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OPERATIONS OF THE 307TH INFANTRY (77TH DIVISION)
IN THE CAPTURE OF THE ISLAND OF LEYTE
1 DECEMBER - 21 DECEMBER 1944
(LEYTE CAMPAIGN)
(Personal Experience of Regimental S-3)

Type of operation described: REGIMENT IN THE ATTACK

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	<u>PAGE</u>
Index	1
Bibliography	2
Introduction	3
Preparations For Ormoc Landing, 1-6 December 1944 .	9
The Capture of Ormoc, 7-10 December 1944	13
The Capture of Valencia and Libungao Road Junction 11-21 December 1944	20
Analysis and Criticism	36
Lessons Learned	41
Map A - The Philippine Islands	
Map B - Leyte - The Sixth Army Situation	
Map C - The Capture of Ormoc	
Map D - The Capture of Valencia and Libungao Road Junction	

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OPERATIONS OF THE 307TH INFANTRY (77TH DIVISION)
IN THE CAPTURE OF THE ISLAND OF LEYTE
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(LEYTE CAMPAIGN)
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INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operation of the 307th Infantry, 77th Infantry Division in the Capture of The Island of Leyte, Philippine Islands, 1-21 December 1944.

The objective is to demonstrate how this regiment, fighting as part of an Infantry Division which emphasized the principles of surprise and the offensive through a relentless execution of the attack, was a deciding factor in the defeat of an enemy that had held up the advance of two army corps for several weeks. However, prior to discussing the operation of the regiment it is necessary to review some of the events leading up to its employment.

Following the successful operations of U. S. Forces in the Marshalls, Marianas, and the Palaus, it was decided by Allied Headquarters to continue the attack against the Japanese by invading the Philippine Islands on 20 October 1944 instead of 20 December 1944 as previously planned. The stepping up of the time was due largely to the recent successful land operations and to the successful naval attacks of Admiral Halsey's Third Fleet on Japanese installations, throughout the Philippine Islands, during the month of September, which had crippled the enemy air and naval forces in this area. (1)

The Island of Leyte, located in the south central part of the Philippine Archipelago (Map A), was chosen for the initial thrust into the Philippines for the following reasons:

1. Its location makes it a natural gateway for access to the Philippines.

2. The beaches on the eastern shore afford excellent landing areas.
3. Landing in this area would divide the forces defending the Philippines.
4. The occupation of Leyte would insure a base for the support of further operations to the north or south under cover of Air and Naval superiority. Existing air fields near the eastern shore could be readily enlarged to furnish bases for land based aircraft at an early stage in the operation.

Leyte is divided throughout its entire length from north to south by a high mountain range known as the Central Cordillera. The mountains rise to a maximum height of 4,426 feet and are characterized by interlocking, knife-like spurs and ridges with heavy tropical foliage. This range forms a natural barrier between the eastern and western coastal areas. To the east of the mountain range is found the Leyte valley. Still further east and just south of Tacloban is a smaller corridor known as the Tacloban valley. To the west of the mountains and north of Ormoc is the Ormoc valley. These three valleys comprise the chief agricultural areas of the island and consist mostly of coconut plantations and sugar cane fields. (2) (Map B)

During the Japanese occupation no extensive farming had been practical and as a result most of these areas were covered with a thick growth of native grasses which were of such height as to affect ground observation to a great extent. (3)

The road system of the island is far from adequate and consists of only one principal all-weather road which extends from Tacloban to Abuyog, across the mountains to Baybay, north

(2) D, p. 5; (3) N

to Carigara, and thence east to Tacloban. No other roads are constructed to withstand any motor traffic during the rainy season and must be considered as poor secondary roads. (4)

(Map B)

On 21 September 1944 the Sixth U. S. Army, commanded by Lieutenant General Walter Krueger and consisting of the X and XXIV Corps was selected by General Headquarters Southwest Pacific Area to seize Leyte. The initial assault landing was scheduled for the east coast of the Island on 20 October 1944.

(5)

Final plans for the assault called for X Corps, consisting of the 1st Cavalry Division and the 24th Infantry Division (-), to land in the vicinity of Tacloban with the mission of capturing Tacloban and all airfields in that vicinity; then driving north to Carigara Bay. The XXIV Corps, consisting of the 7th Infantry Division and the 96th Infantry Division was to land in the vicinity of Dulag with the mission of capturing the Dulag-Burauen-Dagami area which contained several airfields. On order, the XXIV Corps was then to seize Abuyog and move westward to capture Baybay and destroy enemy forces on the west coast of Leyte. (Map B)

At this time, the 32nd Infantry Division at Hollandia and 77th Infantry Division on Guam had been designated as Sixth Army reserve but neither could arrive at the target prior to the middle of November since both organizations had to await the return of the shipping which had lifted the assault forces. Therefore, the initial landings were to be made with a regiment of the 96th Infantry Division designated as the only floating reserve. (6)

(4) D, p. 6; (5) D, p. 18-19; (6) D, p. 23

Information indicated that Leyte was defended by the Japanese 16th Infantry Division, plus attachments, with a total strength of approximately 16,000 troops. (7)

At daylight on 20 October, Allied battleships moved into Leyte Gulf and began a bombardment of the selected landing beaches that was to last for two hours. Meanwhile, aircraft from escort carriers were also conducting strikes in this area. Just prior to the arrival of the assault waves LCIs moved in close and placed a devastating barrage of mortar and rocket fire on the beaches.

Following this preparation, the assault waves landed rapidly against very light resistance due to the effectiveness of the bombardment. (8)

During the period 21 October to 2 November, the advance of Sixth Army was rapid and control of the Leyte Valley and its airfields was gained. The Panaon and San Jaunico Straits also had been opened, and Carigara on the north central coast and Baybay on the west coast had been secured. This ended what was known as phase two of the Sixth Army plan, and the final phase of eliminating the remaining hostile forces was begun. (9) (Map B)

By this time it had become apparent that the enemy was determined to defend the Island at all cost. Since the initial landings the Japanese had struck with their fleet in the decisive naval battle of Leyte and had been constantly pouring large numbers of reinforcements into Leyte through the western ports. Although a large number of casualties was inflicted against the Japanese by air and surface units, a total of approximately 60,000 enemy troops were landed as reinforcements during

(7) D, p. 83; (8) D, p. 32; (9) D, p. 3

the entire operation. Ormoc was the chief port for these landings while a large number was landed at Palompon and other points on the west coast. (10)

In addition to stubborn enemy resistance, the rainy season and a definite lack of Allied air support made the going extremely slow as the Sixth Army tried to push toward the west coast. In the absence of all-weather roads, supply and evacuation became extremely difficult and in many instances it was necessary to rely on the carabao and hand-carry to support forward elements. As a result of these combined factors, very little gain was made during the period 2 November - 5 December. (11) (Map B)

The enemy was not alone in receiving reinforcements during this period. On 14 November, Sixth Army received the 32nd Infantry Division and the 112th Cavalry Regimental Combat Team and attached them to X Corps. The 11th Airborne Division arrived on 18 November and was attached to XXIV Corps. The 77th Infantry Division landed on 23 November and it also was attached to XXIV Corps. (12)

The 77th Division consisting of the 305th, 306th, and 307th Regiments had, prior to this time, completed the Guam campaign and after several alerts and "de-alerts" was finally released from the mission of Sixth Army Reserve when it appeared that it would not be needed on Leyte. (13) Upon release from this assignment, the Division departed from Guam and sailed for New Caledonia for rest and re-equipping. When the convoy was about four days away from its destination orders were received to turn back for Manus Island and there orders were received to proceed to Leyte.

