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THE OPERATIONS OF THE 11TH INFANTRY, USAFIP, NL (P.A.)
IN THE CAPTURE OF MAYOYAO, MT. PROVINCE, LUZON, P.I.
26 JULY - 8 August 1, 1945
(LUZON CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of a Regimental Commander)

Type of operation described: REGIMENT IN THE ATTACK

Lt. Col. Donald D. Blackburn, Infantry
ADVANCED INFANTRY OFFICERS CLASS NO. 2

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OPERATIONS OF THE 11TH INFANTRY, USAFIP, (P.A.)
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INTRODUCTION

This monograph is about an action of a Filipino Guerrilla force in the destruction of a Japanese center of resistance, resulting in the capture of the town of Mayoayao, Mt. Province, Luzon, Philippine Islands on 7 August 1945. This force commanded by the U.O., 11th Infantry (P.A.), USAFIP, NL, was composed of the 11th Infantry (-1st and 2nd Bns.) (P.A.) plus the 1st Bn., 14th Infantry (P.A.) and a Provisional Battalion (P.A.).

As an introduction to this operation it is necessary to regress to the fall of the Philippines in 1942. When Bataan surrendered on 9 April 1942, rather than surrender to the Japanese, many Americans and Filipinos evaded capture and worked their way northward out of the Bataan peninsula. Some of these individuals made their way into the Cordilleras Mountains of northern Luzon, where there already existed many Americans, both military and civilian, and Philippine Army personnel, who had also escaped capture by the Japanese on the latter's drive to Bataan. With these as a nucleus, under the leadership of Lt. Col. (then a Maj.) R. W. Volckmann a guerrilla force, later to become known and recognized as USAFIP, NL (United States Army Forces In The Philippines, North Luzon), was organized. The strength of this force ultimately approximated 20,000 Officers and men. (1)

USAFIP, NL was composed of a General Headquarters under which were command, combat and service echelons. The combat echelon included the 11th, 14th, 15th, 66th, and 121st Infantry Regiments (P.A.) and a Field Artillery Battalion (P.A.). (2)

The 11th Infantry (P.A.) was composed of a Hq. & Hq. & Service Battalion, and three Rifle Battalions of four Rifle Companies each. A Headquarters and Service Company, a Combat Company and a Medical Company made up the Headquarters Battalion.

A Rifle Company was composed of three Rifle Platoons and a Special Weapons Platoon. Any machine guns, American or Japanese, were in the Special Weapons Platoon. At the time of this operation the Japanese machine guns had been replaced by Browning Light Machine Guns, there (1,2) A-1, P.6 and A-6

being three per Platoon. These machine guns arrived with neither tripods nor ammunition belts. Tripods, that would permit both elevating and traversing, were ingeniously designed and made from pipe by a Filipino Non-commissioned Officer of the Regimental S-4 section's Ordnance Group. The ammunition belts were made by Filipino women. To carry the weapon, the tripods that could not be easily detached would hang perpendicular to the gun that was tied to a pole which was supported from the shoulders of two men. (3)

The Combat Company was composed of an 81mm Mortar Platoon, an Anti-tank Platoon, and a Rifle Platoon. There were three 81mm mortars in the Mortar Platoon and two Japanese 47mm guns in the Anti-tank Platoon.

In addition to the organic units the C.O., 11th Infantry had been authorized by the C.O. USAFIP, NL to organize and carry as attached, two Replacement and Casualty Companies, two Hospital Companies, two Engineer Companies, a Signal Company and a Land Communication (Message Center) Company. (4)

The area throughout which the units of USAFIP, NL were organized and operated was that portion of Luzon, north of an East-West line running generally through San Jose, Nueva Ecija and Lingayen, Pangasinan.

(see Map A)(5)

On 9 January 1945, D-Day for the Americans reentry onto Luzon, USAFIP, NL, which had been in radio contact with American forces since August 1944, was placed under the command of the Commanding General, Sixth Army. At 0001, 1 July 1945, USAFIP, NL passed to the control of XIV Corps, Eighth Army when said Army relieved the Sixth Army of the tactical responsibility of Luzon. (6)

At this time, (1 July) the 11th Infantry (-1st Bn.) (P.A.) was attached to the 37th Infantry Division which was engaged in mopping up operations against the Japanese in the Sierra Madre Mountains of the upper Cagayan Valley.

To the south and in a zone adjacent to the 37th Division, the Sixth Infantry Division was heavily engaged with Japanese forces of Lt. Gen. Yamashita's XIV Army that were withdrawing northward, from the lower

(3,4) A-6; (5) A-4, P.5; (6) A-1, P.8 and A-2, P.1;

Cagayan Valley, along Highway 4 into the Cordilleras Mountains. (7)

Yamashita's forces on Luzon had been defeated at every turn and were now preparing for a last stand in the very rugged and mountainous terrain west of Highway 4 in the general area of Payawan-Antipolo-Hungduan-Banaue. Another Japanese force estimated from 1000-2000, believed to be remnants of ground, air, service, and naval units, organized into Provisional ground force units was east of Highway 4 in the general area of Butigui-Matonin-Bunhian-Mayoyao-Alimit. This latter force was reported to be concentrating in the vicinity of the town of Mayoyao with the intent of making a juncture with Yamashita's force to the west. (8)

On or about 7 July a conference was called at Hq. USAFIP,NL. Those present included Staff Officers of XIV Corps, the C.O. USAFIP,NL, and the C.O. 11th Infantry (P.A.). It was brought out in this conference that the 6th Infantry Division was to continue its advance north to Banaue, and once Banaue was secured the Division's main objective would be Yamashita's force west of Highway 4. The large concentration developing in the vicinity of Mayoyao would be a constant threat to the Division's rear and its main supply route, thus it was necessary to destroy this threat. (9)

