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War diary of 5307th Composite  
unit (Prov)

WAR DIARY OF 5307th COMPOSITE UNIT (PROVISIONAL)  
Beginning 15 January 1944

By Captain John M. Jones, *INF*

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WHAT HAS GONE BEFORE: January 15, 1944

**Origins**

At the Quebec Conference in the late summer of 1943 Admiral Mountbatten and Major General Orde C. Wingate recommended to <sup>Sen</sup> George C. Marshall that an American unit be trained to operate with his forces behind Japanese lines in the spring of 1944 in the Burma offensive. General Marshall gave the plan his approval and the wheels started turning to select the personnel for this more or less experimental American unit. As time was short and the necessity for selecting the most experienced jungle-trained personnel was recognized, a Presidential call for volunteers was sent to General MacArthur's Headquarters in the Southwest Pacific and to the South Pacific Headquarters where most of our experienced jungle troops were located. The call also went to the Jungle Training Centers in Panama and Trinidad and to the Infantry School where jungle tactics are a part of the curriculum.

Practically no information on the projected operation was given the volunteers. The simple statement, "The President of the United States has called for volunteers from experienced jungle troops for a dangerous and hazardous operation - somewhere," brought men from practically every regiment that had seen action in the Southwest Pacific. Volunteers poured in from the 11th and 33rd Infantry Regiments in Panama and Trinidad while a careful screening of higher ranking officers with jungle training at the Infantry School resulted in the selection of Lieutenant Colonel Charles N. Hunter, West Point 1929, for a key position in the organization. Colonel Hunter in turn helped select four more officers from the instructors at the Infantry School for other key positions.

About the middle of September the troops from the American Theater rushed by plane and train to the San Francisco Port of Embarkation sailed on the S.S. Lurline.

When Master Sergeant Doyer found this volunteer outfit moving through the Port of Embarkation at which he was stationed, he recognized many an old comrade of former days. He was 46 years old, a veteran of the Canadian Black Watch Highlanders who distinguished themselves in the last war, and was itching to leave his desk for the field again. He called on Colonel Charles N. Hunter and presented his story. Colonel Hunter tried to persuade him to stay on his job at the San Francisco Port of Embarkation but Sergeant Doyer, bearded hero of the last war, wanted a crack at the Japs in this war and finally he persuaded Colonel Hunter to let him

accompany this volunteer outfit. From the start Sergeant Doyer became one of the most valuable men in the outfit - a tough old army Sergeant, he soon became Colonel Hunter's Sergeant Major on the voyage over and did not relinquish the post from that day on.

The S.S. Larline docked in Australia and picked up the battle-trained volunteers from the Southwest Pacific, then sailed again to land in October at Bombay, India where they were met by Colonel Francis G. Brink and Major Hancock, U.S. Army. Colonel Brink had been designated as officer in charge of organization and training of the unit upon recommendation of the War Department.

Trains rushed the unit to Deolali for a temporary stay and two weeks later the unit was moved by train to Deogarh, a tiny Indian village in the State of Gwalior in Central India.

#### TRAINING

As the first Battalion Commander stepped off the train at Jahklann, the rail head for Deogarh, Colonel Brink met him and handed him a typewritten sheet of paper which turned out to be a problem to be worked out by that Battalion en-route to their camp at Deogarh. Speed, realism and efficiency characterized the training program from the start. Colonel Brink, one of the foremost authorities in the U.S. Army on jungle training and tactics for fighting the Japanese, believed in giving junior commanders every opportunity for individual work. A ten week training program had been prepared in anticipation. He assigned the training objectives for a week or possibly two weeks at a time, then the methods and actual plans and training became the responsibility of the Battalion Commander. An officers' meeting was held each night which included a critique of training during the day, a discussion of problems and solutions and ended with a short orientation by Colonel Brink on the general training objectives and his plan for accomplishing them. This organization used very little paper work - practically all business was transacted by field telephone or in person. The camp was of temporary construction - not a building in the entire camp. The Betwa River runs about a quarter of mile from the camp and proved to be a source of recreation, water supply, a training area for river crossing problems and an excellent place in which to train pack animals to swim. The climate was excellent during the short period the 5367th was at Deogarh, however, the extreme changes in temperature between midday and midnight caused some discomfort and a hurry call for more blankets. Main disadvantage in training

area was that it bore no resemblance to country in which the force was to operate.

The training program was by battalions on a weekly basis covering a six-week cycle beginning on the 28th of November. Due to the two week manoeuvre with General Wingate's Special Forces starting the 10th of November, the training program was scheduled to close about the 15th of January 1944. Particular attention was given to individual, squad and platoon tactics to include movement by night by celestial navigation. All officers were required to learn cipher and radio operating procedure and double transposition. The objective was to perfect sound tactics first, then unusual variations, could be developed. Critiques were held on completion of each exercise. During the brief training period the technical training of Pioneer and Demolition platoons, Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoons, Heavy Weapons platoon and communication personnel was emphasized. The basic tactics of the column with air-ground exercises were practiced. The training program roughly followed the following schedule:

The 3rd Battalion covers the training by weeks in order 1st, 2nd, 3rd, 4th, 5th, 6th.

The 1st Battalion trains by weeks in the order 3rd, 4th, 1st, 2nd, 5th, 6th weeks.

The 2nd Battalion trains by weeks in the order 5th, 6th, 3rd, 4th, 1st, 2nd Weeks.

#### FIRST WEEK

<u>Days</u>	<u>Notes</u>
<b>1st Day</b> Clean equipment, G-2 talks, Officer orientation, Church Services.	G-2 talks by officers with combat experience. Outline of week's training.
<b>2nd and 3rd Day</b> Combat Team 1. Individual combat firing, targeting of weapons, AT grenade firing, rocket launcher firing. Construction of booby traps. IAR platoons, P&D platoons and communication personnel practice their specialties. Swimming	<u>In combat firing realism will be stressed at all times.</u> Firing at indistinct and area targets will be included.
<b>Combat Team 2.</b> Marches to selected area - dispersals - bivouacs overnight by dispersal groups. Rendezvous next day and return to camp. Swimming	During this exercise non-lethal booby traps will be constructed. Trail covering and ambushes will be practiced.
<b>4th and 5th Day</b> Combat Teams reverse procedure of 2nd and 3rd days.	

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4

FIRST WEEK (CONT'D)

Date	Notes
<p><b>6th Day</b> Operation of small patrols. Observation methods, stalking, Swimming.</p>	<p>This exercise will be a Combat Team Versus Combat Team affair. A good test of squad and platoon leaders.</p>
<p><b>7th Day</b> Organization of a defensive position by one Combat Team to be attacked by the other. Continues as a pursuit by one Combat Team and delaying action by the other. Swimming.</p>	<p>Particular attention to squad and platoon tactics in defense and attack.</p>
<b>SECOND WEEK</b>	
<p><b>1st Day</b> Clean equipment, G-2 talks for officers. Orientation. Church Services.</p>	<p>G-2 talks to be on probable operational areas. Orientation will consist of critique of pre- vious week's training and con- ference in preparation of current week's training.</p>
<p><b>2nd and 3rd Days</b> Combat Team 1. Combat workmanship for all elements except RD platoons and Com Personnel. RD platoon practice demolition, flame-throwing technique, and river crossing. Com Personnel work in Bn. C.P.K. Swimming</p> <p>Combat Team 2. Preparation of ambushes, stalking for all except I&amp;S, RD, and Hqs platoons and Com Personnel. RD platoon work with Combat Team 1 RD Platoon. Hqs &amp; Hqs platoon with Com Personnel in Bn. C.P.K. Swimming</p>	<p>Individual and squad combat firing for all individual weapons includ- ing sniper practice. Crew, Section, Platoon combat firing for crew weapons.</p>
<p><b>4th and 5th Days</b> Combat Team 1. Continue combat firing. Combat Team 2. Combat firing as outlined for Combat Team 1 on two preceding days. The RD platoon can be used to prepare position for Combat Team 1 exercise.</p>	<p>Combat Team 1. Combat firing will be by platoon and with crew weapons in combined sq. and mortar fire. This will be followed by the Combat Team in attack on dummy positions using supporting fires.</p>
<p><b>6th and 7th Day</b> Combat Team 1. Training as outlined for Combat Team 2 for the 2nd and 3rd days of this week. Combat Team 2. Combat firing as outlined for Combat Team 2 on the 4th and 5th days of this week.</p>	

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THIRD WEEK

DATE	Notes
1st Day Same general plan as preceding Sunday.	
2nd Day River Crossing	Medics only to include approach to and departure from river. If time is short Bn. may recross by ford
3rd Day River Crossing	Bn. cross in two columns (one Combat Team per column). Each Combat Team march to and establish bivouac position independently of the other.
4th Day Combat Team 1 attacks the bivouac of Combat Team 2.	This attack to be without ammunition. While this is going on, bivouac of Combat team 1 is prepared for following day.
5th Day The Bn. attacks the bivouac of Combat Team 1.	Attack on unoccupied position (dummy installations) of Combat Team 1 using ball ammunition. (Purpose to show accuracy and effect of fire)
6th Day Bn. recrosses the river.	
7th Day Reserved for training in subjects where further training is indicated.	Battalion Commanders' decision.

FOURTH WEEK

1st Day Usual Sunday schedule	
2nd Day Tactics and technique of land mines, incendiary grenades, and demolition. G.P.X. for communication personnel.	Basic instruction of all Bn. personnel by P&I platoons.
3rd - 5th Days (cont.) Bn. field exercise. Air dropping exercises. Destruction of railroad bridge. Night march.	Combat Teams march separately, first Combat Team moving from camp about two hours ahead of other. Second Combat Team overtakes and attacks first Combat Team while on midway halt. Each Combat Team breaks off engagement and disperses. Fourth day. Bn. is supplied by actual or simulated air-drop with rations and caches on railroad bridge between Bina Jn and Mangoli. Fifth day. Destruction of railroad bridge (simulated)

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FOURTH WEEK (CONT'D)

Days	Notes
	and withdrawal up west side of Delta R. Continue withdrawal that night. Sixth day. Complete march and return to camp.
7th Day Christmas Holiday	For "A" and "B" Bns. this day will be used to make up training missed on Christmas Day of schedule.
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1st Day Usual Sunday Schedule	Notes
2nd Day Platoon ambushes. Coon Personnel train separately. Swimming.	Tactics and technique of ambushes to include selection of ambush sites, location of troops marking ambush and simulated attacks from ambush.
2nd Night and 3rd Night (3rd and 4th days rest) Night problems communications and IED platoons work separately.	Problems to train squad and platoon leaders to move by night (navigation) and control their units.
5th Day Stalking practice. Swimming	Trailing and trail concealment. Interception - Control of small units by radio from central CP.
6th Day Continue work of preceding day.	
7th Day Open to Battalion Commander for training in which troops appear to be deficient.	
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1st Day Usual Sunday Schedule	
2nd Day Combat Team marches under Bn. control on an enemy airfield.	Combat Team leaves camp separately. Bn. starts concentration on enemy airfield and reconnoiters it.
3rd Day Bn. attacks and seizes enemy airfield.	Coordination of columns - the attack - Organization of defenses. Remaining overnight.

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-7-  
SIXTH WEEK (CONT'D)

Days	Notes
4th Day Return to camp. Swimming.	A good time to practice evacuation of wounded and on the return cross country of small units.
4th and 5th Nights (5th and 6th Days rest) Night problems.	Combat team versus Combat Team exercises. Practice night meeting engagements with night dispersal followed by daylight rendezvous. Troops out of camp area 4th night, 5th day, and night.
7th Day Simulated attack on a village by Bn.	Got permission to use an actual village or else have a dummy village built.

5. Training of Rear Base Echelon will be the subject of the separate memorandum published later.

6. SCHOOLS:

The following schools will be held.

- a. Officer's special training conducted by Headquarters Special Force. (British)
- b. Selection communication personnel to Headquarters Special Force to learn British Communication Procedure.
- c. Battalion schools for Communication and Acquisition Personnel.

From the beginning of the training period the units were encouraged to get in as much range and contest firing practice as they could possibly work in to their training. This opportunity was seized by the battalions and consequently the marksmanship in the unit improved greatly. General Merrill got hold of some clay pigeons and during the first two weeks of January, the men practiced snip shooting at these, on the ground, in the forks of trees and everywhere they could place them. It was quite a sight to see a troop-gunner set up about ten clay pigeons along a trail and then walk down it firing a burst of two or three shots at each target.

During the last two weeks of November the Third Battalion, principally made up of volunteers from the Southwest Pacific was given a blanket malaria cure. They were relieved of all duty and were placed under medical supervision for a course of treatment designed to curb any latent malaria.

As all of the volunteers had had jungle experience, the training program consisted mainly of practical field problems in which one unit worked against

another unit. Hard tactical marches with full field packs - moving overland by compass, night problems, ambushes, and small attack problems on enemy pill boxes and fortified positions characterized the training programs.

About the middle of December, a ten day maneuver was held with units of General Wingate's Forces. The Wingate Forces were to attack and infiltrate into the area occupied by the U.S. forces in an attempt to capture an airstrip. The maneuver was stopped when the units came in contact before reaching the field when it appeared that physical conflict might determine the side which won the maneuver. Air-dropped supplies, ambushes, glider-borne troops and glider picked up troops were a feature of the maneuvers.

Special attention during the training period was given to the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoons. These platoons were made up of the toughest physical specimens in the entire unit. The men were carefully selected and this tended to make the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoons the fastest hardest marchers, the best shots and, in most cases, the most aggressive fighters.

An I&R platoon is made up of one officer, a First Lieutenant, and fifty enlisted men. It has two animals, one for transport of radio equipment and one to be used for mounted reconnaissance or for a mounted messenger. The platoon is broken into a headquarters consisting of eight men - one platoon sergeant, four radio operators, one Nisei Japanese interpreter and two mule skinnners; three sections consisting of fourteen men each commanded by a sergeant. No machine guns or mortars are carried though some of the I&R personnel think it would be a good idea to have the sixty millimeter mortar and a load of ammunition on a third animal.

These men are taught what every combat infantryman is taught and in addition they get special problems in scouting and patrolling or "snooping" as they call it. They also must know their map reading and as much as possible about how to find and quickly evaluate intelligence information.

The I&R platoon has three SCR three hundred radios for communication within the platoon and one SCR two hundred and eighty four radio for communication between the platoon and Battalion Headquarters.

The I&R platoon is the eyes and ears of a combat unit in the jungle. They precede the unit, feeling out the enemy, selecting the best trails, picking

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-2-

diverse areas, air drop field, and they usually make the first contact with the enemy. They usually fight the enemy when operating on reconnaissance only long enough to feel him out, spot his automatic weapons and try to figure his strength, then they gradually break contact leaving one or two men to keep an eye on the enemy position. They precede the unit from one to fifteen miles and knowing that they are liable to contact the enemy at any time they move swiftly but with an alertness that enables them to react to every sound. Once a water buffalo nearby moved, breaking a dry bamboo pole which popped like a gun--the lead scout of an IAI platoon quickly worked his way towards the sound, saw what had caused the noise and silently signaled the platoon to move on. The moment a shot is fired and the enemy is contacted, the tension breaks and the men operate like clockwork fixing the enemy position and feeling him out. The fact that practically no casualties were inflicted on our IAI platoons by rifle fire indicates that the training period which these men went through has produced startling results.

Admiral Lord Louis Mountbatten, Supreme Allied Commander in Southeast Asia visited the 5307th in early January. He drove his own jeep on an inspection tour with General Merrill and was much impressed with the accuracy of mortar fire, the bazooka, and the rifle grenades which were demonstrated for him. He made several informal talks to the men and officers as he drove through the training area and was well received by both officers and men of the 5307th.

Up until early January 1944 the 5307th had been associated with SEAC's Special Forces for training and supply. General Wingate, the Commanding Officer of Special Forces, had visited the unit in person several times and had had his representatives with the unit from its arrival in India. Early in January it was decided between Admiral Mountbatten and General Stilwell that the 5307th Provisional Unit would come directly under General Stilwell and no longer be connected with General Wingate's Special Forces. The first move General Stilwell made was to give the unit its combat Commander and prepare to move it to Northern Burma to operate in conjunction with his American-trained Chinese in the coming offensive to open the Lode Road to China. Brigadier General Frank D. Merrill formerly Stilwell's G-3 was selected for this important assignment. Not just any general could lead this jungle-wise tough bunch of volunteers, but General

Merrill filled the bill and was enthusiastically received as their leader by both men and officers.

Thirty nine year old General Merrill rose through the ranks from private to win an appointment to West Point from which he graduated in 1929. An engineer with a love for horses, his intense interest in military affairs from the start marked him as a man to watch. Serving in Cavalry regiments in the U.S.A. he was sent to Japan as a language student in the middle 30's. There he learned the language and also the nature of the people he was later to fight. He cultivated the army class and spent such time in the field with the Japanese Army on maneuvers.

On December 7, 1941, he was on an airplane flying from the Philippines to Rangoon. He remained in Burma and helped General Stilwell in his fight there, later accompanying him on his famous retreat. Merely two years ago General Frank Merrill was a Major. His rapid rise is indicative of the magnificent job of organization he has done in the China-Burma-India Theater as General Stilwell's G-3 and strong right arm. So the 5307th got a commander that knew the Japs and the country in which he was destined to operate, perhaps better than any other officer in the United States Army. A few days after General Merrill was selected as Commanding Officer of the 5307th he made a quick inspection of the unit and reported to General Stilwell that he was satisfied with their training and that he would be ready to move by train to Assam starting on the 22nd of January 1944. When he made that report few men believed he could move by that date for most of the animals had not yet arrived and one beastload was reported sunk. Three hundred horses were found to replace the animals lost, teams were scraped together somehow and by working day and night the obstacles were overcome, and on the 22nd of January the first troop train pulled out for Assam exactly on schedule.

#### SUPPLY

Long before General Merrill knew he would command the 5307th he was called upon to select a supply officer of the highest caliber for this unit. He selected Major Edward T. Hancock, who had risen through the ranks, to hold a key position in the G-4 organization of General Stilwell's headquarters.

Major Hancock planned and built the camp at Deoguri, set the troops at Bombay, arranged for their transport to Deoguri and their supply while in training there. Then he organized one of the smoothest functioning supply organizations imaginable. Practically none of his personnel had had any prior experience in supply - much less the supply of an outfit to be supplied entirely by air drop while they were in the field.

Parachute packers were trained, men were trained to throw or kick the loaded crates from the transports without damaging the transport or killing themselves, men were taught how to pack every conceivable type of load that the unit in the field could possibly ask for and most important of all the men were imbued with the spirit of not letting these men down in the field by failing to supply the least little thing they asked for.

Close coordination was worked out with the Second Troop Carrier Squadron at Dinjan which was to drop the supplies. Warehouses, parachute drying and packing sheds, a communication system and in fact anything that dealt with supply was centralized at the air base near Dinjan from which the 5307th was to be supplied during their operations in Burma.

By the middle of February everything was ready at the air base to supply the unit by air drop and on February 22, the first tactical air drop to the 5307th was made at Hingyen. The supply set-up worked like this:

At the supply base records were kept of the strength of each unit and a prearranged ammunition set up made it possible to call for ammunition drops simply by requesting a "unit of fire" or a half unit of fire for the First Battalion. The supply base kept an accurate situation map and records showing exactly what ammunition and rations each battalion had on hand so that they could predict when and approximately where each supply drop would be made. In the field the battalion supply officers sent a daily request for supplies to the Regimental supply officer. He consolidated these and then he and Colonel Hunter went over the lists marking off any items deemed unnecessary and notifying the units concerned of the items struck off. Twenty four hours if possible before an air drop was desired the drop field would be selected, usually from a study of aerial photographs or from reports by Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoons or guides who were familiar with the country, then a radio message would be sent to air base simply requesting two days "E" ration and one days "C" ration and one unit

of fire for the Regiment plus the supplies previously requested by radio, or a hundred variations of the same message to meet the individual situation. When this message reaches the air base some two hours later the information is plotted on schedules and maps and Captain Lowell, the air liaison officer of the Second Troop Carrier Squadron, is informed so that he can schedule the planes.

Captain Robert O. Gardiner, the air supply officer, gets a copy of the order. His men draw the rations, ammunition and supplies from the warehouses scattered around his packing shed (rations and ammunition are kept ready for immediate drop at all times) and pack the loads and attach the parachutes which they keep ready. Each plane load runs about seven thousand pounds. The next step is to place the packed chute on the platform so that a truck can pick up one plane load complete. About two hours before take-off time, Captain Gardiner's loaded trucks drive up on the airfield and each truck backs up to the large doors on the C-47 assigned to carry that particular load. The truck is emptied and the plane loaded under the supervision of the Marauder who is in charge of "kicking" the loads out.

He arranges the loads as he thinks best and carefully checks the load, the destination and the time his load is to be dropped. The planes take off so that only about three to five planes are over the drop field at one time. On the ground the unit has laid markers with code words previously agreed to, on the field and indicated by a sign the exact place where the drop is desired. The air-ground radio is used for voice communication and both planes and troops on the ground check to see that the load is meant for this particular target. When both parties are satisfied, the drop is made, each plane circling over the target. On the field the combat team assigned to defend the field is ready for trouble from any side - spotters for enemy aircraft are located with field glasses searching the sky and the work details stand ready around the field to rush on the field, cut the parachutes off the loads and carry them to the jungle to hide them. Other groups with animals are ready to go out on the field and haul the loads off quickly. The Supply Officer controls the clearance of the field by SCR 536 radio to each of the supply officers from the combat team stationed at

points around the field. Speed is the first consideration and as each combat team collects its food, ammunition and supplies at its concentration point it reports the quantity to the Regimental Supply Officer. When the planes have finished the drop, from one to two hours after starting (for a big drop) any extra supplies are broken down and any shortages evened out among all combat teams.

In the air, the "kicker" and his helpers, usually two or three other men, stack up the grain sacks in the doorway for a free drop first, that is the grain sacks are kicked out without parachutes. The plane circles the field and each time from six to ten grain sacks are kicked out. The pilot estimates the place to kick the load out and then signals the "kicker" by lowering his arm the exact moment to kick the load. At that moment the pilot lowers the nose of his ship bringing the tail up to give extra clearance to the loads. After the free drop is over the parachute-dropped loads are kicked out. About three to five parachute loads can be kicked out at a time, each load weighing about one hundred to one hundred and seventy five pounds.

There are two big dangers these troop carrier and drop plane pilots face aside from the weather and normal flying hazards. One is the Jap fighter - as the C-47's are unarmed, they are "duck soup" for enemy fighters. Sometimes our planes have a fighter cover but it is mighty hard to sit and be shot at when you can't shoot back even if you have your own fighters with you. The second big danger a drop plane faces is that one of the parachutes will catch on the tail of the ship. This happened twice to planes flying over the Marauders. The first time the pilot landed the plane at an emergency landing barely in the nick of time. The second time the pilot was forced to belly land the plane in a paddy field adjoining the drop field and some of the "kickers" were injured.

Every Marauder has the greatest admiration for the crew of the drop planes, for they have dropped to us in weather we thought was anything but flying weather; they have dropped ammunition to us at night when we needed it badly; they have braved Japanese ground fire to drop to us when we were surrounded; and they never let us down from the moment this operation started.

Once when several planes were making a night drop at Waga On, Captain Lowell was piloting the lead ship. His co-pilot kept seeing red streaks come past the ship and asked the pilot of the ship behind if he was firing flares - at that moment a bullet tore through the fuselage of the ship and Captain Lowell gave him this answer, "You know what that is" - Everyone did - but they made the drop despite Jap ground fire.

The fastest air drop that was made to the 5307th sets something of a record. The message was filed from the field one hundred and seventy five miles from the air base at 1110 Hours. The message was received at the air base at 1155 hours. At 1407 Hours the planes were dropping on the target. The elapsed time was two hours and twenty two minutes. This included packing the supplies, loading the planes and flying more than one hundred and fifty miles over the world's worst terrain.

#### THE STAFF

General Merrill selected his staff primarily from among the men who had trained the 5307th and who had volunteered for the mission in the early fall of 1943. Colonel Charles N. Hunter, a classmate at West Point, became the Second in Command. Colonel Hunter was selected by the Infantry School and the War Department from a group of high-ranking officers who had volunteered for this mission. He had been an outstanding instructor at The Infantry School, specializing in jungle problems and those problems dealing with close combat and combat firing. He had also served as a junior officer and a Company Commander in earlier years in Panama where he had operated on extended jungle maneuvers.

G-1 was Major Louis J. Williams, a veteran of the fighting in New Guinea.

G-2 was Captain William A. Laffin, a former resident and businessman in Japan for almost twenty years. Speaking Japanese fluently, he knew the Jap in peace and in war, for he was a Japanese prisoner until exchanged in the early months of the war.

G-3 was Lieutenant Colonel Daniel B. Still, a Cavalry officer who had recently arrived from the States and was assigned to the 5307th from the Chinese Training Center at Bangalore, India.

G-4 was Major Edward T. Hancock.

#### ORGANIZATION FOR COMBAT.

(1) Air Base Group or Rear Echelon supply group under the command of the G-4, Major Edward T. Hancock. This group of approximately twenty officers and two hundred and fifty enlisted men operated a communication system with both the Command Post and the Command Group. They maintained the supply and, packed the parachute loads and the parachutes, and dropped an average of better than fifteen tons of food, ammunition and supplies each day to the <sup>units</sup> columns in the field.

(2) The Command Post Group consisting of three officers and twenty five enlisted men under the Command of the O-1, Major Louis J. Williams and later of Major Frank A. Johnson, were located at or near General Stilwell's forward Command Post. They maintained communication with the air base group and also with the Command Group in the field where possible. They handled the multitude of jobs which were required to be co-ordinated with General Stilwell's American-trained Chinese Forces. When and if communications broke down, they arranged to fly in to the Command Group in liaison planes bringing information, dispatches and orders and getting information for supply drops which was in turn relayed to air base for action. They received the wounded that were evacuated from forward areas and arranged for their care until they could be flown to a hospital.

(3) The Command Group consisted of nine officers and seventy five enlisted men plus various officers attached for liaison or special duty. Approximately twenty five of these men were U.P.s assigned as a guard. The remainder of the men were communications personnel and mail skimmers. General Merrill was senior officer in this group, and the remainder of the officers were members of his staff. This group usually was with the forward maneuvering battalions.

(4) Each of the three battalions consisted of a Battalion Headquarters, and two combat teams of approximately four hundred men each. Each combat team consisted of a headquarters, a rifle company, a heavy weapons company, a Pioneer and Demolition Platoon and an Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon. This organization was based on the "Jungle Column" organization created by General Wingate. This organization was found to be unsuitable and Standard American Battalion organization was found to be more efficient in every way.

#### COMMUNICATIONS.

Communication between air base and O.P. was maintained by the Command Group radio. A command net between the Command Group and each Battalion was maintained. Another Command net between the units of a battalion or combat team was maintained, while units as small as sections and platoons maintained radio contact at times with SCR 536's. Pigeons, liaison planes, air ground communications with the transport planes dropping to the unit, and runners both mounted and foot, complete the communications picture.

TRANSPORTATION.

Each battalion had approximately two hundred and thirty mules or horses for animal transport and approximately one man per animal was solely employed in handling his assigned animal and load. These animals carried approximately two hundred pounds per load and were broken down to units within the Battalion with several veterinary sergeants to each combat team.

MEDICAL ORGANIZATION.

air = aid?

Each combat team had one doctor and several medical (air) men for the operation of an (air) station. Each unit down to platoons had medical (air) men assigned whose sole duty was to give first aid to the sick and wounded in that platoon. A Regimental (air) station was set up where practicable and they handled the evacuation of the sick and wounded as they were sent back by the Battalion aid station.

LIAISON.

Air - Ground co-ordination was maintained by air liaison officers furnished by the squadrons giving the unit close support. An air liaison officer was assigned to each battalion and to the Command Group.

A Chinese liaison officer from the 38th Chinese Division was assigned to General Merrill's Staff, also a liaison officer from the Kachin Levies and one from the Second Troop Carrier Squadron, which furnished the planes for air drop to the unit, was assigned to Rear Echelon Supply Headquarters at air base.

DIARY

17

15 Jan. 1944 - Shortly after dawn a burst of BAR fire followed by a few rifle shots jerked the visitors in Camp Deogarah out of their sacks in a state of alarm. A discussion of when, what and why the shots were fired brought forth an explanation from a sleepy staff officer. He assured the visitors that no Japs were around and advised them to hit their sacks for a little more sleep - that "a few of the boys are just celebrating the break of dawn". It seems that for the past few weeks rifle, tommy-gun and in fact all types of range firing has been going on at an accelerated pace and men have been holding on to some of the ammunition to fire at odd moments and with which to hunt deer.

Col. Roy Boylin, GHI Ordnance Officer, Col. Mason Wright, GHI Public Relations Officer, Col. Frank Milani, GHI Adjutant General, and a number of other officers from Rear Echelon GHI were visiting Camp Deogarah to help Gen. Merrill in his final preparations before leaving for Assam and also because most of them wanted to see the first American Infantry to arrive on the continent of Asia to fight the Japanese.

All day the sound of firing filled the air - rifle, machine gun, tommy gun, mortar, bazookas and rifle grenades all firing at the same time gave the impression of a major battle.

The weather was good - hot in the daytime and cold enough for four blankets at night. The terrific changes in temperatures were said to be due to the fact that our camp was in the bend of the Patwa River, for a few miles away the marked changes in temperature were not noticeable.

Morale was good - men were eager to get on with the job they came over for. In General Merrill's Command Post, a brief officers meeting was held at 1900 - When the business for the day had been taken care of General Merrill and some members of his staff adjourned to the adjoining tent to talk over some detailed plans for the train movement to Assam, only a week away.

A few minutes later a somewhat confused sergeant brought in a box full of junk jewelry that had been brought over from the United States. He wanted to know if the General wanted to pack the stuff with the equipment to be carried to Assam. The General most certainly did as he planned to use it to barter with the natives in Burma. A tiny bottle of perfume on top was quickly seized by one of the officers and emptied on the head of a newly arrived officer in a sort of baptism. A spirit of fun and good feeling prevailed every corner of the camp and indicated the friendly cooperation with which each job was done.

16 Jan. 1944 - War correspondents Frank Hewlett of United Press, Charles Grumlich of Associated Press and Dave Richardson of Yank magazine arrived to join James Shoply of Time and Life Magazines and Captain John M. Jones, Public Relations Officer, Southeast Asia Command, assigned to General Merrill's staff for the operation.

At 1000 the first and last "review" at Camp Deogah was held on a more or less level field that had been used for athletic games. The review was for the purpose of awarding Silver Star Decorations to two men and Purple Heart Decorations to six men who had won them in the fighting in the Southwest Pacific. About 2800 men passed in review before General Merrill and his staff. It was perhaps the strangest review any American unit ever put on. Without a band, jungle clothing and over a rough field on the side of a hill these men carried on as if they were on the grassy parade ground of West Point.

This was the first look General Merrill had had of his Command all together and they looked good. One thing that struck almost every eye was the large number of men carrying tommy guns - it seemed that almost every other man was armed with some type of automatic weapon.

At 2000<sup>11<sup>00</sup></sup> show "Assam Poppin" was put on by the ATC for the men of the unit - it was an excellent show. Perhaps the high point was the imitation of the three Andrews Sisters singing "Chattanooga Cheo Cheo" or it may be it was the scene of a girl and a boy arguing about whether to sit on another park bench because the last one had wet paint on it. They agreed to look further and when the girl turned her back the stripes of wet paint down the back of her dress indicated she had more than sat on a freshly painted park bench.

Jan. 17, 18, 19, 1944 - All three battalions continued their range firing. The male skimmers were practicing their animals in river crossings and the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoons were putting the finishing touches on their review of map reading, sketching and scouting and patrolling. Each afternoon some of the men managed to get a swim in the Betwa River and occasionally a shot at a deer. Many men got up an hour before daylight to get in a couple of hours deer or bird hunting before breakfast.

20 Jan 1944 - The Commandants took a jeep ride with General Merrill to watch the 1st Battalion mules swim the Betwa River. The route to the river was over a rough trail that would try the ability of an expert jeep driver and that is just what General Merrill proved to be. He took the jeep over places that seemed impossible to make - once everyone got out of the jeep but the General, who drove down a steep ditch and up out of it with the greatest of ease. When we finally returned to camp after 2 1/2 hours of vain searching for the spot the 1st Battalion was using to swim their horses, we were convinced of two things - the General is the best jeep driver we have ever ridden with and the jeep can go any place a Micerri Mils can go.

At 1700 a horse race was held on the dusty little road, between Lt. Col. Daniel E. Still and a British Major, one of Doctors in the British hospital which was caring for the sick of the unit. The course was 9/10 of a mile and the race was even until the last 1/4 mile when the British Major gradually pulled ahead to win by several lengths. Quite an exchange of money took place - it seems that at a dinner party a few nights before the merits of our animals - shipped from the States and from Australia were compared with the general run of Indian riding horses and the race was the result of the discussion.

21 Jan. 1944 - A convoy consisting of about 10 vehicles and 40 officers and enlisted men under the Command of Captain Laffin departed for Margherita by way of Calcutta at 0830. Most of the personnel were from the Rear Echelon and the Command Group.

The 1st Battalion swam its horses across the Betwa River. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions were engaged in small unit combat firing problems.

Lt Col. Still, Major Schudnak, Captain Ebbree (Air Liaison Officer) and Mr. John Emerson of the State Department left for Binjan and Lada by air.

The third Battalion had an officer's party at 0800 in a little basha loaned to them by the British Hospital Unit. A number of Sisters, or British Nurses, were present including one fair looking one. The officers had obtained some Indian gin, rum and liquor and by mixing it with fruit juice the concoction became drinkable. It was a good party climaxed by the neck trial of an officer who had failed to cut his hair to the prescribed 1/4 inch length - the prosecution asked for "The Chair" and the defense claimed he was the only officer fit to be seen in public and therefore was of inestimable value to the outfit in case of any emergency dealings with the public. As the jury was drunk,

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the judge threw the case out of court after his chair collapsed spilling his drink and he had to leave the court room in search of another.

22 Jan. 1944 - Exactly on schedule Rear Echelon less approximately 40 men left Deogarh for Jakhama at 0850 and train No.1 pulled out at 1530 for Assam. Included in this party were all correspondents, observers, and liaison officers. General Merrill came down and walked through the train inspecting accommodations and telling the troops good-bye.

The 1st Battalion swam its animals again today and the 2nd and 3rd Battalions continued to work on small unit combat firing problems.

23 Jan. 1944 - Train No. 1 reached Jhansi the night of the 22nd then on the 23rd moved over following route Manipur, Allahabad, Mirzapur, Mugal Sarai, and Pildarnagar. At Camp Deogarh preparations were under way for the main movement to Assam - the final bits of training were being cleared up, equipment checked and packed for the train movement.

24 Jan. 1944 - Train No. 1 reached Moharash Ghat - and ferried across the Ganges River. The troops were greatly surprised to see the bodies of a woman and child floating in the river, also to see large fish resembling porpoises which were reputed to come up so far from the sea to eat the human bodies thrown into the river by Hindus.

The three Battalions at Camp Deogarh continued the same program as on Jan 23rd. Minor difficulties over some laundry arose between a few men of the 3rd Battalion and some Indians in the vicinity of the Field Supply Disp. U.P.'s raided a fruit stand near the Indian labor camp and confiscated several bottles of whisky.

25 Jan. 1944 - Train No.1 moved very slowly last night and at a snails pace all day. An investigation revealed that 800 Indian laborers, or WOP's as they are commonly called, had been hooked on to the end of our train. The train now had 45 cars and one small engine.

The soldiers on the train were buying pets wholesale. Dogs, monkeys, parrots and even a small snake had joined the party.

At Camp Deogarh all three Battalions continued to make preparations for the movement to Assam.

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26 Jan. 1944 - The 1st Battalion less animals started marching for Jakhlaun at 1430. The trains pulled out at 0130 on 27 January.

At 2130 Headquarters was notified by the 80th General Headquarters investigation unit (British) that there had been a shooting earlier that night. They reported that three Indian Dhobis had been wounded by 30 Caliber Cartridges while in their tents. The empty cartridges were found outside the Dhobis tent.

27 Jan. 1944 - A muster was ordered by General Merrill and all men and arms in Camp were inspected in an effort to find the man involved in the shooting. Indian soldiers who had been at the scene of the shooting were present to identify the men involved. Pvt's Gumm and Nichols of L Company 3rd Battalion were identified as the men who had been at the scene of the shooting. They were placed under arrest and confined. An immediate investigation was ordered by General Merrill. Captain Herbert and Lt. Rothchild were appointed the investigating board. This board obtained full confessions from Pvt's Gumm and Nichols. Gumm admitted doing the actual shooting. As the unit was on the eve of departure from Camp Deoghar both men and evidence was turned over to the Provost Marshall of American troops at Agra for action.

The 2nd Battalion entrained at Jakhlaun for Margherita on the same schedule the 1st Battalion had followed the day before. 3rd Battalion and remainder of the Camp made preparations to move the next day.

Train No. 1 passed through Simaria Ghat, Kathihar, Parvatipur, Lalmanir Hat and at dawn arrived at Amingon on the Brahmaputra River, one of the largest rivers in Asia. We were ferried over to Panda at noon and quartered in a British operated Transient Camp. British, U.S. and Chinese troops were all quartered together. The camp was overcrowded and was poorly run - the mess was bad and sanitary facilities were run down. A U.S. Transportation Corps Camp was across the road. This was one of the railroad battalions which was taking over the Bengal and Assam Railway.

28 Jan. 1944 - The 3rd Battalion and remaining personnel in camp entrained at Jakhlaun for Margherita using the same schedule the 1st and 2nd Battalions followed.

The personnel of train No. 1 awoke amid the arrival of a large unit of Chinese flyers on their way to the 14th Air Force in China. They were extremely good looking soldiers.

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While looking for a canteen to purchase some shaving cream I asked a burly soldier in a British uniform where I could buy shaving cream. He replied "Speak no English". An investigation proved that also among us was a labor battalion of Italian Prisoners. They were captured in 1941 and volunteered to go to India to work. They were all skilled mechanics and were healthy, jolly, big strapping fellows. Their morale was good and their discipline tops. They seemed eager to talk to Americans and all day there was trading of coins, milk, and souvenirs. They despised Mussolini but many thought the King was OK, though some called him a little nobody and a stuffed shirt.

At 1900 train No. 1 pulled out of Panna but it was a different train from the one we had left. This train was dirty, full of enormous bugs and the finest car was a broken down 3rd class coach. Not much sleeping was done for the next few days - poker games continued day and night in every coach.

29 Jan. 1944 - The first animal train consisting of the 1st Battalion and Headquarters pack trains left Jabhlam at 1300.

General Merrill, Colonel Hunter, Major Hancock, Captain Hested, Master Sergeant Doyar and a photographer left Camp Deogarh at 0600 and departed from Lalitpur by staff plane at 0900. They lunched at Gaya and arrived at Dinjan at 1600 where they were quartered in the Transient Camp.

Train No. 1 arrived at Lumding, a beautiful little town, as Indian towns go. The troops on all trains were eating 10 in 1 rations which is generally considered to be the best ration the army puts out. The seats were getting hard and the men were getting tired from the long trip. While eating breakfast one officer said to another, "Is there any more Jan?" The second officer quickly replied, "Not till we get to Dinjan". That was the sad state of the humor on the train.

30 Jan. 1944 - The 2nd Battalion animal train left Jabhlam for Margharita at 1830.

Train No. 1 arrived at a siding near Dinjan Air Field where we unloaded at 1400 in the rain. No camp could be seen, but a few hours later the men had set up <sup>pyramidal</sup> ~~perambular~~ tents and were ready to bed down for the night.

31 Jan 1944 - The 3rd Battalion animal pack train left Jakhlaun for Margherita on the same schedule that all of the other trains had followed. The entire Command with the exception of the Rear Echelon Group on train No. 1 was now enroute to Margherita by train.

1, 2, 3, 4, 5, Feb. 1944 - All trains still enroute to Margherita. The Rear Echelon (supply) Camp at Binjan has blossomed into a full sized camp and work goes on night and day, setting up tents and loading warehouses with the food, ammunition and supplies destined to be dropped to the unit when it finally hits the trail into Burma.

6 Feb. 1944 - At 0030 the first battalion trains arrived at the staging area near Margherita, were unloaded at dawn and the troops marched to the area they were to use during their brief stay here. They had had a hard, rough trip but were in good spirits and glad to have their feet on the ground again even though it was wet ground. The 1st Battalion animal train arrived during the morning, making the first Battalion complete and ready to move toward Burma.

At 1600 Mr. Harold Young, a Baptist Missionary, born and reared in Northern Burma, gave a talk to the officers and men of the first Battalion on how to live in the jungle. He demonstrated how to get water from bamboo and banana trees, how to build an insect proof bed, and many other practical suggestions on what to do and what not to do in the area we were to operate in. At the conclusion of his talk the Office of War Information distributed a booklet on how to get along with Kachins and Burmans. This booklet proved to be most helpful in our dealings with the Kachins a few weeks later.

7 Feb. 1944 - At dawn the 2nd Battalion, followed by their animal train, detrained at the same staging area the first Battalion had used the day before.

The first Battalion put all equipment and personal belongings not being carried on their backs in large barracks bags with each mans name painted on the bag and stored them in warehouses at the staging area. At 2200 the first Battalion marched out of the staging area at Margherita and hit the Ledo Road for a 14 mile night march.

Mr. Harold Young gave his jungle talk to the 2nd Battalion at 1600. It was well received.

8 Feb. 1944 - The third battalion followed by their animal train detrained at Margherita and at 1600 Mr. Harold Young gave them the same jungle talk he had given the 1st and 2nd Battalions.

At 1800 the 2nd Battalion and the Command Group marched out of Margherita and hit the Leda Road for 1 1/2 miles. The amazed look on the part of SOE personnel along the road as the 5307th marched by is understandable when it is realized that for months the rumor that American Infantry were coming had only been a rumor, and most of them had given up the idea that the doughboys were actually coming.

9 Feb. 1944 - The Third Battalion marched out of Margherita at 1800. The entire unit was at last marching on the Leda Road. To avoid as much congestion as possible and for secrecy the unit marched at night.

10 Feb. 1944 - The Second Battalion was awakened at dawn by the sound of hand grenades burning in the nearby river and screams of laughter as the Chinese grenaded fish, then scrambled about in the water picking those stunned.

Word was received that Lt. Col. Hunter had been promoted to full Colonel and that a number of other officers had also been promoted.

The road was wet and the going was rather rough.

While marching up the Leda Road the men only carried emergency rations. Mess trucks brought two hot meals a day to them. The schedule was a hot breakfast, no lunch and a hot supper.

11 Feb. 1944 - The 3rd Battalion sang a great deal as they marched, and made quite a hit with the Chinese they passed on the road. It rained all afternoon. Everyone was wet but it didn't matter much. The 2nd Battalion stayed at Hells Gate for the night. An engineer pipe line company was nearby and many of the 5307th enjoyed their hospitality. The 1st Battalion crossed the line from India into Burma at 1300 today.

12 Feb. 1944 - The march up from Hells Gate is tough. Eight miles of up grade, most of it quite steep. At Namng Yang, Capt. Melvyn Douglas had a stage show which was put on for the men of the 2nd Battalion. Later that night Douglas and his show drove over a slick mountain road down to Hells Gate where the show was put on for the 3rd Battalion. Today the mountain views were lovely and in some cases awe inspiring. The snow capped Himalayas could be plainly seen in the distance, while winding for miles below was the twisting, turning Leda

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Road which depended in a big way on these men if it was ever to reach China.

13, 14, 15, Feb. 1944 - Rain continued intermittently and the roads became slick and very muddy, as they wound up and down the mountains ranging from 2000 to 4500 feet in height.

A colored engineer regiment working along the road about mile 90 was so happy to see American Infantry that their band stayed up all of one night to play as the 5307th marched by - there was a cheer as they played "Dixie" and "God Bless America". It lifted the spirits of the 5307th and the engineers seemed to get a lot of pleasure out of doing it. It was a fine gesture of good will and good luck and the men of the 5307th appreciated it.

The Saigon (Japanese controlled) radio announced that two divisions of American troops were marching up the Lede Road and warned them to get off the road or they would be bombed off. The troops got a big laugh out of that.

16 Feb. 1944 - James Shepley, Time and Life Correspondent had been calling the 5307th Composite Unit (Provisional) Merrill's Marauders for some time but when the unit reached Shingbuiyang everyone was referring to them as Merrill's Marauders and so they were at last named.

A Marauder's girl friend in the States had written to him just before he went in and said, "The name of your organization sounds like a Quartermaster Unit. I am glad to know you are not going to be in the fighting."

The Command Post Group had established headquarters about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from General Stilwell's headquarters at Shingbuiyang and were functioning smoothly when the Marauders passed through.

17, 18, Feb. 1944 - At 1430 on the 17th about 7 miles from Shingbuiyang on the Lede Road a mess truck loaded with mess personnel and the sick from the 2nd Battalion burned out its brakes going down a hill and crashed into a pile of logs<sup>26</sup> at the bottom of the hill. Casualties were one killed and twenty injured.

They were taken to an evacuation hospital near the Shingbuiyang airstrip for treatment. The reason so many were injured appeared to be due to the pile of logs at the bottom of the little hill where the truck crashed. When the men were thrown out they slammed against the logs.

The march up the Lede Road had been tough from the start and the 7 miles before reaching Shingbuiyang was really a killer. Part of it was a steep down grade, then right back up again. One of the men in the 2nd Battalion after a

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particularly hard climb was heard to say that when he got home he was going to have ten children and that he was going to tell them every tortuous detail of this march up the Ledo Road! And if they didn't cry he was going to beat the hell out of them.

19 Feb. 1944 - The 1st Battalion reached Ningbyen, the area where all of the Marauders were to be concentrated prior to their march behind the Japanese lines. The 2nd and 3rd Battalions were one and two days march behind them.

Ningbyen was the scene of a Chinese attack on Jap dug in positions. The Chinese captured Ningbyen in November of 1943 but even now on the 19th of February, debris is everywhere. Japanese equipment is scattered about, a Buddhist temple was destroyed and hundreds of little clay and wooden idols are scattered on the ground. A river runs nearby and a large dropping (paddy) field makes the camp complete.

The 2nd Battalion arrived at Ningbyen during the day. Both 1st and 2nd Battalions rested, swam in the river and filled up on the ample supply of 10 in 1 rations that had been dropped the day before. A Jap plane flew over this area about 2100 - all fires were put out and the camp had its 1st air raid alert.

21 Feb. 1944 - As the third battalion marched down the trail from Ningam Sakan to Ningbyen a loaded jeep met them. As the trail was very narrow at that point the jeep pulled off into the jungle to let the column pass. It was hot and the men were tired - as a particularly belligerent mile skinner passed the jeep he stopped. He looked squarely into the faces of three American ~~officers~~ ~~officers~~ wearing Chinese Army caps and spluttered, "My God, duck hunters"! He was looking directly at Lt. Gen. Stilwell and some of his staff.

General Stilwell got a hearty laugh out of it and correspondent Jim Brown of International News Service got a swell story out of it. General Stilwell was on his way back from Ningbyen where he had visited General Merrill and the other two battalions of Marauders. The 3rd Battalion arrived at Ningbyen in the early afternoon, completing the concentration of Merrill's Marauders.