Since a combat mission was not expected ^{at the time of} upon departure from

(10) C, p. 11; (11) B, p. 64 & C, p. 11; (12) D, p. 4; (13) N & D, p. 64

Guam and due to shortage of shipping, some of the least serviceable equipment was left behind. In addition, the Division did not have its' rear echelon as it had been expected that this would be picked up at New Caledonia. Accordingly, there was a decided shortage of heavy equipment and vehicles. (14)

Upon arrival at Dulag on the east coast of Leyte, on 23 November 1944, the Division less the 307th Infantry with its normal combat team attachments was assigned a bivouac area in the vicinity of Tarragona. The 307th Infantry, commanded by Colonel Stephen S. Hamilton, with the 902nd FA Battalion; Company A, 706th Tank Battalion; Company C, 302nd Engineer Combat Battalion, and Company C, 302nd Medical Battalion attached, was directed to proceed to a bivouac area in the vicinity of La Paz, which was located some 12 miles southwest from Dulag and about eight miles inland from the east coast. (Map B)

Even giving a lot of credit to the rainy weather for the terrible condition of the area selected, this bivouac probably rates at the top of the list of the worst sites ever selected for a reserve unit. It possessed none of the desirable characteristics. There was only one road leading into the area and after a small portion of the vehicles had entered this road, it was impassable. This made it necessary to carry all supplies and equipment by hand or on carabao for a distance of approximately one mile. With this condition there could be no such thing as a quick departure to engage the enemy should the tactical situation so dictate.

(14) A, p. 1

During the period 24-28 November, the 307th Infantry continued to make such improvements as were possible to the area and performed patrol missions in the vicinity of the bivouac.

On 29 November, Colonel Hamilton was ordered to furnish one battalion to proceed to Samar to protect a naval airfield being constructed on the southwest tip of the Island. The 2nd Battalion was designated and moved from the La Paz area on 30 November. In addition, Company L, 307th Infantry had been sent to furnish protection to the airfield just west of Dulag. (15)

While the other regiments of the Division had been assigned bivouac areas near the beaches they too had been given various and widely scattered assignments. These ranged from assisting in the loading of ships to relieving forward elements of XXIV Corps. As a result, elements of the 77th Division were located over practically the entire east coast of Leyte and one battalion of the 305th Infantry was at Baybay on the west coast. (16)

PREPARATIONS FOR ORMOC LANDING

1 - 6 December 1944

A warning order was received by the Division on 1 December, alerting it for a shore to shore move and an assault landing in the vicinity of Ormoc. The mission was to break the enemy's defenses and supply lines in this area. This was to be the old Statue of Liberty play and none more qualified could have been chosen than the unit wearing the Statue of Liberty shoulder insignia. (17) This landing had been desired by General Krueger for some time, but it had been impossible to assemble

(15 N; (16) A, p.7; (17) A, p. 7

shipping to lift the forces believed necessary for success. In addition the Navy did not approve of the operation as we had neither air superiority over nor surface control of the waters west of Leyte. (18)

Late on 2 December the 307th Infantry received a warning order of the impending action and was ordered to begin movement of the regiment and attachments to the beach area in the vicinity of Rizal. (Map B) The Regimental Commander and Staff were directed to report to the Division CP on the morning of 3 December for further instructions. Movement plans for the regiment were completed immediately. These plans included the sending of heavy equipment to the new assembly area on 3 December, with personnel to begin movement the following day.

The Regimental Commander and his staff reported to the Division Command Post on the morning of 3 December for briefing and then were taken to XXIV Corps Command Post to receive additional instructions. At this time, it was disclosed that Sixth Army had been able to secure only enough shipping to move 8500 troops of the Division and that the landing must be completed, to include unloading all equipment and supplies, within a two hour period. This limitation was placed on the landing by the Navy as they did not control the Camotes Sea and the enemy still had air superiority over the west of Leyte. These limitations meant that adequate equipment and supplies for two days would have to be transported and unloaded during the allotted time as the first resupply convoy would not arrive prior to D plus two. This action necessitated the loading of all supplies on vehicles as the limited time would not permit the unloading of any bulk supplies.

(18) D, p. 62

Shipping for the operation was limited to APDs, LCIs, LSMs, and LSTs carrying LVTs, LVT(4)s (Amphibious Tanks) and DUKWs. (19) Only enough vessels were assigned the 307th Infantry to transport the rifle battalions, elements of Service and Regimental Headquarters Company, one platoon of the Cannon Company with two M-8, and two M-10 Tank Destroyers from the AT Company. The 1st Battalion, 306th Infantry was attached to the 307th Infantry to replace the 2nd Battalion that was to be left on Samar until a later date. (20)

Movement of the regiment to the beach areas from La Paz became extremely difficult as the roads became impassable to all wheel vehicles except when pulled by a dozer. However, by working around the clock the regiment was able to assemble all personnel and essential fighting equipment on the beach by 2400, 5 December.

The Division order was received at approximately 1700, 5 December. It directed that the assault landing be made in the vicinity of Deposito on the west coast of Leyte, with the 307th Infantry and 305th Infantry landing abreast, 307th on the left. The mission was to establish a beachhead and to be prepared to turn north to capture Ormoc. (21) Preliminary preparation on the beach areas was to be limited to the five-inch guns of four destroyers, and two LCIs carrying rockets. (22)

At this time, the Japanese 26th Division opposed the U. S. XXIV Corps and the 1st Japanese Division with miscellaneous units opposed the U. S. X Corps. The combined strength of these units was estimated to be approximately 40,000 and this landing was to be made in rear of their

(19) A, p. 10 & N; (20) N; (21) M, p. 7 & N; (22) A, p. 10 & 11

positions in an effort to break the stubborn resistance of these "crack" Jap divisions. (22a)

on map - place not shown

In a coordinated plan of action, XXIV Corps plans directed that beginning on 5 December the 7th Division would launch an attack to the north and the 11th Airborne Division would attack through the mountains to complete the "pincer" on the Jap 26th Division. Meanwhile elements of the X Corps in the vicinity of Limon were to intensify their activity and drive south. (23)

