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RAID AT LOS BANOS

by

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Section 15

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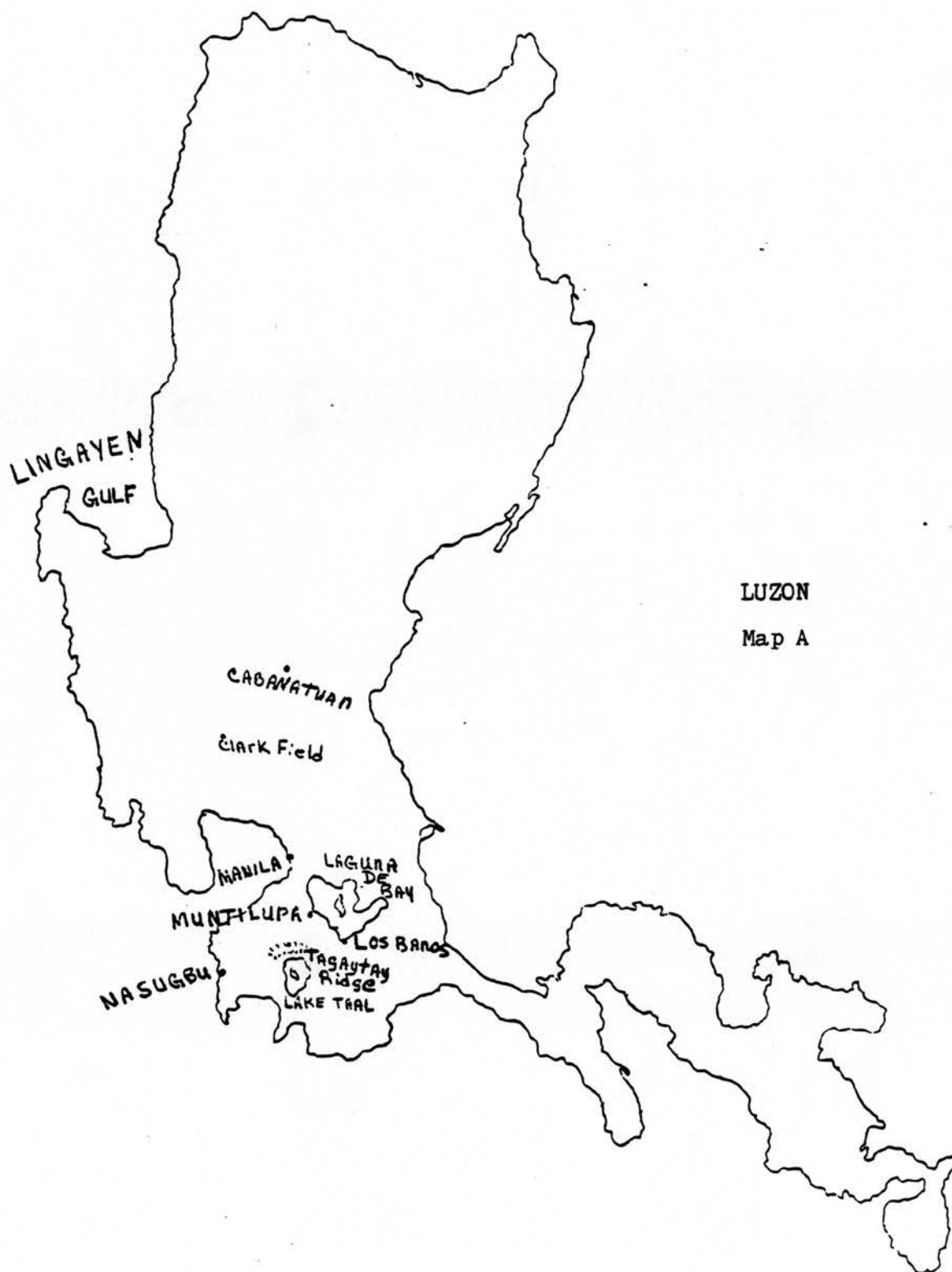
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RAID AT LOS BANOS

The American experience in rescuing its prisoners-of-war (P.O.W.s) and political hostages has been marked with failure and often disaster. In reviewing our experience, most people remember the Son Tay raid, the Mayaguez incident, and the Iranian hostage attempt but overlook our one notable success. On 23 February 1945, elements of the 11th Airborne Division conducted a combined parachute assault, amphibious landing, and diversionary ground attack to rescue over 2,100 civilian internees held by the Japanese at Los Banos, Luzon, Philippine Islands. This mission provides an excellent opportunity to consider some key elements of the prisoner rescue mission.

11th Airborne Division: Nasugbu to Manila

On 31 January 1945, the 11th Airborne Division, commanded by Major General Joseph M. Swing, made an amphibious assault at Nasugbu, Luzon, 45 miles south of Manila (Map A). At the time of the assault, the 11th Airborne was under the command of the Eighth U.S. Army. The assault forces consisted of the 11th Airborne Division's own 187th and 188th Glider Infantry Regiments reinforced by two battalions from the 19th Infantry Regiment, 24th Infantry Division. The 11th's other organic regiment, the 511th Parachute Infantry, was in reserve on Mindoro. The landing forces moved inland against light resistance toward the Division's initial objective, Tagaytay Ridge. On 3-4 February 1945, the 511th made a parachute assault on Tagaytay Ridge and linked up with the remainder of the Division the drive to Manila.¹



LUZON

Map A

The 11th Airborne advanced to the outskirts of Manila against increasingly strong opposition until it reached just south of Nichols Field by 9 February. There, on 10 February, the division was transferred by MacArthur's headquarters from the Eighth Army to the Sixth Army and was placed under the XIV Corps.² The transfer was required to achieve unity of command in the battle for Manila by XIV Corps, which now had three divisions -- the 1st Cavalry, the 37th Infantry and the 40th Infantry -- in the northern half of the city.

The 11th Airborne secured Nichols Field on 12 February. By 13 February, the 11th had linked up with elements of the XIV Corps' three northern divisions; however, fighting in isolated pockets of resistance around Manila continued until 3 March.³

Following linkup with the other XIV Corps' divisions, the 11th Airborne moved south and east from Manila and seized towns on the western shore of Laguna de Bay, occupying Muntlupa and Alabang on 20 February.⁴ The stage was thus set for the liberation of Los Banos internment camp.

Other Prisoner Rescues on Luzon

Throughout the Luzon Campaign, the advancing American forces showed an awareness and sensitivity to the rescue of P.O.W.s and civilian internees as a subordinate mission. On 28 January 1945, as the I and XIV Corps converged on Cabanatuan, a reinforced company from the 6th Ranger Battalion under direct command of the Sixth Army liberated about 500 P.O.W.s at Pangatian, approximately five miles east of the city.

