

COMBAT REPORT FIRST BATTALION 27TH INFANTRYCAMPAIGN AGAINST THE JAPANESENEW GEORGIA, BRITISH SOLOMON ISLANDS

(Period: July 29 - Aug. 27, 1943)

July 29, 1943. At 1500 the 1st Battalion 27th Infantry was alerted to be prepared to move out for combat on 24 hour notice. The Battalion Commander called a conference of Company Commanders and Staff Officers to outline plans for the move. Supplies and equipment were divided into assault, forward and rear echelon units. Assault equipment to include one "D" ration, two thirds "C" rations, combat pack, two canteens of water per man, individual weapons and ammunition. Forward echelon equipment to consist of two stoves, two hot water heaters, seven days "C" rations, two units of fire per company, one barracks bag for three men for extra clothing, blankets, and toilet articles. Rear echelon equipment to consist of "A" bags and balance of T. B. A. equipment not essential for combat to be stored at Regimental rear echelon with two men from each Company left behind as guards. The effective strength of the Battalion at this time was 536 enlisted men and 25 officers.

July 30, 1943. The day was spent in storing rear echelon equipment and procuring and checking combat equipment. The Battalion Commander called a meeting of all officers and gave orientation of the situation on New Georgia Island and lessons by forces engaged in that operation.

At 1500 the Battalion Commander received a verbal order from the Regimental Commander to be prepared to move out the next morning. A meeting of all officers was called, and orders given concerning the move.

July 31, 1943. The Battalion left the bivouac area by truck at 0900, with assault and forward echelon equipment for Kukum Beach. After loading assault and forward echelon equipment, the personnel loaded on APC's and LCI's.

August 1, 1943. The Battalion arrived at Saseville Island at 0815. As we were unloading supplies and equipment, the convoy was attacked by six enemy dive bombers. We suffered no casualties and no hits were scored on the ships. By 1015 all personnel and equipment had been unloaded. There had been no enemy resistance on this island. The First Battalion bivouaced on the north east tip of the island, with the Second Battalion on our right flank. A cordon defense was set up and fox holes were dug by all men as a security measure.

At 1000 the Battalion Commander joined other Unit commanders at the Regimental Command Post to make reconnaissance on New Georgia Island for an assembly area, to get an estimate of the situation. The Battalion Commander returned at 1500, and called a meeting of all officers, at which time he outlined plans for the operations of the next day and gave an estimate of the situation. Only combat equipment with two thirds "C" rations were to be carried by the individual. Forward echelon equipment was left with Company Supply personnel under the supervision of the Battalion Supply Officer.

August 2, 1943. At 0800 the first echelon left Saseville by Higgins boats for Liliana Beach, arriving there at 0845. They followed the jeep trail to the "Parachute Drop," and made reconnaissance of the area and road block along the trail. The remainder of the Battalion arrived at the bivouac area at 1145. The Battalion set up a cordon defense and tied in with the Second Battalion, securing the "Parachute Drop" and making a road block on the trail. A native patrol with seven men and a New Zealand Officer passed through our bivouac on reconnaissance. This patrol had covered the jeep trail to the water point and 1500 yards west of the water point without seeing any signs of enemy activity.

At 1300, the Battalion established four outposts to our front and flanks. Security patrols were sent out to the north, east and west. Patrols returned two hours later with negative reports. A patrol from Regimental Reconnaissance Platoon was sent to the west to contact elements of the 148th Infantry.

August 3, 1943. At 0815, three security patrols were sent out to the northeast, northwest and north to the water point. All patrols returned two hours later with negative reports. Two men from each Company were alerted to go on a reconnaissance patrol to the north of point "W" to reconnoiter the area for a future move.

At 1000, the Battalion Commander received a verbal order from the Regimental Commander to send one platoon to the water point. A platoon of "A" Company under the command of Lt. Fleming was sent on this mission. The platoon moved to this area and set up defensive positions, also sent out small security patrols to the front and flanks.

At 1655, the Battalion Commander and Operations Officer went to Regimental Headquarters to receive orders and plans for the operations of the First Battalion. The Battalion Commander called a meeting of all Company Commanders to issue orders for the move, and explained the mission of the First Battalion.

The mission of the First Battalion was to proceed on the trail north from point "W" to locate and secure Mt. Bao, then proceed on a trail west from Mt. Bao until we made contact with other elements of the Twenty Seventh Infantry who were advancing north to Zieta, where we were to converge on known enemy resistance.

