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HEADQUARTERS 6TH INFANTRY DIVISION
APO 6

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The following report has been accomplished in accordance with the provisions of AR 345-105. Covered are the operations of the 6th Infantry Division on LUZON under Sixth Army from the date of the initial landing, 9 January 1945, to 30 June 1945. This period includes the following campaigns:

The landing at LINGAYEN GULF and the subsequent drive to the east coast to isolate NORTHERN LUZON.

The liberation of the BATAAN PENINSULA.

The destruction of the SHIMBU LINE east and northeast of MANILA.

The mopping-up of ZAMBALES PROVINCE, the MT NATIB Area of BATAAN, and the MT PINATUBO Area west of FORT STOTSENBURG.

The drive to the north up HIGHWAY 4 from BAGABAG in the CAGAYAN VALLEY of NORTHERN LUZON.

The last of the above campaigns has yet to be terminated. The period covered by this report, however, ends as of 2400, 30 June 1945, because at that time control of the operations on LUZON passed from Sixth Army to Eighth Army.

At this writing, the 6th Infantry Division is still heavily committed in the mountainous heart of the MOUNTAIN PROVINCE of NORTHERN LUZON. KIANGAN, long GENERAL YAMASHITA'S SUPREME HEADQUARTERS in the PHILIPPINES has been taken, but the drive to the north on BANAUE still continues. A separate report covering the final phase of the LUZON Campaign subsequent to 30 June 1945 will be submitted later.

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Digest of Staff Sectional Reports

INTRODUCTION

1. Preliminary:

Early in October 1944, while the 6th Infantry Division was undergoing a rehabilitation and training period at SANSAPOR, DUTCH NEW GUINEA, orders were received from the Commanding General EIGHTH ARMY directing that the Division prepare for participation in the M-1 (LUZON) operation. Upon the receipt of Field Order Number 1 (tentative), Headquarters I CORPS, dated 27 October 44, all staff sections began definite plans covering the 6th Division's part in the projected landing.

The M-1 Operation was to involve an amphibious landing in the LINGAYEN GULF area of CENTRAL LUZON, by Sixth Army troops supported by Allied Air and Naval forces, with the objective of reoccupying the CENTRAL PLAINS-MANILA area. As a part of I CORPS, the 6th Division reinforced would participate in the initial landing. The Target Date was announced as 20 December 1944. Staging of the 6th Division and the bulk of its attached units was to be accomplished at SANSAPOR (See Troop List).

During the month of November, planning conferences were held at Hollandia between Division and Higher Headquarters and with Naval Task Force Commanders. A Division Transport Quartermaster Office was set up at SANSAPOR to work out ship loading details. Training during this period emphasized the tactics of open warfare, and included Infantry-Tank operations, amphibious landings employing LVT's, the removal of underwater obstacles, the use of chemical mortars, and air and naval gunfire support. Specially trained assault teams were carefully rehearsed.

Equipping the Division proved to be a difficult task, despite the high priority given units staging for the M-1 operation. Because of a shortage of shipping and the fact that supplies were scattered among widely separated bases throughout the theater, it was necessary for the Division to send its own representatives to different supply points to locate supplies and equipment and arrange shipping on the spot. The same was true regards the securing of personnel replacements and the returning of casuals. These critical problems were alleviated somewhat when the Commanding General, I CORPS announced on 3 December that the Target Date had been postponed until 9 January.

About 15 December the first of the assigned shipping reached the SANSAPOR anchorage, and representatives of Naval Task Group 78.5 visited the Division to confer with the Commanding General and Staff.

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It was discovered that ships' commanders had made changes in the ships' characteristics of several vessels, information of which had not reached the Division Transport Quartermaster. This resulted in a loss of critically needed shipping space and necessitated many last minute changes in loading plans.

The SANSAPOR anchorage is nothing more than an open roadstead; there are no port facilities. All loading and unloading must be accomplished by lighters. With the onslaught of the Northwest season, surf conditions at times made it impossible to carry on any loading operations, either at shipside or on the beach. Despite the above difficulties, all ships were loaded within the allotted time. The assault wave troops embarked on 23 December for a landing rehearsal, which was carried out next morning. The actual beaching of landing craft was omitted due to hazardous surf conditions.

2. Enroute to LINGAYEN GULF:

Naval Task Group 78.5, transporting the 6th Infantry Division reinforced, sortied from SANSAPOR on 30 December 44. The Division was loaded in three Transport Divisions, which included 8 APA's, 1 AKA, 1 AK, 3 AP's, 1 APH, 2 LSD's, 1 LSV, 2 Liberty Ships, 10 LSM's, and 10 LST's. The Commanding General and principal staff sailed on the Task Group Flagship, the FREMONT.

This group effected a rendezvous with Task Group 78.1, carrying other I Corps troops, at 1200I, 3 January 45, and with an LST Group of Task Force 79, from the ADMIRALTIES. Two escort carriers (CVE's) also joined the convoy and were stationed astern Task Group 78.5.

Little happened enroute to LEYTE GULF, although one Jap bomber was shot down by Naval escort planes. Upon arrival in LEYTE GULF, numerous supply and service vessels and several Army communications ships joined the formation. On 4 January, the Close Covering Group (TG 77.3), consisting of four light cruisers and eight destroyers, took positions ahead of the formation and maintained positions in the van or on the flank until our arrival in the objective area.

Passage through the SURIGAO STRAIT was made without incident. Two Jap midget subs were contacted on 5 January, and one was sunk by combined air and destroyer action. On the night of 5-6 January, about 15 enemy planes flew over the formation, but our ships held their fires and the convoy was not spotted. During the evening of 7 January, while in the CHINA SEA, a small group of enemy planes made a dusk raid. One LST was hit by one plane on a suicide dive, with slight damage to the vessel and light casualties resulting. Two enemy planes were shot down by ships AA fire. At approximately 2255I our destroyers sunk an enemy destroyer off MANILA BAY. Throughout the remainder of the night, the formation was snooped by enemy planes.

In a dawn attack on the 8th, an enemy plane crash-dived a CVE, causing considerable damage, and an enemy plane crashed into the superstructure of the CALLOWAY, an APA carrying elements of the 20th Infantry and attachments. Damage to the ship and casualties were both light and the vessel continued in formation. The remainder of the passage to LINGAYEN GULF was made without incident.