The mission involved a 20-mile evacuation march back to the main elements of the two corps' advance with 200 of the prisoners in poor physical condition.⁵

The first task assigned to the 8th Cavalry Regiment of the 1st Cavalry Division, as the lead American unit entering Manila on 3 February, was the liberation of civilian internees held on the campus of Santo Tomas University. Three thousand five hundred prisoners were quickly freed, but the camp commander and guards held another 275 internees hostage until granted safe conduct from the campus. The 8th Cavalry then freed approximately 800 Allied and American P.O.W.s and another 500 civilian internees at the Old Bilibad prison on 4 February.⁶

While these missions demonstrate an awareness by the American forces of P.O.W. liberation, they were fundamentally different from the Los Banos raid. The former were conducted as part of the overall advance; Los Banos was a classic raid -- an attack with a specific limited objective behind enemy lines and back without securing terrain objectives. As the official General Headquarters, Southwest Pacific Area (GHQ/SWPA) operations summary reported it, Los Banos was ". . . an operation of no strategic import but of great sentimental value. . ."⁷

MacArthur's Motivation

Since the liberation of Los Banos had "no strategic import", General MacArthur's motivation for directing the mission deserves a close look. The mission was directed by GHQ/SWPA on 4 February and assigned to the 11th Airborne Division, then under Eighth Army command. Because his division was beginning its drive toward Manila, Major General Swing

requested, and GHQ/SWPA approved, a delay until troops could be spared.⁸ The successful liberation efforts at Pangatian, Santo Tomas, and Old Bilibad Prison between 28 January and 4 February probably heightened the awareness about P.O.W.s and internees in both General MacArthur and his staff.

While the previous successes made General MacArthur conscious of the liberation mission, his primary motivation behind the Los Banos raid was humanitarian in two aspects. First, upon visiting Santo Tomas on 7 February, General MacArthur wrote:

"I cannot recall, even in a life filled with emotional scenes, a more moving spectacle than my first visit to the Santo Thomas camp. . . It was a wonderful never-to-be-forgotten moment -- to be a life saver, not a life taker."⁹

Second, he was legitimately concerned over the safety of the prisoners. At about the same time that he learned of the existence of Los Banos from guerilla intelligence sources¹⁰, MacArthur found out the grisly details of an incident involving American P.O.W.s on Palawan Island.

On 14 December 1944, as the U.S. convoy sailed from Leyte to occupy Mindoro, Japanese P.O.W. guards on Palawan, believing they were the target for the invasion, panicked. They forced their American captives into underground shelters, poured gasoline on them and set them on fire. Prisoners who tried to escape were machine-gunned. Over 140 P.O.W.s were killed.¹¹ This incident and other Japanese atrocities on the Philippine population during the Luzon Campaign through the battle of

Manila, suggested to MacArthur the possibility that the Japanese would harm the internees as the American forces advanced toward the area.

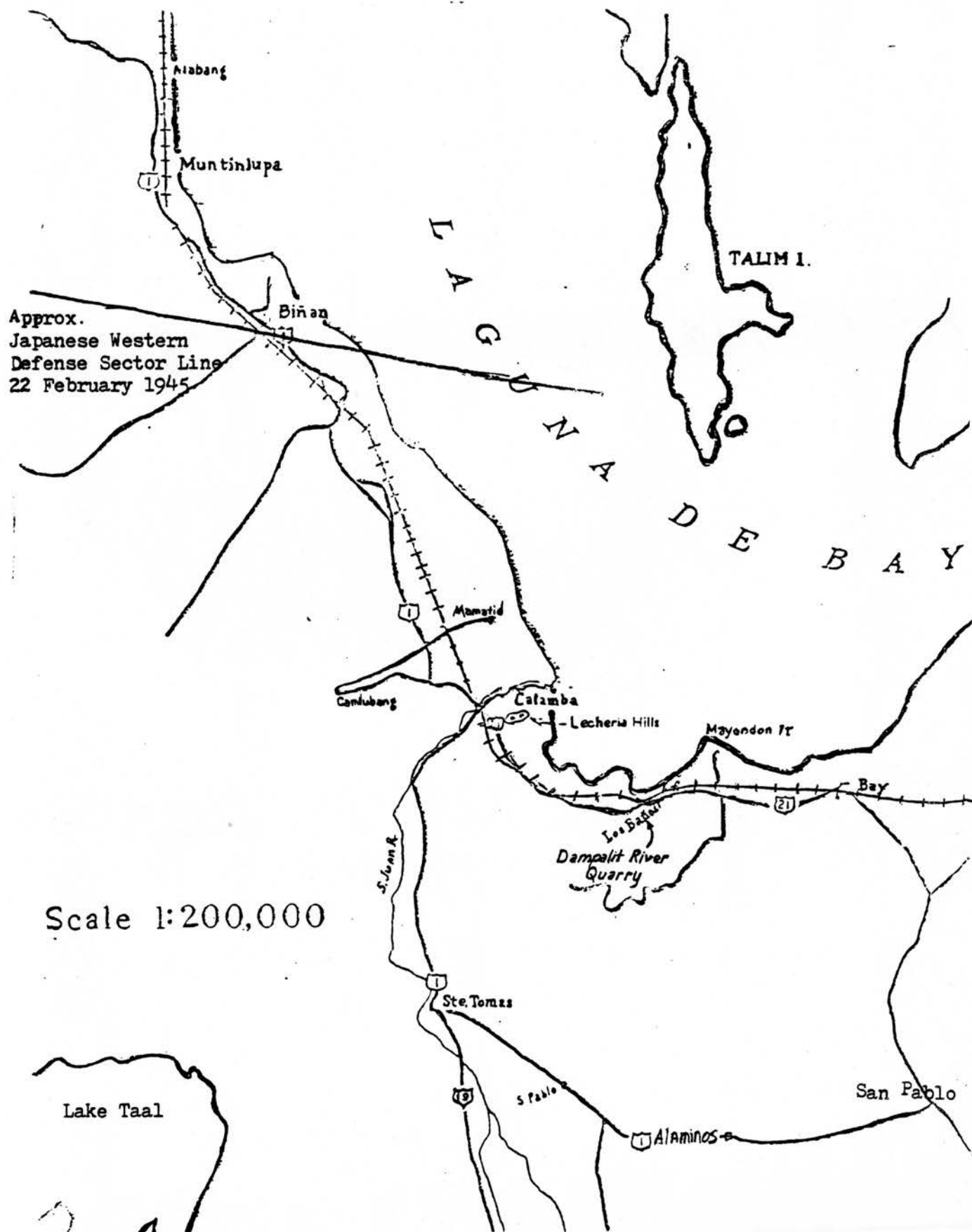
The reports that reached MacArthur indicated that the prisoners were mostly civilians, including some women and children, and probably some American P.O.W.s.¹² The distinction between P.O.W.s and civilian internees is important in that trained military people could be expected to show better discipline during the confusion of a rescue attempt. At the time of the Los Banos liberation, the only distinction drawn between military and civilian was by Major General Swing, who briefed his staff to keep in mind "the tendency of civilians to carry heavy baggage and the reluctance to part with their possessions, no matter what the emergency."¹³

Mission Planning

The mission to liberate Los Banos had been given to the 11th Airborne on 4 February 1945, but was delayed because of other, more pressing requirements. Planning for the raid by the 11th Airborne staff, however, began immediately.

