

### 39. DETAILED OPERATIONS.

a. After an intense artillery preparation and dive bombing by the Air Corps, Company "F", 8th Marines, jumped off at 0650 to secure the right flank of the 1st Battalion. The Reconnaissance Squadron, Aerial Division, jumped off at 0700 to secure the block on the left flank. Company "G" jumped off at 0700, secured the western flank of the 1st Battalion, where it lined up with the left flank of the 8th Marines, ensuring safe passage for the remainder of the battalion. Company "A", Company "C", and Company "D", in column of companies, jumped off at 0700, securing the northern edge of Hill 57 and the hill mass to the north. At 1140 January 10, 1943, the 1st Battalion reached its objective.

b. The 3rd Battalion moved by marching from its assembly area at 0700, January 10, 1943, reaching its line of departure north of Hill 54 at 0810. At 0835, at the termination of the bombing and aerial attack in front of the 1st Battalion, the 3rd Battalion attacked, passing through elements of the 1st Battalion, 2nd Marines, with two companies abreast. "F" Company on the right, "H" Company on the left. The intermediate objective was Hill 52, to be taken by a double envelopment. Heavy enemy resistance was encountered in the assault through the crest of the crest. About noon, the hill not having been captured, the Commanding Officer, 3rd Battalion, revised his plan by shifting his main attack to the northwest. "H" Company attached on the right of "F" Company as the enveloping force, preceded by air and artillery bombardment at 1500. At the completion of this preparation, the 3rd Battalion assaulted and captured Hill 52 at 1605, and consolidated its position for the night.

c. The 2nd Battalion moved by marching from its bivouac area near the beach to the assembly area north of the 3rd Battalion and at 0720 was ordered to occupy Hills 50, 51, and 52, after their capture by the 3rd Battalion.

d. The 2nd Battalion occupied Hills 50 and 51, and the southeast slopes of Hill 52, with part of the command on this date.

e. On January 11, 1943, at 0700, the 3rd Battalion continued the attack, making only a slight advance during the day, mainly due to lack of water, lack of ammunition, and casualties. The battalion was ordered to strengthen Hill 52, as they had on the previous night and revert to the regimental reserve when passed through by the 2nd Battalion the following day. Five artillery concentrations were called for during the day.

f. The 2nd Battalion was ordered during the afternoon of January 11, 1943, to pass through the lines held by the 3rd Battalion and continue the attack at dawn January 12th, following an artillery preparation, aerial bombing and strafing. This was made possible by the attachment of the 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry, which took over the mission of the 2nd Battalion.

### 40. SUMMARY OF LESSONS LEARNED: Lessons learned during this phase of the operations were as follows:

- (1). Supply of water to front lines in jungle fighting must be stressed.
- (2). Cover and concealment were slighted due to lack of enemy artillery in force and air power.
- (3). Too much bunching behind ridges and movements along crests of hills and ridges was prevalent.
- (4). Carrying parties must be supervised so that supplies reach the units urgently needing the same and are not diverted and used by other troops enroute.
- (5). These operations were only sustained by Jeeps which functioned all day and were serviced in a black-out tent at night.
- (6). Jeep roads must be pushed right up to the front line positions as rapidly as possible to avert excessive depletion of manpower for carrying parties.
- (7). While the infantry-artillery team functioned more smoothly each day, there was a lack of appreciation of proper missions for artillery initially. More extensive use could have been made of mortar and automatic weapons support.
- (8). The four elements in the attack were fully demonstrated in all echelons and worked successfully in their functions; namely, holding, base of fire, maneuvering, and reserve.
- (9). The use of air, artillery, mortar and small arms support functioned smoothly on several occasions due to close coordination of parties concerned.
- (10). The importance of leaders being well forward so they had first-hand information, could render quick decisions and supervise operations at critical times, was illustrated time after time. Their presence at the front also was a distinct morale factor in sustaining the attack.
- (11). Every front line soldier must carry his entrenching tool forward, as the digging-in operation may be forced upon him at any moment. It is next to his weapon in importance.
- (12). On reaching an objective, immediate steps must be taken to organize the ground. The tendency is to get in a huddle and discuss past incidents of the battle, collect souvenirs, and forget about security.
- (13). Staff officers must project themselves forward during the fight and forecast operations which will need immediate planning in order to be executed in time.
- (14). The "go-no-go" decision policy must never be neglected.
- (15). When a stalemate is reached, even the smallest combat unit must immediately plan to overcome the stoppage by added fire power or maneuvering. Advantages must be taken of soft spots and the attack pushed by continued pressure.
- (16). Enemy in ravines can be pocketed and by-passed successfully and mopped up later. Critical edges of the pocket must be covered to prevent sniping.
- (17). Snipers are a nuisance but their ultimate success is futile. They can be stalked by individuals patiently approaching from different directions and watching for the overt movement which gives the victim away.

### SECTION II

#### OPERATIONS OF THE 1ST BATTALION, 27TH INFANTRY, FROM JANUARY 10TH TO 15TH 1943.

1. Col. CLAUDE R. JUNEY, 1st Bn. 27th Infantry, Commanding.

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#### 41. MISSION

a. On January 5th the Regimental Commander took the Battalion Commander to Hill 49, and issued the warning order for the attack on January 10th. The 27th Infantry was to seize the "Galloping Horse" by attacking with two battalions; the 1st Battalion on the right and the 3rd on the left. The objective of the 1st Battalion was the foreleg of the "Galloping Horse". After the objective had been taken the 1st Battalion was ordered to assist by fire the advance of the 3d Battalion on its left. The Reconnaissance Squadron of the Aerial Division, one platoon of the 65th Engineers and two sections of the Cannon Company, 27th Infantry, were attached to the 1st Battalion for this operation.

#### 42. PRIOR PLANNING

a. After extensive and detailed reconnaissance of the front line, as held at that time, the following plan of attack was made. The 1st Battalion, instead of attacking abreast of the 3rd Battalion, would pass through the line held by the 8th Marines on Hill 66, and seize the foreleg of the "Galloping Horse". Not only would this maneuver pocket the enemy troops in heavy woods south of Hill 66 but it would shorten the supply line materially. Further, it would enable this battalion to support effectively the advance of the 3rd Battalion on the left.

b. However, the success of this plan depended on one important point. The ravine crossing between Hill 66 and the objective, must be secured. The Japanese held a strongly fortified area called the "Water-Hole" at the western base of Hill 66. One company of the 2nd Marines was ordered to secure the right (east) flank of the 1st Battalion, as it moved off of Hill 66. Company "B", 1st Battalion 27th Infantry, was to secure the western end of the ravine while the Reconnaissance Squadron was to secure the left (west) flank by placing a security detachment between Hill 50 and the rear foreleg of the "Galloping Horse". After the above blocks were in place the 1st Battalion (less Company "B") would attack from Hill 66, across the ravine in a column of companies and advance through the woods between the forelegs of the "Galloping Horse" and seize the objective.

- (18). Two men per fox hole at night alleviates loneliness and gives better security.
- (19). Under artillery, mortar, grenade or bomb bursts hold your ground, if well dispersed. Running to another spot exposes you without cover and may land you in the impact area of the next explosion.
- (20). A shelter half or raincoat should be carried for protection from the sun and rain in the daytime and cold at night.
- (21). Needless firing at night against imaginary targets is a waste of ammunition and creates false alarms for troops who might otherwise be relaxing.
- (22). Front line troops must be alert to take full advantage of the time interval after supporting fires have lifted and overrun the remaining enemy before he recovers.
- (23). Class D rations should be carried in combat and Class C provided at temporary halts. Bouillon cubes were excellent where hot water could be provided and the fruits and fruit juices ideal to help quench the thirst. Men do not eat heartily in combat.

#### (24). JUNGLE COMMENTS:

- a. Jungle kits should be more compact, special care taken to see that statins, salt tablets, calcium hypochloride and sulfanilamide tablets are available.
- b. Less kits should be used on front lines unless Jeeps are provided for proper cleaning.
- c. More care should be exercised to see that men properly chlorinate drinking water. Canteens should be filled at any stream crossing and chlorinated before drinking. This necessitates the carrying and proper use of jungle kits.
- d. Battalion aid stations should carry only essential medicines for treatment of casualties. Carrying parties should be assigned if TMA equipment is to be carried.

#### (25). COMMUNICATION COMMENTS:

- a. Sound power phones worked to excellent advantage.
- b. Battalion communication officers should learn to anticipate in advance the disposition of front line troops and keep in close liaison with battalion and company commanders.
- c. SCR 261 and SCR 511 work well. SCR 236 was found impractical in jungle terrain.

#### (26). SANITATION COMMENTS:

- a. More stress on straddle trenches. More men are lost through heat exhaustion and diarrhea than wounds. Covering dead bodies, cans, and feces will deprive flies of their food and cut down this menace which causes diarrhea through contamination of foods by flies.



b. It was decided to consolidate the Hill 52 positions for the night and resume the attack next day. The Battalion CP group moved forward to Hill 52 and a cordon defense was set up. Contact was made by patrol with the 1st Battalion on the right. Enemy rifle, mortar and artillery fire were encountered during the night, but no organized night attack was made.

47. SUBMERSION, JANUARY 1961. The third and last phase consists the actions on January 1st. The attack was planned for 0900 as it was thought that water could be brought up and containers filled by that time. This was an error because the water was still too cold and there were not enough men and very little water was taken into the attack. This later proved disastrous. The attack should have been postponed until we were ready. The plan for this attack was for an immediate preparation to proceed the night before. The plan was to go from Hill 57 to Hill 57, join with the 1st Battalion and shoot toward the north across the neck of the woods to the south side of Hill 57. "A" Company on the left would lead the assault through "Horse's" Latch. "B" Company on the right would follow "A" Company and shoot along "Sims'" ridge. "C" Company would follow "B" Company and press thru and continue on to Hill 53 joining with "D" Company on their right. A machine gun platoon from "E" Company was attached to support the assault from "F" Companies. The 8mm Company was attached to support on Hill 54.

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[illegible]

d. The following morning the 2nd Battalion passed through the 3d Battalion in the attack at 0630, following which the 2nd Battalion went into regimental reserve on Hill 55.

3. REMARKS - - Artillery planned fires should be included in the plan of attack. This gives both the artillery and our own troops knowledge of what to expect and they can make their plans accordingly. Also, a roof-proof assurance must be had by the Commander that his troops are ready and properly supplied when they enter combat. And finally, a decision - either non-attack, plan change or fire on the resistance or a change in method by the commander of the unit involved. In any case, decisive action must be taken.

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OPERATIONS OF THE 2ND BATTALION  
Young Jr., Major 27th Inf., Commanding

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49. PRIOR PLANNING. Prior to January 10th, 1943, reconnaissance was made by the Battalion Commander, his staff, and Company Commanders. Avenues of approach were selected to the 1st and 3rd battalion positions, the 2nd battalion being in reserve.

50. OPERATIONS JANUARY 10TH. On January 10th, this Battalion moved from Campfires Creek on the coast near the mouth of the Matanuska River, to an assembly area near the upper pool behind the Katikatanuk. At 1800, on this date, an order was received from the regimental commander that the 2nd Battalion would occupy Hills 50, 51, and 52, upon their capture by the 3rd Battalion and also establish a block across the Katikatanuk River southeast of Hill 50. "B" Company occupied Hill 50 and put in the river block. "C" Company occupied Hill 51 and 52 upon their capture by the 3rd Battalion. "A" Company remained in the casualty area. "D" Company mortar platoon was attached to "B" Company. The remaining available personnel served as spraying unit.

51. OPERATIONS JANUARY 11TH. On January 11th, the dispositions and duties of this battalion examined the same as on the afternoon of the 10th of January. Shortly after noon on January 11th, the battalion commander received an order from the regimental commander that the 2nd Battalion would pass through the lines then held by the 3rd Battalion and continue the attack to the Corps objective. During late afternoon, on this date a hasty ground reconnaissance was made and orders issued for the attack.

General Plan of Attacks The companies charged, one in rearward, and "G" Company supporting the attack by fire from Hill 52. The division of "G" was established on Hill 52. Company "G" was to attack on the extreme right of the battalion zone of action and seize on their objective that part of Hill 57 that lay in the battalion zone of action. "G" Company was to attack on the extreme left of the battalion zone of action and seize on their objective Hill 53, the "Horse's Head". The attack was to be preceded by a mortar bombardment of the strutting attack and by a fifteen minute artillery concentration.