The landing beaches that were selected were located between the Baod and Bagonbon Rivers about four miles south of Ormoc. The beach area was about 1000 yards in width and may be considered much smaller than that normally desired for landing a large force rapidly. It was decided after exhaustive studies of aerial photos and conferences with guerillas and natives familiar with the area, that this beach afforded the best chances of success. (24) (Map C)

Having made tentative plans based on warning and fragmentary orders, Colonel Hamilton, upon receipt of the final Division order, immediately assembled the unit commanders and issued the regimental order. Landing would be made with the 1st Battalion, 307th Infantry and 1st Battalion, 306th abreast with the 1st Battalion, 306th on the right and 3rd Battalion, 307th Infantry in reserve with the mission of securing that portion of the beachhead in the zone and to be prepared to continue the attack to capture Ormoc on order. Assault battalions were to be loaded aboard APDs and would land in LCVPs while the remainder would land directly from LCIs and LCMs, as the beaches would permit these ships to be brought in close to shore.

(22-a) B, p. 9-10; (23) C, p. 16; (24) A, p. 11

After working practically the entire night 5-6 December assembling and checking equipment and preparing boat teams, the regiment began loading at 0630, 6 December across the Rizal beaches. Loading was completed by 1200 and the convoy immediately joined the remainder of the Division and sailed for the target area. (25)

The task force included only seven Infantry Battalions and one battalion of Field Artillery and was organized as follows:

Division Troops

Div Hq & Hq Co (Det)	1118th Engr Gp Hq
77 MP Plat (Det)	Attached: 233 Engr Bn
77 Rcn Tr	1 SBC Team,
	292 JASCO
77 Sig Co (Det)	Btry D, 7 AA (AW) Bn
77 QM Co (Det)	Co A, 88 Cml Wpns Bn
777 Ord Co (IM) (Det)	92nd Bomb Disp Squad
Hq & Hq Btry, Div Arty (Det)	6th Supp Aircraft Pty
902 FA Bn	Co A, 776th Amph Tk Bn
302 Engr Bn (-Co's A,B,C))	Co A, 718 Amph Trac Bn
302 Med Bn (-Co's A,B,C)	Det, Co B, 536 Amph Trac Bn
Attached: 95th Port Surg Hosp	
305th Inf	
Atchd: Co A, 302 Engr Bn	
Co A, 302 Med Bn	
3 SFC Parties	
307th Inf (less 2d Bn)	
Atchd: 1st Bn, 306th Inf	
Co C, 302 Engr Bn	
Co C, 302 Med Bn	
3 SFC Parties	
2d Bn, 306 Inf	(26)

Under cover of darkness the trip around the southern tip of Leyte to the target area was uneventful and all ships arrived off Deposito at approximately 0545, 7 December. (27)

THE CAPTURE OF ORMOC
7 - 10 DECEMBER 1944

Following the limited bombardment of the beaches and under the protection of newly arrived P-40 air cover, the 307th

(25) N; (26) A, p. 13; (27) A, p. 11

Infantry stormed ashore beginning at 0707 hours with the 305th Infantry on the right. The landing caught the enemy completely by surprise and resistance was extremely light. Only a few of the prepared positions were occupied. Within forty-five minutes, the initial beachhead had been secured. (Map C) By 0930, all troops and supplies had been put ashore in what probably was record time for landing an Infantry Division. However, it must be stated that the speed in landing was somewhat aided by the appearance of enemy planes overhead just as the landing started. The enemy attacks were directed toward the shipping instead of the landing beaches and despite our air cover the Navy lost two ships prior to their departure for the east coast of Leyte. (28)

It had been planned initially to establish on the beachhead and await additional supplies and reinforcements on the D plus 2 convoy. However, since the enemy resistance had been so light and in his desire to capitalize on the surprise gained, the Division Commander attached the 2nd Battalion, 306th Infantry, to the 307th Infantry and directed the regiment to continue the attack to the north while the 1st Battalion, 306th Infantry, assisted the 305th Infantry ^{in holding} ~~to hold~~ the beachhead line to the east. (29)

The Regimental Commander immediately directed that the attack be continued astride Highway 2 with the 1st Battalion, 307th Infantry, on the left and the 2nd Battalion, 306th Infantry on the right. By 1600 Ipil had been captured against only scattered and surprised enemy elements. The burning of ammunition dumps started by the withdrawing enemy in Ipil slowed the

(28) A, p. 11; (29) A, p. 12

advance of the 1st Battalion and forced it to bypass the town initially. (30) At this time, orders were received to hold up the advance and tie in with the 305th Infantry, which had extended its left flank over to the Baod River, and to be prepared for a counterattack from the east. (31) This mission was rapidly accomplished, with the assault battalions keeping their respective positions to the north and east, while the 3rd Battalion was placed in position near the beach to prevent an enemy landing to our rear. (32) (Map C)

Enemy resistance the initial day indicated that the landing had been a complete surprise. He was busily engaged to the north, east, and south and at the time of landing only service troops were located in the vicinity of our beachhead area. (33)

The attack was resumed at 0800, 8 December with battalions abreast, 3rd Battalion on the left and 2nd Battalion, 306th Infantry on the right. Camp Downes was the objective. Initial ~~fire~~ preparations for the attack were fired by the 902nd Field Artillery Battalion and Company "A", 776th Amphibious Tank Battalion. However, the first volley from the Tank Battalion was short and eliminated an entire mortar squad of Company "M". Investigation later revealed that the battalion had not registered the previous day and was using data computed by the 902nd Field Artillery Battalion. At least in this case it was clear that the exchange of exact data between unlike units without adjustments was not the thing to do.

Immediately upon crossing the line of departure it was necessary for the 3rd Battalion to cross in its zone, a rice

(30) N; (31) A, p. 12; (32) N; (33) A, p. 13

field that was swept with automatic fire, from a stream approximately 700 yards to the north. In addition, the enemy had fox holes located throughout the field that were so well camouflaged that one could approach within a few feet prior to observing the position and then usually it was too late. While the 3rd Battalion was having difficulties in getting the attack rolling, the 2nd Battalion, 306th Infantry, was being engaged by the same stubborn resistance in its zone from enemy troops firing machine guns and mortars from the many finger ridges and stream beds. It was only after bringing up the M-8s and M-10s and using them as assault guns to deliver point blank fire on the enemy positions in coordination with the artillery and 4.2 mortars that the enemy position was breeched for a depth of approximately 2100 yards. This placed our front lines approximately 1000 yards from Camp Downes.

