Monograph

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THE OPERATIONS OF THE ALAMO SCOUTS (SIXTH U.S. ARMY SPECIAL RECONNAISSANCE UNIT) ON THE FOLLOWING MISSIONS:

1. ADVANCED RECONNAISSANCE OF LOS NEGROS ISLAND, 27 - 28 February 44, PRIOR TO LANDING BY THE FIRST CAVALRY DIVISION IN THE ADMIRALTY ISLANDS(BISMARK ARCHIPELAGO CAMPAIGN)

2. RESCUE OF SIXTY-SIX DUTCH AND JAVANESE FROM THE JAPANESE AT CAPE ORANSBARI, DUTCH NEW GUINEA, 4 - 5 OCTOBER 1944.(NEW GUINEA CAMPAIGN)

3. RECONNAISSANCE OF ENEMY DISPOSITIONS AND CONTACT WITH GUERRILLA ELEMENTS, IEGASPI-SORSOGON PENNINSULA 19 FEBRUARY - 26 APRIL 1945. (LUZON CAMPAIGN)

(Personal Experience of Commanding Officer, Alamo Scout Training Center)

Type of operation described: ADVANCED RECONNAISSANCE AND RAIDING MISSIONS

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THE OPERATIONS OF THE ALAMO SCOUTS (SIXTH U.S. ARMY SPECIAL RECONNAISSANCE UNIT) ON SELECTED MISSIONS.
(PERSONAL EXPERIENCE OF THE UNIT COMMANDER)

INTRODUCTION

This monograph covers the operations of the Alamo Scouts in three selected operations -- The advanced Reconnaissance of Los Negros Island on the night and day of 27-28 February 1944, the rescue of sixty-six Dutch and Javanese prisoners from the Japanese at Cape Oransbari, Dutch New Guinea, 4-5 October 1944 , and the reconnaissance of Albay-Sorsogon area ,19 February-26 April, 1945, on the Island of Luzon, P.I.

Before considering the missions in detail, it is necessary to take a look at the situation in the Southwest Pacific Area which led to the organization of an advanced reconnaissance unit.

Perhaps nowhere else on the battlegrounds of World War II did reconnaissance play such a vital part as in the War against Japan. With every amphibious landing a separate operation in itself, and with each maintained by a long and precarious line of communications, the commanders estimate had to be correct. There was no opportunity for revision of plans once the landing forces had been committed to a beach assault, hence it had to be nearly flawless yet elastic enough to meet the ever present frictions of warfare. As never before in history, G-2 was called upon to eliminate the uncertainties of terrain and the enemy situation.

To meet the exacting demands of such warfare, the commander had the accepted organic intelligence agencies of land, sea and air forces. Invaluable as these aids were in eliminating an obscure enemy situation, and in providing information of terrain which had never been adequately mapped, their limitations were readily apparent. The air observer or aerial photography could not penetrate the dense cover of jungle vegetation, nor could it pick up cleverly concealed enemy installations. Suitability of landing beaches or sites for landing strips and staging for future operations could not always be pre-determined. All of these things had to be known before the Navy could risk beach landings; before assault waves could establish a secure beach-head. Furthermore, the demands of logistics required that nothing be placed on the beaches which could not be exploited

to the fullest in bringing to bear the combined might of arms against the enemy whose reputation for tenacious defense has never been surpassed in the history of warfare.

General Kreuger, Commanding General of Sixth U.S. Army was quick to recognize the inherent weaknesses of his organic intelligence agencies, and immediately took steps to find a solution to them. To supplement the intelligence units already available to him, he needed a long-armed, specially trained group of men who could "snoop to conquer" in areas far removed from allied controlled bases--in areas completely dominated by the enemy. While the idea was not novel in the Pacific, having been used to a certain degree in Alaska and by the Marines in operations against Pacific Island strongholds, it was General Kreuger who conceived the idea of establishing a permanent scouting unit as an intelligence arm of his command.

Through Col. H.V. White, his G-2, the late Col. F. W. Bradshaw of Jackson, Mississippi was selected to establish a training center for scouts on Ferguson Island just off the SE tip of New Guinea. Col. Bradshaw was charged with the turning out of a well-trained, well-conditioned group of men capable of skillful and secret reconnaissance behind enemy lines and within their island bases. With an innate organizational ability and with a rare gift of leadership, Col. Bradshaw was able to accomplish his mission in the incredibly short space of six weeks.

