Operations of Bataan Defense Force (24 December 1941 to 6 January 1942) (See Appendix No. 4)

Mission of the Bataan Defense Force

The mission of the Bataan Defense Force was to organize and defend the Bataan Peninsula, as far south as the Service Command area.

Area Assigned for Defense

Northern Boundary: Main Battle Position-The general line Abucay-Mt. Natib-Mauban.

Southern Boundary: The Alangan River-Mount Marivales-Paysawan River (all inclusive).

Eastern Boundary: Approximately 15 miles of shore line of Manila Bay between Abucay and Quitang Point (both inclusive).

Western Boundary: Approximately 15 miles of shore line along the China Sea between Mauban and the Paysawan River (both inclusive).

The distance from Abucay to Mauban along the Main Battle Position was approximately 20 miles. The terrain of the Bataan Defense Sector was very rugged except for a narrow strip varying from one to three miles wide along Manila Bay between Abucay and Orion. Mt. Natib, with an elevation of 4222 feet dominated that portion of the sector north of the Pilar-Bagac Road. It was heavily wooded and cut by many deep ravines.

Mount Samatiand Mount Marivales (elevation 4700 feet) were the outstanding terrain features south of the Filar-Bagac Road. The three mountains formed a mountain range running generally down the middle of the sector. All the terrain south of the Filar-Bagac Road was heavily wooded or covered by thick jungle growth, except the small area between Pilar and Pandan.

The main streams emptied into the South China Sea or Manila Bay. The main streams which drained the Eastern slope of Mount Natib were the Calaguiman River, the Balantay River, and the Abo Abo River which emptied into the Balanga River. The ground west of Mt. Natib sloped abruptly to the west coast. The streams emptied directly into the China Sea. The

Maldica, Bagac, and Limutan Rivers drained the Southern slope of Mount Samat.

A good all-weather two way road (East Road) ran along the east coast from Abucay to Mariveles, and another from Pilar to Bagac through the broad gap in the mountain range between Mount Natib and Mount Samat. There was a good dry weather road (West Road) between Mariveles and Moron. An improved one way road ran from Abucay to Abucay Hacienda. No other communications existed except narrow trails. Moron was connected with Olongapo by a trail along the coast.

Because of the limited road net, it was evident that, unless additional landings were made, the main force of the Japanese attack would fall against the eastern half of the Main Battle Position. Enemy landings were possible at any place within the sector from both the China Sea and Manila Bay. Because of the road crossing the peninsula from Bagac, this point was considered especially vulnerable to enemy landings. The all-weather two way road from Olongapo to Layac Junction was another possible route of approach for enemy movements.

Organization of the Bataan Defense Force Area

The Bataan Defense Force Area was organized into:

- (1) The Main Battle Position: The general line Abucay-Mt Natib-Mauban.
- (2) The Reserve Battle Position: The general line Orion-Mt Samat-Bagacz.
 - (3) The Beach Defenses.

The Area was divided into the East Sector and the West Sector. The boundary between sectors was Mt Natib-Maldica River-Pantingan River (all to West Sector). Brigadier General Maxon S. Lough was assigned to command the East Sector, and Brigadier General Clifford Bluemel was assigned to command the West Sector, pending the arrival of Major General J. M. Wainwright. In general those troops composing the North Luzon Force were assigned the West Sector. Since the main effort of a Japanese attack was expected to be made against the East Sector the mass of troops were assigned

to this sector as the troops arrived in Bataan.

ORDER OF ARRIVAL AND TROOP ASSIGNMENT

Upon my arrival in Bataan the only troops then in my area were the Philippine Division (PS) (less the 57th Combat Team and one Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS)), Brigadier General Lough Commanding and the Provisional Air Corps Regiment (organized as an Infantry Regiment) Colonel Harrison H.C. Richards Jr., Commanding.

The order of arrival of units was as follows:

Unit	Movement Started	Movement completed
31st Division (PA)	2:00 PM 24 December	night 26-27 December
41st Division (PA)	2:00 AM 25 December	28 December
57th Combat Team (PS)	30 December 3	0-31 December night
1st Regular Division (PA)	27 December	31 December
51st Division (PA)	night 31 December	1 January
1st Brig (FC)(later 2d Reg		
Div (PA))	1 January	6 January
11th Division (PA)	night 5=6 January	6 January
21st Division (PA)	night 5-6 January	6 January
71st Division (PA)	10:00 PM 2 January (to covering force positi	
26th Cavalry (PS)	night 5-6 January (to covering force positi	

The 86th Field Artillery, 301st Field Artillery, Self-Fropelled Mounts, and tanks arrived intermittently during the period 26 December - 6 January. Assignment of troops to sectors was as follows:

To East Sector: 41st Division (PA), 57th Combat Team (PS), 51st Division (PA), 11th Division (PA), 21st Division (PA), 86th Field Artillery, 301st Field Artillery.