During the afternoon the 1st Battalion, 307th Infantry, protecting the right (east) flank of the regiment, successfully repelled an enemy counterattack of approximately a company in strength. This was the first such enemy action of this operation and was an indication that the enemy was recovering and was ready to engage in battle.

Material captured during the first day included many tons of ammunition that had been placed in small dumps along the road. Each dump contained two to four truck loads of all types of ammunition and they were usually spaced from two to five hundred yards apart on both sides of the road.

Prior to continuing the attack on 9 December the 1st Battalion, 306th Infantry, relieved the 2nd Battalion, 306th, which returned to the control of its parent organization.

*Maintain
5th*

This objective for the second day was again Camp Downes, formerly a small post of the Philippine Army, which consisted of a small group of wooden buildings located on a commanding ridge overlooking Ormoc and Ormoc Bay. Enemy strength on this position and the ridge extending toward the mountains to the east was estimated to be at least two rifle companies heavily supported by automatic weapons. The position was extremely well organized and was prepared to cover all approaches from the east and south. The plan of operation was to make a frontal attack with the 3rd Battalion and envelop with the 1st Battalion, 306th Infantry, to the east of the barracks. It was in this manner, but only after extremely heavy fighting, that the position was captured late in the afternoon of 9 December. (Map C) Some indications of the strong resistance may be obtained from the information that in the zone of the 3rd Battalion, two light machine guns, eleven heavy machine guns, two 40-mm AA guns and three 75-mm howitzers were captured or destroyed. (34) In addition to his ground defense of the position, enemy air forces were active and during the afternoon combed the Regimental Command Post and train bivouac, inflicting several casualties. (35)

The Division received reinforcements when the remainder of the 306th Infantry plus the 305th Field Artillery Battalion landed at Ipil at 0400, 9 December. This completed the landing of all rifle battalions of the Division with the exception of the 2nd Battalion 307th Infantry, and increased the artillery support to two light battalions. The medium battalion was located in rear of the 7th Division to the south and was

(34) M, p. 8 & N; (35) M, p. 9 & N

available for supporting fire on call.

During this time the 305th Infantry continued to protect the south and east flanks of the Division and patrol to the south and east. (36)

Having captured Camp Downes, which afforded commanding ground for the attack on Ormoc, Division ordered the plan of attack for 10 December. The 307th was to release the 2nd Battalion, 306th, to control of the 306th Infantry and make a frontal attack on the town. The 306th was directed to envelop the enemy's east flank and cut off Ormoc at the Antilao River. (37) Map C)

At this time the 307th Infantry had only the 1st and 3rd Battalions to continue the attack as the 2nd Battalion was still on Samar. Regimental order directed the attack to be continued with a frontal attack on Ormoc from the south in column of battalions, 1st Battalion leading. All heavy weapons of the 3rd Battalion would support the attack initially from positions north of Camp Downes. (38) In addition, two battalions of artillery, Company "A", 776 Amphibious Tank Battalion, Company "A", 88th Chemical Weapons Battalion, M-8s, M-10s, and LCMs firing rockets from Ormoc Bay, gave the city and the high ground to the north a devastating pounding prior to the time of attack at 0930. (39)

Despite the burning buildings, exploding ammunition dumps, (including the town's principle church which had been filled with artillery and small arms ammunition) and a relentless pounding by all supporting weapons, the Japanese chose, in their traditional style, to remain and defend the town to the last man. The Japanese defense of the town can probably be

(36) A. p. 15; (37) A, p. 16; (38) N; (39) A, p. 16

classified as being typical of a standard village defense as they defended from within and from dugouts underneath the buildings with all fires well coordinated. This strong defense resulted in a slow building to building fight for the 1st Battalion which employed grenades, bayonets, demolitions, and maximum use of point blank fire from the two M-8s and M-10s of the Regiment.

At approximately 1600, the Regimental Commander directing the fight from an OP in the front lines of the 1st Battalion, as was his custom, directed Company "I" to be committed on the left flank along the beach in an effort to complete the encirclement of the city. This was based on his observation of the enemy's weakness along the beach area. At this time the 3rd Battalion, less Company "I", had been moved to a position on the right flank of the 1st Battalion, prepared to attack the town from the rear of the 306th Infantry. (40)

The 306th Infantry, through a rapid and well executed attack, had driven to the north and now was heavily engaging the enemy in the vicinity of the Antilao River. By their action a great deal of the pressure was relieved from the 307th Infantry. (41) Company "I" quickly drove toward the Antilao River under cover of the partly destroyed buildings along the water front and completed an encirclement which permitted the 1st Battalion to complete the mopping up.

At approximately 1645 the front lines were located north of Ormoc along the Antilao River. (Map C) Thus the fall of Ormoc denied the enemy the use of the last principal port on the west coast for the purpose of receiving reinforcements and supplies.

(40) N; (41) A, p. 17

This, together with the large quantities of ammunition and signal equipment captured or destroyed in the town, was to prove a deciding blow to the enemy's defense in Ormoc Valley.

(42)

It was at this time that General A. D. Bruce, Commanding General, 77th Infantry Division, who had been previously designated as Commanding General of all XXIV Corps troops on the west side of Leyte, sent the following message to the Commanding Generals of the 7th Infantry Division, the 11th Airborne Division, XXIV Corps, and the Sixth Army: "Have rolled two sevens in Ormoc. Come 7 and 11. Bruce."

THE CAPTURE OF VALENCIA AND LIBUNGAO
11 - 21 DECEMBER 1944

A limited attack was planned for the morning of 11 December for the purpose of gaining a more suitable position to the north of the town, to enable the Division to effect a general reorganization and to permit the moving of supply dumps and a hospital into Ormoc prior to launching the attack up the Ormoc Valley to capture Valencia. The plan called for the 307th and 306th to attack abreast astride Highway No. 2, 306th on the right. Time of attack was 0930. (43)

Due to the frontage assigned the 307th, the Regimental Commander directed the employment of both the 1st and 3rd Battalions, with the 1st Battalion on the right. (44)

The attack was launched following the usual artillery preparations. However, the 1st Battalion was stopped cold on the north bank of the Antilao River by intense enemy small arms and machine gun fire from the vicinity of Cogon. (Map D)

(42) N; (43) A, p. 17; (44) M, p. 9 & N

This same resistance was encountered by the 1st Battalion of the 306th Infantry and only negligible advances were made in the center of the Division zone. The 3rd Battalion, 307th, attacking along the bay and on the left of the 1st Battalion did not encounter this same strong resistance and advanced approximately 1000 yards. During this attack every available Infantry supporting weapon was brought to bear on this strong position based around Cogon but the enemy could not be overcome. The M-8s and M-10s of both regiments were brought up and delivered point blank fire on the position without any noticeable effect. Artillery time fire was also ineffective. (45)