22 Feb. 1944 - The situation became tactical today - patrols and outposts had been used since the march from Margherita started, but now that we were on the edge of Jap held territory patrols were increased, security posted and the camp was on an alert status.

General Merrill jumped to Taipha Ga to see General Stilwell and returned with final instructions late tonight. A Japanese plane flew overhead about 1800 but was too high for positive identification.

All day long C-47's have been over our dropping field dropping equipment, rations, ammunition and supplies.

Lt. Col. Chun Lee of the 38th Chinese Division, fighting on the east side of Hukawng Valley, joined General Merrill's Command Group as liaison officer. He is a graduate of Norwich University in the United States and is a friendly, cheerful officer who is right on the job 24 hours a day.

23 Feb. 1944. - At 0800 General Merrill held a staff conference at which all members of the staff were present also the battalion Commanders, combat team Commanders and Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon leaders.

General Merrill started the conference with sharp criticism of the way men had been throwing away helmets and other equipment issued them. He ordered that it be stopped by the Battalion Commanders at once. He said that a large percentage of the sick which the medics had sent to the 20th General Hospital and other hospitals on the road from Margherita to Ningbyen had been found not to be sick enough for hospital care and were returning to duty today. He directed the regimental surgeon to straighten out some of the younger inexperienced Medics on how to handle minor sickness without resorting to sending every man with a case of diarrhea or a headache to the hospital. Then turning to the entire group of officers with a smile he said, "Well gentlemen, here is what you have been waiting for. We move in the morning with our general objective to cut the road between Jambu Bum and Shingban and get into the 18th Division (Jap) Command Post. The enemy situation is shown on this map: the Japanese are located at Mungwan at Taipha Ga, Kahuja Ga, Hsang Ga, Lanam Ga, Tanja Ga and on the east bank of the Tawang Hka (river) in the area around Maingkwan, Kashi Daru ferry and Makaw, Lalawm Ga and two more Makaw there is another company dug in. There is a possibility of artillery at Sina Gahtawng, there is one platoon of Japs at Shanyen Ga - one battery of artillery south of the Makaw-Ha Gahtawng area and one platoon of Japs at Ehtem and some Japs south of Ehtem. Troops of the 55th Jap Regiment of 18th Japanese Division, the seasoned jungle division which took Singapore, are east of the main road and the 56th

267

Regiment is west of the main road. A captured Jap order indicates that the new Jap defense line will run from Yawngbang Ga to Lakyen Ga. The Japs in the Sumpre-bum area are now practically surrounded by Kachin Levies. The Japanese are said to have been using a few balloons for observation in the general area we are entering. We are using no balloons of any sort. Lately the Japs have formed some new battalions consisting of three rifle companies and a machine gun company. All that this information does for us is give the general picture. We must depend on our own resources for information on which to make our plans. Therefore I am taking the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoons from all three battalions and placing them directly under my command for our first move. The 1st Battalion Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoons will move by 1130 today on a reconnaissance of Nohang Ga, Ndawng Ga, Nding Ga, Nohaw Ga, Tingreng Ga, Tanja Ga and Pup Ga. The second battalion Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoons will make a reconnaissance of the trails Nguken Ga, Warong Ga north to Nohaw Ga, Ndawng Ga, Nding Ga, one half mile east of Nding Ga turn south on the trail to Lanem Ga to Nnaw Ga as far as Mba Tingkrang Ga (south of the 1st Battalion I & R platoons).

The 3rd Battalion Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoons will make a reconnaissance of the trails Warong Ga, Nohaw Ga, Ndawng Ga, Ngang Ga, south to Nkhang Kayang to Tingshan Ga. Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoons are to operate under regimental control communicating through their own battalions until they reach Nguken Ga. Not to fight unless necessary - your mission is purely reconnaissance.

Each battalion will furnish personnel to leave behind until the 26th Feb. to build fires at night in their present battalion areas as we are practically sure the Japs know that we are in this general area. The men left behind will be given the route plan and will rejoin their units after the 26th of February. I estimate that we will make contact with sizable forces of Japanese by March 2.

The general route of march will be Nguken Ga, Warong Ga, Nohaw Ga to the Tawang River. The 1st Battalion will lead out at 0800 on Feb. 24th followed by the 2nd and Command Group at 0900 and the 3rd at 1000.

A discussion of the troop movement followed and the meeting broke up. Orders had previously been issued for Lt. Laffin, G-2 to contact the Chinese 36th Division and let the Chinese know our general route - also to obtain any late information on trails, Jap locations and locations of Chinese patrols and outposts.

There was an air raid alert at 1900 but the plane could not be seen due to

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-29-

trails, Jap locations and locations of Chinese patrols and outposts.

There was an air raid alert at 1900 but the plane could not be seen due to its high altitude.

24 Feb. 1944 - The first battalion carrying 2 days C rations and 1 days K rations moved out on the trail to Nguken Ga at 0800 followed by the Command Group at 0830, the 2nd battalion at 0900 and the 3rd battalion at 1100.

A temporary bridge across the river broke through as a Command Group mule was crossing, throwing the mule into the water on his side. Radio equipment was on the mule and it was imperative that the load be salvaged. The Muleskinner jumped into the river and held the head of the floundering mule above the water while two more men and one officer took off the load and pack saddle. The radio equipment was undamaged and the mule was quickly repacked and moved out to join the column.

General Merrill, carrying a musette bag and map case led the Command Group out, following the scouts.

Just before the unit left Mingbyen the last mail was turned in for censorship - one letter from a private who had volunteered from the Southwest Pacific had written his family a short letter with this paragraph in it "my pack is on my back, my gun is oiled and loaded as I walk into the shadow of death, I fear no son-of-a-bitch".

The unit arrived in the Nguken Ga area at 1330. The Command Group bivouacking in the abandoned village. Fires were out by 1900 and at 2100 an unidentified plane flew over the area.

At 2000 hours about 300 yards due west of the village, a green flare was seen by a number of men. We had no one in that area and had no green flares, so it was assumed that it was a Jap patrol relaying out position to other Japs on the high hills to the east. Radio communication was good, the weather was fair and the night was quiet.

25 Feb. 1944 - The battalions moved out in the same order as on the 24th and took a 2 day ration drop near Warong Ga.

General Merrill and Colonel Lee rode to Tumphang Ga to contact troops of the 38th Chinese Division.

At 1115 The Orange Combat Team Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon under the command of Lt. Logan E. Weston was moving over a trail from Ndwang Ga to Nzang Ga. The lead scout Cpl. Werner Katz, a veteran of Guadalcanal, saw some tracks on the trail that resembled Jap footprints by the pattern of the sole. Katz alerted the patrol with a hand signal and Lt. Weston came up to look over the tracks. Katz, closely followed by Lt. Weston, advanced cautiously and when Katz turned a bend in the trail he saw an unarmed Jap standing about 30 yards up the trail. The Jap smiled and motioned him forward. As his arm came down two light machine guns opened on Katz from each side of the trail. Katz was crouching low and then

the shots were fired and he hit the ground firing at the Japs he fell. A fire fight developed and Lt. Weston's platoon withdrew leaving one dead Jap which Katz had killed on the trail. Katz had been wounded by a bullet that grazed his nose and left cheek. Sgt. Gomez, the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon medical aid man, quickly fixed Katz up and the patrol moved back to report their information and to continue their reconnaissance. Cpl. Katz had won the honor of killing the first Jap and was also the first Marauder wounded in combat.

At about the same time a patrol from the second battalion Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon under the command of Lt. William C. Grisson was entering the village of Lanem Ga. Pvt. Robert W. Landis of Youngstown, Ohio, was the lead scout. Suddenly an unseen Jap machine gun opened fire from about 50 yards away. Landis was instantly killed. The I & R patrol engaged the Japs and found that a platoon was well dug in on some high ground in the village. As the Japs had several machine guns covering the place where Landis was killed the I & R patrol was not able to recover his body, so they withdrew, reported their information by runner and threw a block on the trail north of Lanem Ga to protect the columns which would be passing that way.

Firing to the west where the Chinese were fighting could be plainly heard. Artillery fire was heard at dawn and dusk and intermittent rifle, machine gun and mortar fire could be heard about 4 or 8 miles away.

26 Feb. 1944 - At 1700 the three battalion commanders met General Merrill at his Command Post on the banks of a small stream at Warong Ga for a brief conference. The 3rd battalion moved out in the lead followed by the Command Group at 0740, and the 2nd and 1st battalions moved at 0900 and 1030 in that order.

The entire unit marched 11 miles through rain and over muddy trails to the village of Nehaw Ga. There was noticeable change in the unit. Eyes which a few days before had looked wearily at the ground during the hot, sweaty march were alertly searching every tree along the trail for signs of the enemy.

The 2nd battalion Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon recovered the body of Private Landis at Lanem Ga and buried it with a prayer, on a grassy hill near the center of the village. The body of Private Landis had been stripped by the Japs and all of his clothing and equipment was missing, however his body had apparently not been touched by the Japs. He was the first American infantryman to be killed on the Asiatic continent in combat since the Boxer uprising.

The Japs had broken contact with our scouts just after dawn and had with-

drawn as our units felt them out from all sides preparatory to attacking the village.

All I & R patrols were reporting by radio, by messenger and in a few cases in person. The picture of the enemy situation in the country we were entering was developing nicely and our route of march followed the trails found to be best by the probing fingers of our reconnaissance patrols.

The entire unit was security conscious and each route of approach was blocked by an ambush and by booby traps while the columns were passing through.

Lt. Samuel V. Wilson's Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon had penetrated to the Tawang River and Lt. Wilson rode back to give a full report on the condition of the trails, enemy activity and the location of his patrols which were still engaged in a reconnaissance of the area assigned to him.

During the march today a number of abandoned Kachin villages were passed. Near them were the built up grave mounds where the bodies were burned. A ditch around the mound was dug to keep the spirit in, and offerings of roots and leaves were placed in the little Buddhist Shrine close beside the grave. If several people died, a buffalo would have been killed and the uneaten portions offered as a sacrifice for the dead.

The Command Group arrived at Hohaw Ga at 1400 today and shortly thereafter two pigeons were released with drop messages for the Air Base. A staff meeting was held at 1600 at which time orders were given for the next days march.

27 Feb. 1944 - 3rd battalion left Hohaw Ga at 0700 and arrived at Tanja Ga at 1100 where a drop of rations was taken. Three days K ration and 1 days C ration packed in a burlap bag was dropped.

One of the pigeons committed suicide by hanging himself in his cage during the night.

The defense for the drop fields was worked out by Colonel Hunter and consisted of the following plan:

1. The I & R Platoon blocks each end of the trail at least 1000 yards from the field.
2. One Rifle Platoon defends from 0° to 180°  
One Rifle Platoon defends from 180° to 360°
3. Machine Gun sections box the field with fire lanes cut.
4. Mortars prepare barrages in front of the platoons blocking the trail, on approaches to field and on field itself.
5. The defense position will be dug in and mules kept in ditches or covered positions.
6. One air liaison officer will report to Lt. Fleming at Regimental Headquarters one hour before the scheduled airdrop for aircraft identification.

7. The Regimental Command Post will be due north from the center of the field until further notice.

CLEARING THE DROPPING FIELD

One Rifle Company will be used for labor on the dropping field.

After the drop, men rush on field, cut chute cords, remove chutes and hide them in woods so they can't be seen from the air.

1. Bundles marked for Regiment or not marked at all will be placed at the Regiment stake on the field - Supply Officers work in their own area making distribution of bundles dropped in their area.
4. Mules will drop loads in their bivouac area, mules will be returned to drop field with three men per mule - one to hold mule - two to load. Take mule on field quickly, load it and get off.
5. Each Combat Team will have one SCR 536 with an operator at their stake.

While on the march the battalions bivouacked usually over a 3 to 5 mile area - that is one battalion ahead, one in the center and one in the rear - each protecting itself and in turn protecting each other. Trail blocks were used whenever needed and if the enemy was contacted a heavy block was placed well out for the protection of the columns.

During last night several shots were fired near the Command Group bivouac area, and firing is audible intermittently a few miles to the west where the Chinese and Japanese are engaged in almost continuous fighting.

Lt. Laffin contacted units of the 38th Division and obtained full information on their dispositions and the Jap dispositions then brought his party back, barely missing two Japanese platoons dug in on the trail to Warong Ga from the west.

At a staff meeting at 1500 orders were issued for crossing the Tawang River on the night of the 28th.

28 Feb. 1944 - Eating before dark the 3rd and 2nd battalions crossed the Tawang River at night followed by the Command Group. The first battalion covered the crossing of the other units and was scheduled to cross at dawn on the 29th.

Liaison planes were heard in the 1st battalion area in the afternoon and messages were dropped for General Merrill.

It was a moonlit night and the river crossing went off well - lanes were marked for animals and men with stakes and string and guides took each unit to its bivouac area after making the crossing. The water was about waist deep and the current quite swift. Although everyone was wet we were glad to bed down and the night was warm, so a great deal of discomfort was avoided.

The dispatches which were flown in to General Merrill at Tanja Ga by Major Williams contained orders from General Stilwell for the unit to move as fast as

possible on Walawbum and block the retreat of the Japs on the main road to Kamaing. The message further stated that the Chinese were putting heavy pressure on Maingkwan.

The liaison plane bringing the dispatches was piloted by T/Sgt. William C. Coleman of Fort Worth, Texas. It first flew over Tanja Ga at 0900 and dropped messages, but had no hook to pick up messages, so a strip was built in about 30 minutes by the Pioneer and Demolition Platoon of the 2nd battalion and the plane landed when it returned several hours later. Strange to say the plane's name is the 7-11 and it earned it well. It cracked up twice but was able to be repaired during the following weeks.

Unidentified planes were overhead at 2210 and 2230.

29 Feb. 1944 (Leap Year) - With the 3rd battalion leading, the 2nd battalion and Command Group followed by the 1st battalion left the vicinity of the Tamang River at 0900 marching to Ngalang Ga and on to Gwisu Ga for the night. The 3rd battalion bivouacked at Nhtem, the 2nd battalion and Command Group at Gwisu Ga and the 1st battalion between Gwisu Ga and Nhang Ga.

Bob Bryant, International News Service Photographer, flew in with Sergeant Coleman and landed on a rocky sand bar one mile south of Nhang Ga. Sergeant Coleman said it took 15 minutes to fly from Taipha Ga, General Stilwell's Headquarters.

1 March 1944 - The unit marched into the area around Nhtem where the 3rd battalion set up a defense preparatory to receiving the airdrip and made a feint to deceive the Japs towards Makaw. Other battalions rested along the river bank, swam and traded with the Kachins.

Captain Evan Darlington, British Liaison Officer from the Government of Burma, was welcomed by the villagers around Nhtem with gifts of rice beer, chickens, eggs and rice wine. He was political officer for this area before the war and that entailed being lawyer, doctor, preacher and judge to the people in his area. They apparently thought very highly of him for he was welcomed as a long lost friend. These villagers had been badly treated by the Japanese and Burmans. There was evidence of Jap atrocities and one of our patrols found several Kachins hanging by their necks in an abandoned village nearby. The villagers were glad to see the Americans and the Chief or headman was greatly impressed by General Merrill and told him that some of his men would join him if they had guns and some of these with guns (ancient muzzle loaders) would join if the General would take them. General Merrill persuaded the headman that he would need all of his people to protect their village and to plant the rice crop, but that they could do a great favor for the Americans by caring for two American soldiers who were too sick to march, and then bring them to rejoin the unit.

in a week or two when they were notified that the trail was clear of Japanese. The headman was overjoyed to have the Americans and moved them in to his own basha.

Much good information on the Japanese was obtained from the Kachins around Nhtem.

The bare-breasted women made quite a hit with the Marauders and the naked little children lost their fear of soldiers quickly and soon were munching K ration crackers given them by the Marauders.

Late in the afternoon a liaison plane came over and dropped a message saying that the airdrop today was off and that the airdrop would be made on March 2nd at a sand bar where the trail crossed the Tanai River. The mix up was due to the radio code misfiring - steps were taken to find the reason and eliminate it.

The 3rd battalion marched straight through to the large sand bar on the Tanai where the drop was scheduled and secured the area. Two platoons made the river crossing and secured a bridgehead on the opposite bank - the 2nd battalion followed by the Command Group and 1st battalion started marching at night, however the night was pitch black, and the trail extremely rough and only a mile or two was made in several hours of hard night marching. All units bivouacked on the trail and left again at dawn on the 2nd.

We were now approaching Walawbum and the drop tomorrow would be our last for a few days as we didn't want to give away our position or the objective.

2 March 1944 - All battalions were assembled in the drop area by 1300, and General Merrill held a staff meeting at which he gave the battalion commanders their combat orders.

The third battalion was ordered to move at 1600 via Sabaw Ga and Lagang Ga to Walawbum - seize the high ground on the west side of the river and dig in, covering the main road to Kamaing with mortar and machine gun fire and preventing Japanese from retreating southwards along the main road.

The second battalion was ordered to move to Wesu Ga, cross the Numpyek River, and cut a trail through to the main road  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles west of Walawbum and construct and hold a road block.

The first battalion block trails at Sana Ga and Nchet Ga to prevent Jap movement southwards with one platoon at each point, establish combat patrols along the Nambyu Hka between Shimak Ga and Uga Ga with remainder of one combat team, remaining combat team would be held in reserve in the Wesu Ga area but would be committed when a suitable opportunity presented itself. Just as the conference was over the first drop plane arrived with 3 days K rations and 3 days grain plus

ammunition and equipment. As we were getting behind in our schedule due to the late drop, the 3rd battalion did not have time to draw but 1 days rations by the time it departed, at 1600. The second and 1st battalions were oversupplied with rations and ammunition - some extra ammunition and special equipment was hidden in the jungle to be picked up later. The last plane finished dropping at 1730 and the 2nd battalion, Command Group and 1st battalion crossed the waist deep but wide Tanai River (Chindwin) and marched to the vicinity of Gum Ga by 2400 where they bivouacked for the rest of night on the trail.

The second battalions scouts contacted a Jap patrol of two men on the trail near Gum Ga. Both were killed and their bodies were still laying where they fell when the 2nd and 1st battalions passed by the next day.

3 March 1944 - At dawn all battalions were on the move toward Malawbum. The second battalion's lead scouts were cautiously moving up the trail near Wesu Ga when a Jap patrol opened fire on them from the opposite side of a small open field. The lead scout fell to the ground and the Japs thinking he was killed rushed forward. The scout raised up and fired a full magazine from his tommy gun killing two Japs and putting 5 others to flight, and the second battalion moved on. When the outskirts of Wesu Ga were reached the scouts reported a few Japs moving about in the village and also the appearance of Jap foxholes and trenches. An attack was organized in the late afternoon and Wesu Ga was rapidly overrun - the Japs having fled. No one except the Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoons had seen any live Japs up to this time and the men behind were itching to see something - planes flew overhead off and on during the day and on two occasions all men and animals got off the trail as Japanese planes were reported overhead. That is when you really hear cursing from the muleskinners - a Missouri mule, or any mule for that matter, doesn't like to be suddenly drug off the trail where he can't see the other mules - and when a mule with 300 pounds on his back says no - well it's plenty tough to change his mind - finally the system of taking the animals off in pairs solved the problem and the mules took cover satisfactorily.

A small Jap unit at Sabaw Ga withdrew when the 3rd battalion hit them releasing two elephants which ran through the Orange Combat Team Command Post - The chains shackling their feet were broken - apparently the elephants became terrified at the firing - no Japs were known to be killed at Sabaw Ga. The third battalion pushed on to Lagang Ga where 50 Japs were killed in occupying the village.

The Orange Combat Team pushed to the high ground on the east side of the river from Malawbum by night fall and dug in. They had had a running fight with Jap patrols all day. Major Low, Commanding Officer of Orange Combat Team sent his Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon 500 yards up the river from Malawbum to cross the river for reconnaissance of that area. They were able to cross the river before night fall and then dug in a small perimeter defense for the night.

Our patrols were hitting Japs on every side and every man in the unit was alert, searching every bush and tree for signs of Jap snipers. The second battalion pushed about one mile through Wesu Ga and bivouacked on the trail towards the main road. The Command Group and first battalion bivouacked in the vicinity of Sabaw Ga.

Lt. Duncan's Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon of Khaki Combat Team of 3rd battalion ran into a few Japs with a machine gun at Lagang Ga. The Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon opened fire on them and advanced rapidly - they picked up three Jap bodies and took over several hunks of raw beef the Japs were preparing to cook.

4 March 1944 - The Orange Combat Team Command Post and the third battalion Command Post were at La Gang Ga, a short distance from Halaebum. At 0645 six Japs carrying a litter with one Jap Second Lieutenant on it walked right into the middle of the Command Post. They were as surprised to see where they were as the Marauders were to see them in the Command Post. They walked into a heavy machine gun position and were mowed down. One Jap threw a hand grenade before he was shot, but that was the only resistance offered. An examination revealed that four of the Japs had been previously wounded and were probably on their way back to a rear aid station or field hospital.

Lt. Ted Hughes, Commanding Officer of I Company had his company deployed on the East side of the dropping field and airstrip at La Gang Ga. Some of his automatic weapons covered a slightly used trail from the north leading to the river which ran near the drop field. About 0930 a platoon of about 20 to 30 Japs and one Nambu, or light machine gun, attacked the field from the north along the trail Lt. Hughes was covering. Lt. Hughes' guns opened up and the Japs returned the fire using their knee mortar. After the first burst of fire Private Thibadeaux, a machine gunner was wounded in the arm. Sergeant Jack Mayer, a machine gun squad leader, was wounded in both arms, one leg and his back by a hand grenade but both men stuck to their guns, firing until their assistant gunners would get to them. Sergeant Mayer's assistant gunner was Pfc. Adam J. Land of Baltimore. He was wounded in both legs by a grenade a minute after taking over the gun but he stuck to his gun for 20 minutes until the attackers were driven off. One Jap raised up right in front of him to throw a grenade. Land riddled him with a long burst from his gun. Lt. Hughes got on an SCR 536 and directed mortar fire on the Japs for five minutes before they ran, leaving ten dead on the field.

Lt. Hughes and a small patrol went forward to search the Jap dead and in one small area they counted five bodies. When they returned to that spot a few minutes later, they found only four bodies. As three separate men counted the bodies it appeared that one Jap playing dead got away. The word got around the perimeter and I doubt if that will happen again.

As Lt. Col. Charles E. Beach, Commanding Officer of third battalion was walking from La Gang Ga up the trail to the Orange Combat Team perimeter, a Jap stepped out on the trail 15 yards in front of him but before he could fire Col Beach's orderly, Private Sweeney shot the top of the Jap's head off with a tommy gun.

Lt. Weston's Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon which had crossed the river 600 yards above Malawbum was making a thorough reconnaissance of the area and reporting all information back to the Orange Combat Team Command Post at Malawbum by SCR 300. Lt. Weston was where he could observe Japs near Malawbum all day - at night he dug in a perimeter after making contact with the Japs - all night his men could hear the Japs moving around them and an occasional hand grenade was thrown by both sides.

Back at General Merrill's Command Post at Wesu Ga everything was running smoothly until a shout from a soldier "Get that Jap" then about four shots were fired. A Jap was setting up a sniper machine gun position on the main trail to Malawbum within 100 yards of General Merrill's Command Post. A wild chase followed but the Jap escaped with his gun, in the thick Kunai grass - five minutes later, less than 50 yards from the General's Command Post, where he was then sitting, a soldier looked up from his search to see a Jap smiling at him not 10 feet away. The Jap ran and the soldier fired several shots - the Jap escaped leaving a trail of blood on the grass which indicated the soldier had winged him at least.

The Orange Combat Team dug in and consolidated their position across the river from Malawbum and opened fire on the Japs in the town with their mortars. The main road was also placed under fire and traffic was stopped on it within an hour. The Japs then opened heavy mortar fire on the Orange Combat Team position and put out strong patrols to feel out their flanks - a heavy toll of Japs was taken as they hit American booby traps, ambushes and as they attempted to cross the river below the Orange position. At least 75 Japs were killed by this combat team during the day against the loss of one man killed and 7 wounded for the Marauders.

Liaison planes landed in the afternoon at La Gang Ga to evacuate the 7 wounded.

The Orange Combat Team had not had food for two days and when they put in their request for an airdrop they called for ammunition - ignoring the fact that they hadn't had food.

The second battalion chopped a trail almost due South from about two miles west of Wesu Ga toward the main road. At about 1400 the advance scouts who were protecting the men chopping saw a movement through a little bamboo grove and immediately signaled the choppers, and all took their guns to investigate. It proved to be several families of Kachins who were hiding from the Japanese. They recognized Captain Darlington and

were glad to see him. He asked them for information about the Japs which they readily gave and offered to guide our men to the Japs. Captain Darlington explained that we wanted to go to the main road without contacting the Japs - the old chief had a hard time understanding this but said he would guide the column. He did for about three hours until we found he was taking the column right into the Jap Headquarters, so we thanked him, told him goodbye and made our way as before.

The main road was reached near dusk, a road block constructed and a perimeter defense dug in to protect it without serious resistance.

Sergeant Matsumoto, a Nisei Japanese-American intelligence sergeant, tapped the main telephone line from Maingwan to Japanese 18th Division Headquarters at Kamaing and started sending out reports on the conversations he overheard. One of the messages was from a Jap sergeant at an ammunition dump 1000 metres from a bridge, which we later identified. This Jap sergeant asked his Commanding Officer for help and advice - he told his Commanding Officer that he only had three men and no weapons other than their rifles - this message was relayed through General Merrill for action and he sent it to General Stilwell requesting a bombing mission on the ammunition dump with the statement, "The 'help and advice' are now on their way", meaning that a platoon from the 3rd battalion had set out to find the ammunition dump.

Late in the afternoon everything became quiet at Walawbum and it appeared the Japs might have evacuated their positions there. Lt. Col. Beach decided to find out so he waded directly across the river with his orderly, and walked up the west bank to the village itself. He had reached the center of the village and turned south when about 14 Japs ran toward him from the north. Colonel Beach turned and pulled the trigger of his carbine but the gun misfired. Both he and his orderly ran for the east bank of the river. Across the river a machine gun opened on the Japs and covered Colonel Beach's quick return. It is thought that the reason the Japs didn't fire when he crossed the river was that they were determined to get a prisoner.

5 March 1944 - At dawn Colonel Hunter, Colonel Lee and a few scouts set out from Wesu Ga for Ningku Ga to meet Col. Brown and his tanks which had been placed under General Merrill's command. The tanks did not show up at Ningku Ga, but several Japs did show up. The scouts saw them first and fired killing two, but the rest got away. Colonel Hunter decided to move out on the Shimak Ga trail and as his party got about  $\frac{1}{2}$  mile from Shimak Ga they saw a large party of perhaps 50 Japs coming down the trail toward them - that put Japs on three sides of them so they quickly moved off the trail and hid while the large party of Japs passed - then they set about chopping their way back to Wesu Ga, which they reached late in the afternoon. All patrol

reports indicated that the Japs were withdrawing from the north all along the main line and all day small parties of Japs have run into our ambushes and trail blocks. General Merrill kept his Command Post at Kesu Ga despite the fact that Japs were all around him. The first battalion sent out patrols in all directions during the day. One patrol consisted of Lt. William C. Evans the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon leader of Red Combat Team and Sergeant Hawk, one of the best scouts in the entire unit, and one other man. They were mounted on horses, riding up a shallow river about 400 yards northwest of Kesu Ga when they were suddenly surprised by rifle fire from a distance of 20 feet. Both Lt. Evans and Sergeant Hawk rolled from the saddle into the water crawling on the bottom while the Japs peppered the place where they went under. Lt. Evans horse was killed and he was shot in the hand. Sergeant Hawk got a crease across his cheek and a bad bruise on his back where a bullet hit the saddle. The Japs fired about 40 shots into the water - finally both Lt. Evans and Sergeant Hawk came up. The other man was behind them and had galloped off into the jungle as the Japs continued to fire. All three got back safely a half hour later. A heavy patrol was sent to the spot to take care of the Japs, however they had disappeared into the jungle and could not be found. It was believed that they were a party making their way back from the north trying to reach their forces at Malabum.

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On the second battalion road block  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles north of Malabum the wire tapping was revealing valuable information - the Japs were surprised and confused by the blocks at Malabum and north of Malabum and were calling for help all along the line - one message was intercepted from Japanese Division Headquarters ordering a general withdrawal. All day the Japanese shelled and attacked the perimeter of the second battalion suffering losses from their attacks estimated at well above 100 killed. Pressure increased all afternoon and at 1800 General Merrill ordered the second battalion which had held the block for 36 hours to displace towards Malabum since the main action was going on at Malabum and because he was unable to get supplies to them. Second Battalion had been fighting all this time without water to drink and their ammunition was running low. The second battalion had been without food or water for 36 hours, but they set to work booby trapping the whole area and blowing trees across the rain road. At 2400 they withdrew over the same trail they had out to get in to their block. The lead scouts and Captain Burlington were afraid of booby traps so they drove a mule before them on the trail - it was good thing they did for a few minutes later the mule exploded a large booby trap and was killed. One unit of fire was dropped for them at Kesu Ga at 0800 on 6 March - they arrived

at Wesu Ga to pick it up at 1200 on 5 March and continued south to support 3rd Battalion at Malambum. The second battalion had suffered only one man killed and 5 wounded from the heavy Jap shelling and six separate Jap attacks during their 36 hour fight at their road block.

15-134  
Lt. Wilson, White Combat Team Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon leader, was leading two of his sections on a reconnaissance and combat patrol  $2\frac{1}{2}$  miles north of Shimak Ga at about 1000 when the scout in the center of his patrol saw something resembling a horses tail move near a small stream parallel to the trail. Lt. Wilson quickly crept up to the river bank - when he got about 15 feet from the river bank two Jap soldiers opened fire with rifles and threw hand grenades - one grenade landed within 5 feet of Lt. Wilson and blew his helmet off and several fragments hit his pack but did not injure him - one of the section leaders opened up on the two riflemen, killing one. Lt. Wilson heard a noise to his left and saw one Jap trying to get away on a horse. He shot him with his carbine then shot the horse. By this time his patrol had closed in and was spraying the bushes - the Japs fled leaving two dead including a Jap Major, and blood on the bushes indicated that some of those who escaped were wounded. Lt. Wilson had a critique on the spot - he showed his Tommy-gunners that they could have got the other two horses if they had moved faster.

The Orange Combat Team was engaged in sporadic fights all day from their position opposite Malambum. The Khaki Combat Team was at -a Gang Ga and the first battalion was still fighting with groups of Japs who under Chinese pressure from the north were attempting to escape southwards between Sana Ga and Uga Ga. The Japs were mortaring Orange Combat Team heavily in the afternoon and Orange mortars broke up numerous concentrations of Japs who appeared to be forming for an attack. All day dive bombers had been overhead divebombing and strafing Jap positions as pointed out by our air liaison officers over the radio and by smoke shells from our mortars. 600 yards north of Malambum Lt. Weston's Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon began taking a heavy pounding from Jap mortars just after daylight. At 0730 he was attacked from the north, at 1030 from the northeast, a little later from northwest. The Japanese, Wasei Interpreter with Lt. Weston heard the Jap orders for attack at different points and his warnings enabled Lt. Weston to shift automatic weapons to the point of attack - The Jap knee mortar fire was close and very accurate. At 1100, Lt. Weston was surrounded on three sides by superior forces of Japs and almost out of ammunition - he calmly asked his

Combat Team Commander to let his direct mortar fire on the Japs. This was quickly arranged, the mortars firing from La Gang Ga 1000 yards away. Some casualties were inflicted on the Japs for screams could be heard after an HE light burst in a tree near the river bank. Major Low saw that his Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon was getting into a Jap trap so he decided to get it out as quickly as possible. He told Lt. Weston to withdraw under the cover of a squad on the river bank and a smoke barrage on the Jap positions overlooking the river. Weston's men took off their undershirts and put them on the river bank to mark the flanks of the place they were going to cross so the squad on the opposite bank could cover them, - then he called for smoke and started withdrawing a few of his men to the river bank, letting them infiltrate across under the protective fire of the BARs on the opposite bank. The Japs had anticipated this withdrawal and had placed two Nambus near the bank - the BARs opened on them however and the Nambus didn't fire more than 10 shots at the men withdrawing. A few men from each side of the perimeter withdrew at a time BAR and tommy gun men were lost - The Japs were throwing mortar fire on the perimeter all the time. The first four men to cross carried litters made of jackets stretched on bamboo poles on which they carried two badly wounded comrades. When they reached the opposite bank the medics took the wounded and dressed their wounds even though bullets were flying about and mortar shells were bursting in the water 10 to 20 yards away. Lt. Weston was the last man to cross the river followed closely by the Japs. The withdrawal had been a success - perfectly coordinated plan - communications by 300 radio had been maintained all the time. One of Lt. Weston's snipers, Chief Janis a full blooded American Indian had picked off five Japs who had crept to the river bank and were firing at close range at the infiltrating members of Weston's Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon.

Late in the afternoon the third battalion directed the bombers and fighters on two Jap field pieces about 150 yards apart, which our patrols had located. It is believed that these guns were knocked out for they were not heard from again today.

All day trucks pulled up south of Malambun unloading Jap reinforcements - the planes took a toll of some as they strafed everything that moved, but just after dark the trucks started moving again and tail gates slamming against the back of the trucks could be heard all night indicating reinforcements were arriving.

The Japs attacked several times during the day, but not energetically. Our automatic weapons took a heavy toll as each platoon swept to the river bank only to fall back under a withering fire leaving their dead.

8 March 1944 - At 0700 General Merrill moved his Command Post from Hsu Ga to La Gang Ga. Khaki Combat Team was moved secretly to a position south of Orange in a bend of the river and almost due south of the Jap perimeter at Walambun, where they could protect Orange Combat Team's flank.

The Japs opened fire on Orange Combat Team just after dawn - by 1015 they were throwing medium artillery into the perimeter and a constant stream of mortar fire. Orange was well dug in with logs over their foxholes and trees overhead had been chopped down. The animals however were not so fortunate and the shelling took a toll of 8 killed and several badly wounded by 1200. Orange answered the fire with a heavy barrage of mortar fire on the Jap concentration area behind the village and took a good toll of casualties from among the Japs still unloading from trucks - one 81 MM M.K. light was seen to burst in the bed of a truck load of Japs throwing bodies in all directions. Sergeant Andrew Fung of Halden, Mass., climbed 50 feet up into a tree in his platoon perimeter with a 536 radio and directed mortar fire and told his platoon leader exactly what the Japs were doing enabling him to warn the platoon before an attack. Finally a tree burst stunned him and he dropped his radio, his canteen was blown off his belt but he got down safely though he was deafened for a few days. Sergeant Carl Hammond of Cleveland, Ohio, hit a Jap land mine just outside the Orange perimeter - it blew him 6 feet in the air, he had powder burns and couldn't hear for an hour but otherwise was O.K. He said, "I was really scared, it made a crater as big as a pothole."

At 1450 the Japs started shelling the airstrip at La Gang Ga and the shells were passing directly over General Merrill's Command Post. This artillery

appeared to be either 150 MM. The Japs shot two at a time indicating they were using two guns. The shelling was heavy for 15 minutes then we would get a 10 minute break - some men didn't have foxholes and between rounds the dirt flew as they dug with helmets bayonets and mess gear - few men had shovels - any available would have sold for \$100.00 each at least. Patrol the first battalion which had moved directly behind the Regimental Command Post at LaGang Ga was taking the brunt of the shelling and were losing quite a few animals and some men. Liaison planes kept landing to pick up the wounded - they earned the eternal admiration of every man in the 530<sup>th</sup> that day. Crews of men rushed on the airstrip filling shell craters after each barrage - then rushed off before the next barrage came over. In the middle of the shelling about 1500 hours a Pfc from the first battalion was digging a foxhole near the river bank at LaGang Ga, - about 50 yards from General Merrill's Command Post - as he turned around to dig in the opposite direction, he saw two japs peering through some bushes about six feet away. They threw a hand grenade - he ran, then rolled on the ground - the grenade rolled over the river bank and exploded. He got up and again escaped - the grenade explosion brought other men in the area to the scene. Pvt. Frank Weber, of the Pioneer and Demolition platoon of 2nd battalion, Pvt. Gerald Parma, a Brooklyn M.P. who wears a helmet, wearing only a wool cap through rain or shine, and Pvt. George Walulon, a mule-skinner attacked the two Japs with M-1 and tommy guns and riddled them before they had a chance to get their rifles up. The excitement caused by the Japs near the Command Post during the shelling was electric - other men started firing at supposed snipers, however no other Jap bodies were found in the area.

At 1800 General Merrill had to go through the artillery impact area to see Colonel Rothwell G. Brown who had arrived at Hsueh Ga with some of his tanks operated by Chinese crews. It took an hour to go a 1/2-mile, but the General and his party finally made it. A conference was held at the Chinese Battalion Commander's Command Post, who had just arrived to relieve us at Walawbum. Late Intelligence information indicated that the Japs were falling back rapidly from Maingwan but were trying to bottle up our force with a regiment to the north and large reinforcements from the south. General Merrill decided that we would pull out of Walawbum at 2400 and try to cut the road south of Walawbum near Chammoi. The tanks would continue to operate north and west of the Nambyu river against the main Japanese forces to the north as they could not cross the river and work directly with us. Orders were issued to the 3rd battalion ...

To pull back to the south of Wesu Ga at 2400, and the second battalion was to pull back to the northeast side of Wesu Ga at 2000 - the first battalion was to hold the drop field at Wesu Ga and the area to the northwest of the town.

General Merrill said his party moved back to his Command Post at dusk - the shelling continued - he ordered an immediate move to Wesu Ga and the Command Post moved out at 1930 in the midst of scattered artillery fire all over the La Gang Ga area. Our lack of artillery was felt by everyone. We knew that we had to have something to combat the Jap artillery.

At 1300 the Jap artillery was located and pin-pointed at 600 yards at 290° and one mile at 220° from the Orange Combat Team perimeter. Dive bombers were directed on it but after the bombing the guns opened rapid fire on the Orange perimeter opposite Malawum and the Jap mortars kept up an ever increasing rate of fire on the entire perimeter. Orange expected an attack and was all set. Our automatic weapons were silent as were the Japs but mortars on both sides kept up a steady barrage.

At 1715 hours a reinforced company followed by another company in line of skirmishers under cover of everything the Japs could throw tried to cross the river. There was much shouting of Banzai! Surrender! Banzai and a lot of Japanese words as officers prodded the men forward and in some cases led them waving swords. Not a shot was fired by the Marauders until the first wave was about 40 yards away and had reached the water. Then all hell broke loose from across the river bank - machine guns opened full automatic, tommy guns, BARs, mortars, everything that would fire was turned on the Japs - the river was suddenly full of bodies and still the Japs charged on. The Marauders in the face of the blistering Jap mortar, artillery and machine gun fire kept calm and fired till their gun barrels were red hot. It seemed the Japs had decided that they must storm our position or die and that is just what they did. Our men were waving their arms yelling, "Come and get some more of it, you yellow son-of-a-bitches!" "Tojo eats shit" etc.

The two heavy machine guns low on the river bank swept the river with murderous bands of fire. Corporal Earl E. Kinsinger, gunner on Guadalcanal, and Corporal Joseph de Orio were the gunners. They fired 5000 rounds each in the course of the attack. Ammunition began running low and the Japs continued to attack on the flanks. A rush call for ammunition brought five mule loads from Khaki Combat Team on the run, but before it arrived the attack was broken and dead Japs were choking the shallow stream in front of our position. Chief Janis, a sniper lay close beside

-46-

one of the machine guns and picked off eight Japs who almost got within grenade throwing range of the machine gun position.

Private John G. Gross, Jr. told the machine gunners where to fire when the dirt started coming in on them from ricochets aimed at their pill box. Someone said a Jap yelled, "Roosevelt eats shit!" In reply to a Marauder who yelled, "Tojo eats shit!". Then the Marauder yelled back, "Tojo eats Corned Beef!" The Jap replied, "Eleanor eats powdered eggs!"

The spirit of the men during the attack was awe-inspiring. They didn't notice the shells whizzing by or the mortars exploding in the perimeter. Some of them stood up and shook their fists, imploring the Japs to come on!

After the attack, artillery shelling started again but finally petered out by 2200 hours. The third battalion quietly evacuated their positions at 2400 hours and withdrew to the Wesu Ga area. A number of the boys who were on Guadalcanal, New Georgia and the fighting in New Guinea said that it was the heaviest attack they had ever seen and that the Japs threw more lead at them than they had ever seen before. In the attack we had seven men wounded but not one man killed. At least four hundred Japs were killed, not counting those killed by mortar fire beyond the river bank.

The Japs had tried to get us to fire our automatic weapons all day but Major Lew knew what they wanted. The Japs did not fire theirs until the main attack late in the afternoon.

Sergeant Louis Oliver of Princeton, Kentucky, is a backwoods marksman and squirrel shooter who shoots empty cartridges out of his platoon sergeant's hand as a stunt. He fired only twenty seven shots with his M-1 but says he is sure he got nine Japs. Another sniper who did a good job is a little fellow by the name of Peter Forty. His friends call him P-40. He has been shot at by his own men because he looks like a Japanese, but he got several, he says, in the big attack. He was shot in the shoe; his sock was torn but his foot was not touched.

7 March 1944 - At Wesu Ga dawn broke on a foggy morning and we were glad to see it for it meant Jap artillery wouldn't have much observation. There was sniper fire sporadically in almost every direction and everyone moved with caution. Once a Nambu opened up on a small column. We opened heavy fire and the Japs withdrew. The situation was confused by Japs wandering about trying to find their own forces.

At 0600 hours as the Jap artillery opened up on the drop field at Wesu Ga, the first battalion moved out to a paddy field three and one half miles east of the town where they set up a defense of the field and prepared a landing strip to evacuate casualties. At 0700 the first platoon of C company, Red Combat Team was disposed along the river east of Wesu Ga when they were fired on by unknown troops. They returned the fire using mortars. The noise from the conflict brought Lt. Sam V. Wilson and a Chinese interpreter who was nearby. They called out to the troops firing on us across the little stream and they answered that they were Chinese. We ceased firing as did they and crossed the stream to see if there were any casualties. Four Chinese including a Major were badly wounded. The Chinese Lieutenant told our interpreter that they fired on us when they saw our helmets which were so much like the Japanese helmets. We had had no casualties. Our doctors and aid men were on the scene in a few minutes and the American soldiers who had done the shooting volunteered to carry the wounded on the air strip where they were evacuated before any American wounded. The Chinese and Americans regretted the incident but it could have happened to two platoons of American troops almost as easily.

The second and third battalions arrived at the drop field by noon and prepared to pick up their drop which arrived at 1500 hours. All morning units of the Chinese 38th Division had moved through us towards Walabum. The trails were jammed with troops. They had advanced rapidly when Japanese resistance to the north collapsed after the blocks were placed on the main road at Walabum and two and one half miles north of Walabum. At 1400 hours the Division pack artillery passed by the Marauder drop field. A cheer went up from every Marauder as they saw the pack artillery pass. We had been pounded for several days by Jap artillery without anything to retaliate with and we were mighty happy to see something go by that would even up the score. The Chinese 38th Division went into Wesu Ga and later Walabum without much resistance. The Jap back was broken after his attack on the 6th and resistance to the American and Chinese forces weakened greatly in this area.

At 1845 hours General Merrill had a staff meeting at which he told the officers, "The first phase of our operations is over." Our move to Chammoi is off since we would get jammed up with 38th Division who are heading that way. General Stilwell has sent a message that he is pleased. Between us and the Chinese we have forced the Japs to withdraw farther in the last three days than they have in the last three months of fighting.

Our new mission will be made known to us soon. Please convey to your men General Stilwell's and my congratulations for a fine piece of work. Get rested and re-equipped as soon as possible and be ready to move on our next operation in three days."

Some of the Chinese bivouacked on the trail near our drop field and before long it seemed as if a Chinese occupation force had taken over the American camp and an American occupation force the Chinese camp - trading K rations for bully beef and rice and exchanging souvenirs from Chinese money to Jap battle flags was the order of the day. Many a Marauder ate a delicious Chinese cooked meal. One group got together with some Chinese who had some meal and cook flap-jacks in their entrenching shovels over a bamboo fire. Other perversions of K rations were to be seen on all sides such as making rice pudding by using a fruit bar chopped up in a bowl of rice and adding sugar, chocolate rice pudding by scraping the D bar into the sweetened rice and allowing the whole thing to simmer, rice with meat and vegetable stew from C rations or egg yolks from K rations makes a tasty dish, or a cheese ball made by crumbling crackers up, rolling in the corned pork loaf from K rations, covering the ball with melted cheese and roasting over a fire until brown is quite a delicacy. A good stew can be made by crumbling crackers into the bouillon and adding a meat component from the K rations. For desert, chocolate bread pudding - boil water with sugar, crumble up and add crackers until thick - add scraped D bar and let it simmer.

8 March 1944. - The entire unit moved three and one half miles north to the vicinity of Shikau Ga near where the Chinese 38th Division Headquarters was located. General Merrill visited Lt. General Sun Li Jen, Commanding Officer of the 38th Division, late in the afternoon and had a very cordial reception.

Jap artillery is still shelling Wesu Ga today but Chinese are dug in and the Japs are not attacking.

A joint perimeter was set up by the American and Chinese forces around Sana Ga - Shikau Ga area and again the camps became merged into one Chinese-American Camp.

9 March, 1944. - General Merrill arranged for General Sun to see the correspondents at 0800 hours this morning. On the way up to General Sun's Headquarters we passed many Chinese and Americans bathing in the small stream which paralleled the trail and also many Chinese chopping bamboo to make bashas. The Chinese are great soldiers for digging in. Everywhere they ...

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-49-

slept they dug fox holes and made an excellent perimeter. They first dug the fox holes. Then if they stay in a place a few days, an officer marks out the location of trenches and pill boxes which they dig and improve every day. Logs are laid over the pill boxes and each soldier has a shelter from mortar fire.

General Sun's aide met us at his headquarters basha and a few minutes later General Sun appeared wearing riding breeches and leather leggings. He is a tall, slender man for a Chinese with sharp aquiline features and brilliant black eyes. He greeted General Merrill warmly and talked to the correspondents mainly in English though sometimes through an interpreter. He told them, "We need the Burma Road badly" and "This is fine work you fellows (Marauders) are doing". He told General Merrill, "You've got tough men who want to kill Japs". General Merrill replied, "Well, we haven't done much". General Sun replied, "I think you are very modest". Forty four year old General Sun rose from the grade of private to that of Lt. General in the Chinese Army. He was educated in China, and in 1927 graduated from Virginia Military Institute in the United States. He took some additional engineering training at Furdue University and returned to China to enter the army. He was aide-de-camp to the Generalissimo Chiang Kai Shek in 1930-31. In 1937 he received nine wounds from shrapnel during the fighting in Shanghai. In 1942 he had risen to a Brigadier General and marched into Burma with General Stilwell as Commanding Officer of the 58th Division. In January 1942 he was awarded the C.B.E. by the British Government when one of his regiments saved seven thousand British soldiers trapped near the oil field of Yenangyaung, Burma. He has commanded the 58th Division from the first Burma campaign through its training period in Rangarh until now. His division left Ledo in April 1943. On October 26 they started to move to Shingwiyang, captured it on the 28th and took Kiang Sakan on Christmas Day. He captured Taipha Ga on February 1st and his forces occupied the town of Walawbum yesterday, March 8th.