The town of Mayoyao was approximately 47 trail kilometers east of Banaue, and an equal distance west from Marasat Grande in the Cagayan River Valley. Situated at an elevation of about 5000 feet, the only routes into the town were mountain trails. The rainy season was in full swing, which meant that the only probable means of resupply to a force employed in that area must be by hand carry from Marasat Grande, and/or Banaue, once the 6th Division secured the latter town. Artillery support would be out of the question, and any air support would be dependent on a break in the weather. Evacuation would have to be by hand carry due to the lack of roads and the inavailability of suitable terrain for the construction of an air strip. (10)

The decision of the conferees was that the C.O., 11th Infantry (P.A.) would be assigned the mission of destroying this concentration at Mayoyao. Among the factors influencing this decision were that the C.O., 11th Infantry (P.A.) had lived in the vicinity of Mayoyao for nearly two years, (7,8,9,10,) A-2 P.1,11,14 and A-6

and the 3rd Battalion, 11th Infantry (P.A.) was composed of Igorot soldiers whose homes were located in this general area. This knowledge of the country would prove most valuable in lieu of maps of the area that were nonexistent. (11)

On 9 July orders from XIV Corps directed that the 11th Infantry (-1st Bn. and 2nd Bn.)(P.A.) with the 1st Bn. 14th Infantry (P.A.) attached, would pass from the control of the 37th Infantry Division to the 6th Infantry Division. On 10 July the C.O., 11th Infantry (P.A.) received orders from the 6th Infantry Division assigning him the mission of siezing Bunhian and ^{the 1st Bn. 14th} ~~to~~ prepare to advance west to secure Mayayao on Division order. (12)

To fully understand the composition of this force that was actually employed on this mission it is necessary to digress a bit. When the 11th Infantry (P.A.) was assigned the Mayoyao mission the 1st Battalion was at that time attached to the 121st Infantry (P.A.) and the 37th Infantry Division had requested the retention of the 2nd Battalion. Because of the loss of these two Battalions the 1st Bn. 14th Infantry (P.A.) was attached to the 11th Infantry (P.A.) and a Provisional Battalion (P.A.) comprising the Combat Co., 11th Infantry (P.A.), and Replacement and Casualty Companies "C" and "D", was organized. The purpose of the latter Battalion being two-fold: one, it would make a third Battalion; and second, if casualties became excessive the Provisional Battalion could be dissolved and the personnel of the two Replacement and Casualty Companies be used to fill the vacancies in the other two Battalions. (13)

This was by no stretch of the imagination a well-trained force. The 1st Bn. 14th Infantry (P.A.) was not completely organized until the latter part of 1944. It had been separated from the rest of the Regiment that was located several days of tough hiking across the mountains. This made close and continuous supervision of its activities by the Regimental Commander quite difficult. Only a small number of the Officers and men had received any previous military training, and there had been little or no attempt to train the Battalion. The Battalion was not much more than an undisciplined band, although, it had had numerous encounters with the

(11) A-6; (12) A-2, P.14; (13) A-6

Japanese and was willing to fight. To bring the organization into line the C.O., USAFIP,NL attached it to the 11th Infantry (P.A.) during April 1945. The sector of the 1st Bn., 14th Infantry (P.A.) being adjacent to that of the 11th Infantry (P.A.) facilitated control and supervision. The Battalion had no arms except rifles. One shipment of automatic weapons consigned to the 14th Infantry (P.A.) had been lost in a plane crash, and another shipment fell into the hands of the enemy. This Battalion remained under the control of the C.O., 11th Infantry (P.A.) until the 37th Infantry Division took over the control upon the Division's occupation of the Cagayan Valley in June 1945. (14)

The two Replacement and Casualty Companies "C" and "D" of the Provisional Battalion (P.A.) were comprised mainly of civilians who had never received any military training prior to 1945. Several Philippine Army Officers had organized them into a unit, and with few arms, and a limited knowledge of military tactics, attempted to train them. In April 1945 this group requested to be incorporated into USAFIP,NL. Replacements being a continuous problem, the C.O., USAFIP,NL ordered the C.O., 11th Infantry (P.A.) to reorganize this group into Co. "C" and Co. "D" of the Replacement and Casualty Bn., USAFIP,NL, and carry them as attached to the 11th Infantry (P.A.). This being accomplished they were given rifles and put into training camps. They were given limited combat missions from time to time and had showed up fairly well in several encounters with the enemy. The Combat Company, Provisional Battalion was made up of Igorot soldiers who were former Philippine Scouts or Philippine Army and on whom the Battalion Commander could rely.

The personnel of the 11th Infantry (P.A.) had had considerable experience. About 80% of the combat elements of the Regiment were Philippine Scout and Philippine Army personnel. A number of the Officers were graduates of the Philippine Military Academy. The other Officers were commissioned by the Philippine Army, or were former Philippine Scouts or Philippine Army Non-commissioned Officers that were appointed Officers. (15)

From the middle of 1945, as the Regiment was being organized, the men lived in camps in the mountains. Training, to a degree, was continuous.

There were no Army Regulations, Field manuals or Technical manuals, but the Philippine Scouts proved to have retained the training they had received under American Officers prior to the war, and were of great value in the training camps. There were also a number of Filipino Officers and Non-commissioned Officers, who prior to the outbreak of the war, had been especially selected to train the Philippine Army Cadres, whose knowledge and experience came in handy. This training, though basic, was supplemented by limited encounters with the enemy. Since all efforts of USAFIP, NL pointed to being prepared on D-Day, very few encounters were permitted prior to 9 January 1945, but subsequent to D-Day hardly a day passed with out some unit of the Regiment being engaged with the Japanese. Small encounters by squads developed until companies and Battalions were employed against the enemy.