Los Banos is located on the southern shore of Laguna de Bay. At the time of the raid, the internment camp was approximately 20 miles behind enemy lines (Map B). Its location made the camp accessible by land, water, or air. The first decision in the planning of the mission was the general scheme of maneuver.

The assignment of a mission to an airborne division during World War II did not necessarily mean that a parachute assault would be involved. For example, the 11th Airborne had fought as regular infantry

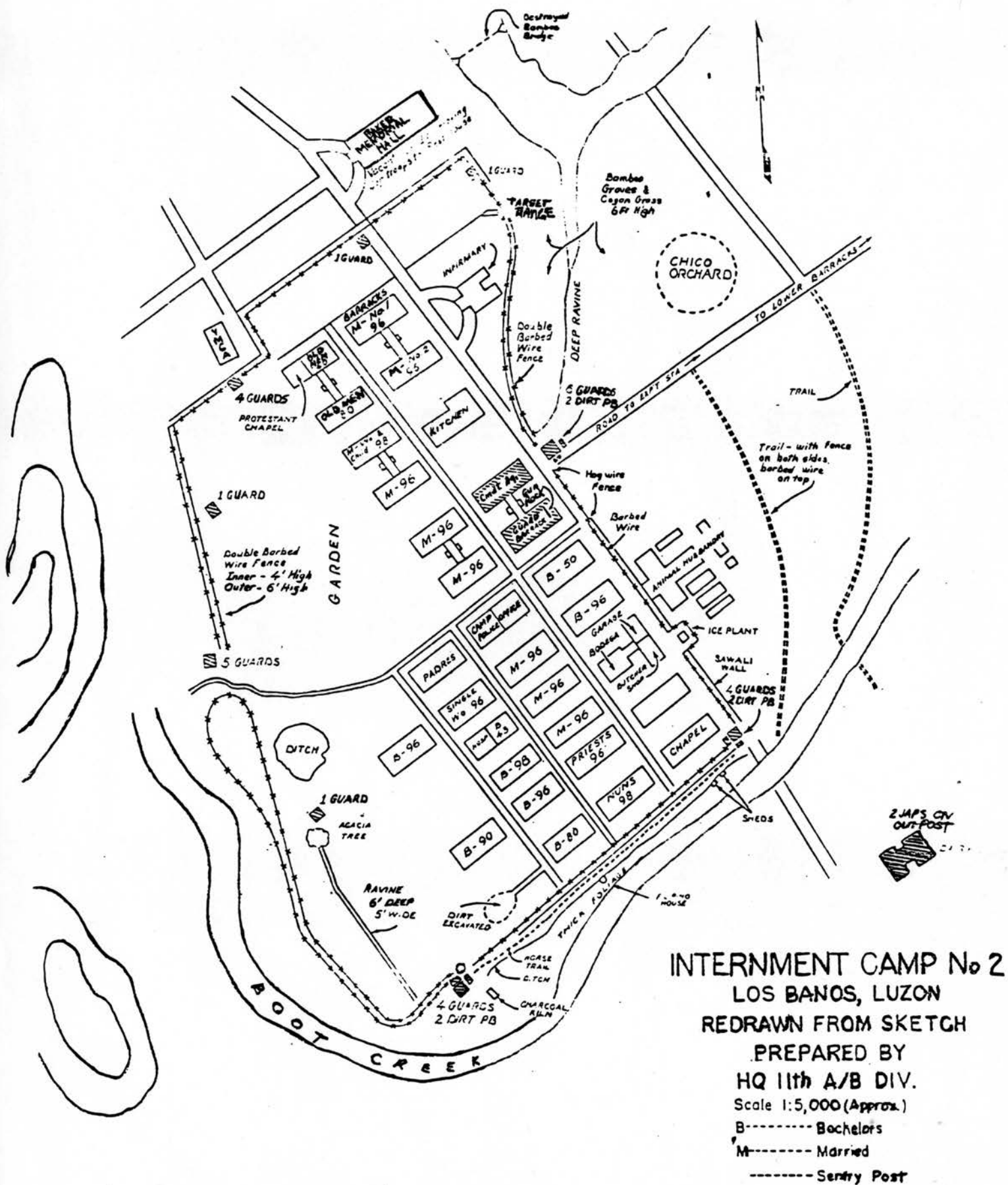


during the Leyte Campaign, and as previously noted, two regiments of the Division had made an amphibious assault on Luzon.¹⁵

In the case of Los Banos, a ground attack oriented along Route 1 on the western shore of Laguna de Bay was the option that could bring the largest force to the target. However, the risk of enemy detection and interdiction of the withdrawal route was also greatest. An amphibious approach would be limited in its numbers of troops and also the noise of the amphibious vehicles would spoil surprise. A parachute assault would limit the possible withdrawal options to evacuating the freed prisoners by march through enemy-controlled territory.

Whichever method would be decided upon, a detailed reconnaissance of the area would be required. The 11th Airborne intelligence officers were infiltrated into the guerilla units operating in the area. Other Division G-2 officers were working with Peter Miles, an escaped prisoner from Los Banos, and also an engineer. From these sources and Air Force reconnaissance photos, the 11th Airborne's intelligence section was able to piece together an extremely detailed sketch of the camp including sentry locations, the guards' quarters, and ammunition and weapons storage area (Map C). Additionally, the guerillas and Miles reported that the camp guards nearly always began their day with a 0700 exercise period.¹⁶

Division engineers reconnoitered the roads and bridges from Alabang to Calamba to determine their trafficability. Engineers also examined the near shore of Laguna de Bay for launch sites and potential amphibious landing areas around Los Banos.¹⁷



Another factor bearing on the initial planning was the enemy strength in the area. In the immediate vicinity, the Japanese had 80 guards at the internment camp, an infantry company with two 105-millimeter guns and four machine guns at the gravel quarry to the west, 20 soldiers and a machine gun at Mayondon Point, two 3-inch guns guarding Laguna de Bay along the Los Banos wharf, and 80 soldiers at a roadblock just south of the San Juan River west of Calamba with potential fire support from two 75-millimeter guns on the Lercheria Hills.

Airborne's intelligence staff estimated total Japanese strength in Los Banos Province to be 6,000 men, concentrated in a hilly area just south of the Santo Tomas-Alaminos-San Pablo area. The internment camp could be reinforced by one battalion from around Alaminos by vehicle in only 90 minutes.¹⁹ The raiding force would, therefore, have to be small enough to get in and out quickly, but large enough to fight its way out against a sizable force if required.