General Sun said, "Frontal attack is no way to defeat the Japs. In this case the long way around is a short cut". Colonel Chun Lee, General Sun's liaison officer with General Merrill, took great pride in introducing the members of General Sun's staff including American liaison officers attached to the 58th Division headed by Colonel Edward J. McNally, another classmate of General Merrill's at West Point.

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At 1015 hours the Command Group left the vicinity of Kuyang Ga and marched to the vicinity of Shikau Ga by 1245 where the entire unit was to rest for several days prior to starting the next mission. Shikau Ga is on the banks of a beautiful little stream and the beach is sandy and excellent for swimming.

Patrol activity is maintained in a six mile radius from Shikau Ga. A Kachin reported that three hundred Japs were seen a few miles down the river on 8 March. Our patrols went out immediately but only found an abandoned Jap bivouac area nearby and fresh Jap shoe prints. Most of the men who went out on these patrols were men who had not yet killed any Japs and were anxious to get in on the killing.

General Stilwell radioed General Merrill to come to his Headquarters at Maingwan on 10 March.

10 March, 1944. - General Merrill and a party of about twenty five rode to Maingwan early this morning to have a conference with General Stilwell on the next phase of our operations. This ride was made through a 16 mile section of country in which scattered groups of Japs were still milling around but there was no excitement. After the conference General Stilwell and General Merrill held a press conference. General Merrill and his party returned to Shikau Ga at 1900 hours.

All day the Marauders have been swimming, resting, catching fish and generally resting. The mules are even joining in and are rolling about on the sandy beach.

An air drop of two days K rations and two days grain ration arrived during the early afternoon.

At 1400 hours Chaplain Lawrence A. Dickson, Waco, Texas, Chaplain of the first battalion, held a memorial service for the men of that battalion who had given their lives. Under a cloudy sky with C-47's flying overhead, the hard, unshaven men resting their rifles on their knees sat and prayed in this service. Mules and horses were grazing nearby and twice our patrols passed by coming back from a reconnaissance. The sound of artillery landing only two or three miles away vied with the heavier thud of an aerial bomb released by a fighter bomber. The sharp rolling crack of strafing drowned out the Chaplain's voice at times. After a prayer, Chaplain Dickson talked about the Friendship of God. The men hung on every word as he talked briefly about salvation and the deliverance that Christ offers us. After the service I noticed a blue flag with a white cross and commented on the fact that he was lucky to have a church flag out here. He told me some of the men had made it from parachutes.

11 March 1944. - General Merrill held a staff conference at which he told us the second phase of our operation would start in about two days and that the units would be split for a part of the phase. This is the plan he outlined: The first battalion of the 5307th would be followed at one day's march by the 113th Chinese Infantry Regiment from the 38th Division and would strike almost due south over the mountains until they were past Jambu Bum then turn west to strike at or near Shaduzup throwing a block on the main road below Shaduzup. The block would be established by the first battalion, then the 113th would occupy it allowing the first battalion to move on for another mission. The second and third battalions of the 5307th would march almost due east to Pabum, turn south at Pabum and be prepared to strike at Shaduzup or below Shaduzup establishing a block on the main road to Kamaing.

Colonel Hunter flew to Maingwan to let General Stilwell know General Merrill's detailed plan. General Merrill showed his diplomacy in handling the 113th Chinese Regiment given to him by General Stilwell for the next operation. Naturally General Sun, Division Commander of the 38th Division, didn't like giving up a regiment so General Merrill gave it back to him and said, "You keep it under your command but have it co-operate with my first battalion. I will lend you my G-3 and G-2 and also a radio team to move with the 113th so that proper liaison can be maintained between them, the first battalion and my Headquarters". General Sun like this plan and everyone was happy.

General Merrill's ability to work with the Chinese is apparent on every side. He does not give them orders, he asks their co-operation and they have never failed him.

The British Foreign Secretary, Anthony Eden, in late February, told the House of Commons, "If any of us had the choice we would say that of all the ordeals to which the military could be put, warfare such as troops are now engaged in on the Burma frontier is perhaps the toughest of all". One of the Marauders, a veteran of Guadalcanal, on hearing this statement far behind the Jap lines, said, "What does he mean 'Perhaps'".

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As the 5307th was split into two units - for the second phase of operations I will split the diary.

FIRST BATTALION ATTACK SOUTH OF SHADUZUP

12 March 1944 - At 0830 the first battalion marched out of Shikau Ga and arrived at Shingbei Ga at 1530, a distance of approximately nine miles, where they bivouaced for the night.

13 March 1944 - The first battalion left Shingbei Ga at 0800 and arrived at Makry Bum at 1830, a distance of about twelve miles. The Chinese 113th Regiment less one battalion joined the column and followed at a distance of one day's march.

Lt. Wilson's Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon advancing several miles ahead of the main column saw fresh Jap shoeprints on the trail and a few minutes later they slipped up on a group of Japs sitting around a fire just off the trail about four miles north of Tabauyang. Creeping up as close as possible before opening fire, they completely surprised the Japs killing four and one Burmese. The surviving Japs ran, abandoning everything and crossed the Tingkrung River. Lt. John P. McElmurry took his rifle platoon across the river and contacted the Japs again. A stiff fire fight developed in which the Japs lost two men killed and Lt. McElmurry lost one man killed. He held the high ground and remained in position during the night holding the bridgehead.

14 March 1944. - The Red Combat Team led out towards Tabauyang and fought eight engagements in one and a half miles. The Japs had two heavy machine guns, two light machine guns and several knee mortars. They used the ground well and their tactics were astutely adapted to the ground they were fighting over. The country was rough and it would be easy to get lost within ten yards of the trail. The Japs probably knew we had a superior force, but, by pinning our lead squad down, then throwing in knee mortar shells fast before we could support it, they successfully stopped our advance. A few minutes later when our mortars went into action and an enveloping force was cutting behind the Jap flanks and rear, they moved back a few hundred yards and dug in again. Approximately one company of Japanese was operating against us on the trail and our scouts reported that the Japs had brought up supplies from the Jambu Bum area, a few miles to the west, and that they had evacuated thirty wounded during

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the night. Lt. Colonel William L. Osborne, Commander of the first Battalion, pulled the White Combat Team back to Bench Marker 918 for the night and left the Red Combat Team in contact with the Japs. As these delays would vitally affect the schedule of his attack near Shaduzup he decided to cut a trail around the Japs the next day even though the going would be extremely tough.

15 March 1944 - At dawn the White Combat Team started cutting a trail along the river to Kumshan Gahtawng. The Red Combat Team remained in contact with the Japs, then late in the afternoon, followed by the 113th Chinese Regiment, pulled out on the trail that the White Combat Team had cut. The White Combat Team arrived at Kumshan Gahtawng at 1515 hours and bivouaced there for the night.

16 March 1944 - The first battalion had a drop scheduled for today, and at dawn they started clearing the most open space available to receive the drop. The planes came over but due to the mountainous terrain could not find the first battalion until they had expended too much of their gas, so they reported they would come back on the morning of the 17th.

Our wounded from the engagements with the Japanese were turned over to a mobile Seagraves Hospital Unit which took care of their evacuation.

All day the men improved the drop area, cutting trees, clearing creepers, and thick underbrush - however at best it was a poor field for it was on the side of a hill, but it was the best available in that part of the country.

17 March 1944 - Our patrols had located some Japs in the area near where the battalion was bivouaced. Colonel Osborne, smelling a rat, moved the battalion to another location. At 0730 the drop planes came over and as they started dropping, the Japs opened up with mortar fire on the bivouac area from which Colonel Osborne had just moved the battalion. The Japs withdrew before we could get to them. No trail could be found on which they could have escaped, so apparently only a few had cut their way through and then had withdrawn by the same route. The air drop was only partially successful due to nearby hills and the planes had to stay up pretty high and consequently quite a lot of the grain, which was free dropped, went over the hillside and was lost. A number of parachute loads also went over the side of the hill but were searched out and found.

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In the afternoon the battalion started cutting its way again over very rough mountainous country. Officers and men alternated at the cutting and clearing of the trail. By nightfall the battalion had moved two miles in the direction of Jaiwa Ga.

18 March 1944. - The first battalion continued cutting the trail during the day and by nightfall they were two miles northwest of Jaiwa Ga where they bivouac<sup>d</sup> for the night.

19 March 1944. - Drop planes were over the drop area near our bivouac during the morning. Captain Tom. P. Seaff; battalion S-3, went to Jaiwa Ga and contacted Lt. Tilley of O.S.S. who had a force of about fifty Kachins in this area.

Lt. Tilley was expecting our column and had guides ready for the rest of the march towards Shaduzup. Captain Seaff went on to Weilangyang where General Merrill and the second and third battalions were then located to give the General full details on first battalions plans and to get any further orders for the battalion.

20 March 1944. - The first battalion marched over difficult trails to Nprawa where our lead platoon hit a Jap machine gun blocking the trail - we had one man killed and two wounded before the gun and crew were wiped out by mortar fire on their block.

Other Japs in the block apparently withdrew and our platoon moved forward in close pursuit. These were the first casualties that we had suffered that could be traced to language barriers. As we moved out of Jaiwa Ga with Kachins accompanying our lead scouts, the Kachins started muttering some unintelligible lingo - our interpreter was not around and the men tried to feed the Kachins or give them cigarettes when they started jabbering. Actually they were trying to tell us that the Japs had a block somewhere along the trail we were then using but before our interpreter came up, our advance scout ran into the Jap ambush. We were lucky only to lose one man killed - if the Japs had waited a few minutes more they could have had a much bigger target. The men learned a lesson, and from then on whenever a Kachin had something to say we got an interpreter.

21 March 1944. - We received a five day drop at a paddy field near Htingnankawng - the Red Combat Team moved on to Mpauchyo Ga and bivouac<sup>d</sup> for the night.

22 March 1944 - We left Hpauchye Ga with Lt. Harry B. Coburn's platoon leading. About four miles southwest of Hpauchye Ga our lead patrols hit a Jap ambush. We had one man killed and two wounded but not seriously enough to be evacuated. Continued southwest on the trail and hit the same Japs who had withdrawn up the trail and had put in another block. It appeared that the Japs were pulling a delaying action again, so Lt. Coburn cut down a stream bed for a about four miles cutting a trail most of the way. The going was very tough but progress was being made. Lt. Coburn's advance scouts scented out a Jap block at a stream junction, crept silently up on it and killed seven Japs resting near fox-holes while the rest of the Japs ran into the jungle. Lt. Coburn took up the Jap position intact and rested his men. While resting in the Jap position, the Japs came back in strength and Lt. Coburn's platoon killed four more of them. A reconnaissance down the trail which led from the stream junction showed the Japs had a block with machine guns and a dug in perimeter so Lt. Coburn led his platoon down the river around the block and late in the afternoon bivouacked<sup>K</sup> along the river banks. As the Japs seemed to have blocks on all the trails in this area, Colonel Osborn decided to cut his own trail for he considered it extremely important that we have as little contact with the enemy as possible from now on, in order to gain the element of surprise at their objective.

24 March 1944 - We marched and cut a trail two miles over mountain country. In some places the loads had to be taken off the animals and man-handled up the slippery mountainsides. We bivouacked<sup>K</sup> for the night on the side of a mountain. No contact with the Japanese all day.

25 March 1944 - We continued to cut a trail for ~~then~~ hours covering only one and a half miles. Today was the hardest, most tortuous part of the march since we entered Burma. Lt. McMurray led his platoon directly towards Shadurup in a feint which made the Japs think we were attacking there. The Japs shifted their defences to handle this movement, thereby weakening their defenses on the main road and allowing the rest of the battalion to slip into the Jap position four and a half miles to the south of Shadurup.

26 March 1944 - We covered eight miles and bivouacked<sup>K</sup> on the banks of the Chengun River. Colonel Osborne had decided the general area where he will place the road block. It is a U-bend of the Mogaung River which parallels the main road about four and a half miles south of Shadurup.

27 March 1944 - The White Combat Team under Major Carlson Johnson led the column for ten miles down the Changan River - wading in ankle to knee deep water most of the way as it was easier than cutting a trail. Everyone was soaking wet all day but in good spirits because we were nearing our objective.

Lt. Wilson reported to Major Johnson about 1400 that his Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon had reached the Mogaung River and that the Japs were in that general area in considerable numbers. Many Japs were seen in bathing, and further down the river some were greasing fish. It appeared to Lt. Wilson that there was Jap camp on the other side of the river between the river and the road. Major Johnson ordered him to break up his unit into two patrols - one to reconnoiter down the Mogaung River from the stream junction with the Changan River, and the other patrol to reconnoiter up the river from that junction. Lt. Wilson personally led the patrol which reconnoitered the area north of the stream junction. After a careful investigation along the river bank he decided to cross the fifty yard wide river taking one man with him and attempt to get a better idea as to the size of the Jap camp and the location of their defenses, and also to find out if the river was fordable. Slipping quietly into the water about two hundred yards up the river from the Jap camp, Lt. Wilson with a carbine and Sergeant Forlee Tintary with a tommy gun held their weapons over their heads and waded as rapidly as possible in the swift flowing stream. As they waded up to their necks in the middle of the stream a signal from the men left on the riverbank brought their attention to an armed Jap patrol walking toward the bank which they were approaching. Lt. Wilson and Sgt. Tintary strained every muscle trying to reach some bushes on the riverbank before the Jap patrol reached the bank. They succeeded in crawling into the bushes only a minute before the patrol passed them moving on to the water's edge and filling canteens then departing by the route they came - much to the relief of Lt. Wilson and Sgt. Tintary. Cautiously peering out of the bushes they wormed their way on the ground into the Jap camp, which was spread out in a woods between the river and the road. They estimated that a company at least was bivouacked in the area that they were in and it appeared that there was another camp to the south. Finally crawling to the road they found it undefended and saw Japs casually walking on the opposite side. Working their way back to the river by a different route they observed large stores of food and clothing in bashes and under canvas tents. Reaching the river they waded in and made their way across just as another Jap

patrol reached the water's edge, but apparently didn't see them only fifty yards up the river.

After Lt. Wilson had returned with the information he had obtained, Major Johnson made a personal reconnaissance and issued orders. At 0300 the next morning the White Combat Team was to cross the river with bayonets fixed and attack the Jap camp at dawn - no firing before daylight - six platoons would cross the stream in column initially, and on reaching the west bank the first platoon would move two hundred yards north along the river, the second platoon would move on a 270° azimuth and hit the road, the third would tie in with the fourth and the sixth platoon to remain in the vicinity of the point where the crossing was to be made - after the attack swept through the Jap camp a perimeter would be dug on the main road. Major Johnson's Command Post and aid station is to be at the river crossing point on the west side of the stream.

28 March 1944 - At 2400 Major Johnson waded the river at the point where he had decided to make the main crossing - a lone Jap sentry about seventy five yards down the river was walking up and down carrying a smudgy lantern. Satisfied that the river could be forded Major Johnson returned to his Command Post on the east bank. In the meantime Colonel Osborne ordered the Red Combat team to cover the east bank of the river - The Chinese 115th Regiment remained bivouaced on a hill about a mile northeast of the river in readiness to occupy the positions when the first battalion pulled out.

At 0500 with Lt. Philip S. Weld's platoon leading and Lt Weld the lead man, the White Combat Team moved out silently, and slowly waded across the river. By some stroke of luck not a Jap sentry was encountered and the platoons slipped into place before daylight. Radio contact by SCR 500 and SCR 556 was maintained. As dawn began to break and little fires started to pop over the Jap camp the signal for the attack was given over the radio by Major Johnson. The Marauders swept through the Jap camp. Consternation and confusion do not half way describe the scene. Half dressed Japs without guns ran amuck - some with guns fired wildly - the Marauders with bayonets and grenades killed many. The first Japs seen were at a semi-permanent latrine and they broke and ran, shouting excitedly. They were mowed down by a tommy-gunner. Lt. Meredith Caldwell's platoon was the first to reach the main road and they were hardly there before a Jap truck from Kamsing came

up the road. Three Japs in the cab started to jump when they saw four tommy guns aimed at them but had no chance as a second later the cab was riddled. The truck proved to be loaded with Jap uniforms and underwear and with a few sacks of rice thrown in. The truck was a Jap copy of the Ford truck, model 1935. The Japs in the bivouac area by this time were in full alarm and were beginning to offer some resistance. The Marauders later ate the cooked rice and fish which some of the Japs had left cooking on small fires and changed into the new Jap underwear. The camp proved to be well supplied with guns, equipment and food but the Marauders didn't have time to inspect it as they had orders to dig in a perimeter on the main road, to block all supplies from Kamaing to Shadusup and to withstand the inevitable counter-attack, which wasn't long in coming.

By 0700 Jap snipers were firing at men digging and at anyone walking on the road. Lt. Weld's platoon at the northern end of the Jap camp was putting in their perimeter and were making an effort to cross the river at the top of the V-bend when they were fired on by Japs. Lt. Weld's platoon pulled back but left two wounded on a sandbar under heavy Jap machine-gun fire. Sgt. Allan H. Oberby located one of the Jap machine guns across the river, then exposed himself by running up and down the riverbank to draw fire so as to find the best place to cross to get the wounded men out. Bullets were landing six inches behind him as he ran. He then directed mortar fire at the Jap machine gun. A mortar platoon leader saw the plight of the men on the sandbar and spotted the Jap guns - they threw a barrage of H.E. light on the Japs, then some smoke and more H.E. light while Lt. Weld and another man waded to the sandbar and brought back the two wounded. The main Jap telephone line paralleling the road was cut by a man throwing a shovel on a rope over the wire pulling it down and cutting it. Apparently the Marauder's attack had hit very close to the Jap artillery positions for within two hours after the attack the Japs opened up on the Red Combat Team on the east side of the river. Apparently the artillery was too close to fire on the perimeter dug on the road, but by mid-morning the Jap artillery, 150 mm. and

75 mm., were keeping up a steady barrage - later another battery of artillery opened up at point-blank range on the perimeter. The Japs were turning their attention from the Chinese to the north to the Marauders who were threatening their rear - the Chinese taking advantage of this, attacked continuously and made good progress towards Shaduzup. By noon the Japs were attacking the perimeter from the north but were repulsed with heavy losses. At about 1800 they attacked from the west under terrific artillery support but were cut down by our machine guns by scores - all afternoon attacks by one or two platoons continued always from a different point and all at a great loss to the Japs. During the night the artillery continued to fire both on the Red Combat Teams on the east side of the river and the White Combat Team on the main road. Sounds of trucks unloading reinforcements could be heard all night - and the artillery was being moved also. We returned their fire with heavy mortar concentrations on the road where they were unloading troops from trucks on known positions they were defending. During the night the Japs fired machine guns intermittently all night long and our men threw hand grenades at anything moving in front of their positions.

29 March 1944 - During the pre-dawn hours, according to plans the Chinese 118th Regiment moved in, platoon by platoon into the perimeter established by the White Combat Teams. By 1000 hours the move was complete and the White Combat Team had moved up the Chengun River about a mile to where the Seagraves Hospital Unit was located. The Chinese pack artillery opened up on the Jap positions on the morning of the 29th - the Japs were relatively quiet.

30 March 1944 - The first battalion rested along the banks of the Chengun River all day. The Chinese and Jap artillery fired off and on all day nearby. More than three hundred Japs were estimated to have been killed by the Marauders in this attack at a loss of only eight killed and about thirty five wounded. Several animals were lost but generally the animals had had good cover during the shelling and casualties were light.

When the first battalion started south from Shikau Ga for Waiabum, the muleskinners noticed that a cow and a heifer were following the mule train. Over steep, slippery mountain trails and through jungle streams they continued

and pretty soon they were getting fed the same grain that the mules were getting. The word spread through the column like wild fire that the victory feast after Shaduzup was walking along with the mule train.

There was a considerable difference of opinion among the Marauders as to whether it was best to keep this dinner until after the Shaduzup fight - some said a bird in the hand is worth two in the bush but the mule skimmers persisted in keeping their cow and heifer. Both animals survived the artillery shelling and the fight south of Shaduzup. When the Chinese took over the perimeter, there was some confusion and animals were all mixed up and to the bitter disappointment of all, the cow and the heifer could not be found.

31 March 1944 - The march back up the Chengun River was pretty tough on the animals as well as the men. The first battalion had been ordered to move to the east of Mupaw Ga to protect the rear of the second and third battalions which were engaged with the Japs in the Manpin - Auche - Mapus area.

Today three horses had to be shot as they were worn out and had collapsed on the trail.

1 April 1944 - We received an air drop today and marched a total of one thousand yards over very rough country.

2 April 1944 - This afternoon as the column was cutting a trail over tortuous mountains, the animal train got separated from the end of the column. The word was passed "There's a gap in the column". When it reached Colonel Osborne at the head of the column, it was "There's a Jap in the column" - Colonel Osborne, tired and sweating, turned his head only slightly and said, "Well, get the bastard out of the column!" That message was passed on to the rear - but the men were too tired to laugh.

Marching over the trail we had previously cut, with rain pouring down and every step forward only half of a step because of sliding back in the

mud, the battalion reached the Shadu River. It was very difficult climbing and some of the horses couldn't make it, and several collapsed and died on the trail.

3 April 1944 - We received an airdrop at 9800 and departed at 1400. The trail cutting is getting worse and the mountains steeper and higher - many of the men have bad feet and they are very tired from the chopping and climbing. We covered one and one half miles today.

4 April 1944 - The first battalion marched to Ladungdukawng - a seven mile march which took all day.

5 April 1944 - We arrived at Singtawngkawng at 1645 after an all day march - the distance was seven miles and the going is still tough. Tonight some friendly Kachins, part of the O.S.S. force, came into our camp and gave us information on the Japs in this vicinity. Our radio has been out for three or four days and the weather has probably been the chief trouble.

6 April 1944 - We rested and waited for an air drop all day - our radio communication is good and this afternoon we picked up an urgent message that the second battalion is having a big fight at Nhpua Ga, third battalion is on fighting to open the trail to the second battalion and needs our help. Colonel Osborne ordered the battalion to move out at 1845 and they marched under the worst possible conditions for five and a half miles to the southeast - still cutting and improving an old trail so that men and animals can pass through.

7 April 1944 - The 1st battalion marched into Hsamshingyang at 1700 and those few troops defending the airstrip spent their first good night in a long time - the first battalion was tired but they were badly needed and Captain Tom P. Senff, Commanding Officer of the Red Combat Team, selected two hundred and fifty of his men who were in physical shape to take another hard march, and alerted them for a tough assignment the next day.

The first battalion had ten-in-one rations waiting for them and they really went after them as they had had no food in thirty six hours when they arrived in Hsamshingyang.

Second phase - Road block by 2nd and 3rd battalions on the main road at Inkanghtawng and fight at Hhpum Ga.

12 March 1944 - At 0700 hours the 2nd battalion pulled out of the Shikau Ga area turning south for a few miles then due east. The Command Group followed at 0800 and the 3rd battalion at 1000.

As the column passed by General Sun's Headquarters he came out to speak to General Merrill - there were "Ding Hows", "Habu Hows", and "Mamma Pu Pus" on all sides as the Marauders passed through the Chinese camp.

About  $3\frac{1}{2}$  miles southwest of Sang Ga a sandy, mucky stream crossing gave difficulties and slowed down the animals. One mule, mired up to his belly, was straining and jerking, trying to escape from the mud and the water which was almost up to his nose. The mule skinner leading the mule had made the crossing successfully but when his mule got stuck he plunged back in - being careful to stay away from the front of the mule. He knew that when a mule is in mud he tries to climb anything solid and a standing man is often a favorite stepping stone. The mule skinner quickly grabbed the mule's head holding it above the water and two other mule skimmers dashed in to help. They loosened the ropes holding the load and lifted the load off the mule, carrying it across the stream. The mule was still unable to get out so they lifted the heavy pack saddle off of his back and carried it across the stream, later pushing and pulling the mule safely across. A corduroy crossing had to be made with bamboo poles further up stream to get the remaining animals across.

At 1600 hours, after a 14 mile march, the Command Group arrived at Gaiun Ga with the second battalion ahead, and the third battalion behind it.

Gaiun Ga was recently occupied by the Japanese and most of it was burned when they departed suddenly on our arrival in the Walaubum area a few days ago. Their fox holes and little semi-circular slit trenches near the entrance to the village are still fresh looking.

March 13, 1944 - The Command started marching again at 0700 hours and arrived in the Fabum area before lunch. The first battalion of the 112th Chinese Regiment was stationed here. The entire place is a mass of trenches and trail blocks. The Chinese soldiers grin and say "Ding How" to every American and the reply is always "Ding How". As we approached Fabum our lead scouts carrying red and blue

rage on their caps as an identification sign felt very fortunate that they had them there as the Chinese have a habit of standing silently behind a tree until you get about ten feet away then yelling "Halti" or something that sounds like halt in Chinese - You look at the tree only to see a barrel pointing in your direction and a finger on the trigger. A quick "Ding How" usually will do the trick but it makes you mighty jumpy to pass a few of these fellows and fail to see them until you have passed by, then have them chuckle and call out "Ding How".

The Chinese had just finished a little bamboo bridge capable of holding our animals so we crossed the swift flowing Tanai River, much to our surprise without getting wet. The trail turned southeast from Fabum around a mountain and wound up and down over low hills along the Tanai River, (Chindwin). Today it has been extremely hot with high humidity.

The column arrived in the Kaidau Ga area about 1600 hours after a 13 mile march.

At a staff conference at 1600 General Merrill told us that the 82nd Division is now five miles south of Chammoi but that Jap resistance is stiffening, and in the Taro area they have even driven a Chinese Unit back slightly after a hard counter attack but that the general advance was still continuing.

14 March 1944 - The column moved out of Kaidau Ga at 0800 hours and marched to Niam Ga where a defense was set up around a large sand bar that was scheduled to be the air drop field. A three day K ration drop was received at 1600 and the column bivouaced in this area for the night.

The trail is getting fairly steep and rough - mountains loom large to the east and to the west - our trail winding along the valley of the Tanai River. Fresh elephant tracks were seen in a nearby banana grove - Capt. Jack Girsham estimates that there may be 100 elephants in the herd. Rain started at 1900 tonight and the leeches and large black ants are very active.

At 1700 hours a liaison plane flew over and dropped dispatches. General Merrill held a brief staff conference at 1800 at which he told us that the Chinese were continuing to forge ahead toward Shadusup, and that the trail to our south was thought to be clear of Japs for the next 2 days march.

15 March 1944 - The second battalion departed from Nlam Ga at 0700 hours followed by the Command Group at 0800 and the 3rd battalion at 1000. The trail was fairly good but it went up and down steep little hills as it wound along the Tanai River.

The Command Group arrived at Maubum late in the afternoon after about a 12 mile march. Captain Vincent L. Curl of Palacios, Texas, the Commander of the office of Strategic Services Unit in this North Burma area met us at the entrance to the village and led us to the bivouac area previously selected for the Command Group. Captain Curl had a full red beard about five inches long and is a very colorful looking figure in his large felt hat. He welcomed us and provided a bottle of rice beer for the General.

The town of Maubum is the busiest village we had seen. Captain Curl has organized a force of Kachin boys and men into an organization known as the Me Preh Pui or Lightning Force. This force wears green shirts and shorts and carry rifles, tommy guns, U.S. guns and a variety of weapons all their own. The soldiers range in age from 13 to 60 and they salute, stand at attention when reporting and form for inspection with an unexpected smartness. They use guerilla tactics mainly. Ambushes are their specialty. Their job has been to keep the Jap out of the area within a forty mile radius of Maubum, to gather information any place they can find it, to rescue flyers forced down in the area and to do as much damage as possible to the Japanese any place they find him. They have been extremely successful and proved invaluable to us in the coming weeks. The office of Strategic Services feeds and cares for many Kachin refugees, forced out of their villages by the Japs.

The radio information net which sends out information to Maubum for transmittal to combat Headquarters is superb. Small groups of 2 to 10 men gather information right in the Jap lines and installations and then send or bring it to their tiny radio transmitter hidden in the jungle for relay to Maubum. Captain Curl's success has been largely due to Father James Stuart, an Irish Catholic Missionary who has lived among the Kachins for 7½ years. In 1942 he stayed and faced the Japs when every other white man left, and strange to say he lived to tell the tale. He has been responsible for recruiting the Kachins, and establishing friendly relations without which the office of Strategic Services function would have been almost impossible. Father Stuart appeared a few moments after Captain Curl and after meeting the General he says (he always emphasises

that word) boys asked me to hold Mass and Confession for them in the morning. Will your unit be here then or do you move away at dawn?" General Merrill replied that the Command Group would move about 0800 hours but that the third battalion would be in the area until about 1000. Father Stuart was dressed in Khaki with a large Australian type felt hat with two pheasant plumes in the side opposite the turned up brim. He is about five feet eight inches tall, of medium build. He has heavy black jaws even when close shaven and a friendly Irish twinkle in his eye. He moves about the whole camp with a manner that makes it unnecessary to introduce him. Men instinctively love him when they meet him. His personality is tremendous and his sense of humor is refreshing. You are impressed when you see him that here is a great character.

It rained for a few hours tonight but almost all the men had mastered the technique of constructing a lean-to or basha of banana leaves, or joining together two panches, for shelter so very few of us got wet.

16 March 1944 - Major Williams flew in and landed on the little airstrip OSS had had built at Naubum. He brought dispatches from General Stilwell and took away film and more dispatches.

The 3rd battalion pulled out for Weilangyang earlier than originally planned and arrived there after a 14 mile march over a rough muddy trail that got continually steeper and more difficult. At 1700 hours a transport plane flew over the 3rd battalion at a paddy field one half mile northeast of Weilangyang and circled several times. Over the air ground radio Lt. Paulson asked to whom it was dropping - the pilot said - "Americans".

Lt. Paulson said "You must be looking for the 1st Battalion. We aren't expecting a drop until tomorrow."

The pilot kept circling and said "Are you Americans or aren't you?" Lt. Paulson said, "We are Americans," whereupon the plane dropped several loaded chutes which an examination proved to be marked for White and Red Combat teams of the 1st battalion. Lt Paulson immediately told the plane not to drop any more as the load was for the 1st battalion. The plane took off in the direction that the 1st battalion was thought to be in.

One of the mule leaders in the third battalion got his mule bogged down in the mud and in his efforts to pull him out the mule rolled over on him; he was

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injured but not fatally. He was lucky that the mine rolled on him in soft mud, otherwise it probably would have killed him.

Information was received by radio that the first battalion had contacted the enemy and had several fights - suffering eight casualties but was continuing on its mission with opposition.

Father Stuart held Confessions and Mass for the Catholic men early in the morning. He baptized one man who had been prepared by two of his friends. Father Stuart said he had been well prepared and was remarkably well versed in doctrine.

The Command Group left Naubum about 1000 hours and marched four and one half miles to the crossing of the Tanai River where it bivouacked for the night. Rain started in earnest about 1700 and everyone got wet before shelters could be put up; but it didn't matter much as the water cooled us off. Intermittent rain continued all night with a thunder storm about 1750.

The second battalion bivouacked in a banana grove on the west side of the Tanai River about two and one half miles northwest of the Command Group.

Tiger and elephant tracks were identified by Jack Girsham at several little changes which we crossed today. Elephant dung has been seen on the trail for several days now but only a few elephants have been actually seen. Captain Curl has a small herd he uses for work and transport - most of which belonged to the Japs at one time but were spirited away by his guerrillas.

Sitting around a camp fire tonight we persuaded Father Stuart to tell several of us a few of his experiences with the Japs. In June of 1942 he was caring for a group of refugees in Sumprabum. Earlier, the Chinese had retreated through that part of Burma and had taken almost all the food the Kachins had, and consequently the Kachins hated them and feared them, for at that time few Kachins had guns and those that did had muzzle loaders that fired home made powder. When the Japs came toward Sumprabum they capitalized on the Kachins hate of the Chinese and treated the Kachins kindly - but only in the country the Chinese had passed through; elsewhere they were crueller and harsher than the Chinese had been.

As the Japs advanced toward Sumprabum the Chinese withdrew from there leaving Father Stuart and his group of refugees alone to face the Japs. Father Stuart decided the best thing for him to do would be to go down the trail - meet the Japs and surrender the town to them and avoid a fight - asking them to let him care for the refugees.

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About four miles south of Sumprabum he ran upon an officer sitting on a horse in the middle of the trail. At first he thought the officer was Chinese - Father Stuart said "Chinese". The officer on the horse spat out of the side of his mouth and barked "No! Japanese". Then the Jap officer looked squarely at Father Stuart and said harshly "English". Father Stuart without batting an eye spat out of the side of his mouth and snapped "No! Irish". The Jap Major smiled wryly - and in broken English asked if any planes had flown over Sumprabum lately. Father Stuart replied "Yes, one of yours flew over yesterday". The Jap Major said, "No, it couldn't have been Japanese". Father Stuart replied, "It had a white star on its wings". Father Stuart had never seen an American plane before and didn't recognize our insignia.

The Jap Major apparently was convinced that Father Stuart was simple minded and couldn't do any harm so he told him to lead the way to Sumprabum. On the way in, the Jap Major asked him when the Chinese left, where they had gone, how many there were and how they had treated him. Father Stuart told him a large number passed through to the north a few days before and that they took all the food - that his refugees had only a little rice left. The Jap Major seemed pleased at this and his manner toward Father Stuart warmed perceptibly.

When they arrived at the village Father Stuart took the Major and a group of Jap soldiers over the entire village and asked the Major if the Japs couldn't occupy one part of the town and that the Major give orders for no Japs to go into the area where the refugees were staying although they could inspect the area anytime they wanted to. He showed the Major that there were only old people and children and many were sick and terribly terrified for fear the Japs would harm them. The Major assured him that no Japs would harm the refugees and that Father Stuart could remain with the refugees. He lived up to his agreement through the weeks the Japs held the town.

17 March 1944 - The Command Group and second battalion departed at 0730 hours and 0930 for WEILANGYANG. ~~The first battalion departed at 1000 hours for~~

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~~the first battalion departed at 1000 hours for~~  
~~the first battalion departed at 1000 hours for~~

After today we were destined to have elephants near us practically all the time and the funny situations which developed when elephants and mules accidentally ran head on into each other furnished a great deal of humour for the camp. It was not so funny to the Mahout carried on the back of the elephant on the dead run through bamboo groves and thick jungle until the elephant figured he was safe. Nor was it funny to the mule skinner who were towed in the opposite direction and could be heard swearing at a rate never believed possible even for a mule skinner. After a few almost disastrous experiences, a system was worked out whereby the mules or elephants were led a few yards off the trail separately and faced so one species couldn't see the other pass by.

Today a mule skinner was trying to get his mule out of a bad mud hole where it was stuck and laying on his side. The mule skinner was kicking, pushing, and cussing the mule for all he was worth. Finally, exasperated with the mule, he gave him a terrific kick in the ribs and said, "Sit up you son-of-a-bitch, you volunteered for this, too".

One man from the third battalion was seriously wounded by an accidental rifle shot while one of the members of his squad was cleaning his rifle. He was evacuated today by L-5 from the sand bar strip in the river. It is barely long enough and when the pilot comes in or takes off he has to bank sharply and follow a bend in the river to avoid the high trees.

Today Major Williams flew in to Weilangyang with orders from General Stilwell. The orders were for the second and third battalions to stay at Weilangyang and not to follow the original plan to attack Shaduzup, as it was believed the first battalion would throw a block behind Shaduzup in a few days and the Chinese to the north were making good progress toward the town. The first battalion is now only about ten miles northwest of us near Tanja Ga and is prepared to move fast toward Shaduzup to the southwest in the morning. The plan General Merrill had in mind until ordered to stay at Weilangyang was to strip the second and third battalions of heavy equipment and all but eighty horses, then force march them over torturous mountain trails into Shaduzup so as to arrive there on the twenty first.

Three days K ration, one day's C ration and one pound of rice per man was in the food drop today.

Lt. Jim Filley of Denver, Colorado, one of Captain Curl's lieutenants who had a force of Kachins to the northwest in the Jaiwa Ga, Tanga Ga sector arrived

in the afternoon at Weilangyang with Captain Tom Senff, S-3 of the first battalion. They confirmed reports that the Japs were northwest of Weilangyang in a number of trail blocks. We were conducting active patrolling on all trails leading out of Weilangyang and had established blocks or ambushes on the trails to the northwest and south.

18 March 1944. - The second and third battalions and the Command Group remained in camp all day. Our patrols were active to the north, west and south but had no contact with the enemy. The men rested all day, swimming, fishing with grenades, washing clothes and swapping rumors - some of which were: "Mail will be dropped today; we are going back to Assam to activate a new Division, 10 in 1 rations will be dropped today; we are moving south to attack Kamaing, the first battalion got badly shot up; we are going home when the next phase is over."

Captain James W. Parker, dentist, came in by plane this morning and immediately went to work. Captain Parker brought dispatches the gist of which came out in the staff meeting at 1700 hours. Here's the essence of the report. "The Chinese are having tough going in the Jambu Sun area. South of the main road near Chisidu, one thousand fresh Japs have dug in, apparently expecting an attack from the west. One Jap platoon has been located south of Mogaung near the main road, also in the same area are 300 Japs, two-anti-aircraft guns, a large ammunition depot and a large gasoline and oil depot".

Just at dusk a liaison plane flew over and dropped a message for General Merrill from General Stilwell that our help may yet be needed at Shaduzup and that for the present we are to block approaches up the Tanai from the south. General Merrill decided to do this by moving to the line Kaulun Ga - Mupaw Ga and await further orders. At 1730 we received a ration drop, and at 1900 all drop planes had cleared.

19 March 1944. - At 1800 the Command Group left to march to Janpan preceded by the second battalion. The third battalion was ordered to stay in the Weilangyang area, protecting the airstrip and blocking all trails by active patrolling and ambushes.

The trail from Weilangyang to Janpan is the steepest hardest climb we have yet encountered - there is a steady ascent for about two miles and at places the grade is fifty degrees. About midway up the steep mountain trail the head of the column was taking a break when a little MP came puffing up to the head of the column. One of his fellow MP's in a Brooklyn accent said, "where ya goin in such a hurry?"

The 1st MP in an even stronger Brooklyn accent said, "Chees guys, I'm going up with the big shots where they take breaks." General Merrill, sitting 10 feet away, got a hearty laugh out of that.

Robert Rhea, warrant officer, U.S. Navy, a member of Commander John Ford's OSS photographic Unit joined us today. He was formerly a Paramount movie cameraman and for two months has been with various OSS Units in this area photographing their work.

The Kachin Guerillas, 500 strong, under Captain Curl of OSS who have joined us are intelligent, hard workers, and good fighters. They carry bandoliers of ammunition slung over each shoulder and most of them wear earrings and bamboo leg bracelets below the knees. Odd pieces of British and American military equipment adorn them. They think nothing of marching ten or fifteen miles in this mountainous country in a day. In fact two were sent eight miles by the first battalion over torturous trails from Jaiwa Ga to Janpan today. They made the march in less than three hours and then took messages back to the first battalion a few hours later. Of course they were not carrying packs but they did carry a substantial load of ammunition.

Colonel Hunter marched a group of Kachins to Janpan this morning. The Kachins wanted to build him and General Merrill a basha, so at 1315 hours he told them to build it. At 1700 it was finished. It is twelve by fifteen feet with a fireplace in the middle of the room, windows, a good floor, a front porch, a candle holder in the wall, a sliding front door and a rain proof roof and walls. It is the first building General Merrill's Command Post has ever been in and is was dedicated with a bottle of rice beer the village Chief presented to General Merrill.

20 March 1944. - At 1030 hours General Merrill had a staff meeting at Janpan and gave the following information and orders :

The enemy is estimated to have about 300 men at Shaduzup, 500 to 600 at Jambu Bum and south and west of Kamsing about 2,000.

The general situation: Yasu Bum, half way between Taro and Lonkin, was captured on the 18th. The first battalion, now in the vicinity of Jaiwa Ga, is moving south-west to put a road block below Shaduzup followed by the Chinese 11th Regiment and the 6th Pack artillery battery. It had contact with the enemy at 1200 yesterday one mile west of Tanga Ga. The enemy appeared to be using delaying tactics.

The general gave orders as follows: The second battalion and the Khaki Combat Team of the third battalion under the command of Colonel Hunter will secure the road south of Warong, reconnoiter the trails south toward Kamaing, and move a portion of the force as the situation permits to put a block on the main road between Warazup and Salakawng. A supply drop has been arranged at Auche for the late afternoon of the 22nd. The Orange Combat Team of the third battalion will remain in the vicinity of Japan, prepared to move on short notice. Two reinforced platoons will be kept ready to polish off any Japs filtering into this area. Extensive patrolling of the trails to north, south and west will be maintained. One radio team from the third battalion will report to the Command Group with SCR 284 radio to work the OSS information net. Captain Curl's Kachin guerillas will also aid in the patrolling of this area - and guides will be furnished from them to go with Colonel Hunter's force. The general said his Command Post would be at Japan temporarily. Communications will be maintained by radio, runner and liaison plane.

The staff meeting was over at 1100 hours and Blue Combat Team of the second battalion marched to Nhpum Ga and bivouacked for the night. Green Combat Team of the second battalion marched to Hsawshingyang as did the Khaki Combat Team, where they received an air drop.

Japan was the first real Kachin village pursuing a normal existence that the Marauders had seen. The Kachins are a Mongolian type who have slowly immigrated for hundreds of years from central Tibet into the mountains of Northern Burma. This typical Kachin village of 150, contains about 20 large bashas, each Basha housing a family consisting usually of three generations. Ordinarily a Kachin village has a hereditary chief but this village has a government appointed head man as the ruling family had died out and the claimants for the job of chief were so numerous a satisfactory choice could not be made by the populace.

Marip Zow Krim is the headman and Chief. A Chief always has "Zow" in his name which means ruling family. Marip has two wives. One was childless so he married a second as the more children a family has the better its local standing. Unlike India and China, daughters are desired for they mean wealth. They do most of the work and when they are married the family of the husband give large gifts to the family of the bride to compensate for the loss of her work. The dowry may ...

be from 200 rupees, or articles so valued, to 10,000 rupees for a Chief's daughter. A man must marry to have a good standing in the community - if he doesn't marry he is likely to get a nasty funeral and be held in contempt ever after. There is considerable freedom of contact between the sexes before marriage, controlled mainly by custom. Every household has a maiden's room where the girls of the house entertain their boy friends - if the boy's family is O.K. sexual relations with the daughter are not frowned on before marriage if conducted in the room. It is a grave offense against both families for the young people to abuse this custom.

There are five principal families or tribes of Kachins: the Lahpai, Marip, Nihum, Maran, and Lahtawng.

In order to strengthen families in the feudal system which exists, intra-family marriages are forbidden. A Lahpai may marry a Marip; a Marip a Nihum and so on.

These people were given the name Kachin by the Burmans whom they hate. It means savage. They call themselves Jaipaws (pronounced Jingpaws) which means "the race". There are approximately 1,000,000 Kachins in Burma, India and China. They say that they migrated from their ancestral home in central Tibet which they call Sting Ra Bum which has a significance similar to Shangri-la. They use small hill ponies, brahms cows for sacrificial purposes. Water buffalo are used for meat and for ploughing. In the hill country the Kachins burn a piece of jungle in the spring and plant rice in the ashes at the beginning of the monsoon in May.

Bamboo is undoubtedly the greatest friend of the Kachin. He uses its shoots for food and for fire building when dry. He can make nails, cooking utensils, flash torches, water carriers, snares for animals, traps, pipes, fish nets, baskets, beds, rope and many other articles from it. He uses it for a weapon in the construction of penjils and large pieces become the main timbers for a basha while split bamboo becomes the walls and floor. He can even get a drink of pure water from it. Villages are built near bamboo groves and when the bamboo gives out the village is moved to another grove of the same kind. It is so light that one can carry a piece which if composed of ordinary wood would require an elephant to carry.

Just before the war started the British had the sale of opium under nearly complete control in this area, but with the removal of the British government from the area, the cultivation of poppies returned under Japanese auspices.

The Kachins love to smoke opium in a mild diluted form so that they get a pleasant exhilaration rather than wildly drunk. Here is the formula: take a pinch of opium and spread it out in the bottom of a "Chata" or copper spoon on a bamboo stick, add a little water and heat over the coals of a wood fire, blowing on the coals to get a flame. Next, cut slivers from a banana leaf and roll into the opium in the "Chata" until it is all deposited on the slivers. By using two long bamboo sticks, similar to chop sticks, work and roll the entire substance into a little black ball.

The pipe consists of a curved piece of bamboo with water in the bowl and a stem in the top of the bowl to put the opium into. The mouth stem is about one inch in diameter. The bowl is about three fourths of an inch in diameter with carvings all over it. The entire pipe is about fifteen inches overall length. A piece of the black ball of opium on banana leaves is pinched off and put in the pipe and a hot coal from the fire is used to light it. Then the smoker lies back on his side, puffing on the pipe. A pleasant gurgling sound is emitted as the smoke is sucked back over the water and the smile of satisfaction on the smoker's face denotes the pleasure he is deriving from the effect of the smoke. A pipe full lasts only a few minutes and after several puffs the smoker will take a drink of Meis or locally grown tea brewed in a bamboo stick then poured into a gourd shaped bamboo stick from which they drink. This process may be repeated many times during the day. The smoker gets pleasantly high on three or four pipes and lays back on his side smiling and grinning as he smokes, or maybe drifting off to sleep.

Major Melvin A. Schudnak, Regimental Surgeon, and his medical aid men took time off from their duties to hold a clinic during the morning for the villagers of Janpan. Captain James A. V. Girsham, of Mayayo, Burma also of the Kachin Levies and the British Army who was liaison officer and trail adviser to General Merrill, gave assistance, as interpreter. Major Schudnak set up for business near the head man's basha. The first patient was a woman with dozens of infected leech bites on her legs. Major Schudnak won her confidence quickly as he treated each sore, and her face was wreathed in smiles and giggles as he bound them up. The next patient was a ten month old baby with scabs, secondarily infected. The mother with the screaming baby grasping her exposed breasts watched every movement Major Schudnak made as he removed the scabs, cleaned the sores and applied sulphur

ointment to them. A stream of patients followed with ailments from enlarged spleens, due to malaria, to simple sore throats and colds.

21 March 1944. - Blue, Green and Khaki Combat Teams arrived at Auche where they were joined by Colonel Hunter late in the afternoon. The plan of attack has been changed by General Merrill. The new plan is for the Blue, Green and Khaki Combat Teams to move with all possible speed to put a block on the main road in the vicinity of Inkangantawng. Orange Combat Team will move from the Japan area today to block the trails to the south and around Auche, Warong and Manpin and become a part of Colonel Hunter's forces. Today another of the OSS men showed up. He furnished us detailed information on Japanese activities in this area. It seems the Japs send patrols through at irregular intervals but no trail blocks have been placed between Auche, Warong and Manpin. Japanese activity to the west has increased lately however.

When the second battalion moved through Kauri this morning they saw 15 elephants ranging in size from a five month old baby to an enormous bull. The elephants checked out quickly when we appeared.

At the village of Japan there was no suitable spot for an air drop except in the village itself. General Merrill told the village head man we were moving down the mountain to a large paddy field close to Mupaw Ga to get our drop the next day. The chief protested saying his people would rather have the chutes and take a chance on damage to their homes than have the residents of Mupaw Ga get the supplies.

