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THE XIV CORPS BATTLE FOR MANILA
FEBRUARY 1945

A thesis presented to the Faculty of the U. S. Army
Command and General Staff College in partial
fulfillment of the requirements for the
degree

MASTER OF MILITARY ART AND SCIENCE

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by

KEVIN T. McENERY, CPT, USA
B.A., University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, Michigan 1981

Fort Leavenworth, Kansas
1993

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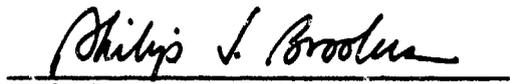
Approved by:


_____, Thesis Committee Chairman
Dr. Thomas M. Huber, Ph.D.


_____, Member
LTC Roger C. Wilson, MS.


_____, Member
LTC Joseph B. David, MS.

Accepted this 4th day of June 1993 by:


_____, Director, Graduate Degree
Philip J. Brookes, Ph.D. Programs

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ABSTRACT

THE XIV CORPS BATTLE FOR MANILA, FEBRUARY 1945 by CPT Kevin T. McEnery, USA, 154 pages.

This study is a historical analysis of the February 1945 battle to liberate Manila. It focuses on the large unit urban combat operations of the U.S. Army XIV Corps. The XIV Corps attack was part of the larger Allied campaign to liberate Luzon in the Philippines. Manila was an important political and military objective. This month long battle was the only time in the Second World War that U.S. forces fought the Japanese inside a major city. It represented a dramatic departure from the earlier island campaigns of the Pacific Theater.

The study evaluates the relationship between the strategic and operational importance of modern major cities and U.S. tactical doctrine for seizing a defended city. The analysis includes U.S. Army World War II large unit doctrine for offensive urban combat, the circumstances that determined the city of Manila would become a battlefield, and the adaptation of doctrine by XIV Corps in Manila. From this historical analysis, we can determine planning and operational considerations for likely corps and division level urban combat today.

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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

On January 9, 1945, Lieutenant General Walter Kreuger's Sixth U.S. Army landed with two corps at Lingayen Gulf, the island of Luzon, Philippine Islands. The mission of one corps, Major General Oscar W. Griswold's XIV Corps, was to attack south towards the Philippine capital of Manila. The Americans needed the port of Manila to supply its Philippine Campaign and for future operations against Japan itself. As the capital of an Allied nation, and as a symbol of American defeat three years earlier, liberation of Manila also held significant political importance.

There was no Sixth Army or XIV Corps plan to fight in Manila. To the Americans, it appeared the Japanese would leave the city undefended. However, by the end of January, Japanese intentions to defend the city to the end became disturbingly clear. MG Oscar Griswold's XIV Corps would have to fight to liberate the Philippine capital.

XIV Corps' month long urban battle destroyed not only the Japanese defenders but much of this historic city, home to nearly 1,000,000 civilians. Hardly a building in downtown Manila escaped heavy damage or destruction.¹ From February 3 through March 3, the XIV Corps lost over 1,000

soldiers killed and 5,500 wounded in the metropolitan area. Some 16,000 Japanese Army and Navy troops died in Manila. Tragically, approximately 100,000 Filipino civilians also died during the battle to liberate their city.² Rebuilding the city has been a source of political conflict between the United States and the Philippines for decades. Of all allied cities, only Warsaw suffered greater damage during the war than Manila.³

For the American Army, Manila represented a significant change in the nature of the ground war in the Pacific Theater. Unlike previous island and jungle battles, Manila entailed a multi-division corps attack in a major metropolitan area. The battle of Manila marked the first and only time in the Pacific War in which American troops met the Japanese in a struggle for a major city. In the spring of 1945, American Army commanders viewed the experience as a glimpse of fights awaiting them in large cities of the Japanese home islands. Surveying the aftermath of the battle for Manila, General MacArthur vowed, "...by these ashes [the enemy] has wantonly fixed the future pattern of his own doom."⁴

The XIV Corps experience in Manila illustrates the nature of combat in a modern major city. The battle that unfolded in Manila defined American expectations for this type of warfare on the Japanese home islands. For commanders, tactical success against a fanatical defender in

a city meant resolving the conflict between duty to win at the least possible cost in American soldier lives and utter devastation for the city and its inhabitants. This conflict remains as valid for U. S. military leaders today as it did in 1945.

It is increasingly common for cities themselves to be the focus of armed conflict. Small, poorly armed forces or terrorist groups offset their tactical liabilities by maximizing the defensive advantages of urban terrain. Conflicts in cities of political, historical or cultural importance capture the attention of the entire world. Beirut, Panama City, Kuwait City, Sarajevo, and Mogadishu, are some recent examples of cities that have become battlefields. The suffering of women and children, concentrated in major cities, may push an otherwise militarily insignificant battle to the "front-page news."

Our warfighting doctrine, as well as our best tactical sense, tells us we should avoid combat in major cities.² However, it is probable, given the political and military importance of major cities throughout the world, that avoiding them may be the exception rather than the rule. If we then accept that conflict with an enemy force at some level is likely within a major city, then political and military leaders must have a common understanding of the effects of military force in an urban environment.

High technology warfare of the 1990's may be more precise than 1940's warfare, but it is no less devastating to anyone or anything in its path. The American public has demonstrated a willingness to accept nothing less than quick victory with no casualties. For some in our society, success in war must include absolutely no civilian or military casualties to the enemy nation as well. The competing costs of victory are exacerbated in the urban combat environment. American commanders will face a dilemma much like that which faced American leaders contemplating targets for the atomic bomb in World War II. According to Secretary of War Henry Stimson, "To discard or fail to use effectively any weapon that might spare [American soldiers] further sacrifice would be irresponsibility so flagrant as to deserve condign punishment ... and yet to use the atomic bomb against cities populated mainly by civilians was to assume another and scarcely less terrible responsibility." When one reflects on the destruction conventional war brought to Manila, a comparison to the effects of an atomic bomb is not far fetched.

The purpose of this study is to determine planning implications today for large unit offensive operations in a major urban area. Through historical analysis of the XIV Corps battle for Manila, I will first, analyze *how well our 1945 doctrine for division and corps level operations supported synchronization of an attack in a large*

metropolitan area. Second, is an analysis of how XIV Corps responded the tactical challenges of combat in Manila. And third, I will consider issues that may determine whether a large unit commander today can achieve tactical success on an urban battlefield, without creating strategically unacceptable levels of destruction.

U.S. Army Urban Combat Doctrine Today

Political and operational requirements may not provide a contingency corps commander the option of ignoring or bypassing an enemy force defending in a major city. Our armed forces require secure sea and air ports to establish the lodgment and theater logistics bases. American Logistics-Over-The-Shore (LOTS) capabilities to sustain large forces over time are limited. Air and sea port facilities are, for the most part, located only in or near large urban areas. If access to these critical facilities is contested, large, powerful forces are required to secure any adjacent urban area.

Our warfighting doctrine is undergoing a period of change and revision. Current doctrine for urban warfare emphasizes tactics, techniques, and procedures at the small unit level. The compartmental nature of tactical level combat in cities necessitates this emphasis on small unit proficiency. However, the scale of urbanization also demands consideration of military operations at higher levels. In the ever increasing heavily populated areas of

the world, corps and division commanders may be responsible for major urban areas as their primary area of operations.

Today's emphasis on contingency forces and regional threats, highlights the very real the possibility of a corps receiving the mission to secure a large city. Major urban combat, however, is not a new requirement. Execution of our defensive plans for Europe would certainly have included combat in heavily populated cities. Such combat, however, was assumed to be incidental to the overall defense of German territory. Major command training exercises, outside of Berlin, do not routinely include large forces fighting in any large cities. Training for urban combat above the battalion level certainly is considered to only require modification of established tactical doctrine to the effects of urban terrain.⁷

There is a difference between military operations *on urban terrain* and military operations *in an urban environment*. Current U.S. Army doctrine considers operations in urban areas only within the context of "terrain." In the 1986 edition of FM 100-5, Operations, urban terrain is discussed in terms of the physical "effects of terrain." The predominant distinction in this section is that the effects of physical conditions on the employment of troops are largely the result of man-made rather than naturally occurring phenomenon.⁸

The 1986 FM 100-5 also addresses an issue for commanders more likely in urban combat than combat in other unique environments such as mountains or jungle. "Strategic guidance will constrain operational methods by ruling out some otherwise attractive alternatives."¹⁰ The January 1993 Final Draft of the new FM 100-5 tries to explain this in a more positive tone. Under the subtitle of "Disciplined Operations", this draft edition suggests that "as a disciplined force subordinate to political authority, the Army . . . expects all of its units--from the highest to the lowest--to fight within the restraints and constraints specified by the higher commander."¹⁰

FM 90-10, Military Operations on Urban Terrain, defines MOUT to include all military actions on terrain modified by man to meet his needs. It briefly discusses that "success may well be measured by how we accomplish our mission while minimizing destruction of buildings and alienation of the population."¹¹ The emphasis in this manual is on avoiding protracted and costly urban battles.

FM 90-10 includes an example of how a corps might conduct an offensive battle on urban terrain. The defended city is not the objective. It is a smaller town incidental to the larger corps attack. The corps sector includes a city that the commander ultimately assesses as a brigade objective.

Tactics, techniques and procedures for isolating, attacking, and clearing the city are described in some detail. Success for the maneuver units tasked to clear the city is determined by the application of overwhelming firepower.¹² It is interesting that the scenario portrayed in the manual is clearly the defense of western Germany, but the effects of overwhelming firepower in an enemy held, "friendly" town are not considered.

The way the U.S. Army considers combat in urban areas may be changing. A preliminary draft of the new FM 100-5, Operations, establishes new ideas that may change the way we plan to fight urban combat. Fighting battles and engagements employing every tactical means available remains a strong central theme. However, there is acceptance that forces other than defeat of an enemy armed force must be considered, even at the tactical level. The draft manual cautions commanders to consider the impact of media coverage of their operations and the effect of excessive collateral damage on the achievement of national political objectives.

The 1992 draft FM 100-5 also indicates a change to the way the Army views urban combat. Remember that in the 1986 version (like the World War II era versions) address urbanization primarily in terms of "terrain." The new proposal considers urban operations a unique environment.

Urban operations present unique and complex challenges to our forces. They can occur in any of the geographical

environments. They have a constraining effect on technological advantages; they have a significant impact on maintaining battle tempo; they force units to fight in small, decentralized elements; they also create difficult moral dilemmas due to the proximity of large elements of civilians. Commanders must enforce discipline in their operations to minimize unnecessary collateral damage and civilian casualties. Combat in built up areas can become even more bitter and wearing on soldiers and units than combat in other environments.^{1,2}

As the "keystone" U.S. Army doctrinal manual, this change in the definition of urban operations is critical to understanding recognition of the effects of urban combat at each level of combat--strategic, operational, and tactical. This recognition, combined with the urban focus of the world's news media, makes consideration of how to fight an urban battle an important endeavor for commanders. This new manual could change how commanders, and doctrine writers, view and evaluate operations in an urban environment.

If this version of FM 100-5 is accepted, it follows that the subordinate tactical level doctrinal manuals also will need revision. The most important requirement regarding urban combat is ensuring that MOUT doctrine complements, rather than complicates, success in urban combat. The first step is understanding aspects unique to the nature of an urban battlefield. Therefore, with an eye toward tactical considerations at the corps and division levels, it is appropriate to establish a structure for this urban combat environment.

The Urban Environment

Unlike deserts, forests, and jungles, the urban battlefield environment is composed of an ever changing mix of natural and man-made phenomenon. There are significant differences in the way a commander approaches a tactical problem if the issue is unique terrain, and the way the same commander considers a problem within a unique environment.

Terrain analysis is the consideration of how physical conditions of the battlefield effect combat operations. We modify our tactical doctrine, developed to achieve success on natural terrain, to account for the effects of man-made terrain. In an environmental analysis, of urban operations, the commander also considers the effects of his application of combat power. It involves more than the physical implications of operating in a man-made environment. He must determine a course of action that achieves his objective at the least possible cost in many different terms. The urban environment demands consideration of the physical, moral, cultural, political, strategic, and operational implications, as well as tactical conditions for the application of military force.

Before studying combat in an urban environment, it is useful to first consider how this environment differs from a "rural" combat environment. There are several principal differences.

The first, and most obvious, is the terrain itself. Urban terrain is predominantly man made. The terrain which provides cover and concealment is artificial. Visibility and target acquisition are significant challenges.

Paved roads provide access to virtually every part of the battlefield. The role of weather on ground mobility is not as critical.

Confined spaces limit massing of forces or firepower. Urban terrain favors the defending force.

Key terrain may be defined in psychological terms or may be terrain which, by itself provides no tactical advantage (i.e., a TV station, water supply, or a place of cultural importance).

Large urban areas usually add an underground dimension to a land battlefield. Urban subway systems and multilevel basements provide a force enhanced cover, concealment, and mobility with less engineer effort.

The battlefield contains large numbers of noncombatants. Whether friendly or enemy, their presence is a dominating factor in the conduct of tactical operations.

Significantly, cities are dominant terrain features precisely because they are cities. Urban terrain, as opposed to other militarily unique terrain such as jungle, mountain, or desert, has value far greater than its physical geography.¹⁴

In a city, avoiding destruction of the terrain becomes as important an issue as defeating the enemy force. In combat, an endeavor in which destruction is incidental, achieving tactical objectives while minimizing friendly casualties requires careful analysis and detailed planning. The very nature of urban terrain is founded in its support of the inhabitants. History shows that even under the worst combat conditions, significant numbers of civilians remain within the city. And inevitably, many more will return once hostilities are ended. If the life support infrastructure remains intact, it will continue to provide some level of basic life support. If destroyed, the occupying army incurs tremendous responsibility and logistical burdens for supporting the population.

The destruction of cities of historical or cultural importance is a significant concern. In the best example of this aspect, the responsibility for incurring such destruction weighed heavily in the U.S. decision not to use an atomic bomb on the historically and culturally important Japanese city of Kyoto during World War II.¹⁵ The devastation created by battle takes on a new political importance once combat involves great cities or large populations of noncombatants. A commander's freedom of action and ability to conserve soldiers' lives may depend upon his ability to adapt to the whole of the urban combat environment rather than merely fighting on urban terrain.

Obviously, a national capital or city of great cultural significance also becomes an important strategic objective. Nations will expend significant resources protecting cities that are symbolic centers of gravity. Many cities, particularly coastal cities, become objectives because of their geographic locations. The fact that most major airports and seaports are located in major urban areas makes control of them vital to sustaining campaigns at the operational level.

Tactically, a smaller enemy force may choose to take advantage of the inherent defensive opportunities provided by a large urban area. A determined defender with relatively few weapons, but detailed knowledge of the terrain, can have a significant tactical advantage over an attacker. The splintering of nations and armies and the growing urbanization of our world makes combat operations in large cities increasingly likely.

These complications all support arguments for avoiding combat in a major urban area. Yet commanders recognize that urban terrain may become decisive in every level of war. We cannot always bypass major cities and cannot, with large civilian populations, realistically put them to siege. We also cannot, as GEN MacArthur did regarding Manila, assume an enemy is as reluctant as we are to risk the cost of urban combat.¹⁶

Importance of the Study

Why is it important to study corps level offensive operations in a city? Because large unit operations in major urban areas require a completely different tactical mindset. As noted in the 1992 draft of FM 100-5, the approach to solving tactical problems is much more complex than applying doctrinal tactics, techniques and procedures to urban "terrain."

There are important differences between the tactics of small unit combat in a built up area and large unit operations to seize a major metropolitan area. Our published doctrine for urban warfare emphasizes tactics, techniques, and procedures at the lowest levels. Discussion of larger units considers urban areas as towns or villages within a larger sector. At no level is there guidance for a large unit commander whose area of responsibility is a city. The application of doctrinal principles, modified only for terrain, does not address the issue of combat within an urban environment. The special characteristics of large unit warfare in urban areas require a different mode of thought from other combat operations.

The U.S. Army does not lack from experience. Commanders have always recognized the importance of urban areas as strategic objectives, but attacking defended cities has always been difficult. Urban operations require enormous resources, diminish the tempo of the attack, restrict maneuver, and consume precious time and lives.

Tactical success in an urban battle may be determined by the weight of overwhelming firepower. However, strategic failure, influenced by world and national opinion, may be decided very early by the level of destruction and cost in human life.

At every level, warfighting proficiency comes from practice. Even in wartime, practice still equates to training. For the U.S. Army, training for such operations in peacetime has never been a focus, nor has the conduct of large scale exercises in a major city been a realistic option. Small unit military operations in urban terrain training sites are becoming increasingly common. With advances in computer simulation capabilities, exercising large unit operations in an urban environment is now a reasonable expectation. Understanding the implications of combat in a major city is the first step.

Methodology

To get to the issues associated with major urban combat, we must determine some relative constants associated with the problem. The variables of urban combat environments are as numerous as cities and wars themselves. My methodology for examining the problem will be a historical analysis of how one corps commander generated and applied combat power in an offensive operation to seize a major city.

The 3 February to 4 March 1945 XIV Corps attack to liberate Manila is appropriate for this study because it entails coordinated tactical operations by a multi-division corps to attack a major metropolitan area. The corps was, and is, the highest level of U.S. tactical combat. In 1945 Manila covered approximately 15 square miles and had a population of nearly 1,000,000. The metropolitan area included dense residential areas, a modern industrial and port district, and modern construction government and business areas. And finally, seizure of Manila was politically, strategically, operationally, and tactically critical to the United States.¹⁷

Study of the problem first requires an assessment of the doctrine the XIV Corps operated under. Armies fight the way they train. US Army doctrine in 1945 benefited from combat experience in many environments. It, as well as our current doctrine, addresses the conduct of land combat quite well in general terms. I believe that XIV Corps, in its Manila operation, successfully adapted its combat experience and the existing U.S. Army doctrine to an urban battlefield. In doing so, the soldiers of XIV Corps were forced to choose between protecting the lives of noncombatants and limiting destruction of an Allied capital or suffering increasingly heavy friendly casualties in an extended battle of attrition.

An analysis of why Manila became a battlefield is important to understanding the external forces the tactical commander faces. These external forces, which are markedly pronounced in the urban combat environment, often conflict with an American commander's duty to win, not at all cost, but at the least possible cost in American lives.

Study of the XIV Corps tactical operations to seize Manila attempts to analyze the commander's decision making process. Comparisons of operations orders, journals, and after action reports illuminate many of the challenges MG Griswold dealt with. The tactical problems of commanding and controlling a five division attack, which included a deliberate river crossing, are daunting in themselves. In the urban sprawl of Manila, executing with little prior planning, those challenges become even more significant.

How then can a US Corps or Division commander today reconcile the tactical requirements for combat in urban terrain with the strategic implications associated with destruction of a major city? How does a commander respond when valid political limitations endanger the lives of his soldiers? I believe analysis of the XIV Corps battle for Manila will provide important insight into the conditions required to synchronize, fight and win on the unforgiving battlefield of a major urban area.

CHAPTER 2

U.S. ARMY URBAN COMBAT DOCTRINE 1944-1945

To understand why XIV Corps fought the way it did in February 1945, we must first look at the tactical doctrine that existed for Corps offensive operations. Doctrine provides guidance for acting or suggests what has usually worked best. It also establishes a common base of understanding across the Army for solving military problems. Doctrine development is more than a philosophical endeavor. The organization of forces, weapons systems design, and training objectives are derived from a generally accepted doctrine. Military leaders expect superiors to give them "doctrinal" mission orders and similarly expect subordinates to execute their orders in a doctrinally acceptable manner. Therefore, it is logical to begin the analysis of XIV Corps' fight in Manila with an evaluation of how one should expect them to have fought.

The purpose of the corps is to fight. World War II Army doctrine thus focused entirely on the tactical level of war.¹ The emphasis in tactical doctrine is on the destruction of enemy forces. A prewar U.S. Army Command and General Staff College publication on corps operations stated, "The purpose of all military operations being

battle, the commander must be involved with the spirit of annihilation and must obtain all effort that each battle will become a decisive and overwhelming victory."²

Similarly, the predominant theme found in all post 1940 U.S. doctrine is the importance of overwhelming firepower. Maneuver existed to facilitate the destruction of an enemy by fire, as opposed to maneuver to gain advantage without decisive engagement.³ Thus, in the attack, terrain objectives were important only to the extent that they contributed to maneuver of the larger force's destruction of the enemy force by fire.