To West Sector: 31st Division (PA), 45th Combat Team (less one battalion), 1st Division (PA) Regular, 91st Division (PA), 71st Division (PA), 26th Cavalry (PS).

Organization of Main Battle Position

The Main Battle Position was occupied from left to right by: 57th Combat Team, 41st Division (PA), 51st Division (PA)(less 52d Infantry), Provisional (Infantry) Battalion, 31st Field Artillery, 1st Regular Division (PA).

Work on the Main Battle Position astride the East Road near Abucay was started on 24 December by the 31st Infantry (US)(less one battalion). On 28 January this unit moved to Colis to help prepare the Covering Force position. Work was continued on the 30th December by the 57th Infantry (PS). This unit occupied and completed the organization of a sector approximately 3000 yards wide extending west from Manila Bay. (That protion of the Main Battle Position astride Mt Natib between the left of the 51st Infantry (PA) and Mt Silanganan approximately 9000 meters was not organized for defense but was covered by patrols. The terrain in this area was extremely difficult, traversed by deep gorges and covered with dense jungles. It took two days to travel from the occupied portion of the west sector front to the left flank of the 51st Division. Contact between sectors was never satisfactorily established.)

The MLR on the right ran through the barrio Mabatang to a point approximately 5000 yards west of Abucay Hacienda, and on the left from the beach just north of Mauban to Mt Silanganan. The OPLR on the east ran along the Kalaguiman River and on the west along the Nagbalayong River. The RRL on the right was about 600 yards north of Abucay and on the left flank it ran through Mauban Point. That portion of the Main Battle Position that was occupied was protected by a double apron barbed wire obstacle. A mine field was laid in the left of the 57th Infantry sector. Bridges on the East Road in front of the MLR were destroyed. Fields of fire were cleared and work on trenches, gun emplacements, command posts, etc. was speeded up to the maximum of physical endurance.

Despite the fact that the men were not equipped with individual entrenching tools and that each division had only about fifty picks and shovels and very few axes in the Engineer Battalions, they made a very formidable defensive line by using their bayonets and even meat can lide as entrenching tools. Too much praise cannot be given them for their tremendous effort in organizing the Main Battle Position.

On arrival in Bataan the 41st Division (PA) was initially assigned that portion of the MLR extending from the left of the 31st Infantry (US) to Mt Natib. All three regiments of the 41st Division were employed on the position in order from right to left; 41st Infantry, 42d Infantry, 43d Infantry.

On 5 January the 51st Division (less 52d Infantry on beach defense) relieved elements of the 41st Division (PA) on the Main Battle Position west of Abucay Hacienda. The 41st Division troops which were relieved by the 51st Division was used to strengthen the new 41st Division Sector, which now extended only as far west as Abucay Hacienda. The 51st Division employed both the 51st Infantry and 53d Infantry Regiments on the Main Battle Position. The 51st Infantry occupied a sector of 2100 yards extending west from the Abucay Hacienda. The 53d Infantry occupied a sector defending a front of over 3000 yards on the left of the 51st Infantry.

On the arrival of the 31st Division in Bataan the 32d Infantry (PA) and a provisional battalion of the 31st Field Artillery, armed with rifles, two (2) Cal.50 machine guns and four (4) caliber .30 machine guns were assigned to organize the Mt Silanganan-Mauban portion of the line. On arrival of the 1st Regular Division (PA), the 32d Infantry (PA) was relieved, and the 1st Regular Division (PA), occupied the left of the Main Battle Position and completed the organization thereof.

Supporting Artillery Bataan Defense Force.

Unit	Armament	Mission
11th F.A. (PA)	10-75mm guns	East Sector Beach Defense
21st F.A. (PA)	24-75mm guns	East Sector Beach Defense
31st F.A. (PA)	8-75mm guns	West Sector-Main Battle Position and Beach Def.
41st F.A. (PA)	16-75mm guns 8-2.95 mm guns	East Sector, Direct Sup- port 41st Division
51st F.A. (PA)	8-75mm guns	East Sector, Direct Support 51st Division