August 4, 1943. At 0830 with combat equipment the Battalion left for point "W." The order of march was "B", "A", "Hq.", "D" and "C" Company in advance guard formation. The Battalion moved along the jeep trail to point "W" without encountering any enemy resistance. From point "W" advance elements of the Battalion moved 500 yards north along the trail and made reconnaissance of the area, and plans for relieving "I" Company of the Third Battalion Twenty Seventh Infantry, which was held up at this point by strongly organized positions estimated to be thirty or forty men occupying well camouflaged pill boxes capable of firing in any direction and supported by riflemen and snipers.

At 1000 the Battalion Commander received verbal orders from the Regimental Commander to eliminate the enemy positions and continue north on the trail in the direction of Mt. Bao.

"B" Company, the assault company, was ordered to advance to the right of the strong point and attack the enemy pill boxes. The Anti-Tank Company with one 37mm gun and a platoon of machine guns from "D" Company laid down fire in support of the attack. Due to well camouflaged and entrenched machine gun positions protected by riflemen and snipers, the assault company failed to penetrate enemy positions.

At 1400 the remainder of the Battalion moved into position and set up a cordon defense, with "B" Company to the right of the strong point, "A" Company moved to the north of the strong point, and connected with "B" Company. "D" Company established positions on the ridge south of the strong point, "C" Company tied in with "D" Company, "Hq" Company tied in with "C" Company. The Anti-Tank Company and Battalion Command Post were in the center of the perimeter. The Anti-Tank Company tied in with "Hq" Company and Regiment at Point "T".

On August 5, 1943, a heavy concentration of 37mm and machine gun fire was directed at the enemy emplacements, in support of "D" Company who were enveloping the left flank. "C" Company met heavy knee mortar, automatic rifle, and machine gun fire in their attack but pushed forward until they had made contact with "A" Company, where they dug in for the night. "B" Company was ordered out of their flank position, and brought back to the perimeter defense.

At 1145, "A", "Hq.", "D" and Anti-Tank Companies were ordered to move out and join "B" Company at their position. The Battalion Commander, Operations Officer and Communication Section were to remain in place and maintain communications with "B" Company and follow with "C" Company. Elements of the 161st Infantry had been ordered by the Division Commander to follow us on the north trail to Mt. Bao, with the mission of maintaining our supply route to the rear. Elements of the 161st Infantry contacted us at 1000 on this date. One Battalion of the 161st Infantry followed our Battalion on the trail to the north. There was no enemy contacted this date.

August 9, 1943. At 0730, the Battalion moved north along the Bairako Trail. Order of the march was "B", "A", "Hq.", "D", "C" and Anti-Tank Companies. "B" Company reached the river thought to be the Bairako River. The Battalion halted at this point while the Battalion Commander and a six man patrol moved 4500 yards north on the trail and contacted the Fourth Marine Raider Regiment under the command of Col. Liveredge at the junction of the East-West, North-South Trails. The Battalion Commander received maps and information as to the local terrain in this area. The Battalion Commander was also advised that 115th Infantry had established a road block on the Bairako Trail 3500 yards to the northeast. The patrol returned to the bivouac area at 1400.

At 1025, communicated by radio to Regiment, informing them of our position. Battalion Executive Officer said the Battalion would remain in place for orders.

At 1730, by radio communication from Commanding General to Colonel Dalton of the 161st Infantry, stating that the First Battalion Twenty Seventh Infantry would be attached to his Regiment, whose mission was to move to Bairako Harbor and attack enemy positions in that area. The Battalion bivouaced on the river for the night, sent out security patrols, and set up a cordon defense. One Battalion of the 161st Infantry was tied onto our Battalion to the south along the trail.

August 10, 1943. At 0900, one Battalion of the 161st Infantry moved through our bivouac area, to move along the North Trail and establish a road block at the junction of the east-west, north-south trails.

Our Battalion remained in position for the day. Supplies were brought in and issued to the troops in preparation for the move on the next day. The supply for the Battalion was handled by carrying parties from the Rock, a distance of two miles.

August 11, 1943. At 0700, the Battalion moved out along the North Trail. The order of march was "A", "B", "Hq.", "C", "D" and Anti-Tank Companies. At 1230, the Battalion moved through the road block of the 161st Infantry. "D" Company, with their heavy weapons, and the Anti-Tank Company bivouaced here for the night, with orders to resume march the next day. The rest of the Battalion continued along the trail and reached the Marine Raider bivouac area known as "Kelly's Bar," at 1700 after an advance of approximately six miles.

By radio communication from Commanding General, the First Battalion is now attached to Colonel Liveredge's Command.