Army tactical doctrine, throughout the war, reflected America's "Germany First" strategic policy. Although the nature of combat in the European Theater of Operations (ETO) and the Pacific Theater of Operations (PTO) was very different, the Army's tactics, organization, and weapons development programs were predominantly oriented toward the European war. Few senior commanders experienced combat in both theaters. It was believed that the essential features of "conventional", European-type battle merely required modification to any differences in terrain.⁴

The nature of the Japanese soldier, as well as terrain, dictated a very different style of warfare in the PTO.⁵ Tactical success against the Japanese was realized in a different way than combat against the European enemies. The Germans, while experienced, skilled, and tenacious,

could be maneuvered into a position of disadvantage, and ultimately driven to surrender. Even against the Soviets, most German commanders eventually accepted defeat before total annihilation of their forces. The Japanese, however, possessed a very different martial heritage. To "defeat" a Japanese defender required "destruction." Maneuvering to a position of advantage did not cause the enemy to surrender. The battle could not be won until the last defender was killed.

The liberation of the Philippines was in many ways a unique experience for the US Army in the PTO. In terms of committed forces, operational level maneuver, and nature of the terrain, it was the closest combat in both theaters came to resemble each other. In February 1945, there were 10 U.S. divisions fighting on the island of Luzon.* The presence of a major metropolitan area made the battle for Luzon unique compared to previous southwest Pacific campaigns in sparsely inhabited jungle islands. For XIV Corps, accustomed to jungle warfare against the Japanese, Manila presented a new type of tactical challenge.

The purpose of this chapter is to explore the doctrine XIV Corps commanders and staffs called upon in their operations to liberate the city of Manila. It is not a review of street fighting techniques per se, but a look at the doctrinal guides for synchronizing large forces operating almost entirely within a major urban area. The

primary doctrinal sources available to a corps commander in late 1944 and early 1945 were Field Manual (FM) FM 100-5, Manual for Commanders of Large Units, and FM 100-15, Larger Units. FM 31-50, Attack of Fortified Positions and Combat in Towns, provided doctrine for the tactics, techniques, and procedures employed by regiments and smaller units. "Notes for Task Force Commands in Pacific Theaters" was a publication which provided specific observations on the application of tactics against the Japanese.⁷

In this analysis of U.S. Army corps doctrine I will focus on three areas. First, how the U.S. Army as a whole viewed offensive operations. At this level it is more "how to think" about attacking, rather than "how to fight" a specific attack. The second area is how the corps was expected to execute offensive operations on the ground it was assigned. And third, how the U.S. Army doctrinally addressed techniques of offensive combat in urban areas.

U.S. Army tactical doctrine for offensive combat in an urban area reflected two major themes. First was the importance of overwhelming firepower in the form of artillery and air support of infantry-tank attacks. Second was that urban combat was analogous to attack of fortified positions.

Large Unit Operations Doctrine

FM 100-5 served as the keystone manual for US Army doctrine, a role it continues to play in its most current

versions. It established a basis for how the Army would fight at every level. The US Army in 1944-45 was very much focused on the operations of large units. Our tactical doctrine from individual soldier through army levels reflected a war fought by forces of unprecedented mobility and firepower. FM 100-5 was a guide for any large unit commander engaged in combat independent of their theater of war. It reflected the importance of terrain to any operation and established a firepower based offensive doctrine.

Operations

The most immediate, visible aspect of urban combat is the terrain, the city itself. Fighting a major war in nations other than our own, provided the Army the challenge of organizing, training, and equipping for combat in many different environments. The Army considered appreciation for terrain to be central to deriving successful tactical solutions to any military problem.

Mountain ranges, great hill masses, escarpments, deserts, jungles, large rivers, and lakes block, retard, or canalize ground movement. These limiting environments all implied a need for special equipment and training. The commander sought to turn topographical features to his advantage. Americans used highly mobile units to block avenues parallel to the zone of attack and to screen the flanks, rear, and lines of communication. Canalized enemy

movement was attacked by bombardment aviation. The enemy was maneuvered or pursued to the point where he could be destroyed by firepower.*

Unique environments such as deserts and jungles required early consideration of special equipment and training. This did not mean special organizations for these environments. That idea had been tried and dropped in favor of standardized, general purpose divisions capable of adapting to any terrain. "Special" training and equipment therefore doctrinally equated to measures taken to protect personnel against the natural hazards peculiar to such areas. In the Southwest Pacific, Army jungle warfare troop schools and large unit amphibious training were common.*

Offensive Operations

The purpose of the attack was to take full advantage of an enemy's weaknesses, exploit those weaknesses, and decisively defeat the enemy force. Initial success was followed quickly by pursuit and destruction of the demoralized opponent. Success required the rapid massing of overwhelming fire power, especially air power. Experience in North Africa and Italy reinforced the need for air superiority and massive amounts of artillery. Discussions over the roles, development, and employment of tank and tank destroyer units figure dominantly in the development of U.S. Army doctrine during World War II.¹⁰

The critical element of any attack was the successful concentration of fires. Doctrinal discussions of offensive operations focused on organization for combat of subordinate units, movement of reserves, employment of artillery, and strong air support.¹¹ Tactical maneuver purposely facilitated the concentration of fires.

The employment of large, highly mobile, hard striking ground units supported by aviation forces strong enough to ensure air superiority, as well as air transported troops and supplies, was the commander's best guarantee of a successful attack.

In preparing for the attack, it was imperative that commanders have the most exact information possible of an enemy's defensive dispositions and intent. Every attack was prepared for and supported by indirect and direct fire plans. Infantry operated in close contact with the tanks.¹²

During the attack, the commander advanced his artillery by echelon to provide the infantry effective, constant support. A primary task of divisional engineers was to support the forward movement of heavy artillery. Whenever a commander became uncertain of the exact situation of his infantry he needed the capability of immediately responding with the maximum possible artillery fires.

The infantry too employed maximum fire power. Infantry units coordinated the use of all weapons accompanying the attack, for protecting the flanks,

assisting in the repulse of counterattacks, and occupying terrain. They advanced their weapons by echelon to maintain constant support of the assaulting troops. The coordination of artillery fire with infantry movement was essential to success.¹³

Offensive doctrine reflected the difficulties in command and control of large unit night operations. Commanders were expected to take advantage of darkness to readjust unit dispositions, resupply, relieve committed units, organize positions on the objective, and to reestablish and improve communications. Night was also the time to cross ground too dangerous to pass over by day, and to position forces to continue the advance in the morning. Night attacks were not conducted.¹⁴

When a commander was confronted by a well prepared defensive position, he established a hasty defense and made appropriate preparations for a deliberate attack. Attack against an enemy occupying a prepared defensive zone or position required more extensive preparations than attack of an enemy in a deployed defense. The commander had to provide for more firepower on a restricted front and a stronger artillery preparation.¹⁵

"Attacking a village" is the closest FM 100-5 came to addressing urban combat. This reflected a desire to avoid combat in cities, a wish that usually came true in North Africa and Italy (until Cassino). Urban combat was

viewed as incidental to a larger attack and usually involved a regiment or less. Unless a direct attack was necessary, a commander was to reduce villages by fire and outflanking operations, or neutralize them by gas and smoke. If clearing a village was necessary, the force made a methodical step by step advance under the protection of artillery fire, employed to cut off the enemy's front line units from his support and reserves. Urban terrain gave an attacking force an advantage in that buildings screened and sheltered troops, hid their concentration, and concealed reserves, supplies, and artillery.¹⁶

The Corps

The Corps was the largest tactical organization in the US Army. While the field Army had combat roles, it also functioned as an administrative agency. The only purpose of the corps, however, was to fight. The U.S. Army corps commander in World War II was the highest level officer engaged in battle at the front and who concentrated on high-level tactics. The corps was conceived as consisting essentially of a commander and a handful of staff officers who gave unity of direction and continuity of purpose to a mass of units in combat. There was no fixed corps organization after 1942. Divisions were attached and detached based upon the mission and situation at hand. The corps held a pool of nondivisional combat, combat support, and combat service support organizations (usually battalion

sized) which could be held under corps control or attached to subordinate divisions. The corps commander was responsible for tactical combat without distraction. General Matthew Ridgeway, in describing the duty of a corps commander, said, "He is responsible for a large sector of the battle area, and all he must worry about in that zone is fighting."¹⁷

The organization of a U.S. Army corps in 1945 was primarily a product of experiences in the ETO. The focus of the American war effort was to that theater first, then to the Pacific. Indeed, virtually all prewar U.S. Army training from 1939 to 1942 was geared toward fighting a European conflict. The tactics and organizations of the U.S. Army by early 1945 reflected combat lessons learned primarily in the land campaigns of North Africa, Italy, and finally, western Europe.

Corps Tactical Operations

FM 100-15, Larger Units, was the primary doctrinal manual for how Corps and Divisions would fight. It built upon the ideas established in FM 100-5 and reflected the same emphasis. In planning the attack, the corps commander apportioned resources to give maximum strength possible to the main attack. Strong support by combat aviation through close coordination of attacks by ground and air forces was essential.¹⁸

For the attack, the divisions were assigned missions, general lines of departure from which the attack would be launched, zones of action, time of attack, and objectives. The corps artillery supported the attack primarily by counterbattery and long range missions, permitting the divisional artillery to concentrate its guns on close support missions. Control of the organic corps artillery and of reinforcing heavy and medium units was centralized when practicable, but could be attached down to divisional artillery commands. Throughout the battle the corps commander weighted his main attack by the use of the corps artillery, combat aviation, and corps reserves.¹⁹

The Corps level doctrinal manual did not address urban combat, however, attack of a fortified position was considered analogous and probably more likely than attack through a large city. "Fortified areas" were envisioned as those characterized by the prepared positions found in Italy and western Europe (e.g. the Gothic Line, the West Wall). The most likely fortifications were dug into dominant natural terrain, not established within heavily populated cities.

When an objective was strongly fortified and organized for defense, the attacking force required special measures. Attack of a fortified position demanded massed, powerful, well supplied artillery, properly positioned to support the assault forces. Detailed fire plans were

carefully prepared. The corps commander distributed the corps' heavy tanks to overcome major obstacles that could not be destroyed during the artillery preparation. For the assault itself, the commander issued detailed, precise orders to ensure close coordination, to establish measures for holding the ground gained, and to facilitate exploitation.²⁰

Fighting in Towns

FM 31-50, Attack of a Fortified Position and Combat in Towns reflected growing recognition of the inevitability of urban combat, though not necessarily its unique implications. Urban combat was still interpreted in terms of small unit (regiment and lower) action incidental to, and often independent of, the larger force attack. Attacking fortified positions, rather than combat in towns, was considered more likely the type of combat a U.S. unit would face. In the Pacific theater, virtually every attack was against fortified jungle or beach positions, far removed from major population centers. So, it is logical that, based upon experience up to early 1945, that attack of an urban area was merely a specialized version of attacking a fortified position.²¹

FM 31-50 begins to make some distinction between tactics required for "cities" and those for "villages". In the case of cities, the final objective becomes, not houses or streets, but such strategic points as the railroad

station, telephone exchange, gas and other public utility works. As key terrain, these points would undoubtedly be included within strongly defended areas.

Neutralizing hostile fires was of paramount importance in urban combat. Due to the proximity of forces in fighting within built up areas, much of the close fire support would be furnished by supporting artillery using direct fire. Anti-tank guns, mortars, and machine guns were also positioned much further forward than usual. Overwhelming covering fire was essential for every infantry assault and was provided even to the smallest units. Heavy artillery could directly support infantry squads and platoons in their assaults.

It was envisioned that because of restricted movement in the open areas dominated by buildings, much of the urban combat would take place at night. Small groups of soldiers would infiltrate under cover of darkness to occupy or destroy buildings.²²

Planning

An attack in the city, like any operation on unique terrain, required certain special preparation and deliberate planning. Although FM 31-50 was written for units at the regimental level and below, its planning principles would be applied by divisions and corps as well.

Tactical techniques were not always consistent with those used in open country or jungle combat. Due to

restricted movement outside buildings by day, combat, as well as resupply, would have to take place at night.

FM 31-50 also recognized that urban areas now possessed a third dimension not usually present in rural combat. It was possible to bypass an enemy by going directly over or under him. Extensive sewer and subway systems crisscrossed underneath most major cities in the 1940's.

The special training requirements for soldiers operating in the city is also recognized. Experience in Italy and France resulted in increased small unit training in street fighting techniques in Europe. Because most of the available cover is rigid and set in straight lines, movement could usually be observed and maneuver greatly restricted. Varying conditions regarding the density of a city and the layout of streets required careful variation in combat techniques. In no other form of warfare except in dense jungle or woods was observation so restricted. Commanders would often get close to their units in contact but would be able to observe only fractions of them at one time.²³

Another, absolutely essential element of an attack against a fortified area or town was detailed intelligence about the enemy's defenses. Intelligence preparation and reconnaissance required non-traditional sources. Detailed sketches were more useful than military maps. Local

informants, aerial recon/photos/maps, ground reconnaissance patrols, and prisoners also provided essential information.

Phasing the Attack

Attacking a city involved two distinct phases, the first was isolation of the city, the second was the advance into and clearing the city.²⁴

Isolating the city entailed denying the enemy movement in or out of the area. A portion of the command was to secure positions outside the built up area and support by fire the step by step reduction of the objective, control the lines of communication (friendly and enemy), and prevent enemy retreat or reinforcement. This phase also included capture of an initial position within the built up area itself, to eliminate enemy fields of fire, reduce the effectiveness of his long range fires, and limit enemy observation of activities outside the area.

Plans for the advance and clear phase were characterized by decentralized control of infantry units and organized mopping up of hostile resistance. In strongly defended areas it could be necessary for leading elements to mop up as they advance. In lightly defended areas, it was possible for leading elements to push forward rapidly, leaving the mopping up activities to supporting or following forces. Maintenance of communications between artillery and supported units, between adjacent units, and from front to rear was of critical importance.

Logistical support of troops in the initial phases of the attack is similar to that employed in an attack against an organized position. The types of construction characterizing the built up area and the extent of its defenses had a direct bearing upon the kind and amount of supplies required. After entry into the built up area, replenishment and distribution of supplies become increasingly difficult. Vehicular traffic would be interrupted or restricted by rubble and fire. Increased consumption, especially of ammunition, required that every effort be made to push supplies as far forward as cover and concealment permitted. This often required the employment of hand-carrying parties. Ammunition resupply planning would include provision for large requirements for mortar and howitzer special purpose munitions. The nature of combat in built up areas required using these weapons for maximum destructive effect and for smoke screens rather than for extreme range. Large quantities of grenades were required for house-to-house fighting and explosives for demolitions.

Plans for Phase II usually followed the methods for attack of an organized position. Unit preparation for the assault were characterized by several elements. Training and rehearsals were critical. Units were assigned relatively narrow frontages, usually from one to four city blocks wide for a battalion. Very large forces could be concentrated

into very small geographic areas. Control measures were facilitated by the existing geometric layout of the urban area. If the operation entailed a considerable advance, the regiment attacked initially in column of battalions. A large portion of supporting weapons would ordinarily be attached down to the battalions. The determining factor in this decision was whether control and close support could be best obtained by such an attachment. Commanders ensured that attached supporting weapons were protected by infantry.

When the built up area consisted of blocks of buildings, such as the business sections of cities, where the buildings had to be attacked block by block, easily identifiable streets were usually designated as boundaries. Buildings became immediate objectives and their capture was the responsibility of a single commander. Successive objectives were assigned with follow on plans made to continue the attack from each. Common tactical objectives were streets, rivers, and railroads crossing the line of advance.²⁵

Reserves would usually have few opportunities to maneuver within the city. Their primary missions were to repel counterattacks and mop up enemy forces bypassed by forward elements. They could be used to maneuver through the zone of an adjacent unit which had advanced more rapidly, to attack in the flank or rear of enemy resistance holding up the main attack. The heavy weapons of the

reserve(s) were usually assigned close support missions for forward units initially.

During the advance through the built up area, attached engineers cleared areas of antitank and antipersonnel mines and booby traps. Maintaining the lines of communications included the removal of street barriers and the temporary repair of streets and bridges.

Tank units were kept in reserve, specifically to defeat enemy counterattacks. Individual tanks and tank destroyers could be used as assault guns to attack by fire strongly fortified buildings and to assist in reducing barricades. Tanks used in this manner required close infantry support. The use of long range flame throwers installed in tanks were considered very effective in neutralizing enemy resistance and in driving the enemy from cover.

Supporting artillery relied to a large extent upon forward observers for the adjustment and observation of fire. At times, leading infantry elements would have to withdraw a short distance so that they would not be endangered by concentrations fired in close support. Chemical units were attached to the infantry regiments to fire high explosive and smoke missions with their 4.2 inch mortars.

Interestingly, in light of doctrinal imperatives of heavy artillery and tank supporting fires, limitations to

the amount of destructive demolitions allowed attackers by higher headquarters was fully expected to be constrained. While not specified, this caution appeared to be directed toward those demolitions that would hinder subsequent tactical operations rather than preservation of key civil structures or facilities. Generally, if a building was defended by the enemy, its physical status changed from "building" to "fortification", and was targeted as such.

Combat in the Pacific Theater

Fighting in the Pacific was obviously unlike fighting in Europe. The campaigns in Europe were characterized by huge ground forces driving overland into the heart of the enemy's territory. Until 1945, campaigns in the Pacific were a series of amphibious landings and brutal small unit fights for island air bases. The enemy in the Pacific war always dug in and fought until killed. Combat in the Pacific theater, more than the European theater ever did, forced the U.S. Army to forgo much of its tactical maneuver doctrine to fight a war of attrition.

In February 1943 the Army published the pamphlet entitled "Notes for Task Force Commands in Pacific 'Nesters'".²⁰ This pamphlet, compiled from reports and observations of American observers in the Pacific were intended to augment the basic Army doctrine contained in FM 100-5. It considered the varying climatic conditions of the PTO and suggested that the "Japanese psychology and military

methods will require a specific adaptation of logistics, tactics, training, and equipment to fully exploit the fighting ability of our task forces."²⁷

A successful attack basically depended upon sufficient information of the enemy and terrain upon which to plan the maneuver.²⁸ The pamphlet went into great detail regarding the psychology of the Japanese soldier in combat. Taking away his initiative, the ability to attack or counterattack, was the key to success.

Jungle warfare required considerable modification of normal tactical methods. The fighting up until this time was intensely individual, command and control was difficult, and it required a high degree of personal leadership to maintain troops in a fighting formation. Close support between ground forces and air forces took on a special importance. Divisional jungle training schools reflected the need for intensive training. European combat was considered "normal", Pacific combat was regarded as a highly specialized type of fighting.²⁹

Urban combat is only briefly addressed. In 1943, any civilization centers that existed on the island battlefields of the Pacific would not have been classified as "cities". Accordingly, clearing of individual buildings within villages containing one street was important, but not a priority task.³⁰

Summary

U.S. Army doctrine equated combat in an urban area with attack of a fortified position rather than as a separate environmental condition. Urban areas and fortified positions are lumped together because both are man made occurrences. Tactically, urban combat demanded detailed intelligence, thorough preparation, and overwhelming firepower. In the Army's collective mind, however, urban combat did not require special equipment or training. Applying the general offensive imperative of massing firepower to destroy the position and the enemy in it was commonly accepted as a prerequisite to success.

U.S. Army doctrine and organization also reflected many attributes not directly associated with the tactical battlefield. Even with 8.2 million men in uniform, the U.S. could not field more than 89 divisions. The industrial demands of a World War (as "The Arsenal of Democracy"), the demands of naval, air, and significantly, the service forces, resulted in only 2 million of those men actually serving in ground combat units. Infantry in particular suffered from severe manpower shortages. By the end of 1944, the U.S. could not field any more fighting divisions. Replacements did not keep up with casualties. Concern by commanders for the lives of their soldiers was not a duty taken lightly by U.S. commanders in World War II. However, it did have a very direct impact on how commanders fought in the Pacific. Doctrine was modified by commanders in the

field in any way in which casualties would be reduced. Disease and low theater priority for replacements made combat soldiers a more critical resource than ever. Experience showed that combat against the Japanese always produced high casualties. In 1945, as a result primarily of casualties suffered in the German Ardennes Offensive and anticipated troop requirements for an invasion of Japan, the United States could not afford excessive casualties in the Philippines.