To assure the success of such an enterprise, it was necessary to select personnel with extreme care. In addition to having a sound background in ground combat, it was required that the men have a high sense of duty, intelligence with imagination, self discipline, common sense, good physical condition, and an unselfish and stable emotional background. While it was obviously impossible to expect to find the desired attributes in every individual, men possessing the greatest number of them were selected. To insure that there were no mental reservations on the part of those chosen, each man was required to be a volunteer.

Equal in importance to the selection of personnel was training. It was necessary to plan a six week training program which would fit the men for

the type of work in which they would be engaged. It was not feasible to attempt to train them thoroughly in every subject for there was not enough time. Recognizing that fact, and realizing that the men already would be well schooled in many subjects of a basic nature, the program provided for "refresher courses" in map reading, scouting and patrolling, and in weapons. While no less emphasis was placed on the former, more time was devoted to message writing, radio communication, aerial photography, intelligence, and the technique of field reconnaissance. One subject which proved to be new to all trainees was that of the employing of rubber boats in night amphibious landings. A great many hours were devoted to this practice and as it proved to be the case in subsequent operations against the enemy, the ability to negotiate rough surf made possible the success of many missions.

Running a close second in importance to night landings was physical conditioning and swimming. One hour and a half each day over a four week period was devoted to all-round physical conditioning and upon the completion of the course, it was found that the men were aggressively prepared both mentally and physically for the demands of arduous missions in the field.

The six week training period was divided into two distinct phases. The first three and a half weeks were spent largely in the classroom and on nearby terrain. The last two and one half weeks concerned themselves with strenous field problems which entailed the practical application of those subjects studied in the first period. The problems themselves were made as realistic as possible under conditions which closely approximated those which would prevail on missions in enemy territory. Throughout the entire period, the importance of attention to detail and careful planning was emphasized.

Shortly after this first experimental training period, and at a time when Sixth Army had yet to engage in a major operation against the Japanese, General Kreuger had at his disposal a small group of highly trained men the employment of which became standard operations procedure as the war against Japan gained momentum in New Guinea. As the number of successful completed missions increased, the experience gained thereby was put to use in improving the training program. Recommendations and suggestions by the scouts were carefully considered and included in the training curriculum.

The shift from New Guinea to the Philippines was a transition period for the the Scouts. Not only were they called upon to perform pure reconnaissance, but also to perform the function of an intelligence officer operating behind the enemy lines. Intelligence nets had to be established among guerrilla units, and the information gained evaluated. This new type of operation was alien to the Scouts, for until the landing in the Philippines their objective had been clearly defined in a mission type order. The use of initiative was essential, and in many instances the teams had to learn the hard way. The importance of a sound background in intelligence procedure became even more apparent, and enemy order of battle as well as flawless message writing had to be stressed in future training. However, in spite of the changes which had occured, the sound principles of training set forth originally proved adequate in meeting the new situations. The fact that not a single scout lost his life in more than seventy successful combat missions bore out not only the importance of careful training and detailed planning, but also the irrefutable value of the painstaking selection of personnel.

As a result of a long and protracted assault against the ill-gained Japanese Empire, Ground Advanced Reconnaissance came into its own. Through the far-sightedness of General Kreuger, and as a result of G-2's intelligent exploitation of a novel experiment, the expenditure of the nation's most precious commodity--human life--was kept to a minimum; the certainty of ultimate victory over Japan was made even more inevitable.

Each of the seventy-odd missions performed by the scouts from December 1943 to September 1945 fell into one of the following types:

a. Pure Advanced Reconnaissance as typified by those missions carried out for the most part during the New Guinea Campaign--reconnaissance of enemy defenses, beaches, terrain, etc. where American operations were contemplated, far in advanee of our present locations.

b. Reconnaissance-Intelligence missions as typified by those carried out in the Philippines. These missions were concerned not only with advanced reconnaissance , but also with organizing interior guerrilla units, establishing radio intelligence nets behind the Japanese lines and in reporting enemy concentrations and movements.

c. Raiding Missions as typified by the Cabanatuan Prison Release, and by the mission described in this monograph. The Scouts were not specifically trained for this type of mission, and its assignment was rare. (1)

The balance of the monograph treats with one of each of these types.