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52. OPERATIONS JANUARY 12TH AND 13TH. On the morning of January 12th, the attack moved off as scheduled. "C" Company reached their objective, Hill 97, at 1200 after overcoming resistance in the jungle between Hill 97 and Hill 52. "C" Company was in the position in the edge of the jungle north of Sims' Ridge. "F" Company maneuvered to the left and gained Katoan Ridge. At this point they were stopped by the enemy. "F" Company was ordered to withdraw and was sent to the left and held up on the south nose of Katoan Ridge. Heavy fire was coming from between Katoan and Sims' Ridge, from Sims' Ridge from the jungle between Sims' Ridge and Katoan Ridge, and from Katoan Ridge. "F" Company was withdrawn from Katoan Ridge, crossed the draw north of this ridge and attacked Sims' Ridge from the north. "F" Company was successful in taking Sims' Ridge. "F" Company was ordered to withdraw but was unsuccessful. Company "H" had succeeded in taking approximately half of Sims' Ridge. Company "H" was withdrawn from their position and followed "F" Company. "H" Company was ordered to withdraw from Hill 52 to Katoan Ridge, except the 8mm mortar, which remained in position in the rear of Hill 52. Another unsuccessful attempt was made to take Sims' Ridge.

b. On the morning of JANUARY 13, 1943 the battalion Commander, from a position on Sims' Ridge, gave a new plan of attack. Company "M" was to withdraw from Sims' Ridge, shift the east edge of the jungle between Sims' Ridge and Hill 57 to the right, and occupy the southern tip of this jungle and take the "Horse's Head". Company "N" was to take the remainder of Sims' Ridge, move to Hill 57 and occupy the hill top. The plan was approved by the Battalion Commander in the manner in which the opposition on Sims' Ridge was knocked out. Major Charles W. Davis (then Captain), Executive Officer of the Battalion, advised that the plan would require the use of opposition. Namely Sgt. Curran, Sgt. Ward, Pvt. Stice, and Pvt. Woodard, all of Company "M". Major Davis and these men walked around the side of the ridge to the south of the main body of the opposition. They threw the enemy machine guns and mortar positions. Two enemy hand grenades were thrown from behind but failed to go off. Major Davis' group marked eight enemy positions. The first three were destroyed. The last five were fired on from his rifle, after approaching up with the rifle. He then drew his pistol and waved the others on completely without firing. The four men followed him to the top of the ridge. Then Major Davis and his men joined "N". Company M and led them through the jungles to the camp objective. By heroic and determined fighting they took the camp objective. Upon reaching the camp objective, NPO "M" went a platoon to Hill 57 to occupy the jungle between this hill and the company objective. By dusk of this day the task had been completed and the company unopposed. Patrolling and

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SECTION V  
ARTILLERY SUPPORT, HIGHWAY FIELD ARTILLERY  
(Period January 10-13)

Lt. Col. WILLIAM W. BARK, Jr., F.A., Commanding.

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53. **PREPARATION FOR MISSION.**--To accomplish the anticipated missions it was necessary, first to emplace firing batteries in suitable positions; second, to establish the observation and liaison necessary to intelligently control fire; and third, to link these latter agencies, through the fire direction center, to the guns. The batteries and FDC were located near Hill 60, some four thousand yards behind the line of departure. A liaison officer joined each battalion of the 27th Infantry, and another was sent to the regimental CP. A forward observer from each of the three firing batteries joined the front line infantry units, one with each battalion, forming a team with the liaison officer with that battalion. The duties of liaison officer and forward observer were frequently inter-changed due to the fact that the battalion commanders, whom the liaison officers accompanied, usually occupied a fox hole well forward where the only observation existed. Each battalion liaison officer and each forward observer was equipped with a radio (SCR 194, 176, or 511). Wire communication was established to each of the aforementioned parties. Two trunk lines were laid to Hill 60, one of these being parted to the regimental liaison officer. Two trunk lines were also run to a forward switching control on Hill 50. The forward switching board served the liaison officers and forward observers with the 2nd and 3rd battalions and a battalion CP on Hill 54. Later a third trunk was put into Hill 52. These communications arrangements were considered more than ample. This belief was soon shattered. The heavier radio could not be moved over difficult terrain rapidly enough to keep up with the infantry. The SCR 194 was unreliable. The maintenance of wire lines was a nightmare throughout the entire operation. Following good wire-laying procedure will not insure continuous communication when trees are felled and roads bulldozed after the lines are laid. In future operations of this kind, it is believed imperative that wire maintenance crews be present with each construction gang.

54. **SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS.**

a. The preparation opening the action has been discussed. One point in connection with it might well be emphasized. The fire of six battalions was concentrated in a small area southwest of Hill 60. The intensity for just such a concentration of fire is a primary consideration affecting all phases of artillery employment. For example,

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if artillery is distributed along the entire infantry front, instead of emplaced well to the rear, only a few guns could fire on any given close-in target and the shock effect of massed artillery would be unobtainable.

b. During the remainder of the day the battalion fired on the call of the battalions of the 27th Infantry. In all, thirteen such missions were undertaken. Targets were mostly machine guns and mortars. Adjustments on two targets were very successfully handled by infantry officers employing radio relay. Other calls for fire were received that could not be answered. The first and third battalions of the 27th Infantry were uncertain as to the location of all elements of the other battalions. This condition was later improved by increasing our efforts to get more information and to transmit all of it to all of the artillerymen forward.

c. During the afternoon of this first day, a second preparation was fired. This time it was a five minute concentration by four battalions on Hill 52, preventing its capture by the 3rd Battalion, 27th Infantry. Previously, a number of attempts to neutralize the Japanese on and behind this crest had failed. Due to the crowding of the hill from two directions, it was impossible to deliver any volume of fire with safety. Eventually the infantry units were withdrawn a few hundred yards and an aerial bombardment coupled with a heavy preparation was laid down. Following this, the hill was taken with no great difficulty.

d. On the second day, the battalion was relatively inactive. Only five call missions were requested, these being on the south side of Hill 52 and on the head of the "Horse". A number of additional check points were registered on in the sectors of the 1st and 2nd Battalions in preparation for the operations to be conducted on the 12th. The large amount of registration carried on resulted in the loss of surprise effect but was necessitated by the lack of an accurate map or sketch, and by an insufficient supply of what various maps and photos were available.

e. The third day was again a busy one. During darkness, three enemy mortar positions located by the 2nd Battalion were fired on. A large scale Corps artillery preparation was placed on Hill 52 and vicinity at 0700. Of particular interest in this connection--a small tip of woods west of Hill 52 was avoided during the fire due to the proximity of elements of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry. The majority of the seventeen additional call missions fired during the day were requested in and around this wooded area where considerable opposition was encountered. It is possible that a withdrawal of part of the 1st Battalion to permit inclusion of this particular area in the preparation would have made the going easier.

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SECTION VI

SUPPLY AND EVACUATION

Major JOSEPH F. HENSEL, 27th Infantry,  
Supply Officer.

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55. **PRELIMINARY PLANS.**--a. From a supply officer's point of view, the reconnaissance at first was very discouraging. The only possible supply route leading to the area was the Horine Trail. To get over this trail required a knowledge of navigation rather than mere driving ability; it was that wet and muddy. Other than that, there was nothing to traverse except swamps, jungles and the Metekim River, which was not bridged at that time.

b. A regimental IF was established at the junction of the Beach Road and Marine Trail. This was as far as heavy cargo trucks could go. The 3rd Battalion IF was about one and one-half miles from the regimental IF.

c. On January 5th, a company of engineers from the Americal Division began the construction of a jump bridge across the Metekim at the 3rd Battalion Assembly Area. This bridge was completed in one day.

d. After the completion of the bridge, these same Engineers started to bulldoze a jeep road up very steep Hill 55. By sundown of January 9th, this road had progressed just to the top of Hill 55.

e. In the meantime Marine Trail had been improved to some extent and the trail had been extended to a point a little beyond the battalion assembly area.

f. On the morning of January 9th, using all available transportation, which included 8 jeeps and two 3-ton trucks, the very arduous task of hauling equipment and supplies from the regimental IF to the battalion IF began.

g. By working the men all day and through the night, enough food and ammunition was ready for the jump-off the next morning.

56. **TRANSPORT OF SUPPLIES.**--a. On the morning of January 10, all working parties were organized to follow up the attack of the 3rd Battalion with supplies. Working parties consisted of 75 native carriers, our own troops who were not actively engaged in the operations and of course, our 8 very dependable jeeps. As the attack progressed, sub H's were established. One was established on top of

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f. Three battalions of the Division Artillery were adjusted on the "House's Head". The 2nd Battalion, 27th Infantry, leaned on this fire and followed it without any time lag. This was a most worthwhile endeavor and marked the development of real infantry-artillery team action.

g. The last day of this phase of the action was busy, although 50 really heavy fires were delivered. Eighteen missions were fired by forward observers and liaison officers in support of the infantry who were consolidating their hold on the first objective which had been gained.

h. A large part of the afternoon and the next several days were spent in extending our control to the west end and the registration on new check points in preparation for the next phase.

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Hill 55 and one on Hill 54.

b. Heavy sniper fire was very heavy on Hill 54 and as a result the supply line was interrupted temporarily. This difficulty was overcome by building a rope cable system from a defiladed position on the north tip of Hill 54 to another ridge northwest of Hill 54 and a distance of about 350 feet. This method was slow, but enough supplies got to the forward units to sustain them.

57. **WATER SUPPLY.**--a. Water supply was a great problem throughout the whole operation. In spite of superhuman efforts by all concerned, there never was enough water in the canteens of the forward units. Fortunately, a water point at the foot of Hill 55 had been established and there was plenty of water at the source. Because of a lack of thorough planning in the handling of this most important supply some of our attacking units went into combat on January 11th without any water. This almost proved disastrous as many men dropped out from sheer exhaustion during the attack.

b. The mistake was made in not organizing the distribution of water after it had been carried to the top of Hill 55. Here, rear units would stop the carrying parties and use up all the water before it could get forward to attacking units where it was needed most.

58. **FOOD SUPPLY.**--a. Food supply was adequate throughout the entire operation. The forward LP's were always close enough so that carrying parties from forward units could come back at any time and get as much food as was needed.

b. A word about the Class "C" ration. It was initiated during our operations that this ration was not at all popular with the men. They hardly touched the "A" unit and they only ate the confection in the "B" unit and threw the rest away. There was a tremendous waste of this "C" ration.

c. It was found out that the men would much rather drink a prepared bouillon. This bouillon could be prepared at the forward aid stations or by the men themselves during a lull in activity. This bouillon ration is easily carried as it comes in a small cartridge which contains five cubes.

d. In future operations the use of bouillon in lieu of the "C" ration is recommended. It can be easily carried and it contains enough salt to be a substitute for salt tablets.

e. The Class "D" ration was very satisfactory. It was used both as a confection and a drink. More Class "D" ration should be issued for combat.

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59. **TRANSPORTATION.**--a. Transportation was very limited. For this reason transportation was kept under regimental control. The jeep traveled from gun-up to gun-down over very rough terrain and as a result took a lot of punishment. It was SOP in this regiment to check all vehicles in to Service Company every night.

b. The Service Company constructed a blacked-out repair shop, and as jeeps would come in at night, they would perform all the necessary repairs. At no time during the entire operation was there a jeep out of action. This was a remarkable feat considering the job the jeeps had to do, and it can truthfully be said that this was a large factor in the success of the operations.

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#### SECTION VII

##### CONTENTS OF THE DIVISION COMMANDER

60. I am sure that we have all thoroughly enjoyed this presentation and have learned a lot from this action.

I have a few points that I noted as I watched the operation of the 27th Infantry. The first is the danger of smoke signals to designate targets in conjunction with air-support attacks. The attack of the 1st Battalion on January 10th was preceded by an aerial bombardment and artillery preparation. We had arranged ahead of time with the Air Corps that the artillery would mark with smoke a north-south line from the southeast tip of Hill 56 to the left foreleg of the "Galloping Horse." No bombing was to be done east of this line. However, during the artillery preparation which preceded the bombing, either "Pistol Pete" (Japanese artillery) opened fire on Hill 56 or a few rounds fell short there. One landed on an ammunition dump on our safety line, so that when the bombardment started, the first bomber that came over, dove east of the line marked by the artillery. Bombs landed on Hill 56 among the 8th Marines. A few minutes later another bomber came in. A depth charge from this plane landed on Hill 55 east of the smoke line. Thank the Lord there were no casualties and that these untoward incidents did not upset the 27th Infantry at the start of the attack. Smoke possibly led these two aviators astray, smoke we had not planned. In the case referred to by Colonel Dick, where the smoke shell fired by the artillery to designate Hill 52 to the easters fell short, I think it would have been better to have used the mortars on Hill 54, which were only 800 yards from Hill 52, to mark the target. Mortar smoke shell should be used for such short ranges. Artillery smoke shell is much more erratic than high explosive, or at least has been so here. We have had too many short rounds of artillery smoke to warrant its use for designating targets to the air.

The essential coordination that a battalion commander has to exercise between the fire of machine guns, mortar and artillery was ably demonstrated in the attacks of the 2nd Battalion on Ertow and Sins Ridge and Hill 53. The Japanese that were holding up attacks of Bapita and Mitchell's battalions were in a cleft between Ertow and Sins Ridge. There is a precipitous drop-off south of Hill 52 so that our troops could not maneuver to get at the Jap guns which were well placed at the edge of the drop-off. Mortars had to be used on these machine guns, while artillery was placed on Hill 53 which was still held by the enemy, and machine gun fire from Hill 52 and Ertow Ridge was placed on the south end of Sins Ridge whenever a target appeared.

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An incident which I think is significant occurred in the handling of the mortar fire which is worth mentioning. Colonel Mitchell was directing fire of these mortars and I was giving him a little help. I noticed a young man on my right flank, and turned to him and said, "Captain, put your fire over here," pointing to a wooded slope southwest of Sime's Ridge from which we had had reports of enemy fire. The man replied "Sir, I'm not a captain," but he proceeded to adjust the mortar fire as directed, and well. A little while later I asked him to shift the fire to another point. This time I demoted him one file and addressed him as "Lieutenant." Somewhat embarrassed, he stammered, "General, I'm not an officer, I'm a Sergeant." It was Sergeant Rex P. Henry of Company H, 27th Infantry who was in command of a position of mortars on the east slope of Hill 52. Hill 52 was a hot spot in more ways than one, but Sergeant Henry, throughout the day, conducted his fire coolly and accurately. He proved that he was thoroughly competent to command a mortar platoon. His regimental commander and I have recommended him for a commission.