This enemy position was built around a reinforced concrete building that was circled with deep fox holes every few yards on the elevated plateau overlooking the bridge, river bank, and the rice paddies to the east and west. These entrenchments were covered overhead with coconut logs, sheet metal or earth lids. Each had only a small port from which to fire. This necessarily limited their fields of fire but all positions were mutually supporting. The concrete building was a small fortress containing many machine gun emplacements and sniper posts. The position was originally planned for a battalion to defend toward the north, but it was estimated this ^{Force} ~~position~~ was later reinforced to approximately the size of a regiment with an excellent all-around defense. (46)

At 1600, on 11 December, the 305th Infantry, having been relieved from protecting the southern flank of the beachhead, moved two battalions forward and went into position astride Highway No. 2 prepared to continue the attack to the north on

(45) A, p. 18; (46) B, p. 2

12 December. (47) This relieved the 1st Battalion, 307th Infantry which moved to protect the left flank of the division along the beaches of Ormoc Bay. (48)

At approximately 2300 on 11 December, two Japanese ships comparable in type and size to a LST entered Ormoc Bay, apparently not having received the word that the port had changed hands. First indication of the ships was detected by members of the 7th AAA Battalion located near the mouth of the Antilao River when a 50 man landing barge was observed moving toward the pier at Ormoc. All gun crews were alerted and when the enemy craft came within range and was identified it was shattered by the 40-mm guns and 50 Caliber machine guns. (49) At this time members of the 307th Cannon Company reported to the 307th Command Post that they observed a ship moving toward the beach just in front of the 3rd Battalion lines. Lieutenant Ted Bell, the platoon leader, who was in command of the M-8s on the beach, requested permission to fire immediately but Colonel Hamilton would not permit it until a check could be made or the ship definitely identified as Japanese. This precaution was definitely justified as a resupply convoy was expected to bring in much-needed supplies during the night and this craft easily could have been a friendly ship out of the formation. At this time, the 3rd Battalion was alerted and instructed to send up some 60-mm flares. This was done and the ship was again reported by Lieutenant Bell to be definitely Japanese. The Regimental Commander then ordered the Cannon Company and the AT Platoon armed with M-10s to open fire as the 3rd Battalion fired illuminating flares for them. Through

(47) A, p. 18; (48) N; (49) A, p. 19

this coordination direct hits were secured immediately upon the ship as it was beaching and then mortars and artillery fires ^{was} were placed along the beaches and inland of the target to prevent personnel from getting ashore. (50)

The Japanese returned the fire with their AA guns but it was widely scattered and ineffective. Meanwhile as the Japanese Captain attempted to pull the ship away from shore it burst into flames and soon sank. Information obtained from a prisoner of war and patrols indicated that approximately 150 men, two tanks, miscellaneous weapons, and ammunition had been unloaded before the ship sank. (51) However, another prisoner of war reported that about 500 Japanese were lost with the ship. Included in the captured material was one new Japanese amphibious tank. (52)

The other vessel was observed by the light of the burning ship but could not be taken under fire until dawn. At that time it was engaged with artillery and M-10s as it attempted to get out of Ormoc Bay by hugging the west coast line. It received several hits and was smoking badly and moving very slowly when it got out of range. (53)

During 12-13 December the activities of the 307th Infantry were confined primarily to limited objective attacks protecting the left flank of the Division and patrolling to the west. (54)

Orders were received on 13 December to send a patrol north on the west side of the Ormoc-Valencia Highway to Valencia to determine enemy dispositions and locate suitable routes for moving troops across country toward Valencia. The 306th Infantry received a similar order except their objective was Catayom. (55)

(50) N; (51) A, p. 19; (52) M, p. 9 & N; (53) A, p. 19; (54) N; (55) A, p. 21

In compliance with this order the Regimental Commander selected the I and R Platoon leader, Lieutenant Earl Hodges, and Lieutenant Rosario Chevaz as patrol leaders and asked for volunteers to complete the patrols of two officers and six men each. The large number that volunteered made it difficult to pick such a small group. While it may seem odd to ask for volunteers for such a patrol, it is believed that the 307th Commander was definitely justified as the patrol was going approximately eight miles in rear of the enemy lines for a period of 24 hours and if captured it was certain death. A guerrilla guide was selected to accompany each patrol. This group was quickly assembled, oriented, and promptly departed on the mission. (56)

On 14 December, the regiment's front lines were still located in the vicinity of Linao. (Map D) A reconnaissance in force was ^{made} ~~sent~~ along the beach road to the west. The force consisted of two rifle companies reinforced with one dismounted cannon platoon, supported by two M-8s and M-10s. Upon return the beach area was dotted with fires from burning ammunition and other material. Included in the destroyed items were six amphibious tanks, seven landing barges, one eighty foot, two masted schooner, four 40-mm AA guns, four 20-mm AA guns, several machine guns, a radio transmitter, and large quantities of miscellaneous supplies. Twenty-one of the enemy were killed by this force. (57)

During this period the 305th and 306th Infantry continued to pound the strong enemy position at Cogon with only limited success. Attempts were made to envelop the position from both

(56) N; (57) A, p. 23

flanks but the Japanese had established an excellent all-around defense that repelled these attacks with heavy losses.

One of the 307th patrols returned on 15 December with information regarding the terrain and reported that only small enemy patrols were observed. However, natives had reported that a large Japanese force was located in Valencia. The patrol did not enter Valencia but reached the edge of San Jose. (Map D) The patrol leader was immediately taken to the Division Command Post as the Division Commander wished to talk with him. This information along with that obtained by the patrols of the 306th Infantry gave the Division Commander the information desired to complete his plan. (58)

Orders were immediately received from Division that the attack would be continued on the morning of 16 December with the 305th continuing the attack on Cogon; the 307th Infantry making a wide envelopment to the west and then north to capture Valencia; and the 306th Infantry following initially the 307th Infantry and then swinging northeast to cut Highway 2 between Catayom and Dayhagan. (59) (Map D)

During the night 14-15 December the remainder of the 2nd Battalion, 307th Infantry, was landed at Ipil and moved immediately to join the regiment at Linao. Company "F" had joined the regiment on 12 December. This reinforcement was certainly welcomed as preparations were made for the envelopment. Since the route was to be across rice paddies, waist-deep rivers and over terrain that no land vehicles could cross, ^{no vehicles} only foot troops were taken and adequate equipment and supplies for two days had to be carried by hand. Four amphibious

(58) N; (59) A. p. 24

tractors were supposed to be assigned to the regiment for supply and evacuation purposes but all of these did not arrive in time to accompany the unit on 16 December. In the meantime, approximately 100 natives were secured to assist in carrying ammunition and signal equipment. Late this day, a battalion of the 7th Infantry Division moved up and relieved the Regiment of ^{the} ~~the~~ responsibility ~~for its~~ ~~sector~~ in defending Ormoc. (60)

At 0730 on 16 December, the regiment moved out in column of battalions, the 2nd Battalion leading, followed by the 1st Battalion and the 3rd Battalion. This force was followed by the supply caravan which included the natives and dismounted personnel of the Cannon and AT Companies. The Cannon and AT Company personnel assisted in carrying supplies and furnished security for the group.