With this information on the location and camp layout, the enemy strength, and one additional consideration -- the necessity to conduct the mission quickly and then proceed with the XIV Corps' advance through southern Luzon -- Major General Swing reached his decision. He directed the 11th Airborne staff to draw up a plan to include:

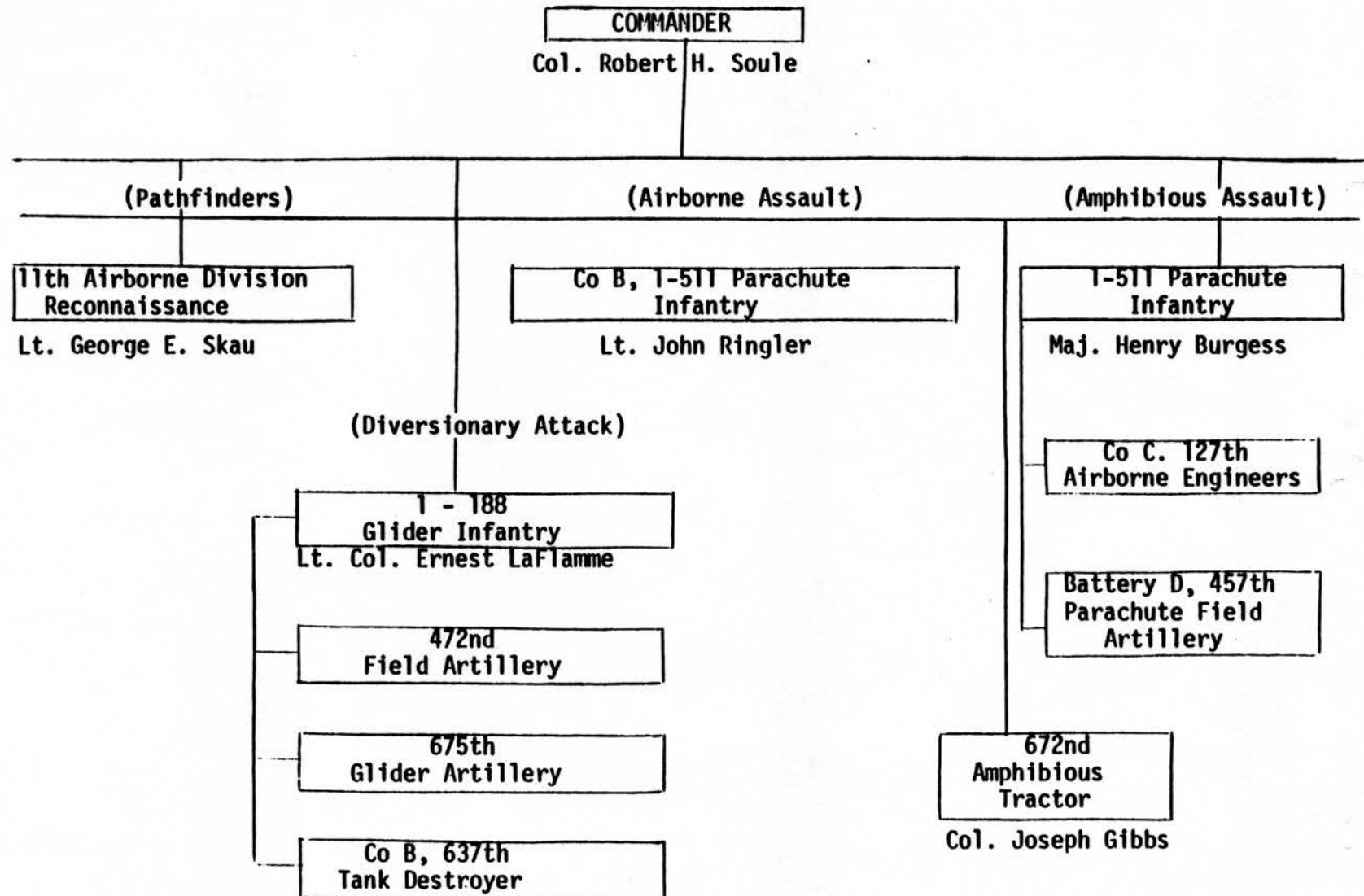
1. An infiltration of a small team prior to the attack to act as pathfinders and prepare to kill the camp's sentries.
2. A parachute assault on the camp.
3. An amphibious landing to provide reinforcement and a means of withdrawal.

4. A diversionary ground attack away from camp.
5. A secure area for quartering and hospitalization of the freed prisoners within friendly territory.²⁰

Based on this guidance, the division staff prepared the plan for the Los Banos Force under the command of Colonel Robert H. Soule. The Los Banos Force was organized and assigned missions as follows:

1. The Division Reconnaissance Platoon would infiltrate the area by water on D-Day minus 2. They would contact a local guerilla force of 300 men at San Antonio, prepare to mark both the drop zone and the amphibious landing area, and prepare to kill the camp sentries on the signal of the first parachute opening.
2. Company B, 1st Battalion, 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment, reinforced by a light machine gun platoon from the 1st Battalion Headquarters Company, would be the parachute assault force. They were commanded by First Lieutenant John Ringler and totaled 155 jumpers. They would parachute at D-Day, H-Hour; assemble and attack the camp; and organize the prisoners into groups for the withdrawal.
3. The remainder of the 1st Battalion with Company C, 127th Airborne Engineer Battalion and two 75 millimeter assault guns from Battery D, 457th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion attached would be the

LOS BANOS FORCE 21



amphibious assault force. Their transportation would be provided by the 672nd Amphibious Tractor Battalion from the 37th Infantry Division. They were to depart from the vicinity of Mamatid about D-Day, H-Hour minus 2; secure the landing area; move inland to the internment camp guided by guerillas; and convoy the freed prisoners back to friendly territory in as many shuttles as required.

4. The diversionary attack forces consisted of the 1st Battalion, 188th Glider Infantry Regiment; the 472nd Field Artillery Battalion; 675th Glider Artillery Battalion; and Company B, 637th Tank Destroyer Battalion. They would attack at D-Day, H-Hour over the San Juan River near Calamba, seize and hold the bridgehead and move overland to contact the forces at the internment camp. While their attack was intended as diversionary, the linkup at the camp was planned in case the amphibious withdrawal had difficulty or the enemy attempted to retake the camp in strength. Additionally, the 1st Battalion, 511th Parachute Infantry planned to withdraw overland from the internment camp with the diversionary attack forces after the last amtrack with prisoners departed the camp.²²

Elements of the Fifth Air Force would support the Los Banos Force. They would ". . . conduct fighter sweeps over Laguna de Bay for several days prior to the operation . . .",²³ perform aerial reconnaissance of the camp, and provide the aircraft carrying the parachute assault force. The airdrop aircraft would be C-47s of the 65th Troop Carrier Squadron, 403rd Troop Carrier Group, 54th Troop Carrier Wing.²⁴

The XIV Corps assumed responsibility for the quartering and hospitalization of the freed internees.²⁵

On 17 February 1945, the 11th Airborne Division was directed to "prepare to carry out the Los Banos special mission on order by Commanding General, XIV Corps."²⁶ Lieutenant General Griswold told Major General Swing that the target date would be 23 February.