General Merrill was awakened at 2300 by Sgt Doyer to receive a message to him from General Stilwell. The message read, "Japs withdrawing down road - Jambu Bum fell today. Come fast now Stonewall". General Merrill who had already started his troops moving toward the main road at Inkangantawng answered, "I'll meet you at Fredericksburg Lee".

22 March 1944. - At Japan, where General Merrill still had his Command Post, Captain Curl of Office of Strategic Services reported that he had been ordered back to his base in Assam but would leave his assistant in charge of the Kachin ...

guerrillas working with us.

In the afternoon the headman of Jampun came to the General and told him the people of the villages near here wanted to have a welcome and victory dance in honor of the Americans who were driving the Japanese from their country. General Merrill said that although there were only a few Americans in Jampun now, he thanked the chief for the honor bestowed on them and that he would be happy to attend the dance later in the afternoon. About an hour later the sound of huge gongs came booming over the mountainside and soon practically every American who could break away from whatever he was doing moved into the center of the village. Jampun is on top of a mountain but completely surrounded by other higher mountains. Winding far below to the east is the headwaters of the Tanai or Chindwin River.

The dance was held in a grassy, circular area at one end of which was bamboo lattice work with little baskets at the top with offerings of roots in them for the Nats or evil spirits. At the other end were two large crossed poles set into the ground. A water buffalo was tied to the tops of the poles and hung down while several Kachins cleaned and cut it into sections for the feast to follow the dance. Many of the Kachins were already feeling pretty high on rice beer and opium and occasionally one would throw his muzzle loader rifle as far up in the air as he could reach and pull the trigger. The noise from the explosion is terrific and a sheet of flame followed by a ball of black smoke seems to gang on the end of the barrel. For several seconds after the gun is fired. When some of the American soldiers jumped at having the gun fired so unexpectedly and so close to their heads the Kachins slapped their legs and laughed heartily.

The dance itself started off with a hatchet faced old man wearing a blue Chinese Mandarin robe (probably brought in by Chinese traders many years ago) and holding a large dah in both hands straight up before him. He was wearing a multi colored hat that resembled a crown. He was the leader of the dance and extremely proud of it. Following him was a man in a robe made from gunny sacks with a huge imitation hornbill head, he also carried a dah in the same manner as the leader. The next person had deer antlers tied on to his head in such a manner that he resembled a deer.

A long line of men followed, each with a dah. Another column of women in their homespun and woven, black skirts and white bodices with all the jewelry in the family tied on somewhere, followed the men. The women carried a banana leaf

with a whitish line on one side. In their ears almost every woman had large amber earrings about six and a half inches long and one and one half inches in diameter. A necklace of beaten silver rupees was worn to the front of their dresses. Both men and women were bare footed but the women each wore a headdress made of the same material as their dresses. About half of the men carried muzzle loader rifles in one hand. Three large gongs were strung between two poles and were beaten in one, two, three, four time.

Just beyond the gongs was a man blowing a horn resembling a snake charmer's horn - he played the same short tune over and over as the dancers shuffled in rhythm. The dance resembled two snake dances winding around each other then forming in circles and moving to the center waving their banana leaves and dabs then moving back again. The dance depicted Kachin life - the sowing of the paddy and then the reaping. Then other features of their daily life were dramatized. As the dance neared its climax the village Chief invited General Merrill and the Americans watching the dance to join. This they did each carrying a banana leaf with lime on one side and weaving and swaying with the dancers.

All of a sudden the gongs ceased for a second and it seemed we were suddenly in the middle of a battle. Muzzle loaders, tommy guns, rifles, in fact every weapon in town was fired. Most of us were deafened for several hours. The Kachins simply raised the guns over their heads and fired, regardless of how close the gun was to the next man's ear. That concluded the dance and General Merrill was then presented with a goat, freshly butchered, and several bottles of rice beer. He in turn presented gifts to the village Chief, the leaders of the dance and the musicians. Then he distributed the junk jewelry, collected in the United States, to every man, woman and child.

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Among the spectators at the dance was a ~~Kachin~~ girl of 17, small and very pretty. Until a week ago she was the wife of a Japanese officer in Kwaning where she was captured by Kachin guerillas who thought she could give them information on the Japanese. She could not speak Japanese and her Jap officer husband could not speak Kachin, but she said she loved him and that he gave her clothes and was kind to her. She was by far the best dressed ~~Kachin~~ woman the Marauders had yet seen. She is treated as a refugee by the Kachins - more or less in protective custody. Her sister lives in Japan and had taken her into her house.

Another spectator was a Kachin who only a couple of weeks before had been

working for the Japs near Kamsing. He also was captured by the guerillas but the guerillas in that area could not spare a man to take the Kachin back to headquarters at Naibun so they gave him a rifle and told him to take himself to Naibun and turn himself in to the officers there as a prisoner. He did exactly that reporting to the guerilla Chief, with the words "I am a prisoner but I wish to fight the Japanese". The next day the guerilla chief sent him out on a patrol in the Jaisa Ga area and the patrol leader reported he had killed one Jap and was a good soldier.

Later in the afternoon an elderly Gurkha appeared in the village coughing in great pain and shaking all over as if he were having severe chills. He lived in a village north of Kamsing and the Japs had an idea he might be helping flyers who were shot down to escape (which he had been doing) and they beat him up, breaking several ribs and bruising and cutting him all over. Major Schudmak diagnosed his trouble as pneumonia, probably from a cracked rib after the Jap fight. He gave him sulfa drugs and a Kachin took him into his basha and looked after him.

The second battalion left early today from Auchu and marched to Manpin.

The trail led over steep mountain trails to the Nampana Cheung which they followed to Manpin, crossing it fifty-four times in eight miles. They took a three days ration drop in the afternoon and marched to Shuraw where they bivouacked for the night. Khaki Combat Team followed the second battalion into Manpin where they bivouacked for the night. Orange Combat Team marched to Auchu by nightfall and bivouacked there.

We had a fighter escort overhead most of the afternoon but no contact with the enemy was made.

23 March 1944 - General Merrill and the Command Group left Japan at 0600 hours and arrived at Mupas Ga at 0830 where the radio was quickly set up to establish communication on our 0900 schedule with Colonel Hunter. It rained all day. The radio reception was very good at Mupas Ga which is on top of a little mountain. The clouds are all below us today making a rather pretty sight. Eighteen Kachin guerillas are with the command group as messengers, guides and soldiers. The Marauders are carrying rice and chicken given to them by the grateful people of Japan who now possess more food, trinkets, cloth and general equipment than ever before in their lives.

At Sharaw, Colonel Hunter set up his Command Post and started the second battalion and Khaki Combat Team toward their objective, Hingahgahyang. They marched over a steep trail in pouring rain to Tigrangyang where Colonel McGee left an Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon to block the trail from the north while the main body led by Blue Combat Team turned west toward Ngahgahyang.

Reconnoitering a small stream near Ngahgahyang, scouts from Lt. Joseph F. Frear's Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon heard a noise down stream "tic tac, tic tac". The Kachin guides stopped. The sound of voices was barely audible. Then the American lead scout saw an elephant coming up the shallow stream bed with a man on top--the man on top saw the scout at the same moment. A moment later the lead scout, Sergeant George L. Pike opened fire with a tommy gun. The elephant was so close that he had to lean back to hit the man on top. As he fired he looked squarely into the eyes of a startled Burman on the elephant who shouted a warning and tried to turn the elephant to escape but Pike's first burst hit him and he toppled into the stream. A moment later the man next to Pike opened fire on three Japs walking behind the elephant. He killed two. The third Jap and the elephant ran back down stream and escaped as Pike's section came to his support.

At 1630 hours they were fired on by three Japs who ran, the patrol cautiously crossed the river and drew close Jap automatic weapon fire. Blue Combat Team and Green Combat Teams pushed across the river at dusk and dug a perimeter in close to the road where they could mortar it.

When the heavy weapons Company of Green Combat Team crossed the river and dug in, the Japs attacked them before they had completed their fox holes so "Smiling Jack" Thornton six foot three inch, 190 pound machine gunner didn't have room in his hole to get in when he fired so he sat on the back of the hole and fired anyway. A tree burst from a knee mortar got him but he still fired until suddenly he slumped over his gun, dead. He was one of the most popular men in the battalion and he died the way he would have preferred, with his beloved machine gun red hot from throwing lead at Japs.

All night both Japs and Marauders were digging in in a downpour of rain. Trucks could be heard coming up the main road from Kamsing. A tail gate slammed and voices sounded as if reinforcements were arriving. This went on all night.

-7-

Khaki Combat Team secured the bridgehead on the east bank of the river.

At Manipin Ache and Warong the Orange Combat Team has established trail block and has sent out patrols to the east, west and south. One of the patrols got within sight of Kamsing but had nothing to report.

About 1600 hours today a tired, hungry aviator walked into one of our patrols near Ache. He was Lt. Irwin E. Jenkins of Longview, Texas from a fighter squadron which had been working with us.

This is his story: On Sunday March 19th he was strafing at 100 feet, just north of Kamsing with his P-40 when the Japs blew up a land mine. His plane exploded and caught fire and he bailed out. The remainder of his squadron circled the place where he landed - strafing parties of Japs who tried to get to the field he had come down on. They also radioed back to base for a liaison plane to come and pick him up as the field he was in looked level.

Lt. Jenkins landed safely and quickly out of his parachute and headed due east to try to escape the Japs. He walked three miles before dark when he got into a swamp and stuck in mud up to his hips so he decided to wait for day-break before going on. He moved cautiously on the 20th, following stream beds and staying clear of trails as all this country was full of Japs. For two and a half days more he walked to the northeast without food except some bamboo shoots he found. On the morning of the 23rd he saw empty K ration cartons and searched each empty can for a biscuit or a scrap of cheese to no avail. A few hours later he hit a patrol from Orange Combat Team. They took him back to Manipin where their headquarters was located and gave him food. An hour later word came down from there that Kachins had also picked up an other American aviator.

This aviator was Lt. Hugh McFarland from a Fighter Bomber Group of Lubbock, Texas. When the word was flashed to Maingwan that Lt. Jenkins was down Lt. McFarland, on liaison duty there, jumped into an L-4 and took off at 1700 hours for the field where Lt. Jenkins was reported down. He saw a chute laying in the field and something brown beside it that looked as if it might have been Lt. Jenkins. The field was covered with elephant grass but it looked smooth. He touched his wheels on the ground to test it and it seemed O.K. so he came in and landed keeping his tail low. When he landed he found the field was rough under the grass and his wheels were sired in mud when the plane stopped. He jumped out, ran to the place where he thought he was lying only to find it a

darker colored grass.

He shouted, fired his pistol and searched the field and surrounding ground carefully. Next morning he was convinced that Lt. Jenkins was either a prisoner or had escaped so he started to work getting the field ready for his plane to take off. He was pulling grass on his hands and knees about 60 yards from the plane when he looked up to see a Jap face peering at him over the wing of his ship. He crawled quickly away through the tall grass then walked to the northeast around a mountain where he found a deserted village and some yams which tasted like green parsnips. He found a trail the next day and reached the Mogaung river that night. He had no map but on the 23rd after having no food for four days he saw some Kachins down by the river behind him about 100 yards. He ran but they followed him and finally he realized they would catch him in a minute. When the first one approached him he noticed he carried in addition to a rifle a piece of cardboard up. Lt. McFarland was looking squarely at his own name. On the card was written "Lt. Jenkins and Lt. McFarland follow this man". He followed him to Tigrayang and about an hour later he heard that Lt. Jenkins was at Manpin. Tomorrow they will start for Weilangyang where a plane can come in and pick them up. The O.S.S. people will give them an elephant each to ride and a party of three Kachins for guides and guards.

24 March 1944 - Today starts another march behind the Japanese lines. General Merrill moved his Command Post to Hgum Ga early this morning. He departed Hgum Ga at 0300 hours in order to get to Hgum by 0900 hours to establish radio contact with Colonel Hunter. Rain started at 0430 hours and the trails were muddy. He had a message from the first battalion that they had had twelve fights since leaving Shikun Ga on March 12 and that they were pushing on. General Merrill radioed Colonel Osborne "Good Work. I hope to see you soon. Is this a private war or can the rest of us join in?"

A. Inkanghtsang, Colonel McGee's reconnaissance reports indicated that a Jap Company was well dug in near the village and all during the night had been reinforced both from the north and from the south. The little scrap at the river crossing late yesterday apparently had tipped them off.

An hour before dawn Colonel McGee's situation looked like this: His block

was dug in on a perimeter north of the town about a quarter mile and about 300 to four hundred yards east of the main road. His east flank rested on the river covering the crossing.

Shortly after dawn the Japs started moving about. They could be heard to the North to the South and to the West. Colonel Moore sent two reinforced platoons out to envelope the village but they hit very heavily fortified positions to the north and to the south of the village and were rapidly becoming involved in a heavy action. Colonel Moore ordered them back into the main perimeter by radio. Lt. Hessel D. Witten, platoon leader of F Company on the west flank of the perimeter, was attacked heavily from the road about 0700 hours. The Japs crept up through the Kunai grass and seemed to assemble in small groups about fifty yards from our perimeter; then there was much shouting and loud talking and you could hear them charging through the underbrush straight for our perimeter. (Kunai grass is between 6-8 feet in height)

We had been mortared heavily for fifteen minutes but now firing slackened as the enemy got closer. All of a sudden you could see one man here, another there, through the brush. Then they burst upon us about twenty yards from our perimeter. Everybody was calm. Then one shot rang out and the whole perimeter opened on them. Cpl James Phillips was on the extreme west flank of the perimeter - the closest man to the Japs. He saw three Japs - one, a first Lt., heading directly toward him yelling "Banzai" and waving a sword in one hand and holding a pistol in the other. Phillips fired a burst into the Jap at fifteen yards but he kept coming, then he let him have what was left in the magazine. The Jap 1st Lt did not stop until his body was almost cut in two. His head fell on the parapet of Phillips fox hole. His sword was in two pieces, shot in two by the .45 calibre bullets. Phillips reached for another magazine only to find all of them empty. Carrying a hand grenade with the pin flattened so it would almost fall out he ran about ten yards to his squad leader's fox hole, grabbed some ammunition and ran back in a few minutes.

There was only scattered rifle fire as he returned to his hole but when he got back, the Jap officer's sword, pistol and pocketbook had disappeared. Another Mgrander about fifteen yards away saw them and risked his life dashing out to pick them up. Such will we do for souvenirs. A few moments later another attack hit the same spot this time Pvt Gerald A. Bryant, a Browning automatic rifle man, was firing when his gun jammed and failed to eject. Bryant said he was "Soared

as hell" as the Japs were yelling like a thousand-tongued horses and were running in every direction. Dropping his automatic rifle he threw three hand grenades as his assistant rifleman, Pvt Julian Bell, fired with his M-1. Bryant took his gun, ran to the rear and knocked the empty cartridge out with a cleaning rod, slipped in another magazine, tested the gun and ran back to his hole.

The Japs next attacked the Pioneer and Demolition platoon under Sergeant Billy from the North. He was attacked hard and often for almost three hours but repulsed each attack. Lt. Phillip Piascia was badly wounded in one attack by bullets in the head and shrapnel in the foot while he was moving back to the battalion Command Post with information he had gathered around the perimeter. He fell during the hottest part of one attack and somebody yelled for the medics.

Lt. Piascia yelled "Stay back! I'll crawl to you". Corporal Harry Fosshine, a medic, ran back and got a stretcher and two men then ran to where Lt. Piascia was lying. Disregarding his own safety, Fosshine dragged him into the perimeter, bandaged his wounds and sent him to the rear on a litter.

At 0830 hours the Japs opened up with another artillery battery at very close range. It sounded like a dual purpose anti-aircraft and anti-tank gun. It was really bad because you heard two explosions almost as one. The Japs by now were throwing a continual artillery and mortar barrage in the perimeter. We answered with mortars but felt the need for artillery support greatly. Colonel McOee called for fighter bombers in a 4-2 radio message to General Merrill. Within two hours the first planes were overhead and they took a terrible toll on the Japs as they bombed and strafed the enemy positions as directed by our air liaison officers over the air ground radio. They strafed the artillery from 1030 hours until 1530 hours and Colonel McOee took this chance to get all his animals except ammunition trains east of the Nogaung River where they would be safe from artillery fire.

The Japs had attacked from North, South and West almost continuously from 0700 hours this morning making a total of sixteen charges and only one Jap had got into the perimeter. He stuck his bayonet into a Marauder's fox hole and the Marauder grabbed the end of it as he couldn't get his own gun up fast enough, then jumped out of his hole twisting and turning the rifle with the Jap on the other end. A Browning automatic rifleman in the next fox hole tried to shoot the Jap but he couldn't fire without hitting the Marauder who happened to be a big man. With a sudden lurch the Jap dropped the gun and ran backwards giving the Browning

his chance. He moved his gun before he had taken ten steps.

In the afternoon the Japs slipped as close to the river as they could and attacked from the South. They hit Lt. Robert Shearer's platoon hard under a heavy mortar and machine gun barrage following a heavy artillery barrage. They were repulsed but the sound of trucks unloading indicated they were getting reinforcements. Colonel McGee had orders not to withdraw under any circumstances and had received a message from Colonel Hunter that at least a battalion of Japs appeared to be moving north from Kaming. By this time his ammunition supply was low and he was being attacked from all directions and in danger of being cut off. The usefulness of continuing the block was lessened by the slow Chinese advance in face of fierce resistance on Shadusup and at 1630 hours he received orders to withdraw towards Nampin.

This was accomplished successfully and the second battalion pulled through, Khaki holding the bridgehead on the Mogyang River, and marched in to Nghghantang where they bivouacked for the night. Before pulling out, Colonel McGee sent two platoons ahead to block all trails to the east and booty trapped everything in the perimeter. A count showed that our casualties were two killed and 12 wounded and the Japanese known dead ran to over 200. The Japs had made sixteen separate charges on our perimeter with a platoon or more of troops each time on this date.

25 March 1944 -- At dawn the second battalion followed by Khaki Combat Team moved out in a pouring rain which continued all day. Holes had to be cut in the litters to let the water off of the wounded and the muddy sloppy trail became a quagmire for man and beast. We arrived at Shuraw in the afternoon where liaison planes had landed to take out the wounded. A few of the planes got off with wounded but some were unable to take off due to the fact that the field was so bad and the wind was blowing so as to hinder the planes departure. However they were able to take off without a passenger. Fortunately all serious litter cases were evacuated. At 1730 hours Colonel Hunter received word from Office of Strategic Service guerrillas that two Jap battalions were moving to the North from Kaming possibly to cut us off at Nampin.

Second battalion and Khaki bivouacked at Shuraw for the night.

The Orange Combat Team which had been blocking the trails to the South in the Auchu, Warong, and Nampin area reported that one of their Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoons had been hit hard below Warong and was fighting a delaying action toward Auchu. They estimated the Japs were using at least reinforced company and possibly a battalion.



the east and south. The second battalion moved four and a half miles up the trail toward Auche.

The Orange Combat Team had contact with the Japs on all trails leading to the south during the day. They had been successful in delaying a Jap force of 400 moving directly north from Kamaing and another force of 450 Japs which was moving northeast from Kamaing. This block was possible largely due to the extremely successful air support. Fighter bombers had caught the Jap columns in several places and bombed and strafed them. Jap casualties were believed to have been heavy from air action and at least 150 were killed in patrol skirmishes and ambushes.

A captured Japanese sketch map indicated that a reinforced Jap battalion was making a wide flanking movement which threatened the Chinese east flank (near Shaduzup). General Stilwell gave General Merrill orders to block this counter thrust at Nhpum Ga. General Merrill immediately sent orders to Colonel Hunter to move by forced marches to Nhpum Ga.

27 March 1944 - Lt. Logan E. Weston, Orange Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon leader, and Lt. Warren E. Smith, leader of the 4th platoon of I Company, led their units in a patrol action best described in their own brief report to Colonel Hunter at Auche on 27 March:

On the 24th of March at 1100 hours Lt. Weston's Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon proceeding from Manpin to Paokum to install road blocks on all trails south of Paokum, to be in place by 1300 hours.

1145 hours Lt. Smith's rifle platoon proceeding from Manpin to Warong to establish road blocks on the Warong-Yathum trail.

1300 hours Lt. Weston's platoon took up positions to block trail by ambush of any enemy proceeding north on Kamaing-Paokum trail.

1730 Hours Lt. Smith's platoon took up positions with Lt. Weston's as he was unable to reach Warong that night.

25th March, 1145 hours Lt. Smith's platoon arrived in Warong and established an ambush to block all trails up from Yathum toward Warong.

1410 hours. Estimate 30 Nips hit Lt. Weston's ambush on the Warong-Paokum trail. Twelve Nips killed, one knee mortar knocked out, five of our animals wounded by mortar fire, (Lt. Weston, the fighting preacher, had a narrow escape, a knee mortar shell landed four feet from him. It was a dud)

1430 hours. Lt. Smith received a message from scouts that three large groups

the greatest guerrilla leader in Burma and a man who is reputed to have killed more Japanese than any other man in India or Burma was leading the patrol. He carried a Tommy gun with a drum magazine and his barefooted guerrillas carried everything from U.S. guns to mule loads marked "Harpers Ferry 1861".

Filing out in single file without a sound, the column moved about 200 yards before it stopped, and then the chief went into action. Quietly he indicated from a diagram drawn on the ground that he wanted three of them to slip around to the rear of the place the Japs or Chinese were supposed to be located. He pooled off another group of three to go around the other side then he motioned the Kachin who saw the guns to lead the way down the trail. We moved slowly and cautiously, every eye alert and every ear cocked for a sound that would tell us something. I heard a slight rustle in the underbrush to the right and swung my gun around to look face to face with a water buffalo. At least five people had that buffalo covered. Creeping close to the ground, peering into each bush, we moved down a draw then up over a little knoll. On the other side of this knoll our lead scout came back to tell the chief the guns were just over the crest of the knoll ahead of us and that the Chinese or Japanese were still there.

We crept closer and could hear a twig snap and occasionally a voice but it was quite dark by now and it was impossible to identify the voices as Jap or Chinese. The chief decided that in view of the difficulty of identifying them in the dark and the fact that we couldn't get closer to them without getting in their field of fire, that he would leave four men to watch them. We were to come back at dawn -- surround them and have our Jap interpreter with us to find out if they were Japanese. As we returned to Myan Ga we left most of the Kachins to block the trail between the unknown enemy and our Command Post at Myan Ga.

It was dark when we reached Myan Ga at 2000 hours. We found that another woman and her small child were working in that same paddy field where the first woman had been, and that they had not returned. We spent a tense night and just before dawn the next morning the same patrol moved out in the same formation to surround the unknown people and deal with them according to plan. The tactical plan was the same. Finally we got to the place we had stopped the night before and crept slowly forward. At the crest of the knoll where the guns could be seen the night before, there was nothing to be seen. Not a sound was heard so the Chief started one of his guerrillas down the trail to attract attention, but not

a sound was forthcoming. The man walked into the position occupied the night before and signaled us forward. Our party closed from four sides on an empty trap.

They pulled out an hour before we got there. I thought the chief was going to kill the scouts he had left to watch them when they told him the Japs, as they proved to be, had killed about and got away before they could call him. There were two machine gun emplacements and Japanese cigarette packages scattered about. Several .25 caliber rounds, scraps of cooked yams and about five bivouac areas were at least ten men each slept during the night marked the place.

Jap shoe prints could be found on the soft muddy trail leading toward the river so we continued in that direction for two miles to no avail. At the paddy field we found the woman's jacket and a garment belonging to the child which the woman's husband identified. A busha at the paddy field was torn up and the floors raised. Apparently the Japs were hungry and were searching for food. They were traced to the river where they turned south.

As we had no force available at Ngun Ga to follow them we returned to Ngun Ga and reported to General Merrill. He notified Orange Combat Team to be on the lookout for them.

General Merrill's Command Post was lucky that we didn't hit those Japs for there was at least a company in that area. We had about 15 Kachins and 10 Marauders at Ngun at that time and no machine guns or mortars. The Japs apparently didn't know we were anywhere near them. The woman and child were never heard from again but were believed to have been taken for guides by the Japanese or possibly killed.

At 2000 hours General Merrill received a message by mounted runner that Orange Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon had been hit by a platoon of Japs at 1600 hours near Tatum and again at 1800 hours, two and a half miles up the trail to Warong. Lt. Weston estimates that a larger force is behind the platoon which hit him.

Rain continued all night.

26 March 1944 - Second battalion followed by Third Combat Team left Shwaz at 0900 hours and arrived at Manpin at 1100 hours where they took a three day ration drop and replenished their ammunition supply. Colonel Hapler received a report from the O.S.S. people that Japs are being trucked from Kasing up toward Warong as far as trucks can go. The third battalion remained at Manpin covering all trails from

of enemy coming up trail from Tatum toward Warong, order of march, 100 followed by 200, followed by 150.

26th March, 1020 hours. A reinforced platoon of Japs hit Pankin trail ambush, were completely surprised. Known dead 28, one knee mortar knocked out, one mule loaded with pack artillery killed. ~~A dog with lead snout of dog printed on~~

~~was shot dead~~ (MC)

1025. Approximately 100 Japs were completely surprised on the Tatum ambush, known killed 18, one knee mortar knocked out.

1030 hours. On Tatum trail Nips withdrew to small valley, we laid a mortar barrage on the losses unknown.

1115 hours. Main body of Japs started an envelopment of our flanks on both trails, by passing our ambushes.

1150 hours. Both of our ambushes were withdrawn up trail toward Auche. During withdrawal Japs hit our right flank, Browning automatic rifles went into action covering withdrawal.

1215 hours. Arrived at Auche, set up trail blocks.

27th March, 0930 hours. Our battalion arrived at Auche, relieving us, awaiting further orders.

The second battalion had thrown up a quick perimeter around Auche in expectation of a Jap attack from Warong so they held it during the night. Contact with the Japs from the south toward Warong was expected momentarily and the perimeter was alert for Jap infiltration. Sporadically grenades were thrown but on the whole the night was quiet - too quiet.

28 March 1944 - At 0600 hours Khaki Combat Team which was strung out along the trail to Npum Ga one mile north of Auche pulled out followed closely by the Blue Combat Team of the second battalion. At 0630 hours the second battalion perimeter at Auche still had had no contact with the Japs and the spirits of the tired men were lifting as they proposed to move toward Npum Ga. They had marched seventy miles in four days and had had plenty of fighting and wanted a good sleep and rest badly.

Battalion headquarters followed by the Green Combat Team was slowly filing up the trail out of Auche when two loud explosions were heard and a moment later a loud whistle as every man hit the ground.

The Jap artillery had opened on them from the vicinity of Warong. The first two rounds were about 200 yards to the right of the trail but right on the north edge of the village. A moment later two more came whistling over a little closer, this time the column got up and started moving faster.

Colonel McGee ordered the Pioneer and Demolition platoons and a machine gun platoon to act as rear guard and he radioed on his SC 300 to the Blue Combat Team Commander to keep his men and animals moving rapidly. Just as the tail of the Green combat Team column cleared the outskirts of Anche, a shell burst close by, wounding one man and several animals.

The Japs had now got their barrage on the trail - and then all hell broke loose. They threw a steady stream of shells into the area. One shell made a direct hit on a heavily loaded infantryman and he was blown to bits. Another shell hit a tree and the shrapnel hit several men. Fortunately none were wounded seriously. These men were physically tired. They had marched seventy miles in three days, made one hundred and eight river crossings, fought off sixteen separate Jap charges and had been soaking wet all the time.

Now they were caught in a place no commander ever wants to be caught in - an artillery shelling in a narrow place where deployment was impossible and the Japs apparently were getting observation to adjust fire on the trail although our rear guard had not seen a Jap so far.

Colonel McGee radioed the Khaki Combat Team to move as rapidly as possible so that his Green Combat Team could get over a little crest that would give them some cover. The trail from Anche to Hgum Ga is two and one half miles of hard climbing. The trail was slick as glass and ankle deep in mud. Animals slipped and fell, had to be unloaded to get them on their feet, then reloaded. It takes a brave man to do that during a shelling but it was done several times.

Somehow up ahead the word was passed up "Move faster"; then a little later again "Move faster". Men were practically running up hill - falling to the ground only when a shell burst close to them. The word passed up the line - Medics and riding horses to the rear.

The shelling increased in intensity and was amazingly accurate. Wounded men screamed out from the side of the trail for help - for it was easy to pass by and not see a man ten feet from the trail. Brave deeds became the order of the day - one medic heard there might have been a wounded man left by a tree just out of Auchs - he walked back almost one half mile leading a horse, calling out and searching for the fellow.

He found him dead beside the trail.

But on his way back he found another man limping along with half the calf of his leg missing and a hunk out of his arm. Calmly binding his wounds he put the wounded man on the horse and led him out. The rear guard followed the column at 200 to 500 yards and still couldn't find any Japs but the shelling searched right up the trail.

When Colonel McGee reached Nhpum Ga, General Merrill ordered him to hold Nhpum with his battalion while the third battalion built and held the air strip at Hsamshingyang, two and a half miles further north. Regimental Headquarters would be at Hsamshingyang where all wounded were to be evacuated.

As they talked, Major Bernard Rogoff, second battalion surgeon, quickly set up an aid station in front of a basha near the center of Nhpum Ga. Already four or five wounded lay on improvised litters where medical aid men examined their wounds and gave them morphine. Major Rogoff, one of the coolest men under fire I ever saw, calmly started on the most serious cases and an orderly line of patients was soon getting plasma and being moved to a more quiet place on the edge of the village awaiting evacuation. A few psychoneurosis cases were coming in now. One man, a big burly fellow with a tommy gun, was shaking violently all over, tears streaming down his face. He cried "Major, I am not afraid, damn it, I tell you I am not afraid, I just can't stop shaking".

Others in worse shape jumped and screamed each time a shell went off and the shells were getting closer all the time. The second battalion column came up the hill into Nhpum on the run. Some of the men were too exhausted to

speak, others were carrying wounded or holding them on horses. One man passed out as he reached the aid station. With all the confusion and terror of a shellin that you are unable to combat, the vast majority of the men despite everything were plodding along doing their jobs. It was these men who quickly whipped the top of the hill at Mapum Ga into a veritable fortress that was destined to withold two weeks of all the Japs could dish out.

Colonel McGee called his combat team commanders together. They made a quick reconnaissance of the hill and decided the rough boundaries for the perimeter defense. Then Colonel McGee sent word to his rear guard at Kauri to hold there until forced to withdraw and then to booby trap the trail. They replied they had already used up all their prepared booby traps between Anche and Kauri but were improvising.

The village of Mapum Ga sits atop a mountain but is also surrounded by knife like mountains on the east and southeast. To the north the ridge continues up and down for one half mile then there is a gradual descent to Hsanchingyang to the south. It is down hill 500 yards then up hill 500 yards to Kauri to the south but there is a high hill near Kauri, to the east there is a sharp decline out by numerous ridges leading to the river about one mile away.

The perimeter had to be in about a figure eight to hold the high ground and to hold the water hole at the bottom of a little hill the other side of which it would be doubtful if we could hold. The division of the perimeter roughly developed into Blue Combat Team taking from 90° to 220° and Green Combat Team taking the rest. Colonel McGee quickly saw that his difficulty was going to be to hold with one battalion and he worked to remedy this for the next few days. The combat teams made their own reconnaissance and by 1030 hours the entire battalion was digging in their position as the above diagram shows.

In the meantime General Merrill who had been sick for a few days under a doctor's care was practically carried to his Command Post at Hsanchingyang.

The situation looked better. We were evacuating our casualties from our new airstrip at Hsamshingyang and the third battalion was setting up a defense of the strip expecting an attack or at least a shelling, for we were "within" range of the Jap guns. At 1700 hours General Merrill suddenly became very sick and the doctor advised that he be evacuated to the Twentieth General Hospital for examination. He, however, said he would not go. Colonel Hunter privately advised General Stilwell of the situation and a radio message came right back "Evacuate General Merrill at earliest possible moment thought safe". The General would not go however as wounded from the second battalion were still waiting for evacuation.

At Kauri the rear guard of the second battalion was still holding at 1330 hours. However about 1345 hours the Japs began shelling Kauri heavily and our patrols were hit by overwhelming numbers of Japanese on all sides and at 1400 hours the Japs started a general attack on the perimeter of the rear guard which actually was no more than a heavy trail block. The rear guard withdrew under cover of their automatic weapons and pulled into the perimeter at Dhpum. The Pioneer and Demolition platoon leader reported that he believed the Japs had a reinforced battalion moving north. At 1500 hours the men were still digging in, clearing fire lanes and getting everything set for the expected attack. At 1605 hours the Japs opened with a hard artillery and mortar concentration right in the perimeter and a few moments later they attacked the first platoon of E Company which held the extreme southern point of the perimeter. They were repulsed with losses. Our mortars opened up now and the observer soon had a barrage on the Jap concentration areas to the south along the trail. The attack was not heavy as compared to later attacks - it consisted mainly of feeling out our perimeter - finding our automatic weapons and hunting for a soft spot. We used rifle and tommy guns mainly - and waited to see what the Jap would do.

All night the Japs kept throwing an occasional mortar or artillery shell in the perimeter - apparently to keep us awake. The men were so physically exhausted however that they took advantage of each lull to catch a little sleep. Most of the men dug two man foxholes and one man slept standing or sitting up while the other remained on guard.

29 March 1944 - At Hsuanhsingyang four liaison planes landed and took out wounded to Maingkwau from where they would be flown by hospital ship to the Twentieth General Hospital at Margherita.

At 0900 hours an airdrop started and a Kachin who had been warned to get away from the field got hit by a bag of grain which bounced into him after hitting the ground. No serious injury was suffered but the Kachin didn't have to be told again to get off the drop field - the Jap mortars could not be located. General Merrill still refused to go out until every wounded man was taken and they kept coming in from the second battalion all day. One of the liaison planes broke a prop on the take-off but the pilot saved the plane and has ordered a new prop from Maingkwau.

At Npum Ga where the second battalion is dug in the Jap artillery opened at daylight and mortar fire opened a few minutes later. At 0600 hours the Jap machine guns opened up and the Japs attacked from the southeast but were repulsed with losses. At 1000 hours and 1500 hours they repeated the same procedure except the attacks came from the southwest and due south. The Japs moved very close to our perimeter on the south and west flanks and all day they could be plainly heard moving about and preparing for an attack, however at nightfall they pulled back and started digging. One of our scouts found a note on a dead Jap which said "Cook rice at 2100 hours at Warong and bring up to forward troops". ~~Apparently the Japs were leading their~~

~~the Chinese by - that is their cooks prepare rice for a platoon or company.~~

~~At nightfall, several Japs were seen to carry their baskets along~~  
~~the perimeter of the camp.~~

At 1750 hours the Japs threw ten artillery shells into the perimeter and under a cover of mortar and machine gun fire attacked the perimeter from the west but again were repulsed with losses. Corporal Samuel Stokes was digging a foxhole just before the attack and laid his helmet on the parapet. A Jap threw a grenade which hit the parapet and rolled into the hole with Corporal Stokes. The helmet rolled off and fell into the hole covering the grenade which went off a moment later. Corporal Stokes was not hurt.

Word was received from Regimental Command Post that a large number of Japs were moving north from Sana which is east of Hhpum.

The general situation tonight didn't look so good. The Japs were gradually moving up on the east and west flanks of the second battalion at Hhpum and now a large force was reported a few miles to the east possibly with the mission of cutting through behind Hsamshingyang and cutting any possible route of withdrawal to the north. Our orders were still to hold Hhpum and foxholes were expanded and improved to allow room for one man to sleep laying down while another stood guard. The Japs had had a practice of slipping up close to the perimeter and listening for a voice then throwing a grenade.

Up to this time the reasons for our pulling back as far as Hhpum Ga and Hsamshingyang which were not generally known became clear. The staff had known that a Jap counter attack up the Yanai was coming and that part of it was coming straight up the trail from Sarong. They knew that some Japs in unknown numbers had been moving north along the river bank for the past three days. Now the whole picture was clear. We had moved back so as to cut off all Japs moving to the north. If we had stayed at Ancho we would not only have been surrounded ourselves but permitted the Japs to move without restriction to attack the Chinese flank near Shadusup.

In the aid station Major Rogoff had found a good job for psychoneurosis cases and it seemed to aid their recovery. He was having them dig foxholes - big ones with a place for two men to lie down feet to feet - the work seemed to help the men. He had evacuated only two of the eight cases he had, and believed in a few days, he would have the other six back in the perimeter.

A Kachin report came in tonight to General Merrill's Command Post that two hundred Japs were seen at Hhpaw Ga, about eight miles north of Hsamshingyang on the 27th of March. That might have been the party which came so close to sleeping in General Merrill's Command Post at Hhpum Ga a few days ago.

The third battalion has patrols on all the trails and streams in the area. They have already found some Japs trying to move around us to the north and have chased them back. In addition to this the Kachins have ambushes in a number of places and are reinforcing our trail blocks.

This afternoon a small boy of fourteen marched proudly up to Father Stuart with his guerilla unit returning from a patrol. Clothed in green shorts and shirt, an ivory handled dagger in his belt, a bandolier of ammunition over his shoulder, a heavy Lee-Enfield rifle at his side, barefooted, smiling innocently, he greeted Father Stuart as a long lost friend. He was so young that I asked Father Stuart how he happened to be with the guerillas fighting Japs. Father Stuart told this story - This little fellow came to him in a refugee camp at Sumprabum about two years ago. When Father Stuart came into the valley this little fellow came to him and said, "I want to go with the others (meaning the older boys in the guerillas)". Father Stuart asked, "Why?". He replied, "I want to fight the Japanese - I am not afraid of them but there are only two of us here and I am afraid of the dark".

30 March 1944 - At Nhpum just after dawn the Jap artillery opened up, then the mortars and finally the automatic weapons, and the Japs swarmed up the east slope towards the perimeter. We threw everything we had at them and they fell back only to try again a little further to the north but again they were repulsed. With each attack the morale of our men improved for they knew the Japs had them at their worst the day before. However they were still tired for they hadn't had much sleep in the past three days. The Japs seemed to know that they couldn't crack the perimeter from the south and now they were concentrating all their effort on the eastern flank.

Colonel McGeer sent a message to the Command Post asking that the trail between Haamshingyang and Nhpum Ga be kept open as he expected the Japs to

try to cut it. Headquarters told him that a daily combat patrol from third battalion would be pushed through to him but as bulk of 3rd battalion was engaged either in protecting the airstrip or on other patrols that Colonel Moore would have to do any other patrolling he felt was necessary. The large size of the perimeter the second battalion was holding left very few men available for patrol; however, all day on the 30th patrols from the third battalion and the second battalion moved over the trail and wounded were evacuated to the air strip late in the afternoon of the 30th.

The Japs seemed to have located our mortar position on the reverse slope of the hill in Nhpun and they concentrated on knocking them out with their artillery.

The second battalion distinguished between the two types of artillery fire; the big gun, probably 105 or 90 mm. was known as "Big Bertha"; its shell could be heard coming over with a whistle, but the one they hated and feared most was the one they called "pst, pst". It was probably a 70 mm. high velocity dual purpose gun and it was fired from a range of about one thousand yards point blank into Nhpun. The two explosions were almost simultaneous and it proceeded on the 30th of March to blow the top off the hill directly in front of our mortars, so they were moved to a better position on the east side of the village.

Early this morning Lt. Brendan J. Lynch and Sgt. Black of the Blue Combat Team were slipping back into the southern part of our perimeter for a reconnaissance. Lt. Lynch was shot by a squad on that side of the perimeter. The only explanation of the mistake was that he didn't use the recognition signal and the men on the perimeter were a little bit trigger happy from loss of sleep.

The Japs threw a few shells over about 2100 hours and one was a tree burst which wounded one man seriously. The litter bearers left the air station to go pick him up. Just before they got to the wounded man two Jap snipers fired a flare into the middle of the perimeter and fired on the litter bearers. Two were wounded.

Snipers ringed the perimeter from the east, west and south and banged away off and on, day and night. Sometimes they fired at the sound of a shovel striking the ground. Many times they fired directly over the medical aid station on the reverse slope of the hill. Major Rogoff by now had excellent fox holes dug for the wounded. He had received twelve litter cases today that were occupying them prior to evacuation in the morning.



on them from the rear. Now it is the Japs next move in the battle of ambush.

Tonight Father Stuart told us much about the Kachins. He says they are honest, moral and just. That there are few thieves and the punishment for theft is severe. They despise and will not tolerate thieves.

One time not long ago two men were sent by their chief with one hundred rupees to the leader of an outpost several days march away. On the way over they pinched twenty rupees and turned over only eighty rupees to the outpost leader. At the outpost leader was expecting one hundred rupees and he suspected them of taking the twenty rupees, he thanked them and gave them a note to take back to the chief in which he said, "Your men brought me eighty rupees. If you sent more they have taken it." The men, simple and unsuspecting, took the note back to the chief. He read it and turning to them said, "I have a little job for you". He set them erecting in the centre of the village of Naubun a large bamboo frame in a kind of triangle - anchoring it firmly in the ground. While they were building the frame, he let the story of what they had done get around the village.

When the frame was finished, the Chief's men seized the two thieves, bound them each to a foot of the frame and the entire village gathered around and each person passed by and struck them with a switch or a stick. A sign was placed overhead which read, "This is what we do to thieves". Needless to say the men were badly beaten and will doubtless remember the punishment for stealing.

Similar punishment is meted out by village headmen on those rare occasions when they have been caught stealing. This brought up a discussion of murder and those of us talking with Father Stuart urged him to tell us more about the Kachins - so Father Stuart went on:-

One of the few murder cases in the Kachin Hills in recent years was that of a Kachin who killed a Gurkha. The Kachin received seven years sentence in prison for the murder. It seems that one quiet afternoon a Kachin and his Gurkha friend were pleasantly getting drunk on rice wine. Each was praising the merits of his native knife. The Gurkha showed his Kukri, razor-sharp, and said he could kill quicker and better with it than anyone could with any other weapon. The Kachin equally proud of his Dah, denied that the Kukri was best and made the same claims for his Dah. The argument grew stronger as they got drunker and finally they decided they would fight it out to prove which was ...

the better weapon. The Kachin took the head off the Gurkha in the first few moments of the fight, and, for the Kachin, that proved the supremacy of his Dah, even though it cost him seven years of prison.

Kachins have a unique method of sending messages, sometimes for a hundred miles or more. If one Kachin wants to tell another Kachin in a distant village something, he will send a small bag of salt or tea or some little gift for he knows Kachins are honest and will send his gift on. A message always accompanies a gift, so they will give the message, too, whereas if he simply sends the message, it may never reach the one to whom it is sent.

Father Walsh, a Catholic missionary who lived for years among the Kachins, was attending a conference once in which the subject of Kachin drunkenness was the topic of conversation. After a discussion of the evil which whiskey wrought, the chairman of the conference asked Father Walsh what in his opinion was the effect of whiskey on the Kachins. Father Walsh, without batting an eye, replied, "Whiskey is responsible for all their drunkenness and half their children".

31 March 1944 - At Nhpum Ga just after day break the Jap artillery and mortars opened as usual and at about 0645 automatic weapons also opened and the Japs attacked from three sides - south, east and northwest - a few minutes apart. Their machine guns and mortars were raising hell with our animals. The Jap principal effort was from the east in the area of our water hole. They attacked savagely and bravely in some cases running directly up a slope that we were covering with a machine gun. An hour later we could not get to the water hole - neither could the Japs, but it was more serious for us. We had no other waterhole. The Japs covered the hole with mortar fire and snipers ringed the tall grass overlooking the trail to the hole. We counter-attacked to drive them off the little ridge, but they were firmly established. It was outside of our perimeter and we didn't have the men to occupy the ground if we had taken it.

Already Colonel McGee was using mule skimmers, photographers and every available man in Battalion Headquarters on the perimeter. One hour later a radio message from ~~Headquarters~~ Headquarters at Hsamsingyang said the Japs had blocked the trail between there and Nhpum Ga during the night and that the third battalion patrols were trying to dislodge them and thought they could get through to Nhpum Ga by noon. The word that the second battalion was

surrounded soon spread throughout the perimeter and that coupled with the loss of the waterhole was a severe blow to morale. Also Jap artillery continued to pound them and they couldn't do a thing about it.

At 1000 hours fighter bombers came over and were directed to the Jap positions by our air liaison officers. The weather had been so bad the past four days that the planes could only get over a short time each day. The planes overhead helped morale. Colonel McGee decided to try to push through on the trail to the airstrip and he called the Blue Combat Team commander in and told him to exert all the pressure he could along the trail without endangering the perimeter. He gave him a reinforced platoon withdrawn from the rest of the perimeter. This force attacked under mortar and machine gun support but struck strong Jap dug in positions and were repulsed losing several wounded and one killed. The Japs increased their pressure on all sides of the perimeter during the day. Apparently the Jap commander figured he had this battalion trapped and would annihilate them in a few days.

We received a heavy air drop today of food and ammunition but the shortage of water had everyone worried. There was a muddy hole in a draw where several horses had been killed. A little water ran from it so a squad from the Pioneer and Demolition Platoon dug out a pit and it filled up with a brackish mixture of mud and water. It was enough to quench thirst but that was all. The dead horses only twenty five feet above it didn't add to its taste. Or maybe they did.

Tonight was the low point so far in morale but everytime a Jap made the least move he drew fire. There was no thought anytime but that we would stick it out and come through o.k. /

On the south flank of the perimeter, Lt. Grissons platoon was firing 60mm. mortars at eighty to ninety yard range without bipods or baseplates and were hitting the target.

At the air strip the Orange Combat Team sent the usual morning patrol at 0600 to Inpum Ga but four hundred yards from the strip on the top of a little ridge, the lead scout of the patrol was fired on by a Nambu light machine gun. The Japs pulled a boner here - they fired at the first man whereas if they had waited a minute or two, they could have had a better target.

Our patrol immediately engaged the Japs and found that they had a small trail block - probably no more than half a platoon but they were dug in and would be difficult to get out. The patrol leader left his patrol in contact and went back to report to his platoon leader. The firing had brought the platoon leader combat team commander and battalion commander on the run and he found them on the trail walking up to meet him.

After a quick reconnaissance, Major Lew, the Orange Combat Team commander, moved his Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon up on the trail, and ordered Lt. Ted Hughes' rifle company up to help clear the trail.

We attacked and slowly drove the Jap back. Just before he would be enveloped, he would pull back to previously prepared positions. By nightfall the Japs had been driven back approximately one thousand yards from the air strip but we had lost several killed and about twelve wounded. Most of them were evacuated by liaison plane during the afternoon.

A Kachin report, verified by our own patrols, located an unknown number of Japs only four miles northeast of the air strip and another patrol reported repeated smoke signals from the top of a mountain about four miles northwest of the air strip. The Kachins who were ~~in~~ staying with Father Stuart were beginning to act as if they wanted to get out on their own. Many of them thought the air strip wasn't worth defending. Our idea on that was to hold the strip to evacuate the wounded men though it would be difficult to hold in the event of a strong attack.