3. The Tactical Plan: (See Fig. 2.)

S-Day plans provided that the 6th Infantry Division reinforced (less the 63d RCT in Corps Reserve) on the right (West) flank of I Corps, would land on Blue Beaches 1 and 2 in the DAGUPAN - SAN FABIAN area, with regiments abreast. Making the main effort in the Zone of the 1st Infantry, the Division would:

~~Establish an initial beachhead, seize and hold the bridges~~ on the LOSICABLA - DAGUPAN road.

Immediately upon landing, using a minimum force, seize and secure the peninsula directly South of the BUED RIVER, to cover the landing of right flank elements of the 43d Division.

Seize and hold the road junction at MANGALDAN and block any enemy movement from the South and East.

Seize and hold the DAGUPAN bridge if still existant, or if the bridge was found destroyed, hold the near bank, until relieved by elements of the XIV Corps.

Attack to the South within the Division Zone of Action, destroying all hostile forces therein, and extend the initial beachhead to the limit of the Army beachhead.

Establish and maintain contact with the 43d Infantry Division on the left (East) and with XIV Corps on the right.

The 1st Infantry, reinforced, on the Division's left flank, would land with 1st Battalion on the left and 2d Battalion on the right. (See Fig. 2.) Making their main effort in the 2d Battalion zone, the regiment was to advance to secure lines 1-1 and 2-2 successively, and seize the vital MANGALDAN road junction. 1st Battalion would divert a small force to secure the BUED RIVER peninsula and cover the landing of 43d Division troops. Further advances to secure line 3-3 would be made on Division order.

The 20th Infantry, reinforced, would pass the 3d Battalion to Division control immediately upon landing, while pushing South with two battalions abreast, 2d on the left and 1st Battalion on the right, making the main effort in the 2d Battalion zone. (See Fig. 2.) The regiment would seize lines 1-1 and 2-2, the 1st Battalion capturing and holding the bridges on the LOSICABLA - DAGUPAN road and the

DAGUPAN RIVER crossing. Further advance to secure line 3-3 was to be initiated on Division order.

The 63d Infantry RCT would pass to control of the Commanding General, I Corps, upon arrival in the objective area, prior to landing. (For further details see Field Order Number 1.)

5. Brief Estimate of the Situation:

From available intelligence reports it was believed that the enemy had constructed heavy defenses in the LINGAYEN GULF area. An estimated 35,000 enemy troops, infantry, artillery and service units, were reported to be in the operational area (LINGAYEN GULF and CENTRAL VALLEY, South to TARLAC) with some 19,000 reserves including the 2d Armored Division capable of intervention. The reported dispositions of the enemy suggested that he might either (1) vigorously defend the landing beaches on S-Day by counter attacking with mobile reserves; or (2) hinder our advance from the beach from successive delaying positions at central points along the route of advance.

6. Troops:

Combat	Service
~~6th Inf Div (less 63d RCT)~~	~~Unit 3, 240th Cml Comp Co~~
55th FA Bn (155 How)	424th Med Collecting Co
3rd Sound Ranging Plat (reinf), 289th FA Obstn Bn	6th Portable Surgical Hosp
Det, Serv Plat, 671st Engr Topo Co	37th Field Hosp
Liaison Section, I Corps Arty	29th Evac Hosp (400 bed)
198th AAA AW Bn (less Btry "A")	181st QM Lndry Plat (Type "B")
Btry "C" & "D" and Det, Hq & Hq Btry, 161st AAA Gun Bn	11th Portable Surgical Hospital
1 Plat Btry "C", 222d AAA S/L Bn and Det Hq & Hq Btry	15th Portable Surgical Hospital
Co "C", 44th Tank Bn	26th Malaria Survey Unit
Co "A", 716th Tank Bn and Det, Serv Co	12th Malaria Control Unit
Co "A", 98th Cml Bn (less Prov Plat) and 1/2 Bn Hq	61st Malaria Control Unit
11th Air Support Party	48th Ord (MM) Co (less Det)
293d Joint Assault Sig Co, Army (less Dets)	Det, 3608th (HM) Co (Tank)
Co "B", 727th Amph Trac Bn (less 3 Plats)	2d Plat (less 3d Sec), 601st QM GR Co (less Dets)
	Shore Party
	543d EB&SR
	1462d Engr Boat Maint Co
	2d Plat, 36th MP Co
	Co "C", 263d Med Bn (ESB)
	622d Ord Amm Co
	108th Bomb Disposal Squad
	Det, 198th QM Gas Supply Co
	558th QM Rhd Co (less 1 Plat & Det)
	4188th QM Service Co
	3448th QM Truck Co
	466th QM Amph Truck Co
	294th Port Co
	244th Port Co (less 1 Plat)

Chapter I

THE INITIAL PHASE MEETS UNEXPECTED SUCCESS

1. S-Day.(9 Jan 1945).

Beginning at H-2 hours and 45 minutes destroyers, cruisers, and battleships joined in a bombardment of the landing beaches, while carrier based aircraft formed a protective air umbrella. By 0830I all landing craft had been launched and loaded and were proceeding to the Line of Departure in accordance with the schedule. The first of the 5 waves of LVT's reached Blue Beach at 0930I. Succeeding waves of LCVP's and heavier craft were beached at the allotted time intervals.

Only a few scattered shots opposed the landing. Both the 1st and 20th Infantry Regiments moved rapidly inland and reached the 1st phase line, beyond the BINLOC RIVER by 1330I, securing a beachhead adequate for the Division's supply dumps. The Division CP opened at BINLOC at 1445I and the Division Commander assumed command ashore.

By 1400I elements of the 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop had arrived at the 20th Infantry objective, the battered DAGUPAN bridge. An hour later leading elements of both regiments had reached the MANGALDAN-DAGUPAN highway. By dusk this line was secure, and reconnaissance elements were pushing on south to CALAISIAO and SANTA BARBARA.

The 1st and 51st FA Battalions, coming ashore in the 12th wave at H/54, were in positions and ready to give direct support to their respective regiments by 1130I. The 3d Battalion, 20th Infantry, in Division Reserve, went into an assembly area West of BINLOC and furnished work parties to assist the 543d Engineer Boat and Shore Regiment in unloading vital supplies.

The BINLOC RIVER offered a serious obstacle to the supply of our troops, as had been anticipated. Bailey Bridge sections were unloaded on S-Day, and work was begun on a bridge before nightfall.

A "Red" alert was sounded shortly after dark, but the expected enemy bombers failed to materialize, offering tangible evidence of the effectiveness of our pre-invasion air strikes.