Soon after starting, a Japanese patrol was encountered east of Liloan. Fortunately it chose to fight the 2nd Battalion in true Japanese style and the entire unit of 12 men was eliminated. Had the patrol decided to return with the information of the movement it is possible that the envelopment might not have been so successful.

The move was made over the difficult terrain under a broiling tropical sun in a cloudless sky. Often the heavily burdened troops were wading through mud from ankle to knee deep. It was with pleasure that they crossed the Pagsangahan River at Bao by wading through the water of better than four feet in depth. During the crossing all supplies and weapons had to be held above the head.

(60) N

Just after the crossing, the second patrol that was sent out on 13 December under Lieutenant Chevaz reported to the Regimental Commander. They had obtained information regarding enemy activities farther north in the vicinity of the Libungao-Palompon Road. Lieutenant Chevaz was instructed to return to the Division Command Post and make a personal report to the Division G-2.

It was truly a fine tribute to the heavily burdened men who arrived at San Jose at approximately 1600 with the necessary equipment and the stamina needed to continue the attack. By this time, the 100 native carriers had grown to a small army of about 500 as everyone in that section seemed to get the word and join the column as if we were going on a picnic.

As the leading elements of the 2nd Battalion were entering San Jose they were engaged by an enemy force estimated to be two platoons. These were caught by surprise as the enemy outpost on the south edge of the village was preparing supper and did not observe our forward security element until they were a hundred yards away. Apparently no other word had been received of our approach and the village was soon cleared. (Map D)

During the day a distance of eight miles had been covered and only the medium artillery was now in supporting range of the regiment. The Regimental Commander ordered the establishment of a perimeter defense for the night. Meanwhile, an artillery liaison plane using a narrow road for a landing strip began the evacuation of the casualties, as the amphibious tractors had not joined the unit. Only a part of the casualties were removed in this manner as only one plane was available and it had to be used to register the artillery protective fires prior to darkness. The remaining casualties

were assembled in the regimental aid station to await evacuation the following day. (61)

During the day, the 305th Infantry had captured the Cogon road junction and the 306th Infantry, moving under conditions similar to those of the 307th Infantry, had advanced to a position about 1200 yards from its objective. (62)

The regiment spent a quiet night, which was broken only by the dive bombing of a few million mosquitoes and the suspense as to when and where the 2000 Japanese reported by the natives to be in the Valencia area would strike. The expected counter-attack did not materialize. At dawn on 17 December cub planes were available to evacuate the remainder of the casualties.

During the early morning the Division Commander arrived by liaison plane at the Regimental Command Post and informed the Regimental Commander that the 305th and 306th Infantry were to continue the attack generally as planned for the preceding day. The 307th Infantry would remain in present position pending the bombardment of the Valencia area with artillery and an air strike which had been arranged for during the morning. In view of the large number of enemy reported in Valencia, this action was believed essential for a successful advance. (63)

The target area was continuously plastered by the Corps artillery, 155-mm rifles, throughout the morning of 17 December, ~~until about 1230~~. About 1240 the air strike began and continued until 1330. Following this, the medium artillery opened up again and as a result of the terrific pounding by bombs and artillery shells some of the enemy were forced to

(61) N; (62) A, p. 25; (63) N

withdraw. Air observers reported an estimated 2000 of the enemy moving eastward toward the mountains. (64)

The 307th Infantry resumed the attack at 1415 in a wedge formation with the 2nd Battalion attacking astride the San Jose-Valencia Road and the 1st and 3rd Battalions echeloned to the right and left rear with the 3rd Battalion on the right. As the regiment left San Jose, it ~~was~~ immediately met with strong ~~resistance~~^{only} that apparently had been driven close to our front lines by the bombardment of the objective and this increased as the 2nd Battalion drove closer to Valencia and its airfield. However, at 1640 leading elements of the 2nd Battalion ~~was~~^{were} on the southwest corner of the airfield. It was at this point that the attack was held up for the night. Enemy forces identified during the day were the Japanese 33rd regiment and the 47th Air Field Company. (65)

At 0830 the next day, the attack was continued in the same formation with Valencia and its airfield the objective. Against limited resistance the town and air strip were taken by 0905. At this time the Regimental Commander ordered the 3rd Battalion to send a patrol south on Highway 2 to contact the 306th Infantry while the remainder of the regiment continued to mop up Valencia and patrol to the north and east. Patrol contact was gained at 1100 with the 306th Infantry south of Valencia.

The two regiments ~~were~~ joined during the afternoon, and the Ormoc-Valencia Road was now open. This enabled the 307th Infantry to receive its first supplies since 15 December. The replenishment of ammunition and rations was welcomed for both

(64) A, p. 27; (65) M, p. 10 & N

were almost exhausted and the ammunition on hand was definitely not adequate to repel a strong enemy counterattack. (66)

The Division plan for 19 December was for the 305th Infantry to move to Valencia and relieve the 307th Infantry of the defenses around the town. The 306th Infantry was to make another envelopment to the north and capture the crossing of the Tagbong River and the Libungao-Palompon Road. (Map D) The 307th Infantry was to continue the attack northeast astride the highway to seize the Libungao road junction. (67)

The 307th Infantry plan of advance was to use the wedge formation, with the 2nd Battalion leading and the 1st and 3rd Battalions echeloned to the left and right rear, respectively. It was thought that this formation would give the best control as well as furnish the maximum protection against an attack on either flank.

Colonel Hamilton with his Observation Post group consisting of S-3, Artillery Liaison Officer, Radio Operator, telephone operator, and messenger, habitually operated from an Observation Post just in rear of the assault companies and sometime it was within these units. Observation was limited at best and he always insisted that the Observation Post be at the best vantage point, which was the front lines.

Highway No. 2 to the north was crossed by many streams and finger ridges. Generally the vegetation was thick along both sides of the road as fields that a few years ago had been growing sugar cane, had now been permitted to grow up in a tall native grass that in most cases was higher than a

(66) M, p. 11; (67) A, p. 29

man's head. This greatly restricted observation and in every way favored the defender.

Initially only scattered resistance was encountered in the drive toward Libungao. This resistance consisted of small groups of riflemen, supported by automatic weapons, dug in along the streams and finger ridges. Riflemen with grenades and bayonets were required in most cases to eliminate them. (68) By approximately 1700, 19 December the leading elements of the 2nd Battalion had advanced 3 miles to reach the Neghalen River, where they were stopped by a strong enemy position on the high ground to the north. (Map D) Here the observation was good for the enemy and he had skillfully organized the commanding terrain in such a manner that his machine guns, mortars, and artillery employed in direct fire, placed effective fire throughout the regimental zone.

