

longer ranges, provided a means of opening gaps in well constructed and sandbagged buildings. With these gaps opened, 105mm fire from the Infantry Cannon Company's Motor Carriage, M-7, and the destroyer's 76mm High Explosive fire was very effective. The caliber 50 anti-aircraft machine gun mounted on the M-18 destroyer was extremely effective in pinning down the enemy while the destroyer placed 76mm fire on the buildings from very short ranges - sometimes as short as fifty yards. We suffered very few casualties, those minor, mostly from fragments of friendly artillery which rebounded off the buildings.

1 March 1945

Company A, in support of 148th Infantry, placed 76mm direct fire on the FINANCE BUILDING in preparation for infantry assault.

Other units of the battalion had no enemy contact.

2 March 1945

Company A placed 76mm fire on the south and southwest portions of the FINANCE BUILDING in a 45 minute preparation fire, division artillery and Cannon Company weapons firing direct fire at the same time. The infantry assaulted the building but encountered heavy resistance. The direct fire missions were repeated and the building secured. The effect of this combined direct fire, ie, 76mm gun, 105mm howitzer, and 155mm howitzer, was devastating.

3 March to 13 March 1945

The battalion less Company B remained in bivouac areas in the CITY OF MANILA. During this period repairs and maintenance of all equipment was undertaken and successfully completed.

Company B remained attached to the 11th Airborne Division for Operational Control and Supply. During this period the company operated motorized patrols in the west LAGUNA DE BAY AREA. On 8 March 1945, one Reconnaissance Platoon from Reconnaissance Company was attached to the Company for anticipated operations. During the period the company supported the 511th Parachute Infantry in the LOS BANOS and SANTO TOMAS AREA with 76mm direct fire killing nine enemy and destroying 3 houses occupied by Japs, two enemy machine guns and one pillbox. Our casualties: one Enlisted Man killed, two wounded by enemy mortar and artillery fire on 13 March.

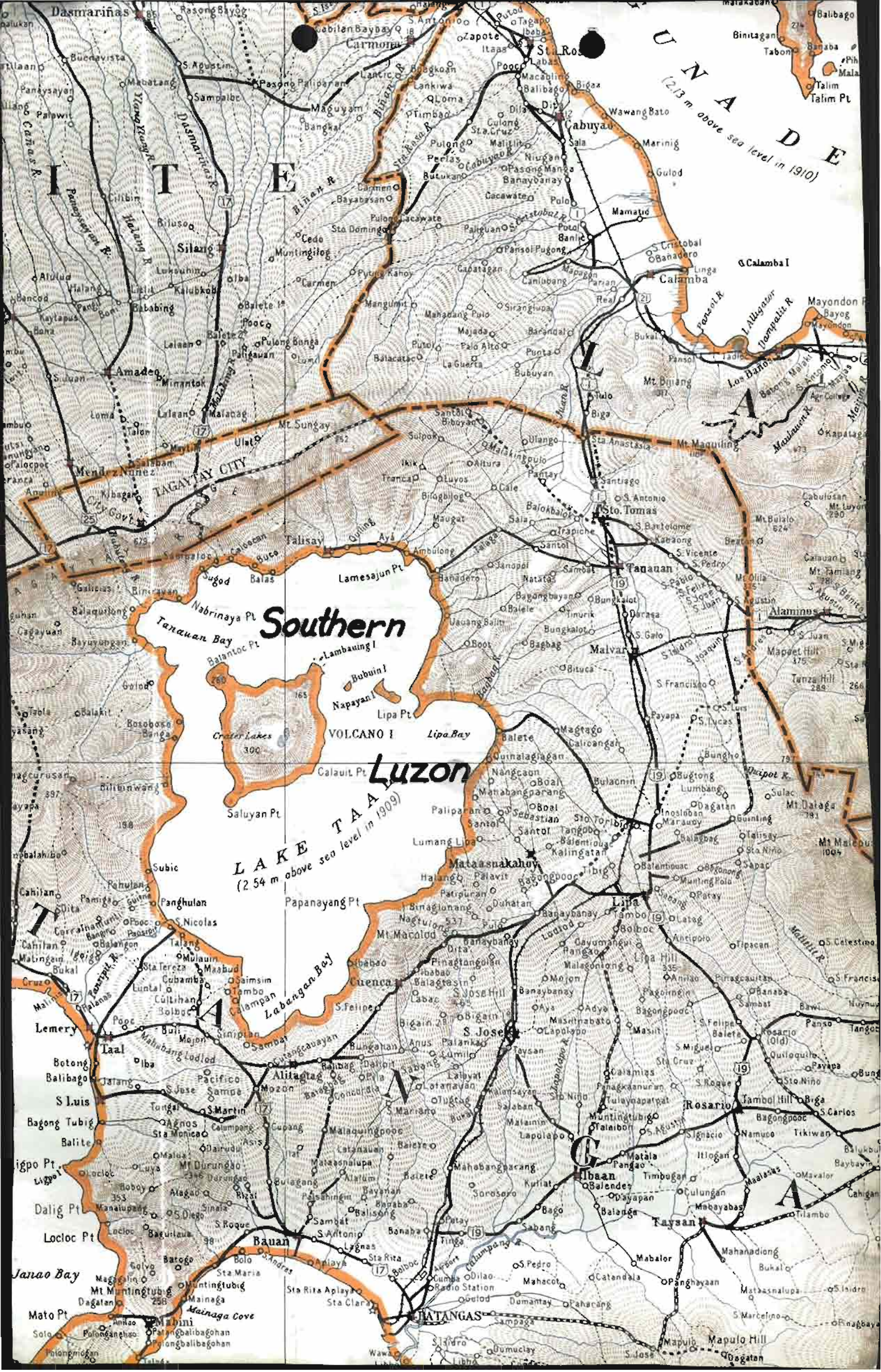
Operations Memorandum Number 33, Headquarters XIV Corps, dated 2 March 1945, released the 637th Tank Destroyer Battalion, less Company B, from attachment to the 37th Infantry Division for Operational Control and Supply, effective 1800I, 4 March 1945, and the Battalion less Company B was placed in Corps Reserve by Field Order Number 8, Headquarters XIV Corps, 4 March 1945. (Journal File).

