the steep slopes or through the mountain streams. But the enemy in central Luzon had been so thoroughly beaten and his remnants so scattered that both patrols reached their objectives, on 12 and 13 February respectively, without enemy contacts, to become the first American troops in the counter-invasion to reach the east coast of Luzon.

By stretching the 6th Infantry Division line from Muñoz to the two bays on Luzon's east coast, the Sightseers had completed the isolation of all enemy forces in southern Luzon and had effectively cut the island in half—leaving two enemy pockets that could now be cleaned out separately.

On 11 February the 1st Regimental Combat Team was alerted for movement to Dinalupihan, on the northern end of Bataan peninsula, where it would operate under the control of XI Corps. At 1700 on the following day the 1st Infantry Regiment, 1st Field Artillery Battalion, Company A of the 6th Engineer Battalion and Company A of the 6th Medical Battalion began the long motor march to the new objective area.

The remainder of the Division prepared for movement to San Miguel, which it reached on 17 February by alternate riding and walking periods reminiscent of the walk-a-day-ride-a-day marches during the Louisiana Maneuvers. The Sightseers, less the 1st RCT, reassembled and left San Miguel for the Novaliches area, where, on 18 February, they started operations against the strongest enemy force in southern Luzon. It was the job of the 6th to clear the mountains that rose within sight of Manila and to destroy the one remaining enemy threat to the nearby city and harbor.
BATAAN
FEB. 14 - 21 1945

ADVANCE ACCOMPLISHED BY LEAP-FROGGING OF BATTALIONS WITH EXTENSIVE PATROLLING TO FLANKS

COUNTER ATTACK 15 FEB. BY 250-300 JAPS
CHAPTER 16
THE RETURN TO BATAAN

THE 1st Infantry men on their way to Bataan remembered the long and bitter defensive war that American and Filipino troops had waged there in early 1942, and wondered whether the Nips were also going to use the heavily wooded mountains that covered the peninsula as a last-ditch defensive stronghold now that the roles of attacker and defender were reversed.

The troops of XI Corps which had landed at Subic Bay had driven across the northern end of Bataan Province to establish contact with XIV Corps northwest of Manila, isolating the enemy troops in Bataan from the remaining Jap forces in southern Luzon. Now it was the job of the 1st Infantry to clean up northern and central Bataan and to cut off the escape route of the enemy withdrawing from Mariveles, on the peninsula’s southern tip.

By 1700 on 14 February, the 1st and 2d Battalions had occupied the Balang-Pilar area, Companies I and G were astride the main highway in the vicinity of Bantan and Pequeno, and Company B had established a strong position on the highway 3,500 yards southwest of Pilar. While Company A of the Red Star Engineers started work on destroyed bridges and by-passes along the route of advance, the 1st FA Battalion wheeled its 105s into position 500 yards west of Abucay. During the day a boatload of Japs evacuating Manila landed near Samal and started inland. Patrols from Company C and the I&R Platoon contacted the enemy force, drove them into an abandoned shack and in the ensuing fire fight killed a majority of the enemy, only five Nips managing to escape through the heavy brush that covered the area.

On the following day, while Company B moved out to secure the river-crossing seven hundred yards southwest of Pilar, the 2d Battalion pushed rapidly to the south and seized Orion, consolidating its position there with Company E outposting the south side of the town. The 3d Battalion strengthened its positions in the Abucay area, while its assault team killed part of another force of Nips evacuating Manila who landed near Abucay at dawn.

That night at about 2200 hours the outposts that Company E had established around Orion were charged by 250-300 Japs armed with demolition charges and incendiary grenades in addition to their rifles and automatic weapons. The enemy force, guided through the area by two Filipino spies, broke through the company’s line and attacked the battalion CP. Battalion staff officers fought side by side with the Semper Primus doughs as they poured lead into the enemy from the cover of their foxholes or from within the heavy stone walls of the local church. For five hours the men of the battalion fought out the invaders, fighting through the black night that was relieved only by tracers and the glow of a burning jeep that the enemy had reached with his incendiaries.

During the night attack the enemy had killed 11 of our men and wounded 15 others, but when morning came 80 Nip bodies were found around the CP and 1 prisoner was captured. The enemy’s losses had been high, and despite the confusion that accompanied the night-long battle his gains had been few, for damage to the installations at the CP were relatively light.

On 17 February some of the doughs manning the sea wall along the east coast watched a PT boat fire two torpedoes into a large hulk lying offshore and
used as a temporary stop-over by retreating Nips. One of the torpedoes hit its mark, but the other passed the wreckage and streaked toward the sea wall on which the men were stationed. Hundreds of rounds of small arms and machine-gun slugs were hurriedly thrown at the oncoming menace in an effort to detonate it before it reached the wall, but in vain. The men nervously hugged the ground as the torpedo hit, then watched gleefully as it glanced off the wall and sped harmlessly off at a tangent.

From 17 to 20 February the entire regiment proceeded west along the Bagac road, with the three battalions leap-frogging across the peninsula to Bagac on the west coast. Extensive patrolling was conducted in the hills and forests north and south of the road and vast quantities of enemy equipment were either captured or destroyed by the advancing troops. Though little contact was made with the remnants of the enemy troops hiding out in the mountains, the RCT cleared all of northern and central Bataan and secured the vital road junctions at Pilar and Bagac, sealing completely the exits that might be used by enemy stragglers.