Unit	Armament	Mission
71st F.A. (PA)	2-75mm guns 4-2.95's Mt Guns	Covering force, later West Sector
91st F.A. (PA)	8-75mm guns	West Sector
1st Bn, 24th FA (PS)	8-75mm guns 4-2.95 Mt Guns	East Sector, Direct Sup- port 45th Infantry
2d Bn, 24th FA (PS)	8-75mm guns 4-2.95 Mt Guns	West Sector, Direct Sup- port 45th Infantry
1st Bn, 23d FA	12-75mm guns	Covering Force
2d Bn, 23d FA	8-2.95 Mt Guns	West Sector, Main Battle Position
86th FA Bn (PS)	12-155mm guns GPF	East Sector General Support
301st F.A. (PA)	16-155mm guns GPF	East Sector General Support
Frov Bn 92d CAC	6-155mm guns GPF	West Sector Beach Defense

The two Provisional Battalions Self-Propelled Artillery, 27-75mm guns (less one battery) were employed in the East Sector as anti-tank and general support artillery. One battery was assigned the West Sector with a similar mission. Headquarters and Headquarters Battery, Provisional Artillery Brigade (PS) operated a "Fire Control Center" within the East Sector.

In addition to the above, emplacements for 31 naval guns ranging from one pounders to 3 inch, were started for beach defense. This work was under USAFFE control.

The Reserve Battle Position

The Reserve Battle Position at this time was scarcely more than a line on the map. The Provisional Air Corps Regiment, Colonel Harrison H.C. Richards, A.C. Commanding, started organization of that portion of the Reserve Battle Position astride the East Road just north of Puting early in January.

The 45th Infantry (PS) was directed to lay out and organize the Reserve Battle Position within the West Sector, but the difficulties of the terrain were such that only a small portion of the position was completed

before the 45th Infantry was employed elsewhere.

The Beach Defense

In the East Sector the 57th Infantry (PS) was assigned that portion of the beach from Abucay to Puerto Rivas. The 52d Infantry (PA) Colonel Cordero Commanding, was assigned the sector from Puerto-Rivas to Limay (both inclusive). The 2d Regular Philippine Division occupied the sector on the right of the 52d Infantry (PA). On 11 January the 11th Division, Brigadier General William E. Brougher, Commanding, relieved the 52d Infantry and the 52d Infantry (PA) rejoined the 51st Division (PA) on the Main Battle Position.

The 11th Infantry (PA) was assigned and occupied the sector along the beach between Puerto Rivas and Orion (exclusive). The 12th Infantry (PA) covered that portion of the beach between Orion and Limay, (both inclusive). The 13th Infantry (PA) was held in reserve near Balanga.

The artillery of the 21st Division (PA) was attached to the 11th Division (PA) in order to strengthen the beach defense. The 11th Division (PA) remained on beach defense until 25 January, at which time it was assigned to I Corps.

In the West Sector the 31st Division (PA) was assigned the mission of defending the beach from the RRL to Saysayan Point (inclusive). One battalion of the 45th Infantry (PS) covered Bagac Bay. The Regiment (less two battalions) was in reserve near the junction of the Pilar-Bagac Road and the road leading to Moron. (The 2d Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS) was covering the beach at Marivales).

Bataan Defense Force Reserve

Shortly after midnight 5-6 January the 21st Division having withdrawn into Bataan was assigned a bivouac area in the vicinity of Guitol. It was assigned as Bataan Defense Force reserve.

Reorganization of Units on Arrival in Bataan

The Philippine Army Divisions with the exception of the 31st Division

Authority MALA Date 2/16/12

(PA) and the 41st Division (PA) were badly disorganized and depleted because of constant enemy pressure and the normal difficulties encountered in a withdrawal by untrained troops and inadequate transportation. The 31st Division and 41st Division had not been in combat. It was necessary to place the disorganized divisions in bivouac area for rest and reorganization before they could be used on the preparation of their assigned defensive sectors. On arrival in Bataan, the 51st Division was initially assigned a bivouac area along the trail leading west from Limay. The 11th Division was assigned a bivouac area in the vicinity of Guitol. The 91st Division was assigned a bivouac area about two miles east of Bagac, south of the Filar-Bagac Road. Several days were spent in reorganization and reconnaissance by the key personnel of these Divisions.

The Covering Force Action at Layac Junction

On 2 January 1942, USAFFE ordered the Commanding General North Luzon Force to organize a covering force at Layac Junction and upon completion of the organization to turn the command of the covering force over to me. The troops allotted for this mission were the 71st Division (PA), the 31st Infantry (US), the 26th Cavalry (PS), the 1st Battalion, 88th Field Artillery (PS), and the 1st Battalion, 23d Field Artillery (PS). Brigadier General C. A. Selleck was placed in direct command of this force.