General Merrill was finally evacuated late this afternoon on a stretcher. Every man hated to see him go but knew he was not going of his own ~~volition~~ that he had been ordered out. His only words were, "I'm coming back." Not many of us thought he would be able to for this campaign. Colonel Hunter who had been in command for all practical purposes since General Merrill became sick on the 28th, assumed full command. At a staff meeting tonight he gave orders that a transportation train and supply dump would be formed under Lt. Dominic Perrone, supply officer of the third battalion. All supply and all animals will be directly under his command. Starting in the morning a regular supply train will be run from the supply dump to the troops fighting to open the trail. In the morning the orange Combat Team will use everything they have to push open the

Annex - 31 March Pfc Claude Davis of Company L. was a member of a reconnaissance patrol operating from Nhpum Ga. The patrol infiltrated through the Japanese lines to the north in an attempt to contact friendly troops. A friendly platoon was encountered and joined. While the platoon leader was directing mortar fire on the Japanese positions, a group of Japs moved in on the platoon from the rear (north), firing two machine guns and pinning the platoon to the ground. Pfc Davis shifted his position to the opposite side of the trail to get a better firing position. He opened rapid and accurate fire on the machine guns and silenced them enabling his platoon to withdraw. He then led a few isolated men, separated from the platoon, including one wounded man back to friendly troops three miles to the north at Hsawshingyang.

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trail into the second battalion perimeter. <sup>101</sup> Khaki Combat Team will take over all patrols Orange is now sending out and will also be responsible for the defense of the field. He said that he had sent a staff representative to General Stilwell's Headquarters requesting that the Chinese Battalion of Pabum be sent down to block trails to the north. Starting in the morning all officers and non-commissioned officers will wear or improvise insignia of rank and grade.

The situation was tense on the air strip - probably the best evidence of how tense it actually was is furnished by a little incident that happened only thirty yards from the Command Post.

At a church service at dusk tonight a shadowy figure in an off-size G.I. suit and a G.I. helmet walked by. A few moments later a whisper - "Did you see that man? He looked like a Jap in our uniform". - swept through the audience. Automatically the audience began to peel off from the rear, but the figure had disappeared in to the jungle. More and more men joined the search. Finally some ten minutes later a Chinese soldier attached to the Marauders was found talking to a group of soldiers sitting in front of a lean-to. On investigation it was found that he was attached to the organization, but had got a bad fit in a uniform. The men were as relieved as the Chinese soldier when his story proved to be true because they were expecting the Japs to pull a smart stunt like this anytime.

1 April 1944 - At Nhpum at dawn we were all set for the usual attack but 0700 hours came - and 0800 hours came and still no attack. However our patrols found that the Jap had dug in on high ground east of the waterhole so we let him have a nice mortaring. At 0900 hours the artillery started again - this time it seemed very close - probably from Kauri, one thousand yards away or possibly from Auche only two and a half miles away. Following the barrage the Japs attacked from the east and the northeast and were repulsed. Our 60 mm. mortars were worth their weight in gold now. Our mortar men lay the 60's right in the front of the Jap perimeter only thirty yards from our perimeter and they hit their holes with a tree burst many a time. The 60 mm. mortar is perfect for close work and a good mortar crew can actually put them down a stove pipe if they have a little ammunition to play with. We used the 60's when the Japs attacked and fired them at range as short as seventy five yards with good results.

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When the drop planes came over they drew heavier than usual ground fire. One of the pilots reported that the Japs shot a bullet between the legs of a kicker in the back of his plane. A check up reveals that we now have in Nhpum Ga seven dead and twenty five seriously wounded. We started with two hundred and twelve animals and are now down to one hundred and twenty with some of those shot up badly. The stink of the dead Japanese and dead animals sprawled and bloated all around the perimeter is terrific. The shortage of water is acute. Colonel McGee asked for a drop of water in plastic bags tomorrow. The medics don't have enough water to make a plaster cast for a broken leg and they are now giving sulfadiazine without water. Everyone is rationed to half a canteenfull - if he can get that. The artillery shelling is hellishly accurate and that and mortar fire are the principal causes of our casualties so far.

Colonel McGee sent two strong patrols out this morning to try to feel out weak spots in the Jap lines.

They found Japs every place they tried and returned with the information that there was one possible route to the outside available. Down an extremely steep and rough mountainside on the west of the perimeter and up and down some very rough country for almost a mile to the river. Then up the river to Haamshingyang. A platoon from the third battalion which had come through on the daily patrol and was cut off in Nhpum decided to try to break through that way. Dividing themselves into two sections, one following the other by about twenty minutes, they started their tortuous journey through the Jap lines and back to their battalion at the air strip. Crouching low, the first section pushed its way through thick underbrush to a tiny stream bed. Following this stream bed they made better time and soon figured they were through the Jap lines and started moving faster and less cautiously. They were following a rough compass course of 210 degrees but the roughness of the terrain made it necessary to vary their course as they went along. Just at nightfall after five hours of hard climbing they unexpectedly came upon the river and bivouacked along its banks for night. The second section which had started twenty minutes later did not show up. The men in the first section were not worried about them because they knew that coming down the little stream bed they might have turned off at a different place.

At the air strip the Orange Combat Team moved up the trail and attacked the Japs along the main trail all day. The Japs withdrew again - but showed more determination to hold ground. Their selection of ground to defend was excellent. It appeared that a Jap officer kept some distance behind the front troops marking emplacements for automatic weapons. The Japs used a clever S shaped trail block with Nambs on the humps and ends which could fire cross fire usually both up and down the trail. A few riflemen were in fox holes between the Nambs and some were scattered back along the trail. The Japs truly used men and ground to maximum advantage and forced us to be extremely careful about envelopment. In some cases they estimated where we would envelop and got a machine gun there to hit us in the flank. The Orange Combat Team had the most seasoned and experienced fighters in the command and their ability to sense where the Jap would be saved many a life. Very little progress was made in pushing the Jap back today. Less than one hundred yards was gained. We needed artillery and we needed it badly. Fighter bombers were helping a lot but they were not enough.

When General Merrill was taken out, the first thing he told Major Hancock who met the ambulance plane at Ledo was to get two howitzers and drop them to the third battalion at the air strip. Major Hancock had those guns packed and ready to drop by 1900 hours on the 1st of April and sent Colonel Hunter a message that they were available when he wanted them. Colonel Hunter radioed back to drop them early on April 2nd. We had no artillerymen and the guns would be dropped in sections and would have to be assembled. Colonel Hunter sent a call to Colonel Beach, Commanding Officer of the third battalion, to get all men with any previous artillery experience and make up two gun crews tonight. The word had hardly get out before twenty five mulekinners from the third battalion had reported. They had volunteered from the 98th Pack Artillery in New Guinea and there were actually four complete gun crews with us. S/Sergeant John A. Acker was made Battery Commander. Private Thomas W. Merritt was made chief of Number One section, while Sergeant George S. Lowe took Number Two section. These men organized their crews and a man was given the job he used to do regardless of how it fitted his present grade. One of the best gunners in the 98th was found in Private Isaac W. (Little Chief) Ross, a full-blooded Cherokee Indian from Cherokee, North Carolina. These men were like school kids on a vacation - they were so happy to have their hands on a pack howitzer again. The gun crews went

through dummy ran, completed their organization and were all set to receive the guns by 2100 hours tonight.

Morale all over the area picked up when the news got around that we would have our own artillery, tomorrow, for the first time since we had been behind the Japanese lines. The cheering news was radioed to the second battalion which was told it would be out in short order when the artillery arrived. Morale lifted there also but Major Rogoff was not so encouraged. He had buried seven men already and had twenty five more seriously injured in fox holes in his aid station. Some of them would not be able to live another two days without hospital care, surgery, and in one case a blood transfusion and they couldn't be carried out through the jungle, but only over some kind of a trail.

At a staff conference tonight Colonel Hunter ordered the Orange Combat Team to continue the attack down the trail to the south the next morning while a strong force from Khaki Combat Team moves up the river, then turns east to hit at the Japs surrounding the second battalion on their west flank. In the meantime second battalion is to exert all pressure possible and try to break through to the west and to the north down the main trail. Colonel Hunter told us we had to get through to the second battalion as soon as possible as their wounded were badly in need of hospital care and every day they were surrounded was costing a man that might have been saved if he could have been evacuated.

2 April 1944 - Orange Combat Team was engaged with the enemy along the trail by 0700 hours and their first attack early in the morning was repulsed by unusually strong Jap fire. The Japs seemed to have been reinforced during the night. Colonel Beach put the fighter bombers on the Jap positions all morning, but they were well dug in and they didn't move. The attack continued all day at a cost of four dead and four seriously wounded. At dawn Major Edwin J. Briggs, Khaki Combat Team Commander, led out a reinforced company of his men leaving 81 mm. mortars and heavy machine guns at the air strip. They marched down the river for about three hours until they estimated they were almost opposite the heavy fire which they believed to be the second battalion perimeter. Turning east cross country, they moved over the most difficult stretch of mountains and jungle they had yet encountered.

Three and a half hours later the point platoon under T/Sergeant Lenwood C. Clements started up another steep mountain where they were suddenly fired on. For ten minutes there was sporadic rifle fire in all directions; then it became clear that the Japs held the rest of the ridge and had snipers literally all over the ridge. Sergeant Clements had already lost one or two men killed and several wounded. The Sergeant risked his own life to save one of his men by running through heavy sniper fire picking the wounded man up and carrying and dragging him to a defended place. Major Briggs felt out the Japs on both flanks with patrols only to find they occupied the entire ridge. By that time the Japs were throwing mortar fire from the ridge. Several feeling-out attacks made by Sergeant Clements were repulsed by the Japs. The enemy had an excellent position commanding all approaches and it was just plain waste of manpower to hit them at this point. So Major Briggs withdrew a few hundred yards and dug in for the night.

At 0830 hours the drop plane arrived at the airstrip and soon the various sections of the two pack howitzers were floating to earth on double parachutes. Four hundred rounds of 75 mm. ammunition came with the guns. At 0930 hours the planes had finished their complete drop and the gun crews rushed on the field with pack animals to carry off the guns. Other men were assigned to get the ammunition and carry it to previously prepared positions. At 1100 hours the guns were ready to fire and Colonel Hunter was figuring the fire data to blast the Japs south of Nhpum Ga. The first round was fired amidst a silent prayer from every Marauder, at 1130, and went over the second battalion perimeter landing about eight hundred yards beyond the Jap lines and four hundred yards to the west. Adjustment was made and at 1200 hours both guns had registered on the target.

Over the radio Colonel Hunter told Colonel McLee and Colonel Beach that we would attack and try to break through this afternoon after a good artillery barrage preceded by strafing and dive bombing. The attack came off but the Japs held. Word was received later in the afternoon from Major Briggs that he was held up so Colonel Hunter ordered him back to the air strip as he carried supplies for only thirty six hours and had expended most of his ammunition.

In Nhpum Ga they got their usual <sup>damn</sup>/attack from the south and from the northwest preceded by artillery and mortars. When our artillery opened up at 1130 hours morale seemed to go way up. The men in the perimeter overestimated the ability of the artillery for many of them thought this would cause the Japs to withdraw not remembering that for six days they had taken all the Japs could give them without withdrawing.

Water was getting very low and what there was stank so badly that you could hardly drink it. Wounded men cried for water and that afternoon a heavy, but short rain provided enough for everyone to get their throats wet. At dusk the men began to see that the Japs were not going to be run off by our artillery. Counter battery fire was going on from both sides, apparently with very little effect; and tonight morale was again pretty low.

Someone started a rumor that the battalion had been told to fight their way out the next day carrying their wounded. Everyone knew that was just what the Japs wanted us to do. Colonel McGee spiked the rumor by passing the word around that the second battalion was accomplishing its assigned mission of blocking a Jap counter thrust on the Chinese east flank at Shaduzup, that we had plenty of food and ammunition and tomorrow we would have water dropped, that we were not moving from Nhpum but were sticking it out. In the drop today were a number of books, two of which were "Manual of Operation of Garryall and Flew" in Spanish and "Symposium of Office Gynaecology". There were also a number of novels in French. The men got a kick out of this as the books were passed about over the perimeter.

Colonel McGee used field telephones to the key points of the perimeter and to the Combat Team Command Posts. 30 300 radios and even 50 536 radios were also used.

One Marauder sitting in his foxhole just before dawn this morning saw a Jap come towards him. The Jap appeared to be groggy and lost. He walked to the edge of the Marauder's fox hole mumbling to himself apparently thinking he was in his own perimeter. The Marauder mumbled back while reaching for his gun. The Jap walked away apparently still looking for his fox hole and the Marauder shot him dead with one shot through the head.

Sergeant Roy H. Matsumoto, A Nisei Japanese, proved invaluable to the second battalion during their siege at Nhpum Ga. He and other Nisei were placed at strategic points around the perimeter where they could

hear the Japanese talking and shouting before an attack, and frequently were able to give us a little warning of what they were going to do.

Sergeant Matsumoto crawled out close to the Jap perimeter every night and sniped at Japs. He listened to them talk and secured information. He usually returned just before dawn. Last night however he returned about 2300 hours and reported to Lt. Edward A. McLogan that the Japs were going to attempt to cut off a part of the perimeter that Lt. McLogan was occupying. Lt. McLogan's perimeter stuck way out on a nose of ground that sloped down hill. It was difficult to defend but so far they had held it mainly because they wanted to deny the defilade it would offer the Japs if we pulled back to the crest of the little ridge. Sergeant Matsumoto said the Jap plan was to creep up as close as possible to the perimeter before dawn, then rush the little nose, which about twenty men were holding. Lt. McLogan figured that it might be possible to give them a surprise. He decided to pull his men back to the crest of the ridge, concentrate tommy guns and Browning automatic rifles along that side of the rise, booby trap the fox holes they were leaving and let the Japs attack the nose of ground - take it and then be annihilated by his automatic weapons.

At dawn everybody was set. Sergeant Matsumoto was in a two man fox hole overlooking the nose of ground with a tommy gun. Suddenly there were shouts of "Banzai." "Death to the Americans", "Die", "Banzai" and a hail of hand grenades hit around the nose of ground as a reinforced platoon swept up the hill. A moment later they were sticking bayonets in fox holes, firing wildly, shouting and grenading everything that looked like a gun emplacement. Their sudden occupation of the nose started them. Then they charged up the hill, an officer leading them carrying a sword (which later proved to be a beauty). Lt. McLogan held his fire till they got within fifteen yards of his perimeter. Then tommy guns, Browning automatic rifles, grenades - everything - opened at once. The Japs were falling like flies. Another platoon or part of a platoon was following the first platoon and they started hitting the ground - jumping in our booby trapped fox holes. Then Sergeant Matsumoto shouted in Japanese "Charge!" "Charge!" and they charged. Thirty minutes later fifty four dead bodies were counted on that slope including two officers. Sergeant Matsumoto became a legendary character overnight.

The platoon which left the second battalion perimeter yesterday arrived safely at the air strip this afternoon without losing a man. The Japs were

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contacted only once and the platoon was able to break contact and get away after a few shots. They report that it would be impossible to carry litters over the ground they covered however. It took all their energy to get over it themselves without carrying anyone.

3 April 1944 - At Nhpum Ga, the Japs made a heavy attack on the south flank of the perimeter at dawn and three hours later hit the west side. The same pattern of artillery, mortar, grenades and attack was followed and they were repulsed with heavy losses.

Planes were overhead, bombing and strafing the one mile gap between Nhpum and the third battalion which was fighting desperately against Jap strong points and bunkers. All day the men were wishing for water. Finally the airdrop came late in the afternoon and with it came water in plastic bags.

The Japs always opened up with mortars when we got an airdrop and today they really gave us a pounding.

Some of the water bags were broken open within a minute from the time they hit - the first bag opened was carried to the aid station where every wounded man was allowed to drink his fill. The water had a rubberish taste to it but was delicious and refreshing compared to the blackish stinking stuff we had been drinking for the past three days. The stench of more than one hundred dead animals was almost overpowering - and the Japs opened up with mortars whenever we tried to bury one. <sup>Over</sup> ~~about~~ two hundred dead Jap bodies were scattered around the edges of the perimeter and were making their contribution to the nauseating odor.

At 1630 hours the enemy sent a heavy artillery barrage over, then suddenly stopped. All was quiet. Not a shot was fired by either side for more than two hours. The night was quiet. Even our own artillery had stopped about 1500 hours. The ominous silence was getting the men. The third battalion had not been able to break through today. Our artillery hadn't helped much and some of our wounded were dying. Tonight was the low point for morale. Things ~~can't~~ get any worse, unless they don't drop any more water.

At the air strip Colonel Hunter called a staff meeting about 1800 hours. He told his officers frankly that the situation was bad. Reports were confirmed that the Japs are moving in strength up the Tanai River to our east and we had been told not to expect much Chinese help for another eleven days. The battalion at Pabum is supposed to be moving down to Tate Ga to block trails to the

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south. Colonel Hunter said he had given orders to Colonel Osborne to rush as fast as possible from Shaduzup but that due to bad weather the message was delayed. However he told us not to expect the first battalion for five days. Finally he said, "Gentlemen, in the morning we start an attack that will drive through to the second battalion. It may take two or three days but we will get through. All troops except the sick and the muleskinners will be withdrawn from the defense of the airstrip. Large patrols will be called in and Kachims substituted where possible. Tomorrow, as soon as we can get ready, Orange Combat Team will attack due south along the trail. Khaki Combat Team will leave their heavy equipment here, march down the trail behind Orange until they are four hundred yards from the Jap positions then turn west down the mountain and attack the Japs on their west flank."

The artillery will be moved up to where it can fire pointblank into the Jap bunkers and pill boxes. Every man of the gun crews volunteered to do this, this afternoon. The attack will be tentatively set for 1200 hours tomorrow. Runes, feints and anything else you can do to fool the Japs are in order. A fake message will be dropped from a plane so as to fall in the Jap perimeter. The message will be to the second battalion and will say that a battalion of parachutists will be dropped between Kauri and Auche at 1700 hours on April 4. If possible we will have a dummy airdrop in that area to fool them.

A brief discussion of the plan followed. Then everyone scattered to get his own job done.

Major Briggs brought his tired, wet company back from their trek down the river by noon. They had taken a strong Jap position at dusk last night but had withdrawn on Colonel Hunter's orders after he found out the strength of their opposition. Yesterday afternoon after six men had been wounded, Captain Melton H. Ivens, the Khaki Combat Team surgeon, told Major Briggs that four of them should be started back to the airstrip at once as their chances of survival depended on how soon they reached a hospital. Major Briggs immediately detailed the lead platoon, from which most of the wounded had come, as their escort back. That meant litter-bearing, but that platoon under Sergeant Clements was glad to help these <sup>men</sup> out, though it was a very tough assignment. There was no trail for this had been an infiltration attack and the jungle was thick; every inch of the trail had to be cleared before the improvised litters could be

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-11-

carried through. The mountain slopes were so steep that men crawled on hands and knees, lifting the litters a few feet at a time. Every few minutes the men and one officer changed around. - some cutting the trail, some watching for Jap snipers, while others struggled with the litters. The wounded, their pain dulled by drugs, did not cry out even when a litter bearer would fall on the slippery mountainside. They stopped by the side of a stream at night. During the night one man died and was buried nearby. At dawn the caravan moved out and arrived at the airstrip at noon. Fortunately there were planes on the field and the wounded were flown out within ten minutes after their arrival.

4 April 1944 - As the airstrip was to be left relatively undefended Colonel Hunter moved his headquarters to Mahetkawng, two miles north of the airstrip where a platoon of Chinese had just arrived from the Chinese Battalion at Pabum. This unit was ordered to dig in and hold the trail junction at Mahetkawng. Colonel Hunter with his staff moved up with the Orange Combat Team which was attacking astride the trail. Planes were overhead strafing and dive bombing the Japs all day. At 1100 hours Colonel Hunter saw that the attack couldn't come off before 1600 hours so it was set for that time. The delay was due to the time it took to move Khaki Combat Team into position and Colonel Hunter wanted to wait until he could hit an overpowering blow before hitting at all, today.

Major Lew, the Commander of the Orange Combat Team, had the following plans of attack: At 1530 his Pioneer and Demolition platoon would move down the east side of the mountain to the valley below and have a sham battle among themselves. Carbines, which sound something like an Arisaka, would represent the enemy while tommy guns and M-1s would represent the Marauders. It was hoped that the commotion would draw Jap attention and mortar fire while his main attack moved along the trail. The front was only one hundred and fifty yards wide. It consisted merely of the top of a long ridge with the Japs on one end and the Marauders on the other. Major Lew's mortars were set up to lay down a close in barrage with 81 mm. heavy ammunition to try to penetrate some of the Jap pill boxes and also because the 5.5. light would be hitting too close to our own front line troops. Captain Burch, Commanding Officer of the assault company making the attack, was employing three platoons in a U-shaped formation. The bottom of the U would be his center platoon

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with the two flank positions echeloned out as close up to the Jap position as possible. Colonel Beach, the Third Battalion Commander, planned to have his air liaison officer direct the planes on the Jap strong points for fifteen minutes of bombing and strafing and then open with the artillery at point blank range. At the same time his mortars were to pulverize the closed in positions. At a signal over the radio, the artillery and mortars would cease firing and Burch's company would rush the Jap positions before they could recover from the shock of the artillery barrage. Then we would do the same thing over again, consolidating after each attack.

At 1600 hours Khaki Combat Team informed Colonel Hunter that they were engaged with the Japs and were temporarily pinned down by mortar and machine gun fire.

At 1630 the ruse fight at the bottom of the valley to our west got under way. It sounded real and five minutes later the Japs started throwing mortar fire in that direction. At 1645 the planes were circling and Lt. Paulson was directing them on to a target not more than one hundred and fifty yards in front of our front line. They made several passes from east to west and at 1655 they strafed and bombed the target. At 1605 our artillery opened up at point blank range and the mortars followed in a moment. What happened next can best be told from the SC 300 radio net that was used to actually direct the attack. The force commanders were:

- YUMA - Lt. Colonel Charles E. Beach, Commanding Officer, third battalion.
- LUKE - Lt. Colonel George A. McGee, Jr., Commanding Officer, second battalion, (surrounded in Nhpun Co, one mile south of third battalion).
- LEW - Major Lawrence L. Low, Commanding Officer of Orange Combat Team.
- BOSTON - Major Edwin J. Briggs, Commanding Officer of Khaki Combat Team.
- BURCH - Captain Clarence O. Burch, Commanding Officer of company making the assault (he was with center platoon).
- TOE - Lt. Theodore T. Chancelas, Commanding Officer of Burch's right flank platoon.
- VIC - Lt. Victor Weingartner, Commanding Officer of Burch's left flank platoon.

"Low from Yuma, Low from Yuma. Come in Yuma". "Low to Yuma, go ahead Yuma". "Low from Yuma, the "fatboys" (artillery) will open at 1600, your mortars at 1605 and the jump-off your decision - Razor on that".

"1605-Yuma from Lew - Come in Yuma."

"Yuma to Lew - go ahead Lew"

"Yuma from Lew - the 'fatboys' are raising hell with the pillboxes on the right slope of the hill - a direct hit on one - Japs ran from another - have the 'fatboys' hit that machine gun firing two hundred yards to the west of their present target then swing their barrage up the slope of the hill - we are preparing to push off "

"Lew from Yuma - Roger Roger"

"Lew to Burch - come in Burch"

Burch to Lew - go ahead Lew"

"Lew to Burch - shove off boy and good luck"

"Burch to Lew - Roger on that - Roger"

"Burch to Tom - come in Tom"

"Tom to Burch - go ahead Burch"

"Burch to Tom - shove off and be sure to cover that little draw on your right with at least one squad".

"Tom to Burch - Roger on that - the Japs are running from that pill box to my front- our snipers got one sure and lobbed a 60 mm. or two on them - believe we got some more"

"Burch to Vic - come in Vic "

"Vic to Burch - go ahead Burch"

"Burch to Vic - did you hear my message to Tom? - same applies to you - shove off and keep your eyes open for each other"

"Burch from Vic - Roger - I understand you"

"Burch to Lew - come in Lew"

"Lew to Burch - go ahead Burch"

"Burch to Lew - have shoved off - am now moving my Command Post forward with center platoon - no enemy firing yet"

"Lew to Burch - Roger on that - and close in fast"

"Yuma from Boston - come in Yuma"

"Boston from Yuma - go ahead Boston"

"Yuma from Boston - have Luke fire three rounds of 60 mm. two hundred yards due west of perimeter - I am close but can't locate him"

"Boston from Yuma - Roger on that "

"Yuma to Luke - come in Luke"

"Luke to Yuma - I heard Boston, will fire in three minutes - Japs are

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-114-

pressing us from the north - ask the bombers to drop a few and strafe four hundred yards north of Nhpua on that little ridge"

"Luke from Yuma - Roger on that"

(A separate radio net worked the planes and Yuma reached over and told his air liaison officer what he wanted. The air liaison officer gave the planes overhead the target)

"Tom from Burch - come in Tom"

"Burch from Tom - go ahead Burch"

"Tom from Burch - the Japs are rolling hand grenades down on the squad near the trail - can you throw some rifle grenades on them?"

"Burch from Tom - we just threw three hand grenades - I don't believe those Japs are throwing them - I'll tell Bill (Squad Leader) to watch out - we're almost to the crest of the hill so don't fire on us"

"Tom from Burch - Roger old boy"

"Burch from Lew - come in Burch"

"Lew from Burch - go ahead Lew"

"Burch from Lew - your left flank is too far down the hill - the Japs are moving out so move that flank up fast"

"Lew from Burch - Roger on that"

"Lew to Yuma - come in Yuma"

"Yuma to Lew - go ahead Lew"

"Lew to Yuma - how about that mortar ammunition? - we need some 81 badly"

"Lew from Yuma - the supply train is passing my Command Post now - will be with you in a minute"

Yuma from Lew - Roger on that - Roger -r-r"

"Burch from Tom - come in Burch"

Tom from Burch - go ahead Tom"

"Burch from Tom - we're over the top of the ridge on our way down - three pill boxes are blown to hell - bloody Jap uniforms all over the place and one Nambu machine gun blown up - looks as if the Japs are in strength on next hill - we're drawing inaccurate small arms fire and a little knee mortar - put some 'fatboys' on that hill for us but be damn sure it's on the hill"

"Tom from Yuma - Roger on those 'fatboys' - good work fellow - keep going"

"Burch from Lew - are you on the trail yet"

"Lew from Burch - we are one hundred yards past the trail - there are no

~~SECRET~~

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115

Japs on the east side of the trail - Japs have moved out of their positions - will be at top of hill in five minutes"

"Yuma to Lew - come in Lew"

"Lew to Yuma - go ahead Yuma"

"Lew from Yuma - have you moved anything to occupy the ground you have taken"

"Yuma from Lew - I am moving a platoon up now - how about the ground we are leaving"

"Lew from Yuma - O.K. - I'll occupy it with maleskinners"

"Boston from Yuma - come in Boston"

"Yuma from Boston - go ahead Yuma"

"Boston from Yuma - you are coming in 3 x 3 (poor radio reception) - have you contacted Luke yet"

Yuma from Boston - we've hit Jap perimeter - they have machine gun covering this area - can't get at them with mortars - am trying rifle grenades now - looks like I may be held up here"

"Boston from Yuma - tell Luke to put pressure on that spot - if necessary try further south"

"Yuma from Boston - Roger in that - it's getting dark down here - we'll start digging in soon"

"Burch from Tom - come in Burch"

"Tom from Burch - go ahead Tom"

"Burch from Tom - I am pinned down by heavy machine gun fire from west side of hill - artillery is hitting too high on hill to do any good - my flame thrower is way rounded on my right flank trying to knock that gun, but doubt if he can get close enough - am going to pull up to a little knoll ahead and dig in as it's almost dark"

"Tom from Burch - good work - we may be able to help you when we get our mortars set up - I see that machine gun - Roger on digging in"

"Burch to Lew - come in Lew"

"Lew to Burch - I heard Tom - over"

"Burch to Lew - I am held up by a position on the next hill - like the position we just took - believe we'll have to have those 'fatboys' in close again - it's almost dark - I am reorganizing and digging in"

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"Law to Burch - fine work - I am coming up with the supply train now"

"Burch to Yuma - have one and one (-one killed - one wounded) that I know of"

"Yuma to Burch - send him right back - we'll notify a plane to stand by"

"Yuma from Burch - Law hit by Jap sniper - suggest you come down at once - our perimeter is set up and we're digging in"

"Burch from Yuma - Roger - am on my way".

One hour later the wounded were on their way to hospital by plane. Jap casualties were estimated at two hundred.

The fighting had been close and bitter but the Japs had literally been blasted out their holes and we had advanced to within one thousand yards of the second battalion perimeter.

At Nhpua Ga the second battalion was not doing so well. Three wounded men died during the night and one man lay to the southeast just outside the perimeter with his entire frontal lobe exposed. The medics tried to get at him all night but the Japs threw up flares and opened fire whenever there was a sound in that vicinity. The next morning we did get him out, but he died a few hours later. There are only seventy usable animals left - the others are dead or wounded. He won't shoot wounded animals because they stink, and they may stop some of the lead from getting to the muleskinners' fox holes. One animal has twenty six bullet holes in him where he got in the line of fire of a Jap machine gun.

Blood plasma is nearly out.

This morning we found that the Japs had grenaded one of our machine gun positions at dawn and taken the machine gun. They were firing it at us for an hour this morning - we know because they didn't use tracer and the gun they were firing had a lot of tracers in it. Our mortars concentrated on knocking out this gun and got a direct hit on the fourteenth round. It has not fired since. Some of the men on our southwest flank captured a Jap machine gun this morning and fired up all the ammunition they had for it.

The Japs attacked this morning from the northwest without success. Again at 1700 hours they made a heavy rush attack on a part of the perimeter which had been manned by some muleskinners who had got out of their holes while things were quiet. The Japs broke through the perimeter in one place for a minute but

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were wiped out a few moments later by <sup>-117-</sup> a two-man assault force throwing hand grenades. The hole in the perimeter was plugged but a chill swept around the perimeter as the story got around about how close the Japs came to really getting in.

Morale picked up considerably at about 1800 hours when the third battalion started to attack.

5 April 1944 - About midnight at Nhpum Ga there was a little noise in the Jap perimeter to our west. Sergeant Matsumoto slid quietly out of his fox hole and moved slowly towards the Jap lines where he could hear the voices a little plainer. He returned to the perimeter with the news that he believed the Japs were getting ready to attack. A heavy rain had just fallen for about twenty minutes and the water still dripped from trees and bamboo overhead. Our perimeter was strong on the west flank and there was very little to do except alert the men and wait.

Suddenly at 0200 hours the Japs attacked - rushing madly towards the perimeter. A wave of hand grenades went out to meet them but some Japs actually reached the perimeter and were killed by tommy gunners. One Jap fell dead in the foxhole of a man he never saw. The startled Marauder hadn't seen the Jap either as he was facing the other way. The slightest movement drew fire and even though the Japs were repulsed, not a man slept for fear a wounded Jap lay close enough to the perimeter to shoot or throw a grenade.

They pulled the same attack again at 0430 hours without success. The Japs threw artillery off and on during the day but generally the pressure on the perimeter was lessened, apparently by the attacks of the third battalion. Tonight in the second battalion perimeter there were ninety seven wounded, seventeen killed and four missing. The Japs had suffered heavy casualties. The dead lay all about the perimeter and our snipers had picked many of them off trying to get their dead. On the west side of the perimeter, moans could be heard as if there was a Jap aid station in that vicinity.

The third battalion followed the same plan today that they used yesterday in their successful attack - blasting pill boxes with bombs, strafing, throwing artillery, mortars and bazooka fire and twice using flame throwers. The infantry followed closely.

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occupying each foot of ground and mopping up. Then the artillery opened again. The artillery is firing from an open position a few hundred yards from the hill top the Japs are occupying. They could be easily hit by machine gun fire from the Jap position.

Private Paul Fields, Franklin, Ohio, owes his life to the men in the first platoon of Company I.

Corporal Luther Sutterfield, Dunbar, Oklahoma, gave his life trying to rescue Fields who was wounded and lying in a spot that was covered by Jap sniper fire. Fields was feeling his way cautiously up a Jap-infested hill when a sniper shot him in the leg. He tried to crawl back to his squad but every time he moved the sniper fired just over his body.

Sutterfield, who had served with Fields in the 147th Infantry on Guadalcanal and New Georgia, saw him fall and rushed out to get him. As Sutterfield grabbed him by the belt and started dragging him back, the Jap sniper opened up and shot him through the head, killing him instantly.

Undaunted, two more men a few yards behind, started crawling forward. The sniper opened up again, but this time a light machine gun saw a rustle in a bamboo clump and let go a burst. The Jap sniper opened on the machine gunner while Private First Class Harold C. Bible, Cincinnati, Ohio, and Paul F. Bicknell, Norwood, Ohio, dragged Fields and Corporal Sutterfield to safety.

Jap resistance has been strengthened today and the fighting is extremely bitter and close. Ammunition, food, water and other supplies are packed up to the Orange Combat Team from the airstrip over a steep, slippery trail. Yesterday, after a hurry call, some 81 mm. ammunition arrived in time to help in the attack.

The ground we took yesterday is blasted bare along the trail - every tree is either down or chipped all over with fragments or bullets, and the bamboo is cut as if with a huge knife. Jap bodies were found in trees, where a five hundred pound bomb had blasted them yesterday afternoon.

This morning Lt. Weston's Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon was in the forefront of the attack. As the artillery lifted, his men rushed forward. Lt. Weston, running down the middle of the trail, suddenly came on a Jap fox hole with a sack over the top. He jerked the sack off to see two terrified Japs shaking all over from the shock of the artillery so close to them. Before he could stop he had shot both with his carbine, one shot

for each. Later he regretted he hadn't tried to make them prisoners.

Mounted messengers supplementing radio and telephone communications, gallop up and down the trail. Aid men and litter bearers move with the front line troops bandaging and carrying the wounded to aid stations from which they are evacuated to the airstrip and on to a field hospital.

Captain Burch was right up with his lead platoon all through the attack. His calm decisions when a Hambu suddenly opens up on a flank have kept his company functioning like a deadly machine. He has taught his men the importance of moving fast in the jungle to keep from being hit by snipers, and unlike most troops when they are in combat areas after severe fights, Captain Burch's men keep their heads up. He will call a man down for hitting the ground and ducking. He has proved it is safer to see what is going on around you.

Lt. Abie Weingartner's platoon has done very outstanding work all through the campaign. He believes the Browning automatic rifle is the best weapon for jungle fighting although most men will swear by the tommy gun. Yesterday Abie put his Brownings right behind his attacking echelon. He had them spraying the trees ahead as the riflemen advanced thus giving the men in front confidence and causing them to move faster.

Lt. Weston has taught his men to stay close to the ground when they stop and to move often, firing a few times in place, then moving rapidly to another. The Weapons platoons have their own little tricks too. If a flame thrower won't ignite, they throw an incendiary grenade, then shoot the liquid into it. The planes helped us today, too, by making diving passes after strafing - the Japs never could be sure and they ducked to beat hell when the planes started over. Of course all the Marajiders prefer to use hand grenades at night.

Captain James E.T. Hopkins, Orange Combat Team Surgeon, and Lt. Paul E. Armstrong, his assistant, worked right with the assault platoons all days. Hopkins said, "We didn't have a man wounded who didn't receive medical aid within two minutes of being hit". He gave the chief credit to his aid men, one of whom is Corporal Daniel Hardinger, a Conscientious Objector. Corporal Hardinger has carried several men out of danger even though he was exposed to sniper and machine gun fire. Although he will not carry a gun, he volunteered to crawl out and bring back tommy gun ammunition when the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon was pinned down by fire.

This morning a note torn into small pieces was found scattered along the

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720

trail. One of our Intelligence sergeants put it together and it contained a very interesting message which the bearer tore up when he thought he might be killed or captured. It was a note from a Japanese platoon leader to his company commander that the Americans were attacking fiercely and had brought artillery up to one thousand meters from their positions and were shelling them continuously. He said that he was forced to withdraw to better positions on the hill. Search of a number of dead Japs revealed a poem and statement of policy by a Jap Company Commander that is quite interesting.

(Poem written by Kiroshi Shimosaka, Jap soldier killed near Nhpum)

#### WORLD UNIFICATION (conquest)

With the blood stained flag of the Rising Sun,  
I'd like to unify the world.

As I urinate at the great Walls of China,  
A rainbow rises above the great Gobi Desert.

On the Ganges River at the feet of majestic Himalaya Mountains  
Sons of Japan look for some alligator (crocodiles).

Today we're in Berlin, Tomorrow, Moscow, home of snowbound  
Siberia.

As the fog lifts we see the city of London,  
Rising high as the Ceremonial Fish of Boys Day Dees.

Now we're in Chicago, once terrorized by gangsters,  
Where our grandchildren pay homage to our  
Memorial Monument.

Oh: Governor General of Australia and South America,  
only in Japan, sweet odor of Fragrant Blossoms Permeates.

When I die, I'll call together all devils (Orges)  
and wreath them in a three inch Rivulet.

I've set my mind in making my home in Singapore,  
For there my darling awaits my return.

Policy of the Company (of Jap companies) opposing Merrill's  
Marauders at Nhpum)  
From a Captured Document.

1. Abide by the Imperial Rescripts.
2. Strict and rigid Discipline and Courtesy.
3. Cooperation (Highest)
4. Health.

In the fighting at Nalawbum, a small liaison plane, the "7-11", was damaged in landing to evacuate wounded. It was decided that the plane was too badly damaged to repair and the airstrip was under almost constant Jap shelling. Sergeant Jim Ballard was only a few yards away when he heard they were going to

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Annex - April 5 A platoon of Company I, 3rd battalion was advancing southwest of Nhpum Ga when they were held up by fire from an enemy light machine gun and a few riflemen. The platoon withdrew a few yards and formulated a new plan of attack. As there were only 2 squads in the platoon at this time the platoon leader decided to send one squad under S/Sgt Ellisworth Dalmus, the platoon guide, around the right flank while the other squad engaged the enemy with fire.

Sgt Dalmus with 6 riflemen, 1 BAR man and 1 tommygunner advanced up a draw, crawling up a steep bank to get close to the enemy flank. When they were about 30 yards from the top of the hill two heavy machine guns, one light machine gun and a number of riflemen opened fire on them from the top of the hill. They were pinned to the ground and Pvt Heinz Sanders was critically wounded in both legs. Several men attempted to drag him to safety without success when Sgt Dalmus crawled, leaped and ran through enemy fire to a position where he could drag Pvt Sanders out of the line of fire.

As Sgt Dalmus' squad was pinned down by superior fire and number of the enemy and three of his men were wounded he withdrew down the hill, reorganized and rejoined his platoon.

burn the wrecked plane. He ran over, gave it a quick look and persuaded the pilot to let him try to fix it. Sergeant Chester N. Dulan thought he could help too so these two communications men set to work straightening the cowling, removing the damaged landing gear and propeller. A new landing gear and propeller was landed by another plane evacuating wounded and two hours later the wrecked "7-11" was tested and flown out with another wounded American boy. Since that time Sergeants Ballard and Dulan have repaired four planes damaged in evacuating wounded Marauders. The pilots of the liaison planes swear these Infantry sergeants are top airplane repairmen but neither ever worked on a plane before, though Sergeant Ballard has flown small planes. Sergeant Ballard never worked on radios before joining the army but was an infantryman with 101st Infantry. He was sent to the Communications School at the Infantry School, Fort Benning, Georgia. There he was an outstanding student and his interest in radios led into the details of repair and adjustment usually made by factory representatives.

In the past two months behind the Jap lines, he has fixed more than one hundred damaged radios and generators. His battalion commander says he's a natural mechanic and that, with pliers and screwdriver, he can fix anything from tanks to tommy guns.

In the attack today, Lt. William E. Woomer, known as "Woomer the Boomer", platoon leader for Company K, worked his way forward to within twenty five yards of two machine guns that had been holding us up for several hours. He directed his mortar fire on them and had shells landing within twenty feet of where he was directing the fire by SCR 500. During this he was heard to give this order over the radio, "Deflection correct. Bring it in twenty five yards and if you don't hear from me, you know you came this way too far. Then shift it just a little and you'll know you're right on it".

The guns were knocked out in the next few rounds and Lt. Woomer was miraculously not hurt.

6 April 1944 - The Jap artillery fired on the second battalion perimeter at 600 hours, 1500 and 1730 - about ten rounds each time. The Japs made a light attack on the northwest flank of the perimeter early this morning. We have one hundred wounded, seventeen dead and four missing to date in Nhpum Ga. The stink of the dead horses and men grows worse though it doesn't seem possible that it could get worse. Water was dropped again today and the planes

seemed to draw unusually heavy ground fire. Four out of the twenty eight aid men in the battalion have been wounded. Three men that were wounded and were sent back to the perimeter after having their wounds dressed have been killed. Many of the wounded refuse to stay in the aid station and insist on returning to the perimeter where they know they are sorely needed. We had planned to burn the dead horses but the smoke would have brought all kinds of mortar and artillery fire.

The two in one helmet which so many men scorned before being under shell fire has certainly proved its worth. There have been several instances where men have had their helmets badly dented by fragments or shrapnel from a tree burst.

At the airstrip things are going better. The Chinese battalion from Pabun is now in the Weiliangyang area and is blocking trails to the south. They are in contact with the Japs at several small towns. One town which was known to be occupied by Japs was burned out with gasoline and oil. The planes dropped the drums of gas and oil in the village, then strafed it with tracers to set it on fire.

At 0830 hours we zeroed in our artillery, a battery of four heavy machine guns, a battery of four 81 mm. mortars using H.E. heavy. We pin-pointed these thirty yards in front of our own troops. Then we zeroed in a battery of 81 mm. mortars for H.E. light about two hundred yards in front of our position and finally zeroed in a battery of four 60 mm. mortars firing for three hundred yards along the main trail which was the Japanese supply route.

At 0900 hours the set up for attack was the same we had used on the 4th.

Our communication set up was a little different. We had sound powered wire to each of the two flank platoons - radio net from company commanders, combat team commanders, battalion commanders and also for mortars.

Sound powered wire to the forward artillery observer was used part of the time. The rest of the time he used SCR 300. Flares were to be used only for an emergency - red for stop firing - green for lift firing.

The plan was to use a one hundred round artillery barrage at Jap strong points thirty yards ahead, following a dive bombing and strafing attack. Use of the H.E. Heavy at the same point was simultaneous. H.E. Light shooting from two hundred yards out and working back towards our own perimeter. 60 mm. mortars to fire at a medium rate along the Jap supply route.

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-13-

After a fifteen minute artillery barrage and seven minute 81 mm. mortar rolling barrage the attack was to jump off under a heavy machine gun support.

At 0930 hours the attack went off exactly as planned. In the first attack we only gained fifty yards but by adjusting the barrages on to Jap strong points the total advance for the day was three hundred yards.

Three of the dead Japs found along the trail were using M-1 rifles and one Japanese was wearing G.I. Jungle Boots.

The Japs got smart after the first barrage and ran back up the trail fifty or sixty yards to prepared positions - then when the barrage lifted they ran back to their weapons and opened fire. Our lead scouts noted this and after the next artillery barrage they picked off four running back to their guns.

Orange Combat Team fired the following ammunition in today's attack:

<u>Rounds</u>	<u>Type</u>
220	81 mm. H.E. light
210	81 mm. H.E. heavy
322	60 mm.
136	75 mm.
12,000	30 caliber machine gun

The Japs take clothing off their dead. They must be short of clothing.

Each Jap strong point has all around perimeter and they are using high spots for strong points - not low ground as they sometimes did in the Southwest Pacific.

Private Leo B. Wildman, Oakland, California (300) Radioman for Major Lew, Combat Team Commander, got his aerial shot off by a Nip while he was with Major Lew inspecting the perimeter.

T/Sergeant John Keslik, Chicago, Illinois, with two scouts crawled up a steep mountain side - slowly parted the grass and peered directly into the eyes of two equally startled Japs. The Jap threw a hand grenade at Keslik and his boys fired and rolled down the hill. The grenade exploded wounding one man very slightly, but they all escaped safely.

Captain James Hopkins goes anywhere to take care of the wounded. His aid station was thirty yards from Nips. Sniper and mortar fire frequently cut the bamboo above his aid station. His great uncle was Johns Hopkins, founder of the University and Hospital. He himself was a former interne at that hospital. He has a slow southern drawl and a pleasant personality that assures each wounded

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soldier he is in the hands of a man who cares for him and who knows how to take care of him. He has seen every man before he died. Even if dead, the American Infantry won't let the Japs get a body. Every wounded man is moved and treated within two minutes of being shot. Medics move with assault troops.

An 81 mm. and one 82 mm mortar shell landed in the aid station and wounded two men. Doc Hopkins got a piece of shrapnel in the aid pouch at his side.

Lt. Logan E. Weston bent over Technician Fifth Grade Joseph E. Gomez, aid man, as he fell on the trail with a serious head injury. As another aid man came up, Doc Hopkins heard Gomez say, "Yes, I have faith".

Weston said, "Shall we talk to Him now?"

Gomez said, "Thanks" and nodded. Weston prayed while Doc Hopkins bandaged the wounded Gomez, then rushed him down the trail to the airstrip to be evacuated. Doc Hopkins says that practically all men killed in battle get it in the chest and that a piece of metal eight by ten inches covering that area would save many lives of front line troops. Experience shows that even a slight wound there is fatal. There are so many spent bullets, hand grenades fragments that such a shield would save lives.

The artillery observer since April 4th has been Lt. Winslow B. Stevens. He directed fire on Jap fortified positions from thirty yards distance and the remarkable job which the artillery did in knocking out Jap strong points was due in large part to his outstanding work as an observer.

7 April 1944 - In Nhpum Ga the Jap artillery came over at 0600 hours, 1500 and 1750 but Jap pressure on the perimeter has lessened considerably. Documents taken off Jap dead indicate that we are surrounded by a reinforced Jap battalion from the 114th Regiment, 18th Jap Division and also elements of the 55th Japanese Regiment.

At the airstrip Colonel Henry L. Kinnison, Jr., G-3 of General Stilwell's forward echelon arrived by liaison plane and joined Colonel Hunter who was with the third battalion on the hill.

Khaki Combat Team attacked north of Nhpum all day against heavy Jap automatic weapons fire and emplacements. Orange Combat Team occupied the ground already gained. Planes dive bombed and strafed all day. Artillery, mortar and machine gun fire were used as on the 6th but we could not blast the Japs off the ridge. We are approximately five hundred yards from the second-battalion perimeter.

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-125-

Japs but they were pinned down by machine gun fire from pill boxes. The first battalion arrived at the airstrip at 1700 hours after a forced march from the vicinity of Seola. Ten in one ration was dropped to the second battalion but fell in the Jap perimeter. The third battalion is fighting like hell to get that ten in one back. Supply trains and ammunition dumps are working smoothly now from airstrip to third battalion on the trail. At 1930 hours Colonel Hunter had a staff meeting. The third battalion attacks down the trail. One combat team from the first battalion will move northeast along the river to cut off the Japs withdrawal. Patrols will continue in all directions. The attack starts with artillery, mortar and dive bomber support at 1000 hours for the third battalion. The litter train will be ready to move to Nhpum Ga to evacuate the wounded when the break through is made. The Regimental forward Command Post is with the third battalion. Morale was high when the first battalion pulled in but is even higher now.

The first battalion drew ~~one~~ ten in one ration when they arrived. Captain Senff, Commanding Officer of the Red Combat Team, is hand picking the men in his Combat Team that are fit for a hard march preparatory to moving out tomorrow.