I- ADVANCED RECONNAISSANCE OF LOS NEGROS ISLAND: (27-28 February 1944)

THE GENERAL SITUATION (Map A)

The period 15 December 1943- 2 January 1944 saw successive Allied landings on New Britain Island at Arawe(15 Dec 43) and at Cape Gloucester (26 Dec 43), and on British New Guinea at Saidor(2 Jan 44). The success met and the rapidity with which these operations progressed made it possible to advance by several weeks the projected landing in the Admiralty Islands. The latter operation was calculated not only to secure for us desireable bases for land, sea and air operations, but also to dominate the Japanese line of communications from the North to Rabaul(New Britain) and the Solomon Islands to the South. (2) The capture of the Admiralties would be the last step in sealing off the Bismark-Solomons Area from supply and reinforcement, and in denying its use to the enemy for effective air and naval operations, leaving garrisons totaling over 160,000 troops in isolated impotance. (3) Accordingly, the scheduled landing in the Admiralties was advanced from 1 April to no later than 29 February 1944. (4)

By early February enemy activity in the Admiralty Group had deteriorated greatly. On Los Negros Island activity had become imperceptable. Serviceable aircraft on Momote Airstrip had disappeared and our own Fifth Air Force maintained that the enemy had evacuated the Island of Los Negros if not also Manus Island. (5)

RECONNAISSANCE PLANS

With the original landing set for 1 April, it had been planned to land a reconnaissance party by submarine on the Western end of Manus Island, for the purpose of scouting out the enemy situation for a few weeks. With the advancing of the landing date these plans had to be cancelled, and the Commanding General, GHQ, SWPA called for a reconnaissance in force by elements of Sixth Army in the vicinity of Momote Airstrip. " If the attack-troops, limited to 800 men, found the area inadequately defended, they

(1,2,5) Personal knowledge; (3,4) R-1,P.1,11

would hold on and await reinforcement; reconnaissance would then be transformed into invasion."(6)

The Commanding General, Sixth Army then made the decision to land one reinforced squadron of the First Cavalry Division , and also directed that one Alamo Scout Team be landed 48 hours prior to the invasion to determine insofar as possible the enemy situation in the Momote Area of Los Negros Island. The landing was to be made under the cover of an airstrike on Momote Airstrip.(7)

Once the mission had been assigned, the designated team consisting of one officer and five enlisted men reported to G-2 of Army for briefing. A careful study was made of existing maps and air photos and the known enemy situation provided the background for the mission plan. G-2 estimated the enemy strength on the island group to be approximately 4300 in spite of air reconnaissance reports to the contrary, with 2400 on Los Negros Island for airdrome defense.

MISSION: To determine the enemy situation in the Momote Area , Los Negros Island.

TEAM: 1st Lt. J.C. R. McGowan, Team Leader
S/Sgt Ramirez, Asst Team Leader
Cpl McDonald
Cpl Roberts
Pfc Legoud
Pvt Gomez

PLAN: To depart from Finschafen, N.G. 0300 26 February aboard a Navy PBY, and arrive at dawn off the South Coast of Los Negros. The plane would land 1/4 mile off shore from which point the team would land by rubber boat. The pick-up time was set for dawn the following day. The landing would be covered by an airstrike on Momote Field. In detail, the team planned to land just NW of Chapotup Point, SW of Momote Field. Upon landing and after all-round security had been established,the rubber boat would be deflated and hidden in the vicinity of the landing point.(Map B)

(6) R-1, P.11; (7) Personal Knowledge

Initially an azimuth of 45 degrees would be followed to Porhamenemen Creek where a crossing would be made into the area SW of the airstrip. Using concealment, a reconnaissance of the entire Momote area would be made. The team planned to return to its pick-up point by dark to await pick-up at 0630 the following morning. Aside from the five man rubber boat which would be their landing craft, the team planned to wear camouflaged jungle suits; ponchos, and carry four carbines, one tommy gun, and a few hand grenades plus one SCR 300 for communication with the plane were carried. Two days supply of "K" rations were carried. In the event that pick-up failed, the team planned to retreat to the remote part of Manus Island and attempt to contact friendly natives.

Execution: The team departed from Finschafen at 0330 26th February. Because of a heavy storm, the pilot of the PBY felt that it would be very dangerous if not impossible to land at sea, and returned to Finschafen at 0830 the same day. The team left Finschafen again at 0300 the following morning, 27th February and the Catalina landed in broad daylight at 0645, 1/2 mile off shore. At this time it was found that the boat could not be removed from the plane fully inflated and as a result it had to be placed in the water partially deflated and then pumped up. In broad daylight 1/2 mile off shore, neither the pilot nor the team leader felt secure--particularly as there was no diversionary airstrike going on against the enemy defenses. The bombing had been rescheduled for 1000 hours. Since the landing had been made 1/2 mile off shore instead of the planned 1/4 mile, the team had to paddle twice as far and be exposed to enemy observation twice as long. With conditions as unfavorable as they were, the team leader later stated that he felt his chances of getting ashore unobserved and of not meeting the entire Japanese garrison waiting for him were non-existent.