14 March 1945

The Battalion Command Post, Headquarters Company and Reconnaissance Company displaced on Corps Order (Field Order Number 9, Headquarters XIV Corps, 11 March 1945) to bivouac areas in CANLUBANG. The Battalion less Company B was placed in Corps Reserve. (See March Order Number 1, Headquarters 637th Tank Destroyer Battalion, 13 March 1945 - Journal File).

15 March 1945

Companies A and C displaced to bivouac areas in CANLUBANG.



I T E

Southern

Luzon

LAKE TAA
(2.54 m above sea level in 1909)

CUNA DE
(2.13 m above sea level in 1910)

Janao Bay

JATANGAS

C

A

16 March 1945

The status of the battalion remained unchanged.

17 March 1945

On Corps Order, Operations Memorandum Number 39, Headquarters XIV Corps, 17 March 1945, Company C displaced to REAL and received Company B, being attached to 11th Airborne Division for Operational Control and Supply. Company B and platoon of Reconnaissance Company joined the battalion at CANLUBANG and immediately began complete maintenance and overhauling of all equipment.

Operations Memorandum Number 38, Headquarters XIV Corps, 16 March 1945, ordered a daily reconnaissance of an area including CANLUBANG and the villages of MANGUMIT, PUTOL and PALO ALTO to the south and southwest of CANLUBANG, beginning 17 March 1945. This mission was assigned to Reconnaissance Company.

18 - 19 March 1945

The status of the battalion remained unchanged.

20 March 1945

Company C relieved from attachment to 511th Parachute Infantry, attached to 158th Regimental Combat Team and moved to LEMERY.

Company A established roadblock with one platoon in the vicinity of SAN ANASTASIA at 1800I, 21 March 1945.

21 March 1945

Commanding Officer presented Purple Hearts to wounded personnel at a Battalion Ceremony.

22 March 1945

No change.

23 March 1945

One Red Alert during this period.

Company A relieved from roadblock in vicinity of SAN ANASTASIA at 0900I.

Reconnaissance Company established roadblock with one platoon at GOVERNMENT REST HOUSE in vicinity of TAGAYTAY CITY.

24 - 25 March 1945

No change.

26 March 1945

Company C relieved from attachment to 158th Regimental Combat Team and attached to 11th Airborne Division for Operational Control and Supply.

27 March 1945

No change.

28 March 1945

Company C fired 101 rounds of High Explosive at ^{up} installations on LIPA HILL, using indirect fire. Results undetermined.

One section, 2d Platoon Company C attached to 1st Battalion 188th Para-Glider Infantry at TERNATE for fire mission.

29 March 1945

One Red Alert during this period.

30 March 1945

Company C supply party encountered enemy fire at bridge near SAN JOSE and with small party of Engineers held up the enemy until Infantry support arrived. Twenty enemy dead counted, with Company C having one enlisted man killed.

31 March 1945

No change.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES - MARCH 1945

During the month of March the 637th Tank Destroyer Battalion in support of the Infantry, placed direct artillery fire on a number of reinforced concrete buildings in the CITY of MANILA, with telling effect. Company B was attached to 11th Airborne Division and supported the 511th Parachute Infantry in the west LAGUNA DE BAY AREA, and remainder of Battalion placed in Corps Reserve, moving to bivouac area near CANLUBANG.

Company C attached to 11th Airborne Division and Company B relieved from attachment. Company C fired the first indirect fire mission of the Battalion during this campaign on 28 March 1945. One hundred one rounds of High Explosive were fired under direction of forward observer at Japanese Installations on LIPA HILL, while supporting the 472d Field Artillery Battalion.

Regular routine road patrols were made by the Reconnaissance Company during the month.

1 April 1945

Company C attached to the 11th Airborne Division for Operational Control and Supply in vicinity of LIPA.

2 April 1945

Battalion Headquarters, Headquarters Company, Reconnaissance Company and Company B moved to new bivouac area at CABAONG, in vicinity of SANTO TOMAS. Company A attached to 1st Cavalry Division at LOS BANOS for Operational Control and Supply. Reconnaissance Company relieved from roadblock and routine road reconnaissance.

3 April 1945

No change.

4 April 1945

Company A attached to 2d Brigade of 1st Cavalry Division in vicinity of SAN NICOLAS. 2d Platoon Reconnaissance Company attached to 5th Cavalry Regiment of 1st Cavalry Division near SAN RAFAEL.