Those Officers that failed to produce were immediately demoted to the enlisted grades, and conversely, those Non-commissioned Officers that showed promise were appointed Officers.

The detachment of the more experienced, better trained, disciplined and equiped 1st and 2nd Battalions was a serious loss. In addition, the services of the 1st Battalion that was composed entirely of Igorots would be missed in the mountains. It was opined that the Mayoyao mission could have been accomplished more expeditiously had both Igorot Battalions (1st and 3rd) been employed. As it was the majority of the troops were lowlanders, who unlike the Igorots, found fighting and living in the mountains extremely difficult. (16)

(16) A-6

THE GENERAL SITUATION

At the time the order to seize Banihan and to prepare to move on Mayoyao was issued, the Japanese were in the process of withdrawing their troops which were scattered along the eastern foothills of the Cordilleras Mountains, from Cordon to Palasilis, generally westward toward Mayoyao. This withdrawal had been under way for several weeks. (see Map A) (17)

Mayoyao was a logical area for the Japanese to concentrate. It was not only remote and difficult to reach, but it was also the largest rice

(17) A-1, P. 177-179

producing area in the mountains remaining accessible to the Japanese, who were in dire need of food. The town was easy to defend, though at an elevation of approximately 5000 feet; it was situated in a bowl whose surrounding peaks and ridges towered 500-1000 feet above. The only probable routes of approach for an attacking force were the long and difficult trails from Lanaue, and from the Cagayan River Valley via Bunhian. (18)

With elements of the 6th Infantry Division along Highway 4, approximately 35 kilometers south of Lanaue, which was occupied by the Japanese, Mayoyao would have to be approached from the Cagayan River Valley. (19)

There was a possible route into Mayoyao from the Cagayan Valley via the village of Alimit, but this was not given much consideration due to the almost impassable trail and the distance, which would lend to an insolvable supply problem.

There was a good trail leading to Bunhian and Mayoyao from Marasat Grande in the Cagayan Valley, but this trail led over the crest of a divide approximately 6000 feet in elevation which separated Bunhian from the Valley. The enemy was known to have this divide fortified.

A third trail led to Bunhian from the North through the mountains. This trail could be reached from the Cagayan Valley by two probable routes: One was from the village of Mallig to Palasilis to Bunhian via Natonin; the other, from Butigui to Bunhian via Natonin. There was a large concentration of Japanese reported to be in the vicinity of Butigui. There were few, if any, Japanese along the Mallig to Bunhian trail.

This northern route to Bunhian was long, and over steep and treacherous mountain terrain for the greater part of the distance. But, this trail had been much travelled by the Igorot soldiers of the 3rd Battalion (P.A.) during the period of the Japanese occupation, and coupled with the fact that many of these Igorots were natives of this area, the trail was not new to them. It was estimated, barring any Japanese resistance, that the 3rd Battalion could move from Mallig to Bunhian in three to four days.

With these facts taken into consideration the following plan was decided upon: (20)

1. The 3rd Battalion, 11th Infantry (P.A.) would depart from Mallig 13 July, and move to Bunhian via Natonin, avoiding any engagement with the enemy. The Battalion would attack and seize the village, and without delay, would attack the fortified divide east of the village from the rear. It was believed that once Bunhian was captured, the enemy would automatically withdraw from their position on the divide; or if any resistance were offered it would be meager. The divide should be free for passage of the main force from the valley on or before 18 July.

2. The 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry (P.A.) would depart from Eden 13 July, and would advance through the valley and the foothills via Batigui and Dalloag to Ubao which was situated at the foot of the divide. Any enemy encountered within its assigned zone would be destroyed. The Battalion was expected to arrive in Ubao 17 July, and would prepare to advance to Bunhian.

The Provisional Battalion (P.A.) would depart from Vira 14 July, and advance southwest to Cadillina Ranch. The Battalion was expected to arrive at the Ranch 16 July and would prepare to advance to Bunhian via Ubao

4. The C.O., 11th Infantry (P.A.) that was located at Tuao, Cagayan, would move to the Cadillina Ranch and be established thereat on 14th July. Upon the arrival of the Provisional Battalion (P.A.) the C.P. would move toward Bunhian.

The 37th Infantry Division had been made responsible for initially supplying this force with ammunition and rations, and also for trucking the units to their points of departure. The 6th Infantry Division was to establish a ten (10) day supply dump at Marasat Grande, which was on the eastern side of the Magat River opposite the Cadillina Ranch. (21)

As pointed out earlier the 1st Bn., 14th Infantry (P.A.) and the Provisional Battalion (P.A.) were armed with only rifles. Because of the tough march assigned the 3rd Battalion (P.A.) which necessitated travelling

(20) A-6; (21) A-2, P.14, and A-6

light as possible, the Battalion was permitted to carry only one light machine gun per company. The other machine guns were redistributed to the other two Battalions.

The three 81mm Mortars of the Combat Company were turned over to the Regimental S-4 for transporting. They would be available, if needed, from Ubao on. The 47mm Anti-tank guns were to remain in Tuao. Thus the Combat Company was just another Rifle Company of the Provisional Battalion.

All the men were in bad need of clothing and equipment. With the exception of about 300 ponchos, and a similar number of blankets, the men possessed absolutely nothing but their rifles, helmets, one uniform, and if fortunate, a pair of shoes; no more. This condition of the men had been brought out before the Mayoyao mission was assigned, though nothing materially was done about it. (22)

The widely dispersed Battalions made necessary the maintenance of good communications. This was accomplished by furnishing each Battalion with an SCR 284, and each Company with an SCR 300. Radio Technicians, capable of repairing the radios, were attached to the 3rd Bn. 11th Infantry (P.A.) and the 1st Bn., 14th Infantry (P.A.). Telephone and radio communication would be maintained between regiment and the supply base at Cadillina Ranch. The personnel charged with the responsibility of establishing and maintaining communication was from the Signal Company attached to 11th Infantry (P.A.)