The Trail covered by the First Battalion was very muddy, crossed numerous ridges and streams and passed through very dense jungle growth. The supply route was from Enogai Inlet by native carrying parties; a distance of three miles.

The Battalion position for the night was "A" and "C" to the left flank and north of the enemy, "B" Company to the right flank extending to Hq. Company. "D" Company tied in with "C" Company with the Anti-Tank tied in with "D" Company. Intermittent artillery was fired throughout the night to the north of "D" Company positions.

August 6, 1943. At 1125, General Collins visited the Battalion Command Post and issued orders for the Battalion to push forward to Mt. Bao the following day. The Regimental Commander was present and the Battalion Commander called a conference at the Battalion Command Post for all Company Commanders. The orders were for "A" and "C" Companies to bypass the enemy strong point and continue on the original mission. Hq., "B", "D" and Anti-Tank Companies were to remain in place, and contain the enemy within their strong point. Hq. Company, on the trail to the south, "D" Company tied in with Hq. extending northwest, "B" Company north of the strong point. "A" and "C" Companies were to tie in north of the strong point and move out the following morning along the North Trail, with "A" Company as the advance guard, followed by "C" Company.

August 7, 1943. At 0700 "A" Company with "C" Company following started north on the trail; 500 yards up the trail, we passed through a strongly organized and entrenched enemy defensive position which had been abandoned. We continued along the trail, and the leading Company arrived at the Rock (40.8 - 87.7), where we found a large bivouac area estimated to have been occupied by a battalion, which had recently been evacuated. From this point trails led to the west, and northwest. Security patrols were sent in every direction to search the area to our front and flank. The Battalion Commander ordered the Battalion to bivouac at this point for the night, using a cordon defense.

At 1120, a patrol from Regimental Intelligence led by Lt. Koonits with five Fiji scouts advanced up the north trail. The patrol found two Japs. One was killed and the other escaped through the jungle.

At 1300, mortar and 75mm guns fired a concentration of Jap pill boxes, which had been holding up our advance. No enemy fire was returned. One platoon from "B" Company was ordered to attack the right flank of enemy positions and to secure these positions. At 1530, Rear Command Post and other units of the Battalion moved out on the North Trail to join the leading elements of the Battalion at the Rock. The Engineers started demolition of the Jap pill boxes. "Hq.", "B", "D" and Anti-Tank Companies reached the Rock at 1700 and joined the Battalion. The distance covered by the Battalion was 2500 yards. No contact was made with the enemy. A cordon defense was established, with "C" Company establishing their defense on the commanding ground with a security outpost on each trail. The following items of equipment were found in this area: 30 rifles, 1 heavy machine gun, 12 bayonets, 6 land mines, large quantities of small arms ammunition and miscellaneous equipment.

August 8, 1943. At 0730, "B" Company patrol moved out on the North Trail with the mission of finding the East-West Trail. The patrol travelled in a north and northeast course, crossing numerous ridges and small streams, through the dense jungle growth. The trail was generally fair, and followed the ridges. Several Jap bivouac areas were found, these areas were thoroughly scouted and found to have been recently evacuated. At 1130, the patrol reached a high ridge, and were ordered to dig in for the night; the rest of the Battalion would join "B" Company that afternoon, advancing 3000 yards.

At 0800, "C" Company patrol was sent out on the West Trail. This patrol found two bivouac areas, with well organized defense positions along the trail. These bivouac areas had been evacuated recently. There was personal equipment and small arms ammunition scattered throughout the area.

August 12, 1943. The Battalion changed the position of their bivouac area, moving into the area vacated by the 145th Infantry, which returned to Triri. At 1700 "D" Company, and the Anti-Tank Company arrived at the Battalion bivouac area. Battalion with all attached personnel is now present. The 1st and 4th Marine Raider Battalions were located at Enogai and patrolling west toward Bairoko. Our mission was to patrol north to Bairoko on the east side of the Bairoko River. A Battalion of the 161st Infantry was to patrol the west side of the Bairoko River.

At 1100 "C" Company sent a patrol consisting of 16 men, on the North Trail, the patrol was to go out 1000 yards and return. The patrol returned at 1300 with a negative report.

August 13, 1943. A patrol of 35 men left the bivouac area to travel north along the Bairoko Trail with mission of contacting and taking prisoners if possible. They moved up a well used trail which was in good shape and followed along ridge lines on the right and low swamp ground on the left. There were numerous small streams, with footbridges made with poles. The patrol moved 3000 yards and came to two hills (later established as Hill #4 & #5). The trail ran across the saddle and continued north. At the foot of the hills there was barbed wire barricade. The patrol continued 3000 yards farther and contacted a Jap outpost. Six men were sent to flank the outpost and take them by surprise from their rear. The sentry discovered our movements and before it was completed, fled into the jungle.