LTG Griswold's XIV Corps in 1945 was a product of Army doctrine in its organization for combat, and of the PTO environment in its approach to planning and training. Major subordinate units had fought the Japanese in brutal campaigns beginning with Guadalcanal. Replacements for casualties were fewer and fewer. For soldiers who had been overseas for two years, surviving the upcoming Luzon campaign only meant that yet another fight awaited on Japan.

In February 1945, XIV Corps' assigned task was to seize the city and port of Manila as quickly as possible. For MG Griswold and soldiers throughout the Corps there was an important implied requirement that it be done at the lowest possible cost in American lives. We shall now see how they accomplished this mission in light of the Army doctrine that existed and the adaptations they made based on experience.

CHAPTER 3

SETTING THE STAGE

The circumstances regarding how XIV Corps came to find itself in a bitter urban battle for Manila in February 1945 are important to understanding this particular urban battle. There are three critical external forces which establish the setting. First is the political and military importance of Manila to the American Southwest Pacific Army. Second is the physical environment of the Manila battlefield. And there is the rather complicated Japanese decision to defend the city of Manila.

The Strategic Setting

By August 1944 the Japanese were in an extremely vulnerable position through out the Pacific. In the Southwest Pacific Area (SWPA), General Douglas MacArthur's forces had destroyed or paralyzed two entire armies--the 17th Army in the Solomon Islands and the 18th Army in New Guinea--and the remainder of the once powerful 8th Area Army was scattered and isolated in New Britain and New Ireland. Constant pressure by the Allied Air Forces gradually eliminated the enemy's air capabilities in the Southwest Pacific. Along with experienced soldiers, pilots, and sailors, huge stocks of equipment, supplies, and ammunition,

which the Japanese could not replace, had been completely lost.¹

In January 1945 U.S. forces returned to Luzon, where in 1942, they had suffered a historic defeat. The American strategic plan which brought them back to Luzon was based upon the concept that the Allies, as with Germany, would find it necessary to invade the Japanese home islands in order to end the war in the Pacific. To accomplish this, intensive aerial bombardment of the Japanese home islands would be a prerequisite to any invasion. The bombing campaign would have to be coordinated with combined air, surface, and submarine operations aimed at cutting Japan's overwater lines of communications to their territories in SE Asia. The American Joint Chiefs believed that the best way to carry out the bombing was from airfields in eastern China. To secure and develop adequate air bases in China, Allied forces would have to seize at least one major port on the south China coast. The Allies required a sea port to replace the poor overland and air routes from India and Burma as the primary means of bringing men and materiel into China.

Securing a port in China, and simultaneously cutting Japan's lines of communications to the south, required Allied control over the South China Sea. This in turn, demanded the seizure of large air, naval, and logistical bases in the strategic triangle formed by the South China

Coast, Formosa, and Luzon. The American Joint Chiefs concluded that Formosa constituted the single most important objective in the target area. For, until they seized Formosa, the Allies would be unable to establish secure overwater supply routes to China. Allied air and naval forces could also sever the Japanese lines of communications to the south more effectively from Formosa than either the South China Coast or Luzon alone. Furthermore, new B-29 bombers could carry heavier loads against Japan from Formosa than from Luzon. Many planners considered Formosa such a valuable strategic prize that considerable attention was paid to bypassing the Philippines in favor of a direct attack on Formosa.

Contrary to the Joint Chiefs, General MacArthur, believed Luzon to be the more valuable strategic prize than Formosa. He felt that the Allies would ultimately need to reoccupy the Philippines before they could completely sever Japan's lines of communication to the south. MacArthur also believed that any invasion of Formosa would prove exceptionally hazardous unless provided air and logistical support from Luzon. Finally, he suggested if the Allies took Luzon first, they could hasten the end of the war by bypassing Formosa and striking targets farther north. The "Luzon first" course of action, he argued, would be the cheaper in terms of time, men, and money. Most of the other

senior Army and Navy officers serving in the Pacific also favored a Luzon first strategy and bypassing Formosa.

MacArthur had another, perhaps more convincing argument, that was bound to influence planning in Washington. Reoccupying the entire Philippine Archipelago as quickly and early as possible was, MacArthur believed, "a national obligation and a political necessity."² Bypassing any or all of the islands, he declared, would destroy American honor and prestige throughout the Far East, if not the rest of the world as well. MacArthur's argument that it would be politically disastrous for the United States to bypass any part of the Philippines could not be dismissed.

As MacArthur's views on Luzon were gaining some favor in Washington, supporters of plans for attacking Formosa and the south China coast were losing ground. The plans for Formosa had serious drawbacks. The Japanese would hardly allow Allied forces to sit unmolested in southern Formosa. So far during the war, the Japanese had been hard put to move air and ground reinforcements against the island perimeters Allied amphibious task forces had seized. Fighting in the Formosa-Amoy (now Xiamen) China area, on the other hand, the Allies would not have the protection of distance from major Japanese bases they had enjoyed in those earlier campaigns. It appeared that this course of action would inevitably lead to protracted costly land campaigns to secure Formosa and large areas of the adjacent Chinese

mainland as well. Major campaigns of this scope could only delay progress toward Japan and would mean an unacceptable drain on Allied manpower resources.

Army planners saw other combined logistical-tactical disadvantages in the Formosa plan. They believed for example, that the campaign would tie down so many troops, ships, landing craft, and planes that an invasion of Luzon, assuming Formosa came first, could not possibly take place until November 1945. By the same token any other major step toward Japan, such as the seizure of Okinawa, would be equally delayed. A delay of this length would then be unacceptable for tactical reasons alone.

The "Luzon first" course, it appeared, was far safer logistically than the Formosa plan. As Army Service Forces planners pointed out, Allied lines of communication to Luzon would be shorter and easier to protect than those to Formosa. Logisticians predicted that the Allies would find it especially difficult to safeguard lines of communications to Formosa if Luzon remained in Japanese hands. By mid September 1944, senior Army and Navy commanders and planners favored the "Luzon first" strategy as one which promised to be a longer course of action but at lesser cost overall.

Finally, while discussions in Washington over tactical and logistical problems continued, the Allied position in China steadily deteriorated. Japanese offensives in eastern and southeastern China overran the

last air bases from which the China-based U.S. Fourteenth Air Force could effectively support invasions of either Luzon or Formosa. Chinese armies were unable to either hold or recapture the air bases.

By the end of September 1944 almost all military considerations--especially the closely interrelated logistical problems concerning troops and timing-- weighted the scales heavily in favor of seizing Luzon, bypassing Formosa, forgetting about a port on the China coast, and jumping on to Okinawa.³ On 3 October 1944, the Joint Chiefs ordered General MacArthur to invade Luzon with a target date of 20 December 1944. He was to establish bases on northern Luzon to support further allied advances, including an assault by the Central Pacific Forces against the Ryukyu Islands, an operation set tentatively for 1 March 1945.⁴

The Operational Setting

SWPA HQ's planning for the Philippine Island Campaign began at the conclusion of the Buna Campaign in early 1943. The first version of the overall plan for the conduct of the Philippines campaign was published under the name "Musketeer" on 10 July 1944. The primary objectives were the destruction of Japanese forces in the Philippines and prompt seizure of central Luzon to provide air support and naval bases for possible operations in the China coast-Formosa area. The plan called for an allied advance along the eastern shores of the Philippines to establish bases for

a final attack on Luzon. Initial lodgments were to be made on Mindanao on 15 November 1944 and on Leyte on 20 December. Except for these preliminary operations to secure airbases, however, Mindanao and the Visayas were to be bypassed and not consolidated until after the occupation of Luzon was completed.

The SWPA plan was modified and enlarged based on changes in both the strategic and operational situations. "Musketeer II" was published on 29 August 1944 and had as its primary objective "the prompt seizure of the Central Luzon area to destroy the principal garrison, command organization, and logistical support of hostile defense forces in the Philippines and to provide bases for further operations against Japan." The main effort, in the Central Plains-Manila area, was an amphibious assault in the vicinity of Lingayen set for 20 February 1945. A supporting operation to land at Dingalen Bay in eastern Luzon was contemplated for the first part of March.

A sudden change in the tactical picture in early September led to further, drastic revision of the "Musketeer" plans. Allied air attacks and reconnaissance showed Japanese air strength on Mindanao to be unexpectedly weak. The discovery of this vulnerability in the enemy's air shield over the Philippines caused an immediate reassessment to determine if accelerating the existing

schedule was possible by omitting operations designed mainly to ensure air support.

Intelligence sources indicated that the Japanese had been increasing their ground forces in the Philippines. Each week or month the Allies could cut from their timetable for the Philippines would reduce the overall cost of the campaign and help ensure rapid mission accomplishment. Consequently, the operation against Mindanao was canceled, the invasion of Leyte moved up to 20 October, and finally, the Joint Chiefs approved a target date of 20 December 1944 for landing U.S. forces on Luzon.

In spite of the favorable intelligence update, the war in both Pacific Theaters continued. In November 1944, SWPA HQ determined that adequate naval and air forces would not be available for the Luzon operation by 20 December. General MacArthur reluctantly postponed the operation, codenamed MIKE-I, to 9 January 1945.

SWPA HQ ordered Sixth Army to seize, in order, the Central Plains-Manila area from Lingayen southward, prepare to complete the destruction of Japanese forces and their occupation of Luzon, assume control of Philippine Forces on Luzon, establish facilities to support minor naval operations in the Lingayen Gulf area, establish air fields in the Lingayen area within 15 days, and finally, initiate establishment of naval, air, and logistical bases to support subsequent operations against Japanese forces in the

Philippines.⁷ SWPA HQ was specifically concerned with securing the airfields of Clark and Nichols Fields and the sea port of Manila. MacArthur expected all to be securely in American hands in as little as four weeks after the initial landings.⁸

Sixth Army's basic plan for Luzon was completed on 14 October 1944, a day before this same organization landed at Leyte. Even though the Leyte campaign was a significant operation in itself, a great deal of detailed logistical planning remained to be done. Kreuger left a special planning group behind at Hollekang (near Hollandia on the island New Guinea) to complete this work undisturbed by the activities of the Leyte operation. Conferences were also held on Leyte by the planning staffs of the Sixth Army and supporting Allied air and naval commands.

Sixth Army would be SWPA Headquarters' main effort on Luzon. The main maneuver forces were XIV Corps and I Corps. The campaign plan for invading Luzon had three phases. Phase I was the amphibious landing at Lingayen and establishment of air and logistics bases ashore. Phase II was the destruction of enemy forces within the beachhead north of the Agno River. Phase III encompassed the destruction of enemy forces in the Central Plains and *continuing the attack to capture Manila.*⁹

It is notable that the plan really had no end state. The campaign plan, instead of working backward from an

operational objective of a secure island of Luzon, begins with a very detailed amphibious landing plan and progresses to a rather vague continuation of the attack. The phases of the plan are logical in terms of chronological sequence, but without specific command emphasis these phases actually became sequential in priority as well.

Sixth Army's initial objectives were limited.¹⁰ The amphibious landings at Lingayen would establish a secure base area into which General Kreuger could pour supplies and reinforcements, establish land based air support, and from which to launch attacks against the main body of the Japanese 14th Area Army.

Air forces were to play a critical role in Sixth Army's plan. Allied air forces would isolate hostile forces in the Central Plains-Manila area by blocking the defiles that give access to that area. The plan also included tentative instructions for Allied Air Forces to be prepared to separate Japanese defenders in the north from those in the south of Luzon. In this way Sixth Army would only face a portion of the estimated 235,000 Japanese troops on Luzon at any given time.¹¹

The Sixth Army plan did not include details for the capture of Manila. Only after the landing and initial push inland, did General Kreuger believe he would be in a position to assess the Japanese response and determine how best to seize Manila. MacArthur, believing the Japanese

would not defend Manila, did not question Kreuger's decision.¹²

When the Sixth Army's XIV Corps reached Manila on 3 February, no plan, at any level, existed for operations in the metropolitan area other than the division of the northern part of the city into offensive zones. Every command in the theater, from MacArthur's on down, hoped--if not actually anticipated--that the city would be cleared quickly without much damage. SWPA HQ even had plans for a great victory parade, that General MacArthur was to lead through the city in person.¹³ It was not until the last week or so of January that SWPA and Sixth Army HQs began to receive definite reports that the Japanese planned to hold the city. Only when troops actually closed with the main Japanese strongpoints did they discover where the main defenses were. When XIV Corps began to learn the extent and nature of the defenses, the plans for the big victory parade were quietly laid aside. The XIV Corps and its divisions began developing tactical plans for seizing Manila "on-the-fly" as the situation unfolded.

The Battlefield: Manila in January 1945

1945 Manila covered an area of nearly 14.5 square miles¹⁴. It stretched about 5.5 miles north to south along the eastern shore of Manila Bay and extended inland approximately 4 miles. With the surrounding suburbs and small towns of the Rizal province, the city formed a public

utilities service area known as Greater Manila. An area of almost 110 square miles, Greater Manila extended from the Paranaque River north some ten miles to include Grace Park and inland, about eight miles to the Marikina River.

The city's population had increased greatly since the outbreak of war. The peak was reached in the early fall of 1944, just before the Allied air attacks began. In September 1944 the population of the city proper was over 800,000, and that of Greater Manila was some 1,100,000.

The business district lay in the west-central part of Manila north of the Pasig River. The Pasig, a river about 200 meters wide, flows westward to Manila Bay through the center of the city. Most of the retail stores, restaurants, and many of the manufacturing plants were north of the Pasig River. The Tondo district, on the bay front, was the most populous residential area, housing laborers, fishermen, and others in the lower income brackets, mostly in substandard dwellings. To the east of the business area lay better residential districts, which, for the most part, housed the older European families and many of the middle and upper class Filipinos. On the north bank of the Pasig, near the center of the city, was the Filipino White House, Malacanan Palace, once the seat of Spanish and American Governors General.

South of the Pasig, near the river's mouth, lay the old Spanish walled city, the Intramuros. It was bordered on

three sides by a filled in moat converted to a public park. Originally constructed in the 1600s on the bay front, in 1945, the Intramuros was half a mile inland. The bay front, along the western wall, had been reclaimed for construction of modern port facilities, including piers, warehousing, fuel storage, and machine shops.

Beyond the Intramuros and the port area, much of Manila south of the Pasig was composed of modern residential districts, hospitals, government buildings, schools, apartment houses, and parks (including a large, modern baseball stadium). In addition, there was considerable industrial development along the south bank in the eastern part of the city.

Most of Manila's streets were paved before the war, but many of them could not stand up under three years of constant military traffic, and maintenance was neglected during the Japanese occupation. North of the Pasig River many streets were narrow, little better than alleys. There they radiated in all directions from central plazas, crossed each other at various angles, and ended abruptly. Within the city limits one railroad and five vehicular bridges crossed the Pasig River. The Japanese destroyed all of them in early 1945. South of the River the city streets were generally broader and, even in the Intramuros, were mostly set at right angles.

Construction within the city varied considerably. The flimsy houses of the Tondo District were highly flammable, while other residences north of the Pasig were either frame and stone or brick. Buildings in the business district were built of reinforced concrete. The government buildings south of the river were constructed to withstand earthquakes and looked much like U.S. government buildings in Washington, D.C. The outer walls of the Intramuros, up to forty feet thick at the base and reaching heights of twenty-five feet, were constructed of great stone blocks. Buildings within the walls were constructed all or partially of stone. Many of the homes south of the river combined wood with brick, stucco, or cinder block, while apartment houses were of reinforced concrete.

Manila remained relatively untouched by the war until February 1945, although Japanese raids in December 1941 had done some damage to the port area and the Intramuros. Manila port and railroad facilities were struck in late 1944 and in January 1945 by Allied air attacks. The destruction caused by these air attacks was minor compared with that which would come with the fighting within Manila in February, 1945.

The Japanese Decision to Defend Manila

The commander of the Japanese 14th Area Army, General Yamashita, had no intention of defending Manila. His plan for the defense of Luzon was to draw the Americans

into the mountains where they could be tied down to a war of attrition. Yamashita knew that within his plan for a protracted delaying action on Luzon he had no hope of defending the entire island. He had neither sufficient troops nor equipment to do so. Defending Manila in particular would require too many forces for no appreciable gain.¹⁵

Having decided to abandon the Central Plain-Manila Bay region, Yamashita concentrated his forces in three mountainous strongholds. He felt that the Americans could only overrun the mountain positions at an excessive cost in lives and time. Only minor delaying actions, by isolated garrisons, would be undertaken at other points on Luzon.

The strongest and most important of the defense sectors covered all Luzon northeast and east of Lingayen Gulf. To defend this northern stronghold Yamashita formed the *Shobu Group*, a force of 152,000 troops which he retained under his direct command. Yamashita located his second force in mountain country on the west side of the Central Plains overlooking the Clark Field area. This force, designated *Kembu Group*, was to deny the Allies the use of the Clark Field as long as possible, and when forced back, conduct delaying operations in the Zimbales Mountains, west of Clark Field.

The third major Japanese force was the *Shimbu Group*, commanded by LTG Shizou Yokoyama. While responsible for

defending all southern Luzon, Yokoyama was to concentrate the main strength of his 80,000 men in the mountains east and northeast of Manila. Yamashita ordered Yokoyama not to defend the capital, but to keep troops there only long enough to cover evacuation of supplies and delay the Americans by destroying important bridges.¹⁶

In December 1944, the Japanese Army plan was to leave behind a small force to maintain order, protect supply movements, and ultimately to blow the bridges over the Pasig and Marikina Rivers to delay American occupation of Manila and slow development of an Allied drive against the Shimbu Group east of the city. The Japanese would hold the Pasig bridges only so long as the spans remained useful for supply movements. They had no plans for a last ditch stand.¹⁷

Until late December the protection of the city had been charged to an Army officer. Major General Takshi Kobayashi commanded the Manila Defense Force, roughly equivalent to two regimental combat teams in strength and armaments.

Throughout December and January, however, while Army units were pulling out of Manila, naval troops were moving in. Vice Admiral Denshichi Okochi was the commander of the Southwestern Area Fleet and ranking Japanese naval officer in the Philippines. Okochi, apparently on his own initiative, decided to strengthen Navy defenses in Manila and assigned some 4,000 men to a new organization he

designated the *Manila Naval Defense Force*. To command the new force, Okochi called upon Rear Admiral Sanji Iwabuchi, commander of the 31st Naval Special Base Force which already had troops in and around Manila.^{1*}

When Okochi left Manila with Yamashita in early January, he left Iwabuchi with naval orders were to hold Nichols Field and the Cavite Naval Base area, mine Manila Bay, direct navy suicide boat operations in the bay, arrange for the evacuation of IJN ships and small craft, and, ultimately, assure the destruction of all Japanese naval installations and supplies in the Manila and Cavite areas. Okochi also transferred operational control of the Manila Naval Defense Force to General Yokoyama, commander of the Army's Shimbu Group.

Operational control in the Japanese military came with strict qualifications. The Shimbu Group would only have complete operational control after the Manila Naval defense Force had completed its naval mission.^{1*} Iwabuchi would not withdraw his forces from Manila, under the Shimbu Group plan for leaving Manila undefended, until he felt he had fully accomplished his naval missions. General Yokoyama called a series of Manila Naval Defense Force-Shimbu Group staff conferences to discuss the obvious complications. During these discussions in early January, the naval officers made it clear that, no matter the Shimbu Group plans, it was their intent to defend Manila to the bitter

end. In Okochi's judgment, any withdrawal from the city would prevent the *Manila Naval Defense Force* from completing the missions Okochi had given. Most of his naval staff officers felt that Manila was a natural fortress that could easily be defended at great cost to the Allied forces. Faced with naval orders that he lacked authority to countermand, Yokoyama had little choice but to assent to Iwabuchi's general concept for the defense of Manila, however unwise he might feel it to be. All Army troops in Manila were placed under Admiral Iwabuchi's command.