Troop Assembly

While the planning phase of the mission was being completed, the assembly phase began. As the reconnaissance platoon prepared to move across Laguna de Bay, the 54 amphibious tractors designated for the mission were moving the ten miles over dirt roads from Paranaque to concealed assembly areas near Muntlupa. The planners of the mission were very concerned that the movement of this large number of noisy vehicles might alert the enemy. The amtracks reached the assembly areas on the night of 21 February where they were joined by the ground attack forces. These two elements of the Los Banos Force totaled 1,945 troops. They remained in these concealed locations during the day of 22 February and that night moved to their final departure points -- the amphibious force to Mamatid and the ground force to Calamba.²⁷

At the return amphibious landing area at Mamatid, XIV Corps assembled a reception force to handle the internees consisting of 18 ambulances for litter cases and 25 two and one-half ton trucks for the rest. In the interest of security, Major General Swing prohibited war correspondents and photographers from the Mamatid area.²⁸

The parachute assault force commander, Lieutenant Ringler, was not notified of the mission until 20 February. At that time, the 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment was still engaged in heavy fighting east of Nichols Field. B Company of the 1st Battalion was pulled out of action on 21 February, only 36 hours before the mission, and moved to the airfield on the 22nd for the jump the next day.²⁹

On 20 February, Captain Donald G. Anderson, the 65th Troop Carrier Squadron Commander, was notified by 54th Wing Headquarters that his squadron would airdrop the troopers. Captain Anderson and his Operations Officer, Captain H. D. O'Grady, flew to Nichols Field on 21 February where they met with the Los Banos Force planners for a briefing on the mission. Following the briefing, the Air Force pilots flew a one-pass reconnaissance flight over the Los Banos area at an altitude of 5,000 feet and returned to Nichols Field.

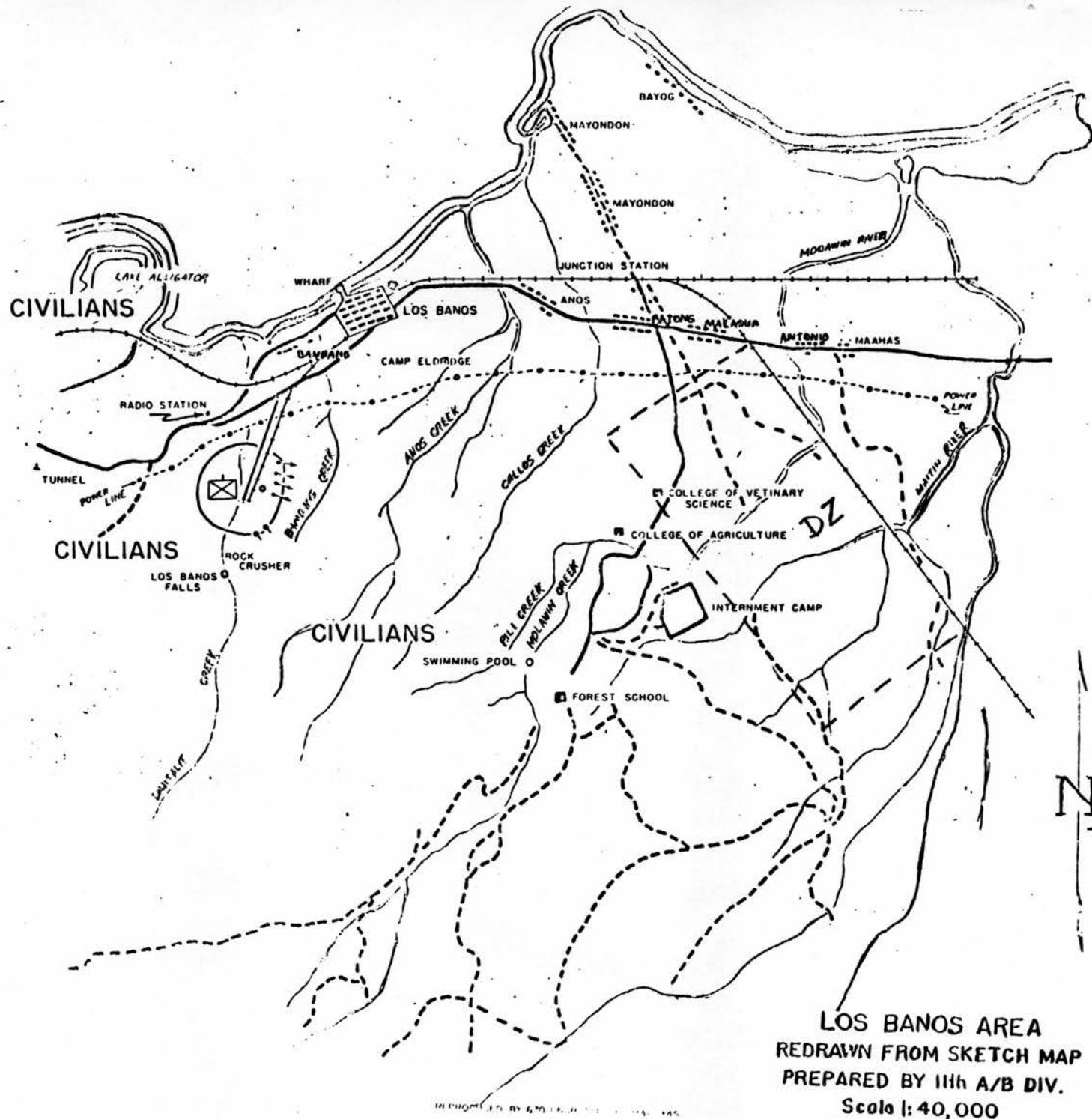
On the afternoon of 22 February, the rest of the nine C-47s of the 65th Troop Carrier Squadron that would make the drop flew from their home base on Mindoro to Nichols Field. There the aircrewmembers and the jumpers finalized plans for the airdrop. Captain Anderson would lead the mission. The route would be flown at 1,000 feet and would take 20 minutes of flying time, just enough to allow the paratroopers to complete

their pre-jump checks. The drop zone would be a 3,200 by 1,500 feet field north and east of the internment camp with trees on three sides, a railroad track on the other, and a power line across the northern end (Map D). Formation would be a standard three V's of V's and drop altitude would be 800 feet. With final plans complete, the paratroopers spent the night of the 22nd sleeping underneath the C-47s.³⁰

Mission Execution

The Los Banos Force with its Air Corps support was now ready to execute the mission. The Division Reconnaissance platoon had departed Muntlupa on 21 February in native "bancas" (canoes) and paddled across Laguna de Bay to a landing point east on Los Banos. There they rendezvoused with the Filipino guerillas and organized them into teams -- part to mark and provide security for the drop zone, part to secure the rendezvoused with the Filipino guerillas and organized them into teams -- part to mark and provide security for the drop zone, part to secure the amphibious landing area, and the rest to infiltrate near the camp and support the parachute assault.