The 71st Infantry (PA) occupied the south bank of the Culis River from Almacan to a point just north-east of Culis. The 72d Infantry (PA) was in the position previously prepared by the 31st Infantry (US). This prepared position was astride the East Road just north of Culis and about 1000 yards south of the Layac Junction bridge. It extended about 400 yards west of the East Road. The 1st and 2d Battalions extended the line to the south-west. The disposition set forth above left a wide gap between the left of the 31st Infantry (US) and the nearest hill mass about 3000 yards away. The 26th Cavalry (PS) was assigned to cover this gap and protect the left (west) flank of the covering force. The 1st Battalion, 23d Field

Artillery and 1st Battalion, 88th Field Artillery from positions west of the East Road supported the 31st Infantry (US). The remnants of the 71st Field Artillery (PA) supported the 71st Division (PA).

The 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry was held in reserve about 1000 yards south-west of Culis.

The 71st Division (PA) was badly disorganized and consisted of the remnants of the 71st Infantry and 72d Infantry. The 31st Infantry (US) had not been in combat. The 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry (US) had not completely recovered from the bombing it had received on Corregidor a week previously. The 26 Cavalry (FS) was organized into a horse squadron, a motorized squadron, and one Headquarters Squadron.

The position in general lent itself to a good defense. It was on high ground and had good fields of fire. Some work had been done on the position on 28 and 29 December. On 30 December the 31st Infantry (less 1st Battalion) was moved to the zig-zag on the Dinalupihan-Olangapo Road. It returned by 4:30 PM, 4 January and spent the remainder of the 4th and all the 5th January on preparation of the position. The 71st Division (PA) worked on the position from 2 to 5 January (inclusive). The 26th Cavalry (PS) arrived on the position during the night 5-6 January.

On 3 January Colonel Skerry sent one of his Engineer Officers to report to General Selleck to assist in the organization of the position. An inspection on 5 January by Colonel Skerry disclosed that little work had been completed. Some wire had been constructed, trenches dug, and gun emplacements constructed. The line occupied was over extended. Early on the morning of 6 January the highway and railroad bridges over the Culo River were destroyed by the North Luzon Force engineers. The Commanding General, North Luzon Force turned the command of the covering force over to me about 6:00 AM, 6 January on orders of the Commanding General, USAFFE.

By 10:30 AM, 6 January, the Japanese had moved their artillery into

position in the vicinity of Sabo and started shelling our position. All during the morning additional hostile artillery including 105mm howitzers came up, went into action and pounded our front line infantry positions, as well as severely punishing our artillery. Early in the action the 71st Field Artillery (PA) was hit. Several guns were destroyed and the Field Artillery suffered numerous casualties. This unit promptly dispersed and ceased to exist as a fighting unit, leaving the brunt of the fighting to be borne by the two Field Artillery (PS) battalions.

These two scout units put up a good fight in the face of tremendous odds. Not only were they outranged by heavier caliber guns, but they were outnumbered five to one. To add to their troubles, Japanese observation planes were flying unmolested continually over their positions and they were forced to change positions often. We had no 155mm-guns within supporting distance of the covering force. By 2:00 PM three out of four guns in one battery of the 23d Field Artillery (PA) had been knocked out. The one remaining gun carried on the fight alone. The other battery was also in difficulty. The ammunition train was hit and blown up. Frime movers were disabled, and the battery suffered severe casualties. The 23d Field Artillery (PS) lost all its guns except one during this engagement. It ceased to exist as a fighting unit on 6 January. The 88th Field Artillery (PS) which was in more covered terrain was badly hammered, but did not suffer as great a loss.

About 2:00 PM, Japanese infantry units were observed crossing the Culo River. Additional units were approaching from the north. At 4:30 PM, a heavy infantry attack was launched against our position with the main blow falling near the junction of the 31st Infantry (US) and the 72d Infantry (PA). The 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry was forced back causing a gap. Two companies of the 31st Infantry (US) left the field of battle without orders. These companies were brought back in motors and the Company Commanders relieved. The 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry (US) counterattacked and restored the line.

The 71st Infantry (PA) was overextended along the Culis River and a breakthrough there had only a short distance to go in order to cut the East Road and imperil the remainder of the force. No reserves remained.

Japanese troops continued to move south into assembly positions north of the Culis River. It was evident that the enemy was planning another attack against the position. At 8:00 PM, General Selleck informed me that unless he was reinforced by infantry and artillery he could not hold the position. My artillery officer informed me that we could not send more artillery to support a counter-attack at dawn as we could not occupy a position after dark and fire without daylight reconnaissance. At 10:00 PM, 6 January I ordered General Selleck to withdraw the covering force during the night 6-7 January.