Supply and evacuation could be foreseen as two of the most difficult problems to be solved. In addition to the remoteness and inaccessibility of Mayoyao, the rainy season caused the many rivers and streams to remain high and swift. Crude bridging of many would be necessary before the men and supplies could be crossed safely. The trails that were narrow and steep were made even more difficult by the bogs and slippery clay. Plans had been made to air drop supplies if the weather permitted, but this could not be depended upon, thus it would be necessary to recruit civilian cargadores, and carabaos with sleds to haul the supplies and evacuate the

(22) A-6

wounded. Initially each Battalion Commander was made responsible for his own transport. Regiment would establish and maintain the main supply route from Cadillina Ranch to Mayoyao, and would relieve the Battalions of their responsibility when they tied into this supply route at Ubao or Bunhian.

The plan as outlined was initiated on 13 July. Everything was proceeding according to plan when on 16 July the C.O., 3rd Battalion radioed that he was engaged with the enemy in the Natonin area. On 14 July the 1st Bn., 14th Infantry (P.A.) had run into an unexpectedly large concentration of Japanese east of Butigui, who offered little fight. By 1800, 15 July the Battalion had reached Butigui, forcing the Japanese to withdraw west through this village. It was undoubtedly elements of this force that the C.O., 3rd Battalion permitted to delay him, and thus resulted in his failure to seize the fortified divide east of Bunhian as ordered. (23)

The Provisional Battalion (P.A.) arrived at Cadillina Ranch 16 July after encountering only slight resistance in their zone. The Regimental C.P. had been established at the Ranch on 14 July. By 17 July sufficient supplies to begin the movement westward had been stocked at the Ranch, and the Regimental S-4 had procured enough cargadores and carabaos to move them to Ubao. With the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry (P.A.) still engaged with the enemy between Butigui and Dalloag, the Provisional Battalion (P.A.) was ordered to secure Ubao.

By 19 July Ubao was occupied by the Provisional Battalion (P.A.) and elements of the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry (P.A.), and the C.P., 11th Infantry (P.A.) established thereat. A continuous stream of natives with carabaos were arriving with supplies from Cadillina Ranch. In addition, these supplies were supplemented by an air drop, by mistake. The C.O., 3rd Battalion had requested ammunition and food be dropped to him in the vicinity of Natonin, and the planes mistook his location and dropped at Ubao. (24)

On 20 July orders were received from the C.G., 6th Infantry Division to seize Mayoyao. With the 3rd Battalion still tied down in the vicinity

(23) A-6; (24) A-2, P.14 and A-6

of Natonin, and elements of the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry (P.A.) still engaged with Japanese between Butigui and Dalloag, the Provisional Battalion (P.A.) was assigned the mission of seizing the enemy position on the divide and capturing Bunhian. The 1st Bn., 14th Infantry (P.A.) was assigned the mission of protecting the supply route from Cadillina Ranch to Ubao. (25)

At 0700, 21 July the Provisional Battalion (P.A.) began the ascent to Bunhian with the Combat Company leading. By 1300 leading elements of this company were held up by fire from the divide position. The enemy were able to hold their position until the morning of 24 July when they withdrew toward Bunhian. By 1200 the Combat Company, having overcome scattered resistance, captured the village of Bunhian.

By 1400, 25 July, except for a few snipers, Bunhian was secured by the Provisional Battalion (P.A.), and the Advance C.P. of the Regiment established thereat. At 1700 Company K and two platoons of Company M arrived from Natonin, having fought their way through the Japanese in that area. The Provisional Battalion Commander was ordered to have the Combat Company push toward Mayoyao as a reconnaissance in force in an attempt to find out the actual situation in that area. The remainder of the Battalion with Company K and the two platoons of Company M attached would be prepared to advance on Mayoyao on 26 July with the mission of seizing that town. (26)

THE BATTLE FOR MAYOYAO

By 26 July the 11th Infantry (P.A.) C.P. was well established in Bunhian. The main supply base was maintained at the Cadillina Ranch, and an intermediate supply point at Ubao. The 1st Bn., 14th Battalion, 14th Infantry (P.A.) was assigned the mission of protecting these bases and the supply route. (27)

It was now apparent that the enemy had been fighting a rear guard action covering his withdrawal into Mayoyao where he was estimated to have from 800-1000 troops. There was another enemy force of undetermined strength in the vicinity of Alimit, approximately 20 trail kilometers south of Bunhian, and the 3rd Battalion reported to be tied down by an (25,26) A-2, P.14 and A-6; (27) A-2, P.14

increased enemy force in the Natouin area. Scattered enemy elements were being encountered north and south of the main supply route in the foothills to the West by units of the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry (P.A.). The 6th Division, whose 1st Infantry had captured Banaue on 20 July, reported that patrols that had been sent eastward along the Banaue-Mayoyao trail were encountering enemy resistance a few kilometers east of Banaue. (28)

To date the enemy had not shown much fight except around Natouin. He appeared to be disorganized, demoralized, and absolutely void of any of the aggressiveness and tenacity with which he had been characterized. Our casualties had been extremely light. These facts, coupled with the problem of resupply that was becoming more difficult as the advance pushed deeper into the mountains and away from the supply base at Cadillina Ranch, the Regimental Commander decided to continue the advance to Mayoyao with the Provisional Battalion, and not await the arrival of the 3rd Battalion from Natouin. (29)

In driving the Japanese from Bunhian the Provisional Battalion (P.A.) captured a large quantity of unthrashed rice. The natives, who had evacuated to the brush, began filtering back into the village. Some were put to work at once thrashing the rice, while others were sent to round up the other evacuees and collect more rice that also had been evacuated. These hardy mountain Igorots, both men and women, were put to the tough task of hauling supplies from Ubao. The lowland natives with their carabaos and sleds transported them from the Cadillina Ranch to Ubao. Attempts were made to use carabaos to haul the supplies from Ubao over the divide to Bunhian, but these heavy beasts of burden of the lowlands soon proved to be of no value in the mountains.