5 April 1945

Company A fired upon and demolished several houses, bunkers and dugouts occupied by enemy in SANTA ROSA and killed fourteen (14) Japs.

1st Platoon Company C received severe enemy artillery shelling while in assembly area near LIPA, but escaped with casualties or damage to materiel.

6 April 1945

No change.

7 April 1945

Company A destroyed one Jap 75mm artillery piece and assisted in capturing two others on TANZA HILL south of HIGHWAY 21. Company C destroyed three enemy pillboxes, one 75mm gun and one 37mm gun in vicinity of SULAC.

8 April 1945

Company B attached to 37th Infantry Division MANILA, pursuant to Field Order Number 59, Headquarters Sixth Army, 21001 7 April 1945.

2d Platoon Company C in support of 1st Battalion 187th Para-Glider Infantry fired 146 rounds of 76mm ammunition on Japanese emplacements and caves on BUKEL HILL. Results - unknown.

9 April 1945

Company B departed from MANILA with elements of 37th Infantry Division enroute to NAGUILIAN.

Company A relieved from attachment to 1st Cavalry Division and reverted to Battalion control at CABAONG.

2d Platoon Company C destroyed two enemy machine gun emplacements and three enemy dugouts on BUKEL HILL.

10 April 1945

2d Platoon Reconnaissance Company relieved from attachment to 5th Cavalry Regiment and reverted to Battalion control at CABAONG.

11 April 1945

No change.

12 April 1945

Reconnaissance Company attached to 1st Cavalry Division and remained alerted in Battalion bivouac area.

13 April 1945

1st Platoon Company C while supporting the 1st Battalion 187th Para-Glider Infantry fired 568 rounds of 76mm ammunition with great effect destroying 19 caves, 6 houses and 9 pillboxes on MT MACOLOD.

14 April 1945

3rd Platoon Company C fired 420 rounds of 76mm ammunition at targets of opportunity on MT MACOLOD, in support of the 1st Battalion 187th Para-Glider Infantry. This platoon's perimeter was attacked by a small party of Japs during the night and had one man wounded. Enemy casualties were two men wounded.

Company B in support of the 148th Infantry, 37th Infantry Division, fired upon and sealed 14 enemy caves and dugouts on road 11000 yards west of BAGUIO.

15 April 1945

Company B in support of 148th Infantry fired 208 rounds of 76mm ammunition at targets of opportunity on BAGUIO ROAD.

16 April 1945

No change.

17 April 1945

Company C in support of 187th Para-Glider Infantry in assault on MT MACOLOD, destroyed 2 enemy concrete pillboxes, 2 mortar positions and 6 machine gun positions. Our casualties were five men wounded by mortar fire.

18 April 1945

Company B destroyed one house, several machine gun positions, one pillbox and sealed six caves on BAGUIO ROAD.

19 April 1945

Reconnaissance Company released from 1st Cavalry Division and reverted to Battalion control at CABAONG.

Company C killed four Japs, destroyed two machine gun positions and sealed 36 caves on MT MACOLOD.

20 April 1945

No change.

21 April 1945

Company C sealed three caves on BROWNIE RIDGE of MT MACOLOD with unknown number of Japanese casualties.

Company B sealed one cave and destroyed several huts occupied by Japs, with eight enemy killed.

22 April 1945

Company A attached to 11th Airborne Division for Operational Control relieving Company C which reverted to Battalion Control.

23 April 1945

No change.

24 April 1945

No change.

25 April 1945

Reconnaissance Company patrol searched MT CABULUGAN area for suspected Japanese bivouac area, but made no contact.

Company B destroyed one 5 inch gun, six buildings and one ammunition dump on BAGUIO ROAD. Also sealed one cave and damaged an enemy water tower and one occupied stone building. Two Company B men were wounded with 48 Japanese killed in action.

26 April 1945

Company B destroyed one machine gun position and one building on BAGUIO ROAD killing one Jap.

27 April 1945

Company B destroyed four houses and sealed nine caves with three Japs killed.

28 April 1945

No change.

29 April 1945

Company A fired 109 rounds of 76mm ammunition at Jap positions on MT MALEPUNYO with unobserved results.

30 April 1945

3rd Platoon Company B in support of 129th Infantry destroyed two 20mm guns, two houses and one ammunition dump near BAGUIO. 1st Platoon Company B in support of 148th Infantry destroyed one 77mm gun and four guns of unknown caliber in vicinity of BAGUIO.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES - APRIL 1945

During the month of April, the 637th Tank Destroyer Battalion moved to CABAONG and supported the 1st Cavalry Division and 11th Airborne Division in numerous attacks on MT MALEPUNYO and MT MACOLOD, and in mopping up various isolated Japanese positions in these Division Sectors. Company B was attached to the 37th Infantry Division and supported their advance east along MARGUILIAN - BAGUIO ROAD to the city of BAGUIO proper.

1 - 3 May 1945

No change.

4 May 1945

Company A released from attachment to 11th Airborne Division and reverted to Battalion control.

5 - 6 May 1945

No change.