Through a failure to decode the message ordering the withdrawal, the 26th Cavalry (PS) was not aware of the withdrawal of the remainder of the covering force. On 7 January this unit was forced to withdraw across country. It joined the I Corps on 9 January after a most difficult march. After the withdrawal the 71st Division was attached to the I Corps and the 31st Infantry (US) withdraw to bivouac area on the Orion-Cut-Off, two kilometers west of Orion.

On withdrawal, contact was lost with the enemy.

The First Battle of Bataan (Abucay - Mt Natib Position)

(See Appendix No. 5)

Change in Designation of Headquarters

On 7 January in accordance with orders from Commanding General USAFFE the Bataan Defense Force was discontinued and the North Luzon Force and South Luzon Force were redesignated the I Philippine Corps and II Philippine Corps respectively.

All troops previously assigned to the West Sector Bataan Defense Force were assigned to I Philippine Corps, Major General J. M. Wainwright commanding.

All troops previously assigned to the East Sector Bataan Defense Force were assigned to II Philippine Corps, Major General George M. Farker Jr., Commanding. The boundary between I Corps and II Corps was the same as the boundary between the East Sector and West Sector Bataan Defense Force.

The I Corps was ordered to maintain contact with the II Corps.

Mission II Philippine Corps

The mission II Philippine Corps was to defend that portion of Bataan previously designated as the East Sector Bataan Defense Force.

General Situation

After the withdrawal of the covering force on the night of 6-7 January, contact with the enemy was lost. On the 7th and 8th of January, the enemy continued its advance to the south, pushed out reconnaissance units, and developed its forces for attack on our Main Battle Position. Japanese infantry cavalry, artillery, and motor units were observed moving to the south on the East Road, between Orani and Samal. Contact was regained on 9 January. Japanese patrols maintained numerous contacts with our outpost on the 9th and 10th of January. The first attack was made on the night 10-11 January against the left of the 57th Infantry (PS) Sector. Thereafter, the Japanese attacks against the II Corps Position were piecemeal and successively progressed to the west in an effort to locate and envelope our left flank. It was soon evident that they preferred to attack over rough terrain and through thick jungles rather than to attack over the narrow strip of good terrain astride

the East Road which was strongly covered by fire. On 7 January I moved my command post to a point on the trail 2 miles west of Limay.

Operations in 57th Infantry Sector

By NARA Date On 8 January the 57th Infantry was occupying the right sector of the Main Battle Position with the 1st and 3d Battalions on the MLR. 3d Battalion on the left, the 2d Battalion on the RRL. The 1st Battalion, 24th Field Artillery (PA) was in direct support. Two battalions, 41st Field Artillery (FA) were in positions to give support on call. Contact was made by reconnassiance patrols on 9 January. On the afternoon of 10 January the OPLR was driven in. On the night 10-11 January a Japanese force estimated as one battalion attacked the 3d Battalion, 57th Infantry. The attack was repulsed.

On the night 11-12 January the enemy again attacked the 57th Infantry Sector. Enemy shelling was intense. The enemy attack reached our MLR. On 12 January the 21st Infantry (PA) was attached to the 57th Infantry.

At 4:30 AM, 13 January the Japanese again attacked with great fury. The enemy made a dangerous salient into the left of the 57th Infantry (PS) sector. The 21st Infantry (PA) counterattacked, but made little progress. The morale in the 57th Infantry at this time was very low. Colonel Clarke was relieved and about noon, 13 January, Colonel Arnold J. Funk, was placed in command of the 57th Infantry (PS). Colonel Funk after a personal reconnaissance of his sector, ordered a counterattack by the 2d Battalion, 57th Infantry (PS) at 3:00 PM. The MLR was restored by dark. The change in regimental commanders did much to raise morale. During the night 13-14 January the 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry relieved the 2d Battalion, 57th Infantry.

On 14 January the enemy launched an attack against the 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry at 10:00 AM. By 12:30 PM, this battalion had been forced out of the MLR. Again the 2d Battalion was used to counterattack and restore the MLR. On 15 January the 22d Infantry was attached to the 57th Infantry and on the night 16-17 January the 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry was relieved by the 22d Infantry. About 18 January the 2d Battalion, 21st Infantry (PA) was relieved by the 22d Infantry (PA). The enemy pressure against the 57th Infantry Sector had lessened since 15 January and moved to the west. Because of the threat of an envelopment of the left (west) flank of the Main Battle Position, the 1st Battalion, 57th Infantry (PS) was relieved about 20 January

by the 2d Battalion, 21st Infantry and the 57th Infantry assembled in reserve south-west of Abucay, prepared to move to the left of the battle line to meet a threatened envelopment of the left (west) flank of the Main Battle Position.