As long as the 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry (P.A.) and the Provisional Battalion (P.A.) were fighting in the lowlands and foothills, the people of the Cagayan Valley were over enthusiastic in transporting supplies as this meant that their homes would be protected from the Japanese raiding parties, but once the divide was crossed their interest began to wane, and it was most difficult to keep them on the job.

The Igorots around Banihan and vicinity were eager to transport supplies, but the area was sparsely settled and would not produce enough people to transport all the supplies necessary for a sustained action, nor would the food in the vicinity last for many days. It would have been difficult to remain indefinitely in Banihan awaiting the arrival of the 3rd Battalion.

The Provisional Battalion (P.A.) was ordered to begin the advance on Mayoyao on 26 July. The Battalion was to advance in two columns. (see map B) The Battalion, with the two platoons of Co. M, which were to be attached to the Combat Company, would advance west along the main Banihan-Mayoyao trail and seize the high ground (R-1) 600 yds. east of Mayoyao, from which point they would attack the town. This trail being the most direct and easiest route to Mayoyao, the Provisional Battalion (P.A.) could expect resistance enroute. In fact the Combat Company that had been sent ahead on 25 July reported they were encountering what appeared to be sniper fire from the ridges overlooking the trail. There was another trail to Mayoyao that was known by few other than the natives. It was narrow, rocky, steep and ill defined. This trail led through the village of Liwo and terminated at the village of Chaya, which overlooked Mayoyao from approximately 1100 yds. to the northeast. Company K, ^{was made up} that ~~was~~ made up of Igorots, was assigned this route of advance. (30)

The Battalion and attachments departed from Banihan at 0630, 26 July, and picked up the Combat Company about 4 trail kilometers east of Mayoyao, at which point they were encountering stiffening resistance from the enemy. Company K encountered no resistance during their advance to Chaya. Dawn 27 July found the Provisional ^{P.A.} in position along the ridge (R-1) east of Mayoyao, and Company K in the village of Chaya. (31)

The Provisional Battalion was receiving heavy machine gun, rifle and mortar fire from the village of Balambang, 800 yds. south of Mayoyao. Company K apparently had arrived in Chaya undetected. The Battalion ^(P.A.) Commander reported the original estimate of approximately 1000 Japanese, in the vicinity of Mayoyao, to be correct. Japanese could be observed along the ridges south and west of the town, and in the rice terraces (30,31) A-2, P.14 and A-6

surrounding the town. (32)

Company K was ordered to attack the town from its commanding position, and at about 0700, 27 July the Company began the descent on the town supported by fire from the Battalion deployed along the ridge (R-1). (see Overlay 1) Almost immediately Company K was detected and began receiving fire from the town, but by utilizing the concealment afforded by the contours of the rice terraces, and the naturally irregular terrain, the Company was able to continue its advance. Upon reaching a point approximately 300 yds. from the town an enemy machine gun and rifle ~~fire~~^{fire}, located on a knoll (K) to the Company's right flank, opened up killing the Platoon Leader and several men of the leading platoon, who had sprung up and were rushing across the rice terraces toward the town. This caused the Company Commander to halt the assault. During this halt the enemy were able to recover sufficiently from their surprise and place enough fire on the Company to pin it down.

(33)

As pointed out earlier, Mayoyao is situated in a bowl surrounded by rugged peaks and ridges. (see Map B) This bowl was pierced on the east by a river that was 150 ft. below and 300 yds. south of the town. Rice terraces descended from the town to the river. South of the river was a crescent shaped hill mass that formed the southern rim of the bowl. The trail from Bunnian was north of and 150 ft. above, the river. The commanding terrain feature overlooking the town was an apex (A) about 900 yds. northeast and 500 ft. above the municipality. This apex was the western terminus of the main ridge (R-3), running generally east-west, from Bunnian; the northern terminus of the north-south ridge (R-1), 600 yds. east of the town, and along which the Provisional Battalion was deployed; and the eastern terminus of a crescent shaped ridge (R-2) about 1500-2000 yds. north of the town. (34)

Throughout the morning Company K attempted to drive the Japanese from the town, but without success. (see Overlay 1) The Company began receiving the brunt of the enemy mortar, machine gun, and rifle fire from the town and the knoll (K). At approximately 1130, with ammunition

(32,33,34) A-6

nearly exhausted, the Company withdrew to Ohaya, and from there proceeded along the ridge (R-2) through the apex (A) to rejoin the Provisional Bn. whose C.P. was located along the trail between the ridges (R-4) and (R-5). (35)

It is difficult to picture the position of Company K, that was only 300 yds. from their objective, when forced to withdraw due to the lack of ammunition; but, to traverse the circuitous route from their position to the supply point of the Provisional Battalion would entail a minimum of four to five hours of tough climbing. Although the Battalion was in position only 600 yds. away, the intervening terrain was open rice terraces which could be easily covered by fire from the town and knoll (K).