2. S/1 to S/5.

On the morning of 10 January, both the 1st and the 20th Infantry Regiments were ordered to continue the advance in their respective zones, to seize line 3-3 (MAPANDAN-SANTA BARBARA-CALAISIAO), and reconnoiter to the line TORRES-CATABLAN-MALISIQUI. The 63d Infantry, in I Corps Reserve, was landed on White Beach and proceeded to

the town of ANGIO, in the 43d Division sector.

The construction of the Bailey Bridge over the BINLOC RIVER assumed the proportions of a real problem on S+1. By 1800I it was reported to be 80% completed, but an abutment gave way during the final launching, causing several hours additional work. A sneak air raid on the supply dump area and a threatened enemy infiltration necessitated further delays. Construction of light ponton bridges across the BINLOC on the LOSICABLA-DAGUPAN road could not get underway because of a heavy surf which made is impossible to unload bridging materials from LST's.

Only amphibious tractors could be used to supply the regiments, and supporting weapons could not be moved forward until the BINLOC was bridged. In the light of this problem, both regiments were ordered to consolidate their present positions and search out any scattered resistance which might have been bypassed while improving their communications lines, and establishing contact with adjacent units.

On the morning of 11 January, work on the BINLOC bridge was intensified, and a fill was constructed close by. The first armored scout car of the 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop crossed the river via this fill at 1200I. The Cannon Companies, Anti-Tank Companies, and artillery soon followed. Both the 1st and 51st FA Battalions were in positions near MAPANDAN and SANTA BARBARA respectively before dark. Supply trains moved forward during the night.

On 12 January the 1st Infantry and 20th Infantry were ordered to secure and consolidate the line TORRES-CATABLAN-MAIASIQUI, further advance being limited temporarily by Corps order.

While the above orders were being carried out, the CP moved to MANGALDAN. The Bailey Bridge was completed, and heavy equipment was moved forward, to include Company "C", 44th Tank Battalion, and Company "A", 716th Tank Battalion.

The 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, moving along the SANTA BARBARA-CATABLAN highway, made contact with the enemy in what proved to be the first organized resistance encountered by the 6th Division in its advance inland from BLUE BEACH. On the 13-14 January the battalion drove an estimated reinforced Jap company from deeply entrenched, well camouflaged positions in the high ground west of CATABLAN, and the line CATABLAN-MALISIQUI was secured. Meanwhile, reconnaissance elements to the east and southeast made contact with another enemy force in the vicinity of LUNEC.

The Division main supply road from BLUE BEACH was now in full operation, and the unloading of shipping had progressed rapidly. All units were well supplied, and supporting weapons were ready to enact their roles. The 3d Battalion, 20th Infantry, had been released from

its beach party labors, and all was in readiness for futher advances. At this time the Division was ordered not to advance in strength beyond the line CATABIAN-MALISIQUI, but to push reconnaissance to the line URDENETA-CABARUAN HILLS. (See Fig 3)

Chapter II

THE BATTLE OF THE CABARUAN HILLS

1. Estimate of the Situation 14 January:

Since the enemy had not chosen to defend the beaches of LINGAYEN GULF, it was believed he would make a strong stand at the next important natural barrier, the AGNO RIVER. In this connection, it was anticipated he would deploy delaying elements of considerable strength in the CABARUAN HILLS. This was the most advantageous terrain for defensive purposes to be found north of the AGNO, and any enemy elements in these hills must be eliminated to secure routes for our further advances to the south.

An evaluation of civilian and guerilla reports indicated that a Jap force estimated at 1000-3000 troops with artillery and tank attachments was concentrated in the LUNEC-CABARUAN HILLS area. The enemy position encountered at CATABLAN, 13 January, was believed to be an outpost for this force.

2. Nature of the Terrain:

The CABARUAN HILLS consists of a series of low hills, ridges, and rolling terrain. The soil is heavy clay, very hard during the dry season. The hills are covered with bamboo thickets, scattered palm trees, and patches of heavy scrub growth. The valleys or draws are free of trees, being covered with heavy cogan grass and occasional cultivated fields. At frequent intervals, hedges of bamboo thickets separate the fields, making natural defense lines. Each hill is more or less isolated, giving no opportunity for a covered approach. Some of the valleys contain swamps, but for the most part they are dry.

3. Nature of the Jap Defenses:

The main Jap positions were established on a horseshoe shaped ridge extending approximately 1000-1500 yards West of CABARUAN barrio. All principal ridges and hills to the West and Northwest were organized.

Likely approaches were covered by artillery fire and by automatic weapons so painstakingly camouflaged that close range scrutiny often failed to locate them. Pillboxes and dugouts of all descriptions were used. Individual and two man foxholes five to six feet deep were common, with deep tunnels at right angles to the opening, in which the occupants could seek cover from artillery air bursts. Some positions were pillboxes, with log and earth coverings. Large, deep dugouts with bamboo ladders were used for CP's, aid stations,

ammunition dumps, and food storage dumps. Two large installations, apparently CP's, were dug in to a depth of 20-30 feet. The enemy had also dug an underground blacksmith shop and stable for 50 horses.

Artillery pieces were skilfully camouflaged, and dug in so that only direct hits by artillery or organic infantry weapons could silence them. Many strong points were complete with inter-connecting trenches, and all were covered by ingeniously concealed sniper posts.

4. The Enemy:

The Japs encountered in the CABARUAN HILLS were average Jap infantrymen. They were well clothed and well equipped. Their food and water supply was adequate until our artillery fire destroyed numerous wells and food dumps and prevented them from leaving their holes to get fresh water. Until the very last, when only scattered remnants remained, the enemy stubbornly defended their positions on each ridge until our troops dug them out one by one, employing flame throwers, demolitions, white phosphorous grenades, and every other means at their disposal.

5. Operations for 14-16 January:

From positions along the CATABLAN-MALISIQUI road (See Fig. 4.) the 1st Infantry on the left, the 20th Infantry on the right, pushed reconnaissance patrols toward the line URDANETA-CABARUAN HILLS. Two groups of 25-30 Japanese were encountered in the vicinity of LUNEC barrio. Company "E", 20th Infantry, captured this town against light resistance on the morning of 15 January, following a bombing and strafing mission which included the targets CABARUAN-LABIT-PALINA and UNZAD. The 3d Battalion, 20th Infantry, was released to regimental control. Both regiments were directed to consolidate their present positions, and continue reconnaissance South to the AGNO RIVER, with emphasis on the URDANETA-CABARUAN HILLS areas.

During the night of 15-16 January the 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, moved under cover of darkness to the road junction West of UNZAD, and from here small patrols were dispatched to the North and East. Several contacts were made with small enemy outposts, and a late afternoon thrust at the battalion's position by an estimated 50 Japs was repulsed.