The team made its landing however at 0715 just NW of Chapotut Point. After reconnoitering the entire area in the vicinity of the landing point and setting up all-round security, the boat was deflated and hidden. The hiss of air as it escaped from the rubber boat sounded

to the team as if a thousand locomotives were letting off steam.

At 0745 the team leader led out on an azimuth of 45 degrees toward Momote Airstrip. Progress through the heavy rain forested area was slow and it wasn't until 0945 that the team encountered the first signs of enemy activity. These consisted of Conda vines extending from tree to tree about five feet off the ground. The vines apparently were strung up as guides for night movement in the heavy wooded area. At 1000 two short machine gun bursts were heard in the distance, and shortly thereafter our bombers and fighters were heard bombing the enemy airstrip. The heavy overhead cover prevented the team from observing however, and as the bombing and strafing sounded very close to their position, the team leader called a halt. When the strike was over at about 01030, the team continued on the same azimuth and shortly came across newly dug trenches running NW and SE for approximately 200 yards. They were marked by vines running parallel to the trenches and camouflaged by branches and leaves still green and fresh. The trenches themselves were approximately two feet wide and two feet deep. In the same area there were three probable machine gun emplacements. At 1054 someone was heard screaming as in great pain and someone else trying to quiet him down. Shortly thereafter a work detail of 15 Japanese were seen from a position 15 yards off a trail. They were moving down a trail parallel to the trenches, and one was carrying a shovel. Their complexion was fair and they appeared to be in good health. Their uniforms, slightly darker than our khakis, were neat and new appearing, and their caps were similar to our fatigue cap but slightly higher and pointed in front. One of the Japanese was over six feet in height and well built;all were clean shaven.

Slightly beyond the trench area was what appeared to be a bivouac area of native style huts made of nipa. As the team leader was observing this, a Japanese came around the turn in a trail and stopped within fifteen feet of him. The enemy soldier looked around and at one time seemed to look the team leader right in the eye. The camouflaged suit and mud streaked face apparently blended in well with the surround-

ing foliage however, for the Japanese shortly continued down the trail. After attempting to get through to Porharmenemen Creek, increasing enemy activity in the area finally forced the team to abandon its efforts.

At 1300 the team started back to the landing point on an azimuth of 225 degrees. In crossing a trail singly, the team became separated when a group of Japanese appeared - three men having crossed and the other two unable to do so at that point. The team was finally able to rendezvous at the initial landing point at approximately 1800. During the remaining hours of daylight, the team reconnoitered as much of the coast as possible. A small, little used track ran parallel to the coast approximately 30 yards inland. There were no beaches as such as far as could be seen . Rain Forest came right down to the water edge and coral extended from the shore out in a reef which was uncovered at low tide. At dark all-round security was established in the landing area, and the team remained there all night.

Radio contact was made with the PBY at dawn, and a fragmentary report of the mission made to the radio operator of the plane in the event that the pick-up failed. The report that the area was"lousey with nips" almost proved disasterous to the team on being picked up. The pilot was so anxious to get airborne that he almost ran the team down, never stopped taxiing, and actually picked up the team on the run. The plane arrived at Finschafen at 0930 28 February 1944. (8)

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM:

While the team had been unable to carry out its mission completely in that it had been unable to reach Momote Airstrip because of unexpected enemy activity in the area where the trenches were observed, that intelligence in itself confirmed the belief that the enemy occupied Los Negros in considerable strength. Defensive positions SW of Momote Field were located , and the general physical condition of the defenders determined. The intelligence gained by this mission enabled the airforce to plan more accurately the bombing og Los Negros, and assisted the Task Force Commander in his planning of the initial landing. Concerning advanced reconnaissance in Pacific operations of this type, this first Alamo Scout Mission proved the soundness and practicability

(8) Personal Knowledge, R-2

of employing small teams in this manner.

LESSONS LEARNED

1. It is highly unsatisfactory, and jeopardizes the success of the entire mission to land an advance reconnaissance force in broad daylight so obviously under the observation of the enemy. Captured documents strongly indicated that the landing had been observed by the enemy, and further that it may have caused a shift in enemy dispositions for at least one battalion moved S and SW of Momote airstrip just prior to the landing of the Task Force on the 29th of February. In this particular instance this disposition worked to our advantage, for the landing was not made by the Reconnaissance In Force on the South Coast of Los Negros Island, but it could have proved embarrassing to our forces had it been made in that area.(9)

2. Catalina Flying boats are not suitable for landing reconnaissance elements in such close proximity to the enemy. They cannot land in the dark, and are definitely restricted to fairly smooth water in landing.