The position was engaged with all available supporting weapons, including the 902nd Field Artillery Battalion which had moved up within supporting range, but with little observed success.

Due to the late hour, employment of neither the 1st or 3rd Battalion to envelop the position could be accomplished.

The defense for the night was an all-around defense for the entire regiment less the service train. The replenishing of supplies could not be accomplished prior to darkness and the regimental train was ordered by Colonel Hamilton to establish its own bivouac just in rear of the regiment instead of trying to return to the vicinity of Valencia. It was believed

(68) N

unsafe to attempt the return of the trucks to the rear as many of the enemy had been bypassed during the day or driven back into the hills to the east of Highway No. 2, and troops were not available to occupy all of the ground gained. During the night the Service Company personnel had to drive off several small groups of the enemy who attempted to enter their position. (69)

Throughout the night the strong enemy position was blasted with artillery and mortar fire in an effort to soften it up for the attack in the morning. Enemy patrols were very active and infiltration parties were repelled by both the 1st and 2nd Battalions during the night.

Preceded by a heavy artillery preparation the regiment assaulted the position at 0830 on 20 December in the same wedge formation employed the previous day, the 2nd Battalion again leading. This position was to prove the strongest encountered since Camp Downes and was defended by elements of the Japanese 1st Division and the 5th Regiment of the 8th Division. Order of Battle indicated that these units were classed among the best of the enemy forces. It was estimated that the enemy force defending in the 307th zone was about 2000, well supported by machine guns, mortars and artillery. (70)

The 2nd Battalion made a frontal attack on the position while the 1st Battalion moved in close on the left flank of the 2nd and assisted in reducing the enemy right flank. The bulk of the assault was carried by the 2nd Battalion as it

(69) N; (70) M, p. 11 & N

moved in with bayonets fixed following the artillery and mortar preparation.

Just as the high ground was being overrun at approximately 1000 the Japanese launched a counterattack in true "Banzai" style with an estimated force of 200 men from a position directly to the north. Officers were leading the force waving their sabres and all the troops were screaming "Banzai, Banzai". This attack was repelled by companies "E" and "F" and resulted in the elimination of the entire howling mob. Another counterattack of approximately the same strength and executed in the same manner followed shortly. This attacking force was likewise eliminated as ^{they were} ~~it was~~ coming across fairly open ground directly into the 2nd Battalion position. Enemy material captured included several large ammunition dumps and about 30 trucks located immediately in rear of this position.

Following a short reorganization the attack was continued against very light resistance until the middle of the afternoon when a strong position was encountered about 1000 yards south of Libungao. (71)

This was a typical Japanese defense consisting of a well dug in position, expertly camouflaged, and supported by weapons masterfully employed. When the frontal attack of the 2nd Battalion was stopped, the Regimental Commander ordered a double envelopment of the enemy position. 1st Battalion on the left was to envelop the enemy right flank and cut the highway just in rear of the enemy position. The 3rd Battalion was ordered to envelop the enemy left and drive deep to the north

(71) M, P. 11 & N

to the regimental objective.

Although maximum use of the 4.2 mortars and artillery was made, both envelopments were stopped short of their objective by fierce enemy resistance. In the 3rd Battalion zone, movement was through tall grass that limited visibility to a few feet. Just before dark Company K, the leading company, moved into a strong position and suffered several casualties. The Battalion was driven back a short distance, without an opportunity to retrieve its casualties and the ground could not be regained. The next morning when this position was finally taken it was reported that the wounded left behind had been bayoneted by the Japanese. (72)

For a defense during the night, the 1st and 3rd Battalions refused their flanks to protect the regimental flanks. Regimental Headquarters Company and elements of the Cannon and AT Company defended the rear.

During the period 19-20 December the 306th Infantry had successfully captured its objective. The bridge over the Tagbong River had been reached, but the 1st Battalion, 306th Infantry, which had been given the mission of securing the bridge was receiving strong counterattacks from the enemy located west of the river. In the meantime, the 2nd and 3rd Battalions were driving east toward the Libungao Road Junction. (73) Due to the close proximity of the 306th and 307th, artillery fire had to be closely coordinated. This was done by artillery liaison plane and through the Assistant Division Commander who was with the 307th Infantry. (74)

(72) N; (73) A, p. 30-31; (74) N

In a desire to capture the objective as quickly as possible, thus effecting a juncture of the 306th Infantry which would permit evacuation of their casualties, and to join X Corps units driving from the north, the Division Commander directed the attack to be continued on the morning of 21 December.

In preparation for this attack, the artillery expended a half-unit of fire in placing intensive fires on the enemy position in front of the 307th Infantry throughout the night of 20-21 December, and a concentrated 30 minute preparation prior to the attack at 0700, 21 December. (75)

The attack of the 307th Infantry was resumed with the 1st Battalion enveloping the enemy position from the west. Enemy opposition was light, as those that were alive in their holes were too stunned by the artillery to offer organized resistance. By 0800 the 307th Infantry joined with the 306th at the Libungao road junction.

At this time the 2nd Battalion, 307th Infantry, and SPs of the Cannon and AT Companies were attached to the 306th Infantry to assist in its drive northward to contact the 1st Cavalry Division, X Corps, which was attacking south along Highway No. 2. (76) Contact was gained during the late afternoon, thus opening the road from Ormoc to Carigara Bay.

The 307th Infantry then went into a defensive position defending the south sector of the Libungao road junction. (77)

The last organized resistance was completely broken four days later, 25 December, when the 1st Battalion, 305th Infantry completed an amphibious envelopment and captured Palompon,

(75) A, p. 31; (76) M, p. 11 & N; (77) A, p. 31-32

the last main port held by the enemy.

Thus ends the operation of the 307th Infantry in the Leyte campaign except for the extensive mopping up activities.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM

In studying the Leyte operation it should be kept in mind that the enemy at all times continued to fight to the last man with the fanatical zeal which is characteristic of his defense doctrine. Throughout the operation it was clearly indicated that the Japanese soldier was well trained in the use of the shovel and the employment of fortification material, and with these he habitually prepared a strong defensive position regardless of failure to receive air or artillery support. Normally, enemy positions were protected with overhead covering and were expertly camouflaged. The fact that his ammunition did not produce a noticeable muzzle blast or trail of smoke was a large contributing factor in the concealment of his defense. Weapons were mutually supporting and the area was generally organized for all-around protection. His occupation of a position with orders to hold at all cost meant making it his grave. This was strongly verified by the fact that the 307th Infantry during the 15 day operation killed 4157 while taking only one prisoner.