About 1330 when the last elements of Company K were approximately 500 yds. east of the apex (A) and along ridge (R-3) they were fired upon from the rear. The Japanese, by cunning use of the rugged and heavily covered terrain, had worked their way undetected up to the apex (A), which the C.O., Provisional Battalion (P.A.) had neglected to secure although he had deployed his Battalion along the ridge (R-1), which descended therefrom. (36)

Following this initial burst of fire the Japanese directed their fire down the ridge (R-1) to the great surprise and amazement of the Battalion Commander. The enemy was now in a position to attack the flank of the Provisional Battalion (P.A.), or advance eastward along the main ridge (R-3) and outflank the Battalion's position.

Foreseeing these possibilities, the Battalion Commander ordered Company K to take up a defensive position along the main ridge (R-3). Company K selected a position (D) on the lip of a saddle, and approximately four hundred fifty (450) yds. east of the apex (A).

At approximately 1400 the Japanese launched an attack on the Provisional Battalion's flank, and by 1700 the Battalion had been forced to withdraw from the ridge (R-1), and take up positions along the ridge (R-4) 300 yds. to the East.

On 28 July, the Advance C.P. 11th Infantry (P.A.) moved to the
(35,36) A-6

Mayoyao area, accompanied by the 1st Bn., 14th Infantry(-Co. "C" and Co. "D")(P.A.) which had arrived in Bunhian on the afternoon of 26 July. The two companies of the 14th Infantry (P.A.) were placed in position on the ridge (R-5), south of, and adjoining, Company K that was deployed along the main ridge (R-3), extending from point (D) eastward. From this position along the ridge (R-5), which was approximately 300 yds. east of the Provisional Battalion's position (R-4), the two companies of the 14th Infantry (P.A.) could protect the flanks of the Provisional Battalion, (P.A.) and by direct overhead fire support that Battalion's attempts to regain their former position (R-1). (37)

The enemy held the key to Mayoyao--the Apex (A). This position had to be seized before the town could be assaulted again with any success. (38)

From the position (D) that Company K occupied to the Japanese held Apex (A) was approximately 450 yds. Between these two positions, the Japanese had occupied a cave position (C) on the opposite side of the saddle and facing Company K. The distance across the saddle was approximately 200 yds., and the depth of the saddle was about 125 ft. The side of the saddle leading up to the Japanese position was at an angle of slope of 65 degrees. The Japanese could enter their cave position through a galley from the rear. The only approach for attacking the cave position was from the front facing Company K, as it was protected on both sides by a sheer drop of several hundred feet. Though the position of Company K was barren and rocky, the crags in the rocks afforded some concealment for the men, who were deployed in depth, with not more than six men abreast and shoulder to shoulder. This should give some indication as to the narrowness of the ridge, and the terrible position that it afforded. (39)

At 1700, 29 July elements of Company K, covered by fire directed at the cave entrance, descended to the bottom of the saddle and began the ascent to the Japanese cave position (C).(see Map B) The men were able to get within 50 ft. of the position when they were forced to withdraw because of the handgrenades that the Japanese rolled down upon them.

(37) A-1 P.107; (38) A-2, P.18; (39) A-6

Throughout the night the Company attack^{ed} the cave by utilizing the Igorots in attempts to scale the vertical cliffs on the flanks and rear. The enemy in the cave and along the ridge between the cave (C) and the Apex (A) were able to repel all attempts. The following morning several bodies of men of Company K were visible hanging on the crags below the ridge. At 1100, 30 July, Company B, 14th Infantry relieved Company K, and continued the task of trying to reduce the cave position (C). (40)

On 31 July the 3rd Battalion (-Co. K and two platoons of Co. M) (P.A.) arrived in Bunhian from Natonin. Company "C", 14th Infantry (P.A.) had also arrived from the lowlands, leaving Co. "D", 14th Infantry (P.A.) with the mission of securing the supply route, and the bases at the Ranch and Ubao. Leaving Co. L, who had received severe casualties in the Natonin fighting, in Bunhian for the protection of the installations in that area from any movement of the Japanese from Natonin and Alimit, the remainder of the 3rd Battalion and Company "C", 14th Infantry (P.A.) moved to ^{vib of} Mayoyao on 1 August.

On 1 August a reorganization of the Battalions was effected. Company K and the two platoons of Company M reverted to the 3rd Battalion. The Provisional Battalion (P.A.) was dissolved. Replacement and Casualty Company C was attached to the 1st Battalion 14th Infantry (P.A.); Replacement and Casualty Company D was completely dissolved and its personnel used to replace casualties in the other companies; and the Combat Company reverted to Regimental Control (41)

This reorganization having been completed the units within the Mayoyao area were disposed as follows: (see Overlay #2) (42)

1. 1st Battalion, 14th Infantry (-Co. D)(P.A.), with R/C Company C attached:
 - a. Company B along the main ridge (R-3) facing the Japanese cave position (C).
 - b. Company A and Company C adjacent to Company B extending perpendicular down the ridge (R-5).
 - c. R/C Company C along the ridge (R-4).

(40) A-1, P.107 and A-6; (41) A-2, P.19; (42) A-6

2. 3rd Battalion, 11th Infantry (P.A.):

- a. Company K on same ridge (R-5), and south of 1st Bn., 14th Inf.
 - b. Company H along the ridge (R-6) 500 yds. east of the 1st Bn., 14th Inf.
 - c. Company I providing security for the Air Reception base(E).
3. Combat Company providing local security for the Regimental C.P. at Liwo, minus the Mortar Platoon that was put in general support of the two Battalions.