Colonel Cannon, Chief of Staff, in General Stilwell's forward Headquarters, visited us today and had the most embarrassing moment of his life. When he stepped off the plane and was greeted by Colonel Charles H. Hunter he was introduced to Father Stuart.

Colonel Cannon shook hands with Father Stuart and said, "Oh yes. You have two boys whom I met."

Colonel Hunter, thinking of the Kachin guerillas, said, "Why, Father Stuart has fifty boys".

Father Stuart then added, "Actually I have one hundred boys here but three hundred and forty in this area".

Colonel Cannon's eyes widened with each statement. Then Colonel Hunter explained that Father Stuart was referring to his Kachins and not to his own family. Colonel Cannon, with much relief, explained that he had met two young soldiers by the name of Stuart recently and that he understood their father was a missionary in Burma.

8 April 1944 - Khaki Combat Team attacked all day along the main trail while Orange Combat Team moved down to the small stream in the valley to the

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east and attacked northward hitting considerable enemy resistance, but the jungle itself was enough resistance to make progress very slow. The White Combat Team of the first battalion has taken over the defense of the airstrip while a selected group of two hundred and fifty four men and officers from the Red Combat Team under Captain Tom P. Senff were assigned the mission of feeling out the area to the west of Nhpum Ga - then move to the south offering a threat to the Jap rear. Captain Senff moved out of his bivouac area at the airstrip at 0630 hours. No animals were taken although the light machine gun and 60 mm. mortar were hand carried - each man carried two days K ration and as much ammunition as he could, including at least two hand grenades per man. Six SCR 300 radios were also carried. The column with Captain Senff at the head moved up the trail until they were one mile north of Nhpum Ga then cut west across country. Getting down a small stream and over a big nose to the area west of Nhpum that he was to reconnoiter.

By this time he had lost five men from exhaustion and one seriously injured from falling over a twenty foot embankment. They were sent back together. From the small river they saw Jap tracks leading to Nhpum Ga. Captain Senff sent reconnaissance patrols to follow the tracks and to scout out the area. They found three old paddy fields on the hillside nearby, two clearings, freshly dug Jap foxholes and one dead Jap. They figured, inasmuch as the Japs hadn't buried this dead, they were not now operating in this area. After sending a report by SCR 300 to Regimental Headquarters which was with the assault units of Orange Combat Team, he moved south guiding on the almost continuous firing in the vicinity of Nhpum Ga.

At 1600 hours he hit a pronounced trail leading southwest. It appeared to have been freshly used by men and animals. He sent one Browning automatic rifleman and two tommy gunners two hundred yards in each direction to block the trail. Then turning to the north he moved slowly and cautiously toward Nhpum. At 1610 he was fired on by three Japs about eight hundred yards from Nhpum Ga. He returned the fire and sent a reconnaissance patrol through the area. They returned with nothing to report, except some recently dug positions down the trail toward the river. He left one platoon as a permanent block on that trail and moved to the southwest again at 1650 hours in an effort to get high ground for our bivouac area. At 1815 hours Captain Senff bivouaced eight hundred and fifty yards from Nhpum Ga on an azimuth of 240 degrees.

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Senff moved his company southwest across an old paddy field grown high in elephant grass. He left his Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon in position at the bivouac area to block the trail and evacuate his wounded. After moving five hundred yards southwest from the perimeter, harassing fire opened from the northwest, northeast and due south. It seemed to be coming from the direction of the main trail between Hpum Ga and Kauri. Colonel Hunter called Colonel Osborne on the SCR 300 radio and ordered Captain Senff back to the bivouac area where he had spent the night. (eight hundred yards from Hpum Ga.)

Captain Senff moved back and dug in. His orders were to hold this block and contact the enemy to the north. At 0900 hours his block drew harassing fire from the north and northeast. It was not aimed fire and the Japs threw in some mortar fire covering the approach to the main trail. At 1100 hours one of his combat patrols (one squad) moving to the north to contact the Jap perimeter was fired on by six automatic weapons dug in. We suffered no casualties. At 1250 the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon reported that they had got the wounded back to our first block. It took them five hours whereas we had walked it without wounded in one hour. Captain Senff decided not to push north as he would have suffered bad casualties from the Jap automatic weapons and the evacuation route for wounded men was so difficult, and because there were Jap positions one hundred and fifty yards from his perimeter.

He sent three man reconnaissance patrols to the south, east and southwest. The patrol to the southwest reported the trail to the water hole was open so he let one squad from each platoon go after water. It took one hour and fifteen minutes for the round trip. The patrol to the southeast reported no action but returned with two loads of rice balls, each load weighing about fifteen pounds. At 1345 hours we fired on four enemy near the southeast side of the perimeter - killed two and drew no return fire. It appears that they followed our reconnaissance patrol back.

At 1400 hours Lt. William Lepore's platoon reported movement, talking and animals neighing two hundred and fifty yards to the northeast in a deep draw. Captain Senff checked with the second and third battalions over the SCR 300 to see if they had anything in that position. They reported they had nothing in that direction. Captain Senff then gave orders to mortar and machine gun the draw. At 1600 hours Captain Senff got a message that a

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127

The stench from dead animals and men near the perimeter was very bad. He put in a perimeter defense and dug in blocks across a pronounced foot path leading through the bivouac area. At 2250 hours a four man Jap patrol moving north on the foot path was fired on by a Browning automatic rifle - only three rounds were fired and the gun jammed. The Japs threw a grenade and a brief fight ensued. The Japs withdrew. The casualties were one officer (Lt. Johnson) killed. The rest of the night was quiet.

In Nhpum Ga there had been no heavy fighting all day. The enemy artillery fired only a few rounds and they made no serious attacks although occasional machine gun and mortar fire broke the quiet. Major Rogoff totaled his casualties and found that he had twenty five dead, one hundred and three wounded to date but it was possible others would be found when a muster could be held. In Colonel Hunter's field order for today he had said, "The siege of Nhpum Ga will fall by noon today". Although there had been heavy fighting all around them, the siege still held at 1630 hours and the men in the perimeter wondered, "How long?"

Lt. William L. Fleming, Regimental air liaison officer, was directing some fighter bombers on their targets over the air-ground radio (SCR 284) when he thought he recognized the squadron leader's voice. He said, "Is this Roland J?" The answer came back, "Is this William L.?"

It was his former squadron doing the bombing and Lt. Roland J. Mignes was an old friend. They carried on a little personal conversation and Lt. Fleming got him to promise to write his wife for him. Mignes answered "Roger" and added, "Boy, you just give us the targets. We'll make this place the milk run".

9 April 1944 - Captain Senff's column was up at dawn expecting some action but no Japs showed up. He sent a patrol one hundred yards south on the foot path to investigate the firing during the night. They returned with a Jap trenchcoat, four boxes of cooked rice balls, each box holding enough to feed a platoon. The rice balls looked about like a baseball. At 0530 hours a twelve man Jap patrol hit the perimeter from the south. Lt. McElmurry quickly set up a machine gun. Captain Senff worked two squads forward with rifle grenades because it was too close in for mortars. A fire fight developed and two Marauders were wounded. Then snipers opened on the perimeter from the northwest. Our men sprayed the trees they were thought to be in with tommy guns and the snipers were not heard from again. At 0655 hours Captain

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patrol from the ground battalion had contacted our trail block two hundred and fifty yards northwest of the second battalion perimeter, and that we had one killed and one missing. At 1620 Captain Senff pulled his guns back after mortaring and machine gunning the draw and at the same time a Jap mortar barrage from the ridge to the east opened on an area two hundred yards to the northeast of our perimeter on the approach to the draw. Japs screamed and hollered so it looked as if the Japs figured we were attacking and they mortared the area - hitting their own troops. At about this time the Jap artillery opened fire from Kauri on our artillery position one hundred yards north of Nhpum Ga. Our artillery forward observer officer asked us over the SCR 300 if we could locate the Jap guns. Captain Senff reported the probable location of the guns; then he moved his radio to a clearing on some high ground where he could observe our artillery fire dropping four hundred yards short of the target. He corrected that over the radio and we threw a heavy barrage on and around the Jap artillery. No more was heard from them. Booby traps going off was the only thing disturbing a good sleep tonight.

At the airstrip Father Stuart held mass at 0700 hours and further up the trail the Orange and Khaki Combat Teams continued to attack. The attack was strange - the Japs were full of tricks but today they didn't answer our fire except occasionally a sniper would take a shot. We continued to blast our way through and at 1000 hours our lead scouts reported dead Japs everywhere. At 1210 our lead scouts thought they were near the second battalion perimeter. Over the radio Colonel Beach asked Colonel McGee to fire three spaced shots from the north edge of his perimeter along the trail to be answered by three shots from our lead scouts.

Five minutes later all was quiet. We listened - then suddenly three shots rang out and a minute later three more shots. Major Ed Briggs, Khaki Combat Commander, was right behind the lead scouts and he walked into the second battalion perimeter - lifting the siege they had been under for ten long, bitter hard days.

He walked through a scene of desolation worse than he had ever seen on Guadalcanal or New Georgia - hundreds of Japs, dead for a week, were stinking everywhere - dead horses twice their normal size with maggots and flies by the million all over them. Finally he reached Colonel McGee's Command Post, a series of two man fox holes dug out of the rock and red clay in the side of Nhpum Ga.

Colonel McGee, smiling, said, "Sure am glad to see you, Ed".

The Japs had had all they wanted on the north side of the perimeter but were still in strength in the southern and eastern sides. Orange Combat Team which was moving up the draw to the east was told over the radio to continue as fast as possible. Khaki Combat Team held the ground gained today and part of it was moved into the village with the second battalion. The horrible stench of death that pervaded the place was appalling. I remember pictures of the battle of Buna but it looked like a picnic ground compared to this place. The first thing that was done was to let the long litter train from White Combat Team at the airstrip take the wounded down.

Contact with the Japs was maintained to the south and at 1640 hours the Jap artillery opened up - everyone got back in their foxholes but the shelling didn't last long. At 1900 hours, 2200 and 2300 the Japs threw in a few mortar shells but we suffered only one casualty.

Colonel Hunter made a reconnaissance of the area and ordered five hundred pounds of chloride of lime to be dropped early the next morning. He ordered the clean up of the dead to start at once. The Jap dead were searched and thrown into foxholes and then covered up. The animal dead were very difficult to bury but a start was made on it. Many men vomited at the sight and smell of the place and the second battalion, veterans of the siege, simply smiled and said, "It sure is good to see you".

One platoon leader showed me fifty four dead Japs in front of his platoon and also two dead Marauders that the Japs wouldn't let them get out. They were so badly decomposed that they were buried on the spot. A total of two hundred and twelve dead Japs was counted in the area they had withdrawn from. Aside from what they had buried themselves, at least four hundred Japs were killed around this village. All over the area were unexploded duds - mortars, artillery, grenades - both Jap and American. There were also several bazooka shells unexploded because they had not hit anything hard enough to make them explode. Aimed at a pillbox, they had missed and slipped into the jungle. Patrols were sent out to mark or explode all duds in the perimeter. Two days later there were still duds being found. On the trail leading up to the village was a Jap body that looked normal except that it had three arms - a piece of body nearby showed where the third arm had come from.

10 April 1944 - Colonel Hunter ordered Captain Senff to bring his company into the second battalion perimeter. He was to send a patrol to a clearing northeast of the second battalion perimeter and fire four well spaced shots.

The patrol made contact in about an hour with the second battalion but the route was too bad to try to evacuate the wounded. Lt. McElmurry took a platoon and moved up a little used trail towards Nhpum Ga. In thirty five minutes his platoon hit the second battalion perimeter and sent back patrol to bring the rest of the column in.

On the way back the patrol was fired on by a Jap Nambu. Captain Benff brought his company into the second battalion perimeter without opposition and at 1500 hours they moved to Namshingyang.

Green Combat Team and the second battalion headquarters moved to Namshingyang after being relieved by White Combat Team of first battalion which had been protecting the airstrip. The third battalion is pressing the Japs south of Nhpum Ga and east of Nhpum Ga.

The enemy threw mortar fire on the water hole at Nhpum Ga and a brief fire fight developed after which we held the water hole. The Japs appear to have pulled back between Nhpum Ga and Kauri and are consolidating their positions on an easily defended ridge. The third battalion is engaged in mopping up and patrolling to the south, east and west.

Eighty seven wounded were evacuated today by plane and Captain Gordon Sontyman, an American Field Artillery officer formerly on duty with the Chinese 28th Division, joined us to take command of our two pack howitzers.

It was definitely established by bullets found that the Japs were turning some of their bullets around their cases to make them dum dum.

Colonel Hunter in a staff conference said there is nothing new in what we learned from this fight - it is just a reiteration of principles in the Infantry Manual. However, we know that an outfit must aggressively patrol even if it is physically exhausted. Patrols must be used to keep a route open for evacuation of the wounded and we are all aware of the tremendous value of having Japanese interpreters to translate spoken Jap orders.

11 and 12 April 1944. - The third battalion and the White Combat Team of the first battalion have completed the occupation of Nhpum Ga and have made contact with the Japanese eight hundred yards south of the village. Occasional mortar fire and sniper fire is heard to the southwest but generally the situation is quiet and our work details are making progress burying dead Japs and horses.

Colonel Hunter announced a temporary reorganization tonight. Colonel Still became Executive Officer, Major Williams, S-3, Captain Michaelson, S-4, and Captain Laffin, S-2.

There is very much dysentery, diarrhoea, and colds especially among the second battalion.

The following statistics were approved by Colonel Hunter as being correct:

	<u>Japanese casualties</u>
Walawbum	800
Shaduzup	325
Inkangahtawng	300
Nhpum Ga	400
Patrol action	175
Total killed	<u>2,000</u>
Total average miles marched to date	500
Total Americans killed to date	57
" " wounded " "	302
" " evacuated " "	379

(72 sick have been evacuated)

First battalion	8 killed
Second battalion	31 "
Third battalion	18
Total	<u>57</u>

13 April 1944. - At Nhpum Ga patrol actions continue in all directions. A patrol from the first battalion got within sight of a former Jap artillery position at Kauri and saw piles of empty shell cases. Before they could get to the position, a few Japs showed up with a Kambo. ~~A few hours later another patrol made the mistake of taking the same route the first patrol had used to investigate the enemy position. The Japs ambushed the first two men - killing an officer and wounding an enlisted man. This taught the entire command a lesson that they knew but let slip: never use the same route twice.~~

At a staff meeting at Esamshingyang at 1330 hours Colonel Hunter assigned jobs to the staff for planning another mission in case General Stilwell calls on us again. Trail studies are being made in the Myitkyina area and a thorough survey of our own strength and condition for that operation.

Supply drops continue during the morning and, <sup>in the</sup> late/afternoon, our artillery fired a few rounds in the vicinity of Kauri at 1730 hours.

14 April 1944. - The third battalion and the White Combat Team of the first battalion are holding Nhpum Ga. Our patrols are very active and have

contacted Japs in a strong position on a ridge eight hundred yards south of Nhpum Ga. We have been ordered to hold at Nhpum and not to become involved further south. From our patrols action throughout the day we had one man killed and two wounded. The Japs threw a few mortar shells into the perimeter this afternoon and again about 2300 hours tonight.

A rest camp has been set up near the airstrip where men can get hot coffee, read magazines and rest. New clothing has been dropped and the old clothing is being burned. Morale is good, but a great many men are showing signs of fatigue.

15 April 1944. - Major Hancock flew in for a brief visit. He has done a superb job on supply and every officer and man in the unit is grateful for his untiring work in getting rations, ammunitions and supplies they asked for.

About a week ago the Japs surprised an O.S.S. agent at his base just north of Manpin. Some of his men ran but he stayed and fought the Japs off. The men who ran did not know if he got away and when they arrived at Hsamshingyang after a hard march through the jungle, they reported that it was doubtful if he made it. However today he came in carrying his radio set. He had not had any food in three days. He had stopped along the river near Aucho and caught fish the Japs were grenading around a bend about two hundred yards up stream. One of his Kachins let out a yell when he caught a big fish in his arms and this brought some startled Japs around the bend in the river. He killed two Japs with his carbine and he and his little party took off into the jungle, circling the Jap camp and proceeding up river to Hsamshingyang, arriving today. He reported that the Japs were in considerable strength at Sarong and east of Sarong.

16 April 1944. - The situation at Nhpum Ga remains the same. At 1600 hours an L-5 with Sergeant Acker aboard took off from the air strip. Sergeant Acker was acting as artillery observer for our two gun battery which was preparing to fire on Jap positions at Kauri. As the plane gained altitude to cross a high ridge west of the air strip, it touched a tree and cracked up. One hundred men searched the area for the plane. It was found about 1700 hours. Sergeant Acker was painfully injured and the pilot was dead. As neither the pilot nor the sergeant was carrying a gun, they could not aid the search by firing to reveal their position. Colonel Hunter gave an order that in the future all Galahad personnel would carry a gun when flying.

At 2030 hours there was some firing to the northeast of the air strip. Investigation revealed that some Machine thought they saw something and fired to make sure. It proved to be a small herd of water buffalo.

17 and 18 April 1944. - At a staff meeting today Colonel Hunter told us that General Merrill would probably be back in a few days to form a special task force. The force would consist of three combat teams, two of which would have one battalion of Galahad and one Chinese Regiment, one battery of Chinese pack artillery which would be used with one combat team while the other would use the third battalion's two pack howitzers and two more guns would be on call. The second battalion of Galahad would be formed as the reserve.

The Chinese battalions which have been cutting their way down to attack Warong have been moving slowly for three days. The 22nd Division is fighting on the main road at Warasup.

Orange Combat Team and the first battalion are now holding Nhpum Ga; Khaki Combat Team and Green Combat Team are protecting the air strip while Blue Combat Team is stretched along the trail between Nhpum Ga and the air strip. Active patrolling continues in all directions.

19 April 1944. - The first battalion is now holding Nhpum Ga. The third battalion is resting and checking over equipment at the air strip. The second

battalion is now along the trail between the other two and is already patrolling the area. The Khaki Combat Team in compliance with an order from Colonel Hunter, had a full field inspection this afternoon at 1500 hours. They were issued new clothes from skin out as their old clothes were almost worn out and some of the men were lousy.

A patrol today ran up on a Jap soldier. Four Marauders fired at one hundred yards and missed him. Colonel Hunter jokingly said if that continued we would set up a range and zero rifles again. Most of the men have their sights set for firing at a distance of fifty yards.

Thirty two men were evacuated today. Most of them were sick.

20 April 1944 - At 0800 hours today the third battalion had an hour's close order drill on the air strip and paddy field. At first they were pretty sore about it but soon they were counting in cadence and doing fancy drill. This on a field two and one half miles from the Japs and, when the day before they had been in contact with them.

One old sergeant said, "Now I've seen everything, but it's a damn good thing to whip men back in shape." From now on all battalions will have one hour of close order drill per day while resting near the air strip.

At 1800 hours a mule race on the air strip brought practically every man to the field. "Old Jake" and "Old Russ", two of the best riding mules in the <sup>outfit</sup> regiment, were the contenders. "Old Jake" won by two lengths when "Old Russ" took a little detour off the race course. Not much money changed hands as there wasn't much in the regiment.

At 1150 hours a C-47 of the Second Troop Carrier Squadron was dropping rations on our drop field which is about two hundred yards northwest of the air strip. As it turned to make another run, it hit an air pocket which threw several parachute loads out the door. One chute opened and hit the tail of the plane, locking the elevators. The pilot fought to get it off but it wouldn't come off and he was losing altitude rapidly. Circling the field at tree top level, he belly landed the ship next to our air strip. It was a beautiful job of setting the plane down gently by cutting both motors. There was no fire and the pilot, co-pilot and navigator were uninjured.

The ~~rickets~~ from Galahad in the back of the plane were injured, however, as they had no safety belts and were slammed against the walls of the plane when it hit the ground. Second Troop Carrier Squadron had four men flown in to salvage parts by 1630 hours. A picture was taken today of twenty five different

nationalities represented in our forces here. This means that these people were either at one time citizens of another country or their parents were. At least half of them were not American citizens at one time.

The third battalion had one hour of close order drill and an hours critique of their operations during the past two weeks.

Major Schudask reports we have recently had a few amoebic dysentery cases, four typhus cases and that he evacuated twenty five sick and wounded today.

21 April 1944 - The third battalion drilled from 0800 to 0900 hours. The tactical situation is unchanged. At 11:00 we had a hail storm with hail stones as large as marbles followed by rain for several hours.

Colonel Hunter told us that orders had just been received from General Merrill to concentrate our unit at Naubun for the next operation. The Chinese were to move down from Pabun and join us there.

At 1530 a basha occupied by the Regimental communication personnel caught on fire. A box of ammunition was burned up and the noise from explosions had the entire area alerted. Most of us thought some Japs had slipped into the supply dump. Many flares were exploded and this added to the excitement. No one was hurt and no radio equipment was lost.

22 April 1944 - A Chinese battalion arrived at Haemshingyang to take over the defense of Nhyun Ga. Headquarters and some units of the second battalion marched to Weiliangyang.

23 April 1944 - A large ration drop was received at Weiliangyang for Colonel Kinnison's force consisting of the third battalion of Galahad and the 88th Chinese Regiment.

24 April 1944 - The first battalion is enroute to Naubun. The second battalion is still in the Haemshingyang area and the third battalion arrived at Tate Ga today. Galahad Force Headquarters moved to Naubun today. Colonel Kinnison arrived and took command of his Combat Team.

25 April 1944 - The 88th Chinese Regiment preceded by the third battalion is enroute to Naubun. The second battalion has moved to Lapa Ga - Tate Ga area and is blocking trails to the east and south.

26 April 1944 - The first battalion is bivouacked two and one half miles north of Naubun. The third battalion is two and one half miles south of Naubun. The second battalion is at Tate Ga. The 88th Chinese Regiment is at Naubun. The 150th Chinese Regiment is at Talkri, five miles north of Naubun.

- 136 A -

21 April 1944 - The following radio was received from  
General Stilwell's Headquarters:

"General Sun, Commanding General of the 38th Chinese  
Division, desires to convey to all officers and men his sincere  
appreciation of the fine spirit of cooperation with his men.  
General Liao, commanding the 22nd Division, sends the message  
that his division has admired the fine job done by Gaihard and  
hopes that in the future he will have the chance to work with  
us".

General Stilwell and his son, Lt. Colonel Stilwell, arrived at Naubun by L-5 to meet General Merrill. They visited with the officers and stayed at the O.S.S. camp from 0900 till 1400 hours. General Merrill did not arrive today as his plane could not get over the mountains due to low clouds.

Three Gurkha prisoners who had escaped from the Japanese were captured and brought in by the Chinese. They were part of General Wingate's forces and were sent by plane to General Stilwell's Headquarters at Shaduzup.

27 April 1944 - General Stilwell came in to visit General Merrill at 1400 hours and at 1630 General Merrill, who had arrived at 1000, issued his orders to his combat Team Commanders. First he gave them the situation - pausing long enough for the interpreters to tell the Chinese Regimental Commanders what he had said. Then he told them our mission was to take the air strip at Myitkyina. He gave them the rough plan. "K" force, (under Colonel Henry L. Kinnison, Jr. and consisting of 3rd battalion Galahad and 88th Chinese Infantry Regiment), leading out would move to Taikri, then over the 6100 foot Naura Nyket Pass down to Ritpong. H force (under Colonel Charles Hunter and consisting of 1st battalion Galahad and 150th Chinese Infantry Regiment), following. Then "H" force would break to the west and a two pronged drive would be made to the south towards Myitkyina. The "M" force (under Lt. Col. McGehee and consisting of 2nd battalion Galahad with a Kachin guerrilla unit) will remain in the Senjo Ga - Hkada Ga area and block any Japanese advance from that direction. Following this he met with the force commanders, went over the plan in detail and gave them detailed instructions.

25 April 1944 - It has rained intermittently for a week and the trails are bad, but "K" Force pushed off this morning and marched two miles east of Taikri by 1700 hours tonight.

Lt. Colonel Warner and Captain Oakley from C.B.I. are working with General Merrill's staff. The staff at Naubun consists of his communications set up under Captain Pilcher; G-2, Major Louis J. Williams; G-3, Major George Husted and G-4 at rear echelon, Major Edward Hancock. Captain John Jones is helping out with the G-1 work.

29 April 1944 - Lt. William A. Fleming, Regimental Air Liaison Officer, was badly burned when some gasoline exploded over his body. He was burning out a garbage pit. He was evacuated by plane to Shaduzup.

It rained all night and this morning General Merrill tried to take off in his L-5 for Fort Hertz. After a long flight and getting <sup>within</sup> thirty minutes of Fort Hertz he was forced to return due to bad weather.

At 0930 hours a Kachin Chief arrived from the Ritpong area and split the day giving us valuable information on that part of the country. There are three hundred Japs dug in at Ritpong and supplied by coolie and animal transport from Nsopaup.

One of the O.S.S. Officers killed a ~~RUSSIAN SNAKE~~ within thirty feet of their mess table today. It is the first poisonous snake we have killed so far.

Rain continued all day and slowed the progress of "K" force up the mountain. "H" force remained in bivouac and "M" force continued to hold trail blocks near Sonjo Ga and Hkada Ga.

General Merrill's knowledge of the details of various subjects from the latest radio set to the newest short cuts in laying artillery constantly amaze both his staff and his G.I.s. For example, today he called for an SCR 284 radio to be set up right in his Command Post. He had been having trouble getting important radio messages cleared all morning apparently due to bad weather. When the SCR 284 was set up, General Merrill put on the headphones and took a notebook. About thirty minutes later, he called Captain Pilcher, the communications officer, and told him his bad radio transmission was partly due to a poor radio operator. General Merrill who is himself an expert radio operator, had received his own message then checked the code against the message and found at once what had caused the bad transmission. Being a cavalry man he can shoe a horse or manly up a load as good as any muleskinner. He loves anything connected with military operations and uses spare moments to pick up the details that one would ordinarily ignore. This afternoon he talked for three hours with a fighter pilot getting dope from him on everything from the details of the technique of dive bombing to what fighter pilots think of working in close support of the infantry.

30 April 1944 - It rained hard all night and continued intermittently all day. "K" force is making slow but steady progress. The trail is ankle deep in mud and so slick we are losing animals over precipices every day. One of the dysentery sufferers described the difference between diarrhoea and dysentery this way: When you have diarrhoea you have bowel trouble; when you have dysentery, the bowel trouble has you.

"H" and "M" forces remained in the same positions.

1 May 1944 - Rain continued all day. "K" force reported that it had reached the top of the pass and that the march was just short of impossible. "H" force has started the climb and reports the trail to be as slick as glass and difficult beyond belief. "M" force remains in the same position. A Chinese platoon is now guarding the air strip at Naubum.

The plane carrying Captain Oakley which was reported lost yesterday has been found. When they left Naubum yesterday morning there was a heavy fog to the west. The pilot got lost and wandered around till he was almost out of gasoline when he saw the air strip at Taipha Ga. It had logs on the

field so he had to land on a shallow place in the Chindwin River which was only two feet deep at that point. Both pilot and passenger were unhurt.

Eighteen sick Chinese were evacuated today. Most of them were suffering from a dietary deficiency and had lost control of their muscles. General Merrill ordered vitamin tablets for all Chinese troops in his command.

2 May 1944 - General Merrill tried again to fly to Fort Hertz but without success due to bad weather.

Sergeant Coleman, the pilot of L-4 (the "7-11"), which has made more than two hundred and fifty flights for Galahad reported a herd of two hundred elephants between Taikai and Naubum less than five miles away. The elephants were all sizes and they scattered when the plane circled them. They have flattened out the area through which they have moved and are easy to follow.

3 May 1944 - The sun is shining this morning although clouds are hanging low. It is much clearer today. About 1330 hours General Stilwell landed at Naubum for a talk with General Merrill and departed at 1430. About 1930 hours three spaced shots were heard about five hundred yards east of Force Headquarters. A check on the telephones to O.S.S. on the hill produced no reply from that end and after repeated ringing, the other stations on the line were found to be still in order so a patrol was sent to O.S.S. about one and a half miles up the hill to find out what the shooting was about and why the telephone wasn't answered.

A check proved that an outpost saw a silhouette of a man supposedly on the trail and fired after a challenge which produced no answer. The telephone didn't answer due to no one being in the building. The Chinese platoon headquarters and the few muleskinners and M.P.s breathed easily again and lights went on in Headquarters as work was continued. This afternoon the general was presented with several large fish and a deer. He in turn gave them away as far as it would go to his staff and men.

A fine venison steak was had by the writer in testimony of the prowess of some Kachin hunter.

A message was received ordering Captain John M. Jones, Public Relations Officers of the 5307th, back to his Headquarters in Ceylon via air; He was on temporary duty with the 5307th and attached to General Merrill's staff since January 15, 1944. He will return May 5, 1944.

Slow progress is being made by "H" and "K" forces as they have been trying to get a drop today.

4 May 1944 - Heavy rain started at 0500 hours and looks like it will continue indefinitely. The rain stopped about 1400 hours and clouds lifted. A report was received from "K" Force that they had contacted the enemy, estimated at one hundred and fifty, dug in at Salawng -Ikayang on the 3rd of May. "K" Force called for an ammunition drop on May 4th and said they would attack the Japs with two battalions, one Chinese and one American, on May 4th. Lt. Colonel Peers of O.S.S. is here for the day. "H" Force is close behind "K" Force and the second battalion reports no change.

5 May 1944. - H and K forces report heaviest rain yet during last night.

The trails are extremely bad but they continue to make slow progress.

At Galahad Force Headquarters at Maubum, radio contact with H and K forces was lost during the night, but was maintained with M force in the Senjo Ga - Mkada Ga area. Radio contact with the rear base has been good for the past twenty four hours.

6 May 1944. - The wife of one of our Kachin scouts sent us a message a few days ago that a large number of Japs were at Salawag Mkayang. Captain Laffin, who is now with K force reports that approximately one hundred and fifty Japs are dug in there. K force asked for an ammunition drop and for planes to strafe and dive bomb the Jap position. Later today they reported that Salawag Mkayang has been liquidated and they are moving on Ritpong.

The trails continue to be almost impassable and animal casualties are high as a result of slipping over the sides of cliffs.

At Maubum planes are under way to move Galahad Force Headquarters by air to Arang on May 10th or 11th in order to improve communications.

General Merrill radioed General Stilwell that H force, the critical unit for arriving at the destination, had checked their schedule today and that he (General Merrill) believed the date for taking our first objective can still be met. He told General Stilwell that he was "sweating out" positive information from K force due to bad radio communication with them but that radio communication with H and M forces is holding up splendidly. Contact by liaison plane was impossible due to bad weather.

7 May 1944. - K force attacked Ritpong this morning with two battalions, - the third battalion of the Marauders and the first battalion from the Chinese 38th Regiment. There was a very heavy rain in the Ritpong area last night and radio communications are poor. Fighter-bombers came over early and bombed and strafed the town. Then our mortars laid a heavy barrage on the Jap position and the two battalions attacked from three sides. Chinese casualties were heavier than Marauder casualties probably because it was their first jungle fighting. Colonel Kinnison sent a report back that he had overrun the Jap position and expected to wipe out the Jap garrison to the last man. Later a message was sent to General Merrill that the Japs held out to the last man, but that some had taken off before the assault. Only twenty Japs were alive when the assault started and all were killed in a few minutes. An enemy prisoner captured in the Ritpong area.

stated that the 6th Company had ninety killed and that only forty Japs escaped from Ritpong. It later developed that 36 of these 40 were killed by our patrols.

At Naubum a report was received from M force that their patrols had pushed three miles east of Hpunsimaru Bum without contacting any Japs.

Radio contact from K force had been maintained through the third battalion, but now that the damaged equipment was replaced by the air drop today direct communication with K force has been reestablished. K force reports that they plan to build an air strip at ~~Naubum~~ to the south to evacuate their wounded and that the Chinese are giving excellent cooperation.

Heavy rains continued intermittently throughout the day.

Lt. Clancy Topp came in today to replace Captain Jones as Public Relations Officer.

8 May 1944. - An Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon from M force hit the Japs on the east side of the stream crossing west of Bharawkawng suffering one casualty.

The weather continues to be bad for flying and for marching.

Captured Japanese documents revealing enemy strength north of Kyithyina are being carefully studied. So far they agree with our patrol reports of Jap strength in the area.

9 May 1944. - M force has by-passed Ritpong after obtaining unison with K force for awhile and is moving rapidly towards Arang. K force is joined up on the main trail south of Ritpong.

General Merrill flew over to Shaduzup to confer with General Stilwell and General Egan on final arrangements for the "blow off". General Merrill said to General Stilwell in reply to a question as to where his forces were today, "I'd be either a liar or a magician to tell you I know where they are or what happened today".

10 May 1944. - General Merrill flew over to Ritpong with Lt. Reid to observe our progress in that area. Lt. Reid scared hell out of the people on the air strip at Naubum when he took off at the extreme end of the field, barely missing some trees. General Merrill decided to evacuate casualties from Arang and he suggested to General Stilwell's Headquarters that they send some Seagraves Hospital personnel to Naubum to care for casualties evacuated there.

Colonel Kinnison sent a message to General Merrill that the Chinese 88th Regiment had done a splendid job, had plenty of guts and that we had nothing to worry about as ~~far~~ as their fighting alongside the Marauders.

General Merrill sent a message to the Second Troop Carrier Squadron thanking them for the excellent supply drops they had made around Ritpong when we needed ammunition quickly to liquidate the Jap trail blocks.

11 May 1944 - General Merrill flew from Naubum to Arang where H force arrived last night. There he found that two or three men were showing up each day with Typhus.

In the afternoon it rained again.

The Jap prisoner captured near Ritpong told us that he had originally been in the Medics but was transferred to the Infantry. He said that poor food, understrength units and continual harassment by Kachins, combined to make the troops very discouraged. He said that his company got a new commanding officer in January who was a mean man and that this further discouraged them. He added that recently our planes caught the entire Hsopsup supply train on the road and that only three trucks were left for their supply and that gasoline was hard to get for them. The Hsopsup road is in very bad condition due to the rains and lack of maintenance. All Jap troops were recently warned that anyone listening to American broadcasts would be shot and Jap soldiers were further told that the reason they didn't see Jap planes was that they were being held at Rangoon for a big offensive.

12 May 1944 - A patrol from K force hit the Japs dug in at Tingkrukung. After a short but severe fight our patrols threw a block across the trail to cover the advance of our main body a few miles away.

H force marched to Hpakka without incident while the leading elements of K force struggled over an almost impossible trail into Katu Ga.

Forty one casualties were evacuated from Arang today with seventy nine more to go.

13 May 1944 - K force is still engaged with the Japs at Tingkrukung. The Jap forces there appear to be two companies with heavy weapons, and are well-supplied with food and ammunition. Some have been found wearing Chinese uniforms, American helmets and using British three inch mortars. This has been very confusing as we have to be careful not to shoot into our Chinese troops by mistake.

Last night at Jum, a few miles north of Arang, a number of starving Japs were found killing cattle, digging up the floors of bamas in their search for rice and demanding food from any Kachins they found.

A reliable Kachin on the Wana Mka reports that the Japs are trying to get

away, that these Japs are part of the same force that was defeated at Nhpun Ga and they they are now fleeing the Chinese in the Warong area.

Kachin reports came in today indicating that the Japs are being ambushed and harassed on most of the trails southeast and southwest of Ritpong.

It now appears that H force will be able to get to the objective on time as they are making excellent progress now due to K force occupying the Japs, and the improvement in weather and trails. General Merrill has sent orders to M force to move as fast as possible on Arang and his plan is to join them to H force if they can make junction without blocking K force.

General Merrill radioed air base: "This is no picnic. More planes must be provided, if unable to meet demands at Dinjan". He then sent this message to General Stilwell: "K force inevitably delayed. H has been turned loose. M will follow close. K can probably clean up and be the goat on arrival. This is only course I see for fulfilling mission. Can stop this show up till noon tomorrow, when die will be cast, if you think it too much of a gamble. Personal opinion is that we have a fair chance and that we should try".

Colonel Hunter with H force radioed that he was leaving the Seagraves Hospital Unit at Arang as it was slowing their progress too much and they can join us later.

H force reached Seingneing late this afternoon. They expected a heavy fight but the Jap strength in the area appears to have been overestimated and they occupied the village with very little resistance.

14 May 1944 - M force's Intelligence and Reconnaissance Platoon arrived at Arang. E company is disposed at Paowi, Lupmatkawng and Patwi Pacrao blocking trails, and F company is still west of Mutu Ga with all the animals of M force. It has been extremely difficult to get animals over the trails as they are steep and slippery, and overhanging bamboo has forced us to chop a trail most of the time.

K force estimated that more than half of a Japanese battalion is opposing them at Tingkrusang and they report very hard fighting, but believe they will polish off the Japs there this afternoon. They report ~~unpleasant fighting~~ they have suffered thirty casualties requiring evacuation and have counted sixty five Jap bodies so far.

The weather for flying is very bad today. Liaison planes have made flights this afternoon and at noon General Merrill flew to Shaduzup to confer with General

Stilwell, returning in mid-afternoon.

Correspondents Dave Richardson of Yank, Harry Zinger of Time, John Dowling of the Chicago Sun and Tillman Durdin of the New York Times arrived at Naubun late in the afternoon and reported to General Merrill's Command Post.

Late reports from H, K and M forces indicate that H should cross the main road in the vicinity of Naraw Sakan tonight with M force following from Arang in the morning and K force moving towards Arang from the vicinity of Tingkrusang tomorrow after they have blocked all trails from the north.

General Merrill radioed M force to move with all possible speed to avoid jamming the main trail south towards Myitkyina and also radioed General Stilwell giving him a forty eight hour alert for the attack on our objective - the all weather air strip at Myitkyina.

15 May 1944 - Heavy rains all night made radio communication after 0100 hours very poor. The trails are almost impassable as they vary between ankle deep and knee deep mud and progress on them is very slow and trying.

At 0700 hours all forces were contacted by liaison plane which landed at Seingnaing. H force has had their last drop till they hit the objective and they are planning to move tonight near the river ford at SD-0462 - hide in the woods for all day completing their concentration and preparing the attack on the airfield on the morning of May 17th. Their patrol information will guide their actions from now on and if necessary they may hit the objective tomorrow.

H force is suffering from fatigue from their march which was the hardest any of the columns experienced. They are having trouble concentrating. Due to the fatigue and the difficulty in concentrating all of their animals, General Merrill ordered them to stop at Arang today. K force is in the Seingnaing-Umong Bum area having left the first battalion, 88th Regiment to contact the Japs at Tingkrusang.

General Merrill wants to get K force down where they can support H force by the 18th and tonight it appears they will make that schedule. Tonight there was some rain but communications were satisfactory to forward units from General Merrill's Command Post.

General Merrill gave General Stilwell a twenty four hour alert for our attack on the objective.

16 May 1944 - H force kept radio silence today.

K force moved about three miles south of Maazug Sakan. Their battalion left

behind at Tingshukung has been fighting all day.

General Stilwell radioed General Merrill: "Looks like we're going into the ninth inning with the score 0-0 and you are the first batter". General Merrill replied: "Your message appreciated by me and all others. Hope to fill the bases for you. Importance of this last inning is appreciated and we will not pull a "Cassidy at the Bat".

A captured Jap letter revealed some interesting information as follows: "We get bombing daily. Enemy is using bombs which appear to be duds, but explode at night with deadly effect. Those dropped near the railroad station are timed to go off on arrival and departure of trains. All units here reorganizing and already one half of engineers are gone. Twenty five horses borrowed from first battalion artillery for supply train. Situation in Northern Burma has become such with news of enemy paratroopers landing near Imphal that Yazaki, Okubo and Matsumoto squads with fifteen horses, left for unknown destination with remainder of pack train alerted". This letter is dated April 8, 1944.

17 May 1944 - At 1030 hours Colonel Hunter radioed General Merrill that he was attacking the all-weather aerodrome at Myitkyina and General Merrill took off immediately by plane to watch the attack.

At 1158 Colonel Hunter radioed that he had taken the air field with very little Japanese resistance and was consolidating and digging in to defend it from a counter-attack. The field was covered with logs and oil drums to keep planes from landing but none of the installations were damaged badly.

General Merrill flew to Myitkyina to talk to Colonel Hunter then flew on to Shaduzup to confer with General Stilwell, and see that the airborne force came in promptly as arranged. He came back saying that the planes and gliders were ready on the fields and the 42nd and 89th Infantry regiments standing by ready to load up at any time.

Jack Dowling, Tillsman Durdin and Harry Zinder flew over Myitkyina to watch the attack.

At a Press Conference this evening General Merrill told the correspondents his plan for the taking town of Myitkyina and everyone drank a toast to the captors of the airfield, from a bottle of Schenley Whiskey brought out from the airbase by Major Hancock.

M and K forces reported no change in their positions during the day.

At Myitkyina the code word, "Cafeteria lunch", was flashed to Command Post signifying that the air field had been captured and that glider-borne engineers could be landed. Within a short time, the gliders towed by C-47s were over the field. The first glider was towed by plane piloted by Brigadier General William D. Old, Commanding Officer of the Troop Carrier Command.

The engineer units piled out of the glider and went immediately to work readying the air field for troop carrier planes which followed later in the afternoon. These planes carried Chinese reinforcements which were immediately deployed in defense of the field.

\* \* \* \*

So the Lode Road was pushed forward more than two hundred miles in one hundred days that the Marauders operated behind Japanese lines - and the fighting still goes on.

28 March 1944

When Colonel McGee reached Nhpum Ga, General Merrill ordered him to hold Nhpum with his battalion while the third battalion built and held the air strip at Hsamshingyang, two and a half miles further north. Regimental headquarters would be at Hsamshingyang where all wounded were to be evacuated.

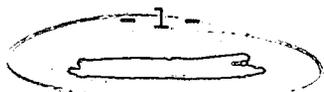
As they talked, Major Bernard Rogoff, second battalion surgeon, quickly set up an aid station in front of a basha near the center of Nhpum Ga. Already four or five wounded lay on improvised litters where medical aid men examined their wounds and gave them morphine. Major Rogoff, one of the coolest men under fire I ever saw, calmly started on the most serious cases and an orderly line of patients was soon getting plasma and being moved to a more quiet place on the edge of the village awaiting evacuation. A few psychounurosis cases were coming in now. One man, a big burly fellow with a tommy gun, was shaking violently all over, tears streaming down his face. He cried "Major, I am not afraid, damn it; I tell you I am not afraid, I just can't stop shaking."

Others in worse shape jumped and screamed each time a shell went off and the shells were getting closed all the time. The second battalion column came up the hill into Nhpum on the run. Some of the men were too exhausted to speak, others were carrying wounded or holding them on horses. One man passed out as he reached the aid station. With all the confusion and terror of a shelling that you are unable to combat, the vast majority of the men despite everything were plodding along doing their jobs. It was those men who quickly whipped the top of the hill at Nhpum Ga into a veritable fortress that was destined to withhold two weeks of all the Japs could dish out.

Colonel McGee called his combat team commanders together. They made a quick reconnaissance of the hill and decided the rough boundaries for the perimeter defense. Then Colonel McGee sent word to his rear guard at Kauri to hold there until forced to withdraw and then to booby trap the trail. They replied they had already used up all their prepared booby traps between Auche and Kauri but were improvising.

The village of Nhpum Ga sits atop a mountain but is also surrounded by knife like mountains on the east and southeast. To the north the ridge continues up and down for one half mile then there is a gradual descent to Hsamshingyang to the south. It is down hill 500 yards then up hill 500 yards to Kauri to the south but there is a high hill near Kauri, to the east there is a sharp decline cut by numerous ridges leading to the river about one mile away.

The perimeter had to be in about a figure eight to hold the high ground and to hold the water hole at the bottom of a little hill the other side of which it would be doubtful if we could hold. The division of the perimeter roughly developed into Blue Combat Team taking from 90° to 220° and the Green Combat Team taking the rest. Colonel McGee quickly saw that his difficulty was going to be to hold with one battalion and he worked to remedy this for the next few days. The combat teams made their own reconnaissance and by 1030 hours the entire battalion was digging in their position as the above diagram shows.



At Kauri the rear guard of the second battalion was still holding at 1330 hours. However about 1345 hours the Japs began shelling Kauri heavily and our patrols were hit by overwhelming numbers of Japanese on all sides and at 1400 hours the Japs started a general attack on the perimeter of the rear guard which actually was no more than a heavy trail block. The rear guard withdrew under cover of their automatic weapons and pulled into the perimeter at Nhpum. The Pioneer and Demolition platoon leader reported that he believed the Japs had a reinforced battalion moving north. At 1600 hours the men were still digging in, clearing fire lanes and getting everything set for the expected attack. At 1605 hours the Japs opened with a hard artillery and mortar concentration right in the perimeter and a few moments later they attacked the first platoon of E Company which held the extreme southern point of the perimeter. They were repulsed with losses. Our mortars opened up now and the observer soon had a barrage on the Jap concentration areas to the south along the trail. The attack was not heavy as compared to later attacks - it consisted mainly of feeling out our perimeter - finding our automatic weapons and hunting for a soft spot. We used rifle and tommy guns mainly - and waited to see what the Jap would do.

All night the Japs kept throwing an occasional mortar or artillery shell in the perimeter - apparently to keep us awake. The men were so physically exhausted however that they took advantage of each lull to catch a little sleep. Most of the men dug two man foxholes and one man slept standing or sitting up while the other remained on guard.

29 March 1944

At Nhpum Ga where the second battalion is dug in the Jap artillery opened at daylight and mortar fire opened a few minutes later. At 0600 hours the Jap machine guns opened up and the Japs attacked from the southeast but were repulsed with losses. At 1000 hours and 1500 hours they repeated the same procedure except the attacks came from the southwest and due south. The Japs moved very close to our perimeter on the south and west flanks and all day they could be plainly heard moving about and preparing for an attack, however at nightfall they pulled back and started digging. One of our scouts found a note on a dead Jap which said "Cook rice at 2100 hours at Warong and bring up to forward troops". Apparently the Japs were feeding much like the Chinese do - that is their cooks prepare rice for a platoon or company, roll it in balls, wrap it in banana leaves and carry it in baskets slung on a bamboo pole right up to the front lines.

At 1750 hours the Japs threw ten artillery shells into the perimeter and under a cover of mortar and machine gun fire attacked the perimeter from the west but again were repulsed with losses. Corporal Samuel Stokes was digging a foxhole just before the attack and laid his helmet on the parapet. A Jap threw a grenade which hit the parapet and rolled into the hole with Corporal Stokes. The helmet rolled off and fell into the hole covering the grenade which went off a moment later. Corporal Stokes was not hurt.

Word was received from Regimental Command Post that a large number of Japs were moving north from Sana which is east of Nhpum.

The general situation tonight didn't look so good. The Japs were gradually moving up on the east and west flanks of the second battalion at Nhpum and now a large force was reported a few miles to the east possibly

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with the mission of cutting through behind Nsamshingyang and cutting any possible route of withdrawal to the north. Our orders were still to hold Nhpum and foxholes were expanded and improved to allow room for one man to sleep laying down while another stood guard. The Japs had had a practice of slipping up close to the perimeter and listening for a voice then throwing a grenade.

In the aid station Major Rogoff had found a good job for psychoneurosis cases and it seemed to aid their recovery. He was having them dig foxholes - big ones with a place for two men to lie down feet to feet - the work seemed to help the man. He had evacuated only two of the eight cases he had, and believed in a few days, he would have the other six back in the perimeter.