Major Davis was very modest in his recital of the events leading to the capture of the Hill at the south end of Sime's Ridge west of Hill 52. I was on Hill 52 throughout this fight and know the part played by Major Davis in this stirring drama. First he volunteered on January 12 to take instructions from Lieutenant Colonel Herbert V. Mitchell, the battalion commander, to the two companies, which were pinned down near the center and north end of Sime's Ridge, for a maneuver to capture the remainder of the ridge. The trip from Hill 52 to Sime's Ridge required Major Davis to advance about three hundred yards through the intermittent cross-fire of Japanese machine guns. The maneuver he directed failed, but Major Davis voluntarily remained with the companies overnight in their exposed position and supervised the consolidation of the position. The next day, after Col. Mitchell had himself gone forward to Sime's Ridge, Major Davis organized and led a party of volunteers that seized the knoll held by the Japanese at the south end of the ridge. First he adjusted the fire of the mortar section which was on Hill 52, using power phone, gradually bringing in its fire onto the knoll until dirt from the explosions was being thrown back on his own men. Then, at a prearranged signal, the mortar fire ceased and Major Davis leaped to his feet to lead the charge of his small party which had swarmed on the bolsters as close to the knoll as it could get. Davis fired one shot from his rifle which promptly jammed. He then took out his pistol and, while shooting Japs who were still behind the knoll, he waved on his men with his rifle in his left hand. Spurred on by his fearless example the party swept over the knoll and killed its remaining defenders. As he led this charge, Major Davis was also shouting against the sky in clear view of the bulk of the battalion, as well as the Japs. His action had an electrifying effect on the battalion. The two companies came to life and in short order had cleared Sime's Ridge and were storming Hill 53 and the "Morro's Head", the Corps objective. A half hour later, Colonel McCallum and I walked forward from Hill 52 to congratulate Colonel Mitchell on the success of his battalion. We found him up on Sime's Ridge,

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surrounded by exultant soldiers. But when I shook his hand and congratulated him, he replied with tears in his eyes, like the splendid officer and gentleman that he is: "Sir, it was not me." "It was Davis and his men!" And the men about him echoed that sentiment. Col. Mitchell had himself done a grand job, but there is no question but that Major Davis' dramatic charge was the decisive factor. I have recommended him for the Medal of Honor and hope he gets it.

There is one final point that I wish to cover. As Colonel McCallum and I walked along Sime's Ridge to Hill 53 we passed through groups of men still abuzz with the thrill of victory. Everyone was telling how he had killed ten Japs single-handed. Men were displaying Samurai swords taken from the dead stream about that scene of devastation. It was a natural aftermath of a stirring fight. But, no one was giving any thought to cover, or consolidating the position, or of taking steps to meet a possible counterattack. The Japanese were still in strength in the valley of the Matulisan south of Hills 52 and 53 and soon placed mortar fire on the south end of Sime's Ridge. Fortunately no one was hit, but it was simply a God-send that "Pistol Pete" did not open up on us from Hill X to the southwest. Colonel McCallum promptly gave orders to dig in, to disperse and to bring up mortars from Hill 52. We must be on the lookout to see that this situation does not develop again. We may not be so lucky next time. When an objective is gained, company and battalion officers must take steps immediately to push security groups to the front and flanks, to organize the position for defense, and to bring forward ammunition, weapons and water.

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#### CHAPTER III, Part 2

#### PLANS AND OPERATIONS OF THE 27TH INFANTRY, JANUARY 14 - 26, 1943.

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#### SECTION I

#### PLANS AND OPERATIONS

Colonel WM. A. MCULLOCH, Infantry, Commanding.

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61. JANUARY 14TH.--On the Jap road which was completed this date to Hill 52, much of the units travel depended. Company "I", 161st Infantry, attached to the 1st Battalion, 161st Infantry, sent a patrol towards the base of Hill 52 along the valley and met stiff resistance. The same mission was assigned on the 15th and no progress had been made.

62. JANUARY 16TH.--By 1200 the 3d Battalion relieved the 2d Battalion on the Morro's Head and it moved to Hill 55 in reserve. Company "I" established a block between Hill 53 and the river to the south--in contact with the 35th Infantry or the patrol from the 161st Infantry was made. A patrol of the 35th Infantry was reported 250 yards south of the block.

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63. JANUARY 17TH.--Company "C", 161st Infantry, was ordered to clear the valley to Block 52. The 27th Infantry patrol joined the block at Hill 53. The 1st Battalion sent a patrol from Company "A" along the "Snake's Back" and ran into resistance. Company "C" dug in on Snake's Head. The 6th Marines were directed to make contact with the 1st Battalion on the Snake's Head.

64. JANUARY 18TH.--Companies "C" and "B" relieved the Reconnaissance Squadron on Hill 56 at 1050. The regimental C.P. was established on Hill 56 at 1437. Company "C", 161st Infantry, reached a point in the valley south of Hill 52.

65. JANUARY 19TH.--The 3d Battalion, 27th Infantry, was relieved by the 2d Battalion, 161st Infantry at 1530 and moved to positions vacated on the "Horse's Foreleg" by the 1st Battalion. By mid-afternoon the 1st Battalion had moved to occupy Hills 87a and 87b.

66. JANUARY 20TH.--On this date the dispositions on the front of the 27th Infantry were as follows: the 1st Battalion occupied the middle of the "Snake's Ridge"; the regimental C.P. was at 69.80-199.19; the 3d Battalion occupied the foreleg of the "Horse" and the 2nd Battalion occupied Hills 84 and 85, with a block between. Outposts were placed on Hills B and C.

67. JANUARY 21ST.--The 1st Battalion C.P. moved to the middle of the "Snake" and the 3d Battalion occupied the "Snake's Head", the 2nd Battalion taking over the "Horse's" foreleg. This movement was completed at 1500. The regimental C.P. was established at 69.55-198.35 at 1555.

68. JANUARY 22ND.--The 1st Battalion jumped off with an objective along the high ground near Hill 87 and was to push on to Kolumbona, if practicable. The 3d Battalion was to protect the north flank and the 2nd Battalion the south flank of the ridge and assist the advance of the 1st Battalion on the south. The attack was preceded by a 15 minute artillery preparation as the battalion moved out in column of companies. Supporting fires from the Cannon Company, mortars, machine guns and 75mm guns were laid on exposed enemy positions, especially Hill 87, which dominated the "Snake's Ridge". At 1300, Hills 87, 88, and 89 were successfully occupied. After a reconnaissance of the positions on Hill 89, with the approval of the Division Commander, who was present, the Regimental Commander decided to push on towards the high ground east of Kolumbona, and a zone-of-action and objective on Hill 90 was pointed out on the ground and assigned to the 1st Battalion. Companies "A" and "B" crossed the valley and went into position on Hill 90 at 1800. At the same time, Company "C" moved to Hill 91 to protect the north flank. The Battalion C.P. and the regimental C.P. remained on Hill 89 for the night. The 3d Battalion followed closely behind the advance of the 1st Battalion and occupied Hill 88 and part of Hill 89.

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Company "B" moved to the eastern slope of Hill 91 to further strengthen the protection of this flank. During the afternoon, the 2nd Battalion followed the 3d Battalion and occupied Hill 87. Thus, the regiment in column of battalions, was well gathered up for future operations. From Hill 89, it was possible to see portions of the Japanese line resisting the push of the Marines between Hill 89 and the beach and these were brought under artillery fire. The thrust of the 1st Battalion pocketed the Japanese on the south but left an escape to the west along the beach road through a defile or over Hills 98 and 99 from the ravine to the east of these hills. Plans were perfected after darkness, and it was decided to close the gap on the west and to continue the advance the following morning. This involved the extension of the right (north) flank of the 1st Battalion to the sea with the 3d Battalion pocketing the Japanese on the west by occupying Hills 98 and 99 and establishing a block on the beach road at Hill 92a. This placed the 3d Battalion directly in front of the zone-of-action of the 2nd Marine Division on our right and plans were perfected to prevent supporting fires in that zone from shooting into our positions. Flashes from "M100" rockets were plainly visible from Hill 89 after dark as he opened up and through the artillery liaison officer with the 1st Battalion, counter-battery missions were accurately fired.

69. JANUARY 23RD.--On this date, just as the complicated maneuver of the 3d Battalion was well under way, all supporting artillery and machine gun fire opened up in the zone-of-action on our right, over-shooting the valley east of Hill 99 and over-lapping the south boundary of that zone, so that shells and bullets slipped into Hills 90 and 91. The Regimental Commander phoned directly to the Division Commander at once, and explained that the maneuver would have to be called off until these fires were properly confined. Immediate action was urgent in order to head off losses by friendly fires and this was accomplished in a satisfactory manner. The regiment was directed to continue the attack. From Hill 89 it was transmitted by the Regimental Commander, that elements of the 3d Battalion had reached Hill 92a. The Regimental Commander then directed the 1st Battalion to move on Kolumbona with "C" Company on the right via Hills 92a and 92b and "A" Company on the left via Hill 92c. He then moved across-country to Hill 90 and contacted the Battalion Commander of the 1st Battalion to further perfect this operation, reaching there about noon. The slope of Hill 90 had to be scaled by crawling on all fours. The bottom of the valley was a devil's den until mopped up and cleared of snipers. In the morning, patrols of the 1st Battalion had been sent out to the high ground above Kolumbona and found no enemy, so the scheme of maneuver contemplated then went from the east and south. This was accomplished at 1530, when platoons of Company "B", Company "C", and Company "A" joined forces at the landing beach of Kolumbona. Company "B" was attached to the 1st Battalion for the final drive and followed company "A" on the

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left. The remainder of the 2nd Battalion followed the 1st Battalion to Hill 90 and protected the south flank by occupying Hill 100 with Company "F", Hill 90 with Company "D" and Hill 97 with Company "E" and the Headquarters Companies. Thus in the afternoon, the 27th Infantry was facing in three directions. The 3d Battalion successfully blocked the Beach Road at Hill 92a and extended south over Hills 90 and 89. The 2nd Battalion faced a possible threat from the south along Hills 97 and 100 and active forces were still facing the 1st Battalion on the west.

70. JANUARY 24TH.--Company "F" was attached to the 2nd Battalion to continue the drive to the west and followed the Beach Road. Company "F" had Hill 102 for its objective, Company "G" by-passed Hill 100 and occupied Hill 103.

71. JANUARY 25TH.--Company "E" was relieved from attachment to the 2nd Battalion and continued mopping up between Hills 102 and 103. At the same time, the 3d Battalion had been relieved by the 6th Marines, of protecting the ridge east of Kolumbona and was directed to push on to the Pohn River, passing through the 1st Battalion along the Beach Road. This was accomplished in a column of companies and the river was reached at dusk. The 2nd Battalion continued to advance west by passing Company "F", through Company "D" and occupied Hills 105 and 106. Company "E" replaced Company "F" on Hill 100 and Company "C" remained on Hill 103.

72. JANUARY 26TH.--The 6th Marines and the 162nd Infantry passed through our front lines about noon and the regiment assembled at Kolumbona to await transportation to its reserve positions on Hill 69. All units cleared this area at the 27th of January 1943.

73. FEBRUARY.--The importance of Kolumbona to the enemy was recognized by the Marines from the beginning of their occupation and plans to capture it were always being considered. Counter-attack by the Japanese and lack of manpower denied this opportunity until the arrival of the 27th Infantry Division. By the capture, on the 23rd of January 1943 of Kolumbona and the Pohn River valley, the Japanese lost control of the nearest good landing beach on the west front, artillery pieces and positions which were always menacing American troops, supply routes to the south and east which lead to the Pohn River, the Pohn River, Mt. Auston and Henderson Field, control of the high ground which dominated the narrowing corridor and landing beaches as far as Cape Esperance, their main radio station, and assembly dumps or flame throwers and ammunition of all types.

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## SECTION II

### OPERATIONS OF THE 1ST BATTALION

Lt. Col. Claude E. Jurney, Infantry, Commanding.

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74. PREPARATION FOR THE ATTACK ON JANUARY 22, 1943.--On January 17th, the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, was ordered to outpost the "Snake's Back" west of the "Dollipong Horse" (C) forming with one rifle company, and gain contact with the enemy. "C" Company, with one section of col. .50 heavy machine guns attached, was ordered to occupy the "Snake's Head." "A" Company sent a patrol south along the "Snake's Back" to make contact with the enemy. At about 1300 the patrol gained contact with the enemy in the vicinity of the "Snake's Tail." By the use of radio, the patrol called for a previously arranged artillery concentration on the enemy, forcing them to withdraw. This was the first time that this method of fire control had been used. It worked so effectively that all subsequent patrols maintained communication with the forward OPs and either had an artillery forward observer accompany them or had an overwatching artillery concentration.

75. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 19TH.--The remainder of the 1st Battalion moved to the "Snake's Head" and "Back." An all around defense was organized from the "Snake's Mouth" to the middle of its "Back." The foreleg of the "Dollipong Horse" was occupied by the 3d Battalion of the 27th Infantry.

76. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 20TH.--The 1st Battalion was ordered to outpost Hills 87a and 87b. Hill 87a was occupied without incident. It was reported that the terrain was exceedingly rough, and that it took approximately three hours to traverse the route. This report on the terrain was of particular importance in the subsequent attack. If the 1st Battalion had sent an assault force across this area on January 22nd, instead of down the "Snake's Back" it is extremely doubtful whether the battalion would have made such rapid progress. Hill 87b, however, was strongly defended, and the patrol consisting of a rifle platoon with one mortar squad attached was practically surrounded in the vicinity of the "Snake's Tail." By the use of the sounder telephone this information was immediately known by the Battalion Commander, and another platoon was dispatched to their relief. Also, the artillery forward observer, who was with the patrol, adjusted artillery on the enemy resistance which then withdrew. Hill 87b was not occupied, due to the dominating characteristics of Hill 87 itself.