Operations in 41st Division (PA) Sector

The 41st Division (PA) held its sector until ordered to withdraw.

Brigadier General Vicinte Lim, and Colonel Malcolm V. Fortier deserve the highest possible commendation for their superior leadership. The 41st Division's outstanding performance of duty in action, in withstanding continuous assaults by superior forces was largely due to the untiring efforts and superior military knowledge and ability of Colonel Fortier. This officer served with outstanding honor and distinction, and his efforts were reflected in the actions of the 41st Division (PA).

Enemy pressure started against the 41st Infantry (PA) Sector on the night of 10-11 January. Repeated attacks and counter-attacks continued until the 15th of January, with the 41st Infantry (PA) holding its MLR after each counter attack.

By 15 January the Main enemy pressure had reached the 42d Infantry. This unit was forced to the RRL and the 32d Infantry (PA) was ordered to report to the Commanding General, 41st Division on the night 15-16 January as 41st Division Reserve. Counterattacks by the 42d Infantry (PA) and elements of the 32d Infantry (PA) restored the MIR within the 42d Infantry (PA) Sector.

The 43d Infantry (PA) received the heaviest enemy attacks of any regiment in the 41st Division. By 16 January its left was exposed because of the disintegration and rout of the 51st Division (PA). The heavy pressure against this unit had made it neccessary to strengthen its sector with the 23d Infantry (PA). During the period 14-24 January all three Battalions, 23d Infantry (PA) were singly committed to the main battle position, supporting the 43d Infantry (PA).

On the 16th January, continued enemy pressure had forced the 43d Infantry to refuse its left flank from the MIR to the RRL. Heavy fighting had forced the battle line within a hundred pards of the Regimental Command Post.

Lieutenant Colonel E. T. Lewis, Senior Instructor, 43d Infantry, refused to move his Command Post to the rear. By his conspicious gallantry and calm manner displayed at this critical time, he succeeded in holding his position until the arrival of the Philippine Division for the counter-attack on the 17th of January.

Operations in 51st Division (PA) Sector

Between 8-11 January the 51st Division (PA) strengthened its position, improved dispositions, completed communication installations, and intensified reconnaissance to the front and left flank. Contact with the I Corps on Mt Natib was never established although numerous efforts were made to do so.

At 5:00 PM, 11 January the 52d Infantry (PA)(less 1st Battalien and one company, previously destroyed in South Luzon) rejoined the Division and was assigned to Division Reserve.

On 12 January the enemy attacked and opened a gap on the right of the 51st Infantry (PA) Sector. The 52d Infantry (PA) counter-attacked and regained some ground. Colonel Loren P. Stewart was killed. Colonel Young was assigned to command the 51st Infantry (PA). On 13 January hostile pressure increased on the front of the 51st Infantry (PA), and by noon that unit showed signs of weakening. The Commanding General, 51st Division (PA) ordered the 51st Infantry (PA) to withdraw to the high ground on the north bank of the Lavantan River.

On 14 January, under continued hostile pressure the 51st Infantry (PA) withdrew to the south bank of the Lavantan River. Such elements of the 52d Infantry (PA) as could be released were returned to normal control so as to reconstitute a Division Reserve.

On 15 January all division reserves and all other available troops were committed in order to maintain the new MIR on the south bank of the Lavantan River.

At this time the I Corps was notified of the critical nature of the situation and additional troops for II Corps Reserve were requested of the Commanding General, USAFFE. The 31st Division (PA) was ordered to move to the vicinity of Guitol as II Corps Reserve.

About midnight 15-16 January I ordered the Commanding General, 51st Division (PA) to again counter-attack at daylight 16 January to reestablish his MLR on the north bank of the Lavantan River. The 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry (PA) was ordered to report to the Commanding General, 51st Division (PA) at 4:00 AM, 16 January to assist in the counter-attack. This battalion never reported.

At daylight, 16 January the attack was launched. By 9:00 AM, some advance had been made, but a dangerous gap had been created between the 51st Infantry (PA) and the left of the 43d Infantry (PA). By 1:00 PM the enemy began infiltrating through the gap and at the same time succeeded in penetrating between the 51st Infantry (PA) and 53d Infantry (PA). Thus the 51st Infantry (PA) was doubly enveloped. All 51st Division (PA) reserves were employed but failed to stop the enemy advance. The entire front of the 51st Infantry (PA) disintegrated and the troops routed. The 53d Infantry (PA) was ordered to fall back to the left rear and protect the right of the I Corps.

By 5:00 PM, the Commanding General, 51st Division (PA) had formed a covering force astride the Guitol Trail near Hill 1620 and started reorganizing his division.