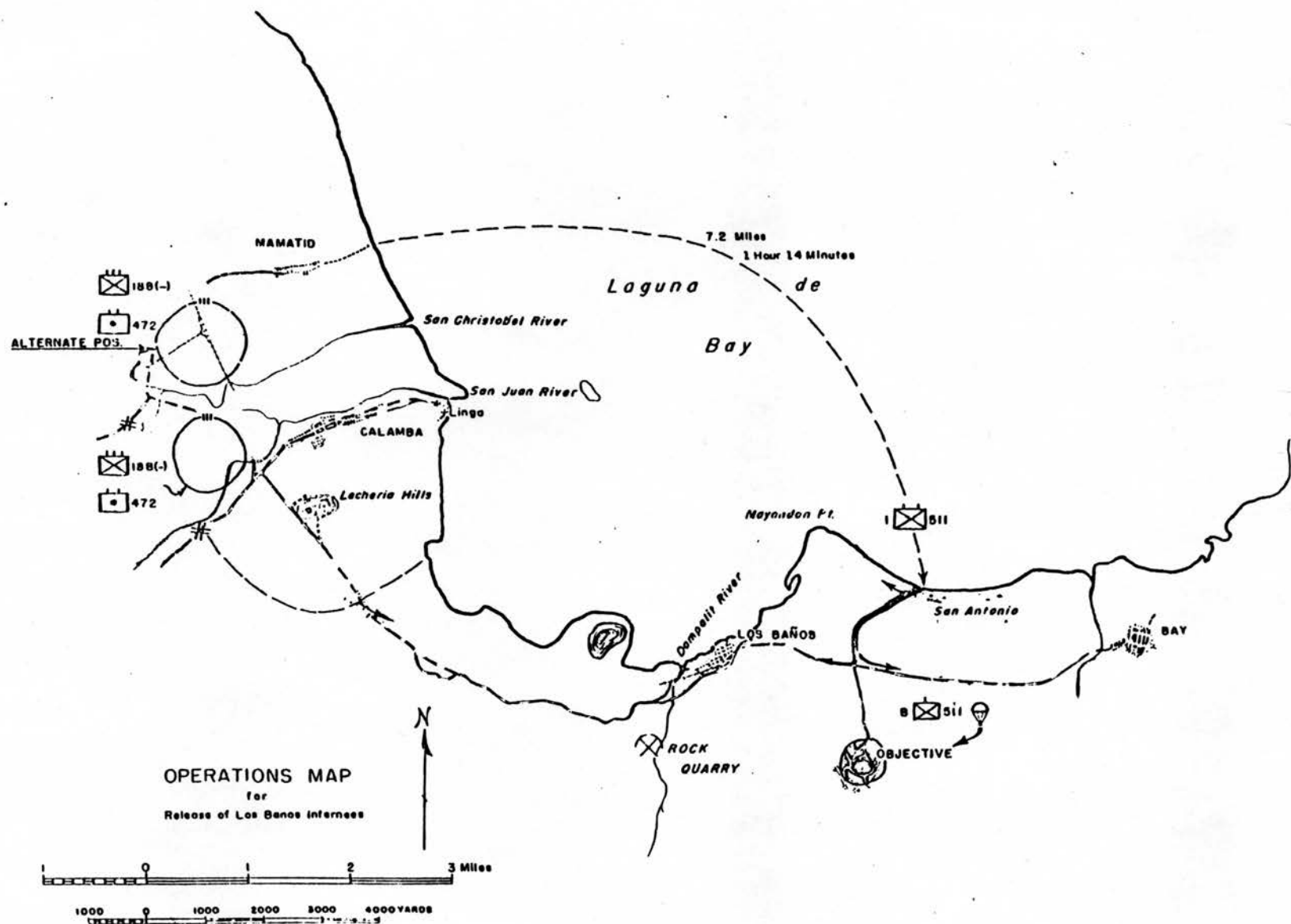
Near midnight on 22 February, as the forces moved to their final departure points, a P-61 reconnaissance aircraft reported large numbers of enemy vehicles moving in the Los Banos area. Major General Swing did not consider this threat to be serious enough to call off the raid. However, he did move an Advance Division Command Post to Calamba and alerted the 2nd Battalion, 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment as a reserve to be prepared to fight with the ground attack force to the internment camp, if necessary. In fact, the Japanese commander in southern Luzon had de-



tected the movement of the amphibious force but, believing them to be tanks preparing for a thrust down Route 1, reinforced the area just south of Calamba in the planned path of the diversionary ground attack.³²

Perhaps the most difficult single part of the mission was the movement of the amtracks across Laguna de Bay. The crossing would have to be made in total darkness with only hand-held compasses for navigation. The 54 amtracks departed Mamatid at 0515 on 23 February to arrive at the beachhead at 0700. The route was a 7.2 mile arc with an initial easterly heading to avoid detection by enemy forces along the western shore of the bay (Map E). The amtracks departed in columns of three with approximately half of the vehicles containing the assault forces and the remaining vehicles empty, except for the crew. As they turned south toward the landing area, nine amtracks at a time made a right turn to hit the beach in six waves.³³

The nine C-47s, with the parachute assault force, departed Nichols Field on schedule at 0640. They made one orbit over the airfield and flew direct over Laguna de Bay to the drop zone. The flight to the objective was unopposed. At 0658, two white phosphorous grenades were exploded by the reconnaissance platoon element on the drop zone. The smoke from the grenades was standard operating procedure to assist the aircrew in drop zone acquisition and signal "clearance to drop". The troopers jumped at 0700 and all landed in a tight pattern with no injuries. They quickly assembled and headed for the internment camp, approximately 800 yards away.³⁵



Fifth Air Force fighters also supported the mission, attacking the machine gun emplacements at the gravel quarry 3,000 yards west of the camp.³⁶

On the preplanned signal of the first parachute opening, the recon-naissance platoon element around the internment camp opened fire. The first shot was a bazooka round fired by the platoon leader that destroyed the pillbox at the main entrance to the camp (Map C), killing six guards. The rest of his men bayoneted, shot, or grenaded the remaining sentries, and most of the other camp personnel who were exercising as predicted. This attack was so violent and executed from such perfectly planned locations that there was very little for the jumpers to do when they got to the camp except search out and kill the few surviving guards who had fled to the prisoners' barracks.³⁷

On reaching the camp at 0717, Lieutenant Ringler's men set up a perimeter guard and organized the freed internees into two groups -women, children, and litter cases in one group; the remaining internees in the other -- for the withdrawal.

The landing area for the amtracks had also been marked with phosphorous grenades and the first wave hit the beach at 0659. Company C of the 1st Battalion, 511th Parachute Infantry Regiment attacked toward Mayondon Point, supported by the two 75-millimeter guns. After destroying the small enemy force, they set up a roadblock on the road from Los Banos. Company A moved toward Bay and set up defensive positions to protect against counter-attacks from the east. The rest of the amtracks

headed for the internment camp, preceded by the engineers who swept the area for mines.

As soon as the vehicles reached the camp, 1,500 internees were loaded and quickly departed for the trip across Laguna de Bay. The remaining internees were then marched to the beach to await the amtracks' return, with guerillas hauling the heavy baggage that Major General Swing had predicted. Companies A and C were recalled from their blocking positions, and the entire battalion augmented by the guerillas formed a perimeter around the beachhead.³⁸

Meanwhile, the ground diversionary attack had been launched at 0700. The force had crossed the San Juan River and by 0745 had secured the Lercheria Hills. They advanced all the way to the Dampalit River by noon against light resistance.