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77. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 21ST.--The order was received by the Battalion Commander for the attack on January 21, 1943.

78. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 22ND.--On this date the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, crossed the line of departure on the "Snake's Head" at 0650 in column of companies, in the order of Companies "C", "B", "A", supported by Company "D". The artillery preparation began at 0630 and lasted to 0700, when the supporting weapons of the Heavy Weapons Company and the Anti-tank Platoon opened fire. As Company "C" reached the tail of the "Snake" they were held up by three Japanese machine guns. The Company Commander quickly adjusted firm mortar fire on them, by using the 211 radio. The machine guns were smashed out, allowing the attack to continue. At 0710 the companies began the assault on Hill 87, in line of companies, with "A" Company on the left, Company "B" in the center, and Company "C" on the right. After the capture of Hill 87, "C" Company was ordered to take Hill 88. When this was done Company "B" was ordered to occupy Hill 88, Company "A" to occupy Hill 87, and Company "D" to take Hill 89. These objectives were seized by 1100, and the battalion was ordered to begin the consolidation of their positions. At about 1400 the order was received to take Hill 90. The companies were immediately relieved by the 3rd Battalion, 27th Infantry, and moved forward. The 1st Battalion made the attack on Hill 90 with "A" and "C" Companies abreast supported by "D" Company. From Hill 89, Company "B" was in reserve. The 8th Field Artillery supported the attack by an excellent barrage. Companies "A" and "C" met some resistance in the draw between Hills 89 and 90. This resistance was in a bivouac area, and it is believed that it included a command post. The two assault companies shot their way through this bivouac area, and seized their objective. It is not known how many of the enemy we killed, inasmuch as we were too pressed for time to stop and count them.

79. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 23RD.--On the morning of January 23rd the order was received to take Kolumbona. After patrolling to the front the 1st Battalion, with Company "B" attached, attacked in two columns as follows: Companies "B" and "C", with one platoon of each, .50 machine guns and one section of mortars attached, attacked on the right, and Companies "A" and "D", with one platoon of each, .50 machine guns and two sections of mortars attached, attacked on the left. After some resistance Kolumbona was captured by 1530 on the afternoon of January 23rd.

b. The local situation made it necessary for the battalion to defend in all directions, and plans were immediately made for re-organizing and consolidating the position. Facing the enemy, the companies were disposed from right to left as follows: "B", "C", "A" and "D". A squad was sent to Hill 90 as an outpost. Then in a day and a half the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, made an attack of about seven thousand yards and captured the Japanese base at Kolumbona. At Kolumbona we discovered and captured numerous guns and supplies, and a few prisoners. The battalion remained in this position until it went into Corps reserve, on January 26th.

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80. SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS.--a. Many valuable lessons were learned during this operation by all officers and men of the 1st Battalion. They have been and will be the basis of all future training of the personnel of this Battalion.

b. The excellent fire support given the 1st Battalion by the 8th Field Artillery should be noted here. The liaison officer and his detail were untiring in their efforts. Due to the rapid advance wire lines were unreliable and by very efficient work the artillery continued to give effective support by using their radios for communication. Both attacks, first on Hill 87, and then on Hill 90, were excellently supported by artillery fire.

c. The work of the 65th Engineers in rapidly constructing a road from Hill 66 to the Snake enabled us to bring supplies and kitchens to the Battalion on January 20th. This made it possible for us to feed several hot meals to the Battalion, which had at that time been in the front line without hot food for ten days. It is felt that this helped greatly in rebuilding the morale of the men before they jumped off again on January 22nd.

81. CRITIQUE OF OPERATIONS JANUARY 10-26, 1943.--The following critique is for the purpose of correcting the deficiencies noted in the operations of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, during the period January 10-26, inclusive. The fundamental principles as outlined in Basic Field Manuals are sound.

a. Rifle Companies: As a whole the rifle units were excellent in their employment of basic tactical principles. However, deficiencies noted were lack of cover and concealment, the need of training in known distance firing, and further training in the value and application of security, especially at night. It was again brought out that scouts must be men especially trained for their work.

b. Heavy Weapons Company: The selection of positions in many cases gave insufficient protection. Alternate and supplementary positions often were not selected. It was found that training in the weapons must be accomplished by all members of the company. There was a tendency to be too exact and to use too many telephone instead of putting the guns up close and using wire and hand signals. All officers, both in the heavy weapons company and the rifle companies, should be trained to some mortar and artillery fire.

c. Weapons: M-1 rifle excellent for fighting, no difficulty with ammunition. BAR excellent. It is felt that this weapon should replace the M16 when fighting in jungle. M16 excellent when terrain permits its use. M16 excellent. Shotgun excellent for close in fighting. Tommy guns functioned well and were effective. However, recommended for use in rear echelons. M1 and M19 mortars both excellent. Hand grenades excellent for close in fighting.

d. Training: More practical tests should be made by battalion commander.

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#### SECTION III

##### OPERATIONS OF THE SECOND BATTALION January 21 - 26, 1943

1. Col. S. F. Evans, Infantry, Commanding.

Paragraph	
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82. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 21ST.--The operations of this battalion during the second phase of the operations of the 27th Infantry, were characterized by speed of movement, long supply lines and by repeated successes in reaching intermediate objectives on schedule until the final objective was reached. On January 21, the 2nd Battalion occupied the positions which had been manned by the 1st Battalion prior to their push on January 22nd. Those positions were on Hill 97, "The Hornet's Nesting".

83. OPERATIONS ON 22ND JANUARY.--Early on the morning of January 22nd, when the regiment had resumed its push toward Kolumbona, Company "B" was moved to the "Snake's Head" to be readily available if called for by the Regimental Commander. One platoon of Company "B" moved from the southern nose of Hill 97 north through the jungle to the "Snake's Tail." This was a security patrol, investigating the jungle on the left flank of the vital Regimental Supply Line. This mission was accomplished with no enemy resistance. During the morning of the 22nd, the 2nd Battalion was moved to the "Snake" to protect the supply line of the regiment. Due to the rapid advance of the 1st Battalion toward Kolumbona, the 2nd Battalion was ordered, during the afternoon, to move to and occupy Hill 87 by nightfall. This hill was organized for all-round defense by dusk of the same day. During the night, the battalion received several rounds in its vicinity from one of the many "Pistol Pete's". An order was received from the Regimental Commander that night, that at dawn, on the 23rd of January, one rifle company and the heavy weapons company was to move to Hill 91.

84. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 23RD.--At dawn on January 23rd, Companies "C" and "B" were moved to Hill 91. "C" Company was ordered to move east, to Hill 96 and protect the rear of the Regimental zone of action. "B" Company was ordered to organize and defend Hill 91. The remainder of the battalion was to move to the southern slope of Hill 91. When they had been relieved of their present positions by the 2nd Battalion of the 161st Infantry, Company "B", at this time, was attached to the 1st Battalion to assist in their drive to Kolumbona. Later in the day of the 23rd, this battalion was ordered to defend Hills 90-97 and to drive across the jungle between Hills 97-100.

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seizing and occupying Hill 100. This move was to protect the left or south flank of the regimental zone-of-action. Company "P" moved from Hill 96 and defended Hill 97. Company "R" and the Headquarters Company of the battalion, extended and defended the ridge running from Hill 90 to Hill 97. Company "P" moved across the draw from Hill 97 westward and, after over-running the Japanese resistance in the jungle, took Hill 100. Approximately thirty Japanese were killed in this move from Hill 97 to 100. This draw proved continuously to be a hot spot.

85. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 24TH.--On January 24th, the 2nd Battalion took over the attack and was to push on westward toward the Pche River. This attack did not jump off until noon of this day because of the problem of supplying the men of our command with food, water and ammunition. Company "H" was released from attachment to the 1st Battalion and Company "R" was attached to the 2nd Battalion from the 3rd Battalion. The plan of the attack was as follows: Company "H" on the right with their left flank extending to Company "P" on Hill 100 and their right flank to the ocean. Company "R" was to attack to the west down Hill 102. Company "P" was to move north from Hill 97 then west through the jungle to 103. Company "H" was to support the attack with mortar and machine gun fire from Hill 97. The objective for this day was a line running north from Hill 103 to the ocean. Company "P" and Company "H" moved off at 1300 and encountered slight resistance until they reached the western nose of Hill 102, then they encountered a strongly organized Jap position defended by automatic fire. Company "P" was unable to advance and Company "H" did not advance because they would expose their left flank to this enemy position. These two companies never advanced past this position on the 24th. Company "R" moved into the jungle north of Hill 97 and then westward toward Hill 103. When they reached the dry stream bed north of Hill 100, they were not by part of the same Japanese fire which was holding up Company "P". The Japanese waited until "P" Company was well into their wonderfully camouflaged trap before they opened fire. When the Company Commander of "P" Company found that his unit was outflanked from three sides (north, west, south), he gave orders for his company to withdraw and take a route across Hill 100 thence to Hill 103. After heavy fighting this plan of maneuver was successful. It was during this maneuver that Captain Struck was painfully injured in the arm and side by an enemy grenade thrown at short range. Instead of going to the rear for medical attention, he remained with his company and directed them skillfully over a hazardous route to Hill 103. "P" Company reached its objective after nightfall on the 24th with a day of heavy fighting and rigorous movement behind them.

86. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 25TH.--a. On the morning of January 25th, a regimental attack order was issued. The 2nd Battalion was to attack along the high ground lying to the left of the regimental zone-of-action. Company "P" moved from Hill 102 by way of Hills 90-97 to Hill 100. Company "H" passed through Company "P" on Hill 103 and had as their objective hill mass 105-106-107. Shortly after dark on the

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25th, Company "P" reached the battalion objective and after joining with the 3rd Battalion on our right, was part in the driving of the Japanese from Guadalcanal had been completed. Blocks were established between Hills 97-100, 100-103, and 103-106 as soon as the companies had taken this territory. Blocks in these draws were necessary as the Japanese used them for evacuation purposes.

b. On January 26th, the 2nd Battalion was relieved from their positions and joined the remainder of the regiment at Kolombang.

87. SUMMARY OF OPERATIONS.--a. Chief lessons learned during this campaign were:

- (1) Men must be in the best of physical condition.
- (2) Communications personnel, assigned within companies, must at all times keep telephones and 536 radio dry to insure their functioning.
- (3) Loads of heavy weapons companies should be lightened to allow effective use of fewer weapons.
- (4) Rapid maneuvering and encirclement are tactical "musts". Although the time required to complete a mission may be increased, accomplishment can be better completed and with less loss of life by envelopment of enemy positions.
- (5) Rifle companies should have additional BAR's; they proved to be the backbone around which attacks were built.

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#### SECTION IV

#### OPERATIONS OF THE THIRD BATTALION January 20 - 26, 1943

Lt. Col. G. E. Bush, Infantry, Commanding

Operations on January 20th .....	88
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88. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 20TH.--On January 20th, 1943, the 3rd Battalion, 27th Infantry was holding Hill 57 and sending patrols out to the west and southwest. At 1600 the battalion was ordered by the regimental commander to send one company to the Snake's Head, relieving "P" Company, 27th Infantry. This was effected at 1700. All companies reported a quiet night.

89. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 21ST.--On January 21, the remainder of the battalion was ordered to the "Snake's Head." Part of the 2nd Battalion relieved us from Hill 57 and we completed our move to the "Snake's Head" about noon. That afternoon, the Regimental Commander gave the attack order for the next day. This order assigned the 3rd Battalion the mission of securing the right flank of the regiment in the westward advance and joining with the 12th Infantry on the battalion's right. The battalion, less the right flank security unit, was directed to follow closely the advance of the 1st Battalion. "P" Company was assigned the right security mission. That evening, just before dark, all officers and some key non-commissioned officers made a reconnaissance forward to the 1st Battalion's CP at the "Snake's Head." While there, the attack order was issued by the 1st Battalion commander.

90. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 22ND.--On the 22nd of January, "P" Company moved out at 0700 along the route through the woods to the ridge running east from Hill 87. This was a long route and the march was not completed until 1000, by which time contact was established with the 12th Infantry on the right. The remainder of the battalion stayed in reserve in a defiladed position southeast of the 1st Battalion CP. At 0950 the 3rd Battalion moved out, southwest along the "Snake's Head" following the 1st Battalion which had reached Hill 87 and was pushing on to Hill 88 and Hill 89. The battalion was joined by "P" Company on Hill 87 and pushed on to Hill 88 and taking up temporary positions on that hill. At about 1500 the order was given to move forward to Hills 89 and 91 to reinforce the position of the 1st Battalion. At dusk the battalion was in position as follows: "P" Company on the east was on Hill 91 joining with "H" Company. "H" Company and one platoon of "M" Company was on the eastern knob of Hill 89 and the remainder of the battalion was on the east side of Hill 89. The

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battalion CP, as well as that of the Regimental Commander, was on the east side of Hill 99. During the late afternoon, the regimental commander ordered that on the following day the 3rd Battalion would move to Hill 90 and thence northeast to Hills 88 and 99, securing them, establish a block across from the top of ridge 99 to the sea, and to prevent the enemy by blocking his passage to the west across Hills 98 and 99.

91. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 22ND:--On the morning of the 22nd, "I" Company, with one machine gun platoon attached, moved across to Hill 90, meeting some enemy resistance in the deep gulch between Hills 99 and 90. They then moved northwest along Hills 98 and 99, and blocked those ridges against the passage of any enemy. "I" Company followed them and extended the ridge block to the southwest. "K" Company crossed then between Hills 91 and 90 and forward on "I" Company extending the block further to the southwest. At about 1500, one platoon of "K" Company, as a right flank security for the 1st Battalion, moved north along ridge 2 to Hill 98 and participated in the occupation of Kolumbum by the 1st Battalion. "I" Company later on that afternoon, set up a very strong block to the sea and during the night killed at least 50 of the enemy trying to pass through the block. The story of this action is interesting. The officer commanding Company "I", placed his company and the machine gun platoon from "K" Company, which was attached to him, in excellent positions and sighted in his automatic weapons before darkness. During the night the Japanese came down the trail not suspecting the existence of the block. They were talking, some had flashlights, and some were pulling a 77 mm rapid fire gun. The company commander, near the middle of his line, held the fire of his men until the enemy was within 30 yards of them and well illuminated, by reason of the fact that our men stayed low in their foxholes. Then they did open fire they had a perfect target and the Japanese suffered heavily. Those Japanese remaining pulled back and later tried to move through higher up the ridge. They likewise ran into heavy crossfire and grenades. The following morning 40 Japanese were buried by "I" and "K" Companies. Besides, large stores of ammunition and some arms were captured. Surprise was responsible for these results and the fact that they had to hold fire until they could see the enemy at night indicates a degree of control and cool-headedness which the Japs had gained since the start of the operations. The other companies were in position on Hills 98 and 99 during the night and only slight enemy resistance was encountered. Some rifle and mortar fire was directed against battalion positions as well as some close firing by the enemy artillery. This was the heaviest enemy artillery yet encountered. The Artillery Liaison Officer placed some counter-battery fire on them effectively and quickly.

92. OPERATIONS ON JANUARY 24TH, 25TH AND 26TH:--On the 24th, "I" Company was ordered to Kolumbum and attached to the 2nd Battalion in its attack westward. One company of the 147th Infantry took over the sector formerly held by "K" Company. The rest of the battalion occupied the same positions as the night before. During the afternoon a battalion of the 6th Marines joined the 3rd Battalion on Hills 98 and 99. Another quiet night was spent. The following day the

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order was given to turn the sector over to the 6th Marines. Apparently there was a misunderstanding concerning the relief order for it didn't get down to the Marine battalion commander and as a result delayed the battalion's arrival at Kolumbum by about one hour. The battalion commander of the 6th Marines was willing to take over but said he couldn't without an order from his commanding officer. There was still some activity going on in the woods east of Hill 99 and as the block was set up by order of the corps commander, it could not be abandoned until some unit became responsible for it. After much searching the executive officer of the 6th Marines was reached and he ordered one of their battalions to take over. The battalion arrived at Kolumbum about noon of the 25th and the order was received from the regimental commander to continue the attack westward immediately and secure the line of the Pohn River, joining up on the left with the 2nd Battalion on Hill 105. This objective was about 2000 yards west of Kolumbum. "I" Company reverted back to the 3rd Battalion. The battalion moved out immediately to where "I" Company was in position near the beach some 500 yards northwest of Kolumbum. Getting the local situation from "K" Company's Commander, continuation of the attack was planned as follows: "I" Company would place a block between Hills 102 and 103 and pocket the enemy south thereof. The remainder of the battalion would advance in a column of companies in the following order: "I", "I", Headquarters, and "K". The leading company would advance on a frontage of 300 yards with their right resting on the shore line. The advance moved out from the front rather slowly due to the thick jungle on the southern flank. However "I" Company, by this method, flashed out and killed several of the enemy. At 1500, the advance was only halfway to the Pohn River, and it was realized that it must continue more rapidly. "I" Company passed through "I" Company on a narrower front of 100 yards. "I" Company followed "I" Company, when passed through. The narrow front speeded up the advance. More enemy were met and killed by "I" Company. At 1730 the Pohn River was reached. Permission was obtained to establish a cordon defense on the west side of the Pohn River that night at a point about 200 yards west of its mouth. This was accomplished by dark. During the advance, a total of 35 Japanese were killed and about 800 cases of ammunition of various caliber were captured as well as two 3 inch guns, 3 trunks, 2 motor pumps, a range finder, an armament repair truck, 5 landing barges and numerous rifles. At 0700 on the morning of January 26th, contact was made with the 2nd Battalion on Hill 105 and at 1100 the battalion was relieved by the 6th Marine Regiment and the 182nd Infantry. Then relieved, the battalion went to Kolumbum in Corps Reserve.

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#### SECTION V

##### SUPPLY OPERATIONS OF THE 27TH INFANTRY

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Preliminary Planning .....	59
Water Supply .....	59
Operation of Supply Plan .....	59
Use of Lighters .....	59

93. PRELIMINARY PLANNING:--In the operations of January 20th-26th we were able to supply the entire regiment by one supply route since the regiment was in one general area. During our earlier reconnaissance, our battalion supply IP was spotted just east of Hill 66 in a well defined area and adjacent to Skyline Trail. The 1st Battalion reached its objective very quickly on January 10th. From that time to the next push there was plenty of time to organize and coordinate supply. The battalion was more or less stabilized in the positions which it had taken on January 10th. Prior to the jump-off on January 22nd a jeep road was in the process of being constructed over the area called the "Snake." Expecting a long campaign, our carriers, numbering over four hundred, carried all supplies possible to the tail end of the "Snake." The plan prior to the jump-off was to establish a large IP as far forward as possible. Our carrying parties were divided into groups. The number of water cans in the regiment was to determine the number of men who were to carry water. Many cans had been lost in the previous operation and at this time there were only two hundred and ten on hand. One hundred and ten men carried ammunition and approximately seventy-five carried rations. Carrying parties were well organized and when the 2nd and 3rd Battalions moved up into this area all the carrying parties were consolidated because, at the time, only one supply route was being used. There was a fairly good jeep trail which extended all the way to the top of Hill 66 and to a point on its southern tip where a forward IP was established. Also, very long cable systems were laid to the troops on the fringes of the "Horse." This was the only way supplies could be sent to them because the slopes on both sides were extremely precipitous.

94. WATER SUPPLY:--The biggest problem was water supply, but this time it wasn't as alarming as it was in the previous operation. The main trouble was getting back and forth from the water point which was located about a mile down the Valley Trail. Traffic was so heavy on this trail that the roads were always under mud. Water tankers were stuck time and again and it was only with the use of bulldozers that the water tankers were able to be brought forward at all. Once they arrived on the Skyline Trail though, there was no trouble getting water up to the troops. The men were given hot meals whenever practicable. The Class "C" ration was supplemented with some Class "B".

95. OPERATION OF THE SUPPLY PLAN:--On the morning of the jump-off, organized carrying parties followed behind the 1st Battalion. An ammunition and ration dump was established midway between the "Snake"

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tail and Hill 87. Water carriers continued on the work with the troops as they advanced. Their orders were to come back to the "Snake's" tail with the empty water cans as soon as the troops used the water up. After reaching Hill 87, the troops moved so fast that they got way ahead of the supply line. On the night of January 22nd the troops had advanced to Hill 89. Another dump was established at the foot of Hill 89. This dump was for food and ammunition only. It was decided that it would be very impractical to carry supplies from the "Snake" to Hill 89 which was a distance of about two miles and over extremely rough terrain. It was humanly possible to make only one trip a day with a load and it was doubtful whether the men could do this for many successive days.

96. **USE OF LIGHTERS.**--At noon, January 23rd, the troops were in Kombokona and supplies began to be shipped by sea. The division had already contacted the Navy for use of lighters to carry supplies. That night, January 23rd, the G-3 and G-4 formulated plans for an expeditionary unloading of supplies the next morning. One hundred men were detailed on the beach at Kombokona. The lighters were unloaded as soon as they reached the shore. The Division had arranged for the detail to furnish the loading at Mulum. In the morning of January 24th at 1015 two lighters left Mulum carrying twenty-six tons of supplies. The beach was identified by using white Air Corps signals. The unloading details were ready and waiting. There were no difficulties in unloading at Kombokona. The trip from Mulum to Kombokona took one hour and fifteen minutes. The unloading time was one hour and twenty-five minutes. In the meantime arrangements were made to evacuate the wounded into Kombokona to wait for transportation back as soon as the lighters were unloaded. The litter bearers should be commended very highly for the splendid job they accomplished in carrying wounded men to Kombokona over extremely rough and precipitous terrain. On our return trip nine prisoners and twelve casualties were evacuated. At this time the Navy did not consider it safe to make another trip. An error was made in the first lighter operation in that we carried no "M" or "W" ration. The Headquarters Commander, after taking Kombokona, sent out numerous patrols and if it had not been for the fact that they were well fed before they left they might have been in dire straits. On January 25th, the two lighters were again used. This time carrying enough "M" rations to sustain one regiment and one attached battalion for two full days. Also, three 75mm guns and four 75mm howitzers, with ammunition, water and "M" rations were transported. On the afternoon of January 26, the regiment was relieved by the 6th Marines and the 14th Infantry Regiment.

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d. At this point it should be emphasized that in requesting artillery support, all available information possible should be given regarding the targets. A call such as "Target fire on point 300 yards short of check point C" will get fire there, but it won't be the best fire. It may even be totally ineffective. That call can be answered in over fifty widely different ways. In heavy jungle with trees 100 feet tall or higher, shells with quick fuse will burst in the tree tops and produce little effect. Delay fuse will penetrate 40 feet or more before detonating. Conversely, a delay fuse, in the open, causes the shell to dig in and produce few effective fragments. If the target lies beyond a steep slope, it can be reached only by high angle fire, whereas on level ground, or on a forward slope, the more accurate low angle fire would be employed. If the target is mobile, it should be attacked by firing through a zone; if stationary fire at a single center elevation is better. If the target consists of a 20 or 30 man patrol, a battery can do the job, while for a battalion assembly, the entire Division Artillery would be appropriate. The G-3 of the JCO cannot see the target, yet he is charged with delivering the fire requested and needed. He should be given all the data in order to make an intelligent decision.

e. The most interesting and one of the more important artillery tasks falls to the forward observer. Above all others he needs to be battle-seasoned. During the operations, 20 out of the 39 battalion officers were given an opportunity to function as forward observer or liaison officer for periods lasting from three days to a week.

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#### SECTION VI

##### THE ARTILLERY SUPPORT BY THE EIGHTH FIELD ARTILLERY

1. Col. William W. Dick, Jr., Commanding.

97. **OPERATIONS FOR THE PERIOD JANUARY 20TH TO 26TH.**--a. The artillery activities of this period followed the pattern set in the first phase of the operations. Forward observers again handled the bulk of the fires and division artillery preparations were employed on major points of resistance. There was a large increase in the amount of night firing. Enemy installations located by the infantry patrols during the day were fired on at irregular intervals throughout the hours of darkness. To get ready for the attack of January 22nd, certain changes were made in our positions. The main artery of wire communication was shifted from the "Horse" to Hill 66 and the "Snake." Survey and registration were extended to Hills 87, 88, 89 and beyond. Excellent oblique photos were received, however in insufficient number, and these materially assisted the forward observers in designation of targets. For the attack of the 22nd no preparation was called for in the Division Order. However, the 27th Infantry requested all possible fire on Hill 87 and the ridge east thereof, to precede their jump off. Three additional battalions were obtained and the four battalions delivered very heavy fire. The 8th Field Artillery fired at the rate of 143 rounds per gun, per minute.

b. The unexpectedly rapid advance of the 27th Infantry necessitated a displacement of the battalion on the afternoon of the 22nd. By exception all possible transportation within the Division Artillery, twenty vehicles were procured to begin the movement. That night an additional eight trucks were obtained from the Quartermaster. One hundred and fifty vehicles are normally used in moving a battalion. The move was completed, and the battalion fired from Hill 66 at daylight the next morning. During the period when the battalion was out of action, its mission was ably handled by the 64th Field Artillery through the 8th Field Artillery forward observers and liaison officers.

c. The communication set-up on Hills 88 and 89 on the afternoon of January 22nd was interesting and illustrated the flexibility of American Army methods. For an hour or two, the only available wire line to the zone was an artillery circuit on Hill 89. This line carried Artillery, Infantry, Engineer, and Division traffic until other lines were brought up. When it was decided to continue to push to Kombokona, the regimental commander of the 7th Infantry requested fire on the wooded area west of Hill W, to cover the advance of the 1st Battalion north along the fingers extending from Hill 89. Our wire man was around Hill 89 and the all points of the liaison officer suddenly refused to function. An infantry battalion commander had his 511 available. Using this cavalry set, assigned to the infantry and operating on an artillery frequency, the fire was adjusted. At one and the same time, on this single set communication was possible to one battery still in position, to the 64th Field Artillery, all this while three officers of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry were busy on other business.

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#### SECTION VII

##### THE FORWARD OBSERVER'S REMARKS

1st Lt. Eugene F. Shiele, 8th P. A.