To defend the Greater Manila area, Iwabuchi had some 17,000 troops -predominantly Navy personnel and about 3,500 Army troops.²⁰ The *Northern Force*, was commanded by Army Colonel Noguchi, whom Iwabuchi made responsible for the defense of the entire city north of the Pasig, Intramuros south of the river, and the suburbs north, north east, and east of Manila. The *Central Force*, commanded directly by Admiral Iwabuchi held the remainder of Manila and concentrated in the government buildings, park, and private club area of the Ermita District east and south of the Intramuros. The *Southern Force*, under IJN Captain Furuse, defended Nichols Field, Fort McKinley, and the Hogonoy Isthmus.

Because of plans executed late in 1944, prepared defenses on the south side of Manila were generally stronger than those on the north. Before the Lingayen landings,

Japanese planners believed (not altogether incorrectly) that a landing south of Manila was the primary threat. In December, Japanese naval headquarters on Luzon still believed that the principal Allied invasions would come against the beaches to the south and therefore had devoted its energies to preparing defenses on that side of Manila. It was not until the last week in January that Iwabuchi seems to have understood the real threat from XIV Corps' attack down the central plains. By then, of course, it was too late for him to redeploy his forces.

Iwabuchi's tactical plan for the defense of Manila was rather vague, promising only a suicidal fight to the death in place. By conducting a static defense, he hoped to inflict heavy casualties upon Sixth Army and deny the Allies the facilities of Manila and Manila Bay for some time.

Japanese defensive preparations within Manila left much to be desired. Rarely were any two lines of defense mutually supporting. Little provision seems to have been made for routes of withdrawal from one line to another. The core of the defenses, if there was one, was the Intramuros. Approaches to it were dominated by fortified government buildings extending from the south bank of the Pasig about three blocks off the northeast corner of the Intramuros, around to the bay front a few hundred yards south of the walled city.

The dominant physical characteristic of the defenses within the city was extensive use of the ready, man-made defenses of heavily reinforced concrete buildings. While the defenders did construct many bunkers and pillboxes throughout the city, they depended principally on the buildings. Most of the standard military defensive installations were located in the Southern Force's area of responsibility.

The Manila Naval Defense Force barricaded streets and intersections through out the city with all types of obstacles. They laid mines of every conceivable type, including improvised Japanese Navy beach mines and depth charges, artillery shells, aerial bombs, mortar shells, as well as standard Japanese Army antipersonnel and anti-tank mines. Another significant characteristic of the Japanese defense preparations in Manila was a great number of automatic weapons, a number all out of proportion to the troop strength.

Practically none of Iwabuchi's troops had any unit training in ground combat operations and many had very little individual infantry training. Admiral Iwabuchi had neither the time to train his troops nor to complete defensive preparations. Even so, his defenses were strong and, although held by inferior troops, would prove formidable when manned by men with little though of escape.²¹

Summary

The port of Manila and the surrounding airfields were militarily important to the Americans. They were key to supplying the continuation of the Philippine Campaign and for future operations against Japan itself. As the capital of an Allied nation, and as a symbol of American defeat three years earlier, liberation of Manila also held significant political importance.

For the American Army, Manila would represent a significant change in the nature of the ground war in the Pacific Theater. The multi-division corps attack in a major urban area was a significant departure from previous island and jungle battles. The battle of Manila marked the first and only time in the Pacific War in which American troops met the Japanese in a struggle for a major city.

Essentially, three critical decisions set the conditions for the XIV Corps battle for Manila. Two were made by the Americans and one by the Japanese. The first was General MacArthur's misreading of Japanese intentions to fight for Manila. The second was the decision by Lieutenant General Kreuger, approved by General MacArthur, to wait in planning for specific operations in the city of Manila. The Japanese decision, to defend the city, determined that the battle MacArthur hoped to avoid would occur.

Omitting seizure of Manila from the planning process at SWPA HQ and Sixth Army guaranteed that lower levels would

also omit it from their tactical plans. Planning an amphibious invasion, second in size only to the Normandy invasion, fully occupied the corps and division staffs. Smaller units trained to proficiency on the jungle bunker clearing tactics previous experience taught were typical of combat against the Japanese. The significance of potential combat in a major city appeared lost amid efforts needed to get ashore and establish the beachhead, a daunting task in itself.²² The decision not to prioritize planning for Manila until well after Sixth Army was ashore, left the question of how to deal with a major city defended by the Japanese in the realm of general concepts rather than specific intelligence, forces, tactics, and resources required.

The decision made by Japanese naval forces to defend Manila, was contrary to the Army commander's intent for the defense of Luzon. While Manila was an important American military objective, it was no longer of practical importance to Japanese forces isolated from sources of supply or reinforcement. Destroying the port itself would only delay the inevitable American restoration effort. Defending the city gained nothing. It is this Japanese decision to defend which determined that Manila, unlike Paris, would become a battlefield. Together, these forces also determined the tactical challenge that Griswold would have to resolve.

CHAPTER 4
THE XIV CORPS

Organization and Preparation

On 26 October 1944, XIV Corps received a warning order from Sixth Army to begin planning for the Luzon operation. Sixth Army itself was now fully involved in the battle for Leyte. The nature of the XIV Corps, its organization, experience, tactical planning, and training, dictated how they would fight in this new environment.

XIV Corps was not unique. Its organization reflected the US Army standards of the period. Divisions and non-divisional units were attached, detached, and cross attached based on the tasks at hand. For the MIKE-I operation, Sixth Army initially assigned XIV Corps two divisions, the 37th and 40th Infantry Divisions. The standard infantry division of the U.S. Army in World War II was a general purpose organization designed for open country warfare and formed around three infantry regiments of three battalions each and a divisional artillery command.¹

The XIV Corps headquarters was an experienced one. They had fought in the campaigns for Guadalcanal, Munda, and Bougainville. The Corps Commander, Major General Oscar W. Griswold, was one of the most experienced U.S. Corps

commanders. A 1910 graduate of West Point and a career infantryman, he took command of XIV Corps on Guadalcanal. This was his second corps command. In the pre-war Louisiana Maneuvers Griswold had also commanded the armor heavy IV Corps.

Summer 1943 found the XIV Corps fighting to seize the Munda, New Georgia airfield. Griswold's soldiers faced solidly dug in, well-concealed Japanese pillboxes, often with interlocking fields of fire, manned by stubborn, fanatical fighters who seldom retreated and never surrendered. To deal with these obstacles, Griswold extensively employed ample air and artillery support, naval gunfire, tanks, and flame-throwers.²

During the planning phase for Luzon, XIV Corps headquarters was on Bougainville, while the Sixth Army HQ was fully engaged in the Leyte campaign (although as stated earlier a planning cell was at Sollekang).

The 37th Infantry Division was a veteran member of the corps, assigned since December of 1943. Originally an Ohio National Guard division, it deployed from the United States in May 1942 and remained overseas until December 1945. The 37th Infantry Division fought under the XIV Corps in the battles for Munda (June-August 1943) and Bougainville (November 1943-December 1944). In October 1944 the 37th Division staged for the invasion of Luzon from Bougainville.³

The second division, the 40th Infantry Division was not assigned to XIV Corps until 20 November 1944. The 40th Infantry Division was originally a California National Guard division. After training in Hawaii and on Guadalcanal throughout 1943, the division relieved the 1st Marine Division at Cape Gloucester, New Britain and continued general security operations there under command of the Eighth Army. The 40th Division staged for the Luzon invasion from Cape Gloucester.*

The other three divisions that would eventually fight under XIV Corps in the battle for Manila were not available, or even known to the Corps, during the initial planning and training. The 1st Cavalry and 11th Airborne Divisions were fighting on Leyte and the 6th Infantry Division was mopping up in New Guinea.

The 1st Cavalry Division, in spite of the name, was an infantry division. However, it differed greatly from the standard U.S. infantry division of World War II. Instead of three infantry regiments the 1st Cavalry Division had four cavalry regiments. The cavalry squadrons assigned to each regiment were smaller than the standard infantry battalions. A regular Army division, the 1st Cavalry Division came to the XIV Corps straight from fighting on Leyte. Leaving that island on 11 January, the 1st Cavalry landed at Lingayen on the 27th and was assigned to the XIV Corps on the 31st.®

The 11th Airborne Division also fought in the Leyte Campaign before its assignment to XIV Corps. The division was formed around two glider-infantry regiments and one airborne-infantry regiment. Like the cavalry division, the airborne division was smaller than the standard infantry division. Each regiment had two battalions each and no heavy weapons, cannon or antitank companies. The division artillery consisted of 75mm pack howitzer battalions and a battalion of 105mm short barrel howitzers that lacked the range of the standard 105mm howitzer. Leyte was the division's first combat. The 11th Airborne Division would not be assigned to XIV Corps until 10 February 1945.*

The 6th Infantry Division was a regular army infantry division. A combatant in the Biak and Sansapor operations of the New Guinea campaign, the 6th Infantry Division landed at Lingayen on 9 January as a part of I Corps. The division fought under I Corps command until 14 February 1945 when it was assigned to XIV Corps.†

Preparation for the battle for Luzon reflected the corps' experiences in previous campaigns. Training emphasized small unit infantry tactics and large unit amphibious assault. The experiences of the 37th Division are typical.

While on Bougainville the primary activity for the 37th Infantry Division was combat patrols to mop up Japanese stragglers remaining active on the island. These patrols

provided valuable combat experience for replacements and maintained the "edge" for veterans. For training, the division set up complex infantry assault courses using former Japanese defensive positions. The reduction of fortified positions by small units was the critical element of their training. Thus far, combat with the Japanese was rarely one of maneuver, but one of identifying enemy defenses and then methodically reducing them through overwhelming firepower in the form of mortars, flame-throwers and explosives at the lower levels and artillery and attack aircraft at the larger unit levels. Marine Corps fighter pilots went through the assault courses with Army infantrymen to gain an understanding of Army ground combat. Army-Marine air to ground support coordination was often better than with the Army Air Corps.

Large unit attacks were rare due to the restrictive terrain in the jungles and mountains of New Guinea. Although a division's mission might be to attack, in reality only relatively small portions of the force could be in contact at any given time.

The troops of the 37th Infantry Division who carried out the battle had been trained in jungle fighting, and to some extent in open terrain and mountain warfare, but what slight experience any of them may have had in city combat was offset by the complete inexperience of what Japanese defenses in a city would be. The fighting on the atolls and

volcanic islands of the Pacific, and in the jungles and mountains of New Guinea, the Solomons and Bismarks, and on Leyte were of very little direct application.⁹

The focus of the division's senior commanders and staffs was almost completely on the amphibious assault at Lingayen. The planning, organization, loading, and rehearsals involved with an amphibious landing are extensive. The Lingayen landing would be second in size only to the Normandy invasion of the previous June. The competition for resources throughout the Pacific theater (as well as the European Theater) made detailed planning even more essential.⁹

Given that the Sixth Army had not issued plans for the capture of Manila, it is not surprising that XIV Corps also had no plans for fighting to take the city. In fact the Sixth Army order, while it listed seizing Manila as an objective, and assigned XIV Corps the western area of operations including Manila, seizing the capital was not a specified task for XIV Corps. With other SWPA HQ forces (Eighth Army and XI Corps) also planning operations around Manila¹⁰, it appears that LTG Kreuger's decision to "wait and see" regarding specific plans for Manila was a widely shared opinion. It certainly caused no concern at SWPA HQ.¹¹

With the preparation time available to XIV Corps (about 60 days) and the difficulties involved with putting

together such a large amphibious assault, it is probably reasonable that plans for combat in Manila did not exist at this phase. It is also reasonable to assume that had XIV Corps directed subordinate divisions to plan for fighting to seize Manila their training and preparations would have differed little from what they did in actuality. Getting two corps ashore at Lingayen was a significant, priority task in itself.

The XIV Corps experience in combat against the Japanese and an Army doctrine that equated urban combat with attack of a fortified position would have led to no new conclusions regarding special training or preparations for combat in Manila. Most U.S. troops had some training in house to house fighting, and for some the main problem would be to adapt the mind accustomed to jungle fighting to the special conditions of city fighting.¹²

From Lingayen to Manila

XIV Corps landed at the southern end of Lingayen gulf on January 9, 1945. After quickly establishing a beachhead, they advanced south down the Central Plain of Luzon, seized Clark Field, and reached the outskirts of Manila with leading elements on February 3. Against varying degrees of opposition, the Corps covered some 130 miles in 26 days.¹³ Importantly, the successful advances of I Corps to the Northeast made it impossible for the Japanese to

launch any large scale counterattack against the left flank of XIV Corps.

On the afternoon of January 30, General MacArthur made a personal reconnaissance along the 37th Infantry Division axis south to the Pampanga River, some 25 miles from Manila. MacArthur was extremely anxious to get to Manila. It had been his home for many years, in fact, his personal possessions still remained in the Manila Hotel apartment he had abandoned in 1942.

Upon his return from the 37th Infantry Division, MacArthur told Kreuger that the division had demonstrated a noticeable lack of drive and initiative. This prompted Kreuger, late on the 30th, to direct Griswold to speed up his drive toward Manila.²⁴

MacArthur's interest was not entirely personal. He did have sound operational reasons for wanting to pick up the pace of the attack, and these did not all have to do with getting to Manila. The SWPA Air Forces commander, Major General George Kenney, needed Clark Field's paved runways and maintenance facilities for his expanding air arm. They had already outgrown the temporary strips at the Lingayen beachhead. In addition to requirements for tactical air support for ground units on Luzon, only Clark Field was capable of supporting heavy bombers. MacArthur had promised Admiral Nimitz that he would provide bomber support

for the invasions of Iwo Jima and Okinawa scheduled for February and March respectively. Time was running short.¹⁵

Intelligence reports also confirmed the location of the Allied internees in Manila. The reports also suggested that, under increasing American pressure, the Japanese would try to kill them. The following day MacArthur visited the 1st Cavalry Division, still consolidating in its assembly area at Guimba, 35 miles inland from Lingayen beach, and exhorted the commanding general, to "Go to Manila. Go around the Nips, bounce off the Nips, but go to Manila. Free the internees at Santo Tomas. Take Malacan Palace and the Legislative Building."¹⁶

On January 31, the lead regiment of the 37th Division crossed the Pampanga, and without waiting for the remainder of the division sped rapidly down Route 3 through an area becoming more and more densely populated. The 1st Cavalry Division's drive toward Manila began just after 1900 hours on the 31st when a small force started from the division assembly area toward Cabanatuan. In spite of MacArthur's rather direct guidance to the 1st Cavalry Division, LTG Kreuger and MG Griswold remained anxious because of the still unclear enemy situation. Accordingly, Kreuger's orders limited the XIV Corps advance to a line 15 miles north of Manila. He was unwilling to launch an all out drive to Manila until he had more information on the nature and extent of potential threats to the XIV Corps left

flank. That no threats actually existed made no difference, Kreuger was basing his plans on his estimates of Japanese capabilities.¹⁷

Japanese resistance proved relatively light. By the evening of 2 February, XIV Corps had progressed well beyond the line Kreuger had designated as the Corps objective on 30 January. Opposition had been insignificant, and for the most part the few organized groups of Japanese XIV Corps had found had appeared surprised and unprepared. By the evening of 3 February the XIV Corps and Sixth Army still possessed very little information concerning the Manila's defenses. Regardless, the Japanese defenders of Manila were about to be squeezed between two pincers. As the XIV Corps' 37th Infantry Division and 1st Cavalry Division were closing in from the North, the 11th Airborne Division of the Eighth Army was approaching from the South.

On 31 January, concurrent with the XIV Corps drive south, Eighth Army conducted an amphibious landing with the two glider regiments of the 11th Airborne at Nasugbu, southwest of Manila. The division's airborne regiment jumped further inland on 3 February at Tagaytay Ridge, about 20 miles south of Manila. The division was to prevent Japanese forces in Southern Luzon from re deploying northward to oppose Sixth Army's drive on Manila. Secondly, the 11th Airborne division would attack towards Manila, 55 miles from Nasugbu. By 4 February the 11th Airborne

Division was four miles south of Manila and faced the principal Japanese defenses south of the city.

The size of Manila and its importance to success of the overall invasion of Luzon demanded more detailed tactical and administrative planning. Detailed intelligence gathering and analysis critical to attacking a fortified position was omitted until very late. Adding to Griswold's tactical problems would be responsibility for the population of Manila after the battle. In the planning phase for Luzon, Kreuger was assured that restoration of public services would be managed by unnamed civilian agencies. On the very day XIV Corps entered Manila, Griswold was told that restoration of the port and civil services would be his responsibility.^{1*}

Omitting Manila from the planning process at SWPA HQ and Sixth Army guaranteed that lower levels would also omit it from their tactical planning and training. Planning an amphibious invasion second in size only to the Normandy invasion of France the previous June fully occupied the corps and division staffs.^{1*} Smaller units trained to proficiency on the jungle bunker clearing tactics previous experience taught were typical of combat against the Japanese.^{2*} It seems the significance of potential combat in a major city was missed amid the efforts needed to get ashore and establish the beachhead, a daunting task in itself. At the top, MacArthur's staff only had plans for

him to preside over "a great victory parade a la Champs Elysees."²¹

In their after action report, the XIV Corps staff emphasized detailed planning and accurate intelligence as prerequisites for success in capture of an urban area. This was true not only of urban areas, but doctrine of the time stated that it was a prerequisite of any deliberate attack. Yet, the XIV Corps staff admitted that preoccupation with ongoing operations (the Lingayen amphibious landing, securing Clark Field, and rescue of the Internees at Santo Tomas) precluded this before Manila.²² In fact, XIV Corps tactical planning accurately reflected the mission essential tasks, in chronological sequence, as laid out in the Sixth Army plan. Griswold's staff devoted their efforts in accordance with Sixth Army priorities. In doing so they suffered from an all too common tendency to worry so much about getting to the objective, that no one quite knows what to do when they finally get there.

CHAPTER 5

THE XIV CORPS BATTLE FOR MANILA

XIV Corps planned and trained for months to execute its tasks in the complicated amphibious assault at Lingayen. Now, over the course of 48 hours, XIV Corps would have to plan and execute a no less daunting operation. The corps was to seize a city of nearly a million inhabitants, defended by an enemy whose intentions and strength remained a mystery, and secure flanks and lines of communication over 100 miles long. In spite of the early announcements of victory by General MacArthur's headquarters, it would take a month to complete the task.¹

The framework of the XIV Corps fight for Manila generally entailed three parts: isolating the city, street by street clearing of the city, and attack of the heavily fortified buildings in the city center. Although I have divided the battle into these three doctrinal groupings, they did not necessarily occur in chronological order. Clearing of the northern suburbs initiated well before operations to complete isolating the city were complete. Similarly, during the final assaults on the government buildings at the end of February, pockets of Japanese defenders continued to resist throughout the city.

Since the intentions and dispositions of Iwabuchi's forces was largely unknown at the end of January, MG Griswold's forces executed their attacks on the urban area of Manila according to the doctrine established for smaller sized units for attack of a town or village, essentially that for reduction of a fortified area. With help from Eighth Army's 11th Airborne Division, the first task was to prevent Japanese reinforcement of forces in Manila, and second to destroy those forces inside the city before they could escape to the mountains. These tasks were facilitated by a cooperative enemy. The Shimbu Group had no intention of breaking through to the Manila Naval Defense Force, nor did Iwabuchi's troops have any intention of breaking out.

The attack on Manila had an inexorable momentum of its own. Both LTG Kreuger and MG Griswold were apprehensive about the speed with which the attack was proceeding. Logistics were tied to a single, tenuously secured route 100 miles from the rear at Lingayen beach. Intelligence regarding the enemy in front of and to the flanks was almost nonexistent. From experience, they both knew that resistance so far was too light. Where would they hit the main Japanese defenses? SWPA said the city was theirs for the taking if only they would hurry. Guerrillas and informants said the Japanese were in Manila in force. The success of the 1st Cavalry in their drive to rescue the internees at Santo Tomas and the urgings of MacArthur pulled

XIV Corps into Manila. Only the blown bridges which delayed movement of heavy artillery and tanks seemed to give Griswold's staff time to coordinate the attack of the corps to seize a major urban area.