The Counter-Attack by the Philippine Division

The disintegration of the 51st Division (PA) created a critical situation which threatened the Main Battle Position. Unless the 51st Division (PA) Sector could be regained, it was evident that my left flank would be enveloped and the position would be lost. I ordered the Commanding General, Philippine Division to counterattack at daylight 17 January to regain the MIR within the 51st Division (PA) Sector.

On the morning of the 17th, the 31st Infantry (US) moved into position west of the Hacienda and attacked in a northerly direction, with the 2d Battalion on the right and the 1st Battalion on the left. The 2d Battalion advanced a short way and was stopped by heavy hostile resistance, leaving a gap between this battalion and the 41st Division (PA) on its right. The 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry (US) pushed its attack successfully to the Main Line of Resistance, thus leaving a gap between the 1st Battalion and the 2d Battalion on its right rear.

The 3d Battalion, 45th Infantry attacked on the left of the 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry (US), and also reached the MIR. It was in contact with the 31st Infantry (US), but not in contact with the rest of the 45th Infantry (PS). The country was very broken, and wooded. Contact was extremely difficult to maintain between units as they went forward. The 3d Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS) was attached to the 31st Infantry (US) and was the left element on the Abucay-Mt Natib line. Their left (west) flank was exposed. On the night of 17-18 January, the 45th Infantry (PS) (less 3d Battalion) moved into the gap between the 41st Division (PA) and the 31st Infantry (US). On 18 January the 31st Infantry (US) failed to make any advance. At 4:00 PM, the 1st Battalion 45th Infantry (PS) attacked from a position on the right of the 31st Infantry (US) in a direction slightly west of north and by 6:45 PM reached its objective on the MIR. However when it reached it, it was in contact with neither the 41st Division (PA) on its right nor the 31st Infantry (US) on its left rear. There was a gap of about 1000 yards on its right and one of about 1300 yards on its left. The 2d Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS) was moved into a position in reserve behind the interval between the 31st Infantry (US) and the 1st Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS).

On 19th January the 31st Infantry (US) continued its effort to dislodge the enemy from the Hacienda pocket. My request for tank support was refused. Early in the day the 1st Battalion, 45th Infantry was withdrawn to regain contact with the 31st Infantry. Later in the day the 1st Battalion, 45th Infantry and the 2d Battalion, 45th Infantry (2d Battalion on the 1eft) again attacked to the north and reached the MLR. After this successful attack there still remained a gap of about 750 yards between the 45th Infantry units and the 41st Division. Contact patrols were sent out by the 1st Battalion, 45th Infantry to cover this gap and contact was established and maintained thereafter.

On 20 January there was brisk action throughout the day in the Hacienda pocket, but no material change developed. The enemy succeeded in infiltrating about one company through the line and in rear of the 2d Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS). This hostile force was encircled by the 31st Infantry (US), 45th Infantry (PS), and some elements of the 41st Division (PA), but managed to escape on the night of the 20-21, leaving behind a large number of dead.

On 21 January the pressure against the 31st Infantry (US) was increased greatly and it was evident that the enemy was preparing to effect a movement around the left flank from the direction of Mt Natib. The 31st Infantry (US) made strong efforts to dislodge the enemy but with no success.

At 3:00 PM, the 1st Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS) was moved to the east so as to make contact with the 41st Division (PA), and the line was refused to the south-west towards the Abucay-Hacienda Road and thus present a uniform front to the threatened attack from the direction of Mt Natib.

The 2d Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS) was ordered to conform to this movement and make contact with the 31st Infantry (US) on its left. However it failed to fully complete the movement and make the contemplated change of front and contact. It stopped short of the desired position and left a gap between its left and the 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry (US).

On 22 January the situation on the left flank grew worse. Repeated attacks and counter-attacks took place, but no material gains were made. On the contrary the 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry (US) was forced to withdraw from the MIR to a position south of the Abucay-Hacienda road and facing Mt Natib.

The 3d Battalion, 31st Infantry (US) withdrew to the rear and made contact with the 2d Battalion, 31st Infantry (US) on its right along the Abucay-Hacienda Road. But there still was a gap between its left flank and the 1st Battalion 31st Infantry (US), which was south of the road. The 3d Battalion, 45th Infantry (PS), which was still attached to the 31st Infantry (US) had been on the MIR and on the extreme left and abreast of the 1st Battalion, 31st Infantry (US), was withdrawn through the gap between the 3d and 1st Battalions, 31st Infantry (US), and placed in the 31st Infantry (US) reserve. It made several counter attacks to stop the enemy who was making determined efforts to penetrate the gap.

It was now evident that the MLR in the 51st Division (PA) Sector could not be restored by the Philippine Division.