98. **SUMMARY OF REMARKS BY THE FORWARD OBSERVER.**--a. In all operations the 8th Field Artillery Battalion kept four liaison officers and three forward observers with the 27th Infantry. A liaison officer's job is with the infantry battalion commander--a forward observer's duty is often with the front line company of the battalion. I was a forward observer during the period January 21st to 24th. The action of the 1st Battalion, of the 27th Infantry during the movement from the "Horse's" hoof to Hill 89, covers that period. The operations both of the infantry and the artillery were routine up until the 20th of January with an occasional call minute and improvement of artillery data by the additional registration and burrowing fires at night. On the evening of January 19th, the 1st Battalion was notified that occupation of a line of departure for an attack on Hill 89 would be carried out the next day. "A" Company was to move into a position on the south finger of Hill 89. "B" Company was to occupy the middle finger, and "C" Company was in reserve. Since the liaison officer was available to the infantry battalion commander and since observation was so poor, the forward observer went out with a company patrol so that he might learn by first hand observation the location of the enemy and the nature of the ground, thereby facilitating the accurate adjustment of fire. Communication with the JCO and Ia I was by 511 radio. The patrol commander had a 536 radio. An enemy force consisting of two or three MP's and some knee mortars was contacted just beyond the tail of the "Snake" at a point known to the artillery as concentration Queen. A short skirmish ensued after which the patrol dug in and held its ground. By this time the rain was coming down in torrents. Since the infantry's 536 would not work satisfactorily, the battalion commander was notified of the situation by the artillery 511 radio. Thus the artillery was furnishing not only fire power but also communication. Reinforcements were sent forward with a sound power phone and the patrol advanced about 400 yards further up the hill where contact was again made with the enemy. The patrol, which now consisted of a reinforced platoon, was asked by fire from an enemy patrol to the front. Then the Japanese cut loose with automatic fire from the woods to our left, the woods to the front, and the woods to the right. Upon being notified of the situation, the battalion commander ordered the patrol to withdraw to the tail of the "Snake." But there was one difficulty--the automatic fire from the right flank commanded the only withdrawal route. The solution then was to knock out the MP's on the right and withdraw defiladed from the left and front. Artillery was the only answer. It was impossible to contact the JCO with the 511 since it had been drowned out by the recent downpour. Telephone communication was out in both lines from the matchboards on Hill 66 had been pulled out by a truck. The sound power phone was the only remaining communication. The fire situation would have to go to the 1st Battalion of the

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infantry regiment, to the infantry division, the division artillery, the 8th Field Artillery Battalion and then finally to our FDC. The request for fire was as follows: "Concentration Queen is 300 short, enemy patrol in open, request battalion." With this information the fire direction center fired a salvo from one battery. The salvo was sent as: "Target, fire for effect." Needless to say the MG's on the right flank were silenced and the patrol withdrew without further casualties. This one example demonstrates several cardinal principles which should be observed by artillery FDC's. Intimate knowledge of the plan and disposition of supported troops; precise information of the terrain; numerous check concentrations whose exact location must be known so that fire can be brought down quickly and accurately despite poor observation at the moment; and lastly, a working knowledge of the existing communication net which can be used in case of artillery wire and radio failures.

b. To summarize, the problems of the forward observer fall into two main headings: (1) Observation - observation of the enemy; observation of supported troops; and observation of artillery fire. (2) Communication - communication with the supported infantry units and communication with our own fire direction center. In general, excellent cooperation existed between the artillery and the infantry. However, numerous times the artillery was delayed and in some cases were prevented from delivering quick accurate fire because of insufficient information regarding the location of friendly units. In future operations of the division this fault will no doubt be remedied by improved communications.

c. The 511 radio or something similar should be furnished to artillery observers in lieu of the 194. A radio is considered by the Japanese as a high priority target. Since the 511 can be put into operation rapidly and taken down rapidly, and far outweighs the 194, it seems to be a logical choice.

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necessary to go the long way around, a total three miles back to the aid station.

I also want to commend Lt. Shiel on his presentation of the duties of a forward observer. Listening to Lt. Shiel talk, on these duties of a forward observer, I was sure, nothing to it. What else could he do? But it takes close teamwork, trained officer personnel, and trained communication personnel to make forward-observation work. It doesn't just happen. Lt. Shiel was right when he said you can make it work only when you are right on the front-lines. But the forward observers and liaison officers must be kept informed of the plans of the infantry. You must know one another's positions and problems. You must see that each side of the infantry-artillery team is completely informed.

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## SECTION VIII

### 99. COMMENTS OF THE DIVISION COMMANDER

I want to stress the difficulty of coordination with adjacent units. Colonel McCallum has talked about the Marines firing on the ridge of Hills 90-98-97, east of Kumbhous. We had made definite plans with corps for changing the boundary of the division from Hill 87 to include this ridge in our sector. The Marine-American Division Headquarters had been notified the day before of this change of direction, and it was pointed out that we would cut off the Japs in front of that division if we took Kumbhous. Nevertheless, for some reason or other, the information did not get down to front-line troops until the next day, and our troops were fired on.

The next point is the necessity for having flexible plans, and flexible minds, so that we are not caught short when a plan is changed. You will recall that the plan of attack on the hill mass 97-98-97 involved a holding attack by the 27th Infantry from the east while the 1st Infantry, from Hills 87, 90, and 92, was to attack across to Hill 87-V to cut the Jap's rear. When, early on the morning of January 22nd, from the division CP, I saw the attack of the 27th Infantry advance over Hill 87 to rapidly, I changed the whole plan of the division attack at once and directed the 27th Infantry to continue the attack to the northwest and the 1st Infantry to send only its leading battalion across the jungle to 87-V while the remainder of the regiment followed the 27th Infantry. This was a change in plan which called for a readjustment of artillery support, boundaries, missions, and what not. I went forward along the "Ganges" to carry these instructions to Colonel McCallum who was up front. I found him on Hill 89. The 1st Battalion had started to dig in on Hills 88 and 89 and the intervening ridge. Colonel McCallum gave instructions to Colonel Jarvey to move out at once to the attack on Hills 90, 90A and 97. Most of the 1st Battalion had dug into the coral which covered the hill-top. Yet, the men cheerfully stepped west, got their equipment and went forward again; which, in my opinion, was a grand indication of their morale. They were ready to step west and go forward in a new attack. We had the Jap on the run and I didn't propose to let him get away. There was no crabbiness when the plan was changed. The plan was changed to take advantage of the situation. We must all school ourselves to expect such changes. I assure you we will not change any division plan unless it makes sense.

I want to again express my admiration for the work of the 6th Engineer Battalion which pushed a road not only up to the Sanks, but up Hill 97-7, and down the ridge to the foot of Hill 89. It was a remarkably fine job. At the same time I want to commend the men of the 27th Infantry who evacuated the wounded from Hill 89 by hand litters on the afternoon before the road was completed. They could not go the short way as the ground would not permit it. It was therefore

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## CHAPTER IV

### OPERATIONS OF 35TH INFANTRY

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## SECTION I

### OUTLINE OF PLANS AND OPERATIONS

Colonel R. B. McCLURE, 35th Infantry, Commanding.

Paragraphs
Orders and Preliminary Movements
Operations
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100. **ORDERS AND PRELIMINARY MOVEMENTS.** -a. After relief by two battalions of the 1st Infantry, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions, 35th Infantry, moved out of their positions in the vicinity of Biscay Ridge and proceeded to the first Staging Area located just west of the Kumbous River. On the morning of January 7th while the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were marching to the second Staging Area on Wright Road, the 1st Battalion was relieved from their position on the Perimeter Defense and moved to first Staging Area. The regiment was thus in a column of battalions, the 3rd in advance followed by the 2nd and 1st battalions. At 1600 on the 7th, the Battalion Commander, together with certain staff officers and the Battalion commander of the 64th Field Artillery, received from the regimental commander the Field Order which follows in part:

"1. The enemy is believed to occupy Hills 43 and 44 with perhaps a defensive position west of Hill 27. Enemy capabilities are believed to be generally defensive with infiltration by small groups armed with automatic weapons.

2. The 25th Division will attack as of 0635, 10 January and seize and hold objective previously announced.

3. The 35th Infantry will attack as of 0635, 10 January in its sector as follows:

a. 1st Battalion - Regimental Reserve.

b. 2nd Battalion - To hold the line now held by the 132nd Infantry, to maintain constant contact with the enemy on its front and to contact the 182nd Infantry on its right.

c. 3rd Battalion - To advance south of Hill 27, seize and hold Hills 43 and 44."

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1. Briefly stated, that is the story of the Division Artillery, but it by no means tells the story of the hard work involved. If it had not been for the superb state of training of all personnel and the well rounded experience gained through various training phases on Oahu, which made organizations out of aggregations and which connected the command, and organizations, and staffs together, the task would have been high impossible.

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## SECTION II DETAILED OPERATIONS

Brig. Gen. STANLEY A. KEDMANT, U.S. Army.

154. **INTRODUCTION.**--a. The first mission was the 100 gun preparation on the "Water Hole", or "Devil's Den" area, on the morning of the 10th. This preparation which sent 92 tons of ammunition into the strongly held enemy position, was intensely terrific and came down with sudden surprise. Here was used for the first time a method of firing a preparation which was believed would keep the enemy guessing, cause him more casualties, and make it impossible for him to know when the preparation was over and friendly infantry could be expected to move forward in the attack. Instead of firing continuously, the fire was delivered in short heavy bursts. Where more than one battalion participated this effect was obtained by firing on a time schedule. When such a schedule was used units were instructed to subvert their time of firing from the given time to get the time that Japans were to be pulled, this in an effort to have the first rounds arrive simultaneously. The intervals of silence were to make the enemy believe that the bombardment was over and that he could safely leave his cover. He was then surprised by another burst, until we hoped that when the firing was actually over he would be inclined to stay right in his hole rather than to man his position in readiness to repel the attack. However such ploys are of little value if the infantry does not follow up the artillery fire promptly. That they should do so was well learned by effective assault troops in the last war and it should not have to be learned again in this one. The infantry should be on top of the enemy's first positions as the artillery fire ceases. To not do so gives the enemy a chance to man his defensive positions, make adjustments for casualties and, generally, be well prepared to resist. Much of the effect of the artillery fire was lost, and so lost repeatedly during these operations. This first preparation sounded like all hell had broken loose; the enemy must have been sure of it. It was a fitting curtain raising performance for the opening of the victorious Division offensive which ensued. In order to gain initial surprise with a well placed volume of timely fire, no registration or adjustment was permitted immediately prior to this preparation. Data had to be accurate with all corrections applied prior to opening fire.

b. It might be interesting to note that at the time of the arrival of the 25th Division there was no adequate horizontal or vertical control available. The 104 map was useless and the uncontrolled mosaic was not sufficiently accurate. The Marine Artillery admitted, of their own free will and accord, that they had been shooting as one of their battalion commanders expressed it, "by earshot and a guide board", and that they had just made a momentous discovery that would revolutionize artillery firing, namely horizontal and vertical control. The survey and the one mosaic which the Division Artillery attached, established control on, and gridded to scale, was the first attempt at an unobserved fire chart to be used on Guadalcanal. The lack of sufficient air photos of the proper sort, for information and identification purposes, was a definite handicap which was only remedied by the highest type of individual ingenuity.

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## SECTION III ARTILLERY SURVEY FOR GUADALCANAL OPERATIONS

Lt. Col. ROBERT C. GILLMAN and Maj. DEAN M. LINDEN

	Paragraphs
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155. **SURVEY.**--a. The ideal solution for artillery fire control is obtained when an accurate 1/20,000 map with military grid is available. Then it is only necessary to locate the actual terrain positions of the guns on the map and direction and range to any target can be measured directly from the map. But there were no controlled maps of GUADALCANAL. Actual distances on the ground (or uncontrolled map or uncontrolled mosaic) was not truly consistently represented. Thus it was necessary to build up a ground survey control. The Marine and American Division Artillery had agreed on an arbitrary basis for survey. It was found and to the advantage of the Division Artillery to use the same ground control plan. A point on the ground at the southeast corner of the Bomber Strip was assigned the arbitrary coordinates (80,0-200,0) - from this point, the line along the south edge of the Bomber Strip was determined to be the Y axis and 60° 11' using a magnetic compass declination of 8° 30' obtained from the Naval Charts of this area. Using this arbitrary basis, the survey proceeded westward. The American Division Artillery traversed along the beach, the 25th Division Artillery further inland triangulation located the prominent hills south of the beach. This type of survey was performed by transit, measuring angles to the nearest 20 seconds, and computing by logarithm tables. Points were established on the ground near the anticipated position areas. From these points the battalion survey sections could locate their batteries. Points were located up forward, Hills 31, G 15, G 17 and others. From these points, using any two for a base, angles were measured to prominent terrain features in the target area thus locating such points as: "The head of the 'Hovos'", Hill 52, the much-shot-at lone tree on Hill 87, and others. Vertical control was carried along with horizontal control. All points were plotted on grid sheets.

b. With the described skeleton control it was possible to use photos to assist in shifting fires. Since American and Marine Artillery were using the same basis for survey, they could assist with fire on targets designated by coordinates from mutual firing charts.