The battle within Manila also included several "special" operations. These included the rescue of allied civilians and POWs interred behind enemy lines, major river crossing operations, and attack of a European style medieval fortress, the Intramuros. While his main effort was the fight within the city, MG Griswold's XIV Corps also commanded and controlled significant supporting actions. The 40th Infantry Division continued its attacks in the Fort Stotsenburg area north of Manila to keep the lines of communication to Lingayen open. Outside the city elements of the 1st Cavalry Division, joined later by the 6th Infantry Division, continued attacks to secure the mountains around Manila, an action necessary if the port was ever to be usable.

By the last week of January, Sixth Army had completed the first phase of its Luzon Campaign. XIV Corps had pushed the Kembu Group off of Clark Field and the successes of I Corps in the north protected the lines of communication from Lingayen. The Sixth Army, with XIV Corps as its main effort, began working the tactical problem of actually getting troops to Manila.

It was apparent by January 27 that the enemy occupied the Fort Stotsenburg area northwest of Manila in such numbers that the potential existed for them to inhibit the XIV Corps advance on the city. If the enemy had sufficient strength to launch a heavy counterattack against the 40th Infantry Division, then he could cut the supply lines of the entire corps.²

The 40th Infantry would continue these attacks against the enemy in the hills west of Clark Field until late February.³ The strong enemy forces in the Fort Stotsenburg area was a major threat to the XIV Corps lines of communication.⁴ With each increasing mile of advance from Lingayen, the flanks of the XIV Corps had increased without a corresponding increment in forces to secure them.⁵

The final advance, and therefore the XIV Corps battle for Manila itself, began on 30 January with LTG Kreuger's orders for XIV Corps to push south aggressively, capture Manila and secure a line around the city from Cavite west to Tagig and Antipolo, and north to Montalban.⁶ On 31 January, with Griswold's troops already moving, XIV Corps published its own order establishing roles the subordinate divisions would retain throughout the battle.⁷ The 40th Infantry Division would continue reduction of Japanese forces in the Fort Stotsenburg area while the 37th Infantry Division and 1st Cavalry Division would advance on Manila.⁸

Isolating the City: 31 Jan to 3 Feb 45

Generally, XIV Corps, after securing the northern suburbs with two divisions attacking abreast, the 37th on the right and 1st Cavalry on the left, would move east, cross the Pasig River, and then attack back westward, again with two divisions abreast, enveloping enemy forces in the city center. One regiment of the 37th was to attack directly across the Pasig River and attack enemy positions on the south bank.

Before XIV Corps struck the main lines of Japanese resistance in Manila there was almost no intelligence on which to base an estimate of the tactical situation. Guerilla reports were contradictory and often inaccurate. Units searched the city thoroughly as they went, yet struck nothing remarkable until reaching the center of the enemy defense.⁹

What available intelligence did show, however, was some 4,000 U.S. and Allied citizens interned in Manila at Santo Tomas University and possibly some Allied POWs at Malancan Palace. It was strongly believed that the Japanese forces within Manila would harm these internees and POWs. Therefore one of the first objectives within the city was the rescue of these prisoners.¹⁰

Responsibility for this mission, established by MacArthur himself, fell to the 1st Cavalry Division. Creating "Flying Columns" of tank and truck mounted infantry ranging far ahead of any practical support, the 1st Cavalry

Division advanced south from Guimba, crossed the Pampanga River, and continued on to Manila, traversing approximately 100 miles in less than three days. By 5 February, the division had captured Santo Tomas University liberating 3521 Allied internees, and had driven to the Pasig River against increasing enemy resistance. Lacking sufficient combat forces to cross the river, the division was forced to halt.¹¹

Tactical objectives planned for Manila often had no direct importance to the fight at hand. They did have significant importance for accomplishing the subsequent tasks of restoring the city of Manila as an Allied capital and a functioning port. XIV Corps directed that all civilian and governmental communications facilities in Manila will be seized as soon as possible. Troops were to avoid damage to these facilities and protect them against sabotage and damage by the enemy. Efforts were to be made to locate former employees of civilian communications systems as soon as practicable.¹²

The necessity for quickly securing the city's water supply facilities and electrical power installations also had considerable influence on tactical planning. Considering the sanitation problems posed by the presence of nearly a million civilians in the metropolitan area, there was good reason to be especially concerned about Manila's water supply. Assuming the wells in the city were not

contaminated and that the pumping equipment would be found intact, they could only meet expected demand for about two weeks. Therefore Kreuger directed Griswold to seize the principal facilities of Manila's modern pressure system as rapidly as possible.¹³

In establishing priorities for the capture of individual installations, Sixth Army ordered XIV Corps to first secure Novaliches Dam, at the southern end of a large man-made lake two and a half miles east of Novaliches. Second came the Balara Water Filters, about five miles northeast of Manila. Third was the San Juan Reservoir, nearly two miles northeast of the city, and fourth was the pipelines interconnecting these installations and leading from them into Manila.¹⁴ The mission for securing these facilities also fell to the 1st Cavalry Division. This meant that by February 5, the division was strung out protecting a flank and line of communication that extended a hundred miles.¹⁵

XIV Corps planned to secure the electrical power system facilities in Manila at the same time its troops were capturing the water supply facilities. During their occupation the Japanese had been unable to import enough coal to keep the steam generator plant located within the city running. Much of the power for Manila's lights and transportation came from hydroelectric plants far to the south of Manila. Since it appeared the southern provinces

of Luzon, and therefore the hydroelectric plants, would be under Japanese control for some time, Sixth Army directed XIV to secure this steam plant, situated near the center of the city on Provisor Island in the Pasig River.¹⁴

The XIV Corps developed its plan of attack as its forces entered the northern suburbs. Intelligence on the Japanese defenses was Griswold's greatest need and most significant shortage. Guerrilla reports were numerous but often incorrect and conflicting. Sixth Army and SWPA estimates differed radically and General MacArthur, characteristically, disregarded the enemy situation in his zeal to liberate Manila.

Into Manila: Battle North of the Pasig River

While the flying columns of the 1st Cavalry Division moved on to Santo Tomas, the 37th Division pushed down Route 3 in the face of constant enemy small arms and mortar fire. At every stream crossing the bridges had been destroyed. As the 37th pushed forward, buildings previously mined were demolished by the retreating enemy. Throughout the night of 4-5 February Manila was filled with the sound of explosions. Flames from the burning buildings were visible 50 miles away. On the 5th the smoke and dust was so intense, and the heat from burning structures so terrible, that little progress could be made.

XIV Corps initially assigned clearing the entire metropolitan area to the 37th Infantry Division. The 1st

Cavalry Division mission was to attack enemy forces in the mountains northeast of Manila. The advance of the 1st Cavalry to Santo Tomas and Grace Park in Manila and the developing enemy situation led Griswold to change his plans. After it became apparent that the enemy was not making his defensive stand outside the city, but would probably do so in the heart of the metropolitan area, Griswold (on 3 Feb) decided to divide the city proper equitably between the two divisions.¹⁷

As intelligence became clearer, both from sources within the city and from the nature of his resistance at the entrance of the city, XIV Corps estimated that the Japanese defense entailed several characteristics. First, that there were few, if any, organized combat units compared to previous encounters. Second, that the enemy defense would be of a generally passive nature, leaving the initiative with XIV Corps. Third, that Japanese communications within the city were crippled. And finally, there was no enemy reserve or mobile counterattack force.¹⁸

The U.S. attack through the streets of the northern suburbs was characterized by devastating machine gun and small arms fire. Tanks were indispensable in the reduction of such emplacements, but due to the delays in crossing the streams, it was not until February 6 that the 37th Infantry Division was able to reinforce its infantry with armor.

By the end of the 6th of February, organized resistance in the 37ID zone north of the river had largely stopped and lead elements were poised on the northern side of crossing points on the Pasig. Clearing operations continued however, and soldiers of the division learned that bypassing too many strong, isolated centers of resistance can be detrimental to the overall effort as the number of troops necessary to contain the defenders will far exceed the number of enemy contained. Bypassed elements had to be reduced as soon as possible.¹⁹

At times the fight was further complicated by rivalries between Filipino guerrilla groups. In one instance, USAFFE guerrillas had been disarmed by rival guerrillas and it was necessary for troops of the 37th Infantry to step in and disarm the later.²⁰

The 1st Cavalry division had captured Novaliches Dam which the Japanese had prepared, but not executed for demolition. They also continued their house to house advance through their zone of Manila and had secured crossing sites on the San Juan River.

Up until this time, XIV Corps operated under fairly strict restrictions on the use of firepower. Air support was forbidden by MacArthur. Artillery fire was limited to clearly identifiable targets in an attempt to limit damage to buildings and avoid civilian casualties. None of the tactics used by the 37ID forced an enemy withdrawal, even in

part. The problem therefore resolved itself to considering the means by which a terrain feature could be reduced rather than a maneuver involving destruction of a mobile enemy force. The XIV Corps was faced with the problem of reducing a very large area of Manila proper south of the River in hand to hand, house to house fighting.

Every effort had been made to spare the civilian population in enemy held areas of Manila. Indeed the Japanese kept thousands of civilians as hostages. Orders from U.S. forces for civilians in their respective zones to stay out of Manila and Manila Bay were ineffective. But, as tactical needs for heavy firepower increased, permission was sought and obtained to employ area artillery fire in front of the advancing infantry without regard to pinpointing targets. Literal destruction of a building in advance of friendly troops now became essential and XIV Corps had yet to determine upon a method of reducing the government buildings near the Intramuros.²¹ All subsequent advances were preceded by devastating artillery fire. Due to the coordination of these fires by the division artillery, every building, street corner, and material object was rubble by the big guns before the infantry moved in.²²

MG Griswold faced a complicated problem. As his divisions progressed through the city north of the Pasig, the nature of his task became better defined. The street fighting conducted by the infantry regiments developed

generally according to that established in Army doctrine. There were, however, two significant differences. First, in the effort to spare civilians lives and property, Griswold was forced to deny them the overwhelming fire support which had had such an influence on him at Munda. And second, even when executed "to standard", nothing would unhinge a defensive position. Orthodox methods of penetration and envelopment resulted in isolating enemy positions, but it still remained necessary to completely destroy them.²³ These two factors raised the friendly casualty rate alarmingly in an endeavor in which casualties were expected to be high even under favorable conditions.

The "right way" also did not always work. Night attacks through rubble was slow and extremely hazardous. Movement was slow and never quiet. Attackers were silhouetted by fires. The Japanese laid thousands of mines throughout the city. Even though most were surface laid, soldiers couldn't see them in the dark amid the rubble. Even under daylight conditions, mines presented a significant hazard. The rubble of the urban battlefield rendered mine detectors useless in differentiating a mine from junk. It was generally concluded that the danger of disaster in a night attack was too great to compensate for any advantages gained. Small scale attacks against known enemy positions could be profitable, but large scale actions

were avoided. Nighttime was best used for rest and resupply of the forward troops.²⁴

The soldiers of XIV Corps learned some difficult lessons in the initial urban combat which characterized combat north of the river. The lessons learned in those few days would characterize how the U.S. soldiers would be compelled to fight the rest of the battle.²⁵

South of the Pasig River

By the morning of February 7 the 37th Infantry and the 1st Cavalry Divisions had cleared Manila north of the Pasig River except for a pocket in the Tondo district. It appeared that there would be little difficulty clearing the eastern suburbs and securing the remaining water facilities. Late on the 6th Kreuger had ordered XIV Corps to seize the Provisor Island generating Plant immediately. Accordingly, on the morning of 7 February, Griswold ordered the 37th Infantry Division across the Pasig River and assigned it most of the city center south of the river. The 1st Cavalry Division, when it finished its job in the northern suburbs, would also cross the river and then swing westward toward Manila Bay.²⁶

The 37th crossed just east of Malacan Palace. The palace gardens on the southern bank was one of the only places in the city proper where both banks of the Pasig were not edged with seawalls, unscalable from assault boats. The lead battalions crossed in amphibious tractors and assault

boats behind an artillery barrage and in the face of intense Japanese machine gun, mortar, and artillery fire.

About 1800 on the 7th, the Japanese unleashed a new weapon. From the upper stories of the large buildings which they still held, they shelled the Pasig River crossing sites as well as adjacent areas with 200mm and 447mm rockets. The big projectiles, so huge they could be seen in flight, howled through the air. The rockets depended on concussion rather than fragmentation for effect. The physical damage done was comparatively slight, but the jolting explosions tore at the nerves of everyone for many yards around.²⁷

The next day infantry of the 37th Infantry Division crossed the Pasig again to seize the steam power plant on Provisor Island. The Japanese resisted fiercely against the attack and any attempts to reinforce US forces that made it ashore on the island. It took three days of close combat and concentrated fire from artillery, mortars, tanks, and tank destroyers on the north shore of Pasig to subdue the Japanese defense. In the end, what equipment had not been destroyed by the Japanese, was destroyed by Japanese and American artillery and mortar fires. There was no chance that the power plant would deliver electric power to Manila in the near future.²⁸

While the 37th Infantry Division fought to clear Provisor island, on the left flank the 1st Cavalry Division crossed the Pasig virtually unopposed.

South of the city, Eighth Army's 11th Airborne Division was having difficulty. Four days of effort had done little to reduce the amount of Japanese fire coming from the Nichols Field defenses. Essentially Army A-20 and Marine SBD attack aircraft (permitted outside the city proper) and the division's light artillery had not destroyed enough Japanese weapons to permit the infantry to advance without taking unduly heavy casualties. The artillery pieces accompanying the 11th Airborne Division were not designed for heavy duty direct fire and were almost ineffective against the concrete pillboxes in the Nichols Field area.²⁹

Another difficulty arose in the area of command and control. SWPA HQ had made no provision for communications between Sixth Army and Eighth Army. As the 11th Airborne Division and XIV Corps got closer and closer to each other, the danger increased that XIV Corps artillery might inadvertently shoot the paratroopers.³⁰

On February 9, the 11th Airborne requested artillery support from XIV Corps. This support meant that the corps artillery, emplaced north of the Pasig River, had to fire directly into the front of the advancing 11th Airborne.³¹ Therefore, Sixth Army enlarged the XIV Corps area of responsibility with the attachment of the 11th Airborne Division to the Corps control on February 10. This solved most of fire coordination problems associated with

converging forces, but more significantly, it gave XIV Corps an opportunity to cut the last routes of possible withdrawal or reinforcement available to the Japanese.

The end of February 10 found XIV Corps firmly established south of the Pasig River. The 37th Division had seized a quarter of the city proper south of the river. The 1st Cavalry Division had cleared some of the south suburban areas and was ready to move back up on the 37th Division's left. The corps plan was for the 37th Infantry to push on across the Estero de Paco while two regiments of the 1st Cavalry Division would drive south and west toward Manila Bay and link up with the 11th Airborne.³²

On February 11 the 11th Airborne Division, now fully supported by XIV Corps heavy artillery and Marine attack aircraft seized Nichols Field and linked up with the 1st Cavalry Division. The airfield however, was in no condition to receive allied planes. Runways were heavily mined, pitted by air and artillery bombardment, and the entire field was still subjected to intermittent Japanese artillery and mortar fire.³³

The 1st Cavalry had advanced thorough the city to the shores of Manila Bay on the 12th of February. With the linkup with the 11th Airborne, encirclement of the Japanese forces in Manila was complete. Admiral Iwabuchi's now isolated troops could only choose between surrender and death.³⁴

On 12 February, the very day Stateside news magazines reported Manila liberated,³⁵ SWPA HQ finally changed its intelligence estimate from that of the Japanese offering only token resistance in Manila. The estimate of Japanese intentions now reflected an intent to draw the Americans into a costly battle of attrition in the Central Plain and deny the Americans use of the airfields and Manila port.³⁶

After 12 February the XIV Corps battle for Manila became a steady war of attrition. Street to street, building to building, and room to room fighting characterized each day's activities. During the drive down the Central Plain, the infantrymen fought one day and then hiked uneventfully the next five. Now, the infantrymen expended all of their strength to occupy a few yards.³⁷ The Japanese, looking forward only to death, began committing atrocities against the city itself and any Filipinos unlucky enough to remain in their area of control. Japanese troops often held civilian hostages so that the Americans would not use large caliber guns against their positions. When the attacks did occur, some of the Japanese became crazed and attempted a wholesale slaughter of the noncombatants.³⁸ The men of the XIV Corps witnessed the rape, pillage, and destruction of a large part of Manila, and unfortunately became reluctant parties to much of the destruction.³⁹

Although XIV Corps placed heavy dependence upon artillery, tank, tank destroyer, mortar, and bazooka fire for all its advances, clearing out individual buildings ultimately fell to riflemen. To accomplish this work, the infantry brought to fruition a system initiated north of the Pasig River. Small units worked their way from one building to the next, usually trying to secure the roof and top floor first, then working their way down through the building. In many cases, where the Japanese blocked stairways and corridors, American troops found it necessary to chop or blow holes through walls and floors. Hand grenades, flame throwers, and demolition's usually proved requisites to success.⁴⁰

Desperate street fighting in the 37th Infantry Division zone gave Corps the impression that the Japanese would make their final stand outside the Intramuros and would not attempt to hold the walled city with great strength. On the other hand, it was also possible these enemy forces were the outpost line to a much stronger defensive position inside the wall. Whichever scheme the enemy employed, it would be necessary to reduce the Walled City. The time required for reduction was a factor to be considered as much as the direction of the attack.

If the Intramuros were lightly held, an amphibious crossing and assault offered the greatest chance for success. MG Griswold therefore decided to continue

attacking to the west and southwest to envelop the enemy around the Intramuros after which plans would be formulated for the final attack.⁴¹

Each infantry and cavalry regiment engaged south of the Pasig found a particular group of buildings to be the focal point of an area of resistance. While by 12 February XIV Corps was confident that the final Japanese stand would be made in the area of the Intramuros and government buildings ringing the walled city, progress toward the Intramuros was held up for days as each regiment concentrated efforts on eliminating the particular strongpoint to its front. There was of course fighting every step of the way through the city in addition to the battles for these strongpoints. This other house to house fighting was, however, often without discernible pattern. Tying up considerable resources of time, materiel, and lives, these actions were usually only incidental to the battles taking place at the more fanatically defended strongpoints.⁴²

What follows is an example of the nature of combat for the strongpoints scattered along the various routes of advance. In a difficult advance, the 37th Infantry Division's 129th Infantry launched an attack supported by tanks and M7 self propelled 105mm howitzers against strongly fortified buildings at the junction of Isaac Peral and San Marcelino streets. The advance was stopped by heavy fire

from a concrete building on the west side of San Marcelino Street. Tanks and the M7s were brought up to a concrete wall and laid direct fire on the building, but were unable to neutralize the enemy pocket. An assault team of one of the infantry battalions, supported by flame throwers and pole charges, succeeded in penetrating the eastern end of the building. However, they were forced to withdraw later under the cover of darkness.⁴³ Their urban tactics were those they had trained to perfection on the jungle assault course at Bougainville.