Also on the 16th, Field Order 2, I CORPS, was received, directing that the 6th Division continue its present missions and conduct vigorous reconnaissance to the line CUYAPO-SAN LEON to secure necessary crossings over the AGNO RIVER. Accordingly the 1st Infantry (less 1 Battalion in Division Reserve) with Company "A", 716th Tank Battalion, and Company "D", 98th Chemical Battalion (less 1 Platoon) attached, was ordered to seize URDANETA. The 20th Infantry, with 1st Platoon, Company "C", 44th Tank Battalion and Company "A", 98th Chemical Battalion attached, was directed to seize the CABARUAN HILLS area. Both regiments were to reconnoiter South to the AGNO RIVER in their respective zones, in cooperation with the 6th Cavalry Reconnaissance Troop.

SECRET

6. January 17-19:

During the morning of 17 January the 20th Infantry conducted intensive patrolling, preparatory to a coordinated attack at 1205L. The 2d Battalion attacked to the Southeast from its assembly area near LUNEC, following a preparation by artillery and 4.2 chemical mortars. Heavy fighting ensued, against strong enemy outposts. Dusk found the battalion dug in on the forward slope of a ridge approximately 4000 yards West of CABARUAN TOWN. A total of 91 enemy dead had been counted, with several LMG's either destroyed or captured.

The 1st Battalion advanced to the North without opposition, and consolidated their lines for the night just West of LABIT. The 3d Battalion, moving South from SIMI, occupied the area vacated by the 1st Battalion, and protected the Division's right flank.

Meanwhile the 3d Battalion, 1st Infantry launched an attack on URDANETA. At approximately 1130L, their advance was held up in the Western outskirts of the town by fires from machine guns, mortars, and tank mounted 47mm guns. Three Jap medium tanks were destroyed. The 1st Field Artillery Battalion fired a heavy concentration on the enemy positions.

Plans for the 18th called for a coordinated attack by the 1st and 2d Battalions, 20th Infantry, which got underway at 0830L. The 1st Battalion advanced to the North with only slight resistance and entered the small barrio South of CABARUAN. The 2d Battalion attacked East, their objective the high ground overlooking CABARUAN TOWN. Some 50 additional Japanese were killed, and a knee mortar and 2 LMG's destroyed. The battalion consolidated its lines for the night some 2500 yards Southeast of CABARUAN.

A captured sketch map identified the forces defending the hills as the 2d Battalion, 71st Infantry Regiment. Subsequent documents and dog tags identified the 5th, 6th and 7th Companies of this battalion, with artillery and anti tank gun attachments. A prisoner of war captured at PALAPAR stated that his unit, the above battalion, was ordered to defend to the last man.

The 1st Infantry launched a coordinated attack on URDANETA and occupied the town by 1200L. The 3d Battalion remained in URDANETA to await relief by elements of the 103d Infantry, while the 1st and 2d Battalions moved on to the vicinity of BACOG NORTE.

On 18 January the 6th Division was ordered to secure the line CUYAPO-BALUNGAO-ROSALES by 1800L, 20th January, with reconnaissance to the line GUIMBA-VICTORIA. Warning orders were issued and plans completed for the 1st Infantry to seize and secure ROSALES and BALUNGAO. The 20th Infantry was to clean up the CABARUAN HILLS by dark on 20 January, and continue the advance in its zone.

Employing artillery, cannon and 4.2 mortar fires on known enemy positions, the 20th Infantry continued its offensive on the morning of 19 January. The 2d Battalion advanced slowly to the Northeast and about midafternoon engaged an estimated 200 Japs. With the aid of arillery and mortar fire, 60 enemy were killed, 3-37mm guns were destroyed, and an ammunition dump was blown up.

The 3d Battalion attacked North to close the gap between the 1st and 2d Battalions, and advanced to within 150 yards of the 2d Battalion's right flank before drawing enemy fire. Joint action by the two battalions, supported by direct fire from two medium tanks, netted two enemy artillery pieces destroyed and several pillboxes neutralized. When positions were consolidated for the night, the 2d Battalion occupied a Northwest-Southeast line some 1500 yards West of CABARUAN TOWN. The 3d Battalion front projected some 500 yards Northeast from the 2d Battalion's right flank. (See Fig. 4.)

The 1st Battalion encountered no opposition in its sector, and at 1200 was withdrawn from the CABARUAN HILLS because of the necessity of continuing the advance toward the Corps objective (CUYAPO-BALUNGAO).

In the 1st Infantry area light opposition at VILLASIS was overcome and the 1st Battalion crossed the AGNO RIVER, employing LVT's of Company "A", 727th Amphibious Tractor Battalion. The 2d Battalion remained in VILLASIS, in Division Reserve, to mop up enemy remnants and establish road blocks on principal routes of entry into town.

7. The Critical Phase, 19-23 January:

It was determined that the remaining main Jap defensive position was centered around the U shaped ring of small hills and ridges extending 1000-1500 yards West of CABARUAN TOWN. There were at this time over 500 known Jap casualties, with results of artillery fire on remaining positions yet to be revealed.

In view of the long front to be secured South of the AGNO RIVER and the fact that only two regiments were available to the Division, it was decided to leave only the 20th Infantry less two battalions one Platoon, Company "A", 98th Chemical Battalion, and Company "C", 44th Tank Battalion attached, to continue digging out the estimated 200-300 Japs remaining in the CABARUAN HILLS. Subsequently, the 3d Battalion, 20th Infantry, was ordered to move at first light to VILLASIS, and thence to SAN MANUEL.

Late on the 19th, orders were issued directing the seizure of the line SAN LEON-BALUNGAO-CUYAPO. The 168th Field Artillery Battalion (155 Gun) and 55th Field Artillery Battalion (155 How) were to give additional support to the Division Artillery from the vicinity of URDENETA.

At 0800 on 20 January, the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, proceeded to BALUNGAO barrio and dispatched a patrol to establish an observation post on MT BALUNGAO. The 3d Battalion occupied ROSALES. (See Fig. 3.)

The 1st Battalion, 20th Infantry, moved via CARMEN to CUYAPO, with no enemy opposition. The 3d Battalion moved from the vicinity of SAN MANUEL to seize the SABIT-CABANATUAN area.

The 20th Infantry (-) resumed the attack in the CABARUAN HILLS. The battalion advanced slowly against considerable mortar and artillery fire, overran and destroyed 5 MG emplacements, and captured two additional 75mm guns. By 1800 the battalion was in position facing the last high ground between them and CABARUAN TOWN. Over 600 enemy dead had been counted, and it was believed that the enemy's organized strength was broken.