156. **FIRE DIRECTION.**--In discussing fire direction it is always necessary to consider it with its components: communication, survey and firing charts. In this operation each battalion used approved methods as a guide for its communications. Direct and sometimes angled lines existed from the fire direction center to the firing batteries. The liaison and forward observer lines were connected into

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switchboards. Each battalion had some form of radio, inadequate as it was, to employ when wire lines went out. The least useful radio was the SCR 154, while the most useful was the SCR 511 used in conjunction with the SCR 224. All of the radio equipment left much to be desired. Firing charts were constructed principally from survey and observed fires. The Division Artillery Fire Direction Center probably approached, in the matter of firing charts the approved solution more nearly than did the battalions. In addition to the survey data as to gun positions, observation posts and check points, the Division Artillery had only one uncontrolled mosaic which, when compared with the survey in the division sector, turned out to be approximately 1/20,000. Outside this sector, however, the scale varied. This mosaic seemed throughout the operation to give excellent horizontal control for observed fires provided no shift over 1000 yards was made from a registered check point. For vertical control, an oblique was furnished from which interpolations could be made from known points. Again, the nets used by the Division Artillery Fire Direction Center was composed of a base east at Division Artillery and one set each of two battalions and air-ground net was maintained. It might be interesting to note at this point, that in maintaining the three hundred and thirty miles of wire laid by the artillery, approximately 2,725 man hours labor and repair of lines was caused solely by the negligence of friendly troops. Thus, it can be seen that radio was relied upon considerably.

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#### SECTION IV

#### FIRE DIRECTION

Lt. Col. ROBERT C. CHIDART

	Paragraph
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Lessons Learned .....	158

157. DESIGNATION AND DESCRIPTION OF TARGET.--a. Aside from the preparation of data for unobserved fires, there were other points of interest which arose during combat. Point number one was the necessity for a proper designation and description of the target. There are over 100 different ways in which artillery can be fired, depending on the ammunition available, the type of target, its cover and where it is in relation to our own troops. At times the artillery battalion commanders were not given this information. In lieu thereof they were told exactly how much artillery was wanted on a given point. The Air Corps is not told what size bombs nor how many planes to use on a target the bombing of which has been requested by ground troops. The infantry regiment does not receive orders as to how its companies should be employed. Similarly then, the artillery should be given the mission only and allowed to solve it by use of the best material and information available.

b. On one particular instance around Hill 53, the artillery was asked to shift one battalion, the 90th, from an unobserved division concentration to a point very close to front line troops. Now, the area covered by four battalions all firing at the adjusted coordinates of one battalion can be expected by experience to cover an area 400 x 400 yards. It is impossible to tell just where each battalion is firing; therefore, in order to shift to another target from such a concentration with just one battalion it is wise to place the fire at a safe distance in front of friendly troops and gradually creep back to the desired target. Here again, had the artillery merely been given the target, a proper solution could have been obtained quickly. As it was, much discussion preceded the delivery of fire.

c. There were two other points of interest which bear mentioning at this point. One was the fact that the artillery tried occasionally, by airplane registration, to keep ahead of the infantry with adjustments so that it could place fairly accurate, harassing fire on the enemy by use of the 1/20,000 mosaic and so also that as observers approached these check points they could shift their fire therefrom. Lastly, the radio intelligence platoon had tied into our survey and when it gave the artillery coordinates of a Japanese station the artillery was able to adjust its fire on these coordinates. This adjustment was accomplished by combining the observation of two observers in what amounted to a set-up quite similar to that used by the Coast Artillery in firing on moving ships.

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158. LESSONS LEARNED.--a. From all the operations many definite lessons were learned. The first from Division Artillery standpoint is very important. In order to mass the fires of the Division Artillery accurately when based on the adjustments of one battery in only one battalion, it is absolutely necessary in this rugged terrain for forward observers to give, in addition to their range and deflection settings, one for the altitude. This setting may be obtained by using the mil relation and applying the result to a point of known altitude. It may be determined by interpolating between two known points or it may as a last resort be estimated using any terrain feature such as trees which might add greater accuracy to the estimation. In other words, altitude settings in this operation were possible and would have been profitable but were not in all cases given.

b. Lesson number two is one of which is applicable whenever there is no Corps Artillery for counter-battery fire. Namely, the OP's of the medium general support battalion must be so situated and their personnel so indoctrinated that they immediately, on their own initiative, take under fire all enemy artillery. This should be one of their prime missions.

c. Prior to combat the artillery had had little opportunity to conduct training in high angle fire. Combat soon proved that the training in this respect had been negligent for it was discovered that high angle fire is necessary in this terrain. True, it takes longer to deliver, but because of the greater angle of impact there is far less chance of obtaining shorts on overhanging crests occupied by friendly troops. It was further learned that for best effect where surprise is not necessary and when firing charts are insufficient it is far better for time to be allowed for adjustment on the target area than to attempt a transfer from a known point. Therefore do work in many cases but for all around insurance where time and secrecy are not important, adjust first.

d. One very important lesson in fighting the Japanese in this type of warfare is that they habitually make their camp sites along stream beds. Therefore, much more harassing fire should be concentrated on these particular terrain features.

e. Our last lesson worth mentioning deals with liaison and forward observers. These officers have a great responsibility and they must be more aggressive in suggesting the use of artillery at the proper time. Similarly when a forward observer recognizes a request for artillery as an intruder and he must state that fact. Infantry commanders on the other hand must be ready and willing to listen to these officers and make full use of the artillery advice so offered regardless of the fact that in most cases forward observers will be by far the junior officer. Lastly, the 2/9 for a light battalion should include the necessary personnel and equipment to form three liaison sections rather than two. In many cases four are actually needed, one to the regimental CP and one to each of the three battalions.

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f. In addition to the element of time, terrain and the enemy situation, the element of surprise is always paramount. Unobserved massed fire without any previous shooting-in or registration is the same of accomplishment for surprise as for an artillery is concerned. This can be done with a high degree of accuracy and effect when the proper means and time are available. The two examples of such unobserved, surprise massed fires, previously referred to, certainly paid dividends. There is no doubt but that unobserved artillery fire is the most effective means of neutralizing the jungle probes, or any other uses, to the point where our infantry can go in for the kill without undue losses if they do it promptly. The massing of field artillery fire was a major factor in the speedy and complete overwhelming of the enemy in this operation.

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g. Fourth, the 57 Engineers helped greatly -- lent equipment and cooperated in every way. The infantry and the artillery helped by building and maintaining their local roads and assisting on the main ones.

h. Last, but far from the least, the engineering task was facilitated by the superior quality of the American truck -- with its front wheel drive and auxiliary transmission -- roads now are passable which in the past we would have been impossible and holes. In fact, the jeep itself built many more miles of road than did the bulldozers.

180. LESSONS LEARNED.--a. The 65th Engineer Battalion along with all other units learned much from this action, much about jungle road building, and proved that the American Army could make better use of the "impassable" jungle than could the supposed expert, the Japanese.

b. It taught that aggressive reconnaissance was necessary, that the engineers had to get out to the front, and beyond, to get information if it was to be worthwhile.

c. It taught them to be constantly on the search for possible water points: to work with the infantry and artillery S-4's in their "rooms" for water so as to enable the installation of engineer water units as far forward as possible.

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## SECTION II OPERATIONS OF THE DIVISION SIGNAL COMPANY

Lt. Col. M. F. Chadwick, Signal Corps

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181. OPERATIONS.--The division signal plan for the initial phases of the recent action, put the main axis of signal communication along the Beach Road to the Matanilla, then up this river, paralleling the Marive Trail, to the 27th Infantry CP. Wright Road was the wire route to the 35th Infantry CP, with lateral lines to the Division CP on Hill 49, and across to the 47th Infantry. As the 27th Infantry CP moved forward, the main wire axis followed through the jungle to Hill 66, and then along the "Snake". While the 27th was making its rapid advance, lines were extended along the Beach Road, from the Matanilla toward Kohnbuna, and there connected in to the 27th CP, after the beach had been cleared of the enemy. Radio communication was used with corps and the regiments only when lines were out. Lack of transportation was the biggest difficulty in installing and maintaining wire communication. The Signal Company had only 6 jeeps for use both for wire crews and for messenger service. The infantry communication sections usually had only one jeep for all purposes. Lines to the regiments were cut by the traffic along Wright Road, and by the engineers in cutting trees that impeded the trails. Better liaison between the engineers and communication personnel must be established. Wire details should be provided with boxes for clearing new wire routes through the jungle, away from the traffic along the Marive Trail. The 7th allotment of balls and olives should be increased for jungle operations. Repair of wire lines at night is extremely difficult, as no lights are permitted and there is danger of being shot at by our own troops. To avoid this, the crews must work steadily during daylight hours improving their lines. Wire details of all units should be commended for their good work, often under enemy fire. Guards should be provided for these details. In regimental headquarters companies, no personnel is available for such guards, and they will have to be taken from other units.

182. COMMUNICATIONS WITHIN THE REGIMENTS AND BATTALIONS.--In carrying communications within the regiment and battalions, we must always keep in mind that communication is a function of command. In this action, those commanders who planned the use of their signal equipment in the ways best suited to the situation and terrain were the most successful in obtaining satisfactory communications. Some battalion commanders found one type of radio best adapted to their needs, while others found better success with different types. Wire

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f. The standard E8-S-A and sound power telephones were very satisfactory. The sound power phone should be used only on direct lines, which are constantly manned, as it has no ringing device. The 3rd Battalion, 101st Infantry made use of Japanese sound power telephones on sound power phone lines. The Japanese phones, when used by our units, proved to be inferior and were not reliable as a substitute for the E8-S-A telephone.

g. The switchboards were satisfactory, but additional switchboards were needed to supplement the T/BA allowances.

184. LESSONS LEARNED.--a. The assault wire was valuable in the first line, but did not stand up long. It must be replaced as soon possible by a permanent line. In the jungle, ground return circuits worked well. The Signal Company should be provided with the use of the 5 pair rubber-covered cable along the axis of communication. This cable was cut into 4 mile lengths with terminals between sections.

b. Much of the damage to equipment was due to defects in the sets, and the fact that they were not designed for use over such rough terrain. The sets should be replaced by more rugged sets. The sets should be carried over a "jeep" trail will be subjected to a terrific jolt. These sets should be carried in a jeep during transit. They must be protected from rain. It was not found possible to make water proof covers for them before leaving camp, but this should be done as soon as materials are available. Until that time, a shatter-half should always be provided for each radio set.

c. Great difficulty was experienced in delivering signal supplies to units. This has been described in general by the cooperation between the Division Signal Officer, and the regimental communication officers solved this problem.

d. Practically no attempt was made within the regiments to obtain any type of signal security over the radio. No voice code prepared by this division was used in the advance units. Each unit commander was prepared in advance to use voice code, adapted for use within his unit, to meet the special situation. If this code is captured, it will then not endanger the signal security of the rest of the division.

e. The Radio Intelligence Platoon of the Signal Company was organized to obtain radio intercepts. It was attached to the XIV Corps for coordinated operations with the Signal Division. It gained valuable experience in locating enemy stations, copying Japanese code, and monitoring the division radio net. It should be a considerable asset to the division in future operations.

f. The Division Signal Officer has made a report giving the defects found in the signal equipment of the division, and suggesting remedies, and changes in Tables of Basic Allowances and in Tables of Organization. This report included the suggestions made by regimental and field artillery communication officers.

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## SECTION V

### OPERATION OF THE DIVISION MEDICAL BATTALION

Lt. Col. Arthur H. Thompson, Medical Corps

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193. INTRODUCTION.---a. The medical phase of the military operations on the Island of Guadalcanal during January, 1943 is best described under five categories. First, the activities of Collecting Companies "A" and "B" from January second to January tenth. Second, the evacuation plan for the attack of January tenth. Third, the chronological consideration of various medical activities in different sectors. Fourth, a discussion of the hospitalization, statistics in reference to sickness and casualties and fifth, some of the lessons we learned during these operations.

b. First, the activities of Collecting Companies "A" and "B" from the second to the tenth of January. Lt. Col. Buchanan informed Lt. Col. Thompson at 1700 on the second of January that the corps had ordered a collecting company of the 25th Medical Battalion to assist the 101st Medical Regiment in evacuation of casualties of the Americal Division. The following morning at 1000, Collecting Company "B" was bivouacked west of Wright Road, a mile south of the Beach Road. Captain Jernigan spent the entire day of January third reconnoitering the litter route between the end of Wright Road and eastern slope of Hill 27. During this reconnaissance a shorter litter route between Hill 27 and Wright Road was arranged, reducing the litter haul from approximately five miles to three miles. Col. Thompson, as a result of a personal reconnaissance on January seventh, decided Collecting Company "A" would be used to reinforce Collecting Company "B" inasmuch as the litter bearers were tired and the casualties were becoming more numerous.

c. The litter bearers in this sector, as well as in others, carried out their work in an excellent manner under extremely trying conditions. They moved parallel to our lines and over miles of rugged jungle trails in intense heat. Intermittent heavy rains enhanced the difficulties of their hard evacuation, and in addition they were frequently subjected to enemy fire of all types.

194. EVACUATION PLAN.---The evacuation plan for the attack of January tenth. Detailed reconnaissance of all front line areas had been made by the medical officers of this Division during the latter part of December and early part of January. The area west of the Lunga and along the Beach Road as far west as Wright Road was

## SECTION IV

### THE OPERATIONS OF THE DIVISION ORDNANCE COMPANY

Lt. Col. Philip F. Lindeman, Ordnance Officer.

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189. PLANS AND PREPARATIONS.---a. Ordnance was called upon to operate a Division Ammunition Point. This was located at Wright Road. The company not only manned the dump clerically but actually manned the dump physically with the help of twenty-one, (21), natives. The men, who manned this dump, should be given credit along with the troops who carried supplies and ammunition to the front line units. At the peak of the combat these men worked so hard, that by the end of the fifteen day period three actual reliefs of manpower took place at the dump. The amount of tonnage handled by these men amounted to 3,000 tons. To give you an idea of part of the picture, 26,411 lbs. of artillery ammunition was issued along with 66,271 lbs. of mortar ammunition and 36,000 Hand Grenades. This is quite a load considering the number of times this ammunition had to be handled. During combat the small arms and artillery section of the company did yeoman service. Often the man who demands immediate service sees only his part of the picture and often forgets that perhaps other business is more urgent at the time. However, in spite of their demands, no calls were left unanswered. The ammunition section of the company went everywhere and anywhere upon call.