Some may wish to criticize this action of not taking more prisoners and say that the unit lacked training in the true value of a prisoner in obtaining information. To those who fought the Japanese, I believe an explanation is unnecessary; others are reminded that to the average Japanese soldier, surrender was thought to be worse than death. At all times every opportunity was given the enemy to surrender.

The decision to make the landing in rear of an enemy force estimated at 40,000 was in itself a bold venture, especially when consideration is given to the advantages that belong to the defender. In addition, the landing was made with about one half of the 77th Division with no chance of resupply or reinforcements for at least two days. Time did not permit the conduct of rehearsals which are definitely desirable in the preparation for amphibious operations. However, the commanders were aware of the risk involved as General Krueger is reported to have said that this certainly could have been a "Pacific Dunkirk". It is personally believed that the loss of this entire force would not have equalled the loss of men in trying to dislodge the enemy from the mountain positions had the western landing not been made. The element of surprise was so great that it upset the whole defensive plans of the enemy. To obtain surprise, a calculated risk had to be taken.

The landing beaches were narrow, in fact, much too narrow for landing a division normally. This selection was made by the Division Commander only after a thorough study of aerial photographs and evaluation of information received from friendly natives who had recently been in that area. The selection was based on the desire to obtain maximum surprise and strike the least resistance possible before getting established ashore. Both of these conditions were satisfied in the landing area selected.

The five major effects accomplished by the landing at Deposito are probably best stated in G-2 Summary, Leyte,

7-25 December 1944, 77th Infantry Division. "(a), It surprised, split, and confused the Jap command (b), it isolated the Jap 26th Division which was attempting to drive our forces out of the southern valley; (c), it thwarted the Jap plan to strike across the mountains ~~and~~ with a sizable force ^{and} to seize our airstrips in the BURAUEN area in conjunction with an attack by airborne troops; (d), it drew off and destroyed heretofore uncommitted Jap reserves, thereby relieving the situation on all other fronts and hastening the juncture of the X Corps with the forces of the XXIV Corps striking across the mountains and up the ORMOC valley; and (e), it denied the Japs the use of ORMOC as a port for receiving reinforcements and resupply; it denied them the use of Highway No. 2 south of ORMOC and drove the Japs north up the ORMOC valley where their remaining troops were ultimately annihilated or scattered into isolated ineffective groups and destroyed separately."

During this operation, the time of attack was varied daily and it resulted in never permitting the enemy an opportunity to get set at a particular time for an attack or to fully relax between them.

Artillery preparations preceeding the attacks varied in length up to as much as thirty minutes. Although artillery support was used to a maximum degree, it is believed that more effect could have been gained had the preparatory fires included definite lulls to permit the enemy to man his battle station and then bring down additional concentrations.

Although this narrative covered a series of engagements that had a decisive effect upon the outcome of the Leyte

Campaign, at no time was contact lost with the enemy once it was gained. This alone was a big factor in the success of the operation as it permitted the employment of our forces in a tactically sound manner.

The attack to capture Camp Downes located on the high ground overlooking Ormoc and Ormoc Bay was accomplished by combining a frontal and a flanking action. The 3rd Battalion, 307th Infantry, made the frontal attack while the 1st Battalion, 306th Infantry, enveloped the enemy's right flank. These units, supported by the M-8s and M-10s of the Cannon and AT Companies, combined fire, maneuver, and shock action to destroy an enemy position that had excellent observation and fields of fire. The capture of this position gave the 307th Infantry commanding ground needed for the successful attack on Ormoc.

The town of Ormoc was captured by using the standard technique of fighting in towns as taught in our service schools. All supporting weapons to include those of the reserve battalion were employed during the preparation preceding the attack. While the 307th Infantry attacked the position frontally, ^{on} ~~by~~ Division order, the 306th enveloped the town from the east. This was believed to be the correct plan for attack. However, as in most operations of this nature the real success of the attack was finally determined by the aggressive leadership of subordinate leaders. The loss of Ormoc with its many supply dumps increased the difficulties of logistical support for the Japanese units in the Ormoc Valley and had a definite influence on the outcome of the campaign.

The capture of Valencia and the adjacent airfield by a wide envelopment was a success due primarily to the planning, reconnaissance, and maintenance of surprise until the objective was reached. This secrecy could not have been maintained if the enemy patrol encountered enroute had decided to report the movement instead of fighting. Another large contributing factor was the maintaining of pressure on the enemy by the 305th Infantry that kept him fully occupied. Since this envelopment took the 307th Infantry out of the range of light artillery, it is believed that this is not a sound practice unless other means of close support are available. This is particularly true when the enveloping unit is forced to leave part of its organic mortars and carry only a portion of the normal ammunition load due to the difficult terrain. The capture of Valencia airfield gave the Division an airstrip that could be used to evacuate casualties by air and also to assist in the supply situation.

The wedge formation for the attack north from Valencia proved to be an ideal formation over this type of terrain and against this type enemy ^{especially since the} ~~when a~~ regiment~~ures~~ operating separately. This formation gave the best control, maximum fire power to the front or flanks, and permitted rapid maneuver of either flank battalion. This resulted in an aggressively conducted attack using maneuver and fire power to a maximum that completely disintegrated the stubborn resistance south of the Libungao road junction.

The capture of this final objective resulted in the opening of Highway 2 from Ormoc to Carigara and divided the Japanese forces to such a degree that it eliminated any opportunity for an organized enemy attack to the east into Leyte Valley.

Throughout the operation, the 307th Infantry, employing the principles of the offensive, movement and surprise to the fullest extent, captured all assigned objectives despite the hardships and fanatical enemy resistance encountered.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. Amphibious movements which are impracticable because of enemy air strength in daylight may often be accomplished successfully under cover of darkness.
2. Surprise is essential to obtain maximum results with minimum losses.
3. Once surprise has been gained the attack should be pursued vigorously to maintain a constant pressure on the enemy.
4. Time of attacks should be varied to prevent the enemy from being prepared for the attack.
5. Artillery preparations prior to the attack should vary in length. Also there should be lulls in the firing to permit the enemy to man his battle stations whereupon additional concentrations are brought down. *Artillery has an open beach*
6. Artillery liaison planes proved to be an indispensable observation post in obtaining enemy information when ground observation was limited.

7. Liaison planes may be substituted for ambulances in emergencies to evacuate casualties.

8. Formations for the attack must be organized to permit the reserve or support unit to be immediately available for employment in the execution of other missions.

9. Successful envelopments depend largely on the degree of surprise attained and on the ability of other attacks to contain the bulk of the enemy's forces.

not covered
10. Reconnaissance patrols should return vital information rapidly back to their units and not engage in combat.

11. Good reconnaissance and accurate intelligence is essential in preparation of plans.

12. Objectives are gained through the close and continuous support of the infantry with all supporting weapons.