Our activity in the CABARUAN HILLS on the 21st was limited to reconnaissance, consolidation of present lines, and continued harassing of enemy positions. Additional Jap casualties reported brought the total of enemy dead to 679, with 5-75mm guns, 3-37mm guns, 8 HMG's and numerous light automatic weapons destroyed or captured. Approximately 30 evacuees from the CABARUAN area were killed on 21 January, near VILLASIS, while retreating toward the river. Such withdrawals substantiated the belief that strong organized resistance had ceased, and that perhaps the order to defend to the death was not being carried out.

Enemy positions in the CABARUANS were pounded all morning by artillery and mortar fire on the 22d, and at noon 22 A-20's bombed and strafed the areas. This strike, coming four hours later than requested, subjected our troops to a nerve racking wait. Napalm bombs were not used as requested, but the strike was excellently placed and it seemed impossible that any enemy could have lived through it.

Our troops immediately moved in behind a rolling artillery and mortar preparation, and advanced against only sporadic small arms fire until facing what was believed the chief remaining strongpoint. Here a tremendous outburst of all types of enemy fire broke loose from a hillside which had received the brunt of air and artillery concentrations. An intense fire fight developed all along the front, and further advance was impossible.

Because of this unexpected heavy resistance, the 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, in Division Reserve at VILLASIS, was attached to the 20th Infantry and moved rapidly to the CABARUAN HILLS.

As a result of the day's fighting, 1 enemy 75mm was destroyed by tank fire, 1-47mm gun was knocked out, and an additional 187 Japanese were dead. It was estimated that only 150-200 enemy remained

in the area, but it was plain that his defenses were superior to anything the Division had yet encountered on LUZON, and that his fanatic determination to fight until death had not abated.

On the 23d, the 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry moved in a counter-clockwise maneuver to the rear of the 20th Infantry elements, then East and North, skirting the enemy's positions, to establish a line some 2000 yards East of CABARUAN. During the day, Cannon Company, 20th Infantry; 1 Battery of the 1st FA Battalion; the 55th FA Battalion; and 4.2 mortars all registered on the enemy positions, preparatory to the all out attack planned for the 24th.

8. The Final Phase, 24-28 January: (See Fig. 5.)

The 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, with tank attachments, attacked at 1000, on 24 January, following a brief but heavy artillery and mortar bombardment, while the 20th Infantry elements held their position West of town.

The area fronting the two assault companies was similar to that previously encountered by the 20th Infantry. The ground was honeycombed with enemy foxholes and prepared earthworks. Dense thickets and bamboo clumps made observation of the enemy impossible, and he could fire on our troops with relative impunity. No suitable routes of approach were available for our tanks, the vegetation being so dense in places that often a soldier only a few feet away could not be seen by the tank observer. The presence of hidden enemy tank guns necessitated that tanks proceed with extreme caution.

Artillery, though devastating and excellently placed, failed to annihilate the enemy because of the ingenuity of his fortifications, with their tunneled lateral extensions.

Enemy artillery pieces were as deeply entrenched and as well hidden as the pillboxes. Typical emplacements were deep excavations in hillsides. All openings were so well camouflaged that it was very difficult to locate them even after the battle.

Against such opposition the attack advanced slowly. By dark, two strong points had been overrun, and the battalion consolidated its lines along the road running South from CABARUAN TOWN. The total number of Japs killed in the CABARUANS mounted to 819. A prisoner of war taken during the day vouched for the effectiveness of the air strike on 22 January. A member of the 5th Company of the 71st Infantry, this prisoner stated that the enemy's morale was very low and that troops were desperately short of water.

On 25 January the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, continued to secure BALUNGAO, with patrols to the East and North, and maintained contact with 25th Division elements on the Division's left flank. The 3d Battalion moved from VILLASIS to ROSALES. The 2d Battalion,

20th Infantry, was withdrawn from the CABARUAN HILLS, reverting to Division Reserve, at VILLASIS, while the remainder of the regiment secured the CUYAPO - SABIT - CABANATUAN areas.

The 2d Battalion, 1st Infantry, supported by one platoon of 4.2 mortars, hammered away at the remaining enemy resistance in the CABARUAN HILLS, and met the same bitter resistance as on the previous day. The digging out process was continued on the 26th. The battalion's assault team, using flame throwers, bazookas, white phosphorous grenades and demolitions, accounted for numerous pillboxes. Two tanks were brought forward to fire point blank on known enemy installations. At 1440I the 1st Battalion, 1st Infantry, was ordered to join the 2d Battalion in a final attack on the next day. During the afternoon the Commanding Officer, 1st Infantry, established his command post in this area, and by dark the 1st Battalion had closed into an assembly area South of CABARUAN TOWN.

The main effort on the 27th was made by the 1st Battalion, attacking Northeast, while the 2d Battalion held their position on the Northern flank of the horseshoe ridge. Company "A" bore the brunt of the fighting, reinforced by the 1st Battalion assault team and a MG platoon from Company "D". When at 1800I all companies were ordered to consolidate their present lines and prepare for a mop up next morning, the entire North and East portions of the horseshoe ridge were in our hands. Numberous pillboxes had been neutralized by both infantry and tank action, and one enemy light tank was destroyed. (See Fig. 5.)

Field Order 7, I Corps, was received on 27 January, ordering that the Division advance in its zone, secure the line LICAB - TALAVERA - MUNOZ and push aggressive reconnaissance to the line ZARAGOZA - CABANATUAN - BONGABON - SAN JOSE.

On the 28th, final mopping up was accomplished in the CABARUAN HILLS. Invaluable assistance was rendered by a prisoner captured during the night 27-28 January, who donned an American uniform and led our troops to the remaining positions. By 1600I all opposition in the CABARUAN HILLS was reported destroyed, with an additional 175 Japs killed on the 28th. Our forces then withdrew, moving South of the AGNO RIVER, leaving one company reinforced by guerrillas to search the hill area for any possible remaining stragglers.

9. Summary, Battle of the CABARUAN HILLS:

Company "C", 1st Infantry, scouring the hills on 29 January, found only a blackened, denuded stretch of shell torn earth, covered with Japanese bodies and equipment, and encountered no living remnants of the strong Jap force which had defended so desperately. Additional enemy dead counted placed the total Japanese casualties

in the CABARUAN HILLS at 1432 KIA and 7 POW. Of this figure, the 20th Infantry was credited with 919, while the 1st Infantry units accounted for 513.