190. FIELD MAINTENANCE.---a. To give immediate service in the field two (2) emergency repair trucks, carrying replacement weapons up to and including machine guns and a limited supply of cleaning and preserving materials, along with one wrecker were moved up to the Wright Road dump. These emergency repair trucks visited the service companies of the regiments daily and then returned to the dump to repair the weapons they collected along with those weapons being brought in for repair.

b. The wreckers went out on many calls. The crews had to work under conditions far from ideal. The roads and traffic caused the wrecker crews many difficulties and, in spite of it all, they came through in fine fashion. The wreckers answered during this period 150 emergency calls. Incidentally, in spite of all the accidents only two vehicles were lost to the division during the operations. These two vehicles were salvaged and used for spare parts. The wrecker proved itself over and over again as being a very necessary piece of equipment during combat.

c. Before leaving the subject of field maintenance, I wish to point out that repairs to weapons and replacement of weapons



points were made available to the 27th Infantry the morning after they took Kokumbona. The 161st Infantry was also contacted for repairs and replacements of weapons while they were still west of Cape Espirano. Upon the completion of the operations these emergency repair trucks again were sent to each regiment and repaired and replaced weapons, so that no shortage of arms would occur if the division was called into action again.

d. During the fifteen days the Automotive platoon was far from being idle. The mud, the type of roads, and night movements all contributed to the number of accidents. This platoon repaired and put back into service 167 vehicles. They often worked after dark to get immediate repairs done on wrecked vehicles. It seems funny, in a way, to inject stove repairs into this speech, but stoves as well as everything else, played their part during the operation. The men repaired during this period over 100 stove burners; that alone required many man hours of work.

191. REMOVAL OF BUNKERS.--g. The company was called upon to remove bunkers, both enemy and our own and some were removed under hazardous conditions. Enemy ammunition and guns were also destroyed. Various types of enemy communication, weapons and instruments were brought in for G-2.

#### 192. LESSONS LEARNED.

(1) There was a tendency to overlook an ammunition. This meant that much time, labor and transportation was wasted. It also contributed to waste of ammunition. This being a common function, we try that some thought be given to ammunition demands during operations.

(2) In ordering ammunition be specific. Order by type and by number of rounds.

(3) When troops are moved, we would like to be immediately informed. Much time was lost in trying to relocate various infantry and artillery units. However, everything considered, it was not too bad but could be improved upon.

(4) In placing calls for service and for the removal of stoves, definite locations should be given or a guide provided. The person making the call should give his name so he can be contacted. Many hours again were spent looking for units and stoves.

(5) It would help if channels of supply were strictly adhered to. Place responsibility where it belongs, as this develops initiative and leadership. Outside interference is usually caused by someone trying to help out, but at times it makes more than help. It is a firm believer in knowing where our job ends and where the other man's takes over. Work through your regimental or battalion supply officers, they will appreciate it as much as the services. Often, duplications took place because all concerned knew nothing about it.

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reconnoitered for a suitable location of a division hospital. The medical troops were disposed as follows on January tenth: the attached medical personnel of all units were organized in readiness to provide direct support to their organizations. Casualties were evacuated by litter from all front line areas to the end of existing "jeep" trails where collecting points were established. "Jeep" ambulances of two types, each capable of carrying three litter patients, transported all casualties to the collecting companies which were established at the end of roads passable for standard ambulances. Evacuation to the hospitals was then completed by ambulance. Collecting Companies "A" and "B" were to continue operating the collecting station on Mindall Hill with an advance collecting point at the end of Wright Road. Company "C" established a collecting station just west of the Matanikau River on the Marine Trail at the base of Hill 66. Collecting Companies "A" and "B" also maintained a bivouac area along the Beach Road near the mouth of the Matanikau where the men came back from the front at night for rest.

195. CHRONOLOGY OF OPERATIONS.--g. Chronological consideration of the various medical activities in different sectors. The 35th Infantry attached on the morning of January tenth with Collecting Companies "A" and "B" in the positions described above. The scheme of maneuver employed by the 1st and 3rd Battalions of the 35th Infantry was a wide envelopment of the enemy's right flank. The 3rd Battalion was the leading Battalion and the 1st Battalion was one half day's march behind the 3rd Battalion. This type of maneuver over rough hilly jungle terrain, devoid of roads, presents a formidable problem in regard to evacuation of the wounded. It was quite obvious by nightfall of January eleventh that the 1st and 3rd Battalions were moving so rapidly that casualties could not be evacuated to the rear. Thus it became necessary for these battalions to carry their casualties forward as they advanced. The following is an illustration of the difficulties encountered during evacuation in this sector. Captain Jernigan and Lieutenant Ashley began establishing their litter relay posts between Hill 27 and the end of Wright Road at 0830 January eleventh. They arrived on Hill 27 at 1000 and by 1530 reached the 1st Battalion Aid station with twelve litter bearers. Two walking wounded and one litter patient weighing two hundred and thirty five pounds had to be evacuated. The litter bearers started their return trip with these patients at 1600. Two units of blood plasma were ordered by telephone from the 2nd Battalion Aid station for the litter patient. These arrived at 1900 and one unit was administered immediately. This party spent that night on the trail in a soaking rain. The remaining unit of plasma was administered in the morning. The litter squad with their casualties arrived at the end of Wright Road at 1130, having spent eight hours on this one haul.

b. Captain Clark, G-3 of the 25th Medical Battalion, as a result of a personal reconnaissance reported on the afternoon of the eleventh that these two battalions could be supplied, and wounded evacuated by boats on the Matanikau. This information was relayed to G-4 of the Division who made arrangements for boats, rafts, and out-

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#### SECTION V OPERATION OF THE DIVISION MEDICAL BATTALION

Lt. Col. Arthur H. Thompson, Medical Corps

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159. INTRODUCTION.--a. The medical phase of the military operations on the Island of Guadalcanal during January, 1943 is best described under five categories. First, the activities of Collecting Companies "A" and "B" from January second to January tenth. Second, the evacuation plan for the attack of January tenth. Third, the chronological consideration of various medical activities in different sectors. Fourth, a discussion of the hospitalization, statistics in reference to sickness and casualties and fifth, some of the lessons we learned during these operations.

b. First, the activities of Collecting Companies "A" and "B" from the second to the tenth of January. Lt. Col. Buchanan informed Lt. Col. Thompson at 1700 on the second of January that the corps had ordered a collecting company of the 25th Medical Battalion to assist the 161st Medical Regiment in evacuation of casualties of the Aerial Division. The following morning at 1000, Collecting Company "B" was bivouacked west of Wright Road, a mile south of the Beach Road. Captain Jernigan spent the entire day of January third reconnoitering the litter route between the end of Wright Road and eastern slope of Hill 27. During this reconnaissance a shorter litter route between Hill 27 and Wright Road was arranged, reducing the litter haul from approximately five miles to three miles. Col. Thompson, as a result of a personal reconnaissance on January seventh, decided Collecting Company "A" would be used to reinforce Collecting Company "B" inasmuch as the litter bearers were tired and the casualties were becoming more numerous.

c. The litter bearers in this sector, as well as in others, carried out their work in an excellent manner under extremely trying conditions. They moved parallel to our lines and over miles of rugged jungle trails in intense heat. Inadequately heavy rains enhanced the difficulties of their hard evacuation, and in addition they were frequently subjected to enemy fire of all types.

161. EVACUATION PLAN.--The evacuation plan for the attack of January tenth. Detailed reconnaissance of all front line areas had been made by the 161st Medical Regiment. The Division directed the latter part of December and early part of January. The area west of the Lunga and along the Beach Road as far west as Wright Road was

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board motors. Initially, G-1 of the Division supplied forty enlisted men from the Cannon Company of the 161st Infantry Regiment to operate the boats from the South Bridge of the Matanikau to the base of Hill 44. Company "A" was ordered to evacuate the casualties from the 1st and 3rd Battalions over this route. The patients were carried from Hills 43 and 44 by litter bearers of this company and natives. A cable with an improved steel mesh of three-fourths inch pipe, which served as a frame to hold a Stokes litter, was used to lower patients down Hill 44. Additional necessary medical treatment was given in the collecting point at the base of Hill 44. The wounded were here loaded on boats and rafts for the trip to the South Bridge of the Matanikau where a collecting station was established. This boat trip down the Matanikau covered three miles and traversed nine rapids across which boats had to be lifted. At the South Bridge of the Matanikau patients were transferred to smaller rafts which were towed by motor boats to the North Bridge of the Matanikau. Here patients were seen by a medical officer and placed in ambulances which transported them to the Division Hospital. Collecting Company "A" continued to evacuate the 2nd and 3rd Battalions of the 35th Infantry until the twenty first of January when the 161st Infantry was committed to action. Company "B" took over the evacuation of casualties of the 1st and 3rd Battalions on January twenty first, and operated this route until the end of the action. Collecting Company "B" also continued to evacuate casualties from the 2nd Battalion, 35th Infantry over Wright Road until the 6th strongpoint was finally reduced on the twenty-fourth of January.

c. Returning now to the 27th Infantry. On the eighth of January, Captain Clark, Captain Dinkin, the commanding officer of Collecting Company "B", and the regimental surgeon of the 27th Infantry made a reconnaissance to the base of Hill 66. It was then decided that Collecting Company "C" would establish a collecting station at the base of Hill 66 on the Marine Trail west of the Matanikau. Two separate litter routes were to be established, one to the base of Hill 66 to evacuate the casualties of the 1st Battalion, 27th Infantry, and a second litter route along the Marine Trail to the base of Hill 54. Collecting Company "C" continued to evacuate casualties of the 27th Infantry until the 27th of January when they were relieved. From January tenth to January twenty-third the collecting station was located on Hill 66. The station was moved forward to the end of the "Snake" on January twenty-third. Members of this company advanced with the 27th Infantry when they entered Kokumbona on this date. Subsequently boats were used to evacuate patients from Kokumbona to Ran Kua Beach.

d. The 161st Infantry advanced on January twenty-second with the mission of flanking Hill 87 by way of Hill V after capturing Hill X, Y, and Z. Collecting Company "A" evacuated the casualties of this regiment. The 161st advanced rapidly on the twenty-second of January without suffering any casualties, however, ten sick patients were evacuated on this date and an advanced collecting point was

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established on Hill 53.

a. The Beach Road to Kokumbona was open on January twenty-fifth and casualties in this area were evacuated over it.

196. **HOSPITALIZATION.**--a. Discussion of hospitalization and statistics in reference to sickness and casualties. The forward and rear hospitals together had sufficient 7/8A equipment and personnel for temporary hospitalization of two hundred and fifty patients. The rear hospital on the morning of January ninth had three hundred and ninety one patients and the forward hospital was empty in anticipation of heavy battle casualties on the tenth.

b. Eight hundred and thirty-two patients were evacuated from the island during the period January ninth to twenty-sixth. There were still four hundred and thirty-two patients in the two hospitals on January twenty-sixth. Two hundred and sixteen officers and men were killed in action and about three hundred battle casualties were evacuated to the hospitals. Two thirds of the three hundred battle casualties, or two hundred, were evacuated from this island. There were four hundred and eighty six patients admitted to the hospital because of malaria or fourteen more patients than were killed and wounded in battle. There were also three hundred and nineteen serious cases of diarrhea and dysentery admitted to the hospital, or nineteen more than the total battle casualties. From January ninth to January twenty sixth, the average admission rate was one hundred patients per day.

c. The medical officers and enlisted men in these two hospitals did a magnificent job in caring for the sick and battle casualties. Once a wounded man arrived at the hospital his chances of living were excellent, as ninety seven per cent recovered.

197. **LESSONS LEARNED.**--a. There is no substitute for active, continuous, aggressive reconnaissance on the ground. It is possible to keep medical installations and routes of evacuation functioning with maximum efficiency by this means and this means alone.

b. Intimate knowledge of the tactical plan and the status of the military operation is essential at all times. Efficient evacuation will be impossible if this principle is violated.

c. Battalion aid stations must make provisions for transporting their equipment and supplies by hand. The standard medical chests are too bulky for this purpose and mortar pouches or special packs must be provided for this contingency, otherwise mobility cannot be maintained.

d. Long narrow litter hauls will be the rule rather than the exception, and provisions for securing extra litter bearers must be made before the casualties actually exist. The infantry regiments are the logical source of litter bearer reinforcements.

e. Night evacuation from forward areas is undesirable because of the tactical plan for night defense, and due to the excessive number of unavoidable accidents which occur during the hours of darkness.

f. "Jeep" ambulances are remarkably efficient vehicles for evacuation of wounded. Equipped with Stokes litters they will follow the "doughboy" anywhere. They are truly a lifesaver for both supply and evacuation during our recent operations.

g. The clearing company of a medical battalion was not designed nor equipped to furnish semi-permanent hospitalization for divisional casualties. Adequate corps or army medical support should be provided to assure efficient hospitalization.

h. It is essential to the health of the command that rigid field sanitation be carried out in all units. This is especially true in advancing operations where supporting units occupy areas recently evacuated by tactical troops. The dead must be buried promptly and the use of slit trenches must be required whenever it is tactically feasible.