7 May 1945

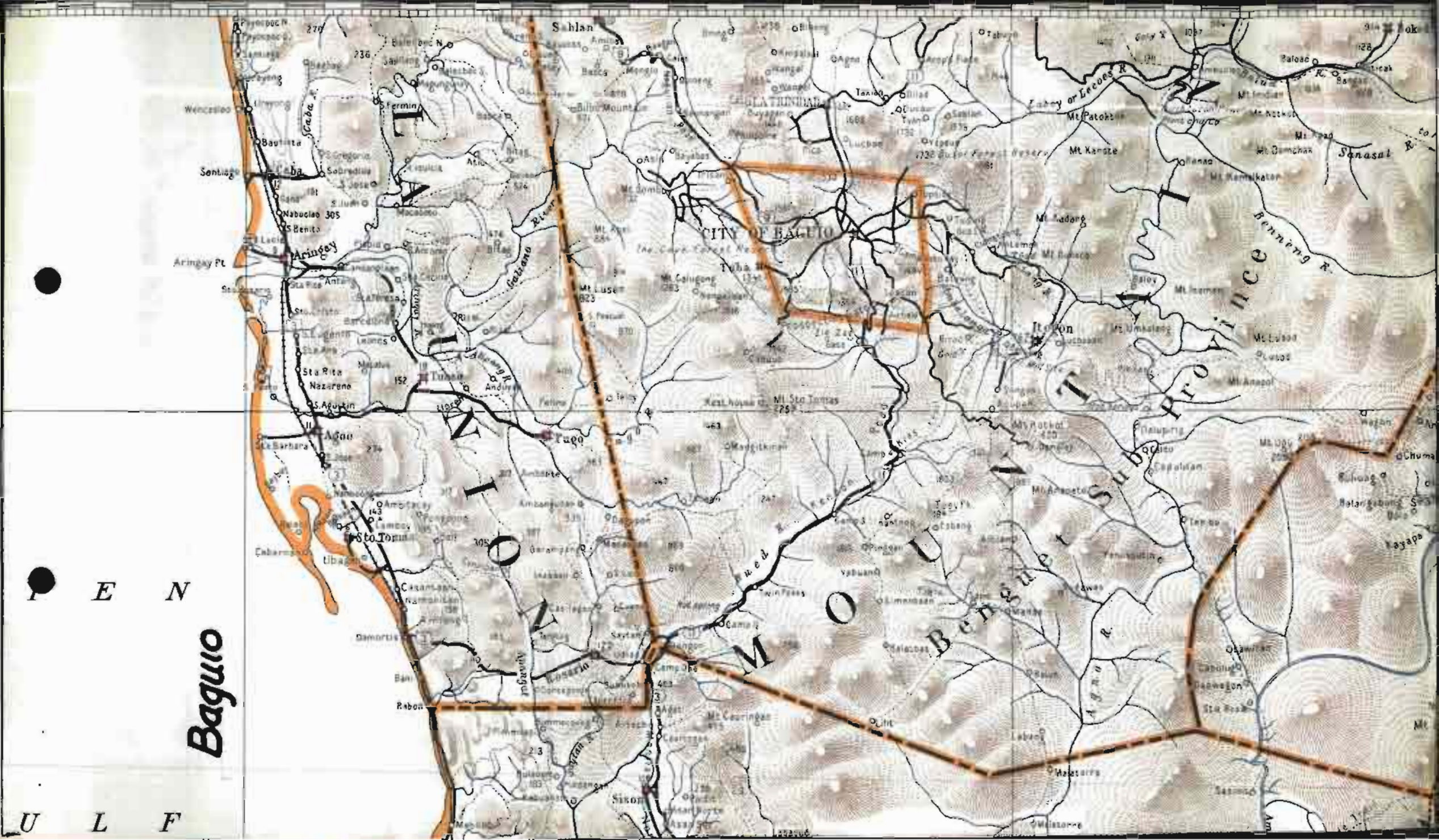
637th Tank Destroyer Battalion (less Company B) moved to Base Camp area vicinity of MUNTINLUPA.

8 May 1945

Battalion engaged in construction of Base Camp. Company B (attached to 37th Infantry Division) moved to SAN ISIDRO, killing one Jap enroute.

9 - 30 May 1945

No change.



Baguio

CITY OF BAGUIO

BAGUIO

MOU

BENSHEL SUBTROPICAL

Salan

Wenceslao

Santiago

Aringay Pt

Sto. Tomas

Libago

Rabon

CITY OF BAGUIO

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U L F

31 May 1945

Company B attached to 37th Infantry Division in advance along HIGHWAY 5 to BALETE PASS. 1st Platoon in support of 3rd Battalion 129th Infantry sealed one cave and killed 13 enemy 5000 yards north of SANTA FE. We suffered no casualties.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES - MAY 1945

During the month of May, the 637th Tank Destroyer Battalion, minus Company B, moved to MUNTINLUPA and constructed Base Camp. Company A was relieved from attachment to 11th Airborne Division and reverted to Battalion Control. Company B moved from BAGUIO to SAN ISIDRO for a rest period. On 31 May, Company B attached to 37th Infantry Division, started on push along HIGHWAY 5 toward BALETE PASS.

1 June 1945

At approximately 0500I, 40 to 50 rounds of high velocity artillery fell within 300 yards west of Company B's Command Post in the vicinity of SANTA FE. No casualties resulted from this action.