The final figure on equipment captured or destroyed included:

14 - Knee mortars	7 - 75mm Guns
20 - LMG's	1 - Tankette
13 - HMG's	1 - Medium tank
3 - 37mm Guns	1 - Scout car
2 - 20mm Guns	5 - Trucks

The defending force was identified as the 2d Battalion, 71st Infantry Regiment, reinforced with a Regimental Gun Company, a Regimental Reconnaissance Detachment, a battery of artillery, and a Signal Detachment.

Our own casualties were as follows:

	KIA	WIA	IIA	DOW
20th Infantry	42	93	12	3
1st Infantry	32	79	2	4
Attached and Supporting Units	0	10	2	0
Total	74	182	16	7

Several valuable lessons were learned as a result of this fight. It was well demonstrated that no large scale attack should be initiated without adequate preliminary reconnaissance to fix the enemy's positions and determine his strength. The need for aggressive patrolling by day and by night, employing observation posts and listening posts at strategic points, cannot be overemphasized. Several battalion attacks were made without sufficient time for thorough reconnaissance, with the result that routes of advance were hastily selected and confusion resulted in attempts to fix boundaries and maintain direction and contact.

This operation showed how essential it is to close with the enemy immediately following an artillery and mortar preparation. Even a few minutes' delay often gives the enemy time to recover from his dazed condition and prepare a warm reception for the advancing troops.

The following procedure worked successfully in one battalion. An 81mm mortar observer was assigned to each assaulting rifle company. The 81mm mortar platoon leader remained at the battalion OP. The mortars were massed in a draw near the battalion OP, or CP, depending upon the situation. Initial communication was through SCR-536 radio.

The company commander could get mortar concentration anywhere in his sector with a minimum of delay.

The specially trained assault teams proved their worth. One team, using flame throwers, bazookas, white phosphorous grenades, and demolitions, accounted for over 20 dug-in positions in one day, killing 70 Japs.

Air strikes must be delivered on time. A strike requested for 0800 which is not made until 1200 loses much of its value, since the maximum use of daylight hours in which to exploit any effect of the air attack cannot be achieved. The effect of such delay on troops who are waiting to attack is obvious.

The operation illustrates the futility of attempting to shoot the Jap out of such a position. He can be worn down by artillery and mortar fire, but if he elects to remain and fight to the last man as he did in the CABARUAN HILLS, he can prolong the fight indefinitely. The only sure way of ending his resistance and bringing the operation to a close is for the infantryman to move in on his positions and dig him out of them by hand.

Chapter III

THE 63D INFANTRY OPERATIONS WITH THE 43D DIVISION

1. Preliminary: (See Fig 6)

The 43d Division landed on S-Day at H-Hour and established a beach head in the SAN FABIAN - MABILAO area. Beginning at H/30, enemy mortar fire fell on the landing beaches, disrupting unloading activities. This mortar fire, originating from the high ground to t northeast of MABILAO, continued throughout S/1 and S/2, and efforts of the 43d Division elements to advance to the north and northeast met stubborn resistance from both mortar and artillery fires. Therefore, the Commanding General, I Corps, directed that the Corps Reserve (63d Infantry reinforced with 53d Field Artillery Battalion; Company "C", 6th Engineer Battalion; Company "C", 6th Medical Battalion) land on White Beach on S/1 and assemble in the SAN FABIAN area for employment on the Corps left flank. After reorganizing at SAN FABIAN, this force continued on to the town of ANGIO and took up defensive positions while awaiting further orders. On S/3, 12 January, this force (less 3d Battalion, 63d Infantry, and 53d Field Artillery Battalion) was attached to the 43d Division, and was directed to move to the town of ALACAN. The regiment was given a sector consisting generally of a North-South corridor between HILLS 420 and 665, and extending north on an approximately 2000 yard front to the DAMORTIS - ROSARIO Road. An attack to the North to seize the ROSARIO - DAMORTIS in the sector was ordered for the 13th of January.

2. Estimate of the Situation, 13 January:

Elements of the Japanese 58th IMB, with an estimated strength of 5000 were known to be occupying defensive positions on the hill area South of the DAMORTIS - ROSARIO Road, with an estimated 2000 of this number defending ROSARIO. The main defensive position was believed to be along the high North-South ridge line West of the APANGAT RIVER, extending from HILL 665 north to CATAGUINTINGAN, while the ridge line 1000 yards inland and paralleling the coast was lightly held. The 105mm artillery supporting the 58th IMB was known to be in positions North of the DAMORTIS - ROSARIO Road. Heavy coastal guns had been located 600 yards East of RABON, 1200 yards West of CATAGUINTINGAN, and Northeast of DAMORTIS. Battalion and regimental guns could be expected in organized defenses throughout the area. The enemy was expected to put up a stubborn defense, making full use of artillery and mortars in the area South of the DAMORTIS - ROSARIO Road. When forced to withdraw, he would probably occupy well prepared positions North of the road, from AMLANG to ROSARIO and along the BAGUIO Road Northeast of CAMP ONE. Any counterattack would probably be organized North of ROSARIO

and hit our lines from the East. The terrain in this area was decidedly advantageous to the defending forces. Observation could be had of all our movements, and the enemy could employ continuous artillery fires on our troops and supply roads. Steep hills and wooded draws provided excellent positions for enemy guns and troops. Each hill and draw had to be thoroughly searched, not overlooking a single cave or entrenchment. This was to become a tedious and costly process, as the enemy was deeply entrenched and prepared to contest every foot of our advance.

3. The Attack on the DAMORTIS - ROSARIO Road:

On 13 January the 63d Infantry (-) completed plans for the attack to the North, up what was soon to be called "Purple Heart Valley" At 0800 next morning the 2d Battalion pushed off and advanced some 3500 yards, to seize HILL 363, their initial objective, drawing fire only from scattered enemy positions. The 1st Battalion (less Company "A" remaining in Regimental Reserve at ALACAN) followed at a distance of 1000 yards. During the night a hostile force of estimated platoon strength, reinforced by mortars and machine guns, attacked the 2d Battalion position from the Northeast. This was repulsed with heavy losses to the enemy.

Next morning the 2d Battalion continued its push Northward and gained some 1500 yards despite heavy artillery concentrations which destroyed their lines of communication and necessitated a halt for reorganization. The 1st Battalion (-) continued to bring up the rear, combing bypassed draws and ravines.