3. The confusion resulting in launching the rubber boat from the Catalina and in being picked up from the water was largely caused by lack of practice and rehersal on both the part of the plane crew and the team. Had more time been available, the need for rehersal was indicated.

4. A mission of this type should be executed afetr a night landing . Darkness affords more security, and definitly limits the opportunity for observation by the enemy.

5. A team consisting of one officer and five men proved ideal for the type of mission called for. It is small, easily controlled. and highly mobile. In jungle terrain where the avenues of escape are practically unlimited, it was felt that the weapons carried would prove adequate in massing enough firepower to cover a getaway.

6. It is dangerous to carry just one radio in with the team. The success of the entire mission and the welfare of the team dependedon the proper functioning of the single SCR 300 taken in by the team. Two radios should be taken in on landing whenever possible.

(9) Personal knowledge

II. CAPE ORANSBARI MISSION (4 - 5 October 1944)

Mission: To rescue and evacuate a Dutch family of fourteen and several Javanese who were held prisoner by the Japanese in an unnamed village approximately three miles up the Maori River. The number of enemy in the village was estimated to be twenty-six. (10)

Composition of the Team:

1st Lt. Tom Rounsaville, Team Leader
1st Lt. William E. Nellist, Asst Team Leader
T/Sgt Alfred Alfonso
S/Sgt Thomas Siason
Sgt Harold Hard
Cpl Andy E. Smith
T/5 Wilbert Wismer
Pfc Francis Laquier
Pfc Gilbert Cox
Pfc Galen Kittleson
Pfc Franklin Fox
Pfc Rufo Vaquilar
Pfc Bob Asis
2nd Lt Louie Rapmund, NICA, Interpreter
3 native guides, NEI

Contact Team:

1st Lt John M. Dove
T/4 William Watson
Pvt Charles Hill
Mo. M.M. 1/c K.W. Sanders (USN)

GENERAL SITUATION

The American landing at Cape Sansapor, Dutch New Guinea on 30 July 1944 was the last operation on the Island of New Guinea. Followed on 15 September 1944 by our landing on Morotai Island, the New Guinea Campaign was effectively closed. The Allies now had powerful airbases and strong ground forces strategically located for another long step northward. New Guinea as a base for enemy operations had been effectively neutralized, and over 200,000 Japanese troops had been by-passed and isolated in the Southwest Pacific Area. (11) (Map A)

Among those areas by-passed was included the Cape Oransbari area on the western shore of Geelvink Bay, and just SW of Noemfoor Island. Intelligence information indicated that a Dutch family and several Javanese were held prisoner by the isolated Japanese forces in the Maori River

(10) R-3; (11) R-4

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area. A previous reconnaissance of the coastal area in that vicinity in August revealed that there were probably several isolated enemy pockets inland from the coast as well as a possible barge station at the mouth of the Maori River. (12)

Landing Operation: (13)

a. The landing team and the contact team departed from Biak Island on 4 October 1944. Using PT boats, the team arrived off of Cape Oransbari at approximately 1900 hours the same day and were landed in five man rubber assault boats by the contact team 3 1/2 miles North of the Cape. Two SCR 300 radios were carried by the landing team and a third was retained by the contact party on the lead PT boat for ship-to-shore communication. Carbines, M-3 Sub-Machine guns , smoke and fragmentation grenades and hunting knives comprised the team armament. Map C; (13)

b. For security on landing, one native guide was sent to the front, one to the right, and one to the left. The remainder of the team stayed at the landing point. The natives returned in twenty minutes with a negative report and the contact team was released to return to the waiting PT boats. The team then proceeded in an easterly direction on a native track so as to approach the native village on the Maori River from the rear.

c. The estimated time for the mission was 12 hours.

Operations Ashore: (14)

The Scout Team preceded by native guides continued along the trail toward the objective, arriving at Point "A" at 0200 5 October .(Map C) At this point the team was dispersed and all-round security established. The natives were sent into the village to obtain last minute information on enemy strength and dispositions, to locate the prisoners, and to secure if possible additional guides. The natives returned in forty-five minutes with additional guides as well as the necessary information. Based on the information received, the following plan was made:

a. The team leader, six men and three native guides were to proceed to Point "B", a large native hut occupied by eighteen Japanese.(Map C)