Casualties were beginning to mount, and the hand carry to Marasat Grande from where they could be evacuated to a hospital was long and difficult, often proving fatal to the wounded. It would take from two to four days for two natives to carry a wounded man in a hammock this distance. On 30 July the Commanding Officer, 4th District Hospital Company (P.A.), (one of the Companies organized by the C.O., 11th Infantry (P.A.)) that was located in the vicinity of Tuao, Cagayan, was ordered by the C.O. 11th Infantry (P.A.) to organize a portable surgical unit to include two surgeons and two nurses, and send it to Bunhian without delay. This hospital unit arrived in Bunhian 2 August. The seriously wounded were evacuated to this hospital ~~unit~~ ^{which} was equipped for surgery. The less serious wounded, having received initial treatment by the regimental or Battalion surgeons, were evacuated to Marasat Grande via the Hospital.

(43)

On or about 31 July several hundred natives were put to work clearing an area of heavy grass and boulders along the main ridge (R-3) about 1200 yds. east of the Apex(A) for an air drop zone (E). Two air drops had been received previously at Bunhian, but the supplies still had to be carried to ^{vic of} Mayoyao, which was an all day hike. The location of this drop zone was far from ideal, but it was the only spot within the vicinity that had the semblance of being flat. It was about 150 ft. long and the widest place was not more than 50 ft. On 2 August, with the weather having cleared, the first drop was made on this reception

(43) A-2, P. 18 and A-6

base. It was not too successful. Several parachutes with ammunition floated into the enemy territory south of the river, and many of the boxes of 10 in 1 rations that were free dropped fell several hundred additional feet into the gorge north of the base and were destroyed.

All the activity along the main ridge (R-3) was clearly visible to the Japanese south of the river, but to date, except for a few patrol clashes in the river, the enemy had not caused much concern from that direction. On 1 August the three 61mm mortars of Combat Company had been placed in position along this same ridge (R-3). This, in addition to the air reception base, apparently was a little too much for the enemy to watch without taking some action. During the night 2-3 August the enemy made his first attempt to reach these installations, but was repelled. (44)

On 2 August an air strike was set up for dropping napalm on the Japanese cave position (C). This air strike was to be followed by Company B assaulting the position. This had been attempted on two previous occasions but without success. Though the napalm hit the cave position, before it could be approached, the Japanese who had apparently withdrawn to the rear were able to reoccupy the position before our troops could reach it. Before the napalm was dropped our men would have to withdraw from their positions (D) for safety reasons, which made considerable the distance they would have to advance to reach the cave.

The strike on 2 August was a success, and before the Japanese could reoccupy their position (C) Company B had moved in. The Company immediately began its advance toward the Apex (A), but when within 150 ^{yards} ~~yds.~~ (B) of the position (A) they were pinned down by machine gun fire from the apertures of that position. (45)

From the afternoon of 2 August the 1st Battalion was unable to advance. The ridge at this point was wide enough for only two men to lay abreast, and maneuver was impossible because of the vertical sides to the flanks. The Japanese tried vigorously to drive the men of the 1st Bn., 14th Infantry (P.A.) from their newly gained position but without success. During this period the enemy intensified his efforts to flank
(44,45) A-6

our position from the south.

From 28 July, the day the attack on the enemy cave position (C) began, it had been necessary to relieve the units frequently along the main ridge line (R-3). The nights were bitterly cold and rainy and the heat during the clear days created an almost intolerable condition along the barren ridge. The men not having any canteens, water had to be carried to them in 31mm ammunition casings. During this period the men were lucky if they received two boxes of K rations per day. This ration was supplemented from time to time with rice that raiding parties were able to procure in nearby villages. The men used their helmets for cooking as they possessed no messing equipment. Notwithstanding these conditions the men maintained a high moral and very few were casualties for other reasons than wounds.

Except for frequent patrol skirmishes and warding off the enemy's attempts at our rear, a virtual stalemate existed. To remedy this situation another course of action was decided upon. On 5 August the 3rd Battalion was ordered to relieve the 1st Battalion. The 1st Battalion would take over the security of the flanks and rear, and the 3rd Battalion with R/C Company C now attached would be utilized in a new attempt to capture the Apex(A) and Mayoyao. (see Overlay 3) (46)

Patrols reported having climbed a peak (F), 1000 to 1200 yds. northeast of the Apex(A) from where they could observe the apertures from which the enemy machine guns were covering the ridge (R-3). Patrols also reported Chaya to be free of enemy. With this bit of information it was decided to again move units to Chaya and attempt to hit the Apex(A) from the north and east.

The C.O., 3rd Battalion was ordered to send Company K and Company M, both composed of Igorots, to Chaya. With Company K protecting the flank and rear of Company M, the latter company would attack the Apex(A) by advancing southeast along the ridge (R-2). The patrol from Combat Company that had scaled the peak overlooking the Apex(A) was attached to Company I and was ordered to return to the vantage point (K) with a
(46) A-1, P.108

machine gun, sufficient ammunitions, and an SCR 300 with which to maintain contact with C.O., I Company. Company I supported by this machine gun fire would attack the Apex(A) from the East. From positions on ridge (R-4), R/C Company C supported by fires from Companies A and C, 14th Infantry (P.A.) from ridge (R-5), would attack the Japanese position along (R-1). (47)

During 6 August the units were redispersed for the attack that was set for 7 August. An air strike had been requested to plaster the Apex(A) with napalm. Company K and Company M being loaded down with ammunition moved over the precipitous ridges to Chaya. At approximately 0830, 7 August the attack jumped off. Company M reported ^{that they were} ~~to be~~ running into machine gun fire along the ridge (R-2). The Apex(A) was pouring machine gun fire along the ridge (R-3) to the East, but when the machine gun from point (F) began registering on the apperture of the Apex(A) Company I found that they could advance. R/C Company C reported to be making slow progress toward the Japanese ridge position (R-1). Things as a whole were not going too badly considering the stalemate that had existed. The three companies were advancing, though slowly. The morning had started off rather cloudy and it was doubtful whether our air request would materialize.