On the 16th, the 1st Battalion passed through the 2d Battalion lines to continue the drive to the North, with their objective HILL 280, approximately 2000 yards East-Northeast of RABON. An estimated company of Japs, reinforced by mortars and automatic weapons, resisted the advance. Company "A" moved by motor up the coast highway to RABON, then proceeded East astride the unimproved road to effect a juncture with the balance of the battalion on the objective hill. The battalion progressed slowly, suffering heavy casualties from mortars, artillery and automatic weapons fires, but succeeded in reaching HILL 280 and joined Company "A" in consolidating positions thereon. During the night both the 1st and 2d Battalions drew heavy mortar fire. The Regimental CP was shelled by artillery and harrassed by infiltrating enemy.

On the 17th, the 63d Infantry (-) passed to operational control of the 158th RCT, and continued their attack to the North. The 1st Battalion advanced to the Northeast, against light resistance initially, but later met heavy fires from machine guns emplaced in deep ravines. The 2d Battalion, following to the right rear, advanced through machine gun and mortar fire to come up on the right flank of the 1st Battalion. Both Battalions consolidated positions on HILL 240 and 260, some 1200 yards short of the DAMORTIS - ROSARIO Road.

Operations on 18-20 January saw the accomplishment of the Regiment's mission. The 2d Battalion renewed its attack to the North and advanced to the hill mass on their East front, where they were held up temporarily by heavy mortar fire. Continuing the attack on the morning of the 20th, the 2d Battalion fought its way through stiff opposition to seize the high ground 800 yards West of CATAGUINTINGAN and extablish positions commanding the DAMORTIS - ROSARIO Road. Direct fire from 37mm AT guns was employed for the first time to destroy enemy fortifications. The Anti-Tank Company manhandled their guns to commanding ground and fired point blank at enemy pillboxes.

The 1st Battalion attacked to the Northeast initially, then swung its effort to the Northwest to fill in the gap between the 2d Battalion and the 158th RCT and seize positions just Southeast of AMLANG, controlling the DAMORTIS - ROSARIO Road.

At 202300I the Regiment (less 1st Battalion, remaining with the 158th RCT for an attack to the East on the hill mass North of CATAGUINTINGAN) reverted to I Corps control, for employment in the ESPERANZA - AGAT area, and assembled near BINDAY.

In the 5 day push to seize their initial objective the regiment had fought through 7000 yards of bitterly contested terrain. While our own artillery and mortars were directed at enemy guns, in most cases it was necessary to bring direct fire on the enemy, using SPM's and anti-tank guns, as well as direct assault with bazookas, rifle grenades and hand grenades. Company "C", 6th Engineer (C) Bn experienced great difficulty in building and maintaining supply road to support this operation.

4. A New Mission is Undertaken:

On 21 January the Regiment less two battalions displaced to BUSH RIDGE, just South of HILL 665, and were joined on the 22d by the 1st Battalion, returning to Regimental control. On 22-23 January the Regiment made preparations for attacks to the Northeast, in the ESPERANZA - AGAT area. The 3d Battalion, which up until this time had been committed only to patrol activity, reverted to control of the 43d Division, for commitment in the 169th Infantry sector. Plans for the 24th called for the 63d Infantry (-), reinforced by 53d FA Battalion Co "C", 6th Engineer Battalion, Co "C", 6th Medical Battalion, 1 platoon of Company "D", 98th Chemical Battalion and 1 platoon of 235th Cavalry, to attack Northeast and seize the high ground East of Highway 3.

The G-2 estimate at this time reported an approximate strength of 11000 Japs occupying the high ground North of the DAMORTIS - CAMP ONE Road. Enemy Infantry were known to have been constructing positions for at least 5 months, with tunnels and caves used to the maximum as concealment and cover for troops and artillery. These forces were

believed to be supported by at least 60 artillery pieces, as large as 155mm, but predominantly 75mm.

5. The Period 24-31 January: (See Fig.6)

The 63d Infantry (-) launched its attack to the Northeast on 25 January from a forward assembly area on the wooded ridge South of HILL 665, moving with the 2d Battalion on the left and the 1st Battalion to the right rear. Little opposition was encountered until the intermediate objective, the high ground West of ESPERANZA, was reached. Here strong resistance was met from Japs well dug-in on the hill mass fronting the 1st Battalion. The 1st Battalion suffered heavy casualties from mortar and sniper fire. Next morning the intermediate objective was secured and both battalions reorganized for further attacks.

On 26 - 27 January, 1st Battalion elements continuing their attacks to the Northeast, crossed the BUED RIVER under heavy artillery and mortar fire to seize positions on the high ground North of AGAT, on the Southern extremity of the Regimental objective. The 2d Battalion, leaving Company "F" to secure the high ground West of ESPERANZA, moved East to join the 1st Battalion. The 3d Battalion, who had pushed up from the South to seize CAURINGAN on 24-25 January, reverted to Regimental control on the 26th, and from positions 2500 yards East of CAURINGAN, launched a night attack to the Northwest to join the 1st and 2d Battalion Company "L" mopped up in AGAT, then advanced Northeast up the CAURINGAN RIVER to rejoin the Battalion. On the night of 26-27 January enemy artillery inflicted heavy casualties on the 3d Battalion, and the 1st Battalion suffered considerable losses. Evacuation became an acute problem because of Jap infiltrations and the long distance from Battalion aid stations to the truckhead. During the period the Regiment killed 103 Japs, destroyed 1 - 90mm mortar, 2 - 75mm guns and 2 - 47mm guns.

The 1st Battalion, resuming the attack Northward on the 27th, progressed slowly against exceedingly difficult terrain and stiff opposition to secure positions on the hill 1500 yards North of AGAT. A night attack failed because of rain and poor visibility, coupled with the fact that jungle-like terrain had to be traversed. The 2d Battalion took up positions just North of AGAT and launched an attack to the Northeast, on the right flank of the 1st Battalion. Company "I" made contact with the 2d Battalion at this point and the 3d Battalion advanced North to join the other two Battalions and take up positions on the South flank of the Regimental objective. The 3d Battalion again received heavy artillery shelling throughout the night, which inflicted a number of casualties.

In attacks on the 28th, the hill mass East of Highway 3 was secured after stiff fighting, and strong positions were established thereon. The 3d Battalion drove through strong enemy resistance on the CAURINGAN RIVER to effect their juncture with the 2d Battalion. During the night Company "L" repulsed an organized counter attack. In the

final assault on the objective on the 28th a 90mm mortar, 3 knee mortars 3 MG's, and 2 - 75mm guns were knocked out.