Operations in the Rear Areas

On 15 January the 31st Division, (PA), was attached to II Corps and ordered

to move to Guitol in Corps Reserve. The leading elements arrived at Guitol at 10:00 AM, 15 January, and completed the movement during the night 16-17 January. About midnight 15-16 January the 32d Infantry (PA) was moved to the Abucay-Mt Natib line as 41st Division (PA) reserve.

During the period 17-21 January stragglers of the 51st Division (PA) were assembled north of Guitol and reorganized into three Infantry Regiments at greatly reduced strength. A covering force consisting of the remnants of the 51st Infantry (PA) and the 21st Engineer Battalion (PA) constituted the covering force on Hill 1620. Hostile raiding patrols frequently moved south along the Abo-Abo River Valley and harrassed the 31st Division (PA) in their bivouac area and the 51st Division (PA) in its reorganization area. One Battalien, 31st Infantry (PA) was placed in position to cover this river valley.

On 20 January the 51st Infantry (PA) and 21st Engineer Battalion (PA) (Colonel Young Commanding) were ordered to advance north-west astride the Guitol Trail and seize the junction of the Guitol-Abucay-Hacienda Trails. The advance progressed slowly against little resistance until almost at the junction when strong pressure developed.

On 21 January this force pushed forward against heavy hostile resistance and secured its objectives during the afternoon. About 9:00 PM, 21 January a Japanese force attacked the 31st Division (PA) from the east and north. The 3d Battalion, 21st Infantry (PA) was ordered to counter-attack at 7:00 AM, 22 January. The attack was launched but the enemy had withdrawn during the night.

On 22 January the enemy attacked the front of the covering force, 51st Division (PA) cutting rearward communications and supply. The enemy captured Hill 1620. An attempt was made by the covering force to retake Hill 1620 but was unsuccessful. During the night 22-23 January the covering force withdrew via the heavily jungled slopes of Mt Mataan, and thence generally south to the 51st Division (PA) reorganization area north of Guitol.

On 23d January an attack was launched from the south to retake Hill 1620.

The enemy had withdrawn from his position and the attacking force continued its advance until stopped by hostile resistance astride the Guitol Trail about one

kilometer northwest of Hill 1620. A new covering force consisting of the remnants of the 53d Infantry (PA) and a detachment of the 52d Infantry (PA), Colonel Boatwright, Commanding, was put in position near the junction of the Guitol and Balanga Trails, with instructions to hold.

The troops north of Hill 1620 were ordered to withdraw into reserve under cover of darkness the night of 25-24 January. At about 6:00 PM the enemy attacked Colonel Boatwrights force. Finding itself surrounded on three sides it withdrew down the Abo-Abo River Valley. The 52d Infantry (PA) detachment reported to the nearest commander in the I Corps and remained there. The 53d Infantry (PA) was badly scattered. Colonel Young was placed in command of a force which held a position astride the Guitol Trail north of Guitol protecting the 51st Division (PA) reorganization area. The hostile advance was stopped there that evening.

Withdrawal to Reserve Battle Position

(See Appendix No. 6)

The Reasons for Withdrawal

On 22 January Major General Sutherland, Chief of Staff, USAFFE, visited my Command Post west of Limay. After a discussion of the situation General Sutherland decided a withdrawal from the Abucay-Mt Natib Position was essential. The reasons for the withdrawal at this time were apparent:

- (1) Disintegration of the 51st Division (PA), which had left a gap in the Main Battle Position for six (6) days.
- (2) Failure of the counterattack by the Philippine Division to reestablish the MLR within 51st Division (PA) Sector.
- (3) Unknown strength of the enemy that had penetrated into the Abo-Abo
 River corridor through this gap.
 - (4) Loss of contact between I and II Corps.
- (5) All reserves of I and II Corps had been committed except elements of 31st Division (PA).
- (6) Possible envelopment of Abucay-Mt Natib position thus making a later withdrawal impossible.
- (7) The enemy was in the rear of the Main Battle Position in the I Corps Sector.

The Reserve Battle Position

The outstanding terrain feature of the Reserve Battle Position was Mt Samat, with an elevation of 1920 feet, which dominated the position and afforded excellent observation over the entire Corps front.

The Catman River corridor and the Talisay River corridor afforded excellent avenues of approach leading from the north into the position. The area in general was covered with dense jungles and traversed by deep gorges. The right half of the position had excellent fields of fire. The East Road and the Pilar Bagac Road were the only highways leading into the position. Both were on flat terrain and subject to excellent observation. Trails #2 and #4 on the east slope and Trails #29 and #429 on the west slope of Mt Samat were the main