With the capture of the university and hospital buildings, the New Police Station and associated structures, the Manila Hotel, the City Hall and General Post Office, and the stadium area, the battles of the strongpoints were over. In their wake, the XIV Corps had left, inevitably and unavoidably, a series of destroyed and damaged public and private buildings. The last organized survivors of the Manila Naval Defense Force were confined in the Walled City, the South Port Area, and the Philippine Commonwealth Government buildings off the southeastern corner of the Intramuros. The 37th Division was now ready to begin the reduction of this last resistance and planned an assault against Intramuros for 23 February.⁴⁴

The Intramuros and Government Buildings

After the fighting at the strongpoints, the seizure of the Intramuros must in some ways have been anticlimactical

to the troops involved. Clearing the walled city was primarily a victory of US army artillery, tanks, and tank destroyers over medieval Spanish walls and stone buildings. The subsequent reduction of the government buildings represented the triumph of the same weapons over modern, US built, reinforced concrete structures. Thus the reduction of the Intramuros and the government buildings was similar to a classical siege conducted with modern weapons.⁴⁵

During the period 18-22 February, the 37th Infantry Division, reinforced by the 1st Cavalry Brigade, continued to close in on enemy forces holed up for a last stand in Intramuros and the port area. The 12th Cavalry drove north along the shore of Manila Bay and by the 22d was engaged in a bitter battle for the Manila Hotel. The struggle for the Manila Hotel typifies the fury and bitterness of the Japanese resistance during the fighting for Manila. The battle raged within the building for almost three days.⁴⁶

Further tightening of the ring around the Intramuros required a decision as to how to deal with the walled city. Enemy defenses in the triangle around the Intramuros area conclusively proved that penetration of the walls from the south and east would be more expensive in American lives than an amphibious attack across the Pasig River. Intelligence obtained from escapees from the Intramuros also showed that the major Japanese defenses within the walled city were directed toward the south and east. These

significant defenses consisted of minefields, barbed wire obstacles, and tank traps, all of which were thoroughly covered by cannons, machine guns and mortars. Along the Pasig, however, it appeared that the strongest enemy defenses were between the National Mint and the Jones Bridge. West of the Mint was lightly defended.⁴⁷

Artillery played an important role in supporting the attack on the Intramuros. It became obvious that the medium artillery (105mm) and the one battalion of 155mm guns of the corps artillery would not be sufficient to reduce the heavily fortified buildings and walls of the Intramuros. Thus, Sixth Army transferred one battery of 240mm howitzers from the Subic Bay area and one battery of 8in howitzers from the Central Plain area to assist XIV Corps in this mission.⁴⁸ MacArthur denied vigorous requests from Griswold and Kreuger to attack the Intramuros from the air.⁴⁹ He said he could not permit the use of dive bombers, and particularly napalm, because many Filipino civilians were trapped within. The General did approve heavy artillery shellings, the results of which were so destructive, that the end result really would have been the same.⁵⁰ Prior to 3 February, Allied air forces had flown missions against the port and oil storage facilities in Manila to deny their use to the Japanese. Inevitably some stray bombs fell on populated sectors, including the Intramuros.

The bombardment of the Intramuros in preparation for the actual assault began on 17 February when 8 inch howitzers, with indirect fire, started blasting a breach in the east wall. At the point of the breach the wall was 40 feet thick at the base, 16 feet high, and about 20 feet across the top. The 8in howitzers made a breach in the central portion of the east wall between Parian and Victoria Gates with 150 rounds of high explosive. Later, a single 155mm howitzer, firing at a range of about 800 yards, fire to form the planned breach south of Quezon Gate. With 150 rounds this weapon produced a break 50 feet long and extending about 10 feet down from the top of the wall. An 8in howitzer smoothed out the pile of debris at the outer base of the wall with 29 rounds of indirect fire, making an easy ramp.⁵¹

The 240mm howitzers began bombardment to breach the north wall and knock out a Japanese strongpoint at the Government Mint on the morning of 22 February. 8in howitzers would fire at this spot from time to time also. The 76mm guns from a platoon of tank destroyers used point blank (about 200 meters) from across the Pasig River to blast footholds along the south bank seawall and in the rubble along the river's bank in order to provide the assault troops with landing points.⁵²

Throughout the night of 22-23 February, in advance of a final barrage before the infantry assault, XIV Corps

and 37th Division artillery commands kept up harassing fires against the walls and interior of the Intramuros. In addition, many of the M7 self propelled guns of the infantry regiment's cannon companies took up positions along the north side of the Pasig River or east of the Intramuros. The 37th Division's 148th Infantry Regiment set up twenty-six heavy and light machine guns in buildings north of the river to provide covering fire for the men of the 129th Infantry who were to make the amphibious assault.

On 22 February the 37th Division completed its preparations for the final assault on the Intramuros. The division commander planned his final assault for early in the morning of the 23d following an artillery preparation. Although the breaching of the walls by the heavy artillery caused rubble to slide into the breaches and block them for vehicular movement, it was expected that the preliminary artillery and mortar bombardment would enable the infantry to negotiate the rubble with a minimum of casualties. One regiment, the 129th Infantry, was to make an assault crossing of the Pasig River opposite the north breach in the wall, while another regiment, the 145th Infantry, attacking from the east, was to enter the Intramuros through the breach in the northeast corner.⁵³

The final assault on the Intramuros began at 0730, with artillery and mortar bombardment of targets within the walled city, sections of the east and north walls, and on

the outside approaches. In the span of one hour, four battalions of 105mm howitzers, three battalions of 155mm howitzers, one battery of 8in howitzers, one battery of 240mm howitzers, one battalion of tanks and elements of one battalion of tank destroyers fired 7,896 rounds of HE, APC, HC, and WP on specially selected targets.⁵⁴

The 129th Infantry made the initial crossing of the Pasig River in assault boats without a single casualty and assaulted the north wall of the Intramuros at the breach in the vicinity of the Mint. Enemy resistance was disorganized and primarily confined to Fort Santiago in the northeast corner of the walled city and from the area between Aduana and Pastigo Streets. The 145th Infantry entered the Intramuros through the breach in the northeast corner and advanced west and southwest against scattered resistance.

A serious interference with the 145th Infantry's attack occurred when a large group of refugees were released by the Japanese in front of the advancing troops. Numbering over 2000, virtually all were women, children, and nuns. There were no men. The 129th Infantry, across the river, organized a truck convoy to evacuate the civilians. The trucks crossed the Pasig two miles upstream and drove through Japanese machine gun fire to the Intramuros. The convoy then shuttled terror stricken civilians and wounded American soldiers back across the river. The interruption slowed the tempo of the 145th's attack, but not Japanese

defensive fires, for six hours. The American's later found the male hostages dead inside the Intramuros' Fort Santiago. They had been forced into a room twenty-five feet square, stacked five deep, and burned to death.⁵⁵

By the following day, the 24th of February, the 37th Division had completed destruction of the enemy forces in the Intramuros except for a small pocket in the basement of Fort Santiago. The 12th Cavalry secured the Port District on the same day.⁵⁶

By the 25th, organized resistance in Manila was broken except for the enemy strongpoints continuing to hold out in the Agricultural, Finance, and Legislative Buildings. The enemy had converted these buildings into last stand fortresses, barricading all entrances and constructing concrete pillboxes in the hallways. These buildings were strong not only by virtue of their heavily reinforced concrete construction, but because all the approaches to them led across wide open ground.⁵⁷ To gain entrance to these buildings, the 37th Division used massed direct fire from artillery, tanks, and tank destroyers to breach the walls.⁵⁸

In spite of the fact that the Japanese in the three buildings had advantages of position and elevation that permitted them to fire on U.S. and Filipino movements over large areas of the city, the XIV Corps at first considered starving the Japanese out. But Griswold soon decided this

would take too long. Prisoners and Filipino hostages who had escaped from the buildings indicated that the Japanese garrisons had sufficient strength, ammunition, food, and water to withstand a protracted siege. Moreover, to permit the Japanese to hold the buildings would unduly delay the development of base and headquarters sites in areas that the Japanese machine gunners and riflemen could dominate. Accordingly, Griswold called upon his battle-weary troops of the 37th Infantry Division to assault the buildings.⁵⁹

The XIV Corps-37th Infantry Division plan of assault called for intensive preparatory bombardment of each building by 155mm howitzers, 105mm self propelled howitzers, 75mm tank guns, 76mm tank destroyer guns, and 4.2in and 81mm mortars. The attacks by the infantry would be first against the Legislature building, then the Finance Building. A regiment of the 1st Cavalry would simultaneously reduce the Agriculture Building. The preliminary artillery direct fire would last for two full days. Undeniably, these fires would lead to the severe damage, if not the destruction, of all three buildings, but again XIV Corps really had no choice.⁶⁰

Shortly after 0900 on the 26th of February, following a final hour of artillery preparation, troops of the 37th Infantry Division entered the Legislative Building. Inside the Japanese conducted a defense as stubborn as that the Americans had encountered anywhere in Manila. By mid day they controlled only a small portion of the building and

further attacks were stopped completely. The infantry withdrew behind a curtain of smoke. The next morning artillery and mortars attempted to smoke the Japanese out of the building. This failed, and 155mm howitzers and 105mm SP howitzers resumed direct fire for about two hours. At the end of this bombardment, the north wing was demolished and the south wing damaged beyond repair. Only the battered central portion, roofless and gutted, remained erect. The infantry attacked the building again, taking another 24 hours to complete destruction of the Japanese defenders.⁶¹

Meanwhile, soldiers of the 1st Cavalry Division's 5th Cavalry assaulted the Agriculture Building. Behind artillery support, the regiment attacked twice but were driven back by Japanese fire from nearby apartment buildings. The next day, the 5th Cavalry cleared out the adjacent buildings and prepared for another assault on the Agriculture Building on the 28th. The final attack began with a three hour artillery direct fire preparation. The howitzers, tanks, and tank destroyers fired one hour at the north and west walls, an hour at the south and east walls, and another hour at the north and west walls. To avoid endangering troops attacking the other two government buildings, no fires were aimed higher than the first floor. As a result, much of the Agriculture Building collapsed on its own first floor. By late morning the bombardment had disintegrated the entire northeastern corner and damaged

beyond repair the rest of the building. The destruction appeared so complete that as the infantrymen moved in from the south, it was inconceivable that any Japanese could possibly be alive amid the smoking rubble. Incredibly, once into the building, they ran into strong resistance. A flame-thrower tank came forward to reduce a pillbox at the southeast corner of the building, while other tanks moved forward to cover all sides of the structure with point blank cannon and machine gun fire. Using small arms, bazookas, and flame-throwers, the infantrymen cleared the above ground ruins by the end of the day, but a few Japanese continued to resist from the basement. On March 1, after a surrender appeal failed, demolitions and burning gasoline took care of the last Japanese resistance.⁶²

The last building was the Finance Building. Throughout February 28 and March 1, 37th Infantry Division artillery, tanks, and tank destroyers subjected the building to the same treatment the previous two had received. The infantry assaulted after another bombardment the morning of March 2. After Japanese machine gunners stopped the first assault, another two hours bombardment commenced. The final assault began in early afternoon and by the next morning the final Japanese pocket was eliminated.

Late on 3 March, after he had made sure that all opposition in the Intramuros and government buildings area

had been eliminated, Griswold reported to General Kreuger that organized resistance in the Manila area had ceased.⁶³

Earlier, on 25 February, Sixth Army ordered XIV Corps, while continuing to secure the city of Manila and adjacent areas, to reduce expeditiously all obstacles to the immediate restoration of port and base facilities in the Manila area. XIV Corps concentrated the bulk of its corps engineer efforts on the repair of facilities in the Port Area, on the clearing of debris and rubble from the streets, and on the creation of storage space dispersal areas for supplies. Even before Manila was officially declared secure, engineers had made considerable progress toward the accomplishment of these objectives. The major piers received top priority.⁶⁴ On March 15 the first Liberty Ship entered Manila port. Two months later, 90,000 tons of supplies per week were off loaded at Manila.⁶⁵

During the battle for Manila, hardly a building in downtown Manila escaped heavy damage or destruction. The Intramuros was a mass of rubble. Pier 7, the largest in the Port District, was unusable.⁶⁶ XIV Corps lost over 1,000 men killed and 5,000 wounded in the metropolitan area from February 3 to March 3, 1945. The Japanese lost some estimated 16,000 killed in and around Manila. And tragically, an estimated 100,000 Filipino civilians lost their lives during the battle to liberate their city.

Tactical victory in Manila had left in its wake masses of twisted steel and shattered concrete, gutted homes and public buildings, wandering civilians seeking food and shelter, and piles of rotting bodies. XIV Corps still had tough fighting ahead in the mountains to the east. To replace its 4,000 February casualties, one division received no replacements in February and only 405 in March.⁶⁷

Sixth Army directed XIV Corps to prepare a detailed account of the defenses encountered in Manila and the tactics employed in reducing them. The resulting pamphlet cautioned that, "... future actions of this type will combine the lessons [the Japanese] learned in Manila with an even more fanatic and tenacious resistance."⁶⁸

CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSIONS

The XIV Corps Battle for Manila

The battle of Manila marked the first and only time in the Pacific war in which American troops met the Japanese in the struggle for a major city.¹ The XIV Corps operation is an example of a successful corps level attack to seize a large city. It is also an example of the tremendous costs associated with urban warfare.

Perhaps overshadowed by the February 19 invasion of Iwo Jima and probably censored by MacArthur's staff, XIV Corps' brutal fight in Manila is not widely known.² But, this urban battle was a unique and influential event for American forces in the Pacific Theater. It challenged conventional wisdom that major cities would be declared "open", as Paris was in 1944. It signaled a change to the tactical focus on the jungle and amphibious operations that preoccupied the Army in the Pacific since 1942.

Since atomic bombs made invasion of the Japanese home islands unnecessary, we can only speculate on the results of urban combat in Japan. However, the final outcome of the Pacific War did not make the XIV Corps experience in Manila irrelevant. There are important

lessons to be drawn from consideration of the events which drew XIV Corps into an urban battle as well as from analysis of their response to the challenge.

MacArthur's Intelligence Failure

The most critical influence to consider is why Manila had to be a battlefield. If tactical sense dictates avoiding urban combat, why did the battle occur? That the city held military and political importance is clear. It is also clear that it was the Japanese decision to defend that determined the Americans would have to attack rather than merely occupy Manila. Between these two givens is one crucial, missing component. If Manila was so important to the Americans politically, strategically, and operationally, why was there almost a complete lack of accurate intelligence until XIV Corps was decisively engaged? This intelligence failure influenced not only the battle fought by XIV Corps in Manila but the preliminary planning and preparation efforts throughout the SWPA command as well.

MacArthur's intelligence staff correctly deduced that the Japanese Army would not defend Manila. They did not, however, analyze correctly the significance of the presence of Japanese Navy forces. His staff also made an error of overconfidence, only believing intelligence that supported what MacArthur (and his G2, Major General Willoughby) wanted to hear and disregarding anything suggesting otherwise.³ The SWPA HQ command did not

comprehend the significance to Luzon of the long-standing rift between the Japanese Army and the Japanese Navy.*

MacArthur and his staff drew their conclusions about the defense of Manila from ULTRA intercepts of Yamashita's orders to his subordinates. Yamashita's intent for the Army to abandon Manila was known, but the plans of the Navy's Admiral Okochi and Admiral Iwabuchi were not.* Failure to analyze the Japanese command structure led SWPA to believe that Yamashita's orders applied to all Japanese forces on Luzon. This early and fundamental intelligence failure, compounded by MacArthur's continual disregard for intelligence estimates which did not conform to his operational concept, influenced how the American battle for Manila developed.

Differences between SWPA and Sixth Army estimates of enemy strengths and capabilities were left unresolved.* MacArthur pushed Kreuger and thus Griswold to attack into an unknown enemy situation. Attacking against a defending enemy without intelligence not only contradicted the established doctrine but contradicted the experience and training of virtually every leader within the XIV Corps.

MacArthur's valid concern for the internees at Santo Tomas and his incorrect assumptions about Japanese strength, led him to send the 1st Cavalry Division into the city earlier than either Griswold or Kreuger would have liked. The 1st Cavalry succeeded in reaching Santo Tomas but lacked

combat power and was temporarily forced to withdraw. On the 3rd of February, Griswold unfortunately had the division he doctrinally needed to isolate the city, located deep within the northern suburbs. The 37th Infantry, the XIV Corps main effort, was squeezed into a very narrow sector between the 1st Cavalry and Manila Bay. MacArthur, by jumping the chain of command to give specific tasks to a division, pulled rather than pushed XIV Corps into Manila. Griswold changed his plans.

Failure to consider the presence of a determined defense of Manila is also reflected in the tactical planning efforts associated with Manila. The 1942 version of FM 100-15, Field Service Regulations for Larger Units, said "the enemy situation is one of the controlling factors in planning the advance." Without an understanding of the enemy's likely course of action, planning for Manila within the framework of the Luzon campaign was "uncontrolled". Tactical and logistical problems that occurred during the battle for Manila trace their origins to this failure. Many of them would seem, with perfect hindsight, to have been obvious considerations during the planning phase. This is true not only at SWPA HQ but Sixth Army and XIV Corps as well.

The need for additional civil affairs and engineer forces to perform functions required to restore basic life support functions was given low priority. Sixth Army Civil

Affairs teams virtually did no planning for the Luzon Campaign, much less with any emphasis on operating in such a large city. The teams assigned to XIV Corps in Manila had in some cases 48 hours between leaving their tasks on Leyte and arriving on Luzon.⁹ On the positive side, Kreuger's staff alone appears to have identified the water supply system as a critical objective. After the battle MacArthur commented on the precarious sanitation status in Manila.⁹ If the Japanese had succeeded in destroying the water system, it is doubtful the Americans could have coped with the resulting epidemic of disease. As it was Luzon cost the American Army more nonbattle, disease related casualties than any other operation in World War II.¹⁰

SWPA HQs planning failures led to the very unpopular decision by MacArthur to limit artillery initially, and air support totally, within Manila. American infantrymen and aviators had trained extensively before the invasion in air to ground cooperation.¹¹ Their doctrine and experience said overwhelming air support was a critical component of ground operations. Now, at the eleventh hour, they were denied this tactically and psychologically important combat multiplier. MacArthur did not consider combat for Manila to be likely so his staff never considered the effects of modern weapons on a the friendly capital. His personal attachment to the Manila also did not prompt any early discussion of rules of engagement. His orders gave the

infantrymen and artillerymen of XIV Corps little choice but to develop new techniques to defeat the enemy by trial, error, and blood.

Griswold had been deeply influenced by personal experience nearly two years earlier at the battle for Munda Airfield. There he saw the slaughter of American soldiers forced into frontal attacks against dug-in Japanese defenses.¹² Now denied the air support and artillery that eventually prevailed at Munda, it probably appeared that he was condemning his men a similar fate in Manila. The soldiers of the 37th Infantry Division, fortunately, had trained extensively in small unit, combined arms attacks against jungle bunkers. Applying those techniques, later enhanced with overwhelming direct artillery fire, the 37th's infantrymen came up with suitable solutions to the problems of urban combat. Losses continued to be high, but Japanese losses were greater.

The 11th Airborne was committed to a fight airborne divisions were not equipped to deal with. These unique units were organized to achieve surprise by a landing *behind* enemy lines, followed rapidly by linkup with a heavier force.¹³ In Manila the 11th Airborne was assigned the task of attacking *into* prepared Japanese defenses, without any consideration for a linkup with the XIV Corps. The SWPA planners, again based on the assumption that any Manila defenders would offer only limited resistance, assigned the

wrong force the wrong mission. Planning reflected the low expectation of significant difficulty, leaving the communication and coordination of these two converging forces to be worked out on the ground.¹⁴

MacArthur's restrictions on air support and artillery "changed the rules" on the XIV Corps. He made this distinction only for Manila. Other, albeit smaller, Philippine towns were quite freely attacked by Army and Marine aircraft.¹⁵ The onus fell to Griswold to determine how to win in Manila. Without adequate preparation for the task, he was forced to choose between limiting friendly casualties and destroying much of the city. Traditional American concern for its soldiers aside, Griswold's infantrymen were not expendable. The tactical end state was securing Luzon. The operational end state was a secure staging base for the invasion of Japan. If Griswold killed off too many American infantrymen taking Manila, ports and airfields would be irrelevant.

MacArthur had a timetable in his mind for the liberation of Manila. It was based upon personal pride and operational and strategic issues, but not upon the effects of a Japanese defense of the city.¹⁶ XIV Corps needed to complete the seizure of Manila quickly, but the nature of urban warfare would not allow it. While the infantrymen of the 37th Infantry Division, 1st Cavalry, and 11th Airborne fought room to room, and street to street in a city of

nearly a million inhabitants, the Corps HQ wrestled with numerous other constraints. Supplies had to be hauled 140 miles from Lingayen. Overworked engineers struggled to replace the many bridges all along this line of communication. The 40th Infantry Division remained heavily engaged west of Clark Field securing the XIV Corps western flank. Isolating the city and protecting against potential Japanese counterattacks required most of the 1st Cavalry Division and ultimately the 6th Infantry Division.¹⁷

Until late February, XIV Corps was unable to focus its efforts on reducing the Japanese in Manila. From Sixth Army, Griswold retained old missions (securing the flanks, lines of communication, and Clark Field) and at the same time picked up new ones (push beyond Manila to Antipolo and concurrently begin work getting the port operational).¹⁸ Logically, XIV Corps, as the Sixth Army main effort, should have been focused solely on taking Manila.