The 1st Battalion, having secured their portion of the final objective, withdrew to the vicinity of PALDIT, in Corps Reserve, and Company "B" moved to ANGIO to furnish security for I Corps Headquarters. The Anti-Tank Company (less one platoon protecting the regimental supply line in the vicinity of ESPERANZA), moved to the SAN FABIAN area to furnish security for Base "M". On 30-31 January, the 1st Battalion (less "B" Company) outposted the road from POZORRUBIO to SANTA MARIA SUR, while the 2d and 3d Battalions were relieved by the 172d Infantry and assembled in the vicinity of DILAN to make preparations to return to 6th Division control.

6. Summary:

During their 22 days under 43d Division control the 63d Infantry (reinforced) had attacked aggressively and accomplished two difficult missions, greatly contributing to the successes of the 43d Division. Our casualties, numbering some 103 KIA and 486 wounded, against the enemy's 971 KIA and 4 PW's, were not excessive considering the nature of the opposition and the formidable terrain overrun. No complete picture of enemy material destroyed was obtained, but, by actual count, equipment destroyed included the following:

15 - 75mm guns
1 - radio
8 - knee mortars
2 - 47mm guns
10 - machine gun nests
2 - 90mm mortars

Company "C", 6th Engineers constructed and maintained all supply roads, keeping them up to the front lines at all times until the Regiment reached the AGAT area. Here use of Filipino laborers was resorted to in extending the supply line Northeast to the hills. These carrying parties also assisted the litter bearers from Company "C", 6th Medical Battalion, and did an excellent job in the evacuation of wounded in the above area.

7. Summary of Lessons Learned:

Troops experienced in jungle combat must quickly overcome jungle-acquired habits, or suffer unnecessary losses in comparatively open, mobile warfare. Troops must learn to disperse properly both in the attack and in the defense; to cover and conceal their positions and movements; and to use to the maximum all supporting weapons. To minimize casualties from enemy artillery and mortar fire, they must learn not to bunch, to dig in properly, to avoid exposure to enemy observation, and to avoid likely concentration areas.

Night attacks and advances under cover of darkness can be successfully made against the Jap. To insure a reasonable chance of succeeding, a night attack should have a limited and clearly definite objective, and should be made over fairly open terrain and under good weather conditions.

Our rate of advance depended largely on our ability to supply the troops. To develop supply routes in support of the attack, combat Engineers are essential. The bull-dozer operator is as indispensible as the rifleman.

Filipino carrying parties with about one soldier to every 10-15 civilians, were the only solution to some supply and evacuation problems over difficult terrain.

Portable Surgical Hospitals should be established as far forward as possible. This will save the lives of seriously wounded men who need immediate surgical attention and cannot survive a long trip to the rear.

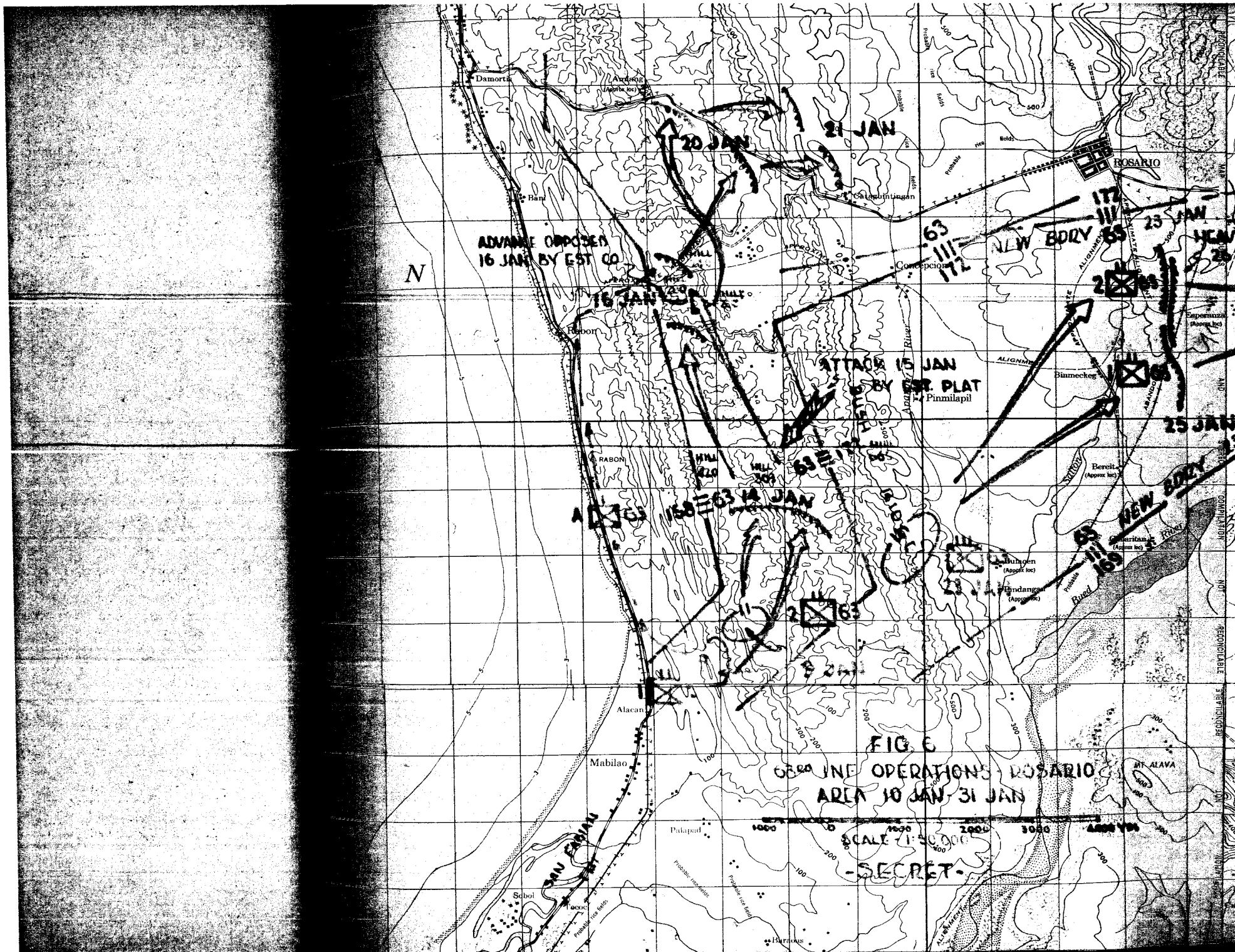

FIG. 6
68th INF OPERATIONS ROSARIO
AREA 10 JAN - 31 JAN