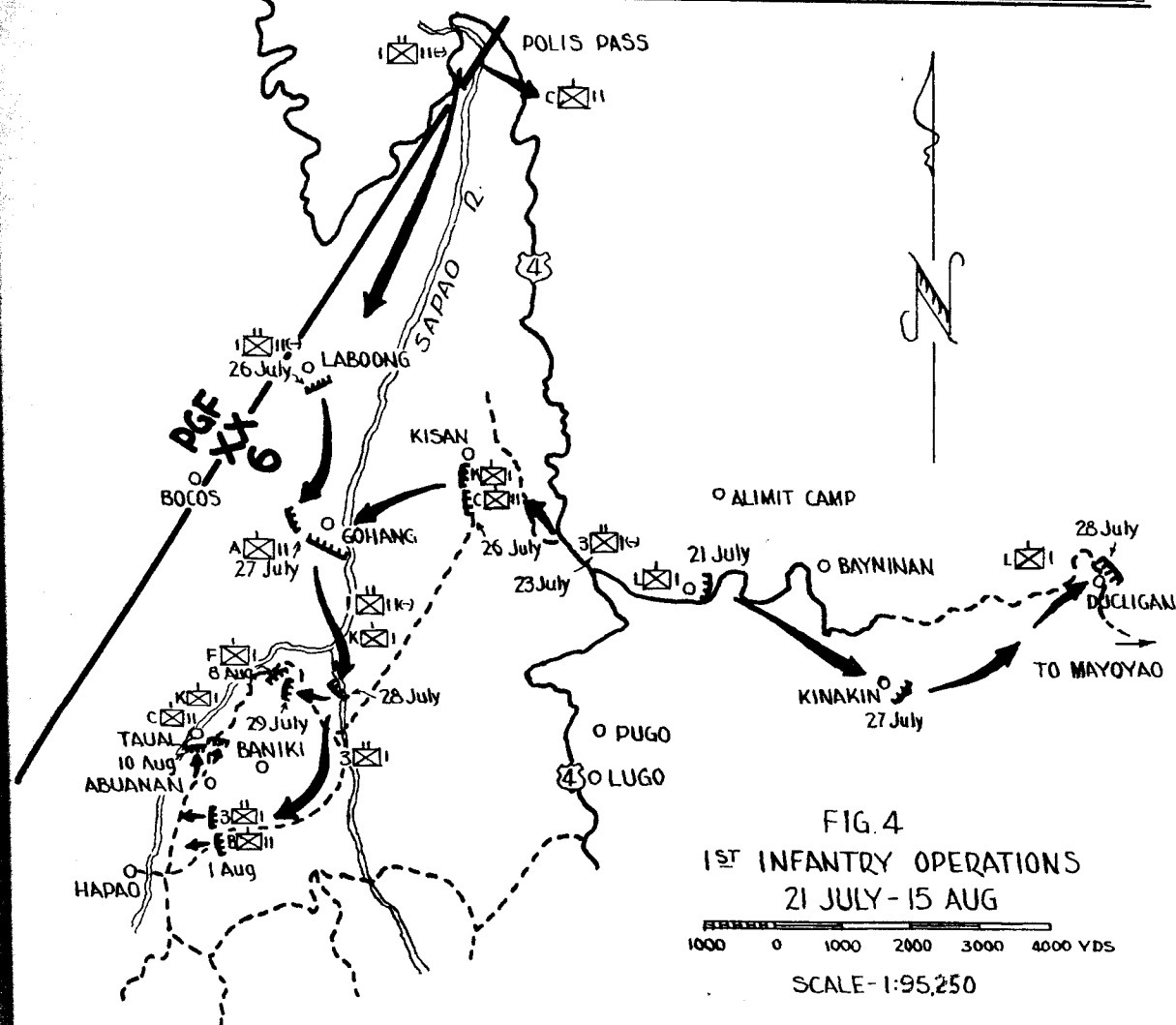
MAYOYAO

25 JULY - 6 AUG
MAYOYAO & HIGH GROUND
SEIZED 7 AUG

TULAI

6 Aug

ACTION VIC MAYOYAO
25 JULY - 7 AUG
SCALE - 1:75,000



Old Highway 4 north of the Jap cut-off remained impassable most of the time. For brief intervals during dry weather, it was open, and then only to light traffic. Supply and evacuation of troops in the KIANGAN area was, therefore, largely accomplished by combined hand-carry and motor transport means. For the 4,000 troops in the KIANGAN area (not counting civilian laborers), this presented no easy problem. Some air drops were successfully made in this area, but priority on air supply had to go to the BANAUE sector which was inaccessible to vehicles. As a result, supply difficulties and heavy rains greatly hindered operations west of KIANGAN.