1st Platoon of Company B in support of 3rd Battalion 129th Infantry advancing along HIGHWAY 5 fired into wooded areas along route. One cave, from which fire was received was closed. A patrol of one M-4 Medium Tank, 2 M-18 Tank Destroyers and a squad of infantry was sent to investigate a report of tank tracks in the brush. Report proved false. Thirteen enemy were killed by the patrol.

2 June 1945

2d Platoon of Company B in support of Company I 129th Infantry in advance along HIGHWAY 5 was fired on by enemy high muzzle velocity artillery 2000 yards north of YANGIRAN. Platoon returned fire, expended all ammunition and withdrew. Results undetermined, our casualties - none.

3 June 1945

1st Platoon of Company B covering advance of Company I 129th Infantry along HIGHWAY 5 sighted three enemy tanks 3000 yards southwest of BONE SOUTH. Area covered with 76mm fire. Results undetermined, our casualties - none.

4 June 1945

Battalion, minus Company B commenced first phase of training in accordance with Training Memorandum Number 25, Headquarters Sixth Army.

3rd Platoon Company B covering advance of 1st Battalion, 129th Infantry along HIGHWAY 5, encountered enemy small arms fire, which was silenced by direct fire and small arms. Results unknown - our casualties - none.

5 June 1945

2d Platoon Company B in support of 1st Battalion 129th Infantry advancing along HIGHWAY 5, fired on and destroyed three enemy medium tanks and closed 8 caves. A small party of enemy was encountered along route and taken under fire, killing one in this action and dispersing the remainder. Our casualties - none.

6 June 1945

1st Platoon of Company B in support of 1st Battalion 129th Infantry along HIGHWAY 5. A roadblock was set up by a section of Tank Destroyers guarding the approaches to HIGHWAY 5 from the west. The section was relieved by the Anti-Tank Company 129th Infantry. Enemy sniper fire was encountered along route of advance. Six enemy were killed. Our casualties - none.

3rd Platoon attached to 37th Reconnaissance Troop to be prepared to move on Division Order in the INEAGAN, MAIASIN, DUPAX area pursuant to Field Order Number 38, Headquarters 37th Infantry Division, 4 June 1945. Platoon departed on reconnaissance mission, ARITAO, DUPAX, MAIASIN.

7 June 1945

Company B's Command Post established at GUILAO. 2d Platoon in support of 3rd Battalion 129th Infantry covered advance north along HIGHWAY 5. Temporary roadblock was set up at the road junction in DUPAX and later relieved by 129th Anti-Tank Company. Platoon fired on what appeared to be a Japanese tank 100 yards south of road junction DUPAX - BAMBAN. Target hit and was left in a burning condition.

During the night one Jap was killed by a booby trap and another was killed by small arms fire on the company perimeter.

3rd Platoon set up road blocks at DUPAX and MAIASIN. Two Japs were killed and one wounded during the night. Our casualties - none.

8 June 1945

Company B's Command Post located at SALANO. 1st Platoon in support of 3rd Battalion 129th Infantry covering the advance along the main route killed one enemy in the vicinity of BAOMBONG. Anti-Tank fire 3000 yards north of BAOMBONG was received by the column at 1430I. A flanking party consisting of two M-18s and one infantry squad killed one enemy and neutralized the position.

3rd Platoon returned to BAMBANG for the night. Our casualties - none.

9 June 1945

1st Platoon attached to 3rd Battalion 145th Infantry advancing north along HIGHWAY 5 fired on and killed two enemy along the route. The column was fired on by an enemy 77mm dual purpose gun. Gun flashed spotted and fire was returned neutralizing the position. At intersection of HIGHWAYS 4 and 5, three enemy were killed by caliber 50 machine gun fire.

3rd Platoon returned to Company Command Post.

Ten Prisoners of War (1 Jap and 9 Formosans) were taken prisoner by Command Post personnel. Our casualties - none.