30 March 1944

At Nhpum just after dawn the Jap artillery opened up, then the mortars and finally the automatic weapons, and the Japs swarmed up the east slope towards the perimeter. We threw everything we had at them and they fell back only to try again a little further to the north but again they were repulsed. With each attack the morale of our men improved for they knew the Japs had them at their worst the day before. However they were still tired for they hadn't had much sleep in the past three days. The Japs seemed to know that they couldn't crack the perimeter from the south and now they were concentrating all their effort on the eastern flank.

Colonel McGee sent a message to the Command Post asking that the trail between Hsamshingyang and Nhpum Ga be kept open as he expected the Japs to try to cut it. Headquarters told him that a daily combat patrol from third battalion would be pushed through to him but as bulk of 3rd battalion was engaged either in protecting the airstrip or on other patrols that Colonel McGee would have to do any other patrolling he felt was necessary. The large size of the perimeter the second battalion was holding left very few men available for patrol; however, all day on the 30th patrols from the third battalion and the second battalion moved over the trail and wounded were evacuated to the air strip late in the afternoon of the 30th.

The Japs seemed to have located our mortar position on the reverse slope of the hill in Nhpum and they concentrated on knocking them out with their artillery. The second battalion distinguished between the two types of artillery fire; the big gun, probably 105 or 90 mm. was known as "Big Bertha"; its shell could be heard coming over with a whistle, but the one they hated and feared most was the one they called "pst, pst". It was probably a 70 mm. high velocity dual purpose gun and it was fired from a range of about one thousand yards point blank into Nhpum. The two explosions were almost simultaneous and it proceeded on the 30th of March to blow the top off the hill directly in front of our mortars, so they were moved to a better position on the east side of the village.

Early this morning Lt. Brendan J. Lynch and Sgt. Black of the Blue Combat team were slipping back into the southern part of our perimeter for a reconnaissance. Lt. Lynch was shot by a squad on that side of the perimeter. This only

[REDACTED]

explanation of the mistake was that he didn't use the recognition signal and the men on the perimeter were a little bit trigger happy from loss of sleep.

The Japs threw a few shells over about 2100 hours and one was a tree burst which wounded one man seriously. The litter bearers left the aid station to go pick him up. Just before they got to the wounded man two Jap snipers fired a flare into the middle of the perimeter and fired on the litter bearers. Two were wounded.

Snipers ringed the perimeter from the east, west and south and banged away off and on, day and night. Sometimes they fired at the sound of a shovel striking the ground. Many times they fired directly over the medical aid station on the reverse slope of the hill. Major Rogoff by now had excellent fox holes dug for the wounded. He had received twelve litter cases today were occupying them to evacuation in the morning.

Sanitation became a problem. Men could not leave their fox holes at night for fear their own men would shoot them by mistake. So each man used his helmet and buried his own waste the next day near his fox hole.

This was beginning to complicate matters for the ground around the fox holes was rapidly being covered with little piles of earth - some not completely buried. About seventy five horses had been killed in the perimeter already - and many others were badly shot up. Their bodies lay all over the place and the ones two days old had already begun to stink badly. Jap bodies scattered about the edges of the perimeter were also beginning to stink. After thirty six hours in this hot, moist climate, a dead body is in terrible shape - bloated and covered with flies and maggots.

It was impossible to bury the horses as the Japs opened fire whenever they heard a shovel hit the ground. Colonel McGee's Command Post was suffering too. A large tree about twenty yards away had attracted at least four tree bursts and had caused the death of one man and caused several others painful injuries. Colonel McGee gave orders that the tree be blown down by the Pioneer and Demolition Platoon. They ringed it with dynamite and blew it down thereby eliminating one source of tree bursts.

At Hsamshingyang the air strip was so muddy only a few planes were able to land. No contact with the Japs was made to the east or to the south towards Nphum Ga but to the southwest one of our Kachin patrols reported the Japs were active and that Japs were seen one half mile southwest of the air strip. Father Stuart said the Kachin patrols had the Japs really confused with the variety of their ambushes. The Japs have been ambushed by Kachins many times using panjis or sharpened sticks on the side of the trail to impale them when they run to the flanks to envelop the Kachins. The Japs got wise to the way the Kachins set traps for them to run into when they sprung the ambush. Accordinally a few days ago near Warong when the Kachins ambushed a Jap patrol the Japs didn't run to the flanks as usual but fell down and hugged the ground along the trail and opened heavy fire on the Kachins. The Kachins were forced to withdraw due to superior fire power. The next day the same ambush was laid further up the trail and the Japs hit it - hit the ground, opened fire. The Kachins withdrew, firing occasional shots as they filtered up the trail. The Japs thinking the Kachins had completely

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withdrawn, got up and proceeded down the trail but when they got a few feet, a Bren gun opened on them from the rear. Now it is the Japs next move in the battle of ambush.

31 March 1944

At Nhpum Ga just after day break the Jap artillery and mortars opened as usual and at about 0645 automatic weapons also opened and the Japs attacked from three sides - south, east and northwest - a few minutes apart. Their machine guns and mortars were raising hell with our animals. The Jap principal effort was from the east in the area of our water hole. They attacked savagely and bravely in some cases running directly up a slope that we were covering with a machine gun. An hour later we could not get to the water hole - neither could the Japs, but it was more serious for us. We had no other waterhole. The Japs covered the hole with mortar fire and snipers ringed the tall grass overlooking the trail to the hole. We counter-attacked to drive them off the little ridge, but they were firmly established. It was outside of our perimeter and we didn't have the men to occupy the ground if we had taken it.

Already Colonel McGee was using mule skinnners, photographers and every available man in Battalion Headquarters on the perimeter. One hour later a radio message from Headquarters at Hsamshingyang said the Japs had blocked the trail between there and Nhpum Ga during the night and that the third battalion patrols were trying to dislodge them and thought they could get through to Nhpum Ga by noon. The word that the second battalion was surrounded soon spread throughout the perimeter and that coupled with the loss of the waterhole was a severe blow to morale. Also Jap artillery continued to pound them and they couldn't do a thing about it.

At 1000 hours a fighter bombers came over and were directed to the Jap positions by our air liaison officers. The weather had been so bad the past four days that the planes could only get over a short time each day. The planes overhead helped morale. Colonel McGee decided to try to push through on the trail to the airstrip and he called the Blue Combat Team commander in and told him to exert all the pressure he could along the trail without endangering the perimeter. He gave him a reinforced platoon withdrawn from the rest of the perimeter. This force attacked under mortar and machine gun support but struck strong Jap dug in positions and repulsed losing several wounded and one killed. The Japs increased their pressure on all sides of the perimeter during the day. Apparently the Jap commander figured he had this battalion trapped and would annihilate them in a few days.

We received a heavy air drop today of food and ammunition but the shortage of water had everyone worried. There was a muddy hole in a draw where several horses had been killed. A little water ran from it so a squad from the pioneer and Demolition Platoon dug out a pit and filled it up with a brackish mixture of mud and water. It was enough to quench thirst but that was all. The dead horses only twenty five feet above didn't add to its taste. Or maybe they did.

Tonight was the low point so far in morale but everytime a Jap made the least move he drew fire. There was no thought anytime but that we would stick it out and come through O.K.

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On the south flank of the perimeter, Lt. Grissoms platoon was firing 60mm. mortars at eighty to ninety yard range without bipods or baseplates and were hitting the target.

At the air strip the Orange Combat Team sent the usual morning patrol at 0600 to Nhpum Ga but four hundred yards from the strip on the top of a little ridge, the lead scout of the patrol was fired on by a Nambu light machine gun. The Japs pulled a boner here - they fired at the first man whereas if they had waited a minute or two, they could have had a better target.

1 April 1944

At Nhpum at dawn we were all set for the usual attack but 0700 hours came - and 0800 came and still no attack. However our patrols found that the Jap had dug in on high ground east of the waterhole so we let him have a nice mortaring. At 0900 hours the artillery started again - this time it seemed very close - probably from Kauri, one thousand yards away or possibly from Auche only two and a half miles away. Following the barrage the Japs attacked from the east and the northeast and were repulsed. our 60 mm. mortars were worth their weight in gold now. Our mortar men lay the 60's right in the front of the Jap perimeter only thirty yards from our perimeter and they hit their holes with a tree burst many a time. The 60 mm. mortar is perfect for close work and a good mortar crew can actually put them down a stove pipe if they have a little ammunition to play with. We used the 60's when the Japs attacked and fired them at range as short as seventy five yards with good results.

When the drop planes came over they drew heavier than usual ground fire. One of the pilots reported that the Japs shot a bullet between the legs of a kicker in the back of his plane. A check up reveals that we now have in Nhpum Ga seven dead and twenty five seriously wounded. We started with two hundred and twelve animals and are now down to one hundred and twenty with some of those shot up badly. The stink of the dead Japanese and dead animals sprawled and bloated all around the perimeter is terrific. The shortage of water is acute. Colonel McGee asked for a drop of water in plastic bags tomorrow. The medics don't have enough water to make a plaster cast for a broken leg and they are now giving sulfadiazine without water. Everyone is rationed a half a canteen-full - if he can get that. The artillery shelling is hellishly accurate and that and mortar fire are the principal causes of our casualties so far.

Colonel McGee sent two strong patrols out this morning to try to feel out weak spots in the Jap lines.

They found Japs every place they tried and returned with the information that there was one possible route to the outside available. Down an extremely steep and rough mountainside on the west of the perimeter and up and down some very rough conuntry for almost a mile to the river. Then up the river to Hsamshingyang. A platoon from the third battalion which had come through on the daily patrol and was cut off in Nhpum decided to try to break through that way. Dividing themselves into two sections, one following the other by about twenty minutes, they started their tortuous journey through the Jap lines and back to their battalion at the air strip. Crouching low, the first section pushed its way through thick underbrush to a tiny stream bed. Following this

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stream bed they made better time and soon figured they were through the Jap lines and started moving faster and less cautiously. They were following a rough compass course of 210 degrees but the roughness of the terrain made it necessary to vary their course as they went along. Just at nightfall after five hours of hard climbing they unexpectedly came upon the river and bivouacked along its banks for night. The second section which had started twenty minutes later did not show up. The men in the first section were not worried about them because they knew that coming down the little stream bed they might have turned off at a different place.

At the air strip the Orange Combat Team moved up the trail and attacked the Japs along the main trail all day. The Japs withdrew again - but showed more determination to hold ground. Their selection of ground to defend was excellent. It appeared that a Jap officer kept some distance behind the front troops marking emplacements for automatic weapons. The Japs used a clever S shaped trail block with Nambus on the humps and ends which could fire across fire usually both up and down the trail. A few riflemen were in fox holes between the Nambus and some were scattered back along the trail. The Japs truly used men and ground to maximum advantage and forced us to be extremely careful about envelopment. In some cases they estimated where we would envelop and got a machine gun there to hit us in the flank. The Orange Combat Team had the most seasoned and experienced fighters in the command and their ability to sense where the Jap would be saved many a life. Very little progress was made in pushing the Jap back today. Less than one hundred yards was gained. We needed artillery and we needed it badly. Fighter bombers were helping a lot but they were not enough.

When General Merrill was taken out, the first thing he told Major Hancock who met the ambulance plane at Ledo was to get two howitzers and drop them to the third battalion at the air strip. Major Hancock had those guns packed and ready to drop by 1000 hours on the 1st of April and sent Colonel Hunter a message that they were available when he wanted them. Colonel Hunter radioed back to drop them early on April 2nd. We had no artillerymen and the guns would be dropped in sections and would have to be assembled. Colonel Hunter sent a call to Colonel Beach, Commanding Officer of the third battalion, to get all men with any previous artillery experience and make up two gun crews tonight. The word had hardly got before twenty five muleskinners from the third battalion had reported. They had volunteered from the 98th Pack Artillery in New Guinea and there were actually four complete gun crews with us. S/Sergeant John A. Acker was made Battery Commander. Private Thomas W. Merritt was made chief of Number One section, while Sergeant George B. Lowe took Number Two section. These men organized their crews and a man was given the job he used to do regardless of how it fitted his present grade. One of the best gunners in the 98th was found in Private Isaac W. (Little Chief) Ross, a full-blooded Cherokee Indian from Cherokee, North Carolina. These men were like school kids on a vacation - they were so happy to have their hands on a pack howitzer again. The gun crews went through dummy run, completed their organization and were all set to receive the guns by 2100 hours tonight.

Morale all over the area picked up when the news got around that we would have our own artillery, tomorrow, for the first time since we had been behind the Japanese lines. The cheering news was radioed to the second battalion which was told it would be out in short order when the artillery arrived. Morale

lifted there also but Major Rogoff was not so encouraged. He had buried seven men already and had twenty five more seriously injured in fox holes in his aid station. Some of them would not be able to live another two days without hospital care, surgery, and one case a blood transfusion and they couldn't be carried out through the jungle, but only over some kind of a trail.

At a staff conference tonight Colonel Hunter ordered the Orange Combat Team to continue the attack down the trail to the south the next morning while a strong force from Khaki Combat Team moves up the river, then turns east to hit at the Japs surrounding the second battalion on their west flank. In the meantime second battalion is to exert all pressure possible and try to break through to the west and to the north down the main trail. Colonel Hunter told us we had to get through to the second battalion as soon as possible as their wounded were badly in need of hospital care and every day they were surrounded was costing a man that might have been saved if he could have been evacuated.

2 April 1944

Orange Combat Team was engaged with the enemy along the trail at 0700 hours and their first attack early in the morning was repulsed by unusually strong Jap fire. The Japs seemed to have been reinforced during the night. Colonel Beach put the fighter bombers on the Jap position all morning, but they were well dug in and they didn't move. The attack continued all day at a cost of four dead and four seriously wounded. At dawn Major Edwin J. Briggs, Khaki Combat Team Commander, led out a reinforced company of his men leaving 81 mm. mortars and heavy machine guns at the air strip. They marched down the river for about three hours until they estimated they were almost opposite the heavy fire which they believed to be the second battalion perimeter. Turning east cross country, they moved over the most difficult stretch of mountains and jungle they had yet encountered.

Three and a half hours later the point platoon under T/Sergeant Lenwood C. Clements started up another steep mountain where they were suddenly fired on. For ten minutes there was speradic rifle fire in all directions; then it became clear that the Japs held the rest of the ridge and had snipers literally all over the ridge. Sergeant Clements had already lost one or two men killed and several wounded. The Sergeant risked his won life to save one of his men by running through heavy sniper fire picking the wounded man up and carrying and dragging him to a defended place. Major Briggs felt out the Japs on both flanks with patrols only to find they occupied the entire ridge. By that time the Japs were throwing mortar fire from the ridge. Several feeling-out attacks made by Sergeant Clements were repulsed by the Jpas. The enemy had an excellent position commanding all approaches and it was just plain waste of manpower to hit them at this point. So Major Briggs withdrew a few hundred yards and dug in for the night.

At 0830 hours the drop plane arrived at the airstrip and soon the various sections of the two pack howitzers were floating to earth on double parachutes. Four hundred rounds of 75 mm. ammunition came with the guns. At 0930 hours the planes had finished their complete drop and the gun crews rushed on the field with pack animals to carry off the guns. Other men were assigned to get the ammunition and carry it to previously prepared positions. At 1100 hours the

guns were ready to fire and Colonel Hunter was figuring the fire data to blast the Japs south of Nhpum Ga. The first round was fired amidst a silent prayer from every Marauder, at 1130, and went over the second battalion perimeter landing about eight hundred yards beyond the Jap lines and four hundred yards to the west. Adjustment was made and at 1200 hours both guns had registered on the target.

Over the radio Colonel Hunter told Colonel McGee and Colonel Beach that we would attack and try to break through this afternoon after a good artillery barrage preceded by strafing and dive bombing. The attack came off but the Japs held. Word was received later in the afternoon from Major Briggs that he was held up so Colonel Hunter ordered him back to the air strip as he carried supplies for only thirty six hours and had expended most of his ammunition.

At Nhpum Ga they got their usual dawn attack from the south and from the northwest preceded by artillery and mortars. When our artillery opened up at 1130 hours morale seemed to go way up. The men in the perimeter overestimated the ability of the artillery for many of them thought this would cause the Japs to withdraw not remembering that for six days they had taken all the Japs could give them without withdrawing.

Water was getting very low and what there was stank so badly that you could hardly drink it. Wounded men cried for water and that afternoon a heavy, but short rain provided enough for everyone to get their throats wet. At dusk the men began to see that the Japs were not going to be run off by our artillery. Counter battery fire was going on from both sides, apparently with very little effect; and tonight morale was again pretty low.

Someone started a rumor that the battalion had been told to fight their way out the next day carrying their wounded. Everyone knew that was just what the Japs wanted us to do. Colonel McGee spiked the rumor by passing the word around that the second battalion was accomplishing its assigned mission of blocking a Jap counter thrust on the Chinese east flank at Shaduzup, that we had plenty of food and ammunition and tomorrow we would have water dropped, that we were not moving from Nhpum but were sticking it out. In the drop today were a number of books, two of which were "Manual of Operation of Garryall and Flow" in Spanish and "Symposium of Office Gynaecology". There were also a number of novels in French. The men got a kick out of this as the books were passed about over the perimeter.

Colonel McGee used field telephones to the key points of the perimeter and to the Combat Team Command Posts. SC 300 radios and even SC 536 radios were also used.

One Marauder sitting in his foxhole just before dawn this morning saw a Jap come towards him. The Jap appeared to be groggy and lost. He walked to the edge of the Marauder's fox hole mumbling to himself apparently thinking he was in his own perimeter. The Marauder mumbled back while reaching for his gun. The Jap walked away apparently still looking for his fox hole and the Marauder shot him dead with one shot through the head.

Sergeant Roy H. Matsumato, A Nisei Japanese, proved invaluable to the second battalion during the siege at Nhpum Ga. He and other Nisei were placed

at strategic points around the perimeter where they could hear the Japanese talking and shouting before an attack, and frequently were able to give us a little warning of what they were going to do.

Sergeant Matsumato crawled out close to the Jap perimeter every night and sniped at Japs. He listened to them talk and secured information. He usually returned just before dawn. Last night however he returned about 2300 hours and reported to Lt. Edward A McLogan that the Japs were going to attempt to cut off a part of the perimeter that Lt. McLogan was occupying. Lt. McLogan's perimeter stuck way out on a nose of ground that sloped down hill. It was difficult to defend but so far they had held it mainly because they wanted to deny the defilade it would offer the Japs if we pulled back to the crest of the little ridge. Sergeant Matsumato said the Jap plan was to creep up as close as possible to the perimeter before dawn, then rush the little nose, which about twenty men were holding. Lt. McLogan figured that it might be possible to give them a surprise. He decided to pull his men back to the crest of the ridge, concentrate tommy guns and Browning automatic rifles along that side of the rise, booby trap the fox holes they were leaving and let the Japs attack the nose of ground - take it and then be annihilated by his automatic weapons.

At dawn everybody was set. Sergeant Matsumato was in a two man fox hole overlooking the nose of ground with a tommy gun. Suddenly there were shouts of "Banzai." "Death to the Americans", "Die", Banzai" and a hail of hand grenades hit around the nose of ground as a reinforced platoon swept up the hill. A moment later they were sticking bayonets in fox holes, firing wildly, shouting and grenading everything that looked like a gun emplacement. Their sudden occupation of the nose started them. Then they charged up the hill, an officer leading them carrying a sword (which later proved to be a beauty). Lt. McLogan held his fire till they got within fifteen yards of his perimeter. Then tommy guns, Browning automatic rifles, grenades - everything - opened at once. The Japs were falling like flies. Another platoon or part of a platoon was following the first platoon and they started hitting the ground - jumping in our booby trapped fox holes. Then Sergeant Matsumato shouted in Japanese "Charge!" "Charge!" and they charged. Thirty minutes later fifty four dead bodies were counted on that slope including two officers. Sergeant Matsumato became a legendary character overnight.

The platoon which left the second battalion perimeter yesterday arrived safely at the air strip this afternoon without losing a man. The Japs were contacted only once and the platoon was able to break contact and get away after a few shots. They report that it would be impossible to carry litters over the ground they covered however. It took all their energy to get over it themselves without carrying anyone.

3 April 1944

At Nhpum Ga, the Japs made a heavy attack on the south flank of the perimeter at dawn and three hours later hit the west side. The same pattern of artillery, mortar, grenades and attack was followed and they were repulsed with heavy losses.

Planes were overhead, bombing and strafing the one mile gap between Nhpum and the third battalion which was fighting desperately against Jap strong points and bunkers. All day the men were wishing for water. Finally the air drop came

late in the afternoon and with it came water in plastic bags.

The Japs always opened up with mortars when we got an airdrip and today they really gave us a pounding.

Some of the water bags were broken open within a minute from the time they hit - the first bag opened was carried to the aid station where every wounded man was allowed to drink his fill. The water had a rubberish taste to it but was delicious and refreshing compared to the blackish stinking stuff we had been drinking for the past three days. The stench of more than one hundred dead animals was almost overpowering - and the Japs opened up with mortars whenever we tried to bury one. Over two hundred dead Jap bodies were scattered around the edges of the perimeter and were making their contribution to the nauseating odor.

At 1630 hours the enemy sent a heavy artillery barrage over, then suddenly stopped. All was quiet. Not a shot was fired by either side for more than two hours. The night was quiet. Even our own artillery had stopped about 1500 hours. The ominous silence was getting the men. The third battalion had not been able to break through today. Our artillery hadn't helped much and some of our wounded were dying. Tonight was the low point for morale. Things can't get any worse, unless they don't drop any more water.

At the air strip Colonel Hunter called a staff meeting about 1500 hours. He told his officers frankly that the situation was bad. Reports were confirmed that the Japs are moving in strength up the Tanai River to our east and we had been told not to expect much Chinese help for another eleven days. The battalion at Pabum is supposed to be moving down to Tate Ga to block trails to the south. Finally he said, "Gentlemen, in the morning we start an attack that will drive through to the second battalion. It may take two or three days but we will get through. All troops except the sick and the muleskinners will be withdrawn from the defense of the airstrip. Large patrols will be called in and Kachims substituted where possible. Tomorrow, as soon as we can get ready, Orange Combat Team will attack due south along the trail. Khaki Combat team will leave their heavy equipment here, march down the trail behind Orange until they are four hundred yards from the Jap positions then turn west down the mountain and attack the Japs on their west flank."

The artillery will be moved up to where it can fire pointblank into the Jap bunker and pill boxes. Every man of the gun crews volunteered to do this, this afternoon. The attack will be tentatively set for 1200 hours tomorrow. Ruses, feints and anything else you can do to fool the Japs are in order. A fake message will be dropped from a plane so as to fall in the Jap perimeter. The message will be to the second battalion and will say that a battalion of parachutists will be dropped between Kauri and Auché at 1700 hours on April 4. If possible we will have a dummy airdrop in that area to fool them.

A brief discussion of the plan followed. Then everyone scattered to get his own job done.

Major Briggs brought his tired, wet company back from their trek down the river by noon. They had taken a strong Jap position at dusk last night but had withdrawn on Colonel Hunter's orders after he found out the strength of their

opposition. Yesterday afternoon after six men had been wounded, Captain Melton H. Ivens, the Khaki Combat Team surgeon, told Major Briggs that four of them should be started back to the airstrip at once as their chances of survival depended on how soon they reached a hospital. Major Briggs immediately detailed the lead platoon, from which most of the wounded had come, as their escort back. That meant litter-bearing, but that platoon under Sergeant Clements was glad to help those men out, though it was a very tough assignment. There was no trail for this had been an infiltration attack and the jungle was thick; every inch of the trail had to be cleared before the improvised litters could be carried through. The mountain slopes were so steep that men crawled on hands and knees, lifting the litters a few feet at a time. Every few minutes the men and one officer changed around. - some cutting the trail, some watching for Jap snipers, while others struggled with the litters. The wounded, their pain dulled by drugs, did not cry out even when a litter bearer would fall on the slippery mountainside. They stopped by the side of a stream at night. During the night one man died and was buried nearby. At dawn the caravan moved out and arrived at the airstrip at noon. Fortunately there were planes on the field and the wounded were flown out within ten minutes after their arrival.

#### 4 April 1944

As the airstrip was to be left relatively undefended Colonel Hunter moved his headquarters to Mahetkawng, two miles north of the airstrip where a platoon of Chinese had just arrived from the Chinese Battalion at Pabum. This unit was ordered to dig in and hold the trail junction at Mahetkawng. Colonel Hunter with his staff moved up with the Orange Combat Team which was attacking astride the trail. Planes were overhead strafing and dive bombing the Japs all day. At 1100 hours Colonel Hunter saw that the attack couldn't come off before 1600 hours so it was set for that time. The delay was due to the time it took to move Khaki Combat Team into position and Colonel Hunter wanted to wait until he could hit an overpowering blow before hitting at all, today.

Major Lew, the Commander of the Orange Combat Team, had the following plan of attack: At 1530 his Pioneer and Demolition platoon would move down the east side of the mountain to the valley below and have a sham battle among themselves. Carbines, which sound something like an Arisaka, would represent the enemy while tommy guns and M-1s would represent the Marauders. It was hoped that the commotion would draw Jap attention and mortar fire while his main attack moved along the trail. The front was only one hundred and fifty yards wide. It consisted merely of the top of a long ridge with the Japs on one end and the Marauders on the other. Major Lew's mortars were set up to lay down a close in barrage with 81 mm. heavy ammunition to try to penetrate some of the Jap Pill boxes and also because the H.E. light would be hitting too close to our own front line troops. Captain Burch, Commanding Officer of the assault company making the attack, was employing three platoons in a U-shaped formation. The bottom of the U would be his center platoon with the two flank positions echeloned out as close up to the Jap position as possible. Colonel Beach, the Third Battalion Commander, planned to have his air liaison officer direct the planes on the Jap strong points for fifteen minutes of bombing and strafing and then open with the artillery at point blank range. At the same time his mortars were to pulverize the closed in positions. At a signal over the radio, the artillery and mortars would cease firing and Burch's company would rush the Jap positions before they could recover

from the shock of the artillery barrage. Then we would do the same thing over again, consolidating after each attack.

At 1500 hours Khaki Combat Team informed Colonel Hunter that they were engaged with the Japs and were temporarily pinned down by mortar and machine gun fire.

At 1530 the ruse fight at the bottom of the valley to our west got under way. It sounded real and five minutes later the Japs started throwing mortar fire in that direction. At 1545 the planes were circling and Lt. Paulson was directing them on to a target not more than one hundred and fifty yards in front of our front line. They made several passes from east to west and at 1555 they strafed and bombed the target. At 1605 our artillery opened up at point blank range and the mortars followed in a moment. What happened next can best be told from the SC 300 radio net that was used to actually direct the attack.

*omitted*

One hour later the wounded were on their way to hospital by plane. Jap casualties were estimated at two hundred.

The fighting had been close and bitter but the Japs had literally been blasted out their holes and we had advanced to within one thousand yards of the second battalion perimeter.

At Nhpum Ga the second battalion was not doing so well. Three wounded men died during the night and one man lay to the southeast just outside the perimeter with his entire frontal lobe exposed. The medics tried to get at him all night but the Japs threw up flares and opened fire whenever there was a sound in that vicinity. The next morning we did get him out, but he died a few hours later. There are only seventy usable animals left - the others are dead or wounded. He won't shoot wounded animals because they stink, and they may stop some of the lead from getting to the muleskinners' fox holes. One animal has twenty six bullet holes in him where he got in the line of fire of a Jap machine gun.

Blood plasma is nearly out.

This morning we found that the Japs had grenaded one of our machine gun positions at dawn and taken the machine gun. They were firing it at us for an hour this morning - we knew because they didn't use tracer and the gun they were firing had a lot of tracers in it. Our mortars concentrated on knocking out this gun and got a direct hit on the fourteenth round. It has not fired since. Some of the men on our southwest flank captured a Jap machine gun this morning and fired up all the ammunition they had for it.

The Japs attacked this morning from the northwest without success. Again at 1700 hours they made a heavy rush attack on a part of the perimeter which had been manned by some muleskinners who had got out of their holes while things were quiet. The Japs broke through the perimeter in one place for a minute but were wiped out a few moments later by a two-man assault force throwing hand grenades. The hole in the perimeter was plugged but a chill swept around the perimeter as the story got around about how close the Japs came to really getting in.

Morale picked up considerably at about 1600 hours when the third battalion started to attack.

5 April 1944

About midnight at Nhpum Ga there was a little noise in the Jap perimeter to our west. Sergeant Matsumoto slid quietly out of his fox hole and moved slowly towards the Jap lines where he could hear the voices a little plainer. He returned to the perimeter with the news that he believed the Japs were getting ready to attack. A heavy rain had just fallen for about twenty minutes and the water still dripped from trees and bamboo overhead. Our perimeter was strong on the west flank and there was very little to do except alert the men and wait.

Suddenly at 0200 hours the Japs attacked - rushing madly towards the perimeter. A wave of hand grenades went out to meet them but some Japs actually reached the perimeter and were killed by tommy gunners. One Jap fell dead in the foxhole of a man he never saw. The startled Marauder hadn't seen the Jap either as he was facing the other way. The slightest movement drew fire and even though the Japs were repulsed, not a man slept for fear a wounded Jap lay close enough to the perimeter to shoot or throw a grenade.

They pulled the same attack again at 0430 hours without success. The Japs threw artillery off and on during the day but generally the pressure on the perimeter was lessened, apparently by the attacks of the third battalion. Tonight in the second battalion perimeter there were ninety seven wounded, seventeen killed and four missing. The Japs had suffered heavy casualties. The dead lay all about the perimeter and our snipers had picked many of them off trying to get their dead. On the west side of the perimeter, moans could be heard as if there was a Jap aid station in that vicinity.

The third battalion followed the same plan today that they used yesterday in their successful attack - blasting pill boxes with bombs, strafing, throwing artillery, mortars and bazooka fire and twice using flame throwers. The infantry followed closely occupying each foot of ground and mopping up. Then the artillery opened again. The artillery is firing from an open position a few hundred yards from the hill top the Japs are occupying. They could be easily hit by machine gun fire from the Jap position.

Jap resistance has been strengthened today and the fighting is extremely bitter and close. Ammunition, food, water and other supplies are packed up to the Orange Combat Team from the airstrip over a steep, slippery trail. Yesterday, after a hurry call, some 81 mm. ammunition arrived in time to help in the attack.

The ground we took yesterday is blasted bare along the trail - every tree is either down or chipped all over with fragments or bullets, and the bamboo is cut as if with a huge knife. Jap bodies were found in trees, where a five hundred pound bomb had blasted them yesterday afternoon.

This morning Lt. Weston's Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon was in the forefront of the attack. As the artillery lifted, his men rushed forward.

Lt. Weston, running down the middle of the trail, suddenly came on a Jap fox hole with a sack over the top. He jerked the sack off to see two terrified Japs shaking all over from the shock of the artillery so close to them. Before he could stop he had shot both with his carbine, one shot for each. Later he regretted he hadn't tried to make them prisoners.

Mounted messengers supplementing radio and telephone communications, gallop up and down the trail. Aid men and litter bearers move with the front line troops bandaging and carrying the wounded to aid stations from which they are evacuated to the airstrip and on to a field hospital.

Captain Burch was right up with his lead platoon all through the attack. His calm decisions when a Nambu suddenly opens up on a flank have kept his company functioning like a deadly machine. He has taught his men the importance of moving fast in the jungle to keep from being hit by snipers, and unlike most troops when they are in combat areas after severe fights, Captain Burch's men keep their heads up. He will call a man down for hitting the ground and ducking. He has proved it is safer to see what is going on around you.

In the attack today, Lt. William E. Woomer, known as "Woomer the Boomer", platoon leader for Company K, worked his way forward to within twenty five yards of two machine guns that had been holding us up for several hours. He directed his mortar fire on them and had shells landing within twenty feet of where he was directing the fire by SCR 300. During this he was heard to give this order over the radio, "Deflection correct. Bring it in twenty five yards and if you don't hear from me, you know you came this way too far. Then shift it just a little and you'll know you're right on it".

The guns were knocked out in the next few rounds and Lt. Woomer was miraculously not hurt.

6 April 1944

The Jap artillery fired on the second battalion perimeter at 0600 hours, 1500 and 1730 - about ten rounds each time. The Japs made a light attack on the northwest flank of the perimeter early this morning. We have one hundred wounded, seventeen dead and four missing to date in Nhpum Ga. The stink of the dead horses and men grows worse though it doesn't seem possible that it could get worse. Water was dropped again today and the planes seemed to draw unusually heavy ground fire. Four out of the twenty eight aid men in the battalion have been wounded. Three men that were wounded and were sent back to the perimeter after having their wounds dressed have been killed. Many of the wounded refuse to stay in the aid station and insist on returning to the perimeter where they know they are sorely needed. We had planned to burn the dead horses but the smoke would have brought all kinds of mortar and artillery fire.

The two in one helmet which so many men scorned before being under shell fire had certainly proved its worth. There have been several instances where men have had their helmets badly dented by fragments or shrapnel from a tree burst.

At the airstrip things are going better. The Chinese battalion from Pabum is now in the Weilangyang area and is blocking trails to the south. They are in

contact with the Japs at several small towns. One town which was known to be occupied by Japs was burned out with gasoline and oil. The planes dropped the drums of gas and oil in the village, then strafed it with tracers to set it on fire.

At 0830 hours we zeroed in our artillery, a battery of four heavy machine guns, a battery of four 81 mm. mortars using H.E. heavy. We pin-pointed these thirty yards in front of our own troops. Then we zeroed in a battery of 81 mm. mortars for H.E. light about two hundred yards in front of our position and finally zeroed in a battery of four 60 mm. mortars firing for three hundred yards along the main trail which was the Japanese supply route.

At 0900 hours the set up for attack was the same we had used on the 4th.

Our communication set up was a little different. We had sound powered wire to each of the two flank platoons - radio net from company commanders, combat team commanders, battalion commanders and also for mortars.

Sound powered wire to the forward artillery observer was used part of the time. The rest of the time he used SCR 300. Flares were to be used only for an emergency - red for stop firing - green for lift firing.

The plan was to use one hundred round artillery barrage at Jap strong points thirty yards ahead, following a dive bombing and strafing attack. Use of the H.E. Heavy at the same point was simultaneous: H.E. Light shooting from two hundred yards out and working back towards our own perimeter. 60 mm. mortars to fire at a medium rate along the Jap supply route.

After a fifteen minute artillery barrage and seven minute 81 mm. mortar rolling barrage the attack was to jump off under a heavy machine gun support.

At 0950 hours the attack went off exactly as planned. In the first attack we only gained fifty yards but by adjusting the barrages on the Jap strong points the total advance for the day was three hundred yards.

Three of the dead Japs found along the trail were using M-1 rifles and one Japanese was wearing G.I. Jungle Boots.

The Japs got smart after the first barrage and ran back up the trail fifty or sixty yards to prepared positions - then when the barrage lifted they ran back to their weapons and opened fire. Our lead scouts noted this and after the next artillery barrage they picked off four running back to their guns.

7 April 1944

In Nhpum Ga the Jap artillery came over at 0600 hours, 1500 and 1750 but Jap pressure on the perimeter has lessened considerably. Documents taken off Jap dead indicate that we are surrounded by a reinforced Jap battalion from the 114th Regiment, 18th Jap Division and also elements of the 55th Japanese Regiment.

Khaki Combat Team attacked north of Nhpum all day against heavy Jap automatic weapons fire and emplacements. Orange Combat Team occupied the ground

already gained. Planes dive bombed and strafed all day. Artillery, mortar and machine gun fire were used as on the 6th but we could not blast the Japs off the ridge. We are approximately five hundred yards from the second battalion perimeter.

Second battalion used two combat patrols to attack the Japs but they were pinned down by machine gun fire from pill boxes. The first battalion arrived at the airstrip at 1700 hours after a forced march from the vicinity of Seola. Ten in one ration was dropped to the second battalion but fell in the Jap perimeter. The third battalion is fighting like hell to get that ten in one back. Supply trains and ammunition dumps are working smoothly now from airstrip to third battalion on the trail. At 1930 hours Colonel Hunter had a staff meeting. The third battalion attacks down the trail. One combat team from the first battalion will move northeast along the river to cut off the Japs withdrawal. Patrols will continue in all directions. The attack starts with artillery, mortar and dive bomber support at 1000 hours for the third battalion. The litter train will be ready to move to Nhpum Ga to evacuate the wounded when the break through is made. The Regimental forward Command Post is with the third battalion. Morale was high when the first battalion pulled in but is even higher now.

#### 8 April 1944

Khaki Combat Team attacked all day along the main trail while Orange Combat Team moved down to the small stream in the valley to the east and attacked northward hitting considerable enemy resistance, but the jungle itself was enough resistance to make progress very slow. The White Combat Team of the first battalion has taken over the defense of the airstrip while a selected group of two hundred and fifty four men and officers from the Red Combat Team under Captain Tom P. Senff were assigned the mission of feeling out the area to the west of Nhpum Ga - then move to the south offering a threat to the Jap rear. Captain Senff moved out of his bivouac area at the airstrip at 0630 hours. No animals were taken although the light machine guns and 60 mm. mortar were hand carried - each man carried two days K ration and as much ammunition as he could, including at least two hand grenades per man. SCR 300 radios were also carried. The column with Captain Senff at the head moved up the trail until they were one mile north of Nhpum Ga then cut west across country, cutting down a small stream and over a big nose to the area west of Nhpum that he was to reconnoiter.

By this time he had lost five men from exhaustion and one seriously injured from falling over a twenty foot embankment. They were sent back together. From the small river they saw Jap tracks leading to Nhpum Ga. Captain Senff sent reconnaissance patrols to follow the tracks and to scout out the area. They found three old paddy fields on the hillside nearby, two clearings, freshly dug Jap foxholes and one dead Jap. They figured, inasmuch as the Japs hadn't buried this dead, they were not now operating in this area. After sending a report by SCR 300 to Regimental Headquarters which was with the assault units of Orange Combat Team, he moved south guiding on the almost continuous firing in the vicinity of Nhpum Ga.

At 1600 hours he hit a pronounced trail leading southwest. It appeared to have been freshly used by men and animals. He sent one Browning automatic rifleman and two tommy gunners two hundred yards in each direction to block the

trail. Then turning to the north he moved slowly and cautiously toward Nhpum. At 1610 he was fired on by three Japs about eight hundred yards from Nhpum Ga. We returned the fire and sent a reconnaissance patrol through the area. They returned with nothing to report, except some recently dug positions down the trail toward the river. He left one platoon as a permanent block on that trail and moved to the southwest again at 1650 hours in an effort to get high ground for our bivouac area. At 1815 hours Captain Senff bivouaced eight hundred and fifty yards from Nhpum Ga on an azimuth of 240 degrees. The stench from dead animals and men near the perimeter was very bad. He put in a perimeter defense and dug in blocks across a pronounced foot path leading through the bivouac area. At 2250 hours a four man Jap patrol moving north on the foot path was fired on by a Browning automatic rifle - only three rounds were fired and the gun jammed. The Japs threw a grenade and a brief fight ensued. The Japs withdrew. The casualties were one officer (Lt. Johnson) killed. The rest of the night was quiet.

In Nhpum Ga there had been no heavy fighting all day. The enemy artillery fired only a few rounds and they made no serious attacks although occasional machine gun and mortar fire broke the quiet. Major Rogoff totaled his casualties and found that he had twenty five dead, one hundred and three wounded to date but it was possible others would be found when a muster could be held. In Colonel Hunter's field order for today he said, "The siege of Nhpum Ga will fall by noon today". Although there had been heavy fighting all around them, the siege still held at 1630 hours and the men in the perimeter wondered, "How long?"

9 April 1944

Captain Senff's column was up at dawn expecting some action but no Japs showed up. He sent a patrol one hundred yards south on the foot path to investigate the firing during the night. They returned with a Jap trenchcoat, four boxes of cooked rice balls, each box holding enough to feed a platoon. The rice balls looked like a baseball. At 0530 hours a twelve man Jap patrol hit the perimeter from the south. Lt. McElmurry quickly set up a machine gun. Captain Senff worked two squads forward with rifle grenades because it was too close in for mortars. A fire fight developed and two Marauders were wounded. Then snipers opened on the perimeter from the northwest. Our men sprayed the trees they were thought to be in with tommy guns and the snipers were not heard from again. At 0655 hours Captain Senff moved his company southwest across an old paddy field grown high in elephant grass. He left his Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon in position at the bivouac area to block the trail and evacuate his wounded. After moving five hundred yards southwest from the perimeter, harassing fire opened from the northwest, northeast and due south. It seemed to be coming from the direction of the main trail between Nhpum Ga and Kauri. Colonel Hunter called Colonel Caborne on the SCR 300 radio and ordered Captain Senff back to the Bivouac area where he had spent the night. (eight hundred yards from Nhpum Ga.)

Captain Senff moved back and dug in. His orders were to hold this block and contact the enemy to the north. At 0900 hours his block drew harassing fire from the north and northeast. It was not aimed fire and the Japs threw in some mortar fire covering the approach to the main trail. At 1100 hours one of his combat patrols (one squad) moving to the north to contact the Jap perimeter was fired on by six automatic weapons dug in. We suffered no casualties. At 1230

the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon reported that they had got the wounded back to our first block. It took them five hours whereas we had walked it without wounded in one hour. Captain Senff decided not to push north as he would have suffered bad casualties from the Jap automatic weapons and the evacuation for wounded men was so difficult, and because there were Jap positions one hundred and fifty yards from his perimeter.

He sent three man reconnaissance patrols to the south, east and southwest. The patrol to the southwest reported the trail to the water hole was open so he let one squad from each platoon go after water. It took one hour and fifteen minutes for the round trip. The patrol to the southeast reported no action but returned with two loads of rice balls, each load weighing about fifteen pounds. At 1345 hours we fired on four enemy near the southeast side of the perimeter - killed two and drew no return fire. It appears that they followed our reconnaissance patrol back.

At 1400 hours Lt. William Lepore's platoon reported movement, talking and animals neighing two hundred and fifty yards to the northeast in a deep draw. Captain Senff checked with the second and third battalions over the SCR 300 to see if they had anything in that position. They reported they had nothing in that direction. Captain Senff then gave orders to mortar and machine gun the draw. At 1600 hours Captain Senff got a message that a patrol from the ground battalion had contacted our trail block two hundred and fifty yards northwest of the second battalion perimeter, and that we had one killed and one missing. At 1620 Captain Senff pulled his guns back after mortaring and machine gunning the draw and at the same time a Jap mortar barrage from the ridge to the east opened on an area two hundred yards to the northeast of our perimeter on the approach to the draw. Japs screamed and hollered so it looked as if the Japs figured we were attacking and they mortared the area - hitting their own troops. At about this time the Jap artillery opened fire from Kauri on our artillery position one hundred yards north of Nhpum Ga. Our artillery forward observer officer asked us over the SCR 300 if we could locate the Jap guns. Captain Senff reported the probable location of the guns; then he moved his radio to a clearing on some high ground where he could observe our artillery fire dropping four hundred yards short of the target. He corrected that over the radio and we threw a heavy barrage on and around the Jap artillery. No more was heard from them. Booby traps going off was the only thing disturbing a good sleep tonight.

At the airstrip Father Stuart held mass at 0700 hours and further up the trail the Orange and Khaki Combat Teams continued to attack. The attack was strange - the Japs were full of tricks but today they didn't answer our fire except occasionally a sniper would take a shot. We continued to blast our way through and at 1000 hours our lead scouts reported dead Japs everywhere. At 1210 our lead scouts thought they were near the second battalion perimeter. Over the radio Colonel Beach asked Colonel McGee to fire three spaced shots from the north edge of his perimeter along the trail to be answered by three shots from our lead scouts.

Five minutes later all was quiet. We listened - then suddenly three shots rang out and a minute later three more shots. Major Ed Briggs, Khaki Combat Commander, was right behind the lead scouts and he walked into the second battalion perimeter - lifting the siege they had been under for ten long, bitter hard days.

He walked through a scene of desolation worse than he had ever seen on Guadalcanal or New Georgia - hundreds of Japs, dead for a week, were stinking everywhere - dead horses twice their normal size with maggots and flies by the million all over them. Finally he reached Colenel McGee's Command Post, a series of two man Fox holes dug out of the rock and red clay in the side of Nhpum Ga.

Colenel McGee, smiling, Said, "Sure am glad to see you, Ed."

28 March 1944

When Colonel McGee reached Nhpum Ga, General Merrill ordered him to hold Nhpum with his battalion while the third battalion built and held the air strip at Hsamshingyang, two and a half miles further north. Regimental headquarters would be at Hsamshingyang where all wounded were to be evacuated.

As they talked, Major Bernard Rogoff, second battalion surgeon, quickly set up an aid station in front of a basha near the center of Nhpum Ga. Already four or five wounded lay on improvised litters where medical aid men examined their wounds and gave them morphine. Major Rogoff, one of the coolest men under fire I ever saw, calmly started on the most serious cases and an orderly line of patients was soon getting plasma and being moved to a more quiet place on the edge of the village awaiting evacuation. A few psychoneurosis cases were coming in now. One man, a big burly fellow with a tommy gun, was shaking violently all over, tears streaming down his face. He cried "Major, I am not afraid, damn it, I tell you I am not afraid, I just can't stop shaking."

Others in worse shape jumped and screamed each time a shell went off and the shells were getting closer all the time. The second battalion column came up the hill into Nhpum on the run. Some of the men were too exhausted to speak, others were carrying wounded or holding them on horses. One man passed out as he reached the aid station. With all the confusion and terror of a shelling that you are unable to combat, the vast majority of the men despite everything were plodding along doing their jobs. It was those men who quickly whipped the top of the hill at Nhpum Ga into a veritable fortress that was destined to withhold two weeks of all the Japs could dish out.

Colonel McGee called his combat team commanders together. They made a quick reconnaissance of the hill and decided the rough boundaries for the perimeter defense. Then Colonel McGee sent word to his rear guard at Kauri to hold there until forced to withdraw and then to booby trap the trail. They replied they had already used up all their prepared booby traps between Auché and Kauri but were improvising.

The village of Nhpum Ga sits atop a mountain but is also surrounded by knife like mountains on the east and southeast. To the north the ridge continues up and down for one half mile then there is a gradual descent to Hsamshingyang to the south. It is down hill 500 yards then up hill 500 yards to Kauri to the south but there is a high hill near Kauri, to the east there is a sharp decline cut by numerous ridges leading to the river about one mile away.

The perimeter had to be in about a figure eight to hold the high ground and to hold the water hole at the bottom of a little hill the other side of which it would be doubtful if we could hold. The division of the perimeter roughly developed into Blue Combat Team taking from 90° to 220° and the Green Combat Team taking the rest. Colonel McGee quickly saw that his difficulty was going to be to hold with one battalion and he worked to remedy this for the next few days. The combat teams made their own reconnaissance and by 1030 hours the entire battalion was digging in their position as the above diagram shows.