About 1000, the weather having cleared, the L-5 Liaison plane that directed the airstrikes showed up followed closely by P-38 fighters with napalm. At this time the companies were holding their own but not making to much progress. It looked as though the companies would have to be pulled back to permit the dropping of the napalm. As this was about to be done, the C.O., Company I radioed requesting that the strike be held off as he was going to assault the Apex(A). At approximately 1020 men of Co. 1 rushed the position with hand grenades, and seized the well-prepared Apex(A), killing seven(7) Japanese in the cave, and fourteen (14) more who were attempting to escape. A total of 25 recently dug graves were discovered near the Apex(A). By 1100 Company M made a juncture with Company I at the Apex(A). Once Company I had seized

(47) A-5 P. 21 and A-6

the Apex(A) the C.O. directed fire down the Japanese held ridge (R-1) to the south. At about 1045 the C.O., R/C Company C requested that Company I withhold their fires as he was moving onto the ridge. By 1100 the ridge that the Provisional Battalion (P.A.) had been driven from on 27 July was recaptured by Company C. The Japanese along the ridge apparently realized that the ridge was no longer tenable, with their troops having been driven from the Apex(A), withdrew to the south and southwest. At this point the Japanese throughout the Mayoyao bowl could be seen hastily withdrawing to the south toward Alimit, and to the northwest.

Leaving a security detachment at the Apex(A), the 3rd Battalion with the R/C Company C began their descent on Mayoyao town, meeting very little resistance. By 1500 elements of the 3rd Battalion had entered the town. By 1800 the stragglers in the vicinity of the town had been cleaned up and the Regimental C.P. was moving into the municipal building.

On 8 August, with Company L, 11th Infantry and Company D, 14th Infantry enroute from Ubao and Buhian, and Company M left to secure the town until relieved by units of the 6th Infantry Division, the remainder of the force began its advance to Banaue. At 1000 Company K made juncture with elements of the 1st Infantry (US) near Ducligan. At 1900, after a 47 kilometer hike, the Regimental Commander and leading elements of the 3rd Battalion arrived in Banaue. (48)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

The Mayoyao mission was successfully completed on 8 August 1945 when the area was completely cleared of Japanese and the 11th Infantry (P.A.) made a juncture with the 6th Division at Banaue.

During this operation over 350 Japanese were killed in the Mayoyao area and a large⁵ and well-stocked rice producing region was captured. The losses⁵ to our forces were approximately 50 killed and 200 wounded. (49)

One of the most serious handicaps of this operation was the lack of capable leaders.

(48) A-6; and A-3; (49) A-2, P.19

If the C.O., 3rd Bn., had complied with orders, and by-passed the enemy in the Natonin area-~~which~~ (it was later learned that ~~he~~ could have done) he would have been able to seize the divide east of Bunhian a week earlier. He would have caught the enemy by complete surprise at Bunhian, and once that town had been secured, the divide, ~~that~~ was held by a small force, would have been most vulnerable from the rear. There would have been no reason for the Japanese to remain in position along the ridge, as the apparent purpose for their being there (to delay our forces advance on Mayoyao) would have been defeated.

In addition, had the 3rd Battalion been prepared to attack Mayoyao with the Provisional Battalion a week earlier, again it is believed that the objective would have been taken with little effort. The enemy would have been caught completely off balance and unprepared. As it was, on 27 July, when the Provisional Battalion attack^{ed} the town, the enemy was still preparing his position, and bringing in troops from the direction of Alimit, as well as shifting troops from the ridges to the West to meet our attack from the East.

The failure of the C.O., Provisional Battalion to have seized the key terrain feature ^(Apex A) when he initially occupied the ridge leading up to it on 26 July, plus the fact that the C.O., Company K failed to exploit his advantage of surprise in assaulting the town on 27 July, are two violations of military principles.

If the C.O., Provisional Battalion had seized the Apex (A) and Company K had been withdrawn, the Provisional Battalion would have still been in possession of the key position from which he could have made another attack on the town; and conversely, had Company K continued the assault on the town and captured same, it is not probable that the enemy would have isolated himself at the Apex (A) without a source of water, food and ammunition.

The Mayoyao mission was a difficult operation if undertaken by the best trained and equipped troops. This mission was accomplished by Officers and men, who by no standards, could be considered well-trained

or equipped, with few exceptions. In my opinion the spirit and determination displayed by these Filipino Officers and men under such adverse conditions is deserving of great credit. It is important to note that the entire personnel of this force were Filipinos, with the exception of the Regimental Commander.

LESSONS

Some of the lessons brought out by this operation that bear mentioning are:

1. That good leadership is essential to success in combat.
2. That an objective and comprehensive training program is essential in preparing troops for combat.
3. An excellent communication system is a vital factor in the success of jungle and mountain operations.
4. Portable Hospital Units are an ~~almost~~ absolute necessity in mountain operations where evacuation is difficult or impossible.
5. That surprise is a vital element to a successful attack.
6. That calculated risks must often be taken to effect surprise.
7. That resupply by air is ~~almost~~ a "must" in penetrations deep into the mountains where there exist no roads.
8. That the key terrain in the battle area must be seized and secured.
9. That decisive results are only obtained through the offensive.
10. That light and large caliber portable weapons, such as the 75mm and 57mm recoilless rifles, could be used to a great advantage in jungle and mountain warfare.
11. That terrain is not a barrier to the attack, and conversely, is not alone an obstacle for defense.
12. Once the assault is begun it should not be halted.
13. There are definite and important roles for guerrilla units during War, but to get the maximum benefit from them there should be a far sighted program worked out for their future employment.