As noted in the original plan above, after the second shuttle of the freed internees had departed for Mamatid, the 1st Battalion, 511th Parachute Infantry planned to linkup with the ground diversionary attack forces and withdraw overland. However, because so many internees had been transported in the first launch, there was plenty of room to transport the entire parachute and amphibious assault forces along with the remaining internees on the second shuttle of amtracks. Thus, when the amtracks returned, the entire group boarded and launched back across the bay arriving at Mamatid at 1500 hours. As this final movement was being completed, the ground attack forces withdrew holding only the bridgehead over the San Juan River and the Lercheria Hills.³⁹

The raid had been executed as well as it had been planned. The Americans had rescued all the internees at Los Banos and had suffered two killed in action and three wounded in action, while killing 243 Japanese. Of the American casualties, one trooper was wounded at the internment camp, and the remainder were suffered in the diversionary attack.

New Bilibad Prison⁴⁰

After the amtracks reached the beach at Mamatid, the freed internees were transferred to waiting trucks and ambulances and moved in a guarded convoy to New Bilibad Prison in Muntilupa. The first group arrived at 1115, the second by 1600.

In all, 2,132 people⁴¹ were registered and housed at New Bilibad. Of these, 1,583 were Americans, with the rest being Canadian, British, Australian, Norwegian, Polish, Italian, French, and Nicaraguan. On 21 February, Lieutenant General Griswold had directed Colonel Robert E. Allen, the XIV Corps Surgeon, to set up a facility to take care of the Los Banos internees. New Bilibad Prison was chosen because it was large enough to accommodate the number expected and was vacant. However, a great deal of work was necessary to make it habitable for its special residents. This included a complete cleaning of the hospital, messing facilities, and barracks and the settling up of a special mess for about 750 people in the Catholic chapel. Medical support was provided by two Corps clearing companies and a detachment from a Sixth Army field hospital. The Corps Special Service Officer set up a movie room and a public address system for record-playing.

After being registered, the liberated prisoners were fed. Conditions at Los Banos had been generally better than at other prison camps except for the food which had been poor. Additionally, after the American landing at Leyte, the prisoners' food ration had been cut back. The Los Banos internees immediately began to compensate for that and the supper line the first day was kept open from 1600 hours until after midnight.

The intelligence reports on the camp indicated that as many as 600 of the prisoners might be litter cases. In fact, only 107 people were hospitalized with conditions ranging from malnutrition and beri-beri to three pregnancies.⁴²

New Bilibad Prison operated as temporary home for the Los Banos internees until 8 March 1945, by which time most of the former prisoners had been evacuated from Luzon. This phase of the mission had been just as thoroughly planned and executed as the raid itself.

Insights

Los Banos was a classic, small unit raid. A typical list of lessons learned from the mission would note the detailed planning, imaginative use of combined arms, and precision timing by the 11th Airborne which led to its success. On the Japanese side, the commander was fooled by the diversionary attack and the lack of security at the camp and adherence to routine (the 0700 morning exercise period) contributed to the American success.

Beyond this typical approach, certainly, the results of the raid were spectacular, but there was also a cost. The Division was tied up

with the mission for three days between 20-23 February. They had been engaged in heavy fighting in the battle for Manila and more combat would follow in southern Luzon. Future commanders will continue to have to resolve the trade-off between humanitarian concerns and the necessity to maintain momentum in a successful offensive operation.

U.S. Army doctrine stresses the desirability of rehearsals for raid operations.⁴³ The word that should be stressed is "desirability". Certainly, any commander would like the luxury of a specially-tailored and well-rehearsed force for any military operation. Yet, conditions favoring successful prisoner liberation may exist only temporarily. These include weather, which was not a factor at Los Banos, and dedicated time and troops to spare, which was a factor. Commanders should note that Los Banos was successfully executed by tired troops on short notice without rehearsal.

Simplicity in planning and execution is an important principle in our doctrine. Yet, Los Banos was brilliantly planned and executed, but certainly could not be considered simple in any aspect. Airborne operations, in general, tend not to subscribe to the principle of simplicity. The aspect of command relationships is illustrative. Lieutenant Ringler's B Company, 1st Battalion, 511th parachute Infantry was involved in numerous command changes in a very short period of time. On the ground at Nichols Field, he was responsible to Colonel Soule, the Los Banos Force Commander. In the air, Captain Anderson, the 65th Troop Carrier Squadron Commander, was in charge. On the drop zone and through the attack,

Lieutenant Ringler himself was the senior officer on the scene, but on arrival of the first amtrack command reverted to Major Burgess, the 1st Battalion commander.

This discussion may appear oriented to the standard military organizational chart, "wiring diagram" approach to military science. However, there may be no more important consideration in a combat situation than the clear knowledge of when, where, and from whom one can expect his orders.

These insights are not merely of historical interest but provide valid considerations for planning and executing such missions in today's conflict-prone international environment.

NOTES

¹Robert R. Smith, United States Army in World War II, The War in the Pacific: Triumph in the Philippines (Washington: Office of The Chief of Military History, Department of the Army, 1963), p. 221-229.

²U.S. Army, Headquarters, XIV Corps, After Action Report, Mike I Operation (APO 442, 29 July 1945), p. 92; U.S. Army, Office of the Chief of Military History, Order of Battle of the United States Army Ground Forces in World War II, Pacific Theater of Operations (Washington, D.C., 1959), p. 440.

³XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 135; U.S. Army, Headquarters 11th Airborne Division, Report After Action with the Enemy, Operation Mike VI, Luzon Campaign, 31 January - 30 June 1945 (APO 468, 24 January 1946), pp. 5-6.

⁴XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 159.

⁵U.S. Army, Headquarters, Sixth Army, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Combat Notes Number 5 (21 March 1945), pp. 2, 10.

⁶Smith, Triumph, pp. 251-254.

⁷Southwest Pacific Area, General Headquarters, Summary of Operations for the Month of February 1945, Volume XI, n.d., p. 4.

⁸XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 159; U.S. Army, Headquarters, Sixth Army, Assistant Chief of Staff, G-3, Combat Notes 7 (May 1945), p. 31.

⁹Douglas MacArthur, Reminiscences (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1964), p. 247.

¹⁰Maxwell C. Bailey, "Prisoner-of-War Rescue by Air Insertion," MMAS Thesis, U.S. Army Command and General Staff College, 1982, pp. 15-18.

¹¹D. Clayton James, The Years of MacArthur, Volume II, 1941-1945 (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1975), pp. 642-643; Supreme Commander for the Allied Powers, General Headquarters, Allied Translator and Interpreter Section, Research Report Number 133: The Palawan Massacre (APO 500, 15 May 1946), pp. 1, 3, 14.

¹²XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 159; "Tactical Employment", Volume II, p. 335.

¹³Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 32.

¹⁴Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 33; 11th Airborne, Mike VI, Map Number 3, Enemy Situation 13 February - 27 February 1945.

¹⁵Army Office of Military History, Order of Battle, Pacific, pp. 434-435.

¹⁶John R. Galvin, Air Assault: The Development of Airmobile Warfare (New York: Hawthorne Books, 1969), p. 230; Flanagan, Angels, p. 93.

¹⁷Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, pp. 32, 34.