10 - 11 June 1945

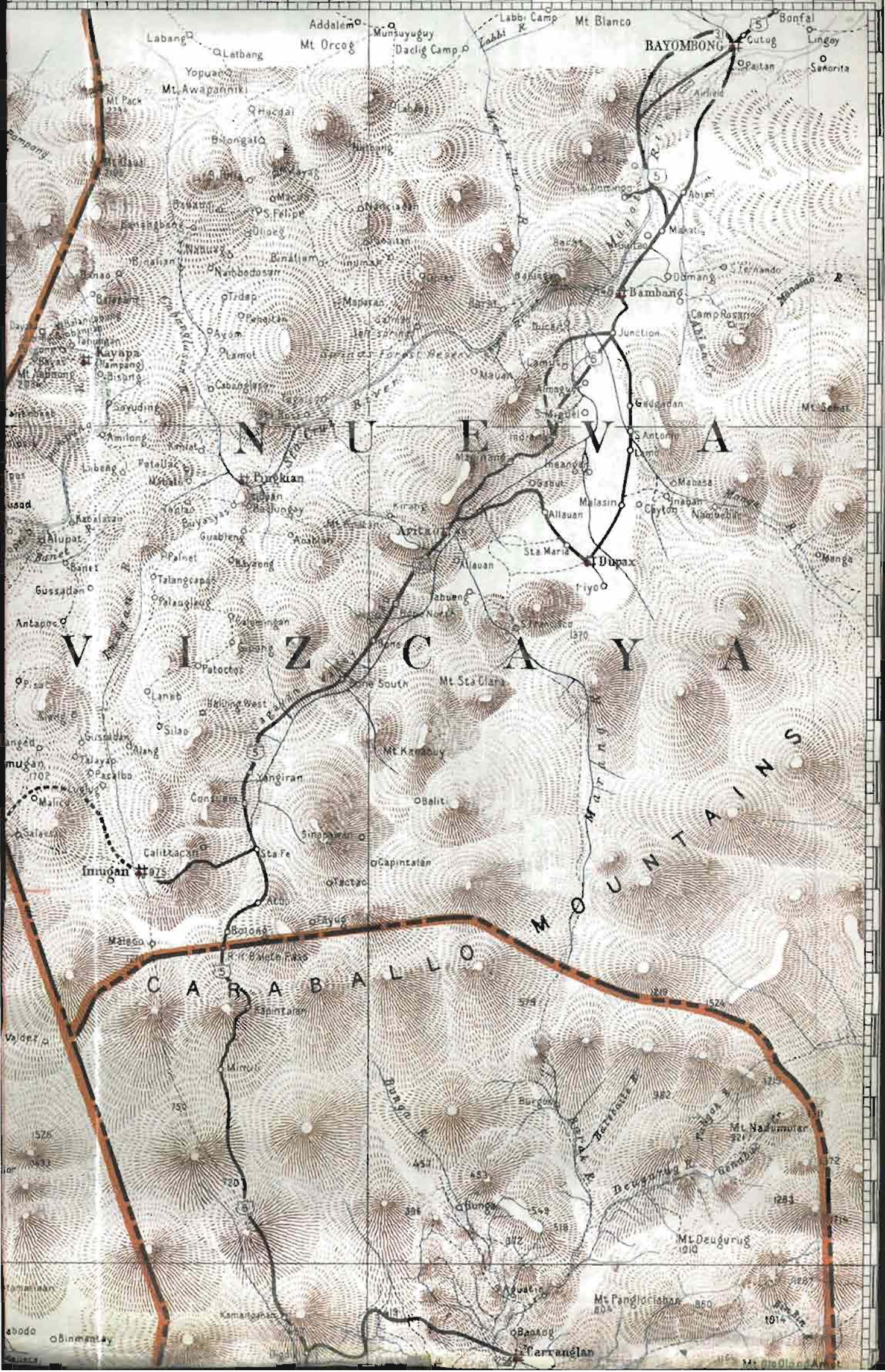
No change.

12 June 1945

Company Command Post moved to vicinity of ORIOANG PASS killing two enemy en-route.

Northern Luzon

10'



13 June 1945

1st Platoon of Company B in support of 3rd Battalion 145th Infantry en route to SANTIAGO. Enemy small arms fire received all along route. Three enemy were killed by the tank destroyers along the route. Five more enemy were killed and one self-propelled flame thrower destroyed east of SANTIAGO.

One section left Company Area at 1830¹ to neutralize enemy road block of two machine guns in ORIOANG PASS. Area occupied by Japs was covered by caliber 50 machine gun and 76 mm fire. Enemy machine guns were silenced, and results undetermined. One friendly dead and three wounded were evacuated. The Company Commander, Captain Robert B Green received the Bronze Star from Major General Beightler for the action of carrying out wounded under enemy machine gun fire. Our casualties - none.

14 June 1945

Company Command Post vicinity CALAO.

15 June 1945

The Battalion, minus Company B, placed under control of XI Corps, effective 0001, pursuant to Field Order Number 16, Headquarters XIV Corps, 13 June 1945.

Two enemy killed vicinity of Company B's Command Post. 2d Platoon Security Section killed 4 enemy 1000 yards north of Company Command Post. 1st Platoon advancing along road to ECHAUGE killed two enemy and captured one Jap in the vicinity of MAGAT RIVER.

16 June 1945

One section of 3rd Platoon of Company B, attached to 37th Reconnaissance Troop on an advance armored patrol to CAGAYAN RIVER.

2d Platoon with 148th Infantry advanced with main force to CAGAYAN RIVER. One enemy was killed in house at CAUAYAN.

17 June 1945

Company Command Post at CAUAYAN. 1st Platoon supported the advance of 2d Battalion 148th Infantry north of CAGAYAN RIVER.

18 June 1945

Company B Command Post at Palatto.

19 June 1945

Company B Command Post vicinity of SEGUNDO. 1st Platoon attached to 3rd Battalion 148th Infantry near NAGUILAN crossed CAGAYAN RIVER and headed north along HIGHWAY 5. Moving along a parallel road to the right, the 1st Platoon reinforced a tank led reconnaissance patrol that came under enemy tank fire. It was impossible for the destroyers to fire due to friendly troops. Platoon formed with Company A 148th Infantry and began moving forward to make contact with the patrol. Reconnaissance Troop made contact with Japanese Tank ambush while the destroyers covered Company A 148th Infantry by flushing out the remaining Japs. Results of action unobtainable.

20 June 1945

Company B Command Post located vicinity of NAGUILLIAN. 3rd Platoon attached to 37th Reconnaissance Troop for road patrol along

HIGHWAY 361, halfway between SANTIAGO - CAUAYAN. Patrol moved to CAUAYAN with few enemy encountered. Platoon relieved from 37th Reconnaissance Troop and then placed in support of 2d Battalion 148th Infantry on mission of armored patrol from NAGUILLIAN to SAN MARIANO. They also set up a road block 3 kilometers west of SAN MARIANO, but no enemy was contacted. Platoon relieved at the road block by 1st Battalion 148th Infantry.