The uncharacteristically passive nature of the Japanese defense of central Luzon certainly helped XIV Corps to succeed. The *Shimbu Group* never mounted a serious counterattack while XIV Corps was in Manila. With all his forces decisively engaged, XIV Corps would have been unable to respond to a serious attack upon one or more of its divisions. Griswold was never unable to mass his Corps against his primary objective.

Tactical Success in Manila

In the battle for Manila, Major General Griswold and his XIV Corps successfully applied tactical methods established by a European based doctrine, adapted to their experience of jungle warfare against the Japanese, to seize a defended, major urban area. They fought the way they had trained, even though the enemy and the terrain did not conform to that which they trained for.

It is significant that none of XIV Corps' operations to seize Manila were seriously hampered by any lack of supplies. In spite of their extended, vulnerable supply lines, dependent upon a distant logistics base, and faced with consumption rates greater than the divisions had previously experienced, the logisticians kept up. The wounded were evacuated and treated in forward hospitals. The enormous consumption rates for all types of ammunition never really gave Griswold reason to pause. Shortages in mortar and some artillery ammunition that did occur, resulted from theater wide shortages, not a lack of distribution efforts.¹⁹

Manila confirmed the primacy of overwhelming firepower in the attack and the accepted doctrine that attacking a city is essentially the same as attacking a fortified area. XIV Corps soldiers still learned some things about urban combat that didn't support their doctrine and previous experience. Mine detectors did not

work in the metal strewn urban rubble like they did on a jungle dirt path.²⁰ One perfectly executed attack was stopped in its tracks by masses of noncombatants fleeing the battle.²¹ And significantly, the more homes, businesses, and hospitals they destroyed taking the city, the more civilians they had to shelter, feed, and care for.²²

Griswold's Corps successfully answered the challenges of urban combat in Manila. Determined defensive efforts by the Japanese aside, these challenges were significant. There was the overbearing command pressure from MacArthur, the lack of adequate intelligence, dissipated combat power, denial of air support, extended supply lines, exposed flanks, and mounting casualties with no replacements.

Urban warfare is considered the domain of the infantry. However, in Manila it is readily apparent that success by the infantry was largely determined by the competence of Griswold and his staff. The general led from the front. His command post was established inside the city very early on.²³ Faced with an entirely new environment, he developed a plan of attack which exploited a common doctrinal base and compensated for his weakness in intelligence. It was a flexible plan, as he proved by adjusting missions for his two divisions inside the city and the rapid integration of the 11th Airborne. Most importantly, he provided his troops the resources they

needed to win and survive the ordeal. He fought with MacArthur about the air support. XIV Corps heavy artillery was pulled out of their positions outside of the city to provide dedicated support to infantry squads attacking heavily defended buildings. Boats and amphibious tractors gave the 37th Infantry Division the capability of attacking across the Pasig into the weaker Japanese defenses, rather than overland into the strongest defenses.

Operational and Strategic Success

The XIV Corps operations to seize Manila and limit American casualties was tactically successful. The degree of that success is somewhat tempered when it is compared to the operational and strategic intent for seizing Manila. Hardly a building in downtown Manila escaped heavy damage or destruction. The Port District's largest pier, Pier 7, was unusable. The airfields were unusable for the immediate future due to extensive damage.²⁴ The city's sole power generation plant and the major hospital were completely destroyed in the battles to take them. The water supply was secured intact, but the distribution network was badly damaged. The majority of the slain civilians were unfortunately casualties of the heavy artillery exchanges.²⁵

This is not meant to pass judgment on the tactics employed by XIV Corps against such a determined Japanese defense. It does illustrate the dilemma of urban warfare. Military and political objectives must account for the

nature of tactical warfare in a city. If the target city is defended, expectations regarding the levels of destruction must be reasonable. Regarding Manila, MacArthur's expectations certainly were not reasonable. SWPA HQ planners simply did not consider the possible effects of a significant battle for Manila.

Manila provided American planners a glimpse at the cost of failing to consider the implications of major urban combat. In the spring of 1945 it still appeared that the Japanese intended to defend every inch of their territory to the death. Their determined, fanatical defense of Iwo Jima and Okinawa seemed to confirm this. It is noteworthy that the Tokyo Defense Army headquarters planned for underground fortifications and supplies capable of withstanding enemy assaults for one year.²⁶ As American commanders added urban combat to their preparations for the invasion of Japan, they also quietly noted the establishment of 30,000 hospital beds in staging areas around Manila.²⁷

Implications for Today

The most lesson of Manila is the need for leaders to prepare soldiers to succeed in accomplishing vital tasks. Operations in major cities continue to involve the U.S. more often than open country maneuver warfare. Major urban combat is unique, but not an exception. It is tough, costly, and complicated to plan and execute. Urban operations require detailed planning and preparation. While bypassing cities

may be desirable, it cannot be assumed in planning, training, or in combat.

If a major city is a decisive objective, the Corps staff must consider the possibility that it may be defended. Operations within the city should not, as it was in the planning for Luzon in World War II, be passed down to lower levels of command as an implied task. Only the Corps has the resources to guarantee tactical success consistent with higher level military and political objectives.

The questions remaining for U.S. contingency corps commanders today, are as valid as they should have been for Generals MacArthur, Kreuger, and Griswold in late 1944 and early 1945. Ports and airfields remain critical to operational success of deployed forces. Control of major population centers remains critical to political success. How then, does a large force achieve tactical victory at an acceptable level in American casualties, without causing unacceptable levels of destruction to the city and its inhabitants?

Our Army today fights as it trains. Most of our MOUT training is at the small unit level. It emphasizes firepower and methods of destroying elements of urban terrain to get at the enemy. The mechanical techniques are remarkably similar to those employed in Manila. At the division and corps levels, operations in cities are incidental to wider, unrestricted, maneuver warfare. Major

cities are "no-go" terrain, costly in lives and materiel to fight through. Doctrinal manuals stress that "the attack of a built-up area, regardless of its size and the level of command involved, should be considered only as a last resort."²²

A significant American doctrinal and training shortfall today is in the arena of large unit operations in major urban areas. There needs to be a change in mindset regarding combat in cities. While bypassing a major city is certainly desirable, it is probably the least likely alternative.

Our doctrine should reflect that cities are increasingly the focal point of conflict and usually cannot be bypassed. Combat in the city may span a spectrum from lone snipers to heavily armed, well supplied, fanatical defenders. The population may be friendly or hostile, but will always be in the way. Destroying the infrastructure of the city incurs tremendous logistical burdens upon the victor. Urban combat operations are not just a function of unique terrain. Destroying the city may win the battle but lose the war.

Cities are decisive points in any major operation. Urban warfare requires a unique set of operational and tactical guidelines. Major cities will not always require armed force to secure them. If the situation does require offensive combat, commanders at every level must have "a

common understanding, prior to hostilities, of the conditions that constitute success."²⁹

The decision by MacArthur to initially limit artillery fires in Manila and to deny air support to forces inside the city is an example of conflicting visions of success. In the eyes of XIV Corps infantrymen advancing into the city, MacArthur had seemingly denied them a means of self defense. Of course, as the SWPA commander in chief, MacArthur saw it in terms of supporting achievement of operational and political objectives.

In developing a different approach to combat in major urban areas, the experience of XIV Corps is appropriate as a point of reference. There are four major areas which require attention. They are the need within the U.S. Army for large unit MOUT doctrine, the need for staff planning and training for seizing large cities, planning for post-urban combat operations, and finally the role of mass communications.

Doctrine

The U.S. Army needs a clear corps and division level MOUT doctrine. Emerging doctrine reaffirms the importance of secure reception bases to support the deployment of U.S. armed forces. Infrastructure is critical to successful and timely reception and onward movement of forces. The air and sea ports capable of meeting our needs are located in areas that are increasingly populated by inhabitants numbering in

the hundreds of thousands or more. Major cities represent political centers of gravity for both friendly and enemy nations. Therefore the first thing our warfighting doctrine must do is reflect, up front, the inevitability of operations to secure major urban areas.

Cities become critical objectives because of the role they serve rather than because they provide a purely military terrain advantage. They should be considered within the context of an urban political and military environment. The presence of noncombatants (including hostages) and critical facilities (be they functional, religious, historical, or political) means cities must be considered as more complex than merely unique "terrain". This change in definition and emphasis will drive subsequent subordinate organization force structure, doctrine, and training.

Our current tactical doctrine is not invalid. However, it must support the most likely operational and strategic reasons for attacking a city. We cannot have a tactical MOUT doctrine which defines success solely through destruction of the terrain if our operational and strategic purposes for attacking in the first place demands the city remain largely intact. Tactical level leaders should not be put into the situation where rules of engagement change the way they trained to fight, merely because we did not anticipate the environment before hand.

In Manila, XIV Corps found that tactical success was impossible at an acceptable cost in American lives without destroying much of the city. When MacArthur changed the rules of engagement, American casualties rose dramatically. Their training and experience gave them the ability to adapt to the urban terrain but failure by the higher commanders to anticipate the urban combat environment put them in a situation they had not prepared for.

The experience of Manila showed that lightly armed airborne infantry did not possess the firepower required to succeed against heavily defended positions in the city. Infantrymen, even when supported by tanks, tank destroyers, and direct fire artillery, accounted for 90% of the XIV Corps casualties.³⁰ Today our light forces suffer similar inadequacies in firepower. Heavy forces, possessing massive firepower, lack the simple numbers of infantrymen to sustain urban combat over any period of time. Force development efforts should consider MOUT operations as a primary tactical mission and evaluate how well combat organizations are manned, equipped and supported to succeed in an urban combat environment.

Staff Planning and Training

Doctrine development for large units occurs concurrent with planning and training efforts. Conducting actual large unit exercises within a major city remains impractical. However, simulation technology can now

incorporate large cities into large unit exercises. Simulation exercises can provide a certain base of experience in planning, coordinating, and sustaining the attack of a large city. Instead of bypassing major cities, or again like MacArthur, declaring them undefended, planning exercises should include the requirements for more detailed intelligence, control measures, civil affairs, force requirements, population control and infrastructure protection. Simulation exercises which vary the level and type of enemy threats support training for major combat operations as well as operations short of war.

Post Combat Operations

The battle for Manila dramatically showed a need for planning post combat operations in detail. Foremost among many competing requirements is the disposal of health threatening human remains. In Manila, American graves registration personnel quickly handled U.S. remains. Japanese and Filipino casualties by the hundreds of thousands littered the battlefield. While front line units fought and moved on, logistics forces moved into areas contaminated by disease resulting from large numbers of unburied dead.²¹ Traumatized civilians tried to care for their own dead. Rear commanders had to contract Filipino laborers to clear the thousands of Japanese bodies.

Planning for mortuary affairs for U.S. casualties only is insufficient to support preventitive medicine

efforts to counter the combined health threats of rotting bodies, garbage and masses of homeless noncombatants. Corps rear troops will have to operate in these former battlefields. Our current mortuary affairs doctrine addresses the problem of civilian and enemy remains, but the graves registration units allocated to the corps remain based on density of troops assigned to the corps.

Medical support for noncombatants heavily taxes standard military medical organizations. The hospitals in Manila were so heavily damaged they were unusable. Yet, Filipino civilians desperately required medical care. There was a tremendous burden put upon the supporting medical units. Organized and equipped to support a particular sized combat force, taxed by heavy combat casualties, these units also treated many thousands of civilians.³² Plans for resourcing medical care for civilians must consider it both an immediate need and probably a long term resource requirement.

Other aspects of the urban combat environment require early planning, especially restoration of public services. Efforts to restore food, water, electrical, fire, police and sanitation services require the work of specialists for planning as well as execution. It is not a task to be handed off lightly to an infantry division which has just fought through the city. Today, probably more so than in 1945, roadways, television, telephone, traffic

control (road, rail, and air) and computer networks require attention by specialists within the occupying force.

Military objectives within a large urban area do not usually coincide with traditional "key terrain" objectives. While high ground may remain important, objectives without tactical importance may be more critical. Port facilities must be secured. Subways, bridges, radio and television transmitter sites, telephone switching sites, sewage treatment facilities, food storage points, and hospitals all become important to successfully taking and keeping the city.

None of these planning considerations are original. Nor is the list complete. Most are buried within various field manuals. The point in addressing them is to emphasize their consideration early in the planning process, not as a later priority. Staff planning for capturing a city must begin with an appropriate end-state then work backward through the tactics of achieving it. The right intelligence is required and the appropriate forces must be assigned to take, then maintain key facilities. The most significant post operations planning issue is correct identification of the elements of a city infrastructure which must remain intact.

Mass Communications

A final implication is the role of the mass communication in urban warfare. The impact of television

and the relationships between the media and military is far beyond the scope of this paper. But, the mass news media is such a pervasive aspect of any military operation it warrants brief consideration as it applies specifically to urban warfare.

The television news media is an unofficial element of national power. For better or worse, the media influences national and global will. For western democracies, the unrestricted mass media becomes a type of environmental condition we operate under. Like the weather, it effects the ability of both sides to accomplish their objectives. Unlike the weather, the media is never neutral. The media can garner political support for a military operation, or just as quickly question an operation's legitimacy.

Mass communications is not always within the ability of the military to control. Witnesses and soldiers can telephone accounts of actions faster than official military channels can publically release them. With the proliferation of personal video cameras, visual reports are not the exclusive realm of established news agencies.

American commanders in Manila did not have to deal with instant criticism of their conduct of operations. Manila was also just another battle in a very long war. While news of the battle for Manila was reported, in February 1945, the big war stories were the invasion of Iwo

Jima (19 January) and the anticipated Russian drive towards Berlin.

The battle for Manila was overshadowed in the news of the day for several reasons. MacArthur had declared the city secured nearly a month before it really was. Correspondents, under tight control, were forbidden from contradicting the story.³³ By mid month, as the 37th Infantry fought in the center of the city, the Marines landed at Iwo Jima, a dramatic event which stole the headlines throughout America. American losses in Manila, and on Luzon as a whole, were not as bad as those on Iwo Jima and later on Okinawa. Without adequate information to question MacArthur's early declaration of victory, Manila became a subordinate item in the news of the day.

The technological capability for live, satellite transmitted news television was, of course, not present at Manila. As a guide to considering the implications of mass media in an urban battle, it is interesting to consider what impact the sights and sounds of a battle on the scale of Manila may have today.

Commanders fighting in a major urban area will have to deal with television to an extent unmatched in open country warfare. The first reason is of course because they are fighting in a city. Major cities are the focal point of national populations and therefore the focus of the news media. Visions of destruction in a city, whether distorted

as propaganda or not, have a much greater dramatic impact than artillery exploding in a forest. Video crews are as common as still photographers in World War II, yet they are under less control. Cameras from many nations send instant visions of American forces to viewers around the world. Audiences see instantly and graphically the destruction modern weapons levy upon a city during war. Tactical methods which appear inconsistent with stated military and political goals dramatically effects public opinion. Failure to produce satisfactory conditions for noncombatants after the operation also produces dramatic effects on public opinion. Television is unforgiving and an urban battlefield provides the perfect show. The importance of television is that it does not have to show the truth to have an effect on public support for a military operation.

American MOUT doctrine must consider ways of exploiting the mass media to support its operations, and not to allow it to hamper them. Complete censorship or restrictions in an urban environment is almost impossible. There are too many official and unofficial video cameras. The most effective way of defusing the negative impacts of television is the demonstration of military competence. As in World War II, this type of credibility stems from a sound doctrine, successfully adapted to the situation by well trained troops. Our doctrine and training must develop the tactics, techniques, and procedures, which provide tactical

success at the lowest possible cost in human life, understanding that most of the operation will be watched around the world as it happens.

Commanders will always worry that television will compromise their tactical situation, and therefore their soldiers lives. This applies to the enemy as well. Access to world television news must be a part of the corps communications package it takes to a fight in any urban area. XIV Corps' greatest need, and MacArthur's greatest mistake involved gathering intelligence confirming or denying Japanese intentions. Thus, with the liabilities of television also come opportunities. It can be an important intelligence multiplier. Doctrine should consider the mass media's impact on tactical courses of action, its potential for intelligence and deception operations, and its effect on achieving political as well as military objectives.

Summary

In the preceding chapters I have compared the successful 1945 XIV Corps attack to seize Manila with implications for success in a similar environment today. I established the doctrinal framework that existed for the attack of a city by a corps during World War II. In a historical analysis of the XIV Corps operation in Manila I evaluated the circumstances which set the conditions for the battle and how well XIV Corps responded to the tactical challenges of urban warfare. And, finally, in analyzing the

XIV Corps operation I determined some of the planning implications a corps commander today must consider to achieve success on an urban battlefield consistent with higher level military and political objectives.

Manila was a unique experience for American forces in the Pacific in World War II. While not our only experience with urban combat, it is a useful case study of the nature of combat in any major modern city. The reasons why Manila became a military objective are as valid in today's world as they were in World War II. If we were to overlay a 1993 U.S. Army contingency corps onto the experience of Manila in 1945, the implications for many different aspects of urban warfare come to light. I have not tried to provide answers to all of the tactical challenges, but I have established an analytical guide to evaluating potential large unit operations in a major city.

Significantly, resolution of conflict between an American commander's duty to win at the lowest acceptable cost in soldier lives versus the potential to inflict utter devastation upon a city and its inhabitants must be addressed in the planning and preparation phases as well as during execution. Successful resolution of this ever important dilemma of conflicting responsibilities could determine how well tactical success supports achievement of strategic military and political goals.

Some implications for large unit operations in major urban areas warrant further research and study. U.S. Army warfighting doctrine is undergoing a period of adjustment and revision. There is a need to consider how well our emerging doctrine reflects operations in an urban environment in war as well as in operations short of war. Changes in doctrine drive changes in force structure. There is a need to evaluate the capabilities of our current forces in an urban battle. The role of attack helicopters and smart munitions require particular attention. The integration of large scale urban operations into exercise simulations scenarios, planning and conducting post combat urban operations, and the role of mass communications all offer opportunities for further study within their larger functional areas. Regarding the history of the battle for Manila itself, the role of Filipino guerillas is one area of the battle which has been neglected. This unique aspect of the liberation of Manila requires more research.

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39Smith, 275.

40Ibid., 275.

41XIV Corps, After Action Report, 98.

42Smith, 277.

43XIV Corps, After Action Report, 99.

44Smith, 290.

45Ibid., 291.

- I, 39. 46Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume I, 39.
- 47XIV Corps, After Action Report, 114.
- I, 66-67. 48Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume I, 66-67.
- 49Smith, 293.
- 50Manchester, 414.
- 51Smith, 295.
- 52Ibid., 295.
- I, 40. 53Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume I, 40.
- 54Ibid., 40.
- 55Frankel, 291; Smith, 299.
- I, 40. 56Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume I, 40.
- 57Smith, 303.
- I, 40. 58Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume I, 40.
- 59Smith, 302.
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- 61Ibid., 304.
- 62Ibid., 305-306.
- 63Ibid., 307.
- I, 42. 64Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume I, 42.
- 65Steinberg, 118.
- I, 40. 66Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume I, 40.
- 67Frankel, 296; 37th Infantry Division, Report After Action, 235.

••Sixth Army, "Combat in Manila", 2.

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¹Frankel p. 296.

²Manchester, 413.

³Drea, 192.

⁴Willoughby, Volume 2, 494.

⁵Drea, 194-195.

⁶Drea, 197; Smith, 213.

⁷U.S. War Department, FM 100-15: Field Service Regulations, Larger Units, (Washington D.C., U.S. Government Printing Office, 29 June 1942), 59.

•Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume III, 175.

⁸Manchester, 418-419.

¹⁰Smith, 652.

¹¹MAJ Charles W. Boggs, Jr., Marine Aviation in the Philippines, (Washington, D.C., GPO, 1951), 76; Smith, 236.

¹²Spector, 235.

¹³Palmer, The Organization of Ground Combat Troops, 97.