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At Kauri the rear guard of the second battalion was still holding at 1330 hours. However about 1345 hours the Japs began shelling Kauri heavily and our patrols were hit by overwhelming numbers of Japanese on all sides and at 1400 hours the Japs started a general attack on the perimeter of the rear guard which actually was no more than a heavy trail block. The rear guard withdrew under cover of their automatic weapons and pulled into the perimeter at Nhpum. The Pioneer and Demolition platoon leader reported that he believed the Japs had a reinforced battalion moving north. At 1600 hours the men were still digging in, clearing fire lanes and getting everything set for the expected attack. At 1605 hours the Japs opened with a hard artillery and mortar concentration right in the perimeter and a few moments later they attacked the first platoon of E Company which held the extreme southern point of the perimeter. They were repulsed with losses. Our mortars opened up now and the observer soon had a barrage on the Jap concentration areas to the south along the trail. The attack was not heavy as compared to later attacks - it consisted mainly of feeling out our perimeter - finding our automatic weapons and hunting for a soft spot. We used rifle and tommy guns mainly - and waited to see what the Jap would do.

All night the Japs kept throwing an occasional mortar or artillery shell in the perimeter - apparently to keep us awake. The men were so physically exhausted however that they took advantage of each lull to catch a little sleep. Most of the men dug two man foxholes and one man slept standing or sitting up while the other remained on guard.

29 March 1944

At Nhpum Ga where the second battalion is dug in the Jap artillery opened at daylight and mortar fire opened a few minutes later. At 0600 hours the Jap machine guns opened up and the Japs attacked from the southeast but were repulsed with losses. At 1000 hours and 1500 hours they repeated the same procedure except the attacks came from the southwest and due south. The Japs moved very close to our perimeter on the south and west flanks and all day they could be plainly heard moving about and preparing for an attack, however at nightfall they pulled back and started digging. One of our scouts found a note on a dead Jap which said "Cook rice at 2100 hours at Warong and bring up to forward troops". Apparently the Japs were feeding much like the Chinese do - that is their cooks prepare rice for a platoon or company, roll it in balls, wrap it in banana leaves and carry it in baskets slung on a bamboo pole right up to the front lines.

At 1750 hours the Japs threw ten artillery shells into the perimeter and under a cover of mortar and machine gun fire attacked the perimeter from the west but again were repulsed with losses. Corporal Samuel Stokes was digging a foxhole just before the attack and laid his helmet on the parapet. A Jap threw a grenade which hit the parapet and rolled into the hole with Corporal Stokes. The helmet rolled off and fell into the hole covering the grenade which went off a moment later. Corporal Stokes was not hurt.

Word was received from Regimental Command Post that a large number of Japs were moving north from Sana which is east of Nhpum.

The general situation tonight didn't look so good. The Japs were gradually moving up on the east and west flanks of the second battalion at Nhpum and now a large force was reported a few miles to the east possibly

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with the mission of cutting through behind Nsamshingyang and cutting any possible route of withdrawal to the north. Our orders were still to hold Nhpum and foxholes were expanded and improved to allow room for one man to sleep laying down while another stood guard. The Japs had had a practice of slipping up close to the perimeter and listening for a voice then throwing a grenade.

In the aid station Major Rogoff had found a good job for psychoneurosis cases and it seemed to aid their recovery. He was having them dig foxholes - big ones with a place for two men to lie down feet to feet - the work seemed to help the man. He had evacuated only two of the eight cases he had, and believed in a few days, he would have the other six back in the perimeter.

30 March 1944

At Nhpum just after dawn the Jap artillery opened up, then the mortars and finally the automatic weapons, and the Japs swarmed up the east slope towards the perimeter. We threw everything we had at them and they fell back only to try again a little further to the north but again they were repulsed. With each attack the morale of our men improved for they knew the Japs had them at their worst the day before. However they were still tired for they hadn't had much sleep in the past three days. The Japs seemed to know that they couldn't crack the perimeter from the south and now they were concentrating all their effort on the eastern flank.

Colonel McGee sent a message to the Command Post asking that the trail between Hsamshingyang and Nhpum Ga be kept open as he expected the Japs to try to cut it. Headquarters told him that a daily combat patrol from third battalion would be pushed through to him but as bulk of 3rd battalion was engaged either in protecting the airstrip or on other patrols that Colonel McGee would have to do any other patrolling he felt was necessary. The large size of the perimeter the second battalion was holding left very few men available for patrol; however, all day on the 30th patrols from the third battalion and the second battalion moved over the trail and wounded were evacuated to the air strip late in the afternoon of the 30th.

The Japs seemed to have located our mortar position on the reverse slope of the hill in Nhpum and they concentrated on knocking them out with their artillery. The second battalion distinguished between the two types of artillery fire; the big gun, probably 105 or 90 mm. was known as "Big Bertha"; its shell could be heard coming over with a whistle, but the one they hated and feared most was the one they called "pst, pst". It was probably a 70 mm. high velocity dual purpose gun and it was fired from a range of about one thousand yards point blank into Nhpum. The two explosions were almost simultaneous and it proceeded on the 30th of March to blow the top off the hill directly in front of our mortars, so they were moved to a better position on the east side of the village.

Early this morning Lt. Brendan J. Lynch and Sgt. Black of the Blue Combat team were slipping back into the southern part of our perimeter for a reconnaissance. Lt. Lynch was shot by a squad on that side of the perimeter. The only

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explanation of the mistake was that he didn't use the recognition signal and the men on the perimeter were a little bit trigger happy from loss of sleep.

The Japs threw a few shells over about 2100 hours and one was a tree burst which wounded one man seriously. The litter bearers left the aid station to go pick him up. Just before they got to the wounded man two Jap snipers fired a flare into the middle of the perimeter and fired on the litter bearers. Two were wounded.

Snipers ringed the perimeter from the east, west and south and banged away off and on, day and night. Sometimes they fired at the sound of a shovel striking the ground. Many times they fired directly over the medical aid station on the reverse slope of the hill. Major Rogoff by now had excellent fox holes dug for the wounded. He had received twelve litter cases today were occupying them to evacuation in the morning.

Sanitation became a problem. Men could not leave their fox holes at night for fear their own men would shoot them by mistake. So each man used his helmet and buried his own waste the next day near his fox hole.

This was beginning to complicate matters for the ground around the fox holes was rapidly being covered with little piles of earth - some not completely buried. About seventy five horses had been killed in the perimeter already - and many others were badly shot up. Their bodies lay all over the place and the ones two days old had already begun to stink badly. Jap bodies scattered about the edges of the perimeter were also beginning to stink. After thirty six hours in this hot, moist climate, a dead body is in terrible shape - bloated and covered with flies and maggots.

It was impossible to bury the horses as the Japs opened fire whenever they heard a shovel hit the ground. Colonel McGee's Command Post was suffering too. A large tree about twenty yards away had attracted at least four tree bursts and had caused the death of one man and caused several others painful injuries. ~~Colonel McGee gave orders that the tree be blown down by the Pioneer and Demolition Platoon.~~ They ringed it with dynamite and blew it down thereby eliminating one source of tree bursts.

At Hsamshingyang the air strip was so muddy only a few planes were able to land. No contact with the Japs was made to the east or to the south towards Nphum Ga but to the southwest one of our Kachin patrols reported the Japs were active and that Japs were seen one half mile southwest of the air strip. Father Stuart said the Kachin patrols had the Japs really confused with the variety of their ambushes. The Japs have been ambushed by Kachins many times using panjis or sharpened sticks on the side of the trail to impale them when they run to the flanks to envelop the Kachins. The Japs got wise to the way the Kachins set traps for them to run into when they sprung the ambush. Accordinally a few days ago near Warong when the Kachins ambushed a Jap patrol the Japs didn't run to the flanks as usual but fell down and hugged the ground along the trail and opened heavy fire on the Kachins. The Kachins were forced to withdraw due to superior fire power. The next day the same ambush was laid further up the trail and the Japs hit it - hit the ground, opened fire. The Kachins withdrew, firing occasional shots as they filtered up the trail. The Japs thinking the Kachins had completely

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withdrawn, got up and proceeded down the trail but when they got a few feet, a Bren gun opened on them from the rear. Now it is the Japs next move in the battle of ambush.

31 March 1944

At Nhpum Ga just after day break the Jap artillery and mortars opened as usual and at about 0645 automatic weapons also opened and the Japs attacked from three sides - south, east and northwest - a few minutes apart. Their machine guns and mortars were raising hell with our animals. The Jap principal effort was from the east in the area of our water hole. They attacked savagely and bravely in some cases running directly up a slope that we were covering with a machine gun. An hour later we could not get to the water hole - neither could the Japs, but it was more serious for us. We had no other waterhole. The Japs covered the hole with mortar fire and snipers ringed the tall grass overlooking the trail to the hole. We counter-attacked to drive them off the little ridge, but they were firmly established. It was outside of our perimeter and we didn't have the men to occupy the ground if we had taken it.

Already Colonel McGee was using mule skinnners, photographers and every available man in Battalion Headquarters on the perimeter. One hour later a radio message from Headquarters at Hsamshingyang said the Japs had blocked the trail between there and Nhpum Ga during the night and that the third battalion patrols were trying to dislodge them and thought they could get through to Nhpum Ga by noon. The word that the second battalion was surrounded soon spread throughout the perimeter and that coupled with the loss of the waterhole was a severe blow to morale. Also Jap artillery continued to pound them and they couldn't do a thing about it.

At 1000 hours a fighter bombers came over and were directed to the Jap positions by our air liaison officers. The weather had been so bad the past four days that the planes could only get over a short time each day. The planes overhead helped morale. Colonel McGee decided to try to push through on the trail to the airstrip and he called the Blue Combat Team commander in and told him to exert all the pressure he could along the trail without endangering the perimeter. He gave him a reinforced platoon withdrawn from the rest of the perimeter. This force attacked under mortar and machine gun support but struck strong Jap dug in positions and repulsed losing several wounded and one killed. The Japs increased their pressure on all sides of the perimeter during the day. Apparently the Jap commander figured he had this battalion trapped and would annihilate them in a few days.

We received a heavy air drop today of food and ammunition but the shortage of water had everyone worried. There was a muddy hole in a draw where several horses had been killed. A little water ran from it so a squad from the pioneer and Demolition Platoon dug out a pit and filled it up with a brackish mixture of mud and water. It was enough to quench thirst but that was all. The dead horses only twenty five feet above didn't add to its taste. Or maybe they did.

Tonight was the low point so far in morale but everytime a Jap made the least move he drew fire. There was no thought anytime but that we would stick it out and come through O.K.

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On the south flank of the perimeter, Lt. Grissoms platoon was firing 60mm. mortars at eighty to ninety yard range without bipods or baseplates and were hitting the target.

At the air strip the Orange Combat Team sent the usual morning patrol at 0600 to Nhpum Ga but four hundred yards from the strip on the top of a little ridge, the lead scout of the patrol was fired on by a Nambu light machine gun. The Japs pulled a boner here - they fired at the first man whereas if they had waited a minute or two, they could have had a better target.

1 April 1944

At Nhpum at dawn we were all set for the usual attack but 0700 hours came - and 0800 came and still no attack. However our patrols found that the Jap had dug in on high ground east of the waterhole so we let him have a nice mortaring. At 0900 hours the artillery started again - this time it seemed very close - probably from Kauri, one thousand yards away or possibly from Auche only two and a half miles away. Following the barrage the Japs attacked from the east and the northeast and were repulsed. our 60 mm. mortars were worth their weight in gold now. Our mortar men lay the 60's right in the front of the Jap perimeter only thirty yards from our perimeter and they hit their holes with a tree burst many a time. The 60 mm. mortar is perfect for close work and a good mortar crew can actually put them down a stove pipe if they have a little ammunition to play with. We used the 60's when the Japs attacked and fired them at range as short as seventy five yards with good results.

When the drop planes came over they drew heavier than usual ground fire. One of the pilots reported that the Japs shot a bullet between the legs of a kicker in the back of his plane. A check up reveals that we now have in Nhpum Ga seven dead and twenty five seriously wounded. We started with two hundred and twelve animals and are now down to one hundred and twenty with some of those shot up badly. The stink of the dead Japanese and dead animals sprawled and bloated all around the perimeter is terrific. The shortage of water is acute. ~~Colonel McGee asked for a drop of water in plastic bags tomorrow.~~ The medics don't have enough water to make a plaster cast for a broken leg and they are now giving sulfadiazine without water. Everyone is rationed a half a canteen-full - if he can get that. The artillery shelling is hellishly accurate and that and mortar fire are the principal causes of our casualties so far.

Colonel McGee sent two strong patrols out this morning to try to feel out weak spots in the Jap lines.

They found Japs every place they tried and returned with the information that there was one possible route to the outside available. Down an extremely steep and rough mountainside on the west of the perimeter and up and down some very rough country for almost a mile to the river. Then up the river to Hsamshingyang. A platoon from the third battalion which had come through on the daily patrol and was cut off in Nhpum decided to try to break through that way. Dividing themselves into two sections, one following the other by about twenty minutes, they started their tortuous journey through the Jap lines and back to their battalion at the air strip. Crouching low, the first section pushed its way through thick underbrush to a tiny stream bed. Following this

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stream bed they made better time and soon figured they were through the Jap lines and started moving faster and less cautiously. They were following a rough compass course of 210 degrees but the roughness of the terrain made it necessary to vary their course as they went along. Just at nightfall after five hours of hard climbing they unexpectedly came upon the river and bivouacked along its banks for night. The second section which had started twenty minutes later did not show up. The men in the first section were not worried about them because they knew that coming down the little stream bed they might have turned off at a different place.

At the air strip the Orange Combat Team moved up the trail and attacked the Japs along the main trail all day. The Japs withdrew again - but showed more determination to hold ground. Their selection of ground to defend was excellent. It appeared that a Jap officer kept some distance behind the front troops marking emplacements for automatic weapons. The Japs used a clever S shaped trail block with Nambus on the humps and ends which could fire cross fire usually both up and down the trail. A few riflemen were in fox holes between the Nambus and some were scattered back along the trail. The Japs truly used men and ground to maximum advantage and forced us to be extremely careful about envelopment. In some cases they estimated where we would envelop and got a machine gun there to hit us in the flank. The Orange Combat Team had the most seasoned and experienced fighters in the command and their ability to sense where the Jap would be saved many a life. Very little progress was made in pushing the Jap back today. Less than one hundred yards was gained. We needed artillery and we needed it badly. Fighter bombers were helping a lot but they were not enough.

When General Merrill was taken out, the first thing he told Major Hancock who met the ambulance plane at Ledo was to get two howitzers and drop them to the third battalion at the air strip. Major Hancock had those guns packed and ready to drop by 1000 hours on the 1st of April and sent Colonel Hunter a message that they were available when he wanted them. Colonel Hunter radioed back to drop them early on April 2nd. We had no artillerymen and the guns would be ~~dropped in sections and would have to be assembled.~~ Colonel Hunter sent a call to Colonel Beach, Commanding Officer of the third battalion, to get all men with any previous artillery experience and make up two gun crews tonight. The word had hardly got before twenty five muleskinners from the third battalion had reported. They had volunteered from the 98th Pack Artillery in New Guinea and there were actually four complete gun crews with us. S/Sergeant John A. Acker was made Battery Commander. Private Thomas W. Merritt was made chief of Number One section, while Sergeant George B. Lowe took Number Two section. These men organized their crews and a man was given the job he used to do regardless of how it fitted his present grade. One of the best gunners in the 98th was found in Private Isaac W. (Little Chief) Ross, a full-blooded Cherokee Indian from Cherokee, North Carolina. These men were like school kids on a vacation - they were so happy to have their hands on a pack howitzer again. The gun crews went through dummy run, completed their organization and were all set to receive the guns by 2100 hours tonight.

Morale all over the area picked up when the news got around that we would have our own artillery, tomorrow, for the first time since we had been behind the Japanese lines. The cheering news was radioed to the second battalion which was told it would be out in short order when the artillery arrived. Morale

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lifted there also but Major Rogoff was not so encouraged. He had buried seven men already and had twenty five more seriously injured in fox holes in his aid station. Some of them would not be able to live another two days without hospital care, surgery, and one case a blood transfusion and they couldn't be carried out through the jungle, but only over some kind of a trail.

At a staff conference tonight Colonel Hunter ordered the Orange Combat Team to continue the attack down the trail to the south the next morning while a strong force from Khaki Combat Team moves up the river, then turns east to hit at the Japs surrounding the second battalion on their west flank. In the meantime second battalion is to exert all pressure possible and try to break through to the west and to the north down the main trail. Colonel Hunter told us we had to get through to the second battalion as soon as possible as their wounded were badly in need of hospital care and every day they were surrounded was costing a man that might have been saved if he could have been evacuated.

2 April 1944

Orange Combat Team was engaged with the enemy along the trail at 0700 hours and their first attack early in the morning was repulsed by unusually strong Jap fire. The Japs seemed to have been reinforced during the night. Colonel Beach put the fighter bombers on the Jap position all morning, but they were well dug in and they didn't move. The attack continued all day at a cost of four dead and four seriously wounded. At dawn Major Edwin J. Briggs, Khaki Combat Team Commander, led out a reinforced company of his men leaving 81 mm. mortars and heavy machine guns at the air strip. They marched down the river for about three hours until they estimated they were almost opposite the heavy fire which they believed to be the second battalion perimeter. Turning east cross country, they moved over the most difficult stretch of mountains and jungle they had yet encountered.

Three and a half hours later the point platoon under T/Sergeant Lenwood C. Clements started up another steep mountain where they were suddenly fired on. For ten minutes there was speradic rifle fire in all directions; then it became clear that the Japs held the rest of the ridge and had snipers literally all over the ridge. Sergeant Clements had already lost one or two men killed and several wounded. The Sergeant risked his won life to save one of his men by running through heavy sniper fire picking the wounded man up and carrying and dragging him to a defended place. Major Briggs felt out the Japs on both flanks with patrols only to find they occupied the entire ridge. By that time the Japs were throwing mortar fire from the ridge. Several feeling-out attacks made by Sergeant Clements were repulsed by the Jpas. The enemy had an excellent position commanding all approaches and it was just plain waste of manpower to hit them at this point. So Major Briggs withdrew a few hundred yards and dug in for the night.

At 0830 hours the drop plane arrived at the airstrip and soon the various sections of the two pack howitzers were floating to earth on double parachutes. Four hundred rounds of 75 mm. ammunition came with the guns. At 0930 hours the planes had finished their complete drop and the gun crews rushed on the field with pack animals to carry off the guns. Other men were assigned to get the ammunition and carry it to previously prepared positions. At 1100 hours the

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guns were ready to fire and Colonel Hunter was figuring the fire data to blast the Japs south of Nhpum Ga. The first round was fired amidst a silent prayer from every Marauder, at 1130, and went over the second battalion perimeter landing about eight hundred yards beyond the Jap lines and four hundred yards to the west. Adjustment was made and at 1200 hours both guns had registered on the target.

Over the radio Colonel Hunter told Colonel McGee and Colonel Beach that we would attack and try to break through this afternoon after a good artillery barrage preceded by strafing and dive bombing. The attack came off but the Japs held. Word was received later in the afternoon from Major Briggs that he was held up so Colonel Hunter ordered him back to the air strip as he carried supplies for only thirty six hours and had expended most of his ammunition.

At Nhpum Ga they got their usual dawn attack from the south and from the northwest preceded by artillery and mortars. When our artillery opened up at 1130 hours morale seemed to go way up. The men in the perimeter overestimated the ability of the artillery for many of them thought this would cause the Japs to withdraw not remembering that for six days they had taken all the Japs could give them without withdrawing.

Water was getting very low and what there was stank so badly that you could hardly drink it. Wounded men cried for water and that afternoon a heavy, but short rain provided enough for everyone to get their throats wet. At dusk the men began to see that the Japs were not going to be run off by our artillery. Counter battery fire was going on from both sides, apparently with very little effect; and tonight morale was again pretty low.

Someone started a rumor that the battalion had been told to fight their way out the next day carrying their wounded. Everyone knew that was just what the Japs wanted us to do. Colonel McGee spiked the rumor by passing the word around that the second battalion was accomplishing its assigned mission of blocking a Jap counter thrust on the Chinese east flank at Shaduzup, that we had ~~plenty of food and ammunition and tomorrow we would have water dropped, that we were not moving from Nhpum but were sticking it out.~~ In the drop today were a number of books, two of which were "Manual of Operation of Garryall and Plow" in Spanish and "Symposium of Office Gynaecology". There were also a number of novels in French. The men got a kick out of this as the books were passed about over the perimeter.

Colonel McGee used field telephones to the key points of the perimeter and to the Combat Team Command Posts. SC 300 radios and even SC 536 radios were also used.

One Maruder sitting in his foxhole just before dawn this morning saw a Jap come towards him. The Jap appeared to be groggy and lost. He walked to the edge of the Marauder's fox hole mumbling to himself apparently thinking he was in his own perimeter. The Marauder mumbled back while reaching for his gun. The Jap walked away apparently still looking for his fox hole and the Marauder shot him dead with one shot through the head.

Sergeant Roy H. Matsumoto, A Nisei Japanese, proved invaluable to the second battalion during the siege at Nhpum Ga. He and other Nisei were placed

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at strategic points around the perimeter where they could hear the Japanese talking and shouting before an attack, and frequently were able to give us a little warning of what they were going to do.

Sergeant Matsumato crawled out close to the Jap perimeter every night and sniped at Japs. He listened to them talk and secured information. He usually returned just before dawn. Last night however he returned about 2300 hours and reported to Lt. Edward A McLogan that the Japs were going to attempt to cut off a part of the perimeter that Lt. McLogan was occupying. Lt. McLogan's perimeter stuck way out on a nose of ground that sloped down hill. It was difficult to defend but so far they had held it mainly because they wanted to deny the defilade it would offer the Japs if we pulled back to the crest of the little ridge. Sergeant Matsumato said the Jap plan was to creep up as close as possible to the perimeter before dawn, then rush the little nose, which about twenty men were holding. Lt. McLogan figured that it might be possible to give them a surprise. He decided to pull his men back to the crest of the ridge, concentrate tommy guns and Browning automatic rifles along that side of the rise, booby trap the fox holes they were leaving and let the Japs attack the nose of ground - take it and then be annihilated by his automatic weapons.

At dawn everybody was set. Sergeant Matsumato was in a two man fox hole overlooking the nose of ground with a tommy gun. Suddenly there were shouts of "Banzai." "Death to the Americans", "Die", Banzai" and a hail of hand grenades hit around the nose of ground as a reinforced platoon swept up the hill. A moment later they were sticking bayonets in fox holes, firing wildly, shouting and grenading everything that looked like a gun emplacement. Their sudden occupation of the nose started them. Then they charged up the hill, an officer leading them carrying a sword (which later proved to be a beauty). Lt. McLogan held his fire till they got within fifteen yards of his perimeter. Then tommy guns, Browning automatic rifles, grenades - everything - opened at once. The Japs were falling like flies. Another platoon or part of a platoon was following the first platoon and they started hitting the ground - jumping in our booby trapped fox holes. Then Sergeant Matsumato shouted in Japanese "Charge!" "Charge!" and they charged. ~~Thirty minutes later fifty four dead bodies were counted on that slope including two officers.~~ Sergeant Matsumato became a legendary character overnight.

The platoon which left the second battalion perimeter yesterday arrived safely at the air strip this afternoon without losing a man. The Japs were contacted only once and the platoon was able to break contact and get away after a few shots. They report that it would be impossible to carry litters over the ground they covered however. It took all their energy to get over it themselves without carrying anyone.

3 April 1944

At Nhpum Ga, the Japs made a heavy attack on the south flank of the perimeter at dawn and three hours later hit the west side. The same pattern of artillery, mortar, grenades and attack was followed and they were repulsed with heavy losses.

Planes were overhead, bombing and strafing the one mile gap between Nhpum and the third battalion which was fighting desperately against Jap strong points and bunkers. All day the men were wishing for water. Finally the air drop came

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late in the afternoon and with it came water in plastic bags.

The Japs always opened up with mortars when we got an airdrip and today they really gave us a pounding.

Some of the water bags were broken open within a minute from the time they hit - the first bag opened was carried to the aid station where every wounded man was allowed to drink his fill. The water had a rubberish taste to it but was delicious and refreshing compared to the blackish stinking stuff we had been drinking for the past three days. The stench of more than one hundred dead animals was almost overpowering - and the Japs opened up with mortars whenever we tried to bury one. Over two hundred dead Jap bodies were scattered around the edges of the perimeter and were making their contribution to the nauseating odor.

At 1630 hours the enemy sent a heavy artillery barrage over, then suddenly stopped. All was quiet. Not a shot was fired by either side for more than two hours. The night was quiet. Even our own artillery had stopped about 1500 hours. The ominous silence was getting the men. The third battalion had not been able to break through today. Our artillery hadn't helped much and some of our wounded were dying. Tonight was the low point for morale. Things can't get any worse, unless they don't drop any more water.

At the air strip Colonel Hunter called a staff meeting about 1500 hours. He told his officers frankly that the situation was bad. Reports were confirmed that the Japs are moving in strength up the Tanai River to our east and we had been told not to expect much Chinese help for another eleven days. The battalion at Pabum is supposed to be moving down to Tate Ga to block trails to the south. Finally he said, "Gentlemen, in the morning we start an attack that will drive through to the second battalion. It may take two or three days but we will get through. All troops except the sick and the muleskinners will be withdrawn from the defense of the airstrip. Large patrols will be called in and Kachims substituted where possible. Tomorrow, as soon as we can get ready, Orange Combat Team will attack due south along the trail. ~~Khaki Combat team will leave their heavy equipment here, march down the trail behind Orange until they are four hundred yards from the Jap positions then turn west down the mountain and attack the Japs on their west flank.~~"

The artillery will be moved up to where it can fire pointblank into the Jap bunker and pill boxes. Every man of the gun crews volunteered to do this, this afternoon. The attack will be tentatively set for 1200 hours tomorrow. Ruses, feints and anything else you can do to fool the Japs are in order. A fake message will be dropped from a plane so as to fall in the Jap perimeter. The message will be to the second battalion and will say that a battalion of parachutists will be dropped between Kauri and Auché at 1700 hours on April 4. If possible we will have a dummy airdrop in that area to fool them.

A brief discussion of the plan followed. Then everyone scattered to get his own job done.

Major Briggs brought his tired, wet company back from their trek down the river by noon. They had taken a strong Jap position at dusk last night but had withdrawn on Colonel Hunter's orders after he found out the strength of their

opposition. Yesterday afternoon after six men had been wounded, Captain Melton H. Ivens, the Khaki Combat Team surgeon, told Major Briggs that four of them should be started back to the airstrip at once as their chances of survival depended on how soon they reached a hospital. Major Briggs immediately detailed the lead platoon, from which most of the wounded had come, as their escort back. That meant litter-bearing, but that platoon under Sergeant Clements was glad to help those men out, though it was a very tough assignment. There was no trail for this had been an infiltration attack and the jungle was thick; every inch of the trail had to be cleared before the improvised litters could be carried through. The mountain slopes were so steep that men crawled on hands and knees, lifting the litters a few feet at a time. Every few minutes the men and one officer changed around. - some cutting the trail, some watching for Jap snipers, while others struggled with the litters. The wounded, their pain dulled by drugs, did not cry out even when a litter bearer would fall on the slippery mountainside. They stopped by the side of a stream at night. During the night one man died and was buried nearby. At dawn the caravan moved out and arrived at the airstrip at noon. Fortunately there were planes on the field and the wounded were flown out within ten minutes after their arrival.

4 April 1944

As the airstrip was to be left relatively undefended Colonel Hunter moved his headquarters to Mahetkawng, two miles north of the airstrip where a platoon of Chinese had just arrived from the Chinese Battalion at Pabum. This unit was ordered to dig in and hold the trail junction at Mahetkawng. Colonel Hunter with his staff moved up with the Orange Combat Team which was attacking astride the trail. Planes were overhead strafing and dive bombing the Japs all day. At 1100 hours Colonel Hunter saw that the attack couldn't come off before 1600 hours so it was set for that time. The delay was due to the time it took to move Khaki Combat Team into position and Colonel Hunter wanted to wait until he could hit an overpowering blow before hitting at all, today.

Major Lew, the Commander of the Orange Combat Team, had the following plan of attack: ~~At 1530 his Pioneer and Demolition platoon would move down~~ the east side of the mountain to the valley below and have a sham battle among themselves. Carbines, which sound something like an Arisaka, would represent the enemy while tommy guns and M-1s would represent the Marauders. It was hoped that the commotion would draw Jap attention and mortar fire while his main attack moved along the trail. The front was only one hundred and fifty yards wide. It consisted merely of the top of a long ridge with the Japs on one end and the Marauders on the other. Major Lew's mortars were set up to lay down a close in barrage with 81 mm. heavy ammunition to try to penetrate some of the Jap Pill boxes and also because the H.E. light would be hitting too close to our own front line troops. Captain Burch, Commanding Officer of the assault company making the attack, was employing three platoons in a U-shaped formation. The bottom of the U would be his center platoon with the two flank positions echeloned out as close up to the Jap position as possible. Colonel Beach, the Third Battalion Commander, planned to have his air liaison officer direct the planes on the Jap strong points for fifteen minutes of bombing and strafing and then open with the artillery at point blank range. At the same time his mortars were to pulverize the closed in positions. At a signal over the radio, the artillery and mortars would cease firing and Burch's company would rush the Jap positions before they could recover

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from the shock of the artillery barrage. Then we would do the same thing over again, consolidating after each attack.

At 1500 hours Khaki Combat Team informed Colonel Hunter that they were engaged with the Japs and were temporarily pinned down by mortar and machine gun fire.

At 1530 the ruse fight at the bottom of the valley to our west got under way. It sounded real and five minutes later the Japs started throwing mortar fire in that direction. At 1545 the planes were circling and Lt. Paulson was directing them on to a target not more than one hundred and fifty yards in front of our front line. They made several passes from east to west and at 1555 they strafed and bombed the target. At 1605 our artillery opened up at point blank range and the mortars followed in a moment. What happened next can best be told from the SC 300 radio net that was used to actually direct the attack.

*Over*

One hour later the wounded were on their way to hospital by plane. Jap casualties were estimated at two hundred.

The fighting had been close and bitter but the Japs had literally been blasted out their holes and we had advanced to within one thousand yards of the second battalion perimeter.

At Nhpum Ga the second battalion was not doing so well. Three wounded men died during the night and one man lay to the southeast just outside the perimeter with his entire frontal lobe exposed. The medics tried to get at him all night but the Japs threw up flares and opened fire whenever there was a sound in that vicinity. The next morning we did get him out, but he died a few hours later. There are only seventy usable animals left - the others are dead or wounded. He won't shoot wounded animals because they stink, and they may stop some of the lead from getting to the muleskinners' fox holes. One animal has twenty six bullet holes in him where he got in the line of fire of a Jap machine gun.

Blood plasma is nearly out.

This morning we found that the Japs had grenaded one of our machine gun positions at dawn and taken the machine gun. They were firing it at us for an hour this morning - we knew because they didn't use tracer and the gun they were firing had a lot of tracers in it. Our mortars concentrated on knocking out this gun and got a direct hit on the fourteenth round. It has not fired since. Some of the men on our southwest flank captured a Jap machine gun this morning and fired up all the ammunition they had for it.

The Japs attacked this morning from the northwest without success. Again at 1700 hours they made a heavy rush attack on a part of the perimeter which had been manned by some muleskinners who had got out of their holes while things were quiet. The Japs broke through the perimeter in one place for a minute but were wiped out a few moments later by a two-man assault force throwing hand grenades. The hole in the perimeter was plugged but a chill swept around the perimeter as the story got around about how close the Japs came to really getting in.

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Morale picked up considerably at about 1600 hours when the third battalion started to attack.

5 April 1944

About midnight at Nhpum Ga there was a little noise in the Jap perimeter to our west. Sergeant Matsumoto slid quietly out of his fox hole and moved slowly towards the Jap lines where he could hear the voices a little plainer. He returned to the perimeter with the news that he believed the Japs were getting ready to attack. A heavy rain had just fallen for about twenty minutes and the water still dripped from trees and bamboo overhead. Our perimeter was strong on the west flank and there was very little to do except alert the men and wait.

Suddenly at 0200 hours the Japs attacked - rushing madly towards the perimeter. A wave of hand grenades went out to meet them but some Japs actually reached the perimeter and were killed by tommy gunners. One Jap fell dead in the foxhole of a man he never saw. The startled Marauder hadn't seen the Jap either as he was facing the other way. The slightest movement drew fire and even though the Japs were repulsed, not a man slept for fear a wounded Jap lay close enough to the perimeter to shoot or throw a grenade.

They pulled the same attack again at 0430 hours without success. The Japs threw artillery off and on during the day but generally the pressure on the perimeter was lessened, apparently by the attacks of the third battalion. Tonight in the second battalion perimeter there were ninety seven wounded, seventeen killed and four missing. The Japs had suffered heavy casualties. The dead lay all about the perimeter and our snipers had picked many of them off trying to get their dead. On the west side of the perimeter, moans could be heard as if there was a Jap aid station in that vicinity.

The third battalion followed the same plan today that they used yesterday in their successful attack - blasting pill boxes with bombs, strafing, throwing artillery, mortars and bazooka fire and twice using flame throwers. The infantry followed closely occupying each foot of ground and mopping up. Then the artillery opened again. The artillery is firing from an open position a few hundred yards from the hill top the Japs are occupying. They could be easily hit by machine gun fire from the Jap position.

Jap resistance has been strengthened today and the fighting is extremely bitter and close. Ammunition, food, water and other supplies are packed up to the Orange Combat Team from the airstrip over a steep, slippery trail. Yesterday, after a hurry call, some 81 mm. ammunition arrived in time to help in the attack.

The ground we took yesterday is blasted bare along the trail - every tree is either down or chipped all over with fragments or bullets, and the bamboo is cut as if with a huge knife. Jap bodies were found in trees, where a five hundred pound bomb had blasted them yesterday afternoon.

This morning Lt. Weston's Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon was in the forefront of the attack. As the artillery lifted, his men rushed forward.

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Lt. Weston, running down the middle of the trail, suddenly came on a Jap fox hole with a sack over the top. He jerked the sack off to see two terrified Japs shaking all over from the shock of the artillery so close to them. Before he could stop he had shot both with his carbine, one shot for each. Later he regretted he hadn't tried to make them prisoners.

Mounted messengers supplementing radio and telephone communications, gallop up and down the trail. Aid men and litter bearers move with the front line troops bandaging and carrying the wounded to aid stations from which they are evacuated to the airstrip and on to a field hospital.

Captain Burch was right up with his lead platoon all through the attack. His calm decisions when a Nambu suddenly opens up on a flank have kept his company functioning like a deadly machine. He has taught his men the importance of moving fast in the jungle to keep from being hit by snipers, and unlike most troops when they are in combat areas after severe fights, Captain Burch's men keep their heads up. He will call a man down for hitting the ground and ducking. He has proved it is safer to see what is going on around you.

In the attack today, Lt. William E. Woomer, known as "Woomer the Boomer", platoon leader for Company K, worked his way forward to within twenty five yards of two machine guns that had been holding us up for several hours. He directed his mortar fire on them and had shells landing within twenty feet of where he was directing the fire by SCR 300. During this he was heard to give this order over the radio, "Deflection correct. Bring it in twenty five yards and if you don't hear from me, you know you came this way too far. Then shift it just a little and you'll know you're right on it".

The guns were knocked out in the next few rounds and Lt. Woomer was miraculously not hurt.

6 April 1944

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~~The Jap artillery fired on the second battalion perimeter at 0600 hours, 1500 and 1730 - about ten rounds each time. The Japs made a light attack on the northwest flank of the perimeter early this morning. We have one hundred wounded, seventeen dead and four missing to date in Nhpum Ga. The stink of the dead horses and men grows worse though it doesn't seem possible that it could get worse. Water was dropped again today and the planes seemed to draw unusually heavy ground fire. Four out of the twenty eight aid men in the battalion have been wounded. Three men that were wounded and were sent back to the perimeter after having their wounds dressed have been killed. Many of the wounded refuse to stay in the aid station and insist on returning to the perimeter where they know they are sorely needed. We had planned to burn the dead horses but the smoke would have brought all kinds of mortar and artillery fire.~~

The two in one helmet which so many men scorned before being under shell fire had certainly proved its worth. There have been several instances where men have had their helmets badly dented by fragments or shrapnel from a tree burst.

At the airstrip things are going better. The Chinese battalion from Pabum is now in the Weilangyang area and is blocking trails to the south. They are in

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contact with the Japs at several small towns. One town which was known to be occupied by Japs was burned out with gasoline and oil. The planes dropped the drums of gas and oil in the village, then strafed it with tracers to set it on fire.

At 0830 hours we zeroed in our artillery, a battery of four heavy machine guns, a battery of four 81 mm. mortars using H.E. heavy. We pin-pointed these thirty yards in front of our own troops. Then we zeroed in a battery of 81 mm. mortars for H.E. light about two hundred yards in front of our position and finally zeroed in a battery of four 60 mm. mortars firing for three hundred yards along the main trail which was the Japanese supply route.

At 0900 hours the set up for attack was the same we had used on the 4th.

Our communication set up was a little different. We had sound powered wire to each of the two flank platoons - radio net from company commanders, combat team commanders, battalion commanders and also for mortars.

Sound powered wire to the forward artillery observer was used part of the time. The rest of the time he used SCR 300. Flares were to be used only for an emergency - red for stop firing - green for lift firing.

The plan was to use one hundred round artillery barrage at Jap strong points thirty yards ahead, following a dive bombing and strafing attack. Use of the H.E. Heavy at the same point was simultaneous: H.E. Light shooting from two hundred yards out and working back towards our own perimeter. 60 mm. mortars to fire at a medium rate along the Jap supply route.

After a fifteen minute artillery barrage and seven minute 81 mm. mortar rolling barrage the attack was to jump off under a heavy machine gun support.

At 0950 hours the attack went off exactly as planned. In the first attack we only gained fifty yards but by adjusting the barrages on the Jap strong points the total advance for the day was three hundred yards.

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Three of the dead Japs found along the trail were using M-1 rifles and one Japanese was wearing G.I. Jungle Boots.

The Japs got smart after the first barrage and ran back up the trail fifty or sixty yards to prepared positions - then when the barrage lifted they ran back to their weapons and opened fire. Our lead scouts noted this and after the next artillery barrage they picked off four running back to their guns.

7 April 1944

In Nhpum Ga the Jap artillery came over at 0600 hours, 1500 and 1750 but Jap pressure on the perimeter has lessened considerably. Documents taken off Jap dead indicate that we are surrounded by a reinforced Jap battalion from the 114th Regiment, 18th Jap Division and also elements of the 55th Japanese Regiment.

Khaki Combat Team attacked north of Nhpum all day against heavy Jap automatic weapons fire and emplacements. Orange Combat Team occupied the ground

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already gained. Planes dive bombed and strafed all day. Artillery, mortar and machine gun fire were used as on the 6th but we could not blast the Japs off the ridge. We are approximately five hundred yards from the second battalion perimeter.

Second battalion used two combat patrols to attack the Japs but they were pinned down by machine gun fire from pill boxes. The first battalion arrived at the airstrip at 1700 hours after a forced march from the vicinity of Seola. Ten in one ration was dropped to the second battalion but fell in the Jap perimeter. The third battalion is fighting like hell to get that ten in one back. Supply trains and ammunition dumps are working smoothly now from airstrip to third battalion on the trail. At 1930 hours Colonel Hunter had a staff meeting. The third battalion attacks down the trail. One combat team from the first battalion will move northeast along the river to cut off the Japs withdrawal. Patrols will continue in all directions. The attack starts with artillery, mortar and dive bomber support at 1000 hours for the third battalion. The litter train will be ready to move to Nhpum Ga to evacuate the wounded when the break through is made. The Regimental forward Command Post is with the third battalion. Morale was high when the first battalion pulled in but is even higher now.

8 April 1944

Khaki Combat Team attacked all day along the main trail while Orange Combat Team moved down to the small stream in the valley to the east and attacked northward hitting considerable enemy resistance, but the jungle itself was enough resistance to make progress very slow. The White Combat Team of the first battalion has taken over the defense of the airstrip while a selected group of two hundred and fifty four men and officers from the Red Combat Team under Captain Tom P. Senff were assigned the mission of feeling out the area to the west of Nhpum Ga - then move to the south offering a threat to the Jap rear. Captain Senff moved out of his bivouac area at the airstrip at 0630 hours. No animals were taken although the light machine gun and 60 mm. mortar were hand carried - each man carried two days K ration and as much ammunition as he could, including at least two hand grenades per man. SCR 300 radios were also carried. The column with Captain Senff at the head moved up the trail until they were one mile north of Nhpum Ga then cut west across country, cutting down a small stream and over a big nose to the area west of Nhpum that he was to reconnoiter.

By this time he had lost five men from exhaustion and one seriously injured from falling over a twenty foot embankment. They were sent back together. From the small river they saw Jap tracks leading to Nhpum Ga. Captain Senff sent reconnaissance patrols to follow the tracks and to scout out the area. They found three old paddy fields on the hillside nearby, two clearings, freshly dug Jap foxholes and one dead Jap. They figured, inasmuch as the Japs hadn't buried this dead, they were not now operating in this area. After sending a report by SCR 300 to Regimental Headquarters which was with the assault units of Orange Combat Team, he moved south guiding on the almost continuous firing in the vicinity of Nhpum Ga.

At 1600 hours he hit a pronounced trail leading southwest. It appeared to have been freshly used by men and animals. He sent one Browning automatic rifleman and two tommy gunners two hundred yards in each direction to block the

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trail. Then turning to the north he moved slowly and cautiously toward Nhpum. At 1610 he was fired on by three Japs about eight hundred yards from Nhpum Ga. We returned the fire and sent a reconnaissance patrol through the area. They returned with nothing to report, except some recently dug positions down the trail toward the river. He left one platoon as a permanent block on that trail and moved to the southwest again at 1650 hours in an effort to get high ground for our bivouac area. At 1815 hours Captain Senff bivouaced eight hundred and fifty yards from Nhpum Ga on an azimuth of 240 degrees. The stench from dead animals and men near the perimeter was very bad. He put in a perimeter defense and dug in blocks across a pronounced foot path leading through the bivouac area. At 2250 hours a four man Jap patrol moving north on the foot path was fired on by a Browning automatic rifle - only three rounds were fired and the gun jammed. The Japs threw a grenade and a brief fight ensued. The Japs withdrew. The casualties were one officer (Lt. Johnson) killed. The rest of the night was quiet.

In Nhpum Ga there had been no heavy fighting all day. The enemy artillery fired only a few rounds and they made no serious attacks although occasional machine gun and mortar fire broke the quiet. Major Rogoff totaled his casualties and found that he had twenty five dead, one hundred and three wounded to date but it was possible others would be found when a muster could be held. In Colonel Hunter's field order for today he said, "The siege of Nhpum Ga will fall by noon today". Although there had been heavy fighting all around them, the siege still held at 1630 hours and the men in the perimeter wondered, "How long?"

9 April 1944

Captain Senff's column was up at dawn expecting some action but no Japs showed up. He sent a patrol one hundred yards south on the foot path to investigate the firing during the night. They returned with a Jap trenchcoat, four boxes of cooked rice balls, each box holding enough to feed a platoon. The rice balls looked like a baseball. At 0530 hours a twelve man Jap patrol hit the perimeter from the south. Lt. McElmurry quickly set up a machine gun. Captain Senff worked two squads forward with rifle grenades because it was too close in for mortars. A fire fight developed and two Marauders were wounded. Then snipers opened on the perimeter from the northwest. Our men sprayed the trees they were thought to be in with tommy guns and the snipers were not heard from again. At 0655 hours Captain Senff moved his company southwest across an old paddy field grown high in elephant grass. He left his Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon in position at the bivouac area to block the trail and evacuate his wounded. After moving five hundred yards southwest from the perimeter, harassing fire opened from the northwest, northeast and due south. It seemed to be coming from the direction of the main trail between Nhpum Ga and Kauri. Colonel Hunter called Colonel Caborne on the SCR 300 radio and ordered Captain Senff back to the Bivouac area where he had spent the night. (eight hundred yards from Nhpum Ga.)

Captain Senff moved back and dug in. His orders were to hold this block and contact the enemy to the north. At 0900 hours his block drew harassing fire from the north and northeast. It was not aimed fire and the Japs threw in some mortar fire covering the approach to the main trail. At 1100 hours one of his combat patrols (one squad) moving to the north to contact the Jap perimeter was fired on by six automatic weapons dug in. We suffered no casualties. At 1230

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the Intelligence and Reconnaissance platoon reported that they had got the wounded back to our first block. It took them five hours whereas we had walked it without wounded in one hour. Captain Senff decided not to push north as he would have suffered bad casualties from the Jap automatic weapons and the evacuation for wounded men was so difficult, and because there were Jap positions one hundred and fifty yards from his perimeter.

He sent three man reconnaissance patrols to the south, east and southwest. The patrol to the southwest reported the trail to the water hole was open so he let one squad from each platoon go after water. It took one hour and fifteen minutes for the round trip. The patrol to the southeast reported no action but returned with two loads of rice balls, each load weighing about fifteen pounds. At 1345 hours we fired on four enemy near the southeast side of the perimeter - killed two and drew no return fire. It appears that they followed our reconnaissance patrol back.

At 1400 hours Lt. William Lepore's platoon reported movement, talking and animals neighing two hundred and fifty yards to the northeast in a deep draw. Captain Senff checked with the second and third battalions over the SCR 300 to see if they had anything in that position. They reported they had nothing in that direction. Captain Senff then gave orders to mortar and machine gun the draw. At 1600 hours Captain Senff got a message that a patrol from the ground battalion had contacted our trail block two hundred and fifty yards northwest of the second battalion perimeter, and that we had one killed and one missing. At 1620 Captain Senff pulled his guns back after mortaring and machine gunning the draw and at the same time a Jap mortar barrage from the ridge to the east opened on an area two hundred yards to the northeast of our perimeter on the approach to the draw. Japs screamed and hollered so it looked as if the Japs figured we were attacking and they mortared the area - hitting their own troops. At about this time the Jap artillery opened fire from Kauri on our artillery position one hundred yards north of Nhpum Ga. Our artillery forward observer officer asked us over the SCR 300 if we could locate the Jap guns. Captain Senff reported the probable location of the guns; then he moved his radio to a clearing on some high ground where he could observe our artillery fire dropping four hundred yards short of the target. He corrected that over the radio and we threw a heavy barrage on and around the Jap artillery. No more was heard from them. Booby traps going off was the only thing disturbing a good sleep tonight.

At the airstrip Father Stuart held mass at 0700 hours and further up the trail the Orange and Khaki Combat Teams continued to attack. The attack was strange - the Japs were full of tricks but today they didn't answer our fire except occasionally a sniper would take a shot. We continued to blast our way through and at 1000 hours our lead scouts reported dead Japs everywhere. At 1210 our lead scouts thought they were near the second battalion perimeter. Over the radio Colonel Beach asked Colonel McGee to fire three spaced shots from the north edge of his perimeter along the trail to be answered by three shots from our lead scouts.

Five minutes later all was quiet. We listened - then suddenly three shots rang out and a minute later three more shots. Major Ed Briggs, Khaki Combat Commander, was right behind the lead scouts and he walked into the second battalion perimeter - lifting the siege they had been under for ten long, bitter hard days.

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He walked through a scene of desolation worse than he had ever seen on Guadalcanal or New Georgia - hundreds of Japs, dead for a week, were stinking everywhere - dead horses twice their normal size with maggots and flies by the million all over them. Finally he reached Colenel McGee's Command Post, a series of two man Fox holes dug out of the rock and red clay in the side of Nhpum Ga.

Colenel McGee, smiling, Said, "Sure am glad to see you, Ed."