21 June 1945

Company B Command Post located vicinity of SAN ANTONIO with the 2d Platoon supporting the 1st Battalion 148th Infantry. En route destroyers fired on and destroyed a concealed enemy medium tank which began to burn immediately. A light machine gun and a stack of ammunition for the tank gun was found nearby in good working order. No enemy personnel was defending these positions. Due to fierce fire it was impossible to ascertain the number of enemy dead in the tank.

22 June 1945

1st Platoon Company B in support of 148th Infantry established road blocks vicinity of HAGAN. Platoon was then placed in support of 2d Battalion in advance along HIGHWAY 5. Platoon fired into all wooded areas for possible enemy positions along route with unknown results. Enemy artillery fire was received by the platoon. Gun spotted and fired upon. Field piece was observed as definitely destroyed and a prime mover with towed gun probably destroyed.

While the 3rd Platoon was bivouaced with 37th Reconnaissance Troop, two Japs were killed in vicinity of BALLACOYA.

23 June 1945

No change.

24 June 1945

At approximately 0120I and continuing for an hour an enemy artillery barrage of 10 or 15 cm landed in the 37th Division Command Post. At 0430I another enemy barrage started and continued for another hour until silenced by counter battery fire. Many rounds landed in the Company Command Post area. The Division Command Post suffered 5 men killed and 16 wounded. The Company Command Post had no casualties.

Company Command Post moved to NAMEBALAN.

25 June 1945

3rd Platoon of Company B in support of 2d Battalion 129th Infantry moved north on HIGHWAY 5 to TUGUEGARAO. One section was placed in support of Company F 129th Infantry on the mission of mopping up the town. No resistance was encountered. Two unoccupied pillboxes were destroyed. On the TUGUEGARAO airstrip one Japanese fighter plane was destroyed. Infantry had advanced on the plane, which was in good condition, and agreement was made that the destroyer would hold fire until called for. The infantry officer observed that all was well around the plane and wanted to signal the destroyer not to fire. He raised his hand and dropped it sharply. The Jap plane disintegrated on the first round on the erroneous signal. The column advanced to IGUIG and set up a perimeter. One prisoner, believed to be a Formosan, was taken.

26 June 1945

Company Command Post located at BACULUD. 1st Platoon of Company B in support of 2d Battalion 129th Infantry proceeded north and made contact with the 511th Parachute Infantry of the 11th Airborne Division north of IGUIG at 1330I.

27 June 1945

The 1st Platoon of Company B supported the 1st Battalion 129th Infantry. The 1st section of the 2d Platoon was in support of the 3rd Battalion 129th Infantry and 3rd Platoon worked with the 1st Battalion 511th Parachute Infantry.

28 - 29 June 1945

No change.

30 June 1945

Company B relieved from attachment to 37th Infantry Division 2400I, per paragraph 17, General Orders Number 132, Headquarters I Corps, 26 June and reverted to Battalion Control.

SUMMARY OF ACTIVITIES - JUNE 1945

During the month of June, the 637th Tank Destroyer Battalion, minus Company B, completed construction of base camp and started training as prescribed by Training Memorandum No 25, Headquarters Sixth Army. On 15 June, the Battalion was placed under the control of XI Corps, pursuant to Field Order Number 16, Headquarters XIV Corps, 13 June 1945.

Company B attached to 37th Infantry Division supported the Division's push from SANTA FE along HIGHWAY 5 to BALETE PASS. After the capture of BALETE PASS the company played a large part in the neutralizing of a road block and also the capture of ORIOANG PASS. Following the capture of ORIOANG PASS, the company, still in support of the 37th Infantry Division, pushed north through the CAGAYAN VALLEY until contact was made with the 511th Parachute Infantry which was advancing south from APARRI after a jump was made on 24 June. Contact was made between the two divisions at 1330I, 26 June 1945. The company was relieved from attachment to the 37th Infantry Division at 2400I, 30 June, and reverted to Battalion control.

A SUMMARY

History is replete with cases and stories of the "small man" who made a definite contribution in carrying out the purposes of a greater being. The history of this war would not be complete without some appreciable mention of the contribution made by separate units in the all-out effort to overthrow the perpetrators of ruthless destruction and widespread carnage.

These separate units - the forgotten brothers or "bastard" outfits, as they have been called - marked many a place with their significant activities. The 637th Tank Destroyer Battalion is one of these.

In restless contemplation of battle, with many promises that fell through and new equipment that did not materialize, the Battalion sweated out over two and a half years of Pacific Island training. And the training was not in vain. The competence of the men in all phases of fighting was only surpassed by their confidence in themselves, their companions and their weapons. This is not only borne out by the facts revealed on the following pages, but more expressly put by a staff officer of the Infantry Division to which the Battalion was attached when he said, "They were veterans before they ever hit the beach."

Anyone may check the Field Manuals for the missions generally assigned to a Tank Destroyer Battalion - and we were fairly confident that we might have a part to play in the destruction of the Japanese 2d Armored Division and separate tank battalions on Luzon. Our training had been keyed to our primary mission - destruction of enemy armor - and the terrain studies revealed suitable grounds for such expected action.