Troops in the IBULAO - LAGAWA - GUROG area, numbering about 2,000, exclusive of civilian laborers, were largely supplied by combined vehicle and hand-carry over New Highway 4. Corps Engineers hoped to have New Highway 4 open for traffic up to the last and most difficult rock slide south of the IBULAO RIVER by 28 July. This would greatly ease the supply and evacuation situation in both the LAGAWA and KIANGAN areas, as hand-carry would only be necessary for a distance of 100 yards. Supplies could then be hauled by vehicle up New Highway 4 to this point, hand-carried around the rock slide, and then taken by vehicle to truck heads at GUROG and KIANGAN.

Supply of troops in the BANAUE area was largely by air drop. Evacuation became a serious problem, as it involved a hand-carry of more than 15,000 yards from BANAUE. For troops fighting to the east and west of BANAUE, the hand-carry was even longer. At this time there were about 1,500 troops in the area, exclusive of civilian laborers. This number was expected to rise in the near future to about 3,500 when troops from the MAYOYAO sector arrived. North of the IBULAO RIVER, vehicles could go on New Highway 4 only as far as GUROG. From this point to a point 6,000 yards south of BANAUE, there were nine earth and rock slides on New Highway 4 for the engineers to clear.

During the period from 27-30 July, substantial gains rewarded both efforts of the 1st Infantry. While the push towards HAPAO was stubbornly resisted yard by yard by well organized Jap positions located on key high ground stretching from GOHANG to HAPAO, a strong combat patrol advancing towards MAYOYAO made good progress, securing DUCILIGAN on 28 July with nil enemy contact. By late afternoon on 31 July, the 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry, had reached a position 1,000 yards east of HAPAO and were attempting to dislodge a strong force of Japs dug in on the ridge running to the northeast. These Jap troops appeared to be well-armed and well-trained Infantry with machine-gun and mortar support.

During the first two days of August the enemy launched a series of determined all-out counterattacks against 3d Battalion positions in the HAPAO sector. These attacks came from the north, west and southwest, and were supported by automatic weapons and mortars. The attacks were broken up each time with well directed small arms and artillery fire, and a total of 235 dead Japs were counted. On 3 August, Companies "I" and "K", 1st Infantry, secured positions on the high ground 900 yards east of HAPAO and immediately dispatched strong patrols to probe the ground between this position and the town. As a result of patrol action in this sector, 34 Japs were killed, and it was learned that large groups of Japs were moving northwest up into the mountains.

On 2 August, the 1st Infantry was given the mission of securing TULAID to the northeast of DUCILIGAN and exerting pressure on MAYOYAO from the west to assist in the capture of this town. By 4 August the 2d Battalion had relieved the 3d Battalion in the BANAUE - DUCILIGAN area, allowing the latter to concentrate in the HAPAO area.

On 5 August a strong combat patrol composed of one rifle platoon and one weapons platoon of Company "G", 1st Infantry, and Headquarters and Company "K", 3d Provisional Battalion, 1st Pangasinan Regiment departed DUCILIGAN. This force secured TULAID on 6 August and then made contact with a Jap roadblock about 3000 yards southwest of MAYOYAO, where the 11th Infantry was engaged with a strong enemy force 1000 yards northeast of town.

1st Infantry offensive action during the period 6-8 August consisted mainly of patrol activity in the HAPAO - BANIKI sector. Company "F" of the 2d Battalion was committed at this time north of BANIKI to protect the supply line to the 3d Battalion. Fanatical enemy counterattacks and desperate efforts to disrupt communications and supply lines occurred throughout this sector. All were repulsed and heavy losses were dealt the enemy with a minimum of loss to friendly forces.

In an effort to shorten ever-lengthening supply lines, reconnaissance patrols from the 1st Battalion, which had now moved up again into the LAGAWA area, were dispatched west from Highway 4 to seek a new trail to elements of the 3d Battalion engaged with the enemy in the HAPAO area. These efforts proved fruitless and the reports were all the same: "Entire terrain extremely rough and covered with dense vegetation. A practical route of supply and evacuation simply does not exist in this area."

On 8 August, Company "K", with elements of the 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry (PA), attacked north from their position 900 yards east of HAPAO, and gained 1000 yards against small-arms fire. This opposition came from a strong, well-organized enemy defensive position. By 10 August, the attack had reached a point 1800 yards northeast of HAPAO along the ridge which dominates the HAPAO-BANAUE trail.

By this time, troops of the 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry, and the 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry, fighting in the HAPAO area, had been reduced to a total strength of about 500 men as the result of battle losses and high non-battle casualty rate from sickness brought on by a high fly population and the inaccessibility of potable water. It was a four hour round trip for a man to descend from these ridge positions to water and climb back on his hands and knees with two canteens of water. The evacuation of casualties was by a long, difficult and hazardous hand-carry. Relief of these two battalions in the HAPAO area was, therefore, initiated on 11 August by the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry. This relief was accomplished on 13 August, and by 14 August, the 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry, and 1st Battalion, 11th Infantry (PA) had closed into BANAUE. Heavy rains limited the operations of the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, to local patrols to continue the development of the enemy positions west and northwest of BANIKI. At 1720, 15 August, pursuant to instructions from XIV Corps, all offensive operations in the Division zone ceased.

3. The Battle for MAYOYAO: (See Fig. 4).

On 26 July, elements of the 11th Infantry (PA), with the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry (PA), attached, advanced west from BUNHIAN to within 1,000 yards of MAYOYAO, encountering little opposition. At this point the situation quickly developed into what proved to be a fierce battle for control of the commanding terrain northeast of MAYOYAO. The enemy, estimated to be 800-1000 in strength, and supported by machine guns and mortars, was strongly entrenched in a series of rock caves and dug-in emplacements on a high ridge northeast of and overlooking MAYOYAO. This strong-point commanded the several trails leading into MAYOYAO and had to be taken.

The reduction of MAYOYAO was to be a tough job. Artillery support could not be furnished and air support was unpredictable because of the frequency of unfavorable weather. Overland supply was abandoned and all supplies were thereafter by air drop. Evacuation, however, had to continue by an extremely difficult hand-carry to MARBAT GRANDE, forty miles away.

By 1 August after heavy fighting, the 11th Infantry (PA)

gained a foothold on the enemy position. Although the situation was definitely improved, the position of the leading elements was still dominated by the enemy. A strong counterattack was launched by the Japs that night, causing numerous friendly casualties, but no ground was given up. During the period 2-7 August, continuous pressure was maintained on the Jap positions still firmly embedded in rock caves and entrenchments on the highest point of the ridge, about 5000 feet in elevation. By this time losses had been so severe that the Provisional Battalion, 11th Infantry, was disbanded in order to furnish replacements to the 3d Battalion, 11th Infantry, and the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry.

On 7 August the last Jap was pushed off the once seemingly impregnable ridge, and the approaches to MAYOYAO were secured. All intelligence reports indicated that the Japs in the MAYOYAO sector were evacuating in small groups both to the north toward NATONIN and the SIFFU RIVER VALLEY, and to the south toward ALIMIT. On 8 August the 11th Infantry entered MAYOYAO. In the meantime, orders had been issued directing that the 11th Infantry assemble in BANAUE and that the 1st Infantry take over the MAYOYAO sector. Leaving two companies in town, the 11th Infantry pushed on to the west and made junction with Company "G", 1st Infantry, near TULAIID on 9 August.

On 12 August, Company "G", 1st Infantry (reinforced), completed the relief of remaining Filipino troops in MAYOYAO, while Company "E", 1st Infantry (reinforced), took over responsibility for the DUCLIGAN area. By 13 August, the 3d Battalion, 11th Infantry and 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry, were assembled in BANAUE, where they were to be rehabilitated for future commitment in the direction of HUNGDUAN.

The 11th Infantry (reinforced) in the MAYOYAO operations killed over 350 Japs and captured a large and well-stocked rice area. Their own losses were over 50 killed and 200 wounded.

4. 20th Infantry Operations in the KIANGAN-MT PULOY Sector, 24 July - 15 August: (See Fig. 5).

The 20th Infantry, having relieved the 63d Infantry in the KIANGAN area on 24 July, was assigned the mission of attacking to the west and northwest to seize KIANGKIANG, and of destroying by-passed enemy groups to the south of KIANGAN. By 26 July, the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, had advanced along the trail from KIANGAN to within 400 yards of PACDAN, where it met serious opposition from a steep, heavily wooded razor-back ridge southwest of PACDAN. (See Sketch of PACDAN position).

On 27 July, Company "B" succeeded in gaining a precarious