¹⁴Smith, 222, 267.

¹⁵Ibid., 431.

¹⁶Drea, 194.

¹⁷XIV Corps Field Order No. 7, 17 Feb 45.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume III, 58.

²⁰Sixth Army, "Combat in Manila", 46.

²¹Frankel, 291.

22Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume III, 114.

23XIV Corps, After Action Report, 135.

24Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume I, 40.

25Stanley Karnow, In Our Image: America's Empire in the Philippines, (New York, Random House, 1989), 321.

26Manchester, 413; Stimson, 632; Willoughby, Volume 2, 664.

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31Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume III, 161; XIV Corps, After Action Report, 135, 141.

32Sixth Army, Report of the Luzon Campaign, Volume I, 114; Volume III, 160.

33Manchester, 413.

APPENDIX A

XIV CORPS ORDER OF BATTLE: MANILA 1945

Southwest Pacific Area GHQ: General Douglas MacArthur

Sixth Army: Lieutenant General Walter Kreuger

XIV Corps: Major General Oscar Griswold

37th Infantry Division: Assigned 15 December 1943

129th Infantry Regiment

145th Infantry Regiment

148th Infantry Regiment

Division Artillery:

6th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)

135th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)

136th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm Howitzer)

140th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)

37th Reconnaissance Troop (Mechanized)

117th Combat Engineer Battalion

112th Medical Battalion

37th Counterintelligence Detachment

Headquarters, Special Troops

HQs Company, 37th Infantry Division

737th Ordnance (Light Maintenance) Company

37th Quartermaster Company

37th Signal Company

Military Police Platoon

40th Infantry Division: Assigned 20 November 1944

108th Infantry Regiment

160th Infantry Regiment

185th Infantry Regiment

Division Artillery:

143rd Field Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)

164th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)

213th Field Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)

222nd Field Artillery Battalion (155mm Howitzer)

40th Reconnaissance Troop (Mechanized)

115th Combat Engineer Battalion

115th Medical Battalion

40th Counterintelligence Detachment

Headquarters, Special Troops

HQs Company, 40th Infantry Division

Military Police Platoon

740th Ordnance (Light Maintenance) Company
40th Quartermaster Company
40th Signal Company

1st Cavalry Division: Assigned 31 January 1945

1st Cavalry Brigade:

5th Cavalry Regiment
12th Cavalry Regiment

2nd Cavalry Brigade:

7th Cavalry Regiment
8th Cavalry Regiment

Division Artillery:

61st Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)
82nd Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)
99th Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)
271st Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)
Headquarters Troop, 1st Cavalry Division
8th Engineer Squadron
1st Medical Squadron
1st Signal Troop
27th Ordnance (Medium Maintenance) Company
16th Quartermaster Squadron
302nd Reconnaissance Troop (Mechanized)
603rd Medium Tank Company
Military Police Platoon
801st Counterintelligence Detachment

11th Airborne Division: Assigned 9 February 1945

187th Glider Infantry Regiment
188th Glider Infantry Regiment
511th Parachute Infantry Regiment

Division Artillery:

457th Parachute Field Artillery Battalion (75mm How)
674th Glider Field Artillery Battalion (75mm How)
675th Glider Field Arty Bn (105mm Short Barrel How)
221st Airborne Medical Company
127th Airborne Engineer Battalion
152nd Airborne Antiaircraft Battalion
Headquarters, Special Troops
HQs Company, 11th Airborne Division
Military Police Platoon
711th Airborne Ordnance Maintenance Company
511th Airborne Signal Company
408th Airborne Quartermaster Company
11th Parachute Maintenance Company

6th Infantry Division: Assigned 17 February 1945

1st Infantry Regiment
20th Infantry Regiment
63rd Infantry Regiment

Division Artillery:

1st Field Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)
51st Field Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)

53rd Field Artillery Battalion (105mm Howitzer)
80th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm Howitzer)
6th Reconnaissance Troop (Mechanized)
6th Combat Engineer Battalion
6th Counterintelligence Detachment
Headquarters, Special Troops
HQs Company, 6th Infantry Division
Military Police Platoon
706th Ordnance (Light Maintenance) Company
6th Quartermaster Company
6th Signal Company

XIV Corps Troops

XIV Corps Artillery

756th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm Howitzer)
757th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm Howitzer)
517th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm Gun)
947th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm Howitzer)
C Btry, 465th Field Artillery Battalion (8in Howitzer)
C Btry, 544th Field Artillery Battalion (240mm
Howitzer)
544th Field Artillery Battalion (240mm How) (2 Mar 45)
760th Field Artillery Battalion (155mm How) (2 Mar 45)
472nd Field Artillery Battalion (155mm Howitzer)
518th AAA Battalion (90mm Gun)
Photo Interpretation Team 11
A Btry, 289th FA Observation Battalion
Survey Platoon, 670th Engineer Topographic Company
754th Tank Battalion
640th Tank Destroyer Battalion
672nd Amphibious Tractor Battalion
1129th Engineer Combat Group
1520 Engineer Water Supply Company
530th Engineer Light Pontoon Company
82nd Chemical Battalion (4.2in Mortar)
88th Signal Battalion

APPENDIX B

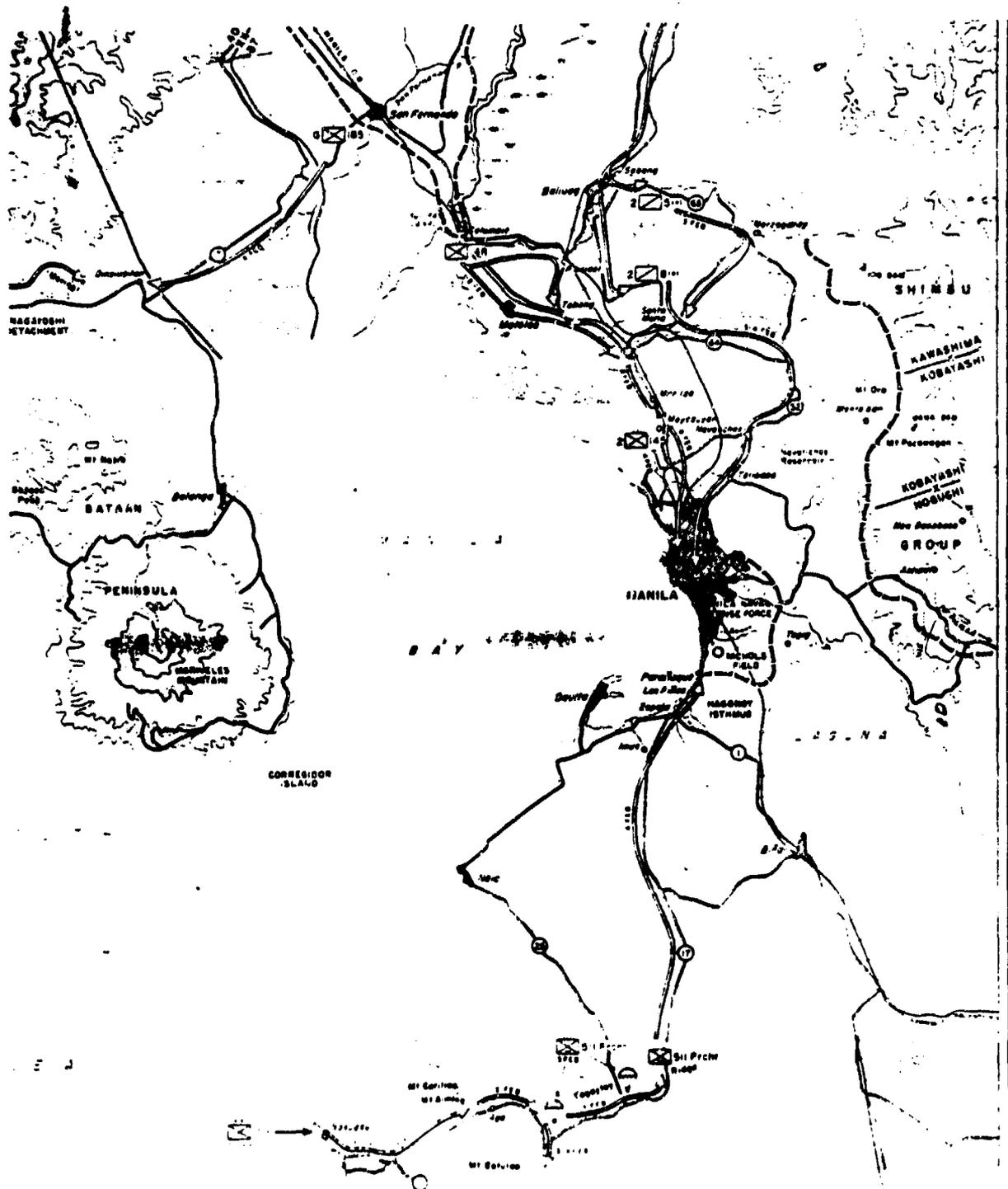


Fig. 1. The Approach to Manila. Source: Robert R. Smith. Triumph in the Philippines, The United States Army in World War II, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1963), Map V.

APPENDIX B

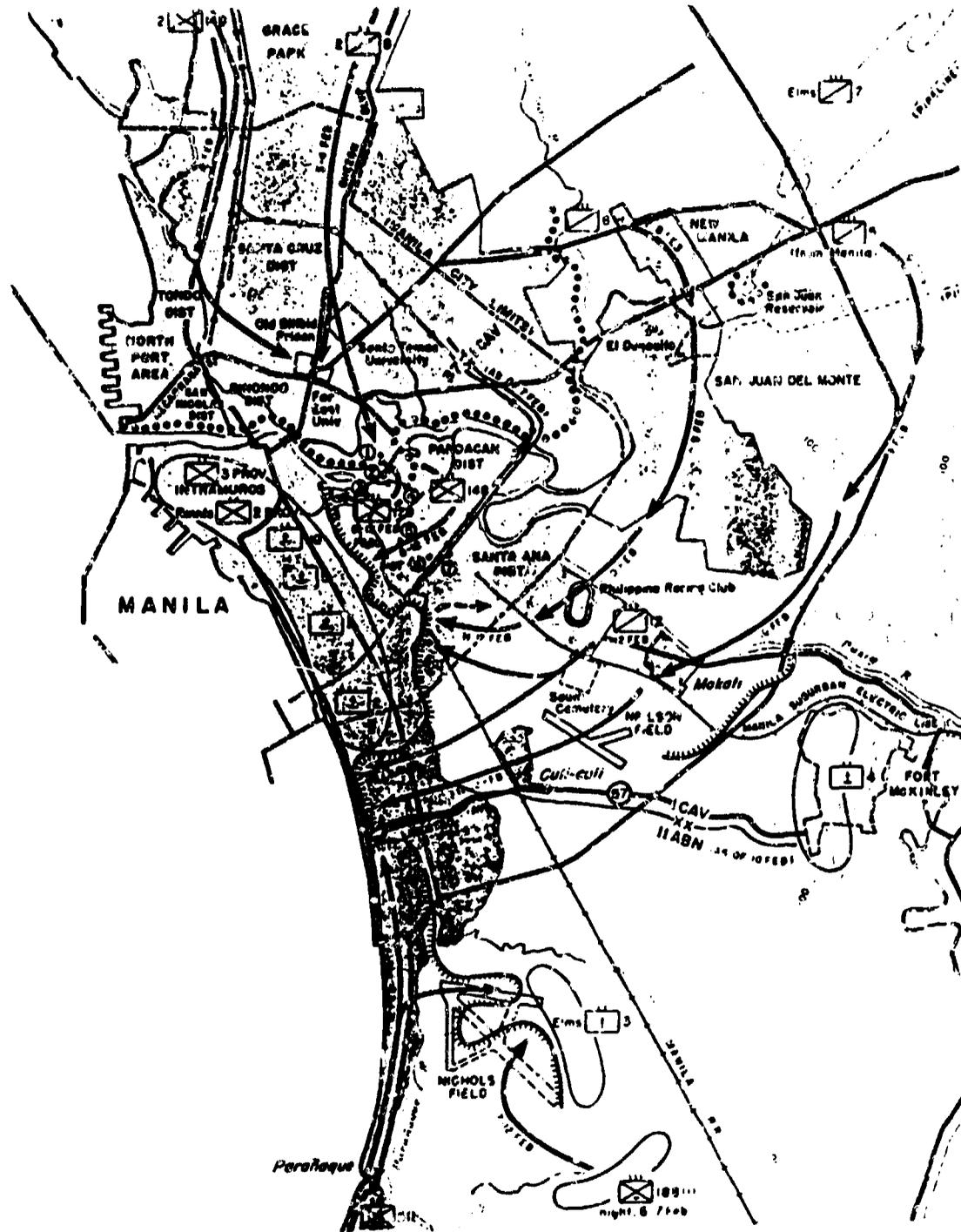


Fig. 2. Isolating the City. Source: Robert R. Smith. Triumph in the Philippines, The United States Army in WWII, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1963), Map VI.

APPENDIX B

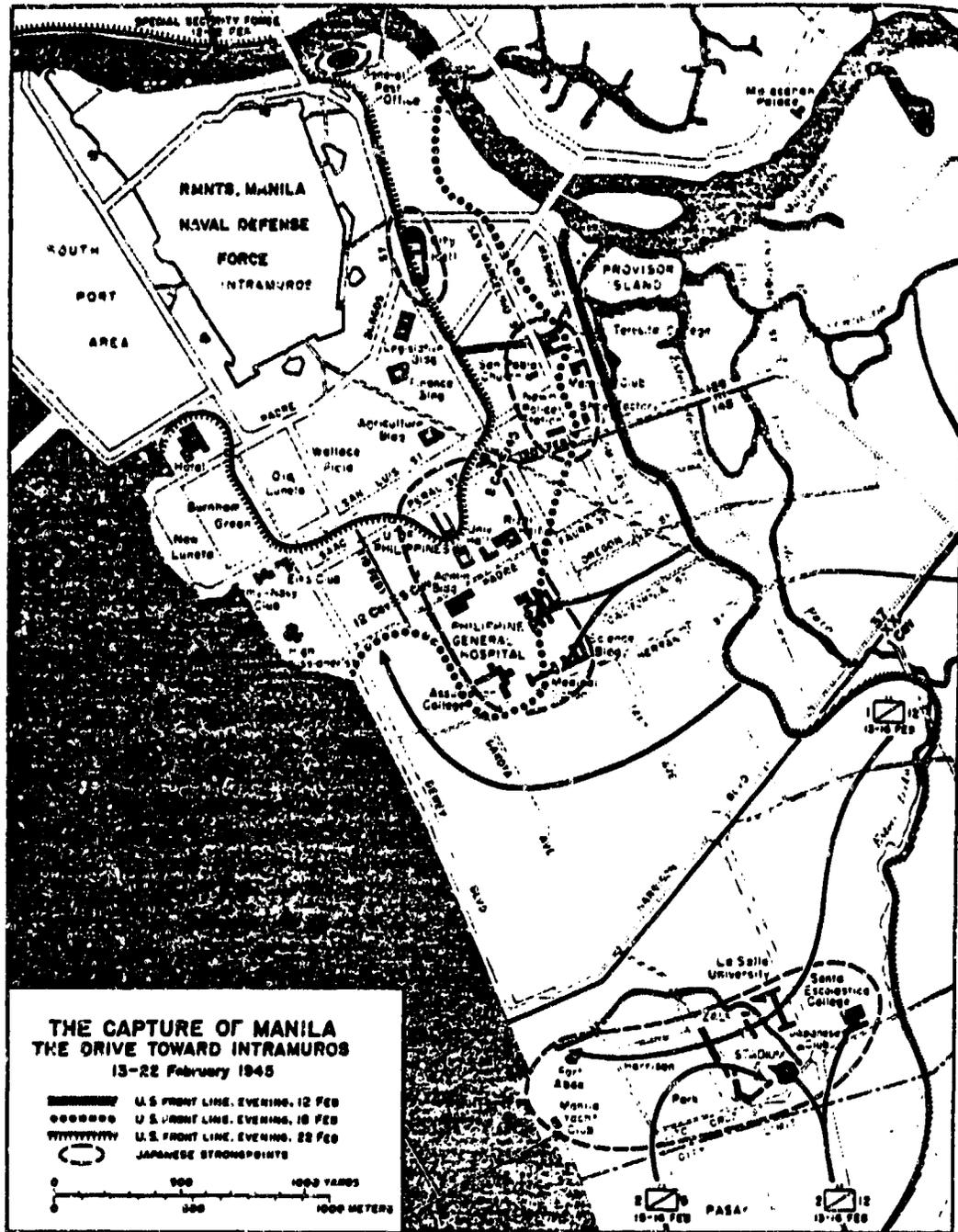
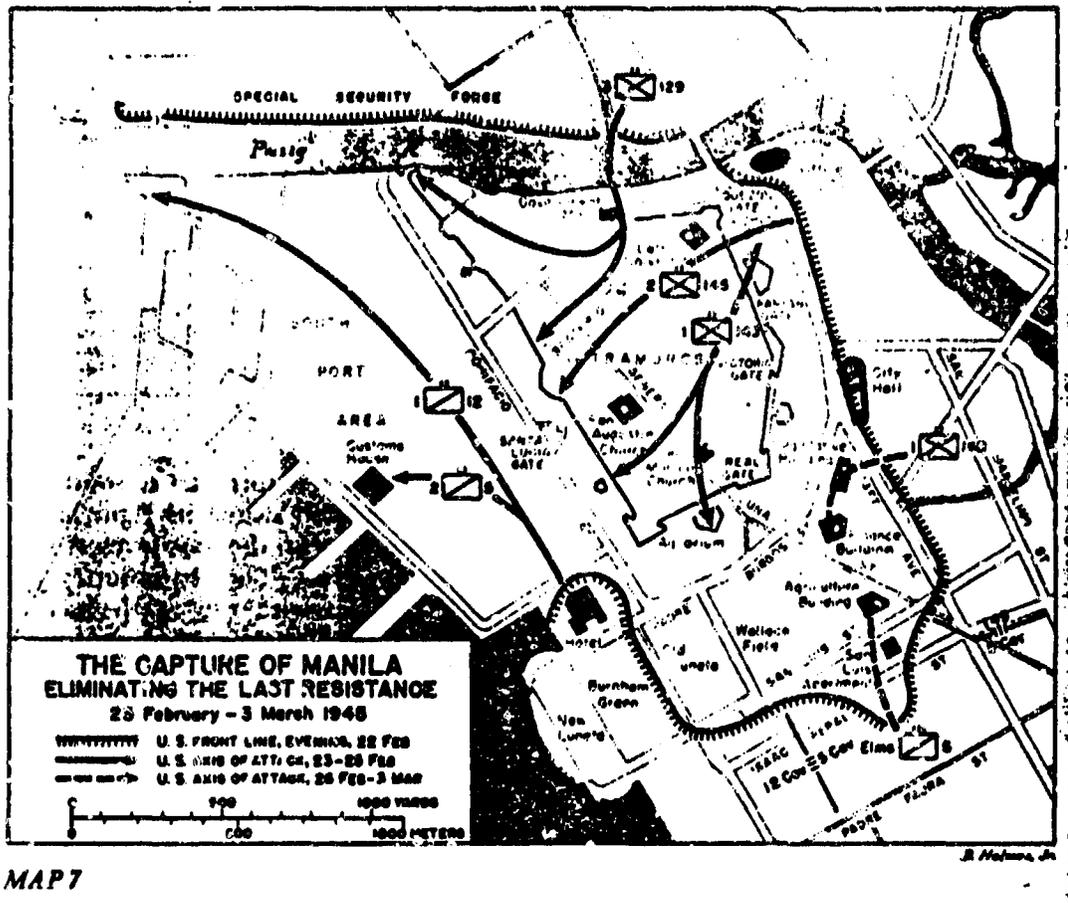


Fig. 3. Reduction South of the Pasig River. Source: Robert R. Smith. Triumph in the Philippines, The United States Army in WWII, (Washington, D.C.: GPO, 1963), 276.

APPENDIX B



MAP 7

Fig. 4. The Intramuros and Port Area. Source: Robert R. Smith. Triumph in the Philippines, The U.S. Army in WWII, (Washington, D.C., 298.

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