In actuality, we were the strong-arm brother; the stop gap; the fallback. Respected for our speed, power, coolness under fire, and the destructive might of our 76mm guns, we were the constant companion and reliable friend of the doughboy. Our primary mission faded as a dream - coming to life in only a few minutes of action. The beginning and the end of the Campaign - Fort Stotsenburg and the Cagayan Valley - fulfilled the anticipations of gunners to feel the culmination of years of training in the burning Jap tanks that they themselves could chalk up to the credit of the Battalion.

But glamour was not paramount. Precise, painstaking care was necessary in slipping the tube of a destroyer over a ridge to get a well placed shot on a pillbox or gun emplacement before the enemy tagged you. Caliber 50 machine guns in destroyer turrets carried out a more positive mission than their originally intended anti-aircraft fire, when brought to bear on the windows and doors of Jap-occupied buildings. Devotion to duty and expression of purpose was evidenced by the men who guided their destroyers through mine-laid streets, around blasted tree stumps, up and down steep embankments - all in the face of enemy fire. Continuous manning of observation posts, with machine guns covering the Manila North Harbor Area, stimulated intelligence reports and curtailed the enemy. These, then, were our missions.

1. Direct support mobile artillery.
2. Establish road block and out-posts.
3. Protect the Division on its exposed flank, and from enemy armor at all times.

It was a versatile employment: - knocking a Jap sniper off a roof with the first shot of a 76mm gun at 600 yards without touching the roof; sinking a barge with indirect bazooka fire; blasting caves at 25 yards; putting to complete rout a Jap encampment, with destruction of personnel and equipment, on a surprise reconnaissance mission; punching two holes in the tube of a Jap 5 inch Naval gun at a range of 1000 yards; pulverizing concrete pillboxes and cutting entrances in the sides of buildings; picking off running Japs with big gun at ranges over 800 yards. This was the 637th Tank Destroyer Battalion in the Luzon Campaign. Out in front; in support; - doughboys, tankers, and troopers learned well the part the man of this organization played in the victory that was won. As a fitting comment, one doughboy yelled to a gunner who had just scored a direct hit on his target - "Hey, Bud, teach me to shoot my M-1 like that!" The gun has been fondly referred to since that time as the "Big M-1".

It was mentioned before that the smaller units are often forgotten in the big picture. As in a football game, the man who carries the ball gets the credit and attention. The supporting cast of any drama is none-the-less important. And, so, even in the smaller unit the tales are told of the exploits of gunners and crewmen, while others pass unmentioned. To pay adequate tribute to these men is impossible, as it is also impossible to list them all. In recognition of their untiring services, their ceaseless efforts in behalf of others, and the seemingly impossible feats they accomplished, we commend the men and the spirit behind the men of the following named sections:

- MAINTENANCE - "...and it was fixed."
- KITCHEN - "...and the food was hot even at the front under fire."
- MEDICS - "...they went through the same stuff we did, and were there to help us."
- PERSONNEL - "...more damned paper work..."
- COMMUNICATION- "...somehow the message got through."

No expression of the development and accomplishments of this Battalion in combat would be complete without calling attention to the leadership. The Company Commanders have their headaches and deserve the respect so competently won. But the depth of the statement that the strength of the Army lies in its Non-Commissioned Officers and Platoon Leaders has been felt by this organization. In the type of assignments we were given, the Platoon Leaders had to stand on his own feet as a liaison officer and unit commander before a much higher ranking officer of the unit to which he was attached. Correct employment and tactical decisions were the responsibility of the Platoon Leader in seeing that they were in keeping with correct Tank Destroyer doctrine and procedure - or that the end would justify the means. With unflinching devotion to duty the Platoon Leader was the spirit behind, in, and at the head of the action.

In like manner, Non-Commissioned Officers were confronted with similar problems, and faced them in like coolness with direct aggressive action. For competence in battle and exemplary leadership, four men were promoted from the ranks. One platoon sergeant became the Executive Officer of his company. Another platoon sergeant and a first sergeant became Platoon Leaders in their respective companies. A destroyer commander took over the duties of Battalion Liaison Officer upon receipt of his commission.

To say they have properly accepted their new responsibilities is a gross understatement.

In many cases the Battalion Commander is just the "Old Man", who sort of makes the necessary contacts and takes the credit. Perhaps this War is different - perhaps not. From the preparatory stages this Battalion was most fortunate in having as its Commanding Officer a man with the keenest eye for terrain, the will and ability to drive himself unceasingly in the interest of his men. No group of men likes unending training, and it reflects in their attitude toward the "Old Man". But no group ever appreciated the efforts of any one man in combat more than the soldiers who fought and worked under this Battalion Commander. His constant understanding and personal disregard of safety were definite factors in his inspiration to all the men. At the close of the campaign he left the organization with a feeling of infinite warmth in the hearts of all men for him.

In the fortunes of war some friends are lost. This Battalion was no exception. We revere the memory of those now gone. They lived as soldiers live, and died as many soldiers die. Theirs is the peace now won at such a price that no man can conceive it. We share the human element of sympathy, but cherish the principles for which they died.

JOHN B STOKES JR
Captain FA, (TD)
Historian

"I am a soldier" IS A TRUTH

Richard J. Tanguary
Adjutant