(12) R-5; (13,14) R-6

b. The Assistant Team Leader, four men and two native guides were to proceed to Point "C" where it was reported that four Japanese manned an outpost with two machine guns. (Map C)

c. Two men and one native were to proceed to Point "D" another hut occupied by two Japanese Kempetai men and a natice chief who was being held as hostage. (Map C)

d. At approximately 0400 the signal for simultaneous attacks on the four objectives would be the initial bust of fire from Point "B".

e. In the event that the group at Point "C", some 2 1/2 miles down the Maori River could not hear the firing in the village, the Assistant Team Leader was instructed to accomplish his mission at dawn.

f. The Dutch interpreter with two natives would move to the huts containing the prisoners at Point "E" immediately afetr the fire fight.

g. A radio reported to be in the hut at "D" and Japanese supplies would be destroyed prior to the departure of the group in the village for Point "F"

h. Upon the successful accomplishment of the mission in the village, a messenger would be dispatched to Point "C" so that the Assistant Team Leader could notify the Contact Team to come in for a pick-up, as soon as the machine guns and pick-up point were secured.

Execution of the Plan: (15)

The Team Leaders group approached the hut at "B" and was in position at 0400. The enemy ~~was~~ were preparing a meal and ~~was~~ were oblivious of the team's presence. The Team Leader allowed another ten minutes for the other groups to get into position and then opened fire. One white phosphorous grenade was tossed into the hut to facilitate more accurate firing and better lighting. The firing, beginning at 0410 ceased at 0413 and the hut was surrounded. Six Japanese were then found in a trench in the rear of the hut. Two of these were killed and four were badly wounded but managed to escape into a swamp twenty yards to the rear of the hut. They could be heard screaming and groaning, but the team leader deemed it inadviseable to enter the swamp at that time. In the vicinity of Point "B" twelve Japanese were found dead. With the four in the swamp, all were accounted for except two who were believed to be hunting pigs in the bush.

(15) R-6

At Point "D" the men entered the hut housing the two intelligence men, on the initial burst from Point "B". One was knifed to death and an attempt was made to capture the other. Unfortunately, however, he was hit so hard by one of the scouts that he died. The native chief was released and the hut thoroughly searched for documents.

After the firefight in the village, the Dutch Officer-interpreter rounded up the prisoners with the assistance of the overjoyed natives.

The Assistant Team Leader with four men and the guide at Point "C" were in position at 0400 but failed to hear the firing from the village. At 0530 two men were placed on the left side of the hut, two on the right and one to the rear in the direction of the village. There was one sentry on guard in front of the hut, and shortly after 0530 three more Japanese appeared in front near the sentry. The scouts opened fire at this time killing two outright and badly wounding the others. The two wounded were killed and the area thoroughly searched. The two machine guns, of British make, were found in good condition with an ample supply of ammunition. This group then established a small perimeter with the machine-guns at the pick-up point, Point "F", to safeguard the evacuation. Upon arrival of the messenger from the village at approximately 0615, the Contact Team was picked up on the radio and told to come in to Point "F".

In the meantime, the portion of the team in the village under the direction of the Team Leader had completed preparing the rescued personnel for evacuation at 0530. A phosphorous grenade was tossed into the enemy supplies setting them on fire. A thermite grenade was tossed into the radio transmitter. The group then departed for the pick-up point with rear and front security for the rescued sixty-six personnel. The entire party was taken aboard the PT Boats at 0700 5 October. The grpup returned to Biak Island where the rescued personnel were turned over to the Dutch Authorities.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM:

The success of the mission depended not only upon accurate and reliable information of the enemy, but also upon detailed planning, flawless execution so as to achieve surprise, and careful coordination

between all elements of the team. As an example of a night attack, although on a small scale, the execution of the mission followed the basic principles of surprise, detailed planning, close coordination, and attack against limited, well-defined objectives. The initial plan was followed to the letter and success depended on each element carrying out its particular task.

LESSONS LEARNED:

It was the opinion of many experienced personnel that it would have been preferable for the team to have landed in the area a day earlier so that a daylight reconnaissance of the area could have been made. In such an event planning might have been more accurate and many uncertainties would have been eliminated.

The use of native guides and an interpreter greatly facilitated the accomplishment ofthe mission and lessened the time element required for execution considerably.