At 1245, a four man patrol from the 161st Infantry contacted the First Battalion, and reported everything clear along the trail from their positions to ours. At 1500, a 20 man patrol sent out on trail to Corrigan's Camp to meet a native carrying party who were bringing up supplies.

August 14, 1943. Patrol from "C" Company moved to Hill #4 and #5 (location of bivouac area for the next move for the Battalion) and proceeded up the trail 500 yards where they contacted the enemy outpost. Again the Japs fled into the bush. Our mission was to make contact. The patrol returned over the same route arriving in camp at 1400. At 1200, cargo planes dropped rations in the Battalion bivouac area. The supply problem is very tough and the Battalion was ordered to remain in place until adequate supplies can be built up for our next move to Hill #4 and #5.

August 15, 1943. A patrol from "A" Company left the Battalion bivouac area at 1200 with the mission to move to Hill #5, bivouac for the night, and set an ambush for the Japs the next day. On this patrol, a detachment was to go to the left of the trail and make reconnaissance of Bairoko Inlet.

At 1700 cargo planes dropped supplies to the Battalion again. Supplies consisted of shoes, ammunition and food. Supplies are quite a problem; natives were used in carrying supplies from Enogai.

A patrol was sent out to the 161st Infantry to survey a possible jeep road between the two units. This patrol returned and found it would be possible to make this trail by following the ridge line 300 to 500 yards south of the trail.

August 16, 1943. "A" Company returned from their overnight patrol. Four Japs were encountered by our ambush, two were killed and the others fled into the jungle. The Japs were searched for military documents, but nothing was found. Patrol returned at 1300. The detachment patrol from "A" Company to Bairoko Inlet returned at 1430. They found the area very swampy and marshy and with the exception of one stray Jap, saw little signs of enemy activity. The patrol reached the river and worked their way toward Bairoko, but did not reach the inlet.

August 17, 1943. Continued patrol activity around Hill #4 and #5 to secure area for the advance of the Battalion. The Battalion was preparing to move to Hill #4 and #5. Anti-Tank Company was sent back on the trail to get all the mortar ammunition and supplies possible for the pending move of the Battalion.

August 18, 1943. At 1000, "B" Company, one platoon of machine guns and one platoon of 81 mm. mortars, moved out on the trail led by Colonel Rynaska, with mission to occupy Hill #4 and #5. This move was to enable the Battalion to get into position for the future push on Bairoko Harbor. The advance party arrived at 1230, and set defensive positions on Hill #5, in a perimeter defense. The remainder of the Battalion remained in their present position.

August 19, 1943. At 0800, "A" Company and "C" Company, two platoons of "D" Company, Battalion Hq. Company and the Marine Raider Hq., moved out on the Bairoko Trail to join "B" Company. The Anti-Tank Company was to remain in position, and carry supplies to the Battalion on Hills #4 and #5.

At 0815, a patrol from "B" Company moved out on the Bairoko Trail for 225 yards, and moved into the bush paralleling the trail approximately 200 yards. The patrol contacted a Jap outpost and was fired on by light machine guns and concussion grenades. As they attempted to envelope the enemy flank the Japs withdrew. They killed two Japs with no casualties to our patrol. The patrol returned by making a long circular trail through the jungle to avoid a possible ambush along the trail. The patrol returned at 1215.

At 1230, the Marine Raider Headquarters and the remainder of the Battalion arrived at Company "B" and went into position on Hills #4 and #5 with a security outpost 200 yards north at the coral rock. A carrying party from Anti-Tank brought supplies up from the former bivouac area.

August 20, 1943. At 0815, a reconnaissance patrol from "A" Company was sent out with a mission to find a route from the Bairoko Trail to the Triri Trail. The patrol moved 3000 yards northeast to what they thought to be Hills #14 and #15, but they did not find the Triri Trail. The patrol returned over the same route they went out on.

At 0830, a combat patrol from "C" Company was sent to the northwest, with the mission of by-passing the enemy outpost, and push toward Bairoko until contact was made with the enemy. The patrol travelled about 1000 yards and ran into the Bairoko Trail. At this point the patrol saw two Japs and killed both of them. There was a Jap bivouac about 100 yards west of this point, estimated to have been for a platoon. The patrol returned by compass through the jungle and arrived at the Battalion bivouac area at 1700. The terrain was a continuous formation of coral hills and dense jungle.