¹⁸Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, pp. 37; XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 163. The latter reference has a slightly different version of the map with arrows and approximate yardages to Los Banos and the drop zone. It also notes in the map legend "Compiled from guerillas, escaped internees and civilians."

¹⁹XIV Corps Mike I, p. 164; Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 34.

²⁰Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, pp. 32, 34.

²¹XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 161; Galvin, Air Assault, pp. 230-231; Flanagan, Angels, pp. 96-97.

²²XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 161; Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, pp. 34, 36, 39; Galvin, Air Assault, p. 232.

²³Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 36.

²⁴Mauer Mauer, ed., Air Force Combat Units of World War II (New York: Franklin Watts, 1959), p. 287; "Tactical Employment", Volume II, pp. 373-374; Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 36. My research has not identified the specific tactical fighter units employed in the Los Banos operation. An excellent source for specific fighter operations is Kit C. Carter and Robert Mueller, comps., The Army Air Forces in World War II: Combat Chronology 1941-1945 (Washington: Office of Air Force History, Headquarters USAF, 1973). However, on pages 562-579 covering the period 4-22 February 1945, there is no specific reference to "fighter sweeps over Laguna de Bay" or aerial reconnaissance in the area. On 23 February 1945, Far Eastern Air Forces (including Fifth and Thirteenth) are only credited with "strikes supporting ground forces continue throughout battle zones on Luzon", (p. 580).

²⁵XIV Corps, Mike I, Inclosure Number 2, p. 33.

²⁶U. S. Army, Headquarters, XIV Corps, Field Order Number 7 (APO 453, 17 February 1945), p. 3.

²⁷Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 36; Flanagan, Angels, p. 95. The move from Muntulupa to Mamatid and Calamba was a thrust into enemy territory. Following the raid on the internment camp the 11th Airborne would hold this terrain "gained so cheaply" (Flanagan, Angels, p. 98) but would not begin a concentrated drive into southern Luzon until mid-March.

²⁸Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 32, 34.

²⁹Flanagan, Angels, p. 96.

³⁰U. S. Army Air Forces, Headquarters, 54th Troop Carrier Wing, History of A-2 Section for the Month of February, (APO 248, 10 January 1946), p. 6; U. S. Army Air Forces, History of the 65th Troop Carrier Squadron (February 1945), Inclosure #4, Mission Report Data; Flanagan, Angels, p. 96; Galvin, Air Assault, p. 231.

³¹Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 35. I have drawn the approximate location of the drop zone from the description in Flanagan, Angels, p. 96 and 65th Troop Carrier Squadron, History, Inclosure 4. Also, the map of the internment camp in XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 163 gives an approximate direction and distance.

³²Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 34; Flanagan, Angels, p. 125.

³³Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, pp. 36, 38; XIV Corps, Mike I, pp. 164-165; Walsh, "Report", p. 17. Each Landing Vehicle, Tracked (LVT) of the 672nd Amphibious Tractor Battalion could transport 24 combat equipped soldiers. The amphibious assault force of approximately 460 men therefore required only about 20 amtracks with the remainder for the freed prisoners. For passengers loaded with less than full combat equipment, the passenger carrying capacity increased substantially. For example, in ferry operations, each amtrack could carry 45 people. See J.D. Ladd, Assault from the Sea 1939-45: The Craft, The Landings, The Men (New York: Hippocrene Books, 1976), pp. 150-152, 166-167; Combined Operations Headquarters, Bulletin X/49 Amphibians (Whitehall, S.W.I., July 1945), pp. 43-51; Henry A. Burgess, "Reminiscences of the 11th Airborne Division Raid on Los Banos," 11th Airborne Voice of the Angels, 15 November 1981, pp. 4-6.

³⁴XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 162.

³⁵Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 38; 11th Airborne/54th Troop Carrier, SOP, p. 8; 65th Troop Carrier, History, Inclosure #4; 54th Troop Carrier, History, p. 6; U.S. Army Air Forces, Historical Report, Headquarters 403rd Troop Carrier Group, AAF, for Period 1 February 1945, to 28 February 1945 (14 March 1945), pp. 1, 8-9, and Figure V. The Sixth Army report and all the other airborne/ground warfare oriented sources credit the airdrop as being perfect with all jumpers on the drop zone. However, the Air Force sources admit to

eight jumpers landing off the drop zone, two of them in the trees. Additionally, one of the troopers landed on the power line which crossed the drop zone. Practical experience suggests that if the drop pattern is good and the jumpers land close to the preplanned target, the drop is a success. Certainly, Major General Swing was satisfied with the 65th Squadron's performance as evidenced by his commendation in 403rd Troop Carrier, History, Figure V.

36"Luzon, Philippines Islands Campaigns, 31 January to 30 June 1945." 11th Airborne Division Report (Copy in USACGSC Library), p. 10; Craven and Cate, Pacific, p. 437.

37XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 164; Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 38; Walsh, "Report", p. 18.

38Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 38.

39Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, pp. 38-39.

40XIV Corps, Mike I, Inclosure 2, pp. 33-37.

41XIV Corps, Mike I, Inclosure 2, p. 35. The registration procedures and detailed listing by nationality give credence to the 2,132 internee count documented in this reference. Therefore, I conclude that the 2,146 or 2,147 numbers referenced in XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 166; Sixth Army, Combat Notes 7, p. 39; and Walsh, "Report", p. 18, are combat estimates, and the actual number of people rescued was 2,132.

42Walsh, "Report", p. 16; XIV Corps, Mike I, Inclosure 2, p. 35.

43U. S. Army, Infantry, Airborne, and Air Assault Brigade Operations, Field Manual 7-30 (Washington, D. C., 24 April 1981), p. 3-31.



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eight jumpers landing off the drop zone, two of them in the trees. Additionally, one of the troopers landed on the power line which crossed the drop zone. Practical experience suggests that if the drop pattern is good and the jumpers land close to the planned target, the drop is a success. Certainly, Major General Swing was satisfied with the 8th Squadron's performance as evidenced by his commendation in 403rd Troop Carrier, History, Figure V.

3d Luzon, Philippines Islands Campaigns, 31 January to 30 June 1945. 11th Airborne Division Report (Copy in USAGSC Library), p. 10; Craven and Cate, Pacific, p. 437.

37th XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 164; Sixth Army, Combat Notes V, p. 38; Walsh, "Report", p. 18.

38th Sixth Army, Combat Notes V, p. 38.

39th Sixth Army, Combat Notes V, pp. 38-39.

40th XIV Corps, Mike I, Inclosure 2, pp. 33-37.

41st XIV Corps, Mike I, Inclosure 2, p. 35. The registration procedures and detailed listing by nationality give credence to the 2,132 internment count documented in this reference. Therefore, I conclude that the 2,146 or 2,147 numbers referenced in XIV Corps, Mike I, p. 16; Sixth Army, Combat Notes V, p. 39; and Walsh, "Report", p. 18, are combat estimates, and the actual number of people rescued was 2,132.

Walsh, "Report", p. 16; XIV Corps, Mike I, Inclosure 2, p. 35.

43d, 2d Army, Infantry, Airborne, and Air Assault Brigade Operations, Field Manual 7-30 (Washington, D. C., 24 April 1981), p. 3-31.