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III. LEGASPI-SORSOGON PENNINSULA MISSION (19 Feb - 26 April 1945)

GENERAL SITUATION

The letter of instructions received from the Commander-in-Chief, SWPA by the Commanding General, Sixth Army early in February outlining the strategic objectives of the Luzon Campaign following the capture of Manila, had also directed that Sixth Army press operations to open Batangas Bay and clear the enemy from the area South of Laguna de Bay. (16)

In accordance with the above general instructions, the Commanding General, Sixth Army planned to land the 158th RCT (Reinforced) at Legaspi on 1 April 1945 with the mission of reducing the enemy defenses in the Legaspi-Sorsogon area, and then of pushing NW to effect a junction with the American elements moving SE from Laguna de Bay into the penninsula. The overall strategic results desired were to secure the northern exit to San Bernadino Strait. (17)

In addition to scattered elements in the Sorsogon-Albay areas, the Japanese were believed to have a highly organized beach defense system at Legaspi, reinforced by artillery ranging from 105 mm howitzers to six inch coast defense guns. It was estimated that an enemy force of between 1500 and 2000 men were located in the organized defensive area Legaspi-Camalig-Mt. Bariwy. (18)

Other than the above information of the enemy, however, the situation was obscure, and in order to clarify it, the decision was made by the Commanding General, Sixth Army to send one Alamo Scout team into the area prior to the landing at Legaspi. (19) Map D

Mission:

To land in the Sorsogon-Albay area, develop the enemy situation after contacting guerrilla units, and wire out all enemy information and recommendations for guerrilla supply. (20)

(16) R-7,p. 64-65;(17) Personal knowledge; (18) R-7,p.65;(19) Personal Knowledge (20) R-8

Composition of the Team:

William E. Nellist, 1st Lt., Team Leader
Wilbert Wismer, Sgt., Asst. Team Leader
Andy Smith, Sgt.
Galen Kittleson, Sgt.
Robert Asis, Sgt.
Thomas Siason, S/Sgt.
Vincent Quipo, Philippine Message Center radio operator

Plan:

To depart Lingayan Gulf via Catalina Flying Boat and land at Megallanes which was known to be free of the enemy. Upon landing, to contact guerrilla elements located there, verify enemy dispositions in the Sorsogon area and then cover Albay Province on order from Sixth Army.

Execution of the Mission: (21)

The team left Lingayan on 19 February 1945 and were landed by Catalina the same day at 1000 at Megallanes. Guerrillas of the Escudero unit were contacted there, and after dark the team proceeded by banca to Casiguran and by foot to San Juan, then HQ of the Escudero unit.

Upon arrival at San Juan, the Guerrilla leader reported that the only enemy concentrations in the area were at San Francisco and Bulan. Information was not considered reliable by the team leader and he requested an ammunition drop at San Juan. Escudero was instructed to meet the team leader at Bulan after receiving the drop. Three members of the team were left at San Juan, and the rest of the team proceeded by foot to the vicinity of San Francisco, arriving there on 22 February. Headquarters of the team was established near Bulan on the 23rd February. Reconnaissance of the entire area was made, and escaptd Formosens and one captured Japanese were questioned. Intelligence concerning the enemy dispositions in the two towns was radioed to Sixth Army Headquarters. On the 27th of February, a radio from Sixth Army requested that a beach reconnaissance of the Bulan area be made. Using native bancas, soundings and a reconnaissance were made on the night of the 27th.

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On 28 February the team leader sent three men to Jovellar, Albayo to make a check on activities in that area in anticipation of early orders from Sixth Army for the team to develop the Albay situation. Making the trip by banca at night, the men took a radio with them.

On 29 February, the guerrila leader Escudero arrived at the team headquarters near Bulan with 200 arms. The Lapus Unit which was operating in Sorsogon was having trouble with Escudero so the team leader took command of both groups to eliminate friction and discord. On March 1 and 2 the Japanese garrisons outside of Bulan were driven into the town proper by attacks led by the scouts. The town was captured on 3 March and the remaining enemy fled to San Francisco which was the only remaining enemy garrison on Sorsogon. During the enemy retreat to San Francisco, three scouts ambushed 17 Japanese. Sixteen were killed and one escaped. A roster captured in the town indicated that 159 Japanese had left Capul and landed in Sorsogon in small groups with the intent to infiltrate north to Albay. It is believed that these were killed by guerrilla action and that none arrived in Albay Province. As a result of the Bulan action, 30 Japanese were killed and 7 guerrillas killed and six wounded. The wounded personnel were evacuated by PT boat.

On 4 March a message from Army directed the scout team to procede to Albay for the purpose of developing the situation there. The team departed the night of the fourth by banca to Donsol and by foot to Jovellar, Albay and established headquarters at the latter point on 6 March. As soon as radio communications were re-established with Army, the team was requested to make a beach reconnaissance of Malacbalac. Three scouts with a radio were sent down the Jovellar River and up the coast to Malacbalac by banca. The report of the reconnaissance was sent into Army on the 8th of March.