At 1130, Captain Hass and 6 men of the 140th Field Artillery arrived at our bivouac area to act as forward observers. The 140th Field Artillery was moving into position for our attack on Bairoko Harbor.

August 21, 1943. At 0930, a security patrol from "A" Company was sent to the west to determine what was on our left flank. The patrol moved 200 yards west along the trail and came upon a bend of the Bairoko Trail, then travelled 250 yards at 220 degrees azimuth and came to the Bairoko River. The patrol circled south for 400 yards and returned to the bivouac area at 1600. There was no contact with the enemy. The patrol travelled in low swampy jungle on the entire patrol, and found there had been no activity in that area.

August 22, 1943. At 0830, a 30 man patrol from "B" Company led by Colonel Ryneka and Lt. Williams, left the bivouac area with the mission of finding suitable artillery observation post and a route of approach for attack on Bairoko. They travelled north for 1500 yards through the jungle, and came to Hill #9. From this hill there was excellent observation to Bairoko River, and a very satisfactory artillery observation post which had been evacuated a few minutes before the patrol arrived. The patrol moved south through the jungle for 500 yards and came upon the Bairoko Trail, following it back to the bivouac area.

At 1000, a small patrol from Headquarters Company was sent to the northwest of our positions to locate an area for a parachute drop, and located a suitable one 500 yards to the north.

August 23, 1943. At 0845, a patrol from "A" Company was ordered to patrol Bairoko Trail 700 yards to the north. They moved to the Jap observation post west of Hill #9, and at this point found tracks indicating a 6 to 8 man enemy patrol had crossed the trail. The area was scouted thoroughly, but no contact was made. The patrol then returned to bivouac area on the same trail.

At 0945, 13 men were sent out to man the observation post on Hill #9. This party consisted of an officer and three men from the artillery, four men from "B" Company, and five men from the Marines. One hour later a party led by Major Berester went to Hill #9 to observe enemy activity, reported the night before. The observation post had reported large fires started at 0830 in the Bairoko Harbor area; it was believed that the Japs were burning all supplies and equipment in preparation for complete evacuation of Bairoko Harbor.

At 1514, all Companies sent men out to receive parachute drops, but drops were not made.

August 24, 1943. At 0800, "B" Company left the bivouac in advance guard formation with "D" Company following, to occupy Hill #9 in force; with a carrying party of 14 men, carrying mortar and machine gun ammunition, followed by Colonel Liveredge and party. The hill was occupied at 1030.

At 1330, the Battalion left the bivouac area to advance to Bairoko Inlet. The order of march was "A", "B", and "C" Company. The Battalion moved along the trail and contacted "B" Company, who had left Hill #9. At this point "A" Company moved through "B" Company to act as advance guard for the Battalion. The Battalion passed through three large bivouac areas which had recently been evacuated, and proceeded to Bairoko Inlet. The Battalion arrived at Bairoko Inlet, and found that the Japs had evacuated this area. Security patrols were sent in all directions. The Battalion set up a cordon defense for the night. Contact was made with 161st Infantry who were on the opposite side of the Inlet. There had been no contact with enemy forces.

August 25, 1943. At 0700, the Battalion Commander with Colonel Liveredge, left the bivouac area to go to the mouth of the Bairoko Harbor and contact the 161st Infantry, which had moved to this position the afternoon before, from Enogai. Here plans were made for defense of the area. Elements of the 161st Infantry were to defend the west side of the harbor, the 1st Battalion 27th Infantry was to defend the east side of the harbor, the 1st and 4th Marine Raider Battalions, Enogai, and 1st Battalion 145th Infantry, Triri and Enogai River Sector. Telephone communication with the 161st Infantry was completed. No contact had been made with the Japs.

August 26, 1943. The Battalion set up in defensive positions at Bairoko Inlet, and the entire Jap bivouac area was searched for equipment that had been left behind. Security patrols were sent to the east and south.

August 27, 1943. The Battalion was ordered to move to Enogai Inlet to relieve the Marine Raider Regiment. The Battalion moved out at 0745, and arrived at Enogai at 1200. "A", "B" and "D" Companies took up defensive positions along the lagoon between Enogai and Kula Gulf. Anti-Tank and "C" Company occupied defensive positions at Enogai. The 1st Battalion of the 145th Infantry was defending Shark Island, Enogai River and Triri. All units in Enogai sector were under the command of Lt. Colonel Ryneka. The 1st Battalion 27th Infantry at this time was attached to the 161st Infantry.

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Commanding