Over most of the ground covered in the week-long drive, the Semper Primus men had been the first American troops to pass since the infamous Death March in 1942, and the Sightseers of the 1st Infantry will long be proud of the part they played in avenging the soldiers of Bataan and Corregidor.
CHAPTER 17
CRACKING THE SHIMBU LINE

In the Shimbu Line, only twelve miles northeast of Manila, the 6th Infantry Division faced the bulk of the troops which had garrisoned the city and its environs during the three years of enemy occupation. General Tomoyuki Yamashita had ordered more than 14,000 combat troops into the hills stretching from Antipolo to Mt. Oro to delay the advance of the U.S. troops and act as a constant threat of counterattack on the Pearl of the Orient. Led by Lieutenant General Yokoyama Shizuo, the Nips had spent many months preparing their defensive positions on the towering peaks and in the wooded draws of the lower Sierra Madre range. Forced Filipino labor had prepared an elaborate system of mutually supporting strongpoints in caves and pillboxes located on commanding ground, and the only routes of approach lay across flat rice fields that were open to constant observation and fire from hilltop positions.

Main points in the strong defensive line were Mt. Oro, rising 1,000 feet above the heavily wooded Puray River valley; Mts. Pacawagan and Mataba, 1,500 and 1,400 feet high respectively, separated by the Mango River gorge and dominating the entire central portion of the Shimbu Line as well as the Mariquina Valley and the eastern approaches to Manila; and Mt. Baytangan, overlooking the steep Bosoboso River valley to the east of Mataba. Each of these peaks, bristling with concealed weapons, had to be stormed and captured by the Red Star doughboys before Manila could be secure.

During the period 20-23 February the regiments moved into their respective areas and prepared for the first attack on the enemy positions, while all four Division Artillery battalions set up their guns for the artillery duels they were soon to have with 75s, 105s, naval guns and 8-inch rockets that the Japs were known to have hidden in the draws and caves of the Sierra Madre range.

On 24 February the attack began. On the right flank, the 1st and 2d Battalions of the 20th Infantry moved east from their positions in the hills 4,000 yards north and east of Mariquina, gaining about 1,000 yards against slight resistance. The 2d Battalion of the 63d seized San Isidro unopposed, while the 1st Battalion moved up the highway from San Mateo to enter Montalban against only scattered opposition. The 63d's 3d Battalion had greater difficulty in reaching its objective. Attacking Hill 400 northeast of Zaragosa under the cover of darkness, the 3d Battalion had to dispose of strong enemy outposts supported by 47mm and 70mm fire before reaching the hilltop, but by 1630 Hill 400 was secured.

Operations on the following day were characterized by increasing enemy activity, all sectors of the Division front receiving heavy artillery and rocket fire. For the first time the troops learned the terror of the 8-inch rockets, whose siren scream caused every doughboy within hearing distance to dive for cover. Division Artillery fired effective counter-battery against the enemy artillery during the day and destroyed many rocket positions. Infantrymen continuing the attacks of the previous day were also cheered by the sight of 73 Army P-47s and Marine dive-bombers bombing and strafing gun positions, troop concentrations and dumps in the hills.

The bulk of the 63d Infantry mopped up the Montalban area during the 25th, while the 1st Bat-
talion sent combat patrols up the steep sides of Mt. Pacawagan. The patrols were forced to withdraw by concentrated fire from concealed enemy positions on the ridge, but not before they had destroyed several strongpoints. The 20th continued its slow advance northeastward into the mountains, running into stiff organized resistance only in the 1st Battalion sector approximately 2,500 yards southeast of San Mateo.

During the attack on Montalban, Lieutenant J. H. Childs' mortar platoon was subjected to a strong enemy counterattack and a 6.2 mortar barrage that cut the communication lines between the fire control center and the mortars. Knowing the success of his platoon's defense depended on operation of the lines, Childs left his foxhole in the face of intense small-arms and mortar fire, and succeeded in repairing the lines despite serious wounds. In another counterattack during this period, Private First Class Clarence H. French voluntarily crawled forward of our lines to pour such devastating fire on the enemy that the company was able to maneuver into more favorable positions without sustaining any casualties. French continued to hold off the attacking enemy until fatally wounded by artillery fire. Technician Fifth Grade Gust Rosin, aid man with an infantry platoon of the 63d that was undergoing a severe shelling by heavy mortars, ran from position to position caring for casualties, despite the fact that he himself was one of the first wounded and was bleeding profusely from shell fragment wounds. He continued his work, organized emergency litter squads and evacuated men to the aid stations until he finally lost consciousness from loss of blood. Private First Class Bill E. Crouch of the 20th Infantry, aid man accompanying a patrol that ran into severe enemy machine-gun fire, lost his life trying to reach the side of a wounded man pinned down by the intensity of the enemy fire. During a heavy mortar barrage in the San Isidro sector, Lieutenant James F. Hudson of the 55th FA Battalion remained at his observation post among the falling shells although the infantry company with which he was serving had withdrawn to safety 400 yards to the rear. His accurate and continuous adjustment of fire on the enemy positions enabled the doughboys to
In the operational area of the 1st Infantry, which now extended over a 2,000-yard front between the 20th and 63d, the 3d Battalion advanced 2,500 yards northeast from San Mateo to take up positions on the west slope of Mt. Mataba, just south of the Mango River gorge. The advance in the face of intense mortar and automatic-weapons fire had caused heavy casualties, and when increased mortar and artillery fire during the night made the positions untenable, the battalion withdrew to the San Mateo vicinity. In the 1st Battalion area, Company C moved up the slopes north of the gorge, but was also forced to withdraw on the following day after its dug-in positions had been pounded by the enemy's heavy weapons.

During the action, Private First Class John R. Leong made repeated trips down steep slopes and through wooded ravines on Mt. Mataba searching for the wounded and administering first aid. When several attempts by others to reach a wounded man had failed because of heavy enemy fire, Leong crawled to the man's side, gave him much needed

In the 20th Infantry sector Private First Class Charles V. McKemie, during a reconnaissance 3,000 yards inside enemy territory, crawled toward an enemy position after being fired on. After killing two of the enemy with a WP grenade, he returned with additional ammunition, completely silencing the enemy emplacement. During a counterattack in the Sykesmen's area, Private First Class William Kezele noticed that a machine-gun squad of four men had been seriously injured by a demolition charge brought right up to the perimeter by infiltrating Japs. He ran to the position despite the small-arms and grenade fire in the area and operated the gun alone, driving back all enemy attempts to breach the defensive line. When the enemy withdrew, Kezele evacuated the wounded.
aid, and succeeded in evacuating him and numerous others down a tortuous route to the aid station. Technical Sergeant Leslie S. Collier, after withdrawing his platoon from Mataha because of the intense mortar fire, returned to the vacated area to find several missing men. Locating one of his squad leaders suffering from a broken leg, Collier carried him on his back through heavy fire to an aid station more than 1,000 yards away. He returned to the hill once more, found another wounded man, and carried him 500 yards to a place of safety.

Following massed concentrations by five artillery battalions, the 63d made two separate thrusts at Mt. Pacawagan on 27 February. Company B succeeded in scaling the heights, advancing in the face of withering enemy fire to reach the objective near the summit of the peak despite staggering losses. Heavy enemy fire failed to dislodge the men from their positions. In storming the objective hill, Lieutenant Leslie A. Burrow had dashed through a heavy automatic-weapons crossfire to carry his wounded lead scout to a protected position. Then, picking up a radio, he worked his way forward to the observation point where the scout had been hit, and without regard for enemy shells or automatic fire, directed artillery fire on the strong enemy positions until they were neutralized. Technical Sergeant Rufus A. Bryant performed a similar function when he moved slowly through a mortar barrage that twice knocked him off his feet, to take up a forward position from which he directed accurate mortar fire on enemy forces apparently gathering for a counterattack that never came.

During this same period the first round of an enemy artillery concentration scored a lucky hit on the gasoline and oil dump of the 80th Field Artillery located just north of the Novaliches Dam, setting thirteen drums of fuel on fire and endangering the personnel and equipment in the battalion area as well as offering the enemy an illuminated target. Although the enemy fire continued for 25 minutes, with twelve rounds of 105mm falling in the immediate area of the fire, Corporal Philip E. Langin and Technician Fifth Grade James M. Nower embarked the fire with their bulldozers, ignoring the flying shell fragments and the threat of explosion from the burning drums to extinguish the flames before any serious damage resulted. Throughout the Shimbu battle the 80th suffered more from counterbattery fire than any of the light battalions, undoubtedly because of the revealing flash of the 155s. There were three men killed and thirteen wounded on 28 February when an enemy shell hit a Lyster bag near one of the battalion's kitchens and exploded above ground, sending its deadly fragments over a wide area. To escape the enemy fire, the battalion moved to a new position under cover of darkness, but left dummy guns in the vacated area to draw the Jap fire. An engineer camouflage platoon
assisted in the deception by using a switchboard wiring device to detonate TNT blocks and powder bags in the dummy positions whenever the real 155s were fired, then watching the enemy lob shell after shell in an effort to destroy or silence the wood and canvas guns.

During the next three days, while Division engineers fought snipers, mortars, steep slopes and heavy underbrush to push the main supply road through the hills, the 2d Battalion of the 1st Infantry completed relief of the 65d troops atop Mt. Pacawagan while the balance of the regiment took up positions in the San Mateo-Montalban area. The 20th consolidated its positions in the hills east of Bayan-bayan and carried on extensive patrol activities in the hills. A strong banzai attack on Company I positions in the early morning hours of 2 March resulted in 68 enemy dead as against two of the Sykesmen wounded in the action. In the 65d sector, a midnight attack on the Company F perimeter resulted in a three-hour fire fight some 1,500 yards west of Mt. Oro. The company had to withdraw for lack of ammunition, but returned the following morning to retake the ground and count 29 dead Japs.

Private First Class Ray W. Saladin, leading a rescue party trying to locate some 1st Infantrymen wounded on Mt. Mataba, lowered himself into a deep ravine by means of communication wire and,
within 100 yards of enemy emplacements, administered medical aid to several wounded men. When the remainder of the rescue party was driven off by superior enemy forces, he returned alone through the enemy positions with information that was used by a rescuing party the following night. On Mt. Pacawagan, when 1st Infantry troops were cut off from all water and food supplies, Lieutenant William L. Kling volunteered to lead a supply party up the steep slopes. He succeeded in reaching the unit with a major portion of the supplies, despite 47mm and machine-gun fire that caused some casualties in the party. On a second trip he killed two enemy snipers before being wounded by a demolition charge.

In the 63d area, the Pacawagan counterattack of 2 March was preceded by so intense a concentration of mortar and artillery fire that our mortar positions became untenable. Privates First Class Arthur L. Arnold, Reuel V. Earnhart, Victor F. Konya and Roy Matlock moved quickly into the open, however, and set up their 60mm mortar for operation despite their exposed position. The squad's fire was so accurate and so rapid that the enemy was repulsed after he had penetrated to within 35 yards of our lines.

During 4-5 March the Sightseers consolidated their positions and continued sending out patrols to probe the enemy defenses. The strain of the constant pounding by enemy artillery, 150mm mortars and 8-inch rockets plus the frontal assaults on strongly fortified high ground was beginning to show on the doughs. The decision was made to change the Division's main effort, utilizing the more favorable terrain in the 20th Infantry's sector for a drive to the east that would cut the Shimbu Line in half and permit an envelopment of the enemy strongpoints on Mataba and Pacawagan from the south.

During the first phase, from 18 February to 5 March, though the doughs had not completed their attempted penetration of the enemy's line, they had gained information on his strength, disposition and the nature of his defenses. In addition, they had killed 1,105 of the Nips and captured 13, plus an uncounted number killed or wounded by our constant artillery and air bombardment; and had destroyed or captured enormous quantities of enemy supplies and equipment. In accomplishing these objectives against the most stubbornly defended heights in Luzon, the Sightseers had lost 91 killed, 320 wounded and 4 men missing in action.

* * *

A major part in the new tactical plan, calling for a knife-like thrust to the east through the center of the vaunted Shimbu Line, was played by the 1st Infantry. Assembling in the 20th Infantry sector on the Division's right flank, the 1st moved out on 8 March after a two-day preparation by air and artillery units, including two 155mm howitzer battalions, one 155mm gun battalion, one 8-inch battery and one 240mm howitzer battery supplementing the Sightseers' four battalions to mass fires for the Division's main effort. During the first day the 1st Battalion advanced 1,500 yards east of the line of departure, with Company K securing positions on the right flank. While Company G moved up to the front lines, the 1st Battalion on the following day combed the draws and ravines in the forward area, supported by the direct fire of SPMs and antitank guns.

On the 10th, Company F joined the 1st Battalion to advance 300 yards to the front, overrunning numerous caves and dugouts on the way and counting 185 dead Japs in their path. Company K in the meantime repulsed an early morning counterattack and advanced to the east. The 2d Battalion pushed through the 1st on the following day, moving 1,200 yards ahead through draws and across ridges that were effectively covered by demolition teams. The 1st Battalion, mopping up in their area, killed sixty
Nips in one large cave. Company L attacked to the southeast, seizing commanding ground on the Division's right flank. Three counterattacks were repulsed that night with heavy enemy losses.

For two long weeks the pattern was repeated in the 1st Infantry sector. Doughs would climb the ridges and scout the draws during the day, occasionally to be driven back by 150mm mortars, only to regain the ground on the following day. The men would be kept up most of the night by noisy banzai attacks that left the perimeters lined with Jap dead, or by stealthy infiltrations that made each rustling leaf seem a potential threat to the weary perimeter guards. Then early the next morning they were off again, combing draws, sealing caves, storming machine-gun emplacements or seeking cover from artillery and mortar bursts. There were many casualties, but on 24 January the 1st Infantry secured a foothold on Mt. Yabang and on the high ground overlooking the Bosoboso River, completing its part in the second phase of the Division's attack on the Shimbu Line.

It was during this phase of the 1st Infantry's operations that the Sightseers lost their commanding general and one of their regimental commanders. Major General Edwin D. Patrick and Colonel James E. Rees, Commanding Officer of the 1st Infantry, were at a forward battalion observation post on 14 March, making estimates and plans for a continuance of the attack to the east, when a burst of machine-gun fire from a draw 75 yards away killed Colonel Rees instantly and mortally wounded General Patrick, who died three days later in a Manila hospital.

While the Division mourned the loss of these able leaders, the drive eastward continued, now under the leadership of Brigadier General Charles E. Burdis, formerly Commanding General of Division Artillery.

Many Semper Primus men contributed to the advance: Private First Class Clifford L. Ferrell, who placed his machine gun on a small knoll when his company encountered devastating cross-fire, and though wounded brought continuous fire to bear on two enemy machine-gun positions, destroying the guns and killing all members of both crews; Private First Class James D. Bridgeman advancing into enemy pillboxes firing his light machine gun from the hip, pinning down the enemy so effectively that several strongpoints were completely destroyed; Sergeant Ralph E. Steffy who drew fire on himself so that his company could maneuver to more favorable terrain, killing two Japs and neutralizing a machine gun while so engaged; Staff Sergeant Harry F. Wieme working his way by short rushes to an enemy position, killing the crew and turning the captured machine gun on another enemy gun, destroying it and its crew; Private First Class Virgil F. Garrison sealing enemy-occupied caves with satchel charges, killing at least thirty of the enemy; Technical Sergeant Leslie S. Collier who threw hand grenades and fired his rifle at near-by enemy elements while he worked desperately to repair a machine gun damaged by mortar bursts, feinted throwing a grenade to keep the enemy down for the last few vital moments, then turned devastating fire on the Nips just as they prepared to rush the position in force; Private First
Class Theon J. Vetter who, during a counterattack, rolled on an enemy hand grenade to shield his three comrades and, on regaining consciousness, remained to assist in repulsing the enemy banzai charges, refusing to be evacuated until the position was secure; and hundreds of others who combed draws, sealed caves, attacked machine-gun nests, rendered first aid, evacuated casualties, resisted banzai attacks or otherwise performed their assigned jobs in a capable manner.

The Red Star field artillery battalions also played a major role in the eastward drive. Supported by several units of corps artillery, they massed fire for heavy concentrations on enemy hilltop positions, rolling barrages ahead of the advancing doughs, harassing and interdictory fire, counter-battery fire, smoke shells to mark targets for the daily air strikes and defensive fire into counterattacking forces. On 16 March elements of the 3rd Battalion, 1st Infantry, found more than 200 enemy dead, killed by fire of the 1st Field Artillery in helping the doughs to repel two early morning counterattacks. On the same day the 51st Field received more than 100 rounds of enemy counter-battery fire in its battery areas in a vain attempt by the Nips to silence the "hellfire" of the battalion. The entire Division zone received more than 360 rounds of enemy artillery fire on that day. A few days later, the 53d Field suffered one gun destroyed and one damaged in another effort by the Nips to silence the everlasting pounding by the Red Star artillery. For probably the first time in the Pacific war, a fast-flying Marine SBD was used as an artillery observer plane when the 80th Field Artillery Battalion during this period turned its long-range guns on the Ipo Dam, where massed enemy antiaircraft weapons prevented the use of the slow artillery observation planes used throughout most of the campaign.

The second major element in the drive to the east was the 20th Infantry. Moving in a northeast direction along the 1st Infantry's left flank, the Sykesmen ran into the same type of opposition faced by the Semper Primus doughs. Huddled in foxholes during the night to escape heavy artillery and rocket concentrations or burning out machine-gun barrels in warding off repeated banzai charges, the men of the 20th plodded ahead during the day, destroying enemy pillboxes and gaining the ground that had been set as their objective. By 24 March all three battalions had reached their assigned areas on the southeast slope of Mt. Mataba and atop Mt. Baytangan.

During the drive a machine-gun position manned by Private First Class Edwin N. Johnson was attacked by forty Nips. When two of his crew were killed and two wounded, Johnson had to operate the gun alone, under continuous rifle, grenade and mortar fire of the attacking force. When the gun became so overheated that it would no longer fire, he continued to defend the perimeter position with
pistol and grenades. Finally, after four hours, the
attacks ceased, 36 enemy dead being piled in front
of the position. Private First Class Roy McDaniel,
a lead scout, was fired upon by a concealed enemy
machine gun. He rushed the position and, though
wounded by grenade fragments, succeeded in killing
the entire gun crew with hand grenades. Staff Ser-
geant Erford H. Gage armed himself with hand
grenades during a night counterattack and crawled
25 yards across fire-swept terrain to destroy a knee
mortar and kill the enemy at the position. Private
First Class William F. Curtis crawled up Mt. Bay-
tangan ahead of his platoon and killed eleven enemy
riflemen who were impeding its advance. Technical
Sergeant Robert D. Smith killed six of seven enemy
attempting to escape from a cave, then advanced
through a hail of bullets to toss a hand grenade into
an enemy machine-gun position, killing the crew.

One of the intermediate objectives captured by the
Sykesmen during the drive was Banzai Hill, about
100 feet high, covered with dense cogon grass, and
containing in one of its deep caves a large enemy
supply dump. On the night of 21 March, the 3d
Battalion elements on the hill received one of the
many counterattacks which gave the hill its name.
During the preparatory mortar and machine-gun fire
which severed communication lines between the for-
ward observer and the 60mm mortar positions, Ser-
geant Max Heller crawled out of his foxhole, fol-
lowed the wire through the high grass and repaired
it, despite enemy fire so intense that it caused fifteen
casualties among the men who remained in their
covered positions. Returning to his position to direct
mortar fire against the enemy troops massing for the
counterattack, Heller remained standing throughout
the attack, calling for accurate fire on the suicidal
charges that carried the enemy so close to the perim-
eter that he had to direct bursts within only twenty
yards of his own position, putting him in serious
danger of becoming a casualty by the very fire he
directed. When the attack was repulsed, Sergeant
Heller ran from foxhole to foxhole, administering
first aid and encouraging the fatigued men to hold
their positions in the face of an enemy 150mm mor-
tar barrage that was raining down on them. Return-
ing again to direct fire into the second counterattack-
ing group, Heller again stood at his post, silhouetted
against the sky to form a perfect target for the Nip
automatic weapons and bayonet charges. When day-
light came, more than fifty enemy dead were counted
immediately in front of his position.
During the eastward drive the remainder of the Division had not been idle. The 63d Infantry, out-posting the entire western line of the Division’s area, had prevented infiltration of the San Mateo-Montalban sectors, dispatched patrols to the Puray River and fought off numerous strong counterattacks with heavy losses to the enemy. Sergeant Floyd M. Hesse staged a one-man counterattack against a Nip banzai charge that had penetrated some of our positions. Ordering his men to hold their positions, he jumped from his foxhole, killed two Japs within only a few yards of his position, then crawled from hole to hole dropping grenades and firing his rifle into the positions that the enemy had succeeded in occupying. After killing four more Nips, he returned for more grenades and moved toward the crest of the hill, reaching it just as a second banzai charge was started. Though silhouetted against the sky in plain view of the large enemy force, Hesse maintained his position, throwing grenades at the enemy ranks two at a time until the force of the attack was broken and the remaining Nips retreated to their holes.

Staff Sergeant Charles H. Lanham was a squad leader of a platoon that was cut off from all friendly forces by a strong counterattacking enemy force, the only possible route of approach to the platoon’s hilltop position being a steep brush-covered trail that had been extensively mined during the day. While a platoon of reinforcements awaited the signal to advance to the beleaguered troops, Lanham made his way down the trail groping for trip wires in total darkness. Knowing that his platoon needed immediate aid, he hurried the job by standing and using a flashlight that revealed his position to numerous enemy snipers. Lanham deactivated seven mines and detonated two, but was unable to locate the last one. Rather than delay the reinforcement any longer, he boldly walked down the path in the area where he knew the unexploded mine must be, and hit the trip wire with his foot, exploding a phosphorus grenade but miraculously escaping injury. He then quickly led the supporting platoon up the hill to aid in repulsing the enemy attack.

Private First Class Tilford C. Cantrell, leading a five-man patrol across the rice paddies in front of Mataba, was rushed by a Jap captain wielding a bayonet. He sidestepped the rush, used a butt stroke on the enemy officer, then killed him with a shot
from his rifle. Three more Nips suddenly rushed out of the darkness, all three being killed by Cantrell’s quick shooting, but not before one of them had put a bayonet through his jacket. Hearing other Nips whispering a short distance away, he broke up the discussion with two hand grenades, leaving several dead or wounded. Then, teaming up with another member of the patrol, busy Cantrell killed or drove back to the hills twenty Nip demolition experts equipped with HE charges, grenades and bangalores, as well as detailed maps of our supply dumps, gun positions and command posts.

Division Artillery, supported by attached battalions of “Long Toms” (155mm) and 240mm howitzers, had silenced numerous enemy guns, destroyed rocket positions and placed supporting fire ahead of the advancing doughboys. Red Star engineers had begun graveling the MSR east of the Mariquina River and continued improving the two-lane road they had hacked out of the hills despite enemy snipers and infiltration raids. The units of the Sightseeing 6th had now completed the second phase of the operation, gaining vital ground for the next push, killing 3,600 enemy, sealing more than 350 caves with an undetermined number of Nips buried alive, and capturing or destroying additional stores of enemy equipment. The stage was now set for the last drive against Mataba and Pacawagan.

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While patrols of the 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop worked with the 1st and 20th Infantry Regiments in patrolling the Mt. Baytangan-Bosoboso areas, the 63d launched a large-scale diversionary attack on the western slopes of Mts. Mataba and Pacawagan on 27 March. On the following morning Division Artillery, reinforced by the fires of two medium battalions and two heavy batteries, sup-
ported the northward attacks of the 1st and 20th Infantry. The doughs advanced slowly, crossing deep ravines and clambering over steep ridges to gain precious yards. Again they were subjected to the pounding of enemy artillery, mortars and rockets, the cross-fires of mutually supporting machine-gun emplacements, and the fury of repeated banzai attacks. The 20th advanced through the desperately defended hill country to the very base of Mt. Mataba, but there they were forced to dig in to escape the punishing fire of the enemy weapons. On 2 April the depleted ranks of the 20th Infantry moved out of the hills while the 63d took over to spearhead the final attack on Mataba, the 1st remaining in the hills to secure the Baytangan–Bosoboso area and continue development of the enemy positions to the north.

The period 6-9 April saw three coordinated attacks by the 63d Infantry, with the 2d and 3d Battalions attacking Hills A and X from the south, while the 1st Battalion completed preparations for an attack from San Mateo on the western slopes of Mataba. The attacks on Hills A and X, guarding the approaches to Mataba from the south and west, constituted one of the outstanding examples of infantry-artillery cooperation in an attack. After the customary heavy concentrations on both hills, the artillery continued its terrific pounding of Hill X while the infantry stormed Hill A. Where previous attacks on the mutually supporting hills had been driven back by withering cross-fire from the strongly-entrenched positions, the attack now succeeded with the Sightseers' and attached artillery pinning down the enemy on Hill X, dropping huge 8-inch howitzer shells only 400 yards from the attacking doughboys, who secured one hill and then turned their undivided attention to the second. During this attack the Red Star artillery used the newly developed VT fuze for the first time, the timed bursts above ground spreading destruction over a wide area in the enemy positions. The 6th Engineers furnished demolition teams to support the 63d in destroying caves and pillboxes in the objective area, while the 4.2 mortars assisted the artillery battalions in saturating the Mataba area in support of the infantry attacks.

On 10 April the final attack was launched, with the 1st Battalion of the 63d attacking prior to daylight up the steep western slopes facing the Mari-
quina Valley and the 3d Battalion pushing up the ridge line east and southeast of Mataba in the vicinity of Hills A, B and X. The attack was successful, resulting in the seizure of all of the Mataba Hill mass except the northernmost tip of the peak. Both battalions consolidated their positions, mopping up by-passed enemy positions and repulsing light enemy counterattacks. Attacks on the remaining enemy strongpoint during the period 14-16 April resulted in slight gains against the strongly entrenched enemy, but the last enemy position was seized by direct assault on the 17th and all of Mataba was under the Red Star banner. During the final assault, the infantry was supported by self-propelled mounts and tanks that were able to reach the area only by the herculean efforts of the 6th Engineers in pushing supply roads to the very summit of the mountain.

The attack on Mt. Mataba added many names to the honor roll of the 63d Infantry: Private First Class Burress Elliott who rescued a wounded lead scout, then assaulted an enemy-held cave, killing all enemy personnel; Private First Class Frank E. Phillips crawling to the crest of a ridge and silencing several machine-gun positions by dropping grenades into them; Captains William C. Beachler, Milburn W. Beitel and William J. Moran, who led their companies up Mt. Mataba, the latter two storming the interconnecting cave positions held by 150 Japs and at least six machine guns, finally overrunning the position on the sixth attempt, after Captain Moran had been twice wounded; Staff Sergeant Walter A. Mirly killing three machine gunners, then turning the gun on an enemy mortar position, killing the crew and destroying the mortar; Technical Sergeant Kenneth C. Johnson and Sergeant Henry A. Timmerman crawling over exposed terrain under heavy fire, and dropping demolitions into a strong enemy position, killing five of the enemy and destroying the emplacement; Privates First Class Rupert Burgess and Pat M. Trella, who scaled the precipitous side of a cliff under small-arms and grenade fire, then charged an enemy strongpoint
with their tommy-guns, demolishing the position and killing the enemy gunners; Sergeant Salvatore Minardi leading a bayonet charge against an enemy emplacement; Staff Sergeant James M. Walker walking into a cave, disarming an enemy rifleman, then clearing the cave by tossing a grenade in among the enemy; Private First Class Alvin P. Kimbrell destroying two enemy caves and silencing a machine-gun emplacement by lobbing grenades into the position; and Staff Sergeant Bummand M. Epps, who stormed a pillbox containing two machine guns and seven riflemen, destroyed the pillbox and killed its personnel with rifle fire and grenades.

The two chief functions of the 6th Engineers during the Mataba attack were demolition of enemy positions and construction of the all-important supply road under the most trying conditions of terrain and combat. The first is epitomized by the actions of Private Leon W. Sharp, who spent most of his time destroying cave emplacements with demolition charges. Forced to take cover when a heavy mortar barrage fell on our troops, Sharp returned to the caves the moment the barrage lifted, braving enemy small-arms fire to place a charge at the last unsealed cave entrance. After destroying the enemy in the last position on the hillside, he was killed by enemy sniper fire. The second engineer job is best represented by Lieutenant Robert J. Ridgway, who reconnoitered the exposed route of the projected supply road up to Mt. Mataba and then supervised its construction, subject at all times to harassing artillery and mortar fire as well as to well directed sniper fire at the sweating road-builders.

While the 63d was attacking Mataba, the 20th Infantry continued to secure the Novaliches watershed area and the high ground west and northwest of Montalban until 16-17 April, when it effected a mutual relief with the 145th Infantry, which had been policing Manila. The 1st Infantry had maintained its positions in the Baytangan area, sending out strong patrols searching for enemy dispositions to the north. On 17-18 April the 3d Battalion attacked and captured the north end of Woodpecker Ridge despite severe mortar and machine-gun fire, with more than 100 battle casualties during the two-day drive.

Captain Orville M. Hutchinson, company commander of one of the assault companies, was forced to direct all mortar and artillery fire in his sector when all his officers and both his mortar and artillery forward observers became casualties. Ordered to hold the ground gained atop the objective hill, Hutchinson could muster only ten able-bodied men, who dug in under his direction to hold the hard-won ground for the night. Lieutenant Thomas E. Brotherton, returning from a patrol to learn that one of his scouts had been wounded and pinned down by enemy fire and that no member of the patrol had been able to approach the wounded man, immediately moved out across the fire-swept ground, crawling through the brush until he reached the stricken man’s side. Placing the man on his shoulders, Brotherton made the return trip standing up, walking slowly because of his burden, with enemy snipers pecking away at the excellent target throughout the trip. Almost miraculously, both men reached the safety of their perimeter without being hit. Corporal Clifford S. Greeneig, leading a recon patrol into enemy territory, came upon a seven-man Nip patrol led by an officer. He attempted to fire from the hip, but the rifle jammed, whereupon he charged the enemy group, bayoneted the officer.
who was firing a pistol at him, and knocked another Nip unconscious with a butt stroke. The remaining Nips fled in terror, and the patrol ran into no further difficulties.

The final capture of Mt. Pacawagan, the last major objective in the Division area, was accomplished by the 145th Infantry which was attached to the Sightseers for the operation. Supported by Division Artillery and the flanking fire of the 63rd Infantry troops atop Mt. Mataba, the men of the 145th attacked at 0400 21 April, storming the successive peaks again and again, until on 29 April Pacawagan was secured. The 6th Engineers had again pushed the supply road up the slopes of the objective mountain, so steep that wheeled vehicles could only negotiate the first third of the ascent. Tractors and bulldozers were used to complete the haul to the top, where the road had been cut through rugged terrain by bulldozers that had to be secured by cables to prevent their toppling over the steep grade.

During the northward drive that marked the final phase of the Sightseers' 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 the area by the 6th Infantry Division and attached units. Division casualties for the period totalled 107 killed in action and 569 wounded or injured.

The Sightseers who left the Shimbu Line for their new stations in west central Luzon were red-eyed and worn, their faces reflecting the sleepless nights and agonizing days that had been their lot for almost two and one half months on the Shimbu Line, facing the heaviest concentrations of artillery, mortar and rocket fire that the Japs had used in the entire Luzon campaign. The fighting men of the 6th had completed 112 days of uninterrupted combat from the landing on 9 January to their relief on the Shimbu Line on 30 April, the only division in the Pacific to face such concentrated enemy might over so great a period of time without a break. Off once more for a new area, the 6th was doing its sightseeing the hard way.
CHAPTER 18
MOPPING UP IN CENTRAL LUZON

AFTER the aggressiveness of the Jap defenders of the Shimbu Line, the passive attitude of the enemy encountered in the 6th Division's new area made the days from 1 May to 12 June seem almost a rest period, despite the continued activity that resulted in more than 1,500 enemy casualties at the hands of the Sightseers.

While the 20th Infantry, 51st Field Artillery and Company B of the 6th Medics performed their official duties and enjoyed unofficial pastimes in Manila, the bulk of the Division spent the period seeking out and destroying enemy remnants in the area that covered Bataan, Corregidor, Pampanga and Zambales. The 1st Infantry, which killed 803 of the enemy and captured 124, conducted active patrolling of the Zambales Mountains during the period, digging out stragglers and eliminating enemy patrols hiding in the hills. The 1st Battalion maintained positions in the Orani-Pilar-Bagac sector of Bataan, sending out daily patrols, including overwater patrols using DUKWs along the west coast of the peninsula. The 2d Battalion occupied positions in the San Antonio–San Marcelino areas, protecting the San Marcelino airstrip and dispatching strong units to Mt. Pinatubo from the south and west. The 3d Battalion protected the west coast of Zambales Province from Paoa to Botolan.

Units of the 63d Infantry were scattered all along west central Luzon. The 1st Battalion, in addition to guarding bridges along the highway and railroad from Manila to Tarlac, mopped up enemy remnants on Corregidor and Caballo Islands and in the Mariveles sector of southern Bataan. The 2d Battalion took up positions north of Abucay and along the Bagac road on Bataan, with the mission of destroying remnants of the 2d and 3d Battalions of the Jap 39th Infantry located in the Mt. Natib area. Strong combat patrols pushed through thick underbrush and bamboo thickets and across the steep hogbacks and deep ravines of Mt. Natib to engage the enemy in several small but sharp engagements. The 3d Battalion of the 63d, securing all installations in the Clark Field area, patrolled the trails west of Mt. Pinatubo and other wooded hills west of Ft. Stotsenburg. The 1st and 53d Field Artillery Battalions supported their respective regiments in the Zambales Mountains of Bataan and Pampanga

while the 80th Field Artillery Battalion remained in the Shimbu Line, supporting the 43d Division in the final drives on Ipo Dam.

Because of the absence of enemy artillery and mortars, the Sightseers were able for the first time in many months to build up their camp areas to some semblance of comfort. Long-neglected shower fittings were cleaned and put to use; 50-gallon drums, small gasoline engines and a little ingenuity were combined to produce effective washing machines; tents were framed with bamboo and miscellaneous lumber; cotton khakis were cleaned and shoes polished for the pleasant hours spent in Angeles, Bacolor, San Fernando, Subic, Iba and the other towns sprinkled throughout the Division area.

Filipino "night clubs" sprang up around the bivouacs, serving ice cream, beer, cokes, ube and local whiskies to the GI on pass, while colorfully dressed hostesses learned some of the rudiments of American slang; parades and dances were held in honor of the "Great Liberating Army." Sightseers learned at first hand the hospitality of the Filipino families; three-day passes often meant a visit to Manila. The men of the 6th were again getting a taste of the
luxuries of Army life between patrols into the near-by mountains.

On 21 May the 1st Battalion of the 20th left Manila and reverted to Division control. The battalion left for northern Luzon on 1 June to start the move to the 6th's new assigned area. By 12 June the bulk of the Division had trucked up the highway through the Balete Pass to start a new drive against the last remaining organized troops in Luzon—the Jap 14th Army under General Tomoyuki Yamashita, the wily "Tiger of Malaya."

During its stay in west central Luzon, the 6th had killed 1,320 Nips and captured 269 prisoners of war to clear that vital area of all threats from enemy stragglers and armed patrols. From Lingayen to Manila the Sightseers had cleared central Luzon of all organized enemy forces. Now it was facing the show-down battle of the Philippine campaign in the Cordillera Mountains of northern Luzon.
CHAPTER 19
THE CAMPAIGN IN THE CORDILLERAS

The rapid breakthrough by the 25th Division at Balete Pass had so surprised the enemy forces in northern Luzon that they had been unable to mass sufficient troops or supplies to stop the bold and rapid advance up Highway 5 by the 37th "Buckeye" Division, which had passed through the 25th to continue the drive to Aparri. Nip troops had scattered to the hills on both sides of the highway or retreated up Highway 4 toward the mountainous northwest corner of the Cagayan Valley when the U.S. troops swung to the northeast on Highway 5. It was the job of the 6th Infantry Division to flush the enemy out of the hills in which he had sought refuge and to destroy the enemy forces that were reorganizing around Lieutenant General Yamashita's Jap 14th Army Headquarters near Kiangon on Highway 4.

On 8 June the 20th Infantry, under control of the 37th Division, was assigned the mission of securing Highway 5 and mopping up by-passed enemy pockets in the Aritao-Bambang area. On 12 June the 6th Division took over, with the 20th continuing to secure Highway 5 and the 63d relieving the 37th Division in the Solano-Bagabag area. Two days later the Sykesmen moved out in the first drive by the Sightseers in their new sector, with the 2d Battalion pushing west from Bambang into the hills that overlooked the town. They were temporarily stopped by a sizable force of Japs well dug-in on the high ground 4,000 yards west of Bambang, the same enemy unit that had ambushed a platoon of the 6th Recon troopers returning from a reconnaissance patrol. A three-day push through strong defenses in thickets and caves along the Bambang-Pingkian road brought the battalion to a position just east of Salinas and netted more than 830 enemy dead, most of them accounted for by the Sightseers' artillery. For the first time artillerymen had a chance to use the VT (proximity) fuze on concentrations of enemy troops in open terrain, and the effect was devastating. Among two groups of 100-200 enemy caught in the open near Salinas by gunners of the 51st Field Artillery Battalion, the casualty rate produced by use of the VT fuze ran as high as ninety per cent. Effective fire by 4.2 chemical mortars, as well as direct fire of self-propelled 105s and the 37mm guns of M-8 armored cars, also supported the doughboys in their advance.

The attack was continued after Company E had killed 45 Nips in repulsing an early morning counterattack, and the 3d Battalion moved around the left flank of the 2d to cut the Salinas–Pingkian road in two places. On the 21st, while the 2d Battalion was cleaning up in the Salinas area, the 3d occupied Pingkian and established contact with elements of the 32d and 33d Divisions to seal off all Jap escape routes to the north between Highways 5 and 11. Active patrolling was conducted throughout the area until 29 June when the 1st Infantry, just arrived in the new Division zone, relieved the 20th Infantry units.

During the drive along the Salinas road, in the vicinity of Barat, Private First Class Charles S. Swimmer sighted a camouflaged machine-gun position that had pinned down one of the Sykesmen's companies. He crawled through thickets and across broken ground to within 25 yards of the emplacement, then charged across a clearing, firing his automatic rifle from the hip. He destroyed the gun and killed its crew, then turned to place fire on adjacent positions in order to cover the evacuation of men who had been wounded by the enemy fire. Alone and in an exposed position from which he could provide the maximum of protection to the wounded and the litter teams, Swimmer was killed by a sniper's bullet. Private First Class David J. Kirkland, leading a company point that was fired on in the same area, crawled forward in the ditch that ran along the road, took up a position only twenty yards from the enemy pillbox and fired four rounds from his bazooka, destroying the machine-gun position and killing the crew. Private First Class Jasper T. Hornsby volunteered as lead scout of a squad ordered to outflank an enemy position holding up the advance of his company. Crawling to the exposed crest of a knoll, he located the machine gun and its supporting riflemen and started worming his way to the positions. Although wounded in the side and arm, he continued his painful advance until he came within throwing distance, then summoned his last remaining strength to lob grenades into the machine-gun nest, destroying the gun and killing its crew.