On 9 March the team leader was placed in command of all guerrilla units in Sorsogon and Albay on order from sixth Army. A conference was called of all guerrilla leaders in Albay the following day at which time sectors were assigned for each unit. In general a guerrilla line

was placed around the concentration of enemy in Camalig, Legaspi, and Daraga, and a force placed at Nasisi to prevent infiltration of the Japanese north to Mt. Isarog. This disposition was not changed until the arrival of the American Landing Force at Legaspi on 1 April. During this period there were daily contacts with the enemy and eventually all of their outposts were driven into an area called "Little Bataan", the general Legaspi-Legaspi Port area. During this period a permanent drop area was established in the vicinity of Jovellar where two scouts were placed in charge of the drop operations and supply dump. The rest of the team remained near Camalig in radio contact with Army. With the dropping of 250 small arms with ammunition, the scout-guerrilla force had approximately 700 small arms, 3 bazookas, 4 LGM's, 4 81mm mortars and 2 cal. 50 heavies in Albay Province. A guerrilla communication net was set up so that there was radio communication with the five units in Albay. In contacts with Army, bomb strikes were requested against pin-pointed targets. The resulting bombardment was excellent.

On 27 March the scout radio station was placed in direct contact with the Task Force (158 RCT) then on its way to effect a landing at Legaspi Port. Contact was maintainted until the landing on 1 April at which time the Team Leader reported to the Commanding General of the Task force to work with the Headquarters on intelligence and employmint of guerrilla units.

On 20 April scouts took 130 armed guerrillas of the Rudolfo unit to Catanduanes Island. In five days 86 of the estimated 115 Japanese on the island were killed, and on the 25th they reported that only a few enemy scattered in the hills remained.

The team left Legaspi Port aboard a supply ship returning to Lingayan Gulf on 26 April and arrived at Sixth Army at 1100 27 April.

ANALYSIS AND CRITICISM:

The intelligence gained during the mission proved to be invaluable to the Task Force making the landing at Legaspi Port on 1 April 1945. In addition to the information gained during the long mission, constant

harrassment by organized and ably lead guerrilla units scattered the defending enemy and greatly reduced his ability to concentrate any appreciable force against the task force landing. Leadership of the Scout Team Leader in eliminating friction between discordant guerrilla units was outstanding and it was through his efforts that it was possible to weld them into an effective fighting unit. Despite the small group of scouts which the team leader had at his disposal to accomplish his mission, the initiative displayed by the individual team members in carrying out their assigned tasks assured success. In considering the size of the area in which the team operated, it might have been better to have sent in two scout teams to accomplish the mission. However, with the team landing so far in advance of the actual Task Force operation at Legaspi Port, more than sufficient time was available to cover the entire Sorsogon-Albay Area.

Without a thorough knowledge and appreciation of intelligence procedures and principles, the team would not have been able to accomplish its task. A good radio intelligence net was essential so that the wealth of information available could be gathered, evaluated and put to best use through Sixth Army and later to the Task Force at sea.

LESSONS LEARNED:

All guerrilla and civilian information will be highly exaggerated but by careful and thorough questioning it is possible to arrive at a fairly reliable estimate.

For the sake of diplomacy and tact, contact should be made with all the important people in a locality. Then contact should be made with the guerrilla leaders and the mission thoroughly explained to them. If the guerrilla leaders are told that the information gathered by them will be reported to Army Headquarters with mention of their names, effort on their part will be increased immensly.

All factions in an area should be contacted. Different political groups often try to run down and discredit other groups. By gathering

information from all of them the intelligence value can be better determined.

Road watches and OP's manned by civilians and guerrillas have to be checked frequently as the untrained personnel leave their posts with great regularity.

Civilian officials are often the best source of information. The enemy will always contact these people when they want carriers or assistance such as carts or food. Frequently the officials are familiar with the officers, the name of the unit, the number of arms and its physical condition and morale.

It is necessary to accompany civilians and guerrillas to some point where the information can be pointed out as they generally have no appreciation of terrain or maps.

When American soldiers are around the native personnel, both civilian and guerrilla are inclined to become careless. It is necessary to check frequently when these people are manning guard posts, outposts or used as scouts.

At least two SCR-694's should be carried on such a mission with plenty of spare tubes and batteries.

A more than adequate supply of medicinals should be carried as the team will be expected to treat native personnel and guerrilla casualties as well as their sick. For the same reason, ample supplies of cigarettes should be taken